

SCHUBERT AS SCHILLER'S SENTIMENTAL POET

SU YIN MAK



ABSTRACT

*Schubert's lifelong interest in literature, his close friendships with poets and his preference for lyric poetry in his prolific song settings suggest that his compositional language may be shaped as much by a literary imagination as by musical concerns. This article argues for a close correspondence between Schubert's late instrumental style and Friedrich Schiller's conception of the elegiac. In 'On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry' Schiller describes the sentimental poet as having to contend with two conflicting objects, the ideal and actuality, and to represent their opposition either satirically or elegiacally: whereas satire rails against the imperfections of present reality, elegy expresses longing for an ideal that is lost and unattainable. Paradoxically, however, the poet's longing must take place in a flawed present; the elegiac thus projects not only a disjunction between divided worlds, but also a cyclic temporality in which memory and desire, past and future, are both entwined with the immediacy of present experience. In both Schiller and Schubert, this paradoxical temporal sensibility is often represented by patterns of returning, repetition and circularity. A close reading of Schubert's *Moment musical in A flat major, D780/2*, illustrates how Schiller's conception of the elegiac might be put into analytical practice.*

Writers on Schubert have often remarked on the repetitive and non-developmental tendencies in his forms, and the frequent use of modal mixture, abrupt modulations and remote keys in his harmony. These features were being characterized as 'lyrical' even in the earliest analytical studies on the composer, and are often measured against a 'dramatic' model of classical form that, in turn, is assumed to represent the mainstream of compositional practice.¹ They also call into question the functional and hierarchical distinctions seen as intrinsic to the Viennese classical style and, by virtue of their salience, draw attention to their status as rhetorical gestures.

The *Moment musical in A flat major, D780/2*, illustrates many of these Schubertian stylistic fingerprints. Table 1 gives a formal overview of the work. It is in a five-part form, A¹B¹A²B²A³, where both A and B sections are varied upon restatement. This five-part form, as Charles Fisk has noted, is a 'Schubertian speciality' often found in the slow movements of the composer's large-scale instrumental works.² Unlike the more typical rondo (ABACA), it emphasizes repetition and return rather than the contrast between refrain and new material. A central rhetorical gesture in the *Moment musical* involves the manipulation of the five-part form. The second A section ends with an extensive coda, as if the piece is coming to an end, but instead there is a

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Society for Music Theory's 2002 annual meeting at Columbus.

- 1 Tovey's assertion in his 1928 essay on Schubert is typical: 'Schubert's large instrumental forms are notoriously prone to spend in lyric ecstasy the time required *ex hypothesi* for dramatic action.' Donald Francis Tovey, 'Tonality in Schubert', *Music and Letters* 9/4 (1928); reprinted in *The Main Stream of Music and Other Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), 148.
- 2 Charles Fisk, *Returning Cycles: Contexts for the Interpretation of Schubert's Impromptus and Last Sonatas* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 278; a complete reading of the *Moment musical* appears on pages 277–282. Fisk has also published an earlier and substantially different analysis of the same work in 'Rehearing the Moment and Hearing In-the-Moment: Schubert's First Two Moments Musicaux', *College Music Symposium* 30 (1990), 1–18.

Table 1 Schubert, Moment Musical in A flat major, D780 No. 2, formal overview

	A ¹	B ¹	A ²	B ²	A ³
Sections:					
Salient:	C-D ^b -C → D ^b	D ^b /C [#]	C (C ^b) C	D ^b /C [#]	C-B ^b -A ^b
Pitches	3-4 -3̂ 4	4	3̂ (+3̂) 3̂	4	3̂ -2̂ -1̂
Keys:	A ^b → D ^b	f [#]	A ^b (C ^b) A ^b	f [#] /F [#]	A ^b
	I	^b vii (iv of IV)	I (^b III) I	^b vii- ^b VII → V ⁷	I - V - I



sudden return of B that contradicts our expectation that the piece is in the simple ternary (ABA) form more typical of nineteenth-century character pieces for piano. The work's tonal design is peculiar as well. The A section begins in A flat major, but ends with a tonicization of D flat major (IV) instead of the usual tonic or dominant, and the B sections are in the remote key of F sharp minor. In the middle of A², right before the false coda, there is an excursion to C flat major (♭III) – what Tovey might have called a 'purple patch'. The end of B² also surprisingly cadences in F sharp major before the return of A flat major in the final A section.

The disjunctive, unexpected and often anti-teleological nature of the discourse demands interpretation. Not surprisingly, then, the *Moment musical* has received considerable attention in the analytical literature.³ This article is in part a response to two earlier analyses. Allan Cadwallader and David Gagné provide a convincing account of the work's voice-leading structure, but subsume and normalize many of its expressive and rhetorical effects under the Schenkerian paradigm. As my own analytical methodology is also Schenkerian, the structural analysis presented below will not differ substantially from Cadwallader and Gagné's, but with the crucial difference that the analysis is undertaken in the service of a more explicit interpretation.⁴ I also find compelling Charles Fisk's reading of the piece, initially published in a 1991 article and considerably reworked in his recent book on Schubert's late piano music. D780/2 is the centrepiece of the epilogue of *Returning Cycles*, a personal and visionary interpretation of Schubert's late works as autobiographical narratives. Fisk sees the *Moment musical* as emblematic of Schubert the eternal wanderer, who obsessively revisits the themes of exile and homecoming, memory and loss, over and over again. As will become apparent, my hearing of musical events in the *Moment musical* is in some respects similar to Fisk's, although we come to almost exactly the opposite conclusion as to its overall rhetorical structure.

In this article, I propose a new reading of the *Moment musical* through examining the rhetorical implications of Schubert's discourse. My interpretative approach is motivated by a number of considerations. First, I am firmly committed to the belief that expressive considerations determine many of Schubert's compositional choices, and the critic's task of interpretation necessarily begins with recognizing the patently expressive gestures in the music. I also believe that musical expression, in both vocal and instrumental works, is articulated through purely musical relationships. To paraphrase Hanslick's famous statement in *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*, the dynamics of affective discourse find expression through the dynamics of musical construction.⁵ Interpretation is thus concerned not only with *what*, but also with *how* and *why*, and must be firmly grounded in specific and detailed accounts of technical procedures.

The traditional metaphor of rhetoric, with its emphasis on both the semiotic and communicative aspects of musical discourse, allows the critic to consider structure and expression as a single domain of meaning. Modern scholarship on musical rhetoric by Leonard Ratner and others has offered insights on ways in which

3 See Patrick McCreless, 'Schubert's *Moment Musical* No. 2: The Interaction of Rhythmic and Tonal Structures', *In Theory Only* 3/4 (1977), 3–11; Allan Cadwallader and David Gagné, *Analysis of Tonal Music: A Schenkerian Approach* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 272–289; Charles Fisk, 'Rehearing the Moment' and *Returning Cycles*. David Beach discusses the first forty-seven bars in 'Modal Mixture and Schubert's Harmonic Practice', *Journal of Music Theory* 42/1 (1998), 75–78. I have also consulted Felix Salzer's sketch of this piece in *Structural Hearing* (New York: Dover, 1962), volume 2, figure 502.

4 To be fair, Cadwallader and Gagné's analysis appears within the context of an undergraduate textbook, and is probably not intended to be a comprehensive interpretation of the work.

5 *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen: ein Beitrag zur Revision der Ästhetik der Tonkunst*, eighth edition (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1891), chapter 3. Hanslick's famous dictum reads in the original German as follows: 'Das Inhalt der Musik sind tönend bewegte Formen.' By 'tönend bewegte Formen' I understand Hanslick to mean 'forms (musical structures) articulated through the dynamic relationships of tonality'. Hanslick does not deny that music is capable of expressing emotions, but only that the emotions expressed constitute the 'content' of music. As an aside, Hanslick's thesis has been variously translated as 'The essence of music is sound and motion' (Gustav Cohen, 1891) and 'The content of music is tonally moving forms' (Geoffrey Payzant, 1986). I find Payzant's translation to be much more accurate.



both stylistic references and large-scale formal organization can serve as cues for expressive content in the music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.⁶ Adapting these interpretive models to Schubert's music may allow us to examine afresh the composer's relationship to the classical style. At the same time, as Edward T. Cone has argued, 'extragenic meaning can be explained only in terms of the congeneric. If verbalization of true content – the specific expression uniquely embodied in a work – is possible at all, it must depend on close structural analysis'.⁷ I shall therefore be describing the 'dynamics of musical construction' in Schubert's musical discourse with reference to the theories of Heinrich Schenker, whose formulation of tonality's defining feature as a fundamental linear-harmonic structure remains the most cogent and elegant structural paradigm of tonal music available today.

More importantly, my choice of a rhetorical approach stems from the belief that Schubert's compositional language, in instrumental as well as vocal music, is as much shaped by a literary imagination as by musical concerns. I have suggested elsewhere that the composer's unorthodox handling of sonata form often reflects the aesthetic principles and discursive techniques of idealist lyric poetry.⁸ Lyricism not only interacted with and modified the conventions of the classical style, but also created rhetorical structures that closely corresponded to poetic modes.⁹ I will focus on one such mode, the elegiac, as a possible rhetorical paradigm for Schubert's late instrumental style.

In his famous essay 'On Naive and Sentimental Poetry' Schiller defines three genres of sentimental poetry: satire, elegy and idyll. He distinguishes the elegiac from the satiric and idyllic as follows:

In satire, actuality is contrasted with the highest reality as falling short of the ideal. . . . If the poet should set nature and art, the ideal and actuality, in such opposition that the representation of the first prevails and pleasure in it becomes the predominant feeling, then I call him *elegiac*. Either nature and the ideal are an object of sadness if the first is treated as lost and the second as unattained. Or both are an object of joy represented as actual. The first yields the *elegy* in the narrower sense, and the second the idyll in the broader.¹⁰

It is likely that Schubert was familiar with Schiller's conception of the elegiac. He composed forty-four Schiller settings throughout his career, and their high proportion among his song output – only Goethe and Mayrhofer received more settings – suggests a strong aesthetic influence from the author. Among the texts chosen for setting are poems that illustrate this very notion of the elegiac, including 'Sehnsucht' (D52 and

6 See, especially, Leonard Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer, 1980); V. Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Mark Evan Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of the Oration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Elaine Sisman, *Haydn and the Classical Variation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Robert Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); and Raymond Monelle, *The Sense of Music* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000).

7 Edward T. Cone, 'Schubert's Promissory Note: An Exercise in Musical Hermeneutics', *19th Century Music* 5/3 (1982), 235.

8 'Schubert's Sonata Forms and the Poetics of the Lyric', *Journal of Musicology* 23/2 (2006), 263–306.

9 I use the term 'mode' in its literary sense, to refer to characteristic rhetorical principles and aesthetic attitudes rather than a definite set of formal and generic expectations. Paul Alpers's distinction between genre and mode is succinct and eloquent: 'Mode is taken to refer to feelings and attitudes as such, as distinguished from their realization or manifestation in specific devices, conventions, and structures, [as opposed to] the concept of genre, in which "outer form" is of the essence. . . . It is the term to use when one wants to suggest that the ethos of a work informs its technique and that techniques imply an ethos. In practical criticism, the idea of "mode" connects outer and inner form.' 'Lyrical Modes', in *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries*, ed. Steven Paul Scher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 61–62. Emphasis in the original.

10 Friedrich von Schiller, 'Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung' (1795–1796); English translation by Julius A. Elias in 'Naive and Sentimental Poetry' and 'On the Sublime' (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1966), 118 and 125. Emphasis in the original.



D636), 'Der Pilgrim' (D794) and 'Die Götter Griechenlands' (D677). 'Die Götter Griechenlands', which explicitly associates the ideal with song, seems to have been particularly appealing to Schubert. He not only set strophe 12 as D677, but also quoted the song setting's opening motive in the Octet (D803) and the String Quartet in A minor (D804). The text and English translation of this strophe are as follows:¹¹

<p>Schöne Welt, wo bist du? Kehre wieder, Holdes Blütenalter der Natur! Ach, nur in dem Feenland der Lieder Lebt noch deine fabelhafte Spur. Ausgestorben trauert das Gefilde, Keine Gottheit zeigt sich meinem Blick, Ach, von jenem lebenwarmen Bilde Blieb der Schatten nur zurück.</p>	<p>Where are you, lovely world? Return again, Nature's fresh blooming time, for you I long! Some fragments of that glory still remain But only in the fantasy of song. The mourning fields lie empty and bereft, No God appears before my mortal sight, And of that life-warm image, nothing left – Shadows have gathered, putting it to flight.</p>
--	--

There is also documentary evidence of Schiller's aesthetic influence on members of the Schubert circle. David Gramit has shown that Goethe, Schiller and Herder played important roles in shaping the programme of *Bildung* expounded by Schubert's circle, and Schiller's idealized vision of ancient Greece, in particular, may have prompted the circle's enthusiastic study of Greek literature and civilization.¹² Schiller served as a literary model as well; for example, the opening strophes of Anton Ottenwalt's poem 'Griechenland', cited by Gramit, were clearly written in imitation of 'Die Götter Griechenlands':¹³

<p>Helles, heiliges Land, Wiege der Grazien, Hoher Tempel der Kunst, edlerer Menschheit Und der ernsteren Weisheit Platons Mutter und Socrates!</p> <p>Ach, wo bist du? Gestürzt liegen die Tempel Und die Hallen in Schutt! Über der Freiheit Land Herrschen rohe Barbaren Nimmer rührt sie der Schönheit Spur!</p>	<p>Bright, holy land, you cradle of the Graces, Temple of Art most high, a nobler nation Of a more serious wisdom, Mother of Plato, and of Socrates!</p> <p>Where are you now? The temple's fallen, The halls destroyed! And over the free land Barbarians rule unchecked, whose savage hearts Beauty in ruins never pacifies.</p>
--	--

The awareness of the gap between the ideal and the real, and of the role of song as both an ideal object and a means of reconciling the opposition between the ideal and actuality, is a prominent intellectual thread in the aesthetics of the Schubert circle. In a letter dated 16 February 1813, when Schubert was in his mid-teens, Josef Kenner writes to Franz Schober:

[Poetry's] purpose should be to address men truthfully – from the prophetic mouth of the consecrated singer (*vatis*) or hero, about a world that differs from the real one . . . It is the painting of a conceptual world, of an ideal life, which turns into the balm for our feelings and raises our hearts and spirits, and which conjures up an example of a higher world beyond the reality and sovereignty of representations.¹⁴

11 English translation by Pauline Burton (unpublished manuscript).

12 David Gramit, *The Intellectual and Aesthetic Tenets of Franz Schubert's Circle: Their Development and Their Influence on His Music* (PhD dissertation, Duke University, 1987), especially 45–55.

13 Cited and translated by Gramit in *Intellectual and Aesthetic Tenets*, 52. The translation here is by Pauline Burton (unpublished manuscript).

14 'Die Dichtkunst . . . ein wahres Wort zum Menschen sprechen soll – aus dem prophetischen Munde des geweihten Sängers (*vatis*) oder eines Helden, einer Welt, die sich von der wirklichen unterscheidet . . . Sie ist die Malerey einer Begriffswelt, eines idealen Leben, dem zur Linterung [sic] unserer Gefühle und zur Erhebung unsers Herzens und Geistes wird außer der Wahrheit und Hoheit der Vorstellungen Beyspiel erfordert aus einer höhern Welt'. The complete letter is transcribed in Gramit, *Intellectual and Aesthetic Tenets*, Appendix I.6, 383–384, and partially



Poems by Schubert's friends, including Schober's poem 'An die Musik' (1817) and Mayrhofer's 'Heliopolis' (1821–1822), provide additional corroboration.¹⁵

If, as I contend, Schubert abided by a similar aesthetic, how might this aesthetic be expressed through musical means? A consideration of the rhetorical implications of Schiller's conception of the elegiac would be an appropriate starting-point. It is important to note that Schiller's classification of poetic types in 'Naive and Sentimental Poetry' is not a taxonomy of poetic genres, but is rather defined by what he calls 'modes of perception', the characteristic patterns of understanding which the poet imposes on the world: *how* he perceives rather than *what* he perceives. These, in turn, are to be discerned from 'the form of the presentation', or the language that he employs.¹⁶ The sentimental poet has to contend with two conflicting objects, the ideal and actuality, and to represent their opposition. If the mode of perception is primarily one of distaste for the imperfect, the disparity between the ideal and actuality would take the form of satire; or the mode of perception may be one of attraction to the ideal, which would lead to elegy.

Although the ideal and actuality are cast as terms within a simple binary opposition, their alignment with, respectively, nature and art reveals a much more complex relationship: nature is a paradise both lost in the past and to be regained in the future, and the means of their rediscovery is to be found in the culture of the present. Schiller's remarks on nature from the opening pages of 'Naive and Sentimental Poetry' place his later discussion of sentimental poetry in context:

We were nature just as they [natural phenomena such as flowers, and streams, mentioned earlier], and our culture, by means of reason and freedom, should lead us back to nature. They are, therefore, not only the representation of our lost childhood, which eternally remains most dear to us, but fill us with a certain melancholy. But they are also representations of our highest fulfilment in the ideal, thus evoking in us a sublime tenderness.¹⁷

Schiller's 'Feenland der Lieder', then, is both an ideal object and an expression of the poet's longing for the ideal. This longing, moreover, takes place in the present, and mediates between nostalgia and aspiration, so that song becomes a means of critical engagement and reflection. The elegiac, in its broader sense, would thus project not only a disjunction between divided worlds, but also a cyclic temporality in which memory and desire, past and future, are both entwined with the immediacy of present experience.

Although Schiller himself did not provide details as to how the elegiac mode of perception is to be realized technically, Stephanie Barbe Hammer has shown, with reference to Schiller's plays *Die Räuber*, *Die Verschwörung des Fiesco zu Genua* and *Wallenstein*, that its paradoxical temporal sensibility is often represented by patterns of returning, repetition and circularity.¹⁸ These same patterns, as a number of writers have observed, are also distinct features of Schubert's instrumental style.¹⁹ It would seem, then, that there are

translated on 57–58; the translation here is mine. I am grateful to Jürgen Thym for his assistance on several difficult passages.

15 For a complete English translation of Mayrhofer's 'Heliopolis', accompanied by an informed discussion of the aesthetic connection between the poem and Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1794), see David Gramit, 'Schubert and the Biedermeier: The Aesthetics of Johann Mayrhofer's "Heliopolis"', *Music and Letters* 74/3 (1993), 355–382.

16 'I employ the terms satire, elegy, and idyll in a wider sense than is customary . . . The division attempted here, for the very reason that it is simply based on the distinction of mode of perception, should by no means whatever determine the division of poetry itself nor the derivation of poetic genres; since the poet is no way bound, even in a single work, to the same mode of perception, that division therefore cannot apply, but must be taken from the form of the presentation.' 'Naive and Sentimental Poetry', Elias translation, 125–126.

17 'Naive and Sentimental Poetry', Elias translation, 85.

18 Stephanie Barbe Hammer, 'Schiller, Time and Again', *The German Quarterly* 67/2 (1994), 153–172.


19 See especially the work by Charles Fisk, cited above, and the collection of essays on the theme of 'Memory and Schubert's Instrumental Music' in *The Musical Quarterly* 84/4 (2000), 581–663; Walter Frisch, 'You Must Remember



Example 1 *Moment musical* in A flat major, $\flat 7/8/2$, bars 1–4 (all examples are taken from the *Neue Schubert-Ausgabe*, series 7, volume 2/5, ed. Christa Landon and Walther Dürr (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1984)). Used by permission

technical as well as aesthetic links between Schiller and Schubert; if so, then Schiller's conception of sentimental poetry might serve as a useful hermeneutic model for our understanding of the composer.

Returning to the *Moment musical*, I suggest that its rhetorical structure closely corresponds to that of the Schillerian elegy in its formal design, harmonic structure and topical references. An elegiac character is already suggested by the very opening of the piece, which draws upon the conventional affective associations of the barcarolle rhythm with melancholy and lament. As Rodney Stenning Edgecombe has written with reference to the elegiac boat song, 'grief is often vacant and undirected, and to that extent the rocking [of the barcarolle] might be compared with mental vacancy and undirectedness . . . Grief is also typically associated with water'.²⁰ The phrase is also harmonically static, with oscillations between tonic and dominant harmonies, and the incessant repetition of a motivic figure, C-D \flat -C.

Thus the character of this opening phrase is not one of stability and repose, as Allan Cadwallader and David Gagné have suggested, but of a precarious balance.²¹ It is unclear whether the music begins with an anacrusis or a downbeat, and the triple metre further upsets the even pace of a typical barcarolle (6/8) through extending the durations of the downbeats. Beginning in bar 3, the repetition of the rhythmic figure  across bar lines suggests a 6/8 grouping that is at odds with the notated 9/8.²² Furthermore, the harmonic rhythm also contradicts the metre. The tonic chord supporting the main note C occurs on a weak beat, while the neighbour chord supporting D \flat receives greater metrical emphasis through its longer duration and placement on the downbeat. Example 1 illustrates these metrical ambiguities.

The home key is thus paradoxically both static and unstable, such that the music seems to vacillate between C and D \flat , tonic and not-tonic. These vacillations suggest that the rhetorical subject of the discourse might be described as a proposition, initiated by D \flat , to escape from the world of the home key.²³ The opening phrase as a whole (bars 1–4), however, clearly prolongs the tonic; the neighbour-note

This": Memory and Structure in Schubert's String Quartet in G Major, $\flat 887$; John Daverio, "'One More Beautiful Memory of Schubert": Schumann's Critique of the Impromptu, D935'; John M. Gingerich, 'Remembrance and Consciousness in Schubert's C-Major String Quintet, D956'; Charles Fisk, 'Schubert Recollects Himself: The Piano Sonata in C Minor, D958'; and Scott Burnham, 'Schubert and the Sound of Memory'.

20 Rodney Stenning Edgecombe, 'On the Limits of Genre: Some Nineteenth-Century Barcaroles', *19th Century Music* 24/3 (2001), 256. I should point out that the elegiac boat song is only one of the subtypes of the barcarolle genre that Edgecombe describes.

21 Cadwallader and Gagné, *Analysis of Tonal Music*, 273.

22 Both Patrick McCreless and Charles Fisk have also drawn attention to the metrical ambiguity of the A section. McCreless analyses this ambiguity as a conflict between the notated 9/8 and a 'counter-metre' of $3 \times 6/8$, while Fisk suggests the metre is constantly shifting between 6/8 and the notated 9/8. See McCreless, 'Schubert's *Moment Musical* No. 2', 1–3, and Fisk, 'Rehearing the Moment', 7–8.

23 For a fascinating investigation of the metaphorical identification of the tonic key as 'home' and Schubert's rendering of 'home' as uncanny in the Piano Sonata in B flat major, $\flat 760$, see Nicholas Marston, 'Schubert's Homecoming', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 125/2 (2000), 248–270.



configuration imprisons the agent of harmonic change by continually forcing $D\flat$ to return to C. The second phrase (bars 5–8) answers the first with four bars of dominant prolongation. The relationship between tonic and dominant is now reversed: the former now serves as neighbour to the latter. In bars 4–6 Schubert prolongs $\hat{2}$ with its chromatic upper neighbour note, $C\flat$, and thus alters, by means of modal mixture, not only the structural function of $\hat{3}$, but its very identity. In bars 6–7 the prolonged dominant itself becomes minor ($G\flat$ s instead of $G\sharp$ s), but this is ‘corrected’ at the end of the phrase to a dividing dominant. The proposal to depart from tonic, though more insistent this time, ends in interruption.

The listener would initially hear the second phrase group (bars 9–17) as the consequent phrase of a sixteen-bar period. Its first phrase (bars 9–12) is nearly identical to its counterpart in the first phrase group, and its second phrase begins as though it will again prolong the dominant. Instead, Schubert tonicizes the subdominant. The departure away from tonic is finally achieved, but only with difficulty and to an unexpected tonal goal. The initial motion towards the subdominant (bars 14–15) is both sudden and tentative: the bass shifts to a weaker and higher register, the dynamic level drops back to *pianissimo*, and the progression $vii^{o7}/IV - IV$ is insecure. A structural cadence on $D\flat$ is reached only after a second and more vigorous attempt, a process that results in the extension of the phrase from four to five bars. As Example 2 illustrates, the structural function of the subdominant tonicization is to provide consonant support for the neighbour-note $D\flat$, our original agent of harmonic departure, at a middle-ground level.

The character of the piece changes drastically in the subsequent B^1 section (bars 18–35; see Example 3). The music is now in the remote key of F sharp minor. Melodic uncertainty gives way to a cantabile theme for the right hand, and the block-chord texture to an arpeggiated accompaniment. The harmony is now unmistakably diatonic, and the metre an unambiguous $9/8$. The dotted rhythm characteristic of the earlier $C-D\flat-C$ motive is also evened out.

Cantabile style, with its long association with lyricism in music, often functions in Schubert like a Ratnerian musical topic to represent the ideal of song. In the *Moment musical*, song is further rendered an object of loss and sadness not only because of its minor mode and sentimental character, but also because it is placed in a remote key. F sharp minor’s distance from the tonic prevents it from being a realistic harmonic goal within the context of A flat major; it signifies, instead, an alternative world in which lyricism can finally be given voice.

The juxtaposition of the A and B sections, then, may be read as articulating a Schillerian opposition between actuality and the ideal.²⁴ At the same time, rhetorical continuity is assured by harmonic and motivic connections between the A and B sections. Analysis reveals that Schubert arrives at F sharp minor through reinterpreting the $D\flat$ at the end of the A^1 section as $C\sharp$, the dominant of F sharp. Structural coherence is further confirmed by the melodic similarities between the beginnings of the A^1 and B^1 sections: the first four bars of the antecedent (bars 18–21) in B^1 turn out to be a variant of the neighbour-note motive that began A^1 . Moreover, as Cadwallader and Gagné rightly point out, ‘F sharp minor derives not only from the $D\flat$ neighbour note, but also from the prominence of $G\flat$ in the opening of the piece, beginning in bar 6’.²⁵ These voice-leading and motivic connections reveal that the lyricism of the B^1 section is ultimately subordinate to the world of A flat major, and cannot be sustained independently. Indeed, they ironically intensify the contrasts in affect, texture, metrical clarity and harmonic complexity between the two sections, and highlight the distance between the ideal, lyrical world and the reality of uneasy stasis in the home key.

24 The reader might wish to compare Charles Fisk’s interpretation of this juxtaposition with mine: Fisk also hears the A flat major music as ‘suffused with doubt’, reaching for some kind of ideal that it cannot quite grasp, but interprets the F sharp minor B section as the intrusion of bleak reality. The crucial difference between our readings lies in whether the A section represents exploration (Fisk) or imprisonment (me), and the B section reality (Fisk) or ideal (me).

25 *Analysis of Tonal Music*, 278–279. Cadwallader and Gagné emphasize the motivic and structural continuity between the two sections and say little about their affective and stylistic disjunction.



(a)

(b)

$I \quad V_4^4 \quad IV^6 \quad V^7$
 (descending tetrachord)

Example 2. *Moment musical* in A flat major, D780/2, bars 1–17, voice-leading sketch



Example 3 *Moment musical* in A flat major, $\text{D}780/2$, bars 18–23

Example 4 *Moment musical* in A flat major, $\text{D}780/2$, bars 36–47

The A^2 section begins with a literal restatement of A^1 , but midway through the second phrase Schubert initiates an unexpected motion to C flat major by means of a 5–6 motion over the bass (see Example 4). This journey to a remote key again sounds imaginary,²⁶ but I believe the passage has quite a different rhetorical

²⁶ Cadwallader and Gagné describe the passage as follows: ‘It would seem that Schubert, in characteristically Romantic fashion, has embarked on an excursion from the ‘reality’ of the home tonic, for this entire passage seems to suggest a dreamlike quality, like the vision of another world.’ *Analysis of Tonal Music*, 281.

(a)

3 A 1
2 A 2
3 A 3

5 b6 6

I V I V I

V⁶ I V I

(b)

40 A 3

bars 36–39= bars 1–4

4 3 2 1

“echo”

4 5 6 7 8 to coda-like
passaged

descent

Ab: I ii⁶ V⁶⁻⁵ I
[V⁶] VI⁴

C^b: I⁶ —ii⁴ [V] IV V⁶⁻⁵ V⁴⁻³(HC)

Example 5 *Moment musical* in A flat major, D780/2, section A², bars 36–55, voice-leading sketch



a)


descending tetrachord

b)

I V (div.) [V₆/5] IV [4/2] 6 V I

Example 6 *Moment musical* in A flat major, D780/2, section A³, bars 74–90, voice-leading sketch

function from the F sharp minor in the B¹ section. The earlier harmonic excursion represents an *alternative* world; here, Schubert suggests that the ‘reality of the home key’ might itself be transformed. In this passage, C[#] usurps the place of the primary tone, C^b, and the shift to a contrapuntal texture at this point offers a brief hint of the ‘learned style’, thereby suggesting an act of reflection that takes place in the present rather than nostalgia for the past. The passage leads to a cadential gesture over G^b that offers C flat major as a viable goal. The immediate repetition of this gesture, in a hushed whisper, seems to express both disbelief in and longing for this goal. The modulation to C flat major, however, remains unrealized; instead, the cadential motion over G^b is redirected back to the dominant of A flat major. An examination of the middleground voice leading also confirms this reading. As Example 5 illustrates, the tonicization of C flat major is actually parenthetical within a larger V–V6/5 motion in the home key.

In the conclusion to the section (bars 48–55), repeated echoes of a cadential gesture revisit and summarize the arguments heard earlier. The E^b pedal note, which so strongly contributed to the impression of stasis earlier in the A¹ section, also returns to punctuate these thematic echoes. This time, though, Schubert extracts the pedal tone from the homophonic texture and casts it in a new, iambic rhythm . The registral placement and rhythmic configuration of the pedal now lend it the character of a bell, a conventional musical topic signalling *Lebewohl*. The passage sounds like a coda that bids farewell to the earlier chromatic journey; we clearly expect that the piece is coming to an end. Yet after the double bar at bar 55, there is a sudden outburst of F sharp minor.

The unexpectedness of this outburst when closure seemed assured suggests that the recollection of F sharp minor is involuntary. In addition, compared to the B¹ section, the discourse here is much more passionate, almost violent: the plaintive lyricism of the gondolier’s song turns desperate. The passion, however, is not sustained. The discourse soon reverts to the *Sehnsucht* of the first B section, but with one striking difference: the phrase cadences in F sharp major instead of F sharp minor.

What are we to make of this transformation? That F sharp major (♭VII) is tonally closer to the home key than is F sharp minor (♭vii) fails to account for the rhetorical impact of this gesture. Further, while the



explanation is perfectly reasonable in an abstract sense, the change to major is not necessitated by the present voice-leading context. The interpretations by David Beach and Charles Fisk are more sympathetic. Beach suggests that A \sharp , being the major \sharp in the key of F sharp, is analogous to C \natural in the key of A flat.²⁷ The turn to the major mode here (b \sharp to \natural \sharp) may therefore be heard as a reminder of an earlier abnegation, where C \flat was corrected back to C \natural at the end of the previous section. Fisk reads the turn to major as an epiphany that illuminates a homeward path from B to A.²⁸ My reading of the final return to A is darker: if the original B theme focused on the mournful aspect of elegy, here Schubert draws upon the traditional associations of major mode with hope and happiness to evoke a sense of 'what might have been' before the alternative lyrical universe is finally relinquished.

In the last A section the discourse returns to the static world of A flat major. In bars 79–80 Schubert recalls the motion to D \flat that we heard earlier in bars 14–15, but this time he denies the possibility of modulation by redirecting the phrase to the dominant. F \sharp is now notated as G \flat , and is subsumed within a descending bass motion from tonic to dominant (A \flat –G \flat –F \flat –E \flat , bars 74–81), as Example 6 illustrates. This reference to the descending tetrachord bass, a conventional topic signifying lament, reinforces the elegiac character of the work.

The preceding analysis argues for a close correspondence between Schubert's *Moment musical* and the Schillerian elegy, interpreting the work as a lyrical discourse that finds expression through the dynamics of stylistic reference and musical construction. Like Schiller's sentimental poet, Schubert attempts to come to terms with the opposition between the ideal and actuality through the effort of reflection, resulting in a rhetorical structure for the *Moment musical* in which 'inner conflict alternates with harmony, calm alternates with motion'.²⁹ The A flat major music vacillates between stillness and motion, striving yet unable to sing; while F sharp minor represents both the ideal of song and the longing for this ideal. The ABABA form in turn projects a continual critical engagement between the ideal and actuality. If the conflict between C and D \flat constitutes the subject of the discourse, then Schubert's formal and harmonic manipulations map its rhetorical progress through stasis, departure, return, interruption, recollection and – finally – valediction. For Schiller's *Sehnsucht* is also Schubert's.

27 Private communication, February 2001.

28 Fisk, *Returning Cycles*, 280.

29 Schiller, 'Naive and Sentimental Poetry', Elias translation, 146.