

DT501: History of Music: Classic/Romantic

Dr Adrian Smith

Lecture 15: The Romantic Lied

Origins of the German Lied

- Definition: A German song in the vernacular
- Origins stretch as far back as the 15th century.
- The increasing awareness of a self-consciously German culture in the late 18th century, particularly in the writings of Gottfried von Herder (1744 –1803) prompted a surge of interest in folklore and oral culture.
- Folk song collections:
 - Herder's *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern*
 - Brentano and Arnim: *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*
- In order to capture something of its 'authentic spirit' many poets led by Goethe began to imitate the style of folk poetry.
- Two main formal types:
 - the Lyric: a short, stanza-refrain poem usually expressing personal emotions and told in the first person.
 - the Ballad: a larger narrative form which usually recounted an adventurous story or supernatural tale. Often imitated the ballads of England, Scotland, or Scandinavia.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749—1832)



Pre-Schubertian Developments



- J. F. Reichardt (1752—1814)
 - an important figure in the Second Berlin School
 - Lyric setting: *Heidenröslein*
 - Ballade setting: *Erlkönig*
 - Both poems written by Goethe.
- Ludwig van Beethoven
 - most significant contribution to the genre is the song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte* based on the poetry of Alois Jeitteles, a Jewish medical student in Vienna
 - set of six songs linked by composed transitions



Schubert

- Composed over 600 songs in his lifetime and is credited with elevating the status of the genre from amateur *Hausmusik* to a serious form in its own right.
- Major innovations:
 - fuses the verbal and musical components of song into a higher unity where it obtains a level of expressiveness that had never existed before.
 - the accompaniment takes on a new significance which extends beyond simple harmonic support. It now plays a vital role in setting the scene and actively responding to the imagery of the text.
 - full deployment of the harmonic language of early Romanticism to capture the shifting moods and emotions of the poetry.
- Songs covered in class:
 - Early: *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, *Erkönig*, *Heidenröslein*
 - Late: *Winterreise* (*Gute Nacht*, *Auf dem Flusse*, *Der Leiermann*), *Schwanengesang* (*Der Doppelgänger*)

Schumann



- The only other composer to rival Schubert's song cycle in terms of their prominence in the repertoire.
- 1840: his great year of the song as well as his marriage to Clara Schumann
- *Dichterliebe* 'Poets love', op. 48
Songs covered:
 - No. 1, *Im wunderschöne Monat Mai*
 - No. 7, *Die Rose, die Lilie, Die Taube, die Sonne*
 - No. 16, *Hör'ich das Liedchen klingen*

Essay Assignment

Selecting a 19th century composer of your own choice, discuss three significant aspects of their musical style or creative aesthetic. (c. 2000 words)

You may choose any composer covered in Semester 2 except Beethoven.

Deadline: 5pm Monday 24th April 2016. Late assignments will be subject to the usual deductions.

Prescribed Listening

Franz Schubert:

Gretchen am Spinnrade (D118)

Erlkönig (D328)

Der Doppelgänger from *Schwanengesang* (D957)

Prescribed Reading

Chapters 25 'The Romantic Generation: Song and Piano Music' in the *Norton Anthology of Western Music*

Chapter 6 in Christopher H. Gibbs: *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Richard Taruskin: *Music in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Chapters 3 and 6 deal with the lieder of Schubert and Schumann.