

Schubert's Instrumental Voice Vocality in Melodic Construction in the Late Works

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The music of Schubert's last months, written between the death of Beethoven (March 1827) and his own (November 1828), shows a definite programme of creating substantial, mainly instrumental works. This new direction in Schubert's compositional career demonstrates a desire to 'find a voice' in music, often by imbuing melodies in these late works with the vocal mastery demonstrated in Schubert's song settings. Two songs later re-used by Schubert within instrumental works exemplify this tendency: "Die Forelle" and "Der Tod und das Mädchen". In each case, little of the vocality expressed in the songs themselves is carried over into the instrumental works that use their material. However, the kind of vocality expressed in these songs is powerfully evident in several examples of melodic construction from the late instrumental works, among them the "Notturmo" D. 897 for piano trio, the slow movement of the Piano Trio in E flat D. 929, and the Fantasy for Piano Duet D. 940. The semiotic richness and complexity created by Schubert's use of vocality in these examples form the true point of connection between the expressivity of his songs and his compositional 'voice' in his last works.

Introduction: Schubert's Last Years

In the last two years of Schubert's life, as is well known, his music exhibits a marked change of direction. He produces a series of substantial works, mainly instrumental, written at phenomenal speed and constituting much of the legacy by which he is best known today. They include the Piano Trios in E flat and B flat, the F minor Fantasy for Piano Duet, the last three Piano Sonatas (in C minor, A and B flat), the String Quintet, and a number of incomplete large-scale works. Christopher Gibbs, in his biography of the composer (see 2000), makes a convincing case for the motivation of this burst of compositional en-

ergy. Gibbs paints a picture of the thirty-year old Schubert, known principally, as Gibbs puts it, as a “song and dance man” (ibid.: 11), carrying a torch in the procession at Beethoven’s funeral in March 1827. The oration by the graveside was given by Franz Grillparzer, whom Schubert knew and whose poetry he had set as lieder; it included the pregnant rhetorical question, “[h]e was an artist [...]. Who shall stand beside him?” (ibid.: 136). The following twenty months saw the composition of works that may indicate the professional, independent composer seeing a gap in the Viennese market for serious, substantial works. Those works certainly do today stand beside any of Beethoven’s, and in the end Schubert himself was, in accordance with his dying wish, laid as close to the ‘Master of Harmony’ as possible in the north-Vienna cemetery today called Schubert-Park¹.

Although this last period of Schubert’s life also brought forth some of his greatest songs, seeing the publication of Book I of *Winterreise* and the preparation of Book II (the proofs of which he corrected on his death-bed), as well as the composition of the posthumously-titled *Schwanengesang*, this rate of production, of perhaps twenty songs in a year, is far behind the annual rate of a hundred songs or more in Schubert’s teens and early twenties. It is also a notable fact that *Winterreise* is a true ‘multi-piece’², a through-composed song cycle with an implied narrative thread. It is part of a larger programme on Schubert’s part to make his name with large-scale works.

It is more than a play on words to say that in this period, Schubert was redefining his compositional ‘voice’ through the composition of instrumental works. Schubert was the composer who had more or less created the genre of the Romantic lied, in which he exploited and relied on the expressive power of the human voice to demonstrate his own depth of understanding; whether of the poetry of the great, such as Goethe and Heine, or of his friends, such as Rellstab and Schober. There is a certain self-effacement inherent in the very nature of the lied as a genre: the music is ostensibly placed at the service of the text, the latent signification of which it reveals and dramatises; the composer serves the intentions of the poet. This situation is summed up in the drawing by Moritz von Schwind, “Schubertiade at Josef von Spaun’s” (reproduced in

1 Both Beethoven and Schubert were exhumed in 1888 and reinterred in the Zentralfriedhof; the original grave monuments still stand in the Schubert-Park in Währing.

2 This inlegant but extremely useful term was coined by Jonathan Dunsby (see 1983).

Gibbs 2000: 12), in which Schubert, seated at the piano (as always in visual depictions of *Schubertiades*), is partially obscured by the expansive gesture of the singer Johann Vogl, whom he is accompanying. Much has been written about the relationship between the poet, the poetic persona within the text of the lied, the composer, and the performer who 'gives voice' to the poetic persona (or personae) and in a sense 'ventriloquises' for the poet and composer. In the plethora of 'voices', real and virtual, the individual voice of the composer can easily be lost. Indeed, I have previously argued that the semiotic complexity inherent in the lied is dramatised as a topic in what is possibly the last song written by Schubert, "Der Doppelgänger" (see Samuels 2010). The instrumental works of Schubert's last period, then, invoke issues of 'voice', 'vocality' and 'vocalisation' as they speak (perhaps sing) for the composer, as he speaks as it were *in propria persona* for once, and indeed perhaps in a sense for the first time. For the first time, that is, in the story of Schubert's relationship with his public, as this latter broadened out far beyond the circle of personal friends celebrated in pictures of *Schubertiades*. What, then, did Schubert's intimate acquaintance with the power and expressive potential of the human voice furnish him as he sings, instrumentally, for himself in these wonderful late works?

Voice, Expressivity, Subjectivity

The question of whether instrumental melody relies for its power to communicate on its resemblance to the human voice is one that has been debated in all periods. It is a fundamental question, resembling in many respects the question of whether musical expression or linguistic utterance is primary in human behaviour. (The current consensus, under the influence of evolutionary biology amongst other discourses, favours musical articulation as the primary mode of expression, regarding language as derivative, and song therefore as prior to speech in the history of human communication.) This is not the place to enter into that particular debate; but its question serves to emphasise how closely vocal expression and musical expression *per se* are bound together. The fact that the human voice is our primary means of communication means that it is easily, perhaps necessarily, invoked by any music heard as expressive.

This is a fact of which Naomi Cumming is acutely aware in her groundbreaking study *The Sonic Self* (see 2000). As a violinist herself, Cumming discusses extensively the way that ‘a singing tone’, or similar vocal metaphor, is so frequently used in relation to the instrument. The potential to imitate the human voice underlies the perception of the violin as an expressive instrument; Cumming links it to her own teacher’s insistence that she should ‘emote’ in her interpretation of violin works, using the instrument to project the persona embodied in the work.

It is important to mark the distinction between the violin’s ‘singing tone’ as a kind of imaginative extension of the performer’s body and the instrument’s potential to vocalise a virtual musical persona latent within the work. Cumming comments of her teacher:

What he sought, somehow, was an identification of his students with the sound of the violin as a voice that could be expressive of their own passion, and yet a cultivated distance that would allow them also to draw out the best in the violin’s tone, in a critical stance that recognized it as more than a projection of their subjective states. (Ibid.: 4)

One of the things Cumming emphasises is how the voice’s signification exceeds the rationality represented by the words it articulates. She bases her discussion of signification in music on the semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce, whose theory depends on a series of trichotomies in sign production. These he called, at the most general level, Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness. The best-known of these trichotomies is his description of signs as icons (Firstness, where a quality inherent in the sign is interpreted), indices (Secondness, where the sign directs the interpreter towards its object), and symbol (Thirdness, where the interpretation of the sign relies upon prior knowledge of an articulating system or convention). Linguistic meaning rests on symbolic signs, whereas musical meaning rests primarily on iconic and secondarily on indexical signs.

In the case of the voice as a signifying medium, the symbolic meaning of the words articulated does not exhaust the voice’s communicating power. The excess to the symbolic meaning includes (and goes far beyond) the signifying function of ‘tone of voice’. So Cumming remarks that “[a]nyone who is able to consciously manipulate their tone of voice [...] has displayed ‘understanding’ in their capacity to work with non-verbal signs” (ibid.: 211).

Cumming relies on this Peircean breadth of attitude to possible sign functioning to explore the fact that the physical presence of the performer is required in order for music to happen at all. In musical performance, meaning is necessarily embodied, and this influences the signifying capacity of voice as vocality. Cumming writes: "When you hear 'singing' in a violin's sound, the singing is in the sound, not somewhere else." (Ibid.: 73) In semiotic terms, for the instrumental voice to signify vocality, there must be a conceptual but not a physical separation of what Peirce would term the *representamen* (the violin timbre) and the *object* (vocality). When the violin is heard as a voice, the grounds of this 'hearing as' is the *interpretant* of the sign.

To return to Schubert, all of this shows some of the play which he exploits between the signifying potential of the human singing voice, the vocality of instrumental timbre, the articulation of musical personae within the work, and the composer's authorial voice. In the remainder of this essay, I will first consider two famous examples in which Schubert exploits the singer's voice and then reworks this in instrumental form; and then attempt to hear the manipulation of voice within three of the instrumental works of his last months.

Schubert's Use of the Singer's Voice

Although Schubert's mastery of writing for the human voice is undoubted, I do not want to be caught in the trap of claiming that his instrumental works are effectively 'songs without words' in which his melodic gifts are simply transported into a non-texted realm in order to carry the meaning of the now absent but implied affective text. Apart from anything else, Schubert shows an enormous variation in his treatment of the human voice. My two examples of instrumental transformation (from among the hundreds possible) are the two best-known songs whose music Schubert later reworks in an instrumental composition: "Die Forelle" (D. 550) and "Der Tod und das Mädchen" (D. 531). In both songs, Schubert makes great play of the contrast between the singing voice and the piano accompaniment. In "Die Forelle", the singer's line with its famous melody represents the narrator, who recounts a scene at which he claims to have been present, while the piano's (completely unsingable) leaping triplets represent the trout (see *Example 1*).

Example 1: Schubert, “Die Forelle” (D. 550), entry of the voice (bars 7–10).

It is notable that when Schubert re-uses the music of the song in the fourth movement of the Quintet D. 667 (also known as “Forellenquintett”), he does not attempt to maintain this distinction, with its polarity of the human and the non-human and the insidious suggestion that the human free will of the young fisherman is used to betray the natural freedom of the trout. The interaction of musical and poetic implication in this song is analysed at length by Lawrence Kramer, who goes on to suggest that “the narrativity of [the variations] turns out to evolve from that of the song” (1998: 81–92). While I entirely agree that there is a narrative legacy of the poem within the quintet, I would suggest that the musical persona in this movement is different in kind, as can be judged from the different role of the piano in its relation to the four other soloists. The opening of the second variation, for instance, shows the original vocal melody broken into motives played imitatively by the lower strings and the piano while the first violin has a melismatic line distantly related to the original ‘trout-like’ accompaniment (see *Example 2*). Partly through the choice of variation form for this movement, the invocation of vocality is not overt.

Example 2: Schubert, *Quintet D. 667*, fourth movement, opening of Variation II (bars 41f.).

There are some similarities between this case and the reworking of “Der Tod und das Mädchen” as the slow movement of the String Quartet D. 810. The song requires the singer to contrast two characters. The maiden, with her brief, hurried phrases, is the epitome of a character defined by her vocal presence, whereas Death sings on a series of monotones. Kramer remarks, “the singer here ‘is’ the maiden in a way she cannot ‘be’ Death” (1998: 69). The subtlety here goes beyond the contrast between the melodies of each character. The piano plays a distinct role in both halves of the setting, first injecting the agitation of panic into the maiden’s lines (see *Example 3*).

13

Voice

Ich bin noch jung, geh, Lieber! und rühre mich nicht an,

Piano

Example 3: Schubert, “Der Tod und das Mädchen” (D. 531) (bars 13–17).

The piano then becomes an embodiment of the memory of life as it accompanies Death’s monotones. Its mobile musical line reaches up in bar 32 to E flat, recalling and reharmonising the highest note of the vocal line from bar 13 as the voice sinks gradually down the arpeggio of D minor to end on a subterranean final tonic more than two octaves beneath the maiden’s highest note (see *Example 4*).

30

Voice

Sei gutes Muts! ich bin nicht wild, sollst sanft in meinen Armen schlafen!

Piano

Example 4: Schubert, “Der Tod und das Mädchen” (D. 531) (bars 30–37).

As with Schubert’s re-use of “Die Forelle”, it is notable that the semiosis of this music in the String Quartet is different from that in the song. Once again, the

movement based on the earlier song is a theme and variations, a form which in its conventional use of progressively more elaborate figuration acts against the production of vocality. The theme is a more or less direct transposition (into G minor) of the piano's introduction, which is then extended and joined to the accompaniment of the vocal persona of Death shown in *Example 4*. The vocal line, however, is completely absent from the theme, and the variations, even if they recall some of the agitation of the maiden's fearfulness, are devoid of vocal-ity, as the opening of the first variation shows (see *Example 5*).

Example 5: Schubert, String Quartet D. 810, movement 2, opening of first variation (bars 25–28).

Voice in the Late Works

It is notable that these reworkings of songs within larger instrumental forms predate Schubert's apparent programme in his last months of composing reputation-enhancing substantial works: the Quintet D. 667 dates most probably from 1819 and the Quartet D. 810 from March 1824. As just stated, there is undeniably a trace of each song within the later work that uses its material; but while this trace goes beyond the simple re-use of appealing melody, it does not constitute a semiotic representation of vocality. In the works of Schubert's last period, however, vocality is again and again the force that animates the expressive power of 'absolute' instrumental works.

“Notturmo” D. 897

This essay's first example of the creation of a musical persona through instrumental vocality in one of Schubert's late works comes from the single movement for Piano Trio entitled “Notturmo”, probably written in 1828. Schubert may have written this slow movement as part of the Trio in B flat D. 898 and then discarded it, perhaps intending to rework it as a ‘character piece’ – hence the scrawled title in the margin of the manuscript; or he may have written it intending to produce a third Piano Trio, perhaps in C minor, alongside D. 898 and the Trio in E flat (D. 929), begun in November 1827 and published in 1828.

The opening of D. 897 is scored to resemble a song setting. The piano begins with two bars of accompaniment consisting of stately arpeggiated chords marked “*pianissimo, appassionato*”, and this texture continues as the two solo string instruments enter with one of Schubert's most memorable melodies (see *Example 6*).

Violin,
Violoncello

pp

cresc. f decresc. pp decresc.

Example 6: Schubert, “Notturmo” (D. 897), opening melody (bars 1–10).

This theme demonstrates Cumming's point that the tone of the violin is often invested with vocality, an observation that here applies equally to the tone of the cello. It is not just the long held notes, which display the aspect of the string timbre closest to the human voice, but also the contrast between these sustained notes and the groups of semiquavers at the end of each bar, which imitate the inflections of speech, especially through the slight hesitation of the dotted rhythms. The signifying structures I am suggesting here are complex: there is the ‘Firstness’ of the string instruments' resemblance to the human voice, a signification that, as Cumming puts it, is “in the sound, not some-

where else” (2000: 73); in addition there is a gestural resemblance between the articulation of the melody and the rhythmic contours of spoken utterance, a ‘Secondness’ that is ‘somewhere else’ but still grounded in the human voice. But there is no ‘Thirdness’ here; what is signified is not any determinate linguistic meaning. It is, rather, vocality itself that is the semiotic object of these signs.

Piano Trio in E flat D. 929

The Piano Trio D. 929 was the centrepiece of Schubert’s *Akademie*, a concert consisting entirely of his works, held on the first anniversary of Beethoven’s death, that netted Schubert the handsome profit of 800 florins (cf. Gibbs 2000:146–148). This is a work which perhaps more than any other attempts to create a compositional voice to stand beside Beethoven’s, and it was the only one of Schubert’s works to be published outside Vienna in his lifetime (by Probst of Leipzig).

The justly famous theme with which the cello opens the slow movement is a compendium of short expressive gestures all of which invoke vocal inflections, and which overall are shaped in a large arpeggiated arc that gives the entire theme the sense of making a statement (see *Example 7*).

The musical score for the cello theme in Schubert's Piano Trio D. 929, second movement, is shown in two systems. The first system starts with a first-measure rest, followed by a melody in the bass clef. The tempo is marked 'Andante con moto' and the dynamics are 'p'. A 'rising arpeggio' is indicated by a bracket above the notes. The second system begins at measure 12, marked 'dim.', 'pp', and 'cresc.'. It features 'octave' markings and 'X' annotations. The dynamics continue with 'p' and 'pp' etc.

Example 7: Schubert, Piano Trio D. 929, second movement, cello theme at opening (bars 1–21).

The resemblance to vocal expression in the articulation of this theme is confirmed by its compositional history. It is derived, although significantly adapted, from a Swedish folk song, “Se solen sjunker” (‘The sun sets’), which was

arranged and sung by Isak Berg, a young tenor Schubert heard perform in Vienna in 1827. The story of Schubert's encounter with Berg was first recorded in 1858 by Leopold von Sonnleithner; the fact that the eventual form of the Trio's melody is so distinctively Schubert's own has led some to doubt the veracity of the account (cf. Brown 1972: 176–178). However, the resemblances between the song setting and the Trio are undeniable (cf. Newbould 1997: 369–371). Schubert takes from Berg's setting the repeated triads that open the accompaniment, and some crucial vocal phrases from the melody. The falling octaves, for instance, in the folksong set the word *farväl* ('farewell'), implying that the folksong text lies latent within Schubert's melody. It is the vocality of the theme, its potential to speak which is itself a form of speech, which enables Lawrence Kramer to describe it as uncanny, and its reappearances in the final movement of the Trio as those of a revenant, or as he puts it, "the uncanny repetition of the uncanny" (Kramer 1998: 160).

The theme in *Example 7* shares with the theme of the "Notturmo" a key vocal factor: long, sustained notes at the beginning of phrases leading to distinctive, faster motivic flourishes at the ends. In this theme, Schubert also repeatedly uses grace notes to emphasise decisive movement within the melodic contour (cf. bars 4, 8, and 12; the trills in bars 5 and 9 have something of the same function). The disruption to the rhythm that results is, again, an element of vocality within the melody.

Most of these expressive motivic cells are then recombined by Schubert in the second subject, in which the cello's opening soliloquy is transformed into a lyric duet for the two stringed instruments. The lonely solo voice of the first subject is replaced by an image of intimacy and companionship as the counterpoint of the lines creates moments of both independence and unity. *Example 8* shows how the motives labelled X and Y in *Example 7* are recombined in this second theme, along with the octave leaps and other distinctive figures.

The affective contrast between the two themes relies on the lines being heard as expressive of vocality, encapsulating subjective personae within the music as it is performed.

It is worth teasing out some of the complexity of the semiosis here. On the level of musical material, all of Peirce's categories are represented. There is ico-

Example 8: Schubert, Piano Trio D. 929, second movement, second subject (bars 41–51).

nic signification in the repetition of the motivic cells if their repetition is recognised as significant in itself; there is indexical signification in the cells' recombination, since this signifies a transformation of material, so that one version 'points back' to an earlier one; and there is symbolic signification in the formal status of these themes as contrasting first and second subjects.

But beyond this, if vocality is accepted as an interpretant of these themes, a whole set of different signifying possibilities arises. In this interpretive light, the recognition of a solo lament on the one hand and an intimate duet on the other signifies iconically through the expressive quality of the sound itself. The contrast between the two themes now points to a transformed subjective state, an instance of indexical signification different from the perception of motivic transformation noted above. And the compositional persona that 'speaks' through this vocalised melodic material is recognised through symbolic signification both complex in its working and powerful in its effect.

Fantasy in F minor D. 940

The Fantasy in F minor for Piano Duet has a romantic anecdote attached to it: it is dedicated to Princess Caroline Esterházy, whom Schubert had taught during his summer employment by the Esterházy court in 1818. Whether the Fantasy is a belated declaration of love for the Princess, as some of Schubert's

friends later claimed, is disputed; the evidence is discussed by Nicholas Rast (see 1997), although as with most biographical facts concerning Schubert, there is a frustrating lack of documentary evidence. What is not in doubt, though, is the extraordinary power encapsulated in the opening theme (see *Example 9*).

Example 9: Schubert, Fantasy D. 940 for Piano Duet, opening (bars 1–12).

It is worth comparing this theme briefly with that which opens Mozart's G minor Symphony K550 (see *Example 10*).

Example 10: Mozart, Symphony K550, first movement, opening theme (bars 1–16).

There are many similarities between the themes in *Examples 9* and *10*. Some of the motivic correspondences are annotated in *Example 10*, and no one could deny that both themes are expertly crafted and rich in subjective expression. The differences between them are even more revealing than the similarities, though, since they demonstrate the vocalicity latent in Schubert's melody but absent as an expressive point of reference in Mozart's. At the opening of the Fantasy there are no fewer than four attempts to play the C natural anacrusis to the F that opens the melodic line in bar 3; a more extreme example of musical hesitancy could not

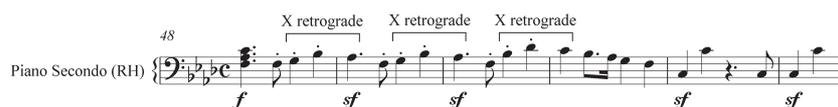
be imagined. In Mozart's theme, by contrast, the repeated D naturals in bar 2 have a cumulative effect, leading in definite manner to the upward minor sixth on the main downbeat of the phrase in bar 3. (There are close analyses of this rhythmic effect in Epstein 1979 and Lerdahl and Jackendoff 1983: 85–87.)

So why should hesitancy signal vocality? The answer to this question neatly brings out the difference between vocal expression and expression of vocality which is the theme of this essay. It is rare indeed for a song setting to represent lack of fluency in expression; the conventions of the genre of the lied rely on exactly the opposite, so that not only does the singer express the feelings of the poetic persona, but the musical accompaniment deepens and enhances this expression. However, the experience of finding it hard to express oneself in words, of being tongue-tied or lame of speech, is a universal one, and moreover one that is particularly associated with moments of intimacy or romance, when speech so often fails to match inner feeling. It is this latter experience that Schubert's melody comes close to capturing. The hesitancy of the opening notes combines with the deft variation of the distinctive three-note motif labelled X in *Example 9*, which appears in retrograde and inverted forms within the span of the twelve-bar melody. Quite literally, the same statement is made several times in slightly different ways. This description makes a point concerning the musical rhetoric of the theme, but we should not stop with it; the significance of the rhetoric is inflected distinctively by the other gestures within the melody. It is the constellation of signifying factors that makes vocality itself the semiotic object of the theme. It is this that invests the passage with its subjectivity and, I would say, its erotic power.

As in the theme of the Piano Trio, the semiosis here is many-layered. The vocality of the theme, by which it presents itself as in some sense 'voice', occurs on a level of signification beyond the one carried out through the techniques of musical construction within the theme and the deployment of the theme within the form. I would also claim that the signification of voice here resembles the representation of spoken utterance within a sung melody as found in both the theme of the "Notturmo" and the characterisation of the two protagonists in "Der Tod und das Mädchen". Perhaps the best way to describe what Schubert the instrumental composer learned from Schubert the master of vocal setting is found here, in the multiple levels of meaning exploited within the human singing voice and then rediscovered in the melodic invention of these late instrumental works. In song settings, Schubert had already produced effects where

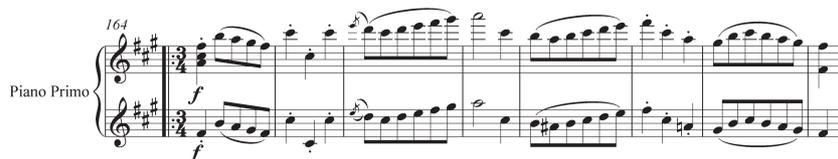
the vocal line signifies on many levels at once: as the enunciation of the text, as a component part of the musical construction, as the representation of the voices of the personae embodied in the text. It is this multiplicity of significance which endows the later instrumental works with voice.

The Fantasy is lengthy and complex, a single movement containing four sections suggesting the four movements of a large instrumental work. This opening section displays many characteristics of sonata-allegro form, including a 'second subject'. Although this theme is in the same key as the first subject, it observes sonata form conventions by presenting itself as an extreme contrast. The X motive is used as a guarantee of thematic unity, but the vocalicity of the opening melody is largely abandoned (see *Example 11*).



Example 11: Schubert, Fantasy D. 940, second subject of opening section (bars 48–53).

And there is a further complexity. Although I have been arguing that the perception of vocalicity within an instrumental melody is bound up with the recognition of a musical persona, as it were vocalising itself within the music, it is important to recognise that the musical persona does not have to be created in this way, nor indeed is it a necessary assumption that the animating persona has to be one of human subjectivity. The possibility of quite another sort of persona is demonstrated by the theme of the Scherzo section of the Fantasy. This theme is no less characterful than the themes of the opening section, but the persona (if one accepts it as such) is one of dance and not of vocalicity – no less human in its way, but a subjectivity as it were depersonalised (see *Example 12*).



Example 12: Schubert, Fantasy D. 940, theme of Scherzo section (bars 164–171).

Conclusion

The contrast in personae within the Fantasy is a demonstration that to the end Schubert was equally a composer of both 'song' and 'dance', endowed with a deep understanding of the depth of significance each carries as an expression of human consciousness. The same contrast also begins to suggest how the topic of voice and vocalisation with which this essay has been concerned connects to another topic integral to the aesthetics of nineteenth-century music, that of narrative. It is a short step from recognising the themes of the opening and scherzo sections of the Fantasy as alternating musical personae, one imbued with vocality and one imbued with dance as a topic, to hearing these as elements within a musical narrative articulated through the Fantasy as a whole.

Musical narratology is a topic that has been widely debated within recent scholarship, and there is not scope here to look in detail either at the theory that might support a narrative understanding of the Fantasy, or at the elements within the Fantasy that might participate in such an understanding. However, it is from such a narrative hearing of the work that the uncanny power of the final statement of the opening theme derives. At the conclusion of the scherzo section, the theme ends not with a coda and cadence, but with one of those passages of extreme violence with which Schubert's last works are shot through. A series of ever-louder repeated chords hammers out a sudden tonal shift from the F sharp major in which the scherzo section concludes back to the F minor of the opening (see *Example 13*).

The bars of silence – 435 and 437, the latter of which has a general pause – are two of the most affecting of the whole piece. The violence of this transition, an unsuccessful coda to the scherzo and an introduction to the final section, fills these silences with immense weight of expectation and uncertainty as to what will come next. In the narrative of the Fantasy, these are moments of aporia: what, indeed, could possibly 'come next'? The answer is given by the vocality of the opening theme, whose fragility and humanity are as evident as at the opening of the work, but now given immense pathos by the Fantasy's narrative. It is moments like these that are rare indeed in the history of musical expression, and that are the true gift of Schubert's vocal expertise to his late instrumental works.

418 *cresc.*
Piano primo
Piano secundo *p* *cresc.* *f* *cresc.*

425 *ff* *cresc.* *ff*

433 *sf* *sf* Tempo I. *p* *cresc.* *ff* etc.

Example 13: Schubert, *Fantasy D. 940*, end of scherzo section and return of opening theme (bars 418–440).

I suggested at the outset of this essay that the ambition to imbue instrumental melody with vocality is a symptom of Schubert's desire to 'find a voice' in these works of his last months. The complexity of the semiosis I have attempted to unravel in these examples demonstrates the success of Schubert's project. It is through these works that he not only speaks within his works, but truly and forever sings.

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