

Thesis of a DLA Dissertation

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## The solo and choral versions of the German Lied

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### I. The Antecedents of the Research

During my studies, since my years in high school, I was equally interested in the two fields where the singing voice – apart from the opera – gets the leading part: the song and the choir literature. The consequences were that during my studies at the Choral Conducting Department at the Liszt Ferenc Music Academy in Budapest, I also attended the Singing Faculty at Szeged. This long lasting range of parallel interest culminated in my dissertation: I was examining such compositions, which were composed – by the same artist – as solo song with piano accompaniment and also as choral piece, using the same text and musical material as well. Apart from my personal affection towards these pieces, dealing with the subject I was led to the conclusion, that the vocational literature examines the matter in question either from the solo song's point of view, or from the choir literature's, but comparing the relation of the two is very rare. The dissertation is completion of documents in Hungarian, but perhaps also from the international aspect is infrequent such detailed, comparative analysis of the two fields. My affection for the subject is intensified by the fact that I have experience on both fields as practising musician.

The centre of my essay is constituted by pieces of the Romantic song and choral literature. The book closest to the subject-matter was *Franz Schubert – Das fragmentarische Werk*<sup>1</sup> by Andrea Lindmayr-Brandl, which comprises many beneficial information, first of all in connection with the works of Schubert written by Goethe's poem – *Gesang der Geister über den Wassern*. Ernst Hilmar's *Hugo Wolf Enzyklopädie*<sup>2</sup> and Wolfgang

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<sup>1</sup> Andrea Lindmayr-Brandl: *Franz Schubert - Das fragmentarische Werk*. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> Ernst Hilmar: *Hugo Wolf Enzyklopädie*. (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 2007).

Sandberger's *Brahms Handbuch*<sup>3</sup> proved to be further important sources. The latter is a particularly valuable collection of data and obviously much specified, like – the also immeasurable – entries of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, but in one instance it supplies corrected facts as well. The mentioned books are not published in Hungarian.

Given this knowledge, following the presentation of the musicological antecedents, I analyse minutely the pieces I considered most important in case-studies.

## II. Sources

During the analysis it gave me great inspiration and proved to be very useful that among the – previously mentioned – works of Schubert the manuscripts of settings D484<sup>4</sup> and D714<sup>5</sup> can be viewed in scanned form on the homepage of the Music Collection of the Viennese Stadt- und Landesbibliothek.

The correspondence of the examined piece's composers provided further remarkably significant inquiry: from Schubert the collection of Ágnes Gádor<sup>6</sup> in Hungarian, in the original language the books edited by Valentin,<sup>7</sup> from Brahms Altmann,<sup>8</sup> Kalbeck,<sup>9</sup> Krebs,<sup>10</sup> Litzmann<sup>11</sup> from Wolf

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<sup>3</sup> Wolfgang Sandberger: *Brahms Handbuch*. (Stuttgart und Weimar: Verlage J. B. Metzler und Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Wien, Stadt- und Landesbibliothek, Musiksammlung, MH 88.

<sup>5</sup> Wien, Stadt- und Landesbibliothek, Musiksammlung, MH 15803.

<sup>6</sup> Gádor Ágnes: *Franz Schubert levelei*. (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1978).

<sup>7</sup> Valentin, Erich, ed.: *Franz Schubert Briefe, Tagebuchnotizen, Gedichte*. (Zürich: Diogenes Verlag AG, 1997).

Grasberger,<sup>12</sup> Hellmer,<sup>13</sup> Hilmar and Obermaier,<sup>14</sup> Nonvellier,<sup>15</sup> and Werner<sup>16</sup>.

The exploration of the writings published before the 20<sup>th</sup> century gave me particular experience: the music journals of Carl Friedrich Cramer – *Magazin der Musik*<sup>17</sup> from 1783 and respectively Gottfried Wilhelm Fink's – *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*<sup>18</sup> from 1826, besides the *Reminiscences*<sup>19</sup> of Michael Kelly. (Owing to the modern technology all these can be found on the homepage of *Google Books*.)

From the scholarly literature of the musicology authoritative and important reading were *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*,<sup>20</sup> edited by

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<sup>8</sup> Wilhelm Altman, ed.: *Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Karl Reintaler, Max Bruch, Hermann Deiters, Friedr. Heimsoeth, Karl Reinecke, Ernst Rudorff, Bernhard und Luise Scholz*. (Berlin, 1912), III, XVI.

<sup>9</sup> Max Kalbeck, ed.: *Johannes Brahm. Briefe an Fritz Simrock*. Briefwechsel XII. Bd. 4. (Berlin, 1919).

<sup>10</sup> Carl Krebs, ed.: *Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Philipp Spitta und Otto Dessoff*. (Berlin, 1920/22), XVI.

<sup>11</sup> Berthold Litzmann, ed.: *Clara Schumann – Johannes Brahms, Briefe*. (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1927).

<sup>12</sup> Franz Grasberger, ed.: *Briefe an Melanie Köchert*. (Tutzing, 1964).

<sup>13</sup> Edmund Hellmer, ed.: *Hugo Wolfs Briefe an Emil Kauffmann*. (Leipzig: Fischer, 1903).

<sup>14</sup> Ernst Hilmar és Walter Obermaier ed.: *Briefe an Frieda Zerny*. (Wien: Musikwissenschaftliche Verlag, 1978).

<sup>15</sup> Heinz Nonvellier, ed.: *Briefe an Heinrich Potpeschnigg*. (Stuttgart: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1923).

<sup>16</sup> Heinrich Werner, ed.: *Hugo Wolfs Briefe an Oskar Grohe*. (Berlin: Fischer, 1905).

<sup>17</sup> Carl Friedrich Cramer: *Magazin der Musik*, I./634. (Hamburg, in der Musikalischen Niederlage, 1783).

<sup>18</sup> Gottfried Wilhelm Fink: *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 28./4. (January 1826).

<sup>19</sup> Michael Kelly: *Reminiscences*. (London: Henry Colburn, 1826).

<sup>20</sup> Christopher H. Gibbs, ed.: *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*. (Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Gibbs, *Das Lied – Spiegel der Spätromantik*,<sup>21</sup> edited by Kravitt, *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*,<sup>22</sup> edited by Parsons and Schmierer's book *Die Geschichte des Liedes*.<sup>23</sup> Excellent summarizing compendium was about the choral literature the *Harenberg Chormusikführer*,<sup>24</sup> edited by Gebhard.

In different style from the preceding, but all the books of Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau connected to the subject, by all means contain a written summary of an immense experience.

### III. Method

Hugo Wolf's song and choral composition *Der Feuerreiter* written for the poem of Mörike was the starting-point. These two extremely dramatic and in its both form fascinating piece of music made me search for pieces with resembling nature and to compare their various settings.

As first act – which took up a long time – I collected those works and their scores, which suited the specifications: namely musical settings by the same composer of the very same poem and musical material in the form of a song with piano accompaniment and a choral piece, accordingly at least two or more version from the same musical theme.

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<sup>21</sup> Edward F. Kravitt.: *Das Lied – Spiegel der Spätromantik*. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag AG, 2004).

<sup>22</sup> James Parsons, ed.: *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*. (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>23</sup> Elisabeth Schmierer: *Geschichte des Liedes*. (Laaber-Verlag, 2007).

<sup>24</sup> Hans Gebhard, ed.: *Harenberg Chormusikführer*. (Dortmund: Harenberg, 2001).

Seeing that the golden age of the song literature was the Romanticism, quite soon it became clear that the composers whose works I would like to analyse as case-studies are Schubert, Brahms and the previously mentioned Wolf.

This method follows the examining system of Lindmayr-Brandl, but the comparable – in different cases different number of – pieces – using the same poem and melody – I analysed more *in extenso* as regards of the musical substance. In addition I also thought it necessary to survey the antecedents of the romantic musical compositions relating to the history of music, and in brief I mentioned Hungarian references from the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### IV. Results

In the first chapter of my dissertation I present the European preliminaries: I lay emphasis on a composition by the discussed composers each, from the earliest works connected to the thesis of Dowland to the compositions of Purcell, Linley, Monteverdi and Handel.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter the examination of the works preceding is narrowed down to the German language territory. In this section I cite an earlier translation of mine – connected to the subject – from the dictionary entries of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* dealing with the history of the chorale. Since no comparable Hungarian translation is published it can be supplementary.

In contemplation of the genre of the choral cantata, I examine a composer – comparing to the others mentioned – less known: Franz Tunder, since I found no analysis of his works in Hungarian. The introduction

relating to the history of music is closed by works of Haydn which closely related to the matter.

The main part of my dissertation can be found in the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter, the case-studies of the related works and their versions – chosen by me – of the three giants of the romantic song literature: Schubert – *Gesang der Geister über den Wassern*, Brahms – *Da unten im Tale* and *Schwesterlein*, *Schwesterlein* from the *33 Deutsche Volkslieder* WoO 33, and Wolf – *Der Feuerreiter*.

The detailed comparison of the three composer's selected works and their variations reveal completely diverse universes from one another. The different, variegated, exciting forces of the choral music are gleamed, from the seemingly simple, but extremely profound *Deutsche Volkslieder* settings of Brahms, to Schubert's extraordinarily sounding eight parts male choir, accompanied by low strings to the dramatic ballad of Wolf.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of my dissertation I sum up the pieces and their versions connected to the subject-matter found during my researches: I could not find any specification of such nature.

V. The author's list of concerts connected to the subject-matter

As choral conductor:

6 May, 2006 Városmajori Jézus Szíve Plébánia, Members of the Purcell Choir. Mendelssohn: *Jauchzet dem Herrn alle Welt, Richtete mich, Gott, Mein Gott, warum hast du mich verlassen*; Bach: *Jesu, meine Freude*

17 December, 2006 Régi Zeneakadémia, Members of the Purcell Choir. Schumann: *Romanzen und Balladen* Op. 67, 75.

25 May, 2008 Foyer of the Budavár Local Government, Members of the Purcell Choir. Schubert: *An die Sonne, Ständchen, Gondelfahrer, Des Tages Weihe*; Brahms: *Liebeslieder-Walzer*

As singer (soloist):

16 May, 1999 Óbudai Társaskör, Gábor Alszászy. Brahms: *Zigeunerlieder*

16 May, 2003 MTA Tudósklub, Ágnes Tóth. Brahms: Selection from the *49 Deutsche Volkslieder* WoO33; Schumann: *Frauenliebe und Leben*; Kodály: Selection from Kodály's *Magyar Népzene*

3 August, 2003 Kodály Festival, Kecskemét, Roland Hajdu. Selection from Kodály's *Magyar Népzene*

12 March, 2006 Foyer of the Budavár Local Government, Orsolya Fajger. Schubert: *Die Forelle, Im Frühling, Seligkeit*; Brahms: *Die Mainacht, Bei dir sind meine Gedanken, Feldeinsamkeit, Meine Liebe ist grün*; Selection from Wolf's *Italienisches Liederbuch*

9 June, 2006 Óbudai Társaskör, József Balogh. Schumann: *Frauenliebe und Leben*

19 November, 2006 Foyer of the Budavár Local Government, György Vashegyi. Haydn: *Mehrstimmige Gesänge*

27, 28 January, 2007 Vienna, Palais Niederösterreich, Malcolm Bilson. Haydn: *Mehrstimmige Gesänge*

31 October, 2008 Ceremonial Hall of the MTA, Purcell Choir, Orfeo Orchestra, György Vashegyi, Bach Cantatas BWV 22, 118, 105, 20

17 March, 2010 MUPA Bartók Hall, Purcell Choir, Orfeo Orchestra, György Vashegyi, Bach *St. John's Passion*

5 March, 2011 Ceremonial Hall of the MTA, Purcell Choir, Orfeo Orchestra, György Vashegyi, Bach Cantatas BWV 107, 94, 113, 101

As choir singer:

Since 2006 I regularly perform as a member of the Purcell Choir (www.orfeo.hu). A significant part of the programs were connected to the subject of my dissertation.