



Franz Schubert (1797–1828). One of the originators of the Romantic style, the Viennese composer Franz Schubert was also the greatest of the postclassicists. He served as a bridge between the two eras. As a composer of songs (lieds) Schubert is without a rival. He turned poems into music effortlessly. He wrote eight lieds in one day, 146 in a single year, more than 600 in his lifetime. His compositions brought the art of German songwriting to its peak.

Schubert was born in Himmelpfortgrund, near Vienna, Austria, on Jan. 31, 1797. His father was head of the parish school. Young Schubert learned to play the piano, violin, and viola, and he played the viola in the family string quartet. At 7 he became a boy soprano in the village choir. Four years later his singing won him a place in the Vienna court choir—now known as the Vienna Choir Boys—and preparatory school. There he studied with the noted Antonio Salieri. He became first violinist in the school orchestra. He began to compose regularly when he was about 13. When he was 16 his voice changed, and he had to leave the imperial school. He taught until 1818 in his father's school. Then he gave up this work and lived only for music.

Schubert was always poor. He applied twice without success for a position as an orchestral conductor. He wrote several operas in an effort to earn money, but they were never performed. In 1828 his friends arranged a benefit concert of his works. Schubert died in Vienna of typhus on Nov. 19, 1828. He was only 31.

Among Schubert's best-known lieds are "The Erl King," "The Wanderer," "The Double," "Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel," "Sylvia," and the song cycles *The Miller's Beautiful Daughter* and *The Winter Journey*. He left many incomplete works and fragments in many forms. He completed seven symphonies and other orchestral works; and numerous choral works, including seven masses. His chamber music includes 16 string quartets, and the well-known *Trout Quintet* for violin, viola, cello, double bass, and piano, and the *String Quintet in C Major*. He also wrote many piano works, including about 20 sonatas.

Die Forelle (German: "The Trout") song setting for voice and piano by Franz Schubert, composed about 1817 (with later revisions), with words by Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart. The lied's lyrics were written from the perspective of an onlooker on a riverbank taking pleasure in watching the "happy little fish" swimming in the river. Soon a fisherman arrives and, much to the onlooker's dismay, catches the trout. Here, Schubert displays his mastery of the genre by using the music to convey the viewer's emotions—first pleasure in the creature's freedom and then dismay and anger while empathizing with the dying fish.

"Gretchen am Spinnrade" (Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel), Op. 2, D 118, is a Lied composed using the text from Part One, scene 15 of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*. It was composed for soprano voice but has been transposed to accommodate other voice types. Schubert composed "Gretchen am Spinnrade" on 19 October 1814, three months before his eighteenth birthday.

The lied is in three sections, exactly reflecting the form of Goethe's poem. It opens with Gretchen at her spinning wheel, thinking of Faust and all that he had promised. The accompaniment in the right hand mimics the perpetual movement of the spinning-wheel and the left hand imitates the foot treadle. The initial key of D minor sets a longing tone as Gretchen begins to sing of her heartache. This, plus the crescendo, builds tension which releases only to be brought back to the beginning, much like the ever-circling spinning wheel. The lied modulates to F major as Gretchen starts talking of Faust. The left-hand imitation of the treadle disappears and changes to block chords. Additionally, the absence of the rhythmic, consistent treadle allows Gretchen to lose her sense of stability and reality as she swoons over Faust. This section increases tension with a faster tempo, louder dynamics, and higher pitch in the soprano and peaks at Gretchen's remembrance of Faust's kiss. Similar to the previous section, the music returns to the home key of D minor as Gretchen resumes reality and begins her spinning once more. The third part begins again, but this time Gretchen escalates in intensity much faster than the previous sections. However, the treadle-like left hand is present, keeping her rooted in

reality. Gretchen comes down from this fantasy quicker than before, as she realizes she and Faust will never be together. With a heavy heart, Gretchen comes to terms with this hard truth. The lied ends as it began: in D minor, alluding to the monotony of the spinning wheel, and how reality is always present.