

Of Songs and Cycles: A Franz Schubert Bifolio

Morten Solvik

Franz Schubert was by any standard a prolific composer. With well over six hundred lieder, scores of chamber and solo instrumental works, symphonies, music for the stage, and various vocal ensembles to his name, Schubert possessed an extraordinary capacity for musical composition. The legacy of this artistic productivity is documented in its most immediate form in the manuscripts that have survived to the present day. While we have hundreds of such manuscripts, each, with its myriad details and often unsolved problems, has a fascinating tale to tell.

The Schubert bifolio in the Moldenhauer Archives serves as a particularly interesting case in point. Written in 1815, the manuscript contains four lieder to texts by Gotthard Ludwig Kosegarten (1758-1818)¹--"Nachtgesang" (D314), "An Rosa 1" (D315), "An Rosa 2" (D316), and "Idens Schwanenlied" (D317). Neither the author nor any of these songs is well known, yet the document holds important clues to a puzzling fact about Schubert's most prolific year of song production: of the approximately 140 poems that Schubert set as lieder in 1815,² no author save Goethe was set more often than Kosegarten. Why did Schubert dedicate such concentrated effort to this obscure north-German poet?³ Manuscript evidence as well as details in the text settings and musical construction suggest that Schubert composed a cycle of twenty songs to Kosegarten texts meant to be performed as a set.

Inscriptions in the Moldenhauer bifolio also point to this conclusion. To take an example, let us look at "An Rosa 1" on folio 1 verso.

Schubert provides the title⁴ and date of composition ("19. Oct[ober] 1815") at the top as well as an author attribution with a note regarding

how many verses should be added to the strophic setting ("Kosegarten dazu 4 Strophen") after the ending of the song. The score is fairly clean,



"An Rosa 1," folio 1 verso

though not without corrections. The Schubert Thematic Catalog refers to this document and hundreds more like it as an "erste Niederschrift,"⁵ a term that roughly translates to "first written version." While many such manuscripts may represent first attempts by Schubert to write full versions of a work, many others were no doubt preceded by some form of sketch.

Musical details are vital to an understanding of Schubert's method of composition, yet those inscriptions on this page that do *not* stem from the composer are just as important in piecing together the Kosegarten cycle. Note the marginal annotations to the left, right, and underneath the score as well as various numberings and markings in the corners and to the left of the title. Virtually all of these stem from a certain Johann Wolf, a minor composer who lived in Vienna towards the latter half of the nineteenth century. Around 1860, Wolf was given the task of cataloging Schubert documents stored in the archives of the Viennese publisher C. A. Spina and identifying works that might be suitable for publication.⁶ It is clear from Wolf's inscriptions that he sorted through dozens, perhaps hundreds, of manuscripts, ordering them as far as possible by date of composition and other criteria. He also cross-indexed each song with other songs bearing a similar title, noting the text author, their location in his files and, if applicable, details regarding their publication and first performance. This is the information scribbled in

the right and left margins of this and many other Schubert manuscripts.⁷

At the bottom of the page Wolf provided detailed information regarding any other manuscript versions of the same lied, noting type of manuscript, catalog number, and any significant features:

"Eine Copie (respect. Reinschrift) von Fr. Schuberts Hand vide N- 19 Abth[eilung] IV; diese Copie hat aber einige Veränderungen u[nd] ist in der Begleitung vollstimiger gehalten"

["A copy (or rather fair copy) in Fr. Schubert's hand see No. 19 Group IV; this copy has, however, several changes and has a fuller texture in the accompaniment"]

Wolf alerts us to a second version of the song in fair copy that varies slightly from the present version. This is noteworthy, since the Thematic Catalog of Schubert's works does not recognize two distinct versions of this lied. The document in question, identified by Wolf's siglum: "Nr.19, Group IV," is in private possession today and thus not available for scholarly investigation. We can, however, examine the published version of the lied in the first complete edition of Schubert's works⁸ to confirm that the document in the Moldenhauer Archives distinguishes itself from the later fair copy in the writing for the left hand and above all in the final measures.

Probably the most useful information provided by these marginal notes can be found in the lower left-hand corner in black ink: namely, Wolf's manuscript numbering. The number given here, "30," is part of a continuous sequence that can be found on every page of the bifolio. "Nachtgesang" on folio 1r is numbered 29, with each following lied numbered in sequential order through 32 ("Idens Schwanenlied"). We know from the marginal note referring to "An Rosa 2" that the present set is part of a sequence known collectively as "Group II." By numbering these pages and listing further manuscripts that relate to each of the pieces at hand, Wolf leads us to consider the significant question of how

the manuscript fits into some larger pattern. To approach this issue we must look at Kosegarten settings not included in the bifolio.

Schubert's manuscript datings tell us that the twenty Kosegarten settings of 1815 were written in two concentrated bouts of creative inspiration: thirteen in June and July and seven all notated on the same day in October. The Moldenhauer bifolio constitutes the middle section of what was once a continuous autograph containing all seven of these later settings. Shortly thereafter, Schubert prepared a fair copy of all twenty lieder in what may also have been a continuous autograph: each of the lieder in what Wolf designated "Group IV" is a Kosegarten setting; what is more, Wolf numbered these fair copies as a group consecutively from "1" to "20," implying a purposeful gathering of these songs. Recall that "An Rosa 1" was number 19 in the series known as "Group IV." Note, too, that elsewhere Wolf refers to "Group IV" as a collection of songs that belonged to Franz Schubert's brother, Ferdinand. Thus, the manuscript evidence suggests that Schubert compiled an extensive series of Kosegarten songs in 1815. To figure out why the composer did this, we should look at the songs in the order suggested by Wolf's numbering. Most remarkable about these fair copies is their arrangement and the musical affinities that emerge between them when grouped together. Rather than copy out the songs in the order of their composition, Schubert placed them in a new sequence; what is more, the resulting succession of song texts reveals strongly narrative tendencies. The story that emerges centers on a male protagonist whose amorous attentions flit from one woman to the next. The feelings of the adventurer --Wilhelm-- and two of his broken-hearted mistresses--Ida and Luisa--are presented in short strophic songs set within the typical Romantic conceits of longing and bliss. Wilhelm stands at the center of the collection with twelve settings presented from his perspective. His songs, excepting the last two, are all characterized by boundless enthusiasm and passionate, though fleeting, devotion. The women (Ida--6 settings, Luisa--2) present a very different character. Hesitant and pessimistic, their soliloquies bespeak angst, self-sacrifice, even tragic pathos.

Kosegarten Fair Copies Arranged by Wolf Catalog Number ⁹

Wolf No.:	D. Title
IV/...	
1	240 Huldigung
2	241 Alles um Liebe

3	228 Von Ida
4	229 Die Erscheinung
5	219 Das Finden
6	227 Idens Nachtgesang
7	313 Die Sterne
8	314 Nachtgesang
9	230 Die Täuschung
[10]	231 Das Sehnen
11	238 Die Mondnacht
12	237 Abends unter der Linde
13	236 Das Abendrot [SSB]
14	233 Geist der Liebe
15	221 Der Abend
16	317 Idens Schwanenlied
17	318 Schwangesang
18	319 Luisens Antwort
19	315 An Rosa 1
20	316 An Rosa 2

This contrast between male and female points of view surfaces repeatedly in the characters' reactions to nature: to take but one example, Wilhelm finds solace in the night, while Ida cannot help feeling dire foreboding of the future when surrounded by darkness. Finally, one of the settings ("Abendrot") includes all three characters singing a trio in praise of the evening and the sunset, a time of day that recurs throughout the set reflecting the transition from day to night, from hope to despair. In the end, the fickle Wilhelm does not escape this fate either, for in the last song we find him pining for yet another woman (Rosa) who is no longer his--and mourning over her death.

Many aspects of the individual songs support the sense of cohesion implied by this dramatic continuity. To take but one musical example, three pivotal songs sung by Wilhelm all bear an undeniable likeness.

Alles das Liebe aus B-13

Die Trübsung aus 4-10

Gott in der Liebe aus B-12

Melodic Similarity in Three Wilhelm Songs

There are also numerous examples of consecutive songs linked by a common motive or texture. "Idens Schwanenlied," for instance, clearly points to the following "Schwangesang." Note the repeated Cs in the voice line of "Idens Schwanenlied," also repeated in the middle voice of the piano right hand in "Schwangesang." Likewise, the descending motion in the piano from A-flat to E-natural up to F in "Idens Schwanenlied" appears again in the left hand opening of "Schwangesang."

Musical Similarly Linking Consecutive Songs

Opening measures of "Idens Schwanenlied", Opening measures of "Schwangesang"

Especially important in this context is the diminished chord resolving to F Minor (at "Nebelflor" and "offen," respectively), a sonority not only in both of the passages above but also a prominent feature of the closing of "Idens Schwanenlied." This sonority takes on even greater prominence in the song as preserved in the Moldenhauer bifolio (on folio 2v), where the music ends rather abruptly on oscillating chords. Astonishingly, this version of the song has never been published; it appears here for the first time. Much more can be said about the codecological, musical, and textual elements that point to a unified conception of Schubert's Kosegarten lieder.¹⁰ That Schubert had already constructed a large-scale, cyclical collection of songs in 1815 will no doubt cause us to rethink certain aspects of his development as a composer and, indeed, the development of the genre itself. Thus, the Moldenhauer bifolio is a part of a much larger complex. An examination of its contents demonstrates what riches of information a musical manuscript may contain and what implications they may have for our understanding of composers and their works.

den 19. Oct. 1815.

Traurig.

Sings.

Pianos

forte

lie - de.

Kosegarten.

First version of "Idens Schwanenlied," first publication

¹ The theologian and writer Kosegarten lived in Pomerania, a region at that time controlled by Sweden. Probably the best biography on Kosegarten to this day is H. Franck, *Gotthard Ludwig Kosegarten. Ein Lebensbild* (Halle: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1887).

² Schubert also wrote abundantly in other genres that year; his output included four stage works--*Fernando* (D220, completed in July), *Der vierjährige Posten* (D190, completed August), *Claudine von Villa Bella* (D239, probably completed in the summer or early fall), *Die Freunde von Salamanka* (D326, completed December)--two symphonies (Nos. 2 and 3), dozens of piano pieces (including the sonatas in E Major, D157 and C Major, D279), and numerous choral compositions (including the Magnificat in C, D486, and the Masses in G, D167 and in B-flat, D324).

³ Schubert's 20 Kosegarten settings of 1815 are short strophic works varying in length between 7 and 31 measures and averaging 18 measures in length. Though included in this figure, one of the Kosegarten settings ("Das Abendrot" D236) is, properly speaking, not a lied but a vocal trio; Schubert set only one further Kosegarten text in his life, "An die untergehende Sonne" D457, completed in May 1817. Schubert probably took all of these poems from the collection *L. T. Kosegarten's Poesieen. Neueste Auflage*, 3 vols. (Berlin: n.p., 1803); note that Kosegarten also used the name "Ludwig Theobul."

⁴ The number "1" was added to the title later.

⁵ Otto Erich Deutsch, *Franz Schubert. Thematisches Verzeichnis seiner Werke in chronologischer Folge*, rev. ed. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1978), p. 189.

⁶ It should be noted that Wolf worked in archives collected by Anton Diabelli. By the time Diabelli died in 1858, his firm, Diabelli & Co., had been passed on to C. A. Spina (in 1852). See the introduction to Alexander Weinmann, *Verlagsverzeichnis Anton Diabelli & Co (1824 bis 1840)* (Vienna: L. Krenn, 1985).

⁷ In this particular case, Wolf also noted the author of the text at the top of the page underneath the title. Though "Kosegarten" appears in Schubert's hand in the lower right system, the reference at the top made identification more convenient when sorting such autographs.

⁸ *Franz Schuberts Werke. Kritisch durchgesehene Gesamtausgabe*, ser. 20, vol. 3 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1895), p. 145.

⁹ Note that the lower left-hand corner of A:Wst 6429 is water damaged, precisely where the number "10" might otherwise be found; the recto leaf is clearly numbered "9." The numbers "14" and "15" have been confirmed in a

personal communication by the current owner of the RS for D233 and 221; the author wishes to extend his gratitude for the owner's friendly cooperation in this matter.

¹⁰ A more thorough discussion of the points discussed here can be found in "Lieder im geselligen Spiel--Schuberts neu entdeckter Kosegarten-Zyklus von 1815" in *Österreichische Musik-Zeitschrift* 53/1 (January 1997), 319.