

The Still Point of the Turning World: The Sense of the Now in Schubert's Late Instrumental Music

O ponto fixo do mundo em mudança: o sentido do agora na música instrumental tardia de Schubert

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Abstract: Schubert's late instrumental music evokes a distinctive time-sense which not only expands the expressive potential of stylistic norms, but also invites deeper reflections on the relationship between the self and the world through his multilayered construction of temporal consciousness. The sense of now, towards which past and future gravitate, is particularly salient. In this article, I examine the formal, harmonic, topical processes through which Schubert constructs a vivid sense of the now in two movements from his late period, D. 956/ii and D. 959/ii, through the lens of phenomenology, drawing on conceptions of time as formulated by Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. I aim to bridge two fields together: first, the general theory of musical time, as has been delineated by Kramer, Barry and Clifton, which examines concepts such as linearity/nonlinearity, silence and stasis; and second, the scholarship on late Schubert, with key conceptual tools such as landscape, late style, lyricism, songfulness and interiority, formulated in the works of Adorno, Burnham, Mak and Taylor. I will also provide the cultural context of musical time in the early-nineteenth century, focusing on the wider paradigm shift from form-as-architecture to form-as-process in music. My analysis reflects a phenomenological orientation within a hermeneutic, narrative mode. I highlight the often disorienting subjective experience of time as evoked by moments that deflect from norms and expectations, specifically the tension between the transient nature of music and the sense of permanence evoked through Schubert's cyclic, paratactic procedures. I then show how Schubert's construal of temporal consciousness acquires a historiographical import and resonates with the broader intellectual world by framing it in terms of Schlegel's three stages of history. I conclude by promoting phenomenological approaches in analysing Schubert's works and nineteenth-century music at large.

Keywords: Schubert's late instrumental music. Musical aesthetics in the nineteenth century. Temporality of music. Phenomenology of music.



1. Prelude

Sviatoslav Richter's interpretation of Schubert's late G major sonata, D. 894 is among the most contentious of any work by the composer. The first movement, played in a 1978 Moscow concert, clocks in at 26', almost 10' longer than 17' time frame adopted by pianists such as Brendel, Lupu and Sokolov. Richter turns the opening chords into an epitome of musical stillness. The feathery tonic chords linger on, reaching into the depths of the instrument and stretching our aural concentration. The ghostly echoes weave an uncanny stasis, barely disrupted by the dominant ripples. The musette-like bass, narrow mezzo-soprano melodic range (A–D), closed-off harmonic progression, and the key of G major—all of which markers of the pastoral (Hatten 2004, p. 53–67)—obtain a new intensity as time dilates far beyond the breadth of time-frame of a sonata first subject, to an extent that the music acquires an eerie primal quality. As the teleological impetus of sonata form dissolves in the languid give-and-take of the hymnal theme, so does our customary sense of formal and temporal equilibrium. Enveloped in the musical present, the listener is caught in a paradox between the timelessness of inaction and the transience of sonority. Richter's radical, revelatory statement casts light on the masterfully controlled temporal elasticity in Schubert's late instrumental music. In doing so it raises complex questions regarding perception, subjectivity, cultural and philosophical construction of time and temporalities of Classical and Romantic forms. In exploring the temporality of Schubert's late music, the article aims to explore two interrelated questions: 1) by what technical means does Schubert construct the musical present in a way that makes one feel its presence so vividly? 2) what can the temporal world of late Schubert tell us about the cultural milieu of the early nineteenth century and the human perception of time in general?

2. Theoretical Overview

This article investigates Schubert's late instrumental music through the lens of temporality as formulated in phenomenological thought, where the present is conceived as the focal point of time-perception. My approach will combine the experiential and musico-technical orientation of the first question with the cultural and philosophical orientation of the second. I see these two as inextricably linked as musical composition is a creative and communicative

process as draws on and replenishes the symbolic arsenal of wider culture. A survey of the vast literature on Schubert's late music reveals an unceasing fascination with issues of memory, mortality, subjectivity and consciousness.¹ From its earliest reception by Schumann (Schulze, ed. 1965, p. 177–9), to the enigma of Adorno's "truth-characters" (1928, p. 71) and the tragic-heroism embodied in the Wanderer persona (Kinderman 2016), the repertoire has attracted intensely personal reflections. It invites a language steeped in visual metaphors, several of which, such as landscape and circular journey,² have become fruitful mainstays in Schubert scholarship. Writers have acknowledged that Schubert's late music transcends ordinary auditory experience: it has been variously characterised as "luxurious" (Korstvedt 2016, p. 418), "extraordinary, even preternatural" (Burnham 2016, p. 41), and involving a "near-mystical communion with numinous musical symbols" (Hatten 2016, p. 91). Indeed, writings on this repertoire seem like exercises in stretching analytical language to its metaphorical extremes. Schubert's late music, then, is at its core paradigm-defeating.

Few scholars have framed the repertoire explicitly around issues of temporality.³ There is, admittedly, considerable conceptual challenge in incorporating time into an analytical framework. Time is a freely associative multiplex: accounts of time have been offered in contexts as disparate as physics, social and cultural history, evolutionary psychology, anthropology and philosophy,⁴ with resonances and cross-currents in between. Time conditions human life and moulds our perception of the world on a basic level. Schubert's late music invites consideration in terms of temporal concepts for four reasons: 1) the repertoire's idiosyncratic time-sense, reflected especially in its vivid "presentness", which Richter made pronounced in his interpretation of D. 894/i;

¹ For classic examples, see Adorno (2005); Burnham (2000) and (2014); Fisk (2000); Frisch 2000; Gingerich (2000); Mak (2008); Taylor (2016).

² Both concepts were first proposed in Adorno 1928, later developed in Burnham (2005) and Kinderman (1997).

³ A notable exception is Chung (2018), in which Chung explores the expressive implications of Schubert's repetition strategies and cyclic organisation of form through phenomenological concepts.

⁴ For a socio-historical account, see Whitrow 1989; for a recent anthology on philosophical issues surrounding time, see Phillips (2017).

2) the paradigm shift from form-based to process-based compositional thinking which occurred during the early nineteenth century (Schmalfeldt 2013), provoking a reassessment of the nature of form as the scaffolding of musical time; 3) Schubert's acute awareness of his impending death from 1824, adding a autobiographical, hermeneutic layer to the broadening of time-sense that characterised his late style; and 4) the repertoire's focus on subjectivity and memory, which are not only central issues in Schubert's time but also in the temporal phenomenology of the early twentieth century.

The notion of "late style" itself wrestles with several layers of temporality. While one can always be accused of revisionism in discussing the late style of an artist, this article avoids any straightforward linkage between music and biography and takes advantage of the vast pool of cultural and aesthetic associations attached to the phrase "late style". The richness of the concept is investigated in Edward Said's seminal work on this subject (2006), which gives the notion of artistic lateness a strong bearing on criticism. My notion of late Schubert refers to the portion of his music that projects a poignant, valedictory aura rarely found in his youthful works. The existential engagement of this repertoire grows acute towards the composer's final months. Several scholars have taken as the beginning of this new style the Quartettsatz, D. 703 of 1820, commonly viewed as a stylistic watershed in Schubert's output.⁵ My main focus will be on two slow movements written in Schubert's final months: the second movement from the String Quintet in C major, D. 956, and the second movement from the Piano Sonata in A major, D. 959. The question of whether the otherworldly character of this body of works mirrored Schubert's awareness of his fatal illness or was the result of the natural maturing of his compositional style will not be central to the arguments of this dissertation.⁶ Instead attention will be devoted to ways in which existential contemplation, a staple of late style, is projected through the musical panorama of the repertoire. I will focus on instrumental music, so that musical events can take the spotlight in the absence of the additional hermeneutic layer brought in by words. This approach offers clearer insights into the distinctive attributes of a "musical" time.

⁵ See, for example, Barry (2014).

⁶ For an extended discussion on this issue, see Bodley (2005).

This article contains three main sections. The first, establishing the critical framework on which the analysis is based, delineates the concepts of musical time and especially the notion of the now. It introduces two key methodological tools: ideas about temporality in the phenomenological tradition, and Being and Becoming, a conceptual dialectic influential across the arts in Schubert's time. This dual approach offers a vocabulary to interpret Schubert's nuanced time-sense and situate the repertoire within the cultural and stylistic context of the early nineteenth century. These concepts inform the subsequent section, in which I explore facets of Schubertian present by examining two slow movements from the end of Schubert's career, D. 956/ii and D. 959/ii. The analysis is divided into three subsections, each of which explores an aspect of Schubertian present, corresponding respectively to the A, B and A' sections of the movements. In the third section I situate the temporal characteristics in Schubert's late music in the cultural and stylistic milieu of the early nineteenth century and explore the historiographical import of Schubert's time-sense in light of Friedrich Schlegel's tripartite view of history. In light of the layering of Schubertian temporality, I conclude by reflecting on the ways in which a temporal orientation enriches current scholarship on late Schubert.

2.1. The Phenomenology of the Now: Husserl's Time-Diagram and Merleau-Ponty's Fountain

A comprehensive theory of time seems out of human grasp. Newtonian time that "flows equably without relation to anything external" (Newton 1753, in Burrows 2007, p. 20) has long been abolished by Einstein's theory of special relativity, which disproves time as a fixed entity independent of space. In humanistic studies, time has also been notoriously hard to define. As Thomas Clifton has pointed out, while a clock seems to be a symbol that time can be somehow isolated from the living experience, it only creates the *illusion* of time as an even, unidirectional continuity; it is a temporal phenomena rather than time itself (Clifton 1984, p. 51). Robert Adlington notes that Western thinkers of the last two centuries have conceived of time as acting as a "constraint upon subjectivity" (Adlington 2003, p. 297). In this view, not only does time come into existence through a perceiving subject, human consciousness is also delineated through and delimited by its grasp of time.

This symbiotic relationship between time and subjectivity is extensively explored in twentieth-century phenomenology, which aims to “examin[e] the structures of consciousness from within” and engage with concrete subjective experience rather metaphysical abstractions (Moran 2000, p. xiii). In particular, it has made problems concerning time-consciousness central to its enquiry. Merleau-Ponty, for instance, has proclaimed that it is the experiencing subject that gives meaning to time-concepts such as yesterday and tomorrow, and more generally, the idea of succession (Clifton 1984, p. 81). Husserl gives temporality foundational status in his philosophy and maintains that “all constitution, of every type and level of existence, is a temporalizing” (Husserl 1970, p. 169). Time and temporality in the philosophical context are usually distinguished by the presence or absence of the perceiver: the former denotes scientific “clocktime” and the latter concerns lived experience of time. Phenomenology is chiefly concerned with the latter. I now give a brief account of Husserl’s model of time-consciousness as illustrated by his time-diagram (Fig. 1), complemented by Merleau-Ponty’s metaphor of time as a fountain. Of vital concern to the two philosophers is the following question: is time a “staccato” of disconnected now-points or a continuous flow?—is it a “string of pearls” or a “river” (Hoy 2012, p. 52)?

Husserl captures the paradox between the ephemerality of the now and the ability to perceive time as unified experience in his time-diagram (Fig. 1). This model of temporality consists of primal impression, protention and retention (ibid., p. 51). It is perhaps unsurprising that melody is Husserl’s “favorite example of a temporal object” (ibid.). At the moment when a note is heard, the now is already no-more: it recedes immediately into the past and becomes “retained” in what Husserl calls primary memory, while at the same time effecting protention, “the intentional anticipation” reaching into the immediate future of the note (ibid.). As one note succeeds another, growing into a melody, there is a new primal impression that corresponds to each new now, contributing to the perception of the melody all-at-once (*Zugleich*). The perceptual unity is what renders time enduring (ibid., p. 53). The now is conceived by Husserl as the “original or ground form” aligning temporal positions of past, present and future (Brough, in Philips, p. 85). An ontological tension underlies Husserl’s concept of the now: it is both a single point in the past-present-future continuum as well its sole constituent, “a continuous moment of individuation” (Husserl 1991, p. 68).

Husserl's thesis of intentionality postulates that conscious experiences (*Erlebnisse*) are always directed towards an object (Moran 2000, p. 16). In other words, contra Kant, there is no "pure intuition" of time, and the perceiving act is coterminous with the perceived object (Brough 2017, p. 83). This primacy of the now is reinforced by the intentional model. Husserl further distinguishes between retention and recollection, the latter being a conscious act of memorising: a re-presentation of the present (Clarke 2011, p. 5). Retention is thus a prerequisite for recollection, as is protention for anticipation, the future-oriented counterpart of recollection. The lines dividing past, present and future are always provisional. As primal impressions are continually replaced by new ones, temporality evokes a unity or wholeness through consciousness while maintaining its oneness at any given point (Hoy 2012, p. xvi). The emphasis given on retention reflects a past-oriented model of temporality, suggesting Husserl's view of the present as a "form(ation) of memory" (Clarke 2011, p. 5).

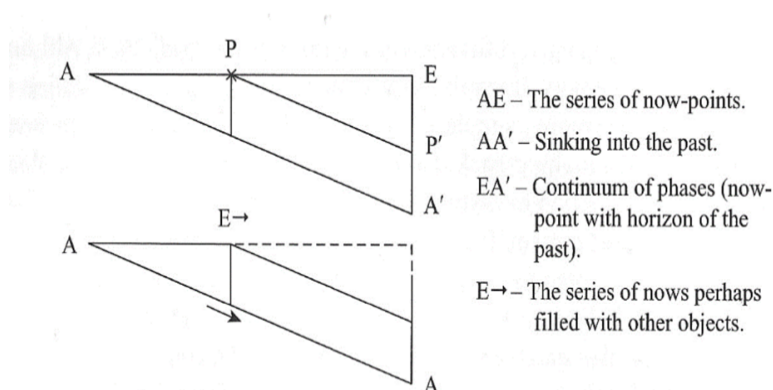


Figure 1: Husserl's time-diagram (Husserl 1991, p. 29).

Merleau-Ponty builds his temporal phenomenology on Husserl's and shares the latter's privileging of the now among time-concepts (ibid., p. 69). His idea of temporality is encapsulated in the image of the fountain, reflected in his remark that "we are the upsurge of time" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, p. 429). The fountain at once captures the unceasing resurgence of the now and presents an "image of eternity" (Hoy 2012, p. 66). This visualisation of temporality is in tension with the schematic diagrams of Husserl that suggests time as a steady, uniform flow of nows. In addition, Merleau-Ponty proposes the concept *anticipatory retrospection*, which "projects the future backward into the past in the very act of looking forward to what is coming next" (ibid., p. 72), extending the

complexity of the process of protention and the degree of interpenetration between past, present and future. Merleau-Ponty goes further than Husserl in grounding the self as the basis of temporality when he declares that "I am myself time, a time which 'abides' and does not 'flow' or 'change'". It is clear that both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty reject the notion of time as "a string of pearls", or a succession of nows. For them the human sense of time emerges a posteriori through a dynamic process involving the constant overlapping of retention and protention. As the now is the only "time" that we have direct experiential access to, temporality consists of the actual now, past nows and future nows, and consciousness is what glues them into a cohesive whole.

2.2. Schubert, Being and Becoming and Phenomenology

What Husserl and Merleau-Ponty have in common is the view that temporality is more about perception of relations than it is an ontology independent of a perceiving subject. Music is particularly apt for a phenomenological inquiry, as shown by Husserl's propensity for using melody as an example to supplement ideas. Not only is it the "temporal art par excellence" (Brelet 1949, p. 25), music, like time, has also been defined as "a certain reciprocal relation established between a person, his behavior, and [an]...object" (ibid., p. 10). Its "finer-tuned" (Burrows 2007, p. 70–1) quality makes it ideal for a focused investigation of the workings of temporality. There is also an ambiguity in that music both constitutes the content of temporal succession and embodies succession itself: in Husserlian terms, it is at the same time "the intending temporal experience and its correlate, the intended temporal object" (Brough 2017, p. 83).

Music contains "a dense fabric of concurrent tensions" that is uniquely capable of modelling various aspects of life (Langer 1957, p. 111–3). Its "combination of implicative choices and their definitive realisation" (Barry 1990, p. 95), for example, mirrors human free will and models Husserl's idea of protention. Its process of linking up successive events into a larger conceptual unity through consciousness exemplifies Husserlian retention. In addition, temporality assumed vital importance in the culture of nineteenth-century Europe, where many of the ideas now understood to be "modern", crucially, memory, subjectivity and (sub)consciousness, took shape. A dominant cultural

ideal was to “synthesise art and life so that the world became ‘romanticized’” (Beiser 2006, p. 9) and music was thought to have a “privileged ability to invoke the human experience of time as well as the art form which most directly stylise[s]...our temporal relation to the world” (Taylor 2016, p. 7).

Schubert’s lifespan coincides with a crucial turning point in music history, one in which the sonata formula that dominated the eighteenth century gradually lost its hold, while no new paradigm fully materialised. In this state of flux, the Classical style was subject to a full-scale overhaul. Three factors distinguish the emergent style from the previous one: 1) the general tendency to broaden (in length, tonal and formal scope) and diversify (in generic, topical and emotional ambit); 2) the priority given to the self as embodied in the composer, seen as an agent of originality; and 3) the cross-fertilisation between art forms, resulting particularly in the significance of an extramusical programme, often of a literary nature, in defining musical meaning. The tendency to liberate music from merely fulfilling a functional role or adhering to a fixed set of rules vastly extended the flexibility of musical time.

Schubert’s music occupies a special place in the process of reorienting Classical towards Romantic temporality. The shift into Romantic forms can be best contextualised through idea of Becoming (*Werden*) that is central to the German Idealist tradition (Schmalfeldt 2017, p. 11). While the Classical form is marked by discrete sections, each of which have pre-assigned functions, formal schemata became gradually replaced by process as a compositional principle from the late eighteenth century onwards (*ibid.*, p. 116). This is a procedure whereby music unfolds organically from a small motivic cell and is always in the emergent process of Becoming. While time-perception in much of Classical music is held in check by largely predictable formal stages, the new form evinces more continuous time-sense that orders particularly proactive listening. The music of middle-period Beethoven can be seen the paradigm of musical Becoming. Schubert, in his late years, largely avoids the organic method of motivic development. He forged a style that drew inspiration from both Classical

and processual models, leading to a new formal principle and temporal mode best characterised by Being, the dialectical opposite of Becoming.⁷

The seminal artistic manifestation of Being is the lyric, a dominant poetic form in nineteenth-century Europe (Murray 2004, p. 700), which depicts scenes, situations and emotions of a self-contained, introspective nature (Mak 2006, p. 279). It evokes a static temporal frame that curbs narrative progress and, by extension, the teleological time of Becoming. It represents an aesthetics of the present since the now is framed as the predominant temporal mode. Being is in many ways a harbinger of the Husserlian temporal model, which, when applied to music, posits that the current musical moment is the only one we have direct access to, and our sense of coherence and form is predicated on acts of retaining and recalling former nows and projecting horizon onto future ones.

3. Case Studies

In his late years, Schubert pushes a mode of temporality that evokes the multiple layers of the now to the forefront of the musical fabric via the saturating of primal impression. He achieves this in three main ways: 1) by extending the perceived duration of the now, often maintaining the intensity with which we focus on the ephemeral now throughout a lengthy passage that stems from a single intention; 2) by introducing passages of unmediated violence that overthrow the established temporal order; and 3) by evoking what Burnham calls the “sound of the past-in-the-present” (Burnham 2000, p. 658), and in light of Husserl, treating the present as a form(ation) of memory: the idea that the present not only evokes memory, but is also built upon the act of memorising.

3.1. The Present as Extended Now

Husserl has observed the “subjectively variable” nature of the present, asserting that it is a construct that can be “dilated for as long as it is possible to hold a temporal object in a single “nexus of apprehension” stemming from an

⁷ An exception would be the first movement of the A Minor Sonata, D. 845, which largely emulates Beethoven's teleological time. There is, however, still a sense in which a Schubertian impulse towards stasis and thematic discreteness impedes the themes from fragmenting into motivic cues.

intentional meaning (Clarke 2011, p. 16). In his final years, Schubert was occupied by the idea of prolonging the musical present towards a state of stasis. He explores the potential for acoustic and rhetorical continuity of various instruments and their combinations, using sonority as a emotive as well as temporal device.⁸ The ABA' form, with its minimal formal necessities, proves ideal for Schubert to experiment with musical time as an extended now, manifest in lengthy passages that exist for their own sake. This results in not a neutral, vacant kind of stasis, but one which abounds in “disenchantment and pleasure”, whose coexistence is a staple of late style (Korstvedt 2016, p. 425).

The opening section of the slow movement from his String Quintet, D. 956 exemplifies the way in which Schubert sustains a pleasure-charged stasis. Written in Schubert's “dream-key” of E major (Wollenberg 2011, p. 162),⁹ the opening bars of the Adagio evoke a soothing spaciousness, with its broad 12/8 metre, long-held legato in the inner strings, gentle lilt of the cello, and tentative march figures which shimmer on top of the texture, all in tranquil pianissimo (Ex. 1). Schubert employs a limited harmonic and rhythmic palette, casting the three-note rising motif in different registers but retaining its original shape in each instance and avoiding V – I progressions. This enacts an engrossing play of tonal colours while making the music lodge securely in the present tense. The eternal and the fleeting are encapsulated in the contrasting note lengths of the outer and inner parts, which to Scott Burnham represent two “temporal extremes of subjectivity: time as a concentrated moment, and time as an endless horizon” (Burnham 2014, p. 156). This captures the basic property of the now: it is at once a “slice” of the temporal stream and the linchpin through which we temporalise the world. In other words, it is both a point on the horizon of consciousness and the focal point of consciousness (Clifton 1984, p. 97). Burnham contextualises Schubert's temporal model in the tradition of Romantic paintings, reading it as a pastoral allegory of the synthesis of human and nature (Burnham 2014, p. 156). The pictorial imagination inspired by the near-stasis of such passages reinforces the link between Schubert's late music and the idea of Being. Jonathan Kramer similarly remarks on the twofold nature of stasis when he defines it as “a single

⁸ On sonority in late Schubert, see Black (2016).

⁹ See also Kramer (1988, p. 376): “According to Freud, both dreams and the unconscious are timeless”.

present stretched out into an enormous duration, a potentially infinite 'now' that nonetheless feels like an instant" (Kramer 1988, p. 55). This evokes the sense of 'vertical time', a temporal mode which highlights involvement of the listening subject and sonic luxuriance (a speciality of strings), in distinction to horizontal time, which involves active recall and anchors a goal-directed discourse (ibid., p. 56).¹⁰ The opening of the Adagio, through its painting-like materiality, fixates us in the now that is oblivious to its own past or future.



Example 1: D. 956/ii (bb. 1-9).

As the opening section unfolds, however, it projects a surfeit of stillness that would gradually become unsettling rather than calming. The opening invites an auditory mode geared almost exclusively towards primal impression and which makes redundant the acts of recollection or anticipation integral to appreciating the processual model of music. Eventually, however, we grow aware of our attentiveness to the present and its unnatural longevity. The paratactic harmonic syntax (shifting in thirds, patched together rather than following a purposeful progression) and the meandering melody become increasingly hard to sustain as conscious recollection and anticipation begin to dismantle the state of absorption. The self-fulfilling now begins to dissipate as

¹⁰ This differentiation can be mapped onto that between the paratactic and the hypotactic in linguistics. See Mak, 2006 for an account of Schubert's paratactic strategies in sonata form examined through the lens of the Romantic lyric.

the finitude of perception takes over the sense of the eternal that the opening evokes. In this light, the present appears to us as an agent that embodies the fragile, internalising nature of temporality, as a sort of lucid dream in which one is fully conscious of its illusoriness.¹¹ As long as it lasts, we are invited to suspend the protentional or forward-looking mode of listening, and retreat to and revel in the sound qua sound. The pleasure is, however, precariously sustained and as will be clear in the middle section, carries a premonition of its own demise.

Schubert's strategy of extending the now could result in a sense of imprisonment as much as it could perpetuate a pleasurable present. The opening section of the Andantino of the A major sonata, D. 959 arrests the listener's attention in a starkly different sense. The slow tempo and the key of F# minor echo the middle movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto in A major, K. 488, one of his most overtly tragic movements. Opening with a skeletal texture outlining the tonic and dominant (sternly opposing, in contrast to Quintet movement's fluid third-motions) and with sigh figure as the binding motif, the music paints a bleak winterscape and evokes the trudging Wanderer of *Winterreise* (Ex. 2).¹² The haunting quality permeates motivic, textural, phrasal, and harmonic levels: the wide-spaced LH and hidden sigh gestures in the bass pattern (F#-E#, mirroring the RH); the lack of organic growth that sustains the wintry image; the sigh motif thinly decorated with a turn in b. 3 and the addition of an inner voice in b. 6 only reinforcing the pathos of sigh; and the RH's repeated revisits to the supertonic G# (e.g., b. 2, b. 4, b. 8), thwarting any sense of progress. The listener is repeatedly driven back to the starting point, reliving the same present over and over again. The sense of claustrophobia is built into the very shape of the phrase, as reflected in the 4 + 4 symmetrical structure of the theme. The phrasal arrangement models Classical periodicity while eschewing its goal-directedness. This evokes a listening mode that divides time into a series of "blocks" of now, putting the listener on edge with relentless metronomic regularity, in contrast to the free-floating joy (although later proven to be deceptive) evoked through the discursive opening of D. 956/ii. The theme recurs multiple times, with tentative

¹¹ Kramer (1988, p. 56): "The way in which the music compels rapt attention while submerging the usual conscious process of listening is closely akin to immersion in the vivid presentness of a dream".

¹² Schubert has been persistently identified with the image of a wanderer, the "antithesis of the hero, the commander, the domineering authority". See Korstvedt (2016, p. 417–8).

phrasal extensions and new harmonic layers. These restylings, however, further reveal the theme's immobile kernel: in b. 29, for example, the incoming soprano voice, usually a sign of renewal, is only an affirmation of the overlap between tonic and dominant harmonies; the main voice, now in the middle, is literally trapped between the outer voices.



Example 2: D. 959/ii (bb. 1–42).

Throughout the A section of the Andantino, we hear a narrative voice trapped in a seemingly endless loop reminiscent of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence, the haunting notion that every small detail of one's life must return to one "innumerable times" (Nietzsche 2001, p. 194), a temporality that "posits time as an endless infinity that is neither cyclic nor linear" (Hoy 2012, p. 84). The sense of infinity evoked here is in stark contrast to that established in the opening of D. 956/ii, which embodies the sublime in its Edenic union of nature and humanity. Here each new snapshot of now reaffirms and burdens the previous one, through which the sense of imprisonment is entrenched. In light of the Wanderer image it strongly evokes, the opening section of the Andantino stages the now as prisoned subjectivity in a never-ending exile.

3.2. The Present under Crisis

Both slow movements feature a middle section that evokes a temporal world puzzlingly incongruent in relation to that of the framing sections. These middle sections contain some of the most disorienting passages in Schubert's oeuvre, as the composer probes into expressive extremes, testing the physical constraints of the instruments, blending stylistic language with the psychological and effecting high levels of temporal disjunction. On the whole, Husserl seems to regard memory and consciousness as continuous and experience as "flow[ing] along in a single stream" (Hoy 2012, p. 110). The astonishing middle sections of the two movements challenge this uniform conception of temporal experience and problematise the smooth, "fixed" process of retention and protention.

In the Adagio, the timeless dream-world gently reaches its resolution in b. 28. Without any warning, however, the tonic E creeps up a semitone into Neapolitan territory, and an ominous-sounding trill crescendos through the strings in unison (Ex. 3). The trill gesture has become something of an *idée fixe* for Schubert in his late years. Rather than functioning decoratively, it often takes on a significant hermeneutic and structural role. The gesture has a gritty, buzzing sonority that channels a chord of anxiety and a momentary suspension of formal time, as it evokes a space of ambiguity that is neither "here" nor "there". The liminal nature of the trill enables Schubert to use it as a symbol of the uncanny and the subversive. Examples include the opening accretion of trills that opens the Quartettsatz, D. 703 and the tremolo underlay that answers the opening series of cadential gestures of his D. 877/i. Apropos the Adagio of the Quintet, Burnham describes this unexpectedly brusque gesture as "more like an astonishing transformation than a willed process of development" (Burnham 2014, p. 159). The fatalistic overtone is enhanced when he identifies the trill as a "memento mori" that poses as "a kind of inert, almost impersonal reminder" of the discrepancy between reality and dream (ibid.). The trill's disruption of the temporal surface is further reflected, for example, in its being used sequentially to effect turbulent key changes: bb. 35–36 to E \flat major, 36–37 to F major, and 37–38 to the C-minor climax (Ex. 4).



Example 3: D. 956/ii, trill leading up to the F-minor section (b. 28).

Example 4: D. 956/ii, sequential use of the trill (bb. 35–38).

From a temporal standpoint, the trill signifies the stepping out of the *Gemütlichkeit* of the temporal world inhabited by chamber music, a finessed “dream”, into the more erratic time-frame of reality. The juxtaposition of distantly-related major and minor modes occurs frequently in Schubert’s songs.

Major and minor keys are troped respectively as dream and reality.¹³ This is supported by the poetic narrative in Schubert's cyclically structured songs, such as "*Frühlingstraum*" from *Winterreise*. In this song, the protagonist dreams about "bright flowers that blossom in May" and "green meadows" (Youens 2013, p. 209) before waking up to a bleak reality. Schubert uses major and minor modes to symbolise "the polarity between memory and the present moment, imagination and outward perception, happy past and tragic present" (ibid., p. 214). By transplanting this device from song to an instrumental plane, Schubert reveals his essentially poetic approach to composition, as the shift from E major to F minor coincides with a shift in affective and temporal landscape. The affinity between the music and the idea of Being, which lyric poetry exemplifies, is strengthened. The phenomenological perspective adds a further degree of nuance: the distinction between the present and the memory is not clear as the present is the "ground form" out of which the past is built.

The sense of now in the B section can be viewed in relation to Adorno's "intensive time", where time is "contracted and subjugated" through a ruthless drive, which characterises Beethoven's middle-period works (Adorno 1998, p. 228). Despite the mayhem on rhythmic, textual and harmonic levels, the B section does not cohere to the temporal world of middle-period Beethoven: there is no clear sense of progress or "character-growth". The music here works 'against' time as it did in the beginning, perhaps more so as here it is compelled to intermesh with the past: the syncopated rhythm in the accompaniment here is derived from the violin's march-figure in the opening, and the nervous semiquaver triplets are a sped-up version of the triple-quavers prominent in the shape of A-section themes. The juxtaposition of various rhythmic groupings (syncopated quavers against triplet semiquavers, underneath a recitative-like melody) reflects a nonlinear, fragmented temporal surface in stark contrast to the expansive time-frame of the A section. All these musical features put under pressure straightforward conceptions of the now and of time as a smooth continuum.

¹³ See Kinderman (1996), where he cites Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht: "in Schubert's songs, major and minor are often juxtaposed with one another as the illusory world of the beautiful, bright dreams to the real world of banal, wretched, naked reality" (p. 65).

The shift in temporal landscape in the Andantino is more gradual as the music undergoes several stages of topical transformation. The effect, however, is a greater sense of temporal disjunction than in D. 956/ii. The sigh figure which permeates the A section is elaborated into a recitative with an accelerating impulse, featuring semiquaver triplets to demisemiquavers (Ex. 5). A more expansive theatrical time is enacted (bb. 69–84) that brings out the ephemeral property of music, as here the writing highlights music as ongoing creative activity rather than as fixed entity. The new improvisatory mode of expression directs our attention to the now as a self-generating process, evoking Merleau-Ponty's self-replenishing image of fountain. The chromaticism of the RH line, diminished seventh harmony, disconcerting trills (b. 87) evoke free fantasia style. These unsettling elements build up to a paroxysm of etude-like figurations (bb. 101–106 and bb. 116–121), fortissimo block chords (bb. 109–112) and virtuosic octaves (bb. 117–122), overturning the usual hiatal role of a sonata slow movement.¹⁴ Psychological poles are represented by the unusually wide registral space (G#2 – E7)¹⁵ that the music traverses (Ex. 7). The streak of violence distorts, even collapses the order of time established in the A section, again challenging the unity and continuity of experience foregrounded in Husserl's intentional model of time. The improvisatory modality blurs the distinction between music as event and music as work (Kania 2017).¹⁶ In particular, it challenges the well-established work status of the sonata, as the violent passages seek to transcend the bounds of notation as well as the orderly temporal frame entailed by formal schemata.

¹⁴ The slow movement of Mozart's Sonata in A minor, K. 310 can be seen as a precursor to the polarised expressive world of such movements by Schubert in having a violent middle section that contrasts with the tranquil outer sections.

¹⁵ In Scientific Pitch Notation.

¹⁶ More precisely, between "the specific temporal properties of the musical event one experiences directly and the determinable temporal properties of a work for performance" (Kania 2017, p. 357).

Example 5: D. 959/ii (bb. 73–86).

Example 6: D. 959/ii, G#2 in b. 111 and E7 in b. 114 (bb. 108–116).

The disjointedness of temporal experience culminates in the confrontation between fortissimo block chords and the quiet recitative material of bb. 69–70 following the outburst (bb. 122–130). Two divergent temporal worlds are positioned side-by-side: the chordal hammerings punctuate individual nows in a metronomic temporal stream while the chromatic lines seize upon the slippery nature of the now. The brief gaps between the chords and the lines provide a new temporal ingredient through which to view previous music, where there are no virtually breaks. The sounds are now as though driven over the surface of silence, which becomes audible precisely through its surrounding music. Edward Pearsall points out that music broadens the semantic connotations of silence and that silence calls for more interpretive engagement from the listener than any other type of musical event (Pearsall 2006, p. 43). The quieter recitative component coaxes the C#-minor block chords to D major, C# major and then to a bracing G# major seventh (bb. 143–144). The RH's hesitant descent along the new C# major scale is again punctuated by Schubert's "sounding silences", pregnant pauses that evoke the future-oriented or protentional now as it is filled with suspense (Youens 2013, p. 211).



Example 7: D. 959/ii, juxtaposition of two temporal and affective extremes, bb. 124–125.

3.3. The Past in the Present

In Schubert's late music, resolutions are never straightforward and repetitions carry the burden of the past. The cyclic structure of the two slow movements provides an ideal background for unmediated contrasts that models the temporal essence of lyric poetry and the anti-teleological nature of Being. The returns of the two opening sections evoke a similar condition of memory, in which the present is poised between a past self-interpreted through memory and

the immediate, generative now (Hatten 2006),¹⁷ between *Vorstellung* and *Darstellung*.¹⁸ In phenomenological thought, memory is paradoxical in that it both concerns with things past and that it is a “present feeling” (James apud Hoy 2012, p. 101). Husserl describes memory as the retention of retention or “secondary memory”: the reflexivity is what distinguishes it from primary impression (Hoy 2012, p. 102). The asymmetry between the act of memorising (actual now) and the content of memory (an accumulation of past nows) can be framed in terms of Merleau-Ponty’s idea of anticipatory retrospection. The ternary form commands a particular mode of listening, one that sets the listener up with an anticipation for the original state to be restored. This protentional mode of listening is entangled with the recollection of the past, in these cases, the traumatic middle section. In both movements, Schubert’s conclusion lies precariously between restoration and loss, and inspires notions that go beyond formal stipulations by capturing the complex and not always coherent workings of memory and time-perception in general.

In the Quintet movement, the idyllic past returns at a heavy cost, as the painful memory of the turbulent middle section leaves its indelible mark. In the return of the opening theme, the inner strings retain the static long notes that evoke a sense of eternity in the opening section, while the outer strings spin out tentative recitative lines that engage in a somewhat jaded dialogue (Ex. 8). The decentricity of the texture suggests a stream-of-consciousness mode of time, revealing a fractured persona, in contrast to the sharply focused stasis of the opening. The first violin, imitating a defunct soprano, has a pleading intonation akin to that of the *Beklemmt* section of the Cavatina from Beethoven’s String Quartet in B \flat , Op. 130. The theme in its original form does return in b. 78, this time with pizzicato flourishes in the first violin that create a harp sonority, a touch of playfulness that kindles hope for restoration.

¹⁷ According to Hatten, the linguistic analogy would be the “present, experienced time of a speech act in which one employs the future or past tense” (Hatten 2006, p. 63).

¹⁸ The “inner process of imagination and creation” through which we engage with the past and the “external motion of exhibition and depiction” through which we engage with the present (Kramer 2008, p. 163).



Example 8: D. 956/ii, varied return of the opening theme (bb. 64–66).

This hope is thwarted as the sinister trill that connected the A and B sections creeps up in the first violin soon after the perfect cadence, marring the already-reached bliss (b. 91). In this movement, the trill is a memory cue of the demolition of A section's idyllic landscape, just as now it threatens its re-establishment. The outcome, however, can be viewed as a hard-won reconciliation between the two opposing forces. This time the violin alone plays the trill, weakening the rhetorical power it previously had when all five strings played in unison. It seems that now the trill is reassigned to its usual Classical role of cadential preparation. The F-minor chord melts into a C seventh, which then leads to E in second inversion, preparing for the final unassuming cadence, a longed-for simplicity. The hymnal voicing and the affective leap from F minor to E major in the last three bars round up the movement with a note of redemption (Ex. 9), echoing the sense of eternity first evoked through the expansive temporal horizon of the opening.



Example 9: Ending of D. 956/ii, bb. 91–94.

Memory is at work at every juncture of the returning section. Through demonstrating that past can never be recovered intact, Schubert invokes the fundamental process of time-perception, that we shape the present in view of the past and vice versa. Each now is filtered through the lens of what happened before, as reality is created and regulated through continuous reinterpretation. We comment on and modify aspects of the past, seeking to amend the conflicting elements that jeopardise our identity, just as the nightmarish trill has to resolve into quiet resignation. In the end the trill takes on a double function as both the disruptive element foreboding peril and its own antidote. It is the constant negotiation between past, present and future that defines the human experience of time. In the Adagio, Schubert reminds us not only of the inevitable pastness of the present, the notion that the present is only a construct through which we navigate ourselves in the shadow of the past, but also of its fragility. The fact that the trill functions as the only mediation between the two worlds is a warning that an ostensibly immutable present can be easily torn down with a simple gesture.

In the Andantino, retrospection is a much more daunting task. After one of Schubert's most extreme streaks of violence,¹⁹ the transition becomes the only ground for temporal respite. Schubert selects the most assuaging trope, the lullaby, to divert from the movement's monochromatic soundscape. The affirmation of the tonic and subdominant projects a tonal security never achieved before,²⁰ while the melody's mellow tenor range, the orderly LH patterns and the bright C# major tonality relieve the ears from the highly charged recitative passage that precedes (Ex. 10). This temporal oasis evokes the "dream" trope common in lyric poetry of the time. The F#-minor theme returns with a trotting rhythm, resuming the temporal world of the beginning with its orderly succession of nows in earnest. It retains the broad nocturne-style accompaniment from the transition, over which a new soprano voice joins in with a dramatic flair

¹⁹ Contrary to the usual image of Schubert as a composer disposed towards dulcet lyricism, Wollenberg proposes that "Schubert's violent streak is the one that above all seems to be at the heart of his individual way of writing" (Wollenberg 2016, p. 161).

²⁰ In exploring Schubert's "ingenious deployment of the functional potential of the subdominant" in D. 958/ii, Burnham remarks that while the dominant forms the "polar counterpart" of the tonic, the subdominant shares the tonic pitch with it and seems "contained" within it. This property of the subdominant allows Schubert to use it as a tonal/harmonic emblem of interiority (Burnham 2000, p. 659).

echoing the tragic underlay of the movement. The nervous triplets in bb. 159–60, 162, 167–8, 170 renew an insistence on the dominant, while the inverted turn in bb. 163–4 is linked motivically to the turn figure in b. 3 (Ex. 11). The new soprano functions like the little commentarial voice that crops up every now and then when past events reenact themselves through memory. The way in which registral expansion enhances the pathetic is felt in moments like b. 187, where major motivic elements of triplet rhythm, descending minor scale, sigh gesture are fused together and stretched over to the left hand in the next bar.



Example 10: D. 959/ii (bb. 147–151).



Example 11: D. 959/ii (bb. 159–161).

In its final incarnation, the F#-minor theme veers unexpectedly to a major key (bb. 189–92). The A folds inwards to G \sharp , enacting a cadential movement to D major in b. 191. The unexpected standstill on the second beats of bb. 189–90, combined with pianissimo dynamics, induces a sudden watchfulness that pins one firmly down in the present. For a brief moment, akin to the experience evoked by the lullaby episode, we seem to step into a tenseless new realm, free of the metrical barricades of the opening theme. After the fleeting overstepping, the theme finds its way back to haunt us, as again F# minor takes central stage in b. 194. The weary trotting is now ceased, replaced by bare octaves in the tonic, a gesture of defeat or death (Ex. 12). It parallels the ending of the Quintet movement, which also evokes a sense of returning to original simplicity, although the latter strikes a more idealistic tone with the transfiguration of the trill and the “dream” quality of E major.



Example 12: Ending of D. 959/ii (bb. 196–202).

Burnham maintains that memory both expresses and constitutes one's identity, and the act of recollection is not only a creative but also an existential one (Burnham 2000, p. 655). The existential pathos is etched into the consummation of the Andantino. The final impersonal octaves free the music from its "stylistic moorings" and the troubling *Fremdling* identity, becoming "almost wholly a space for intra-subjective reflection" (Pearsall 2006, p. 43). In a lyric-poetic light, the Wanderer draws his last breath (or takes his last step) in the final bar. The dissolution of the octaves, as they fall over the edge of the musico-temporal frame, leaves us with a silence that constitutes, according to Thomas Clifton, not only the metaphor of death but its essence (Clifton 1976, p. 176). In retrospect, the chronic looping that characterises the Andantino's framing sections has a paralysing effect that evinces a "provisional denial of death" (Burrows 2007, p. 102). As the sound withdraws and we step out of the temporal flow forged by the nexus of personae (the composer, the performer, the archetypal Wanderer), the state of deep absorption that this music inspires is deflected back on our own subjectivity. Music becomes a meta-model of reality. The returning section of the Andantino, read through phenomenological lens, is an example not only of the past structuring the present in fundamental ways, but also of the mirroring between art and life.

4. Schubertian Now in Context

From the preceding analysis, three features stand out as central to Schubert's conception of the present in his late instrumental music: 1) the tendency to dwell on the present for an extended length of time, which resists the self-renewing impulse of middle-period Beethoven, and liberates the music from regimented Classical formulae; 2) abrupt introduction of violent passages, characterised by rhythmic and metrical intricacy, topical disjointedness and

virtuosic outbursts, which evokes Merleau-Ponty's image of time as an "upsurge" and challenge temporality as a smooth procession of nows; and 3) a propensity for a past-oriented present by using repetition, cyclic organisation, paratactic construction and other nonlinear strategies as agents of memory in returning sections. These features all call for a deep level of aural, emotive and conceptual involvement on the listener's part, resonating with Husserl's thesis that consciousness lies beneath all temporal operations.

As Su Yin Mak has elucidated, the affective landscape of the repertoire overlaps with the valorised qualities of the lyric such as interiority, memory, dream and disenchantment (Mak 2006, p. 263–306). Schubert's aesthetic outlook was likely influenced by his circle of friends, many of whom were lyric poets.²¹ In his late instrumental music, Schubert translates poetic lyricism into long stretches of musical stasis, recurring cantabile passages and unmediated scene shifts, attributing instrumental music the status of song as "idealized abstraction" (ibid., p. 264). By synthesising the agency of memory into cyclic form and adopting lyric poetry's tendency to crystallise the fleeting now, Schubert creates a temporal framework that is essentially poetic in conception. Schubert sees formal protocols as only guidelines for him to grapple with the intricacies of temporal experience. Rather than attempting to pigeonhole the forms of late Schubert as either "process" or "architecture", "Romantic" or "Classical", it seems more fruitful to see them as models of time-perception. Schubert's formal aesthetics resonates with Schiller's conception of poetry as a means to engage critically with the present; by transplanting lyric strategies onto a musical platform, Schubert achieves something similar to Schiller in rejuvenating established forms with a temporality geared towards the now (Schiller, paraphrased in ibid., p. 294).

In many ways Schubert's conception of the present in his late works was influenced by the early Romantics (*Frühromantiker*) (Nivala 2017, p. 5; Feurzeig 2014). Schubert's musical rendition of Being acquires a historiographical sense through Friedrich Schlegel's tripartite conception of history (Nivala 2017, p. 8). According to Asko Nivala's reading, the first is the "golden" past age, where

²¹ Ibid., p. 291: "There is documentary evidence that members of the Schubert circle shared the idealist conception of lyricism." On Schubert's circle, see Gingerich (2014) and Gramit (1997).

society is at its most unified and harmonious, of which Ancient Greece was thought of as the perfect embodiment;²² the second is the “corrupt” present age, where divisions and conflicts abound; and the third is conceived as a messianic age which returns to the golden age, in which a “future Kingdom of God” is established (ibid.). An important common ground for the ensuing comparison is that both Schubert and Schlegel reject the Hegelian outlook of history, that is, history as a purposeful march towards the condition of perfection (Little 2017). Schlegel conceives the process of history as a cyclic one, where the current age is considered an obstacle to overcome and the past and future ages are ideals towards which the society should strive. In keeping with the cultural climate, Schlegel conceives naturalness and simplicity as desirable qualities and a departure from them, especially in the increasingly industrial, urban way of life of the nineteenth century, as a sign of spiritual and moral deterioration (Nivala 2017, p. 10).

This tripartite framework of history provides a fruitful background against which Schubert’s conception of the present can be understood on a broader cultural-historical plane. A cursory look at the affective scheme of the late movements reveals numerous parallels to this model of history: the pristine first themes of, for example, D. 894/i and D. 956/ii represent the past Golden Age, in their stylistic conservatism, strong pastoral allusion and sense of timelessness; the contrasting middle stage maps onto the present age, in its more overtly Romantic, processual style, compressed time-frame and often uncurbed clashes between diverse strands of textual and harmonic forces; the returning section often brings forth a sense of renewal and enhancement to the opening theme, representing a retrieval of original innocence. The preceding analysis of the two slow movements has shown, however, that the temporal and affective modes in the cyclical sections are much more multilayered. Through the often unreliable agent of memory, aporetic emotive states coexist, extremes of temporality intermesh and contradictions abound: the pleasure-charged opening of D. 956/ii

²² The nineteenth century witnessed a revival of interest in the culture of Ancient Greece. The interest was directed particularly towards Athens, which Schlegel saw as the “full flowering of Western civilisation”. (ibid., p. 11) Schubert also participated in this large-scale cultural nostalgia, as evinced in his song *Die Götter Griechenlands*, D. 677. It is also worthy noting the etymology of the word “lyric”. As Mak has pointed out, it is derived “from the Greek *lyra*”, whose “primordial form is song” (Mak 2006, p. 287).

very soon becomes ominous, the violent outbursts of in the B section of D. 959/ii are poised by a soothing lullaby, the trill of D. 959/ii both demolishes and restores time. Schubert's late music ultimately evades straightforward categorisation.

6. Conclusion

The preceding analysis of D. 956/ii and D. 959/ii has shown the essentially phenomenological orientation of Schubert's late music. The analytical framework proposed engages more directly with time and focuses on the now as the bedrock of Schubert's musical vision in his late years. In doing so, recurring analytical tropes in studies of late Schubert, such as memory, consciousness and nostalgia gain a new coherence under the phenomenological thesis that time is subjectivity. As shown in 2.1, Husserl highlights the self as the source of all temporal happenings. His rejection of time as an objective, independent entity empowers music to "create, alter, distort, or even destroy time itself" (Kramer 1988, p. 5), which Schubert's late music poignantly demonstrates. Schubert's intuitive grasp of the potentialities of temporal manipulation leads him to renovate existing musical language, imbuing existing forms with an intensity of expression that demands a new level of sensitivity from the listener and interpretive engagement from the analyst. One can plausibly argue that the world Schubert evokes through his stylistic innovations foreruns notions such as stream of consciousness, distinct mental categories and modern concerns of the contemporary and the psychological (*ibid.*, p. 17).

Ultimately, Schubert's time-sense astounds us because it wrestles with its own contradictions. It exemplifies the tension within musical Romanticism, as it negotiates between formal constraints of musical expression and formless flow of thought and memory, the lyrical and the dramatic, the new (Romantic) and the old (Classical), timelessness and transience, time as line and as time as circle. These dialectical forces reflect Schubert's "constant striving for a system" and his "self-critical awareness that it is unattainable" as his creative career nears its end (Beiser 2006, p. 4). Schubert's late instrumental music, interpreted through a phenomenological lens, kindles a new kind of freedom about how music creates identity, how music can be talked about, how music portrays and constructs reality through intense contemplation and the workings of time itself. This article, then, is a call for a wider application of phenomenological approaches

and a more direct grappling with time in interpreting not just Schubert's music, but nineteenth-century music at large, in which issues of time, consciousness, memory, nostalgia and selfhood are key expressive concerns.

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