

University of Denver

Digital Commons @ DU

---

Musicology and Ethnomusicology: Student  
Scholarship

Musicology and Ethnomusicology

---

11-2020

## Schubert's Compositional Development Reflected in Winterreise: Annotated Bibliography

Reid Wolch

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.du.edu/musicology\\_student](https://digitalcommons.du.edu/musicology_student)



Part of the [Composition Commons](#), and the [Musicology Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#).

---

## Schubert's Compositional Development Reflected in Winterreise: Annotated Bibliography

---

## Schubert's Compositional Development Reflected in Winterreise Annotated Bibliography

Schubert's arc as a composer is one of continual evolution. After recovering from syphilis temporarily, Schubert began to write some of his most profound and influential later works. Among these influential pieces is the song cycle, *Winterreise*, or winter's journey. The song cycle reflects the development of the protagonist wandering character, and an undercurrent of his impending death. This paper aims to answer the question of how the compositional themes of *Winterreise* are reflected in his later instrumental works. This paper will explore the diverse scholarship on *Winterreise*'s meaning and attempt to make new connections building upon the existing research.

Fisk, Charles. *Returning Cycles: Contexts for the Interpretation of Schubert's Impromptus and Last Sonatas*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

Fisk's scholarship is central to understanding how themes present in *Winterreise* are reflected in Schubert's later instrumental works. Fisk encourages his readers to experience Schubert's journey through his in-depth overview of Schubert's life and compositional career. Fisk returns to focus on Schubert's personal identification with the 'Wanderer,' character. Fisk builds upon Alfred Brendel's existing scholarship on Schubert's last three sonatas. Fisk goes beyond Brendel's motivic analysis to look at features such as tonal plan, harmonic language, and atmosphere. Through his analysis he argues that these sonatas and other instrumental works share a direct tie to thematic and motivic material found in *Winterreise*.

Youens, Susan. *Retracing A Winter's Journey: Schubert's Winterreise*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991.

Youens' analysis of the text from *Winterreise* is structured to gain understanding outside of a musical context. She provides background on the poet Wilhelm Müller and describes the genesis of the poems used in *Winterreise*. Youens identifies thematic unity within the cycle using recurring imagery and metaphors found in the text. She describes the entire cycle as an inward voyage of solitude and death. This opinion runs in contrast to Suurpää and Fisk, whose view of the song cycle is one of an evolving character.

Lauri, Suurpää. *Death in Winterreise: Musico-Poetic Associations in Schubert's Song Cycle*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014.

Suurpää's scholarship explores how the theme of death is manifested in the poetry and music of *Winterreise*. Suurpää undergoes this analysis by first examining the music and text separately, before attempting to understand the larger meaning of the work. Suurpää cites Youens scholarship and points out areas of disagreements, most notably, Youens conclusions regarding the cycle's unity. Suurpää argues that the cycle exists as two distinct parts based on their separate publications. He argues further that the cycle's character evolves from one of a grieving and sorrowful character, to one that looks upon death.

Dempsey, Mariclare. "Hearing Voices: The Narrative Function of the Piano Voice in Schubert's *Winterreise*." Master's thesis, College of Bowling Green, 2020.

Mariclare Dempsey focuses her thesis exclusively on the interplay between the voice and piano in *Winterreise*. With her analysis, she provides insightful interpretation guidance specific to the roles the piano and voice play as the cycle evolves. This research is an elaboration of the work done by Youens and Suurpää, serving to illuminate the cycle's inner character or meaning. Her opinions of the evolution of the cycle are akin to Fisk's and Suurpää's understanding of this piece.

Alfred. "Schubert's Last Three Piano Sonatas." *RSA Journal* 137, no. 5395 (June, 1989): 401-411. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41374923>.

Alfred Brendel's scholarship is essential to understanding how Schubert's last piano sonatas relate to one another. Scholars Susan Wollenberg, William Kinderman, and Charles Fisk cite Brendel's research and use it as a building block from which to form new connections. In this article, Brendel discusses the thematic unity that exists between the last three Schubert's sonatas. He identifies strong motivic links that permeate through all three sonatas and argues for their compositional unity.

Wollenberg, Susan. "From Song to Instrumental Style." In *Rethinking Schubert*, edited by Lorraine Byrne Bodley and Julian Horton, 61-78. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2016.

Susan Wollenburg investigates Schubert's stylistic "footprints," that are present in all of his instrumental works. Wollenburg examines a wide range of compositions, most notably the G Major Quartet, D 887, and the F Minor Fantasy, D 940. Wollenburg's article exclusively examines links that exist between instrumental works, but references *Winterreise* when referring to Schubert's fixation with the 'Wanderer' protagonist. Wollenburg focuses on understanding the late sonatas unification through stylistic intention, which is a broader goal than that of Alfred Brendel, who sought out motivic unity exclusively. Wollenburg's approach is far more focused towards understanding broad stylistic tendencies that can be observed as a common feature.

Kinderman, William. "Wandering Archetypes in Schubert's Instrumental Music." *19th-Century Music* 21, no. 2 (Autumn, 1997): 208-222. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/746898>.

Kinderman's article bridges the gap between the highly philosophized commentary on society and Schubert's continued embodiment of the 'Wanderer,' protagonist. Kinderman believes this character is reflected in *Winterreise* but can be identified in Schubert's instrumental works. Kinderman begins by discussing the relationship between increasing technological innovation and a sense of existential isolation. He then aptly describes how the poet Wilhelm Müller was influenced by this dilemma and argues *Winterreise* embodies this existential crisis. Kinderman then describes how *Winterreise* is embodied in the Schubert Sonata in A Major and the String Quintet in C Major by identifying similar passages or themes that harken back to the form and mood of *Winterreise*. To identify motivic unity, Kinderman builds upon Brendel's research.

Dunsby, Jonathan. "Adorno's Image of Schubert's Wanderer Fantasy Multiplied by Ten." *19th-Century Music* 29, no. 1 (July 2005): 42-48. <https://doi.org/10.1525/ncm.2005.29.1.42>.

Jonathan Dunsby, the translator of Adorno's *Schubert (1928)*, provides commentary on Adorno's opinions of Schubert, more specifically, Adorno's esoteric interpretation of the Wanderer Fantasy's embodied character. Adorno was a revered 20<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher and prodigy musician. Adorno's view of the Wanderer Fantasy is that of an embodiment of the "life and death experience." Adorno's understanding of Schubert is referenced by William

Kinderman and Bodley Lorraine in their attempts to unravel the philosophical nature of Schubert's compositional style.

Samuels, Robert. "Schubert's Instrumental Voice: Vocality in Melodic Construction in the Late Works." In *On Voice*, edited by Walter Bernhart and Lawrence Kramer, 161-178.

Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V, 2014.

Robert Samuels discusses in depth how Schubert's writing for the voice is embodied in the melodic construction of his instrumental works. He examines melodic contour and uses many examples, most notably "Die Forelle (D. 500)," where the piano is distinctly unsingable. He later uses the melody within the first movement of the Quintet D. 667. He argues that vocality is the "force that animates the expressive power," of his later works. Samuels scholarship contrasts with Fisk who aspires to make connections based on broader characters, while Samuel focuses on the apparent use and construction of melodic material.

Ishihama, Kanako. "Triangles of Soul – Schubert the 'Wanderer' and His Music Explained by Neo-Reimannian Graphs." PhD diss., University of Oregon, 2017.

Kanako Ishihama studies the Wanderer Fantasy through the analytical tool of Neo-Reimannian graphs. The goal of his study is to more aptly explain how the "wandering," character is embodied in this piece. Ishihama references William Kinderman, Charles Fisk, and Adorno's detailed descriptions of this piece's character. His goal is to embody their views through a more descriptive visual analysis.

Bodley, Lorraine. "A Place at the Edge: Reflections on Schubert's Late Style." *Oxford German Studies* 44, no. 1 (March 2015): 18-29. <https://doi.org/10.1179/0078719114Z.00000000072>.

Lorraine Bodley's article is a thoughtful inquiry into the nature of Schubert's state upon writing his final compositions. She reviews Schubert's experiences upon the eve of his death and compares scholarship on Schubert's compositional themes. She references Adorno when making her point about the "dichotomy," in Schubert's last works that exists between images of death and transcendence. Her conclusions harken back to Adorno's philosophical commentary, and this article seems to stem from the same vein of thinking.

Marshall, Lowen. "Symbolism in Schubert's Winterreise." *Studies in Romanticism* 12, no. 3 (Summer, 1973): 607-632. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25599890>.

Lowen Marshall's article aspires to capture the key symbolic meaning present in *Winterreise* through a combination of harmonic and textual analysis. Marshall walks through each of the songs in *Winterreise* identifying the core symbolic meaning with as much objectivity as possible. After reviewing the piece in its entirety, Marshall expounds upon the high-level interpretation gleaned from this analysis. This work is akin to the work of Lorraine Bodley, but it focuses more on the philosophical dimensions of this work.