THE STAGE WORKS OF FRANZ SCHUBERT
WITH AN ANALYSIS OF FIERRABRAS

THESIS

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By

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INTRODUCTION

Franz Peter Schubert (1797-1828) has long been recognized as a composer of major standing. His songs, which were known by only a small circle of people in Vienna during his lifetime, became increasingly popular in the years following his death among singers and public, and are still frequently performed. The number of book-length studies and the hundreds of shorter essays on the songs now available attest to the widespread recognition of their importance and worth which now exists. The symphonies, and, to a lesser degree, the chamber music, piano works, and church music, have all had a similar history. Because of the immensity of the man's creation, many of his compositions have not, however, found their way out of the collected edition, and today they remain unperformed and unknown except to a few scholars. There are neglected examples in each of the categories mentioned.

But one group of Schubert's compositions remains, as a group, almost totally unknown: the stage works. It is a large group, comprising five of the eighteen volumes of the collected edition. There are also a number of incomplete operas which have not yet been published. Performances of the stage works (always with the exception of Rosamunde) in the one hundred and fifty or so years since their creation
have been extremely rare, and were almost never in the original version. There is no published study of the works which is adequate or even approaches adequacy; in major writings on Schubert's life and work they are usually given only a few words, though works published in the last ten or fifteen years show a tendency to give them more than this summary dismissal. However, even the best of these are not free from errors and hasty judgements.

A thorough and careful consideration of Schubert's stage works is then very sorely needed. The purpose of such a study would be twofold: to provide a broader understanding of the composer Schubert and to spread a new light on his other works, and to contribute to the history of the development of opera in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Because Schubert's operas were not known or performed, they could have had no influence on subsequent composers, but they were influenced by trends which had already appeared in German opera, and so can provide valuable information about these tendencies.

The following study, while it does not propose to fill the need for a thorough examination of the Schubert stage works, does endeavor to bring together some already existing information about all the stage works, and to study closely a representative example, the three-act opera Fierrabras, with the hope of outlining clearly the need and justification for an examination of greater scope and depth.
CHAPTER I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF GERMAN OPERA TO 1823

Schubert and the other German composers of the early nineteenth century who wished to write opera, strongly influenced as they were by the spirit of nationalism arising all around them, wanted especially to write German opera. They faced then the formidable task of defining German opera, a task which was difficult because the only consistent tradition handed down by their country's opera composers since the seventeenth century was one of eclecticism. From the earliest productions of opera, Italian, and to a lesser degree, French styles and forms prevailed in the hearts of the public and the patrons, and German composers were eager to comply with their demands. It was only after Schubert had written many of his operas that a truly German form began to emerge and to gain ascendancy over the still-popular Italian works.

German opera was at first merely Italian opera performed in Germany, sometimes translated into German, or occasionally presented in a combination of German and Italian. The outbreak of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) had seriously hampered the cultural growth of the still-unformed nation, and left it impoverished. The embryonic national spirit of
the German peoples was deeply wounded, and its recovery was very slow. French and Italian forces dominated the cultural and intellectual activities in Germany for many years. The German princes, however, wishing to emulate Versailles, competed among themselves for the most brilliant court.¹ One of the requirements of such a court was the spectacle of opera, performed on special occasions. For this reason, Italian and French operas did often appear in spite of the great expense of such productions.

The most characteristically German of the many forerunners of opera was the Jesuit morality play. These plays often included choral and instrumental pieces and dances; a later example, by Johann Kasper Kerll, *Pia et fortis mulier*, produced in Munich in 1677, even had music which was through-composed like an opera.² The influence of these plays may be seen primarily in the religious subject matter of many of the early German operas.³

The first opera composed by a German was *Dafne*, taken from the Rinuccini libretto by Martin Opitz, a leading German poet of the day, and set by Heinrich Schütz. However, only the libretto remains extant, so it is not known if Schütz


composed a completely new setting of the text or merely reworked the existing Italian one. The work was performed in Torgau in 1627, for a wedding. It is known, through Schütz's letters, that he also composed an Italian comedy in 1629, for which, however, he apparently wrote no recitative. That work is completely lost.

The first German opera which is still extant is Sigmund Staden's *Seelewig* (1644). Bukofzer describes it as a strange mixture of styles, the Italian opera lending its *stile rappresentativo* and the old German music drama its chorale quotations and its strophic songs.

The earliest German composers of opera had at first few followers. Their patrons, for the most part, preferred the imported Italian operas, by Italian composers, with Italian singers and orchestras to perform them. One of the most important Italian composers working in Germany was Agostino Steffani (1654-1728). Most of his eighteen operas were first performed at Hanover. He combined many of the features of the current French and Italian styles, and added to them his own penchant for counterpoint, learned from his German teachers, which allowed a freer, more melodic bass line in the continuo arias and a vocal line more thoroughly integrated with the orchestra in the accompanied arias. In his works

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5Ibid.
may also be found frequent examples of the *devise* (motto beginning), a mannerism of style present in almost every opera of the late seventeenth century.

The court at Vienna, led by Johann Josef Fux (1660-1740), presented operas which were primarily in the Italian style but which exhibited a contrapuntal richness derived from the oratorios of the period. The chorus, also due to the influence of the oratorios, was given a more prominent position than was common in the Italian works.\(^7\) Characteristics of Fux's work include a large number of ensembles, *da capo* arias with instrumental obbligatos, and scenes formed like a rondo with recurrent choral sections.\(^8\)

But the center of truly German opera in the late seventeenth century was not the princely courts of the South, but the independent cities of the North, where public theaters were set up and German composers enjoyed, for a time, the patronage of the wealthy middle class. Hamburg, the leading Northern center for opera, went into competition with Vienna and its Italian opera in 1678, when Johann Theile (1648-1728) produced his *Adam und Eva*. The next sixty years produced two very prominent opera composers, Johann Sigismund Kusser (1660-1727) and Reinhard Keiser (1674-1739). Although these composers were greatly influenced by Italian opera,

\(^7\)Bukofzer, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

\(^8\)Ibid.
they exhibited originality in several ways, including the use of less coloratura, more chordal melodic lines, and frequent use of dance rhythms. In addition they increased the importance of the accompanying instrumental lines.\textsuperscript{9} The continuo arias, especially those of Keiser, were of the folk-song type, simple and generally strophic, and frequently became the hit songs of the day.\textsuperscript{10} Keiser introduced arias in Italian into his German opera \textit{Claudius} (1703), a practice which soon became common. But the \textit{da capo} aria never came to dominate his works as it did those of his Italian contemporaries and German composers like Handel and Hasse.\textsuperscript{11}

Eventually, though, the Hamburg opera house succumbed to economic pressures and the great popularity of Italian opera, and closed its doors, to be reopened a few years later, in 1741, under Italian management. Other opera houses in northern Germany were forced to close also. In Berlin, for example, where public opera houses had begun to operate in the early part of the eighteenth century, strong opposition from the powerful Protestant church soon closed them.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{9}Eulan Von Brooks, "Reinhard Keiser and His Opera \textit{Fredegunda}: A Study in the History of Early German Opera," unpublished master's thesis, School of Music, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, 1966, p. 46.

\textsuperscript{10}Bukofzer, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 311.

\textsuperscript{11}Grout, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 152.

\textsuperscript{12}Ernest Eugene Helm, \textit{Music at the Court of Frederick the Great} (Norman, 1960), p. 85.
Hamburg represented Germany's first national opera, and its composers went a long way toward establishing a German style which could be distinguished from the Italian style, but public opinion was still in favor of the Italians.

Handel's first opera was produced in Hamburg, in 1705, but most of his stage works were written for the English court and people. But like all of the German composers working in the Italian style, he could not quite escape his national heritage, and his operas show a strong tendency toward more important accompaniments, with orchestral parts and vocal lines often of equal importance.\(^\text{13}\)

It is indicative of the state of German opera at this time that Grout is able to say, "The most thoroughly representative composer of Italian opera around the middle of the eighteenth century was not an Italian but a German, Johann Adolf Hasse (1699-1783)."\(^\text{14}\) Although Hasse's first opera was produced at Brunswick, he received most of his training outside of Germany; his works were very popular in Italy and were written in the prevailing Italian style to libretti by Metastasio. It is understandable that so few German composers wished to attempt to write German opera, when they had before them the examples of Handel and Hasse, men who mastered the Italian style with typically northern thoroughness, and

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\(^{13}\) Grout, op. cit., p. 152.

\(^{14}\) Ibid.
who produced works which were eagerly accepted by public and patrons, not only in Germany, but also in Italy and other parts of Europe as well. Most composers who wished to write dramatic music in the German style preferred the oratorio or passion.

The form of the aria used by the Germans often differed from the _da capo_ form used almost without relief in Italian works. This form was used, but other forms, generally strophic, borrowed from German folk song, were also common. The recitative, too, differed slightly from current Italian practice, and tended to move along chordal lines, rather than in a step-wise fashion. It remained rather unimportant, and was often put in at the last moment or done by a student. The resistance to the _da capo_ form and to the Italian form of recitative the Germans had in common with the French, who stubbornly refused to be overpowered by the influence of Italian opera.

An original German dramatic form, the melodrama, in which the spoken words are punctuated and commented upon by the instrumental accompaniment, is said to have been invented by Georg Benda (1721-1795). He used various devices, such as the change of key for dramatic purposes, the use of characteristic themes, and the use of the orchestra to express emotions, which were later used to good effect by composers

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15 Brooks, _op. cit._, p. 21.
of romantic opera, including Weber and Schubert. Mozart became enthusiastic about the melodrama for a time, and wrote a comedy, *Zaïd*, in which melodrama was substituted for recitative. The form became extremely popular for a time, then fell out of use.

A new era in German opera, the classical period, was ushered in with the production, in 1762, of Gluck's and Calzabigi's *Orfeo ed Euridice* in Vienna. Gluck's early works had been first presented in Italy, but most of his works written between 1747 and 1769 were written for Vienna, and the later ones for Paris. All of his operas retained aspects of their Italian origins, but with "a certain squareness" which Oscar Thompson says is purely German. There was, at the time Gluck wrote his *Orfeo*, a prevailing dissatisfaction with opera as it then existed, and with its domination by the singers. He and many others, such as Hasse and his contemporary Graun, court composer for Frederick the Great, worked to restore the place of drama in opera. Their works tended toward freer form in the arias, more expressive and extensive recitative, less coloratura, and the greater importance of the orchestra, including the development of

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an overture which was directly related to the music which was to follow.\textsuperscript{18}

The reform of opera was greatly aided by the growth of comic opera forms during the eighteenth century. For the first time, Germany began to develop a national form which differed substantially from the Italian and French forms. Up until the middle of the eighteenth century, the term Singspiel was used as a general term for all opera. But, following the downfall of the northern cities' opera houses in the first part of the century, a popular form began to appear. In this type of work, a spoken play was interspersed with songs, which were simple and folk-like in character (usually designed to be sung by actors not specifically trained as singers). This form became known as the Singspiel, and the word Oper was reserved for a work which was sung throughout.

The first Singspiel was based on a German translation of an English ballad opera by Charles Coffey, \textit{The Devil to Pay (Der Teufel ist Los)}, and was produced in 1743 in Berlin. This performance used the music from the English version, and was not particularly successful; a new version, with music by J. C. Standfuss, produced in Leipzig in 1752, became very popular, as did still another version by Felix Weisse (1726-1804), librettist, and Johann Adam Hiller (1728-1804),

\textsuperscript{18}Grout, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 217-218.
These two were the most important writers of the early Singspiel, and founded one of the two branches into which the German comic opera soon came to be divided, the northern, which retained its closeness to French opéra comique, with idyllic, sentimental subjects and emphasis on simple melodies closely related to folk music. The southern, Viennese Singspiel was more like the Italian opera buffa with its lively, farcical plots and more brilliant, rhythmic music.

Johann Friedrich Reichardt (1752-1814), friend of Goethe and the first to set his Singspiel libretto, Claudine von Villa Bella, which Schubert also set, developed a very similar form which he called the Liederspiel. This was merely a comic play which served as a thread on which were strung a number of already-known songs or folk songs.

The first five-act German opera with no spoken parts was Alceste, produced in 1773, by Anton Schweitzer and the poet Christoph Martin Wieland. It was, according to Lang, the advance guard of romanticism, but the style was generally that of the late Baroque opera.

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19 Ibid., pp. 264-265.  
20 Ibid., pp. 266-267.  
21 Ibid.  
23 Lang, op. cit., p. 580.
Mozart's contributions to opera, both German and Italian, were more in the manner of personal and perfect examples of existing forms and tendencies rather than of new developments. His works were so important individually that, instead of clarifying the issue for the composer, they only increased the great variety of styles hitherto incorporated by the German opera from which he had to choose.\textsuperscript{24} To the \textit{Singspiel} Mozart brought music of greater contrapuntal complexity and of a greater variety of forms than it had experienced before. \textit{Die Entführung aus dem Seraglio} (1782) included, besides the characteristics of the older \textit{Singspiel}, "elements of Italian serious and comic opera and of French opera comique, as well as the warmth and earnestness of German song."\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Die Zauberflöte} went a step further toward the combining of \textit{Singspiel} and Italian grand opera, with its fantastic diversity of characters, scenes, types of arias, ensembles and recitatives.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century there were, then, a quantity of German operas, but still no "German Opera" which could hold its own with the forms developed by France and Italy.\textsuperscript{26} The \textit{Singspiel} had, however, pointed the way toward a larger form which could be truly national in

\textsuperscript{24} Abert, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 46.
\textsuperscript{25}Grout, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 291.
\textsuperscript{26}Abert, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 47.
character and could provide an outlet for the dramatic talents of the German composers. Single examples by the great masters such as Mozart and Beethoven existed, but they opened no doors for the composer of lesser talents. But the awakening romantic spirit in literature began to have its effect on music, especially in song and opera. A new kind of opera began to arise, with a subject taken from history or from the realm of the supernatural, and with a strong emphasis on folk music. Grout explains the characteristic difference between eighteenth- and nineteenth-century opera as one of "the idea of distinctness on the one hand and that of coalescence on the other." The eighteenth-century composer maintained a separateness from his work, while the nineteenth-century composer became personally involved in his music; he also strove to involve the emotions of the audience as his predecessors had not. The distinctness also broke down between aria and recitative, and between vocal line and orchestral accompaniment. This tendency toward coalescence, which was just beginning in Schubert's time, was to find its culmination in the Gesamtkunstwerk toward the end of the century.

The three standard works of the new form were E. T. A. Hoffmann's Undine (1816), Ludwig Spohr's Faust (1816), and

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27 Grout, op. cit., p. 375.
28 Ibid.
Weber's *Der Freischütz* (1821). The last work became immensely popular in Germany and elsewhere in Europe and had many imitators. Its use of the supernatural and a naturalistic setting in combination, and its mixture of folk-music style with a more sophisticated style of composition, became typical of the romantic opera. Weber's musical characterizations, his orchestral colorings, and the scena in which he came close to developing a system of continuous music, became standards after which opera composers in Germany strove.

*Fierrabras* was written in 1823, two years after *Der Freischütz* and in the same year as Weber's *Euryanthe*. Schubert, like Weber and his contemporaries, was attempting to incorporate Romantic ideals into a form which was still in its infancy. *Alfonso und Estrella*, Schubert's other major opera, was an effort, like *Euryanthe*, to achieve a through-composed opera, something which had barely been attempted before in Germany, and never with any great success. *Fierrabras*, with its combination of spoken dialogue and recitative, was far more typical of the German opera of the first third of the nineteenth century, and its problems were those of the just-emerging national form.

29 *Abert, op. cit.*, p. 48.

CHAPTER II

SCHUBERT'S LIFE AS OPERA COMPOSER

Schubert wrote twelve works for the stage, including the incidental music to *Rosamunde* and two interpolated numbers for a popular opera by Hérold. In addition, he left six works incomplete and possibly a seventh, which is now lost. Of all these, only four reached the stage during his lifetime, and that number includes the pieces to the Hérold opera and *Rosamunde*. Even today, when Schubert's songs, symphonies, and instrumental works may be heard every day, few people are even aware of the operas, and fewer still have studied the scores or seen any of them performed.

The reason usually given for this neglect is the poor quality of the librettos. Schubert's reasons for choosing these librettos, and his reasons for persisting in writing operas in the face of continuing failure, are usually explained by the theory that he was trying to gain material success by producing a work which would have popular appeal. Certainly the taste of the Vienna in which he lived all his life was not of the best, so it is easy to say that Schubert was lowering his usual standards in order to provide himself with bread. It is probable that this is one reason, though only one, since it is known that the composer had little
source of income during his life and would certainly have welcomed the security of a position at one of Vienna's opera houses, which the production of one or more popular operas might have brought him. But it hardly seems likely that this motive alone would have provided fuel for all those operas. Very possibly the simplest explanation is nearest to the truth: Schubert composed music of all types—songs, piano works, chamber music, symphonies, miscellaneous instrumental works, and church music—so it would have been strange indeed for him to have neglected the opera. Then, too, he had a circle of intellectual and literary friends ready and willing to provide librettos, as they had often provided poems for his songs. And it must have been easy for the composer who achieved very little success and recognition in any of his fields of endeavor to ignore his lack of success in this one.

Franz Peter Schubert was born on January 31, 1797, in Liechtental, a suburb of Vienna. His early musical education was entrusted to his father, a schoolmaster whose strong liking for music can be deduced from the reports of the large amount of music-making that went on in the household, his older brother Ignaz, and Michael Holzer, the organist of the parish church. In 1808 he became a singer in the court chapel and, along with the other boys in the choir, a student at the Stadtkonvikt. This was the principal boarding school in Vienna, and, as Maurice Brown points out in his
biography of Schubert, the boy probably got there a much better education than the family would otherwise have been able to afford.¹ At this seminary he became a pupil of Antonio Salieri (1750-1825), an Italian who had lived in Vienna from 1766, known chiefly for his operas and his feud with Mozart. At the time Schubert began to study with him, he was the court music director in Vienna. Schubert was his pupil all the time he was at the seminary and continued to take his compositions to him for criticism for several years after he had ceased to be a student; their association apparently ended in the spring of 1817.²

While at the seminary, Schubert played violin in, and on occasion conducted, the school's orchestra, which was, according to Deutsch, "worth hearing."³ His first experience with opera dates from the seminary days, too. An older fellow-student (who was to remain his intimate friend throughout his life), Josef von Spaun, took him to see Weigl's Die Schweizerfamilie on July 8, 1811.⁴ Spaun himself, in his


⁴George Grove, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn (London, 1951), p. 154. Deutsch (op. cit., p. 20) questions this date; however, it is also given in Maurice Brown's article
obituary notice for Schubert, states that they also saw Spontini's *La Vestale* and Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*, which made a deep impression on Schubert and led him to a study of the Gluck scores over a period of many years.⁵

Perhaps partly because of these events, Schubert was inspired to write an opera for himself. He was already an accomplished composer, having produced a number of things during 1811 and 1812, including a string quartet, an overture for string quartet, an overture for orchestra, a Kyrie, and his first extant song, "Hagars Klage." *Der Spiegelritter*, although undated, appears to have been written while he was still at the seminary.⁶ It exists only in fragmentary form and was apparently not completed. But this work marks the beginning of Schubert's interest in composing operas, and it is worthwhile to note that it is roughly contemporary with his first efforts in other fields, at a time when his interest in making money was probably not very great.

In 1813 Schubert left the seminary to attend a training school for teachers, where he studied for one year preparatory

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to his becoming an assistant in his father's school. While at the training school, he composed a three-act opera on a libretto by August von Kotzebue, *Des Teufels Lustschloss*. Kotzebue, from whose works the libretto of *Der Spiegelritter* also came, was a very popular dramatist in Vienna at that time. Schubert began to work on *Des Teufels Lustschloss* in October of 1813 and completed it in May of 1814, after which he took the completed manuscript to Salieri, whose remarks led him to revise the first and third acts. The revisions were completed in October of 1814. The opera never reached production, although Schubert's friend, Josef Hüttenbrenner, tried much later (1822) to get it performed. There is no record that Schubert even tried to get it performed in 1814; it is unfortunate that he was not able to hear it and learn from it some of the dramatic techniques which would have helped him later on.

But he was turning out other compositions which he was able to hear. The early symphony in D major (completed in October, 1813) was probably performed by the student orchestra of the seminary,7 and the F major mass was performed in October, 1814, under Schubert's direction, at the Liechtental parish church. Schubert was already turning out compositions faster than opportunities for performance could appear, however. In 1814 he wrote, besides the mass and the opera,

"Gretchen am Spinnrade," his first setting of a Goethe text and probably his first important song.

In the autumn of 1814, Schubert became an assistant teacher at his father's school, where he remained until the autumn of 1816. During this period he composed four operas, which, Brown feels, indicates that he was struggling to win freedom from the necessity of teaching by the production of a successful opera. All of these were written in a remarkably short time; Der vierjährige Posten, to a libretto by Theodor Körner, is in one act and occupied its composer from the eighth to the nineteenth of May, 1815; another one-act play, by Albert Stadler, Fernando, required only from the twenty-seventh of June to the ninth of July to be set; Claudine von Villa Bella, in three acts, on a libretto by Goethe, was begun on the twenty-sixth of July; and, finally, Johann Mayrhofer's Die Freunde von Salamanka was begun by Schubert on the eighteenth of November and completed on the thirty-first of December. Adrast, also on a libretto of Mayrhofer, remains unfinished and undated, but according to Alfred Einstein, probably came between Die Freunde von Salamanka and Die Bürgschaft, which he places in 1816. The latter
is an unfinished work, which Schubert did not date; the librettist is not known.

Fernando, Claudine von Villa Bella and Die Freunde von Salamanka all bear the inscription, "pupil of Herr Salieri," from which it may be assumed that the older man commented on these works for Schubert. The composer never saw any of these works performed; of the completed ones, Der vierjährige Posten had to wait until 1896 to reach the stage, Fernando till 1918, and Die Freunde von Salamanka till 1928.

The school-teaching years were busy ones. Besides the four operas, in 1815 Schubert wrote two symphonies (in B♭ major and D major), a piano sonata (in E major), and around one hundred and forty-five songs, including two of his most popular, "Heidenröslein" and "Erlkönig." In 1816 he wrote two more symphonies (C minor and B♭ major), a cantata, and over one hundred more songs, while faithfully carrying out the taxing duties of an elementary school teacher. In April of 1816 he applied for a post which carried a higher salary and which he must have felt more congenial to his talents than the present one: that of music master at a training school for teachers, similar to the one he himself had just attended. His application, however, was rejected.

This disappointment did not prevent Schubert from leaving his post at his father's school, and in late 1816 he took lodgings with his new friend, Franz Schober. There he
remained and composed in greater freedom than he had known before; he depended on the sale of his compositions and, possibly, the hopes for his dramatic works, for a living. He stayed there until August of 1817, when the impending return of Schober's brother necessitated his vacating the room he occupied. During his stay at Schober's, he composed no operas, but concentrated on the piano, for which he wrote seven sonatas, and, of course, he continued to write songs, including "Der Tod und das Mädelchen," "An die Musik," and "Die Forelle."

Once again Schubert found himself a teacher at his father's school. This time, in contrast to the large number of compositions turned out in spare hours during his previous school terms, he wrote only one piece (though it is a large one), the C major symphony, number six, completed in February of 1818. In July of that year he took a new position, as music teacher in the house of Count Johann Karl Esterházy (no relation to Haydn's patron) at his summer house in Zseliz, in Hungary. From there he wrote in great happiness "I live and compose like a god,"[11] but soon fell to longing for Vienna and his friends. In November he returned to the city, where he took lodgings with the poet Mayrhofer, although he continued to give lessons to the Esterházy daughters. He did not, however, return to his post at his father's school.

Immediately upon returning, Schubert set out once again to write for the stage. Die Zwillingsbrüder, a one-act operetta on a libretto by Georg Ernst von Hofmann, was begun in late 1818 and completed in January of 1819. It did not immediately reach production, however. In June or July of that year, Schubert accompanied his friend Johann Michael Vogl on his yearly retreat to Steyr, which Deutsch calls "one of the finest towns in Austria." Vogl was a leading singer at the German opera in Vienna, and Schubert had made his acquaintance in 1817 through Schober. He was already a notable interpreter of the Schubert songs, and helped to forward the young composer's career in many ways. Vogl, with his large influence at the court opera, had been entrusted with Die Zwillingsbrüder's future, but he apparently had some difficulty, for in May Schubert had written to Hüttenbrenner, "In spite of Vogl it is difficult to outwit such canaille as Weigl, Treitschke, etc.—that is why instead of my operetta they give other rot, enough to make your hair stand on end."\(^{12}\)

\(^{12}\)Deutsch, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 121.

\(^{13}\)Weigl, who was, like Schubert, a former pupil of Salieri, and whose opera \textit{Die Schweizerfamilie} had so impressed the young Schubert several years before, was at that time conductor of the court opera theater, and Treitschke was producer and librettist. Georg von Hofmann, librettist for \textit{Die Zwillingsbrüder}, was to succeed him in that post. Deutsch, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 118.

\(^{14}\)Franz Schubert, letter to Anselm Hüttenbrenner, May 19, 1819, Deutsch, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 117.
Vogl's efforts were eventually successful, however, and *Die Zwillingsbrüder* was premiered on June 14, 1820, with both the twins of the title played by Vogl himself. At last, after eight previous essays in the operatic field, three of which were left incomplete, a dramatic work of Schubert had reached the stage. But it was not to be the popular success the composer and his friends had hoped for. One member of the audience noted in his diary, "Schubert's friends made a lot of noise while the opposition hissed."  

The general critical reaction to it may be summed up in the words of a review which called it the "neat minor work of a young composer." Altogether, it was considered too heavy for a "farce," as it was billed, and it received only six performances.

Meanwhile, between the composition of *Zwillingsbrüder* and its performance, Schubert's pen had not been idle. Besides the Trout Quintet and an Easter cantata, *Lazarus*, he completed a melodrama, *Die Zauberharfe*. The play, once again by Hofmann, is filled with all the accoutrements of the magic genre--witches, knights, princesses, and so forth--and could not win the praise of even the Viennese critics. It opened at the Theater-an-der-Wien on August 19, 1820, and received only eight performances.

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16*Vienna Sammler*, June 22, 1820, Deutsch, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
A sketch for a second opera in 1820 exists, *Sakuntala*, libretto by Johann Philipp Neumann, but Schubert abandoned it before progressing very far.

The fact that all the dramatic efforts of 1819-1820 are in the popular magic opera form lends some credence to the theory that Schubert wrote all his operas primarily with a material gain in mind, in contrast to the way he wrote everything else, and chose his librettos less for their artistic merit or suitability than for their mass appeal. But the possibility that he actually preferred this type of libretto must not be ignored.

In January of 1821 Schubert secured a testimonial from the court secretary Ignaz Mosel, and one from Count Dichterstein, himself a modest composer and Court Music Chamberlain at that time, presumably to petition for a post as composer or conductor at the Kärntnertor Theater. However, in February Count Dichterstein himself was elected, and the following year the theater was leased to an Italian manager, Domenico Barbaja, so Schubert's efforts to gain a secure living through the stage came to nothing.

In the summer of 1821 still another of Schubert's stage works was performed. He was asked to write two interpolations for Hérold's *La Clochette*, to be performed at the Kärntnertor Theater. The title was, characteristically, changed to *Das Zauberglöckchen* when it was translated for the Vienna
audience. Schubert's contributions were a tenor aria and a duet for tenor and bass; the duet received critical praise, and Spaun (who may not have been an entirely impartial judge) reports that "the two pieces received more applause than all the rest of the opera." 17 The opera was performed eight nights.

A little earlier, in March of 1821, a concert at the Kärntnertor Theater included, for the first time in a large recital, three pieces by Schubert: two vocal ensembles and the "Erlkönig," sung by Vogl. It created something of a stir; the audience demanded that it be repeated and the critics were kind to it. It was subsequently published, as opus one, although a few other songs had already reached publication, primarily in journals. A number of other songs were published later that year (1821), as well as two books of waltzes for piano. A number of his songs, and a few larger pieces, such as the overture in E minor, were reaching public performance, in addition to the operas, and the songs were increasingly sought for private performance among a certain group. The conclusion may be reached that Schubert's reputation was growing, but the fact is that he still did not have the professional post or the general acclaim which his

friends felt was his due, and neither his music nor his name was often heard outside of Vienna.

But it was with high hopes that Schubert and Schober, in the autumn of 1821, left Vienna to retire to nearby St. Pölten, for the purpose of creating a grand opera. It was to be of much greater scope than previous Schubert operas, and was called Alfonso und Estrella. Schubert completed the setting of the first act of his friend's libretto on the sixteenth of October. The second act was completed back in Vienna, on November 2, and the third was completed on February 27, 1822. After returning from St. Pölten he moved in with the Schober family, presumably to continue the close collaboration on the opera, but he remained in this house some time after the opera's completion.

Alfonso und Estrella was Schubert's first (and only) opera which contained no spoken dialogue. In a letter to Spaun, Schubert indicated that "we have great hopes for it." But those hopes, if they concerned a successful performance, were never realized. Vogl was supposed to get it produced at the Kärntnertor Theater, as he had helped with Die Zwillingsbrüder, but he was unable to do anything. Spaun reports that the singer found "Schober's opera . . . bad, and a perfect failure," so it may be that this opinion


influenced his lack of success. It is certain that the score was formally submitted to the theater, for in December of 1822 Schubert speaks in a letter of having asked for it back.\textsuperscript{20}

Karl Maria von Weber also expressed an interest in getting \textit{Alfonso} produced at Dresden, but a slight difference of opinion between him and Schubert concerning the merits of \textit{Euryanthe} caused Weber to lose interest in the project. Schubert heard the first performance of \textit{Euryanthe} in Vienna, and reported in a letter to Schober, "Weber's \textit{Euryanthe} turned out wretchedly and its bad reception was quite justified, in my opinion."\textsuperscript{21} It is said that Schubert told Weber personally, upon being asked his opinion, that he thought \textit{Der Freischütz} much better.\textsuperscript{22} There was no more talk of a Dresden performance of \textit{Alfonso und Estrella}.

Some time later, in 1824, Anna Milder, an important soprano at the Berlin opera, wrote Schubert asking for a song to be written for her, and suggesting that she might get an opera performed for him there. He immediately sent her the score to \textit{Alfonso und Estrella}, but she replied that "the libretto does not accord with the public taste."\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{20}Schubert, letter to Spaun, December 7, 1822, Deutsch, \textit{The Schubert Reader}, p. 386.

\textsuperscript{21}Schubert, letter to Schober, November 30, 1823, Deutsch, \textit{The Schubert Reader}, p. 300.

\textsuperscript{22}Deutsch, \textit{The Schubert Reader}, p. 294.

\textsuperscript{23}Anna Milder, letter to Schubert, March 8, 1825, Deutsch, \textit{The Schubert Reader}, p. 408.
was never performed during Schubert's lifetime. Liszt, much later, was introduced to the work by his secretary, none other than Schober, became enamored of it, and gave the work its première in Weimar in 1845.

Throughout 1822 Schubert continued living at the Schober home. A number of larger pieces, aside from the opera, were composed here, including a mass (Ab major), the "Unfinished" symphony, and the "Wanderer" fantasy for piano. Late in the year he took residence with his father again, in his schoolhouse in Rossau, a Vienna suburb. In April of 1823 he completed his next opera, Die Verschworenen. The librettist, Castelli, had been official dramatist at the Kärntnertor Theater, and had done the libretto for Weigl's Schweizerfamilie. Castelli published Die Verschworenen in February of 1823, with the instruction that here was a libretto for the German composers who complained of not having one.\textsuperscript{24} Schubert took him at his word, and set it. The censor, however, required that the name be changed to Der häusliche Krieg.

Schubert now had written several Singspiele, a melodrama, and a grand opera with sung recitatives. In his next dramatic work, Fierrabras,\textsuperscript{25} he combined all these types. This work

\textsuperscript{24}Deutsch, The Schubert Reader, p. 398.

\textsuperscript{25}This is the spelling used by Schubert and Kupelweiser. The Spanish word, which means 'braggart,' is spelled Fierabras, as is the French romance from which the story comes, and this spelling is adopted by some writers, including Deutsch. But as the word is used as a proper noun, it seems best to retain the extra letter of the original libretto.
occupied him from May to October of 1823. Brown is of the opinion that the dates on the manuscripts have "with very good reason" been questioned. Act One is dated May twenty-fifth to May thirtieth, Act Two was finished on June fifth, and Act Three on September twenty-sixth. Brown goes on to say that "not even Schubert could have covered the enormous first act in five or six days." Perhaps not, but there is no other evidence except the dated manuscript.

Once again the libretto was by one of the composer's circle, Josef Kupelwieser, brother of the painter Leopold Kupelwieser, and at that time secretary of the Kärntnertor Theater. Barbaja, manager of the theater, may have commissioned the libretto. An announcement in the Vienna Theaterzeitung on October 11, 1823, stated that a new opera by Schubert, presumably Fierrabras, was to be performed. Schwind, in a letter a few days later, also refers to the possibility of a performance, and goes on to say, "Pepi Spaun is afraid for it because of the orchestration. But I cannot be induced to abandon my good hopes."

27 Ibid.
29 Ibid., p. 291.
But the performance never came off. Perhaps Kupelwieser's withdrawal from the theater (October 9, 1823) helped end the chances for it. In November Schubert wrote to Schober to that effect, citing a bad production of *Euryanthe* and a split between some of the theater officials as additional reasons making a production of either *Fierrabras* or *Alfonso und Estrella* unlikely. "Besides," he writes, "it would really not be a great stroke of fortune, as everything is done indescribably badly now." 31

During the summer while he was working on *Fierrabras*, Schubert visited Linz and Steyr with Vogl. He was also working on the song cycle, *Die schöne Müllerin*, which was completed in November. From November thirtieth to December eighteenth (again, a remarkably short time) he was involved in another dramatic piece, the incidental music to *Rosamunde von Cypern*, a play by Helmina von Chézy. Schubert agreed to undertake the commission when the writer presented it to him, in spite of the fact that she was known to him as the librettist of *Euryanthe*, a work he did not particularly respect. Probably the rarity of an opportunity to write a stage piece which was actually to be performed outweighed all other considerations for the composer.

*Rosamunde* did reach performance on December 20, 1823, but closed after only two nights. Further efforts of the

librettist to get it performed elsewhere failed. The play is now lost, but a synopsis of it by a contemporary reviewer remains. It is filled with princesses, shipwrecks, disguises, secret passages, and the like, and must have been too much even for the insatiable Viennese.

Schubert did not write a new overture for Rosamunde, but used instead the already existing one to Alfonso und Estrella, which he considered, according to Schwind, too "homespun" for the opera, and planned to write a new one for it. But, in 1826, when several pieces from Rosamunde were published in an arrangement for two pianos, Schubert supplied the old Zauberharfe overture to be published with them. Thus, what originally had no overture was seemingly given two, both on the authority of the composer. Alfred Einstein feels that this may not have been the case, that Schwind perhaps made a mistake, for in the letter mentioned above, to Schober, he speaks of a melody given partly to the flute, which Einstein feels would fit only the Zauberharfe overture; the overture Schwind heard must have been this one, and not the one to Alfonso und Estrella.33

Rosamunde was Schubert's last completed work for the stage. The summer of 1824 found him in Hungary again, with

33 Einstein, op. cit., p. 214.
the Esterházy family. The following winter he spent again with his family in Rossau. The summer of 1825 was occupied by a musical tour with Vogl. They visited Steyr, Gmunden, Gastein, and Linz. The lost symphony, called the Gmunden-Gastein symphony, is supposed to have been written during this tour.

Bernhardt and Bauernfeld both worked on a libretto for Schubert, based on Ernst Schulze's *Die bezauberte Rose*, but he never set either. Bauernfeld reports in his diary that Schubert was interested in that work, but "a Count Gleichen was in my mind."34 He set to work, and was able to give Schubert the completed text in July of 1826. In October *Der Graf von Gleichen* was refused by the censors (presumably because of the subject matter, bigamy), but Schubert had already started to work on it. He continued to do so, though not steadily, but he never got beyond amassing a great many sketches.

In the meantime he was busy with a great many things. The "Death and the Maiden" quartet had been finished in January of 1826; a string quartet (G major), a piano sonata (also G major), and the "German mass" were also from that year. In 1827 he wrote numerous works, including the song-cycle *Die Winterreise*, two piano trios and eight impromptus for piano. During the first part of 1828 he wrote the C major

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symphony (the "Great"), the Eb major mass, the C minor string quintet, the last two piano sonatas, and the group of songs called "Schwanengesang."

Toward the end of August in 1828 Schubert moved to the house of his brother Ferdinand, where, in early November, he became ill with typhoid fever (complicated by the syphilis from which he had been suffering for a number of years). On November 19 he died. Bauernfeld's diary entry tells that Schubert was still talking of their opera, Der Graf von Gleichen, his enthusiasm for it having flared during this final illness.\(^3\)

Leopold Sonnleithner, in an obituary notice published a few months later, mentioned in his list of works an unfinished opera entitled Die Minnesänger.\(^3\) However, it has completely disappeared, and no particulars are known about it, as Schubert himself and the other members of his circle are not known to have mentioned it in their writings. Einstein places it about 1815, but this is necessarily just a guess.\(^3\)

Brown mentions a bulky sheaf of sketches for an untitled opera with a heroine named Sofie, which is now in the Vienna

\(^{35}\)Bauernfeld, Diary, November 20, 1828, Deutsch, The Schubert Reader, p. 824.


\(^{37}\)Einstein, op. cit., p. 76.
Stadtbibliothek. This he attributes to 1823 because of a theme used both here and in Fierrabras.38

A Survey of All of the Librettos

The reason usually given for not producing Schubert's operas is the poor quality of the librettos. That the texts are generally uninspired and poorly written cannot be denied, but it must be observed that literary standards for opera librettos have almost always been below the normal standards of an age, and that the texts of many operas which are often produced and unfailingly well received are equally uninspired and poorly written. Schubert's reasons for choosing to work with these texts lie deep in the literary and cultural atmosphere of the early nineteenth century, as well as in the events and circumstances of his personal life.

There is no evidence that Schubert held strong convictions as to what a libretto should be, or strove to have any influence in the shaping of the text. He seems to have, in his songs, as well as in his stage works, set indiscriminately any text which came his way. But apparently good poems were much more easily accessible than good librettos, and, while he set hundreds of fine and even great poems, not one of his librettos seems to have been more than second-rate. But they were almost all the products of the Romantic concept.
of literature, which was just reaching its full momentum at the time Schubert was composing.

The German Romantic movement had its roots in the Sturm und Drang period which occupied many German artists and writers in the 1770's and 1780's. This movement was concerned largely with the growth of individualism, with "destruction to every barrier to individual growth; the glorification of primitive, uncorrupted nature, of instinct, of passion, of genius; the vilification of the existing social order of regularity, of learning, of conscious effort."¹ This movement, expressed principally in such works as Goethe's The Sorrows of Young Werther (1772) and Schiller's Die Räuber (1781), was too violent to last very long, and soon succumbed to a resurgence of classicism. But many of its ideals were resurrected by other artists and intellectuals in increasing numbers during the next twenty years, and became the ideals of German Romanticism. The doctrine of individualism was deepened into an all-pervasive subjectivism, which placed man as a center of sensation and sentiment existing in a world of nature.² The many Romantic operas which exhibited heroes of strongly emotional character surrounded by natural or supernatural settings thus were part of the mainstream of Romantic literature.

²Paul Henry Lang, Music in Western Civilization (New York, 1941), p. 737.
The cult of individualism was also extended to universalism; the individual artist sought to identify with some universal element. The striving toward the universal through the feelings and perceptions of the individual often meant, when worked into practical terms by poets of less than the stature of a Goethe or a Schiller, a fall into pure sentimentality. Certain subjects seemed to express the Romantic ideals best, and became standard. Magic plays, which had already been popular for some time (like the "Turkish" subjects of the eighteenth century), seemed a fertile field for the budding Romanticist, as did the legends and tales of the Middle Ages, and folklore of all types. Johann Gottfried Herder (1774-1803) had already uncovered the individuality of nations and of periods of history, and the brothers Grimm, who published their fairy tales in 1816, as a result of the growing interest in folklore as a subject for art, gave a further impetus to Herder's ideas.

Herder's theories also led to the revival of interest in the Middle Ages, exemplified by works such as Schiller's Maid of Orleans and William Tell, and by the great popularity of Sir Walter Scott. The nations under Napoleon's oppressive rule turned to what they considered a period of great

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simplicity and nobility. The Middle Ages remained, for them, "the only safe anchor in a world of spiritual dissolution." The choice of the Middle Ages rather than some other period in history was motivated by

... something stronger than a fondness for romantic chivalry and mysticism. The high Middle Ages, as Romanticism saw them, do not represent a society in flux directed toward yet unknown social, political, and intellectual goals, but a prim, though not perfect order based on firm spiritual concepts. Trust and faith in these foundations, rather than their social-political emanations, lie at the root of romantic neo-medieval tendencies.

All of these influences can be seen at work in Vienna during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Schubert was still a schoolboy when Napoleon was defeated. He lived his entire life under the rule of the Austrian emperor Franz I, who "played the domestic tyrant," and, together with his counselor Metternich, imposed a strict censorship on what was published or produced in Vienna. Nevertheless, the new Romantic school flourished there. There were several theaters which were kept busy producing Austrian, German, and foreign plays and operas. There was the court theater (Kärntnertor

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6Ibid.

Theater), which presented mostly Italian operas. The Theateran-der-Wien was established by Schikaneder, Mozart's librettist for The Magic Flute, in 1801, where he billed his own hastily written works, popular plays by Kotzebue and other forgotten writers, but also Shakespeare, French plays, the Mozart operas, and, of course, Fidelio, which he commissioned.8

There were also a few smaller theaters, notably the Leopold-städter Theater, the main home of the "fairy-tale musicals and burlesques" which had evolved from Baroque comedy.9

Poetry and song, drama and opera quickly became favored means for the expression of Romanticism. "In all seriousness it [Romanticism] attempts to redeem the world through poetry."10 Schubert was caught up in the general flood of Romanticism, and a survey of the poems and texts he set will reveal a great variety of Romantic literature.

Einstein feels that Schubert's literary taste, which he says was usually so sure in the choice of texts for songs, forsook him completely when it came to opera librettos.11 Many of Schubert's librettists were his personal friends, not

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9Ibid., p. 126.
10Rose, op. cit., p. 212.
all of them professional writers, but still talented, intelligent men. Several of them were unknown and inexperienced writers for the stage, such as Schober; others turned out second-rate plays and texts frequently; still others were important figures in poetry and drama, but not well remembered today. Only one is at present still held in high esteem: Goethe. Yet only one of Schubert's authors seems to have been a questionable choice at the time, the redoubtable Helmina von Chézy. Schubert can well be criticized for his choice of librettos, but only after pointing to the small number of librettists who are remembered or singled out for their creations today, the small number of librettos which are readable apart from their music, and the tiny number of modern composers who are credited with having sure and certain literary taste. How many contemporary librettists will be laughed at by future generations for the inanity of their creations?

Schubert's librettos are all the productions of people to whom the fashionable 'Romantic' story was an obsession. Gothic, or pseudo-Gothic, lore is ransacked for the plot; the landscape of the medieval artist, natural to Durer, say, but falsified and sentimentalized by the third-rate poets of the day, forms the background. Spain is the country of three operas, 'Alfonso,' 'Fierrabras,' and the early work, 'Don Fernando' [sic], with castles and gardens and serenades and all the other equipment of history and legend. But no poetry or imagination uplifts the trend in these librettos. 'Romantic' characterizations and situations often tend towards puppetry: at least the danger is there. It needs the genius of Scott or Victor Hugo or Schiller to give the puppets life. Then
poor Schuberti—dependent upon Kotzebue and Mayrhofer, and, even worse, Stadler and Kupelweiser. Their people and situations have as much life as the tableaux in a waxworks. 12

Writers of the highest stature do not often appear in the annals of opera, except for certain authors, such as Shakespeare, whose works are repeatedly adapted for use by composers. Goethe, however, was extremely interested in the development of the Singspiel, and wrote several librettos, including Claudine von Villa Bella, a "slight dramatic piece" 13 written shortly after Werther. Johann Friedrich Reichardt, Goethe's friend, and Ignaz von Beecke had set it before Schubert, and others continued to use it after him. The play exists in two forms, one of which contains prose dialogue, and a second, which Schubert used, which is completely in verse. Unfortunately, only one act of Schubert's music to the three-act work remains.

Schiller, too, figures in Schubert's operatic career. An 'anonymous student' arranged a text from Schiller's ballad Die Bürgschaft, which Schubert had already used as the text for one of his songs. There are a number of operas based on this and other ballads of Schiller; the practice was a common one. That Die Bürgschaft was left unfinished may be


due to Schubert's eventual realization that an opera concerned with an attempted assassination of a tyrant would never be approved by the censors.\(^{14}\)

The majority of Schubert's opera texts, however, came not from Goethe or Schiller, but from other dramatists of the time, who were almost as well known but are now almost forgotten. Ignaz Franz Castelli (1781-1862), whose libretto Der häusliche Krieg (changed from Die Verschworenen by the censors) became Schubert's most nearly successful opera, took his text from Aristophanes's Lysistrata, transported it to the time of the Crusades, and published it in an almanac in 1823. He was then well-known for his comedies in the popular fantastic settings, and had earlier been the librettist for Weigl's Schweizerfamilie. He founded a Bohemian artists' group called "Ludlam's Cave," which included Grillparzer, Rellstab, C. M. von Weber, and Ignaz Moscheles. The group was disbanded by the nervous police on suspicion of being subversive.

Another writer quite famous at the time was Theodor Körner, whose Der vierjährige Posten Schubert set. He has been called a "third-rate imitator of Schiller,"\(^ {15}\) in whose shadow he grew up, for his father was a friend of Schiller. Körner was best known for his war poems opposing Napoleon,

\(^{14}\)Einstein, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

\(^{15}\)Ibid., p. 66.
many of which were set by various composers, including Weber and Schubert. Der vierjährige Posten is one of the better librettos Schubert came in contact with, though it is light and unpretentious. The composer supplied surprisingly little music; there are only eight numbers in the one-act work, and many of them are quite short, in spite of the fact that the entire libretto is in verse.

Johann Mayrhofer (1787-1836) supplied Schubert with poems for many of his songs and with two librettos, Die Freunde von Salamanka and Adrast, which was never finished. Mayrhofer was a fellow law student of Josef Spaun, who introduced him to Schubert. His fear of cholera caused him, in 1836, to jump to his death from a third-story window in the censor's office, where he worked. The spoken parts to both of Mayrhofer's librettos are missing, but Joseph Fuchs, in a preface to Die Freunde von Salamanka in the collected edition of Schubert's works, has reconstructed the plot to this one.

Schubert's first two operas, both written while he was a student (Der Spiegelritter, an unfinished work probably dating from 1812, and Des Teufels Lutschloss, 1813-1814) were drawn from the works of August von Kotzebue, a "tasteless purveyor of fashionable dramas."16 His plays were extremely popular. "No one entered so thoroughly into the ordinary instincts of the masses, no one could flatter them so

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16 Brown, op. cit., p. 23.
cleverly, and no one arranged dramatic effects so conveniently for the actor as Kotzebue... His caricature of humanity renders all great tragic conflicts impossible, and his chief idea seems to be to force vice and misery upon us in all their nudity." The libretto Des Teufels Lustschloss had been set many times before Schubert tried it. Concerned with a test of character which includes confrontations with Amazons, walking statues, a flood, and a cage which whisks the hero away, it has a happy ending which Einstein calls a "masterpiece of sheer banality." The work calls for a great deal of stage machinery and resources, which perhaps contributes to the fact that it has never been produced.

Two of the only three stage works of Schubert's to be performed during his lifetime were on the texts of Ernst Georg von Hofmann. Both Die Zauberharfe and Die Zwillingssbrüder are believed to have been taken by him from French texts, though only the latter includes a reference to the French source on the title page. Hofmann had already done a number of librettos for other composers, including Weigl, and was later to become official librettist for the Karntnertor Theater. Deutsch notes that Schubert did not care much for the Zwillingssbrüder libretto, and Maurice Brown reports

17 Scherer, _op. cit._, p. 176.
18 Einstein, _op. cit._, p. 51.
19 Deutsch, _op. cit._, p. 134.
that the composer cared for neither of these works.\textsuperscript{20} In \textit{Die Zwillingsbrüder} there exists a slight incongruity: the two brothers, Franz and Friedrich Spiess, were obviously designed to be played by one person; however, in the last scene they are required to appear together. One wonders how this staging problem was met in the original production, in which Vogl played both parts.

Helmina von Chézy (1783-1856) was also already an experienced librettist when Schubert wrote the incidental music for her play \textit{Rosamunde von Cypern}. She had already written \textit{Euryanthe} for Weber, a text which was greatly criticized. But Schubert at any rate apparently liked her writing, for he wrote to her that he was "convinced of the value of 'Rosamond' from the moment I had read it."\textsuperscript{21} The play is now lost, but contemporary accounts of it remain. Apparently Maurice Brown's estimation of it is quite correct: "There are some strange flowers in the rotting undergrowth of the 'Romantic' jungle-world, but nothing stranger than this play, with its secret passages, princesses brought up by fisherfolk, shipwrecks, poisoned letters, shepherd princes and the rest."\textsuperscript{22} It seems incredible that it could be even more strange than \textit{Des Teufels Lustschloss}.

\textsuperscript{20}Brown, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 140.
\textsuperscript{21}Franz Schubert, letter to Helmina von Chézy, Zeliz, August 5, 1824, in Deutsch, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 366.
\textsuperscript{22}Brown, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 136.
Schubert even accepted a libretto from a physics teacher, Johann Philipp Neumann, although *Sakuntala* was only sketched. Later Schubert did complete a text of his, the German Mass. Another nonprofessional writer, Albert Stadler (1794-1888) supplied Schubert the text for *Fernando*. Stadler met Schubert in the seminary, and remained his life-long friend. He later became a government official. *Fernando* is a highly emotional text, with long nonverse sections broken by seven set pieces. Schubert wrote no overture for the one-act libretto.

Franz von Schober (1796-1882) with whom Schubert wrote *Alfonso und Estrella*, was born in Sweden but educated in Vienna. He met Schubert in 1815, through Spaun, his fellow-student. He was not a serious writer, but then Schober was not a serious anything; he has been called an "unstable aesthete," as well as a "brilliant exhibitionist and all-rounder." In *Alfonso und Estrella*, he apparently wanted to provide an outlet for Schubert's lyrical talent, and as a result wrote some good poems but faulty action and plot development. Flower is of the opinion that this is one of the best libretti Schubert ever set, but that the operatic construction is of the very worst. Schober himself once

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said of this work that it "earned me great praise, as a poem, from renowned authorities," but he goes on to say that as an opera libretto it was "such a miserable, stillborn, bungling piece of work that even so great a genius as Schubert was not able to bring it to life." 27 After Schubert's death, Schober became secretary to Franz Liszt, and aroused his interest in the work, so that Liszt gave Alfonso und Estrella its première in Weimar in 1854. Schubert and Schober had worked almost simultaneously on the libretto. Brown quotes Schober as saying that they had done the opera "with very happy enthusiasm, but in very great innocence of heart and mind," and suggests that "his words 'heart and mind' should read, 'stage technique.'" 28

The text for Schubert's final operatic effort, Der Graf von Gleichen, was by Eduard Bauernfeld, also a long-time friend. He was a witty, voluble playwright and poet whose comedies won him considerable reputation. 29 His mind was "volatile, satirical, and facetious," 30 but the choice of the subject Der Graf von Gleichen showed a lack of foresight, for the...

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27 Franz Schober, letter to Heinrich Schubert, Dresden, November 2, 1876, in Deutsch, Schubert: Memoirs by His Friends, p. 208.


29 Barea, op. cit., p. 142.

subject matter, bigamy, could not be approved by the censors. Schubert, for this reason, put off finishing it, though his interest in it revived just before he died.

The libretto for *Fierrabras* is by Josef Kupelwieser (1791-1866), brother to the painter Leopold Kupelwieser, a prominent member of the Schubert circle. Josef was secretary to the court opera from 1821 to 1823, and it is believed that Barbaja, manager of the opera theater at that time, commissioned Kupelweiser to write *Fierrabras* for Schubert, though he never produced it.31

An announcement in the Vienna Theaterzeitung in October of 1823 concerning the new opera by Schubert and Kupelweiser, states that the libretto is from Calderón. Although the score on the manuscript libretto does not specify a source, it is obviously based on the French romance of Fierabras, which is a part of the body of legends which grew up around Charlemagne, in the latter part of the Middle Ages. The poem appeared in a German translation in the *Buch der Liebe*, by Hagan and Busching, which appeared in 1809. A German translation of Calderon's play on the same subject, *La puerta de Mantabile* (1635) also appeared in 1809, in August Wilhelm von Schlegel's *Spanisches Theater*. Some of the material was also apparently taken from the German legend of Eginhard and Emma, which appeared in the eighteenth century in H. P.

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Sturz's *Chronicon Laurishamense* and was used by many other authors, including Helmina von Chezy, in 1817. All of this material was available to Kupelwieser, and he used it freely.

A Synopsis of *Fierrabras*

Act I

The act opens in a room in the French castle, where a spinning-chorus (No. 1) is being sung by Emma, the daughter of the French king Karl, and her ladies-in-waiting. Their song comes to an end as Eginhard, a knight, enters. He brings news that her father's army has overcome the Moors and captured several of their number. Emma is overcome by the news, and motions the ladies to leave. Eginhard and Emma now reveal themselves to be lovers and discuss the possible effects of the battle on their personal fortunes. Emma proposes that the present, in view of the probable happiness of her father's state of mind, is a propitious moment in which to reveal to him her relation with Eginhard. This leads naturally into a love duet (No. 2), in which they consider the fate of lovers.

A change of scene reveals a large festival hall in the palace. King Karl and a number of his knights, including Eginhard and Roland, join the other men and the ladies in

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a large chorus (No. 3) celebrating the happy result of the battle. There ensues, after a short speech of the king, a dialogue in recitative (No. 4), in which Roland asks for clemency from the king toward a prisoner whom he captured, because of the skill and courage with which he fought. The king promises that all prisoners shall have their freedom, though they will not be allowed to return to Spain. Roland then reveals that his captive is Fierrabras, son of the Moorish king, Boland. Fierrabras is then brought forth and welcomed like a hero.

Emma and her young ladies then approach and present the king with a garland. They sing a quiet chorus in honor of him and his soldiers, at the end of which Fierrabras catches sight of Emma, and becomes very upset. He questions Roland about her identity, and is admonished to hold his tongue. The entire ensemble of men then join in a chorus about the fortunes of war, followed immediately by a recapitulation of the victory chorus which opened the scene.

At the end of this chorus, everyone leaves the stage except Fierrabras and Roland. In a long dialogue (spoken), Fierrabras reveals that he had seen Emma from a distance four years ago in Rome, and had fallen in love with her, but she had disappeared before he could even learn her name. His sister, Florinda, he continues, was luckier, and met and fell in love with a knight in Emma's service. Roland, full
of surprise at the story, then discloses that he himself was that very knight and advises Fierrabras to remain silent about these strange revelations until his position has become more clear. In the following duet (No. 5), the two knights express their hope that everything will turn out well.

The next scene occurs at night, in a garden just outside the castle. Eginhard appears, alone, with a lute, and begins to sing of the trials of lovers (No. 6). Presently Emma comes onto the balcony and the song becomes a duet. Emma disappears from the balcony, opens a door below, and Eginhard vanishes into the castle.

Meanwhile, Fierrabras enters at the opposite side of the stage, wanders to the center, and begins to curse his fate. A disturbance within the castle causes him to wonder, and a men's chorus, heard from within, only increases his confusion. The men are apparently chasing someone, and soon Emma and Eginhard come out of the door. Eginhard turns to go, and runs into Fierrabras. When the Moor realizes who they are, he is overcome with jealousy and the desire to do away with Eginhard, but, after a moment of thought, he has pity and allows Eginhard to escape. Just as he takes Emma's hand to conduct her safely back to the palace, Karl appears, assumes that Fierrabras is trying to seduce his daughter, and calls Eginhard. The king is ironically unaware of Eginhard's part in the preceding scene. Fierrabras makes
a few attempts to protect himself, but is admonished to be silent by Eginhard and Emma. He is taken away to prison.

Meanwhile, a group of knights and soldiers has appeared, bearing a white flag, a palm, and other symbols of peace. A large chorus closes the act.

Act II

The next act opens in the morning, in a free region between the French and Moorish castles. Roland, Eginhard, and a group of other knights are approaching the Moors on a peace mission from Karl. In the opening ensemble (No. 7), they bid farewell to the fatherland, and pray for success and honor. All the knights then go on except Eginhard. Left alone, he expresses his shame for his treatment of Fierrabras and his reluctance to face Boland, Fierrabras's father. He begins singing (No. 8), and resolves to free Fierrabras, regardless of the consequences. A band of Moors enter, led by Brutamonte, and take Eginhard into custody, but not until he has had a chance to call the other French knights on his horn. Roland and the other knights return, but the Moors have already taken Eginhard away. They sing a rather lengthy chorus discussing Eginhard's disappearance and how they must hurry and find him, then finally leave.

The next scene occurs in Boland's castle. His daughter, Florinda, and her maid, Maragond, have a short discussion about her lost lover, Roland, which develops into a duet
(No. 9). They lapse into silence when Boland appears with Brutamonte, who tells them of the capture of Eginhard. That knight is promptly brought in, and reveals that Fierrabras is still alive. He had his freedom, but lost it, and was put under false arrest because of Eginhard's treachery. The ensuing quintet (No. 10) reveals the king's anger at the news, and Eginhard's desire to be punished for his dishonorable deed.

Roland and his envoy of peace are announced, and enter to a large chorus (No. 11). The following conversation between Roland and Boland causes Florinda to recognize, and reveal only to Maragond, her lost love. The king, angry at learning that Fierrabras has embraced Christianity, refuses the peace offers and commands that the French knights be imprisoned. A trio and chorus (No. 12) allow everyone to express his feelings. At the finish, all exit except Florinda, who, after a few spoken lines, in which she promises to free Roland, begins an aria (No. 13), in which she expresses the sorrows of love and fate.

The scene shifts to the tower of the Moor's castle, where the French soldiers have been imprisoned. They join in an unaccompanied hymn to the fatherland (No. 14). In the following conversation, Eginhard reveals to his brother-knights his shameful betrayal of Fierrabras. A noise off-stage, accompanied by the entrance of the orchestra, arouses
their attention. They continue to speak above the orchestra (No. 15) as they follow, listening, the course of someone who is trying to enter their cell. Convinced it is their executioner, they are very surprised when Florinda bursts in. The melodrama becomes song as Roland recognizes her and expresses his joy at finding her. The spirits of the group rise somewhat in the next chorus (No. 16), but Florinda interrupts to warn them of her approaching father and his soldiers. Florinda supplies them with weapons from a nearby room to which she has the key, and the knights leave. Eginhard, Florinda, and Roland sing for a moment of the honorable death, which is a knight's duty, then Florinda is left alone.

The battle is waged in the orchestra and Florinda, from her viewpoint in the tower window, describes and comments upon the action. The French fight valiantly but are overcome. They return to their cell, comment briefly on the misfortunes of fate, and the curtain falls.

Act III
The third act opens back at the French castle, where Emma and her young women are working. They sing hopefully of the future (No. 18). Karl enters as they finish and tells Emma of his fears for his peace envoy. She reveals her feelings for Eginhard, and her father gently berates her for not telling him before. She then must disclose the innocence of Fierrabtras, whom Karl quickly orders freed. In the
following quartet (No. 19) Karl expresses his anger at her and she voices her sorrow; then Fierrabras enters and adds his voice. They are interrupted by the entrance of Eginhard, who has escaped the Moors, and returned to get help. The quartet closes with each expressing his varied feelings over the state of affairs. Karl then orders an envoy to rescue them, and leaves. Eginhard promises to kill himself, but Fierrabras encourages him to help rescue Roland. After a short trio, they all exit.

The next scene opens in the tower of the Moor's castle. The knights are comforting Florinda, confident that Eginhard will bring them help. Florinda expresses her fear for Roland, who is absent, apparently in another cell awaiting execution. Her aria (No. 21) is supported by the chorus of men. The music suddenly becomes a funeral march, and the occupants of the tower observe the preparations below for Roland's execution. Florinda becomes wildly excited, and hangs her scarf outside the window on a lance, begging the executioners to cease. The knights break the door open and hurry out to save Roland.

The scene changes swiftly to the courtyard below the tower where the chorus of Moors is expressing its desire for revenge on Roland (No 22). Florinda rushes out and begs her father for Roland's life, but he remains adamant. The chorus continues to demand his death.
Brutamonte suddenly enters and announces the arrival of a contingent of French knights, who promptly enter the scene. Eginhard frees Roland, who overtakes Boland as he tries to flee, snatches Florinda with one hand and thrusts his sword against the king with the other, but spares him at Fierrabras's command.

Just at this moment Karl and Emma and their retinue appear. Karl gives his daughter Emma to Eginhard, and Boland, suddenly overcome with the spirit of good will, awards Florinda to Roland. Fierrabras, asked by Karl what his reward should be, replies nobly that he only wishes to serve Karl honorably and well. A chorus expressing joy, friendship, and peace closes the opera.
CHAPTER IV

A FORMAL ANALYSIS OF FIERRABRAS

Schubert calls Fierrabras a "heroisch romantische Oper," in three acts, although it employs the spoken dialogue of the Singspiel, as well as the recitative of the Oper. The principal roles are

King Karl . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Bass
Emma, his daughter . . . . . . . . . . . Soprano
Roland, a French knight . . . . . . . . . . Baritone
Eginhard, a French knight . . . . . . . . Tenor
Boland, the Moorish king . . . . . . . . Bass
Fierrabras, his son . . . . . . . . . . . . . Tenor
Florinda, his daughter . . . . . . . . . . Soprano
Maragond, her maid . . . . . . . . . . . Soprano
Brutamonte, a Moorish knight . . . . . Bass

The orchestra consists of two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, three horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tympani, and strings.

The overture, after a few introductory chords in the strings, opens with a hymn, played by horns and trombones. A few measures later the remainder of the brasses and winds are added.

![Musical notation](image)

Fig. 1--Overture, p. 1
This hymn, "O theures Vaterland," appears in Act Two, sung by men's chorus, unaccompanied. But before the statement in the overture can be completed, it is interrupted by the strings' chords again, which lead into the overture proper, the Allegro ma non troppo. The first theme group is comprised of two subjects, the first minor and the second major.

The development of these two themes, plus a lilting second subject which first appears in C major, provide a certain
ambivalence of mode frequently found in Schubert. In this instance the major seems to predominate. All these themes are developed in a standard sonata form, and the overture draws to a conventional, though vigorous, close.

The first act opens with a spinning chorus, for which the strings supply the spinning wheel. The women's voices enter with a charming refrain, which has regular phrases and unadventurous harmonies.

Fig. 3--Act I, p. 42

A soloist provides the verse, which is quite similar to the refrain. A pause on the dominant provides space for a few sentences spoken by Emma, who then sings the third verse in G minor. The tutti returns to the refrain once more, this time in C minor.
Although a long period of spoken dialogue intervenes, the next number is set in the related key of Ab. It is in the form of the cavatina, a two-part aria, or sometimes, as here, a duet, with a slow first section preceding a rapid and brilliant second part. This form was very popular in Italian opera. The first part of this duet for Eginhard and Emma, marked _Andantino_, is introduced by a solo clarinet. The two voices take alternate phrases. The fast section presents a delightful little tune, and Schubert even adds a little trill for the soprano, a tribute to the pyrotechnics usually demanded of such a number.

The piece quickly builds up to a coda, rather extended for such a short number, and ends, after the final Ab major chord, with a curious little addendum for woodwinds.
The change of scene is echoed in the music by a move to a more remote key, D major. Number Three is a large victory chorus, introduced by a series of bombastic orchestral chords. The male chorus presents the first part of the three-part form. This section (A) is in itself a three-part form (aba), with the last two sections being repeated. Schubert achieves variety within this extremely regular and balanced piece through the use of tone color. The second part (B), in the sub-dominant key, is sung by the women's voices, in three parts, accompanied by woodwinds.
The return to the A section is then *tutti*, and in a slightly varied form (though varied only in voice distribution and orchestration, not in phrase lengths, harmony, or melody). An exact restatement of the eight-measure orchestral introduction closes the piece. This piece is a fine model of Schubert's writing technique, generally classical in form but varied and original in other respects.

Number Four is a more extensively developed piece. It opens with a short orchestral statement, in unison, of the theme.

![Fig. 7--Act I, p. 76](image)

The opening intervals of this theme are echoed by the opening intervals of the recitative which begins a few measures later.

![Fig. 8--Act I, p. 76](image)
The first two phrases of recitative are separated by an orchestral reference to the Fierrabras motive which is to appear later.

Fig. 9--Act I, p. 77

Other phrases in the dialogue in recitative are also punctuated with the theme in Figure Seven, or variations on it. A short chorus develops this theme slightly, chiefly in imitative passages between men and women.

At the end of the chorus, the orchestra presents a new theme which is repeated throughout the first half of the following recitative.

Fig. 10--Act I, p. 83
The opening measures of the recitative present the same theme, in disguise, with octave displacement.

As Karl's recitative becomes more melodic in character, the orchestra gives up repeating the theme and lapses into more neutral material—supporting chords and short echoes of his phrases. Another brief choral section is interspersed before Karl resumes his recitative. As he observes Fierrabras, who has just been brought in, the orchestra presents for the first time in full the motive which is associated with Fierrabras at many places in the opera.

The next few measures of recitative continue to be supported by variations on this motive, in the cellos and basses.
Roland's arioso, which follows, contains examples of melodic devices used by Schubert throughout the opera in places of great dramatic import: the chromatic scale and the leap of an octave (or more).

The ensuing dialogue is dotted with orchestral references to the Fierrabras motive, and leads into a change in the character of the music as Karl affirms his decision to let Fierrabras go free. The drama of the preceding scene is completely gone as Emma and her young ladies step forward to sing an idyllic chorus based on a simple melody.
During Karl's reply, the horn and oboe in turn carry this melody, which would be inappropriate to the King's character, while he has a recitative-like section. At the conclusion the orchestra continues to voice the melody pianissimo, as Fierrabras and Roland have a short spoken discussion.

A dominant seventh built on the minor third of the tonic triad, A, suffices to place the music in F. The next ensemble is built upon an uncomplicated, bouncy theme, but it exhibits much greater variety in form, color, and harmony than seen in any of the choruses before.

![Musical notation]

**Fig. 15--Act I, p. 109**

After a repetition of the march and chorus, No. 3, all exit except Fierrabras and Roland. A duet between the two knights, which brings the scene to a close, is in the usual three-part
form, but the middle section is a short canon, closely related thematically to the first section.

The enormous finale to the first act actually consists of seven numbers, but the music is continuous and there are no spoken parts until the end of the act. The first part, called Romanze, is introduced by a clarinet solo and accompanied by pizzicato strings representing Eginhard's lute, with which he is serenading Emma. This piece is strophic, in A minor, and constructed of six-measure phrases. A sudden change to A major ushers in the third verse, sung by Emma, then by the two voices together.

The final chord leads immediately into the orchestral introduction to Fierrabras's recitative and aria. A rather chromatic series of chords centering around G major and minor accompany this recitative, and serve to launch the tenor into his aria, which begins in C major.
A sudden **forte** passage employing the dotted rhythms of the Fierrabras motive announces the middle section, of accompanied recitative, in which the melodic skip of a tenth is used to help convey strong emotion. Fierrabras's outburst is short-lived, however, and a return to the calm C major theme indicates that he has regained control of himself. The C minor section returns, but this time it is even briefer than before, for after only two phrases it takes a turn back into the major, which allows for a brilliant, major coda. After Fierrabras completes his part, the orchestra returns to the trill-like figure first heard at the beginning of this aria, while flute and bassoon briefly remind us of the opening theme. This, one of the few arias in the opera, is beautifully formed to express the emotions of the moment, and is comparable to the most dramatic of Schubert's songs.
At the end of Fierrabras's aria, a new figure, similar to the trill figure of the introduction, appears in the second violin and cello, and by simply moving down a step becomes the accompanying figure of the next portion of the finale, in $A^b$.

The flutes and oboes perform part of the Fierrabras motive pianissimo, while Fierrabras himself has recitative. The entrance of the men's chorus from offstage is accompanied by more elaborate developments of this motive. The accompaniment continues to be much the same as Eginhard and Emma enter, but changes character suddenly when Fierrabras discovers them, and becomes more agitated. Their exclamations punctuate the orchestral background, and grow thicker, until they develop into a three-part canon.

The canon falls apart and the accompaniment breaks down at the dramatically important moment when Fierrabras decides to let Eginhard escape. The three indulge in a short, exuberant farewell, in B. A transition to E provides background for Fierrabras's and Emma's recitative, which is accompanied only by chords, but interrupted at significant moments by violent measures from the orchestra. One section of the recitative is notable, for Emma seems to be beginning an aria, but Fierrabras interrupts her after only twelve measures and the recitative continues.

Shortly after Karl's entrance, a trio, in G minor, expresses the varied feelings of the three: the fear of Emma
and Fierrabras as they await Eginhard's return, and the sorrow and anger of the king over what he believes to be Fierrabras's betrayal of his trust. This trio serves its dramatic purpose admirably, in the long notes of the young pair over the bass's slightly more moving part, with its octave leaps, and the **pianissimo** which is maintained to the end of the very short work.

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The actual entrance of Eginhard is greeted with a sudden orchestral outburst and a shift to C minor. The viola and cello accompany the recitative with a swiftly moving figure as Karl explains the situation to Eginhard.

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**Fig. 18--Act I, p. 197**

The actual entrance of Eginhard is greeted with a sudden orchestral outburst and a shift to C minor. The viola and cello accompany the recitative with a swiftly moving figure as Karl explains the situation to Eginhard.
The recitative grows even more excited and the accompaniment somewhat more dense until, at the climactic moment, offstage trumpets announce the arrival of the peace envoy Eginhard is to lead. A change to C major leads to a large chorus in the grand style, accompanied by full orchestra. A contrasting section in A minor is provided by the four soloists. The return of the chorus and the C major section is varied by short statements by the soloists of their theme, between the phrases of the chorus, and finally all sing together in an extended coda, which ends the act.

The second act opens with a strophic song with choral refrain. It has a rather square theme, which is sung first by Eginhard in C, then by Roland in G. The third verse is sung by both soloists together, with Roland providing the counterpoint.
A short recitative in which the Fierrabras motive figures in the accompaniment (as Eginhard vows to free Fierrabras), is followed by a short march built entirely on this motive. A rather square-cut ensemble between Eginhard and the Moors is broken at intervals by Eginhard's horn calls, echoed off-stage. An exciting Allegro molto vivace develops as the French knights return and wonder what has happened to Eginhard. This pianissimo chorus with its sforzandos is reminiscent of the conspirators' chorus so frequent in Italian opera.

A change of scene brings a duet for two sopranos, in Ab, in two-part form. The quintet which follows is bombastic and also in a two-part form. Boland opens it.
The ensemble answers with a similar phrase, then all continue, usually singing in two groups, with the three highest parts against the two lowest, or one bass against all the others, or one soprano against all others. The second part opens exactly like the first, with a bass solo, but gradually, through different voice distribution, different orchestration, and the necessity of returning to the opening key, the second part becomes distinctly different from the first.

The next chorus is in a similar two-part form, except that at the beginning of the second part it has already been through the dominant and returned to the tonic.

The trio for men's choirs, marked *Allegro Vivace*, is almost fugal in its development. Boland first presents the theme, in F minor.

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Boland.
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To de solt ihr bissen, was ube bernath ge wagt;

Fig. 22--Act II, p. 316

This is answered by a similar theme from Roland and his knights.

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Roland.
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Das le ben leicht zu lassen, ist ube mer Ritter plicht;

Fig. 23--Act II, p. 317
Boland then returns with his original theme, in \( \text{Db} \) this time, accompanied by sopranos and chorus, but after the first four measures it becomes different from the first appearance. The next entrance of the theme is in stretto.

This occurs again a few measures later, then all have free material till the end. A change of tempo provides room for a new theme, formed directly from the old one.

A short chorus on this theme leads to a grand climax, after which all exit except Florinda. She remains to sing an aria, marked \textit{Allegro furioso}, which is preceded by an orchestral
outburst and accompanied by a fast-moving figure in the strings. It is in a quite regular three-part form, in B minor with a modulation to F# minor.

The new scene, in which the French knights are in their cell, opens with their a cappella hymn, "O theures Waterland," quoted in the overture. A section of melodrama follows, in which the words are spoken over pianissimo strings. This accompaniment continues as the melodrama becomes a declamatory recitative, punctuated by interesting, suspenseful, choral phrases.

The high emotional tone of the entire act is given welcome relief in the duet with chorus of the reunited lovers. But the excitement quickly returns in a melodrama, broken by choral sections. The orchestra, which must depict the battle which is going on out of sight, has rapid, extremely chromatic figures which touch briefly on many keys. A chorus intervenes just before the end of the act.

The third act opens with a chorus of young ladies and Emma, in 6-8, very similar to the chorus which opens Act One. Fierrabras's entrance is accompanied by a brief reference to his theme in the orchestra. Similar references to the motive appear in the orchestra throughout this scene. The dotted rhythm of the motive becomes dominant in orchestra and voice in the following trio for Emma, Eginhard, and Fierrabras.

After a short aria for Florinda and men's chorus, in which
the shift from F minor to F major reflects their growing hope of rescue, the rhythmic figure of the Fierrabras motive re-appears, in a funeral march for brasses and winds.

![Musical notation](image)

Fig. 26--Act III, p. 477

This funeral march becomes the theme of a chorus in the next scene.

A trumpet call from on-stage announces the entrance of the rescuers, and the beginning of the *finale*. The form of this *finale* is very free, but is divided into small sections which display various unifying effects. The first phrase of Karl's recitative, in B♭, is repeated a few phrases later in D♭, but the second part of his speech is different each time. Between the two appearances of this phrase there is a short statement by the chorus, which is repeated after the second appearance also. More accompanied recitative is followed by an ensemble and chorus, introduced by a solo phrase sung by Karl.
Upon this theme a short and very rapid chorus is built, which brings the opera to a close.

It is perhaps natural, when first examining a Schubert opera, to look for songs. But in this work the composer seems to have been avoiding, perhaps purposefully, the inclusion of arias. In Act One, there is a recitative and aria for tenor, and in Act Two there is an aria for soprano. All other numbers are either for solo and chorus, ensemble of soloists (with or without chorus), or chorus alone. Only one number is called a Lied; it is the strophic piece for tenor, baritone, and men's chorus, which opens Act Two. The chorus which opens Act One, also strophic, is called merely Introduction. By far the largest amount of music is written for the various ensembles, but there are also a number of pieces merely for chorus.

The very formal structure of the first act seems to break down in the second and third. The three-part form predominates in Act One, while in the last two acts the forms are freer, often some type of two-part form, and there is more recitative or arioso. Maurice Brown believes that Schubert
grew tired of his task in the last two acts;¹ perhaps that view is correct, for the formal construction is less carefully worked out in these acts, and there is more dependence on melodrama. But in many respects the last two acts are more characteristic of the Romantic opera, more forward-looking, than the first. The melding of melodrama, recitative, and more formal settings is very striking.

Schubert's compositional techniques in the opera are generally the same as he used elsewhere. Modulation, especially from major to minor and vice versa, is used, as in many of the songs, to express a change of mood (as in the opening chorus). Modulation is also used to connect different numbers, so that the orchestral background remains unbroken for long stretches of time, as in the finale to the first act, which is in reality seven separate pieces.

Many changes of key involve a simple turn to the dominant or subdominant (as in the second part of many of the three-part pieces), but others are more complicated. At the beginning of the finale to the first act, for instance, the music is in A minor. It goes to A major for a short time, then through a series of notes which outline the A major triad, and expand outward through the notes F and Ab to a dominant seventh on G, and finally cadence on C major.

This series is sequenced a third lower, ending on $A^b$, then a fifth higher, ending on $E^b$. An augmented sixth chord is used to get to $G$ major, around which the music hovers for some time before resolving into $C$ major, the tonic of the following aria. Schubert uses, in this finale and elsewhere in the opera, a great variety of keys and of key relationships, although, besides the move to the dominant or sub-dominant, the modulation to the mediant or sub-mediant seems to predominate. The fact that the mediant can be either major or minor, and that Schubert used the two modes almost interchangeably, helps account for the chromaticism and harmonic freedom of his work.

One of the most interesting techniques in this opera is the use of the motive which is associated throughout the work with the character Fierrabras. It first appears in full in the first act, just as Karl addresses Fierrabras and brings attention to him for the first time, though he has
been on stage for several minutes. The ensemble following the scene in which it first appears is built on several figures which may have been derived from it.

![Musical notation](image1)

**Fig. 29a--Act I, p. 109**

![Musical notation](image2)

**Fig. 29b--Act I, p. 109**

![Musical notation](image3)

**Fig. 29c--Act I, p. 110**

The Fierrabras motive also appears, both in its original and in varied forms, at various places in the remainder of Act One and in the second and third acts.

Schubert's use of this recurring motive helps give unity to this large and rather disjointed work. This technique is
also interesting from the historical standpoint, for it places Schubert, along with Spohr, Weber, and Lortzing, as the predecessor of Wagner. Schubert's use of long through-composed sections employing the arioso or accompanied recitative and his use of chromatic harmonies also point toward the later Romantic opera. There seems to be nothing in the music of *Fierrabras* which would make it inferior to the operas of his contemporaries, such as Weber, or inferior to any of Schubert's other compositions.
Performances of *Fierrabras* and the other Schubert operas have been very rare. Parts of *Fierrabras* were given in concert form in Vienna in 1853 and again in 1858. The first stage production was in Karlsruhe, February 9, 1897, but the music was revised for that performance by O. Neitzel and the text by F. Mottl. The text was translated into French for a production in Brussels in 1926. A concert version was also heard in London in 1938.\(^1\)

None of these performances, with the possible exception of the one in Brussels, was in the original version. It has always been assumed that the work could not be performed as it stands; at any rate, no one has ever tried. True, there are certain problems in production, especially in the rapid shift of scenes in the third act, but modern stage technique could undoubtedly conquer such difficulties easily.

Probably the real reason for the scarcity of these performances lies in the conservative spirit of opera theater managers. Each passing year without a performance makes this and other works like it more obscure. Maurice Brown suggests

that the reason is not the bad libretto, nor any lack in the music itself, but the fact that a vocal score is missing.²

He reasons that if a score which opera managers could read were readily accessible, they could at least consider the performance of it.

Scholarly treatment of *Fierrabras* in written works has been similarly slight, although scholars may be expected to be able to read the score. The trend has been generally to dismiss the Schubert operas as second-rate works hardly worth mentioning.

Alfred Einstein considers *Fierrabras* one of Schubert's very worst compositions, in which he reached the "lowest depths" of his operatic works.

It is no sacrilege to say that this, his last completed opera, is also his most indifferent, empty, and conventional one. It is difficult, too, to find even one number which would force us to confess that this is no longer operatic currency or stage technique but Schubertian melody, Schubertian euphony, and Schubertian modulation—modulation, that is to say, born of a full heart.³

This statement must be contrasted with Maurice Brown's, "the first act of 'Fierrabras' is second to nothing in the whole field of German Romantic opera."⁴ Such a wide divergence of

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opinion from two recognized authorities would alone indicate that this work merits the attention of others.

Rosamunde is the only one of the stage works to achieve general recognition, although Die Verschworenen has had a certain measure of success. This opera has been done many times in various German cities, in the years since its première in Frankfurt in 1861. In addition, it has been seen in London, New York, Paris, Budapest, and St. Petersburg.\(^5\)

All of the other completed operas have been performed at least once, except the youthful work, Das Teufels Lustschloss. Unfortunately, performances of mangled versions have been accepted without question. Donald F. Tovey and others rewrote for performance both Die Zwillingsbrüder and Der vierjährige Posten.\(^6\) Die Zauberharfe has been adapted to be done with various plays, including Shakespeare's Twelfth Night.\(^7\) And numbers from Alfonso und Estrella and some of the other works were set to a text taken from Shakespeare's The Tempest, and performed in Berlin in 1958.\(^8\)

In writings about Schubert in general, the operas are often dismissed with a word or two, usually exclaiming what a great opera composer he would have been had he found better

\(^5\)Loewenberg, op. cit., col. 952-956.

\(^6\)Ibid., col. 668.

\(^7\)Ibid., col. 1321.

librettos. Perhaps those who speak so harshly of the librettos never read beyond Des Teufels Lustschloss. More serious writers, even those who treat the operas only briefly, generally discuss some particular point, such as the use of the Leitmotif in Fierrabras. Schiedermair's Die Deutsche Oper and Grout's A Short History of Opera fall into this category. More complete discussions of the operas are to be found in Vetter's Der Klassiker Schubert and in the biographies by Brown and Einstein. A lengthy essay by A. Hyatt King in The Music of Schubert, edited by Gerald Abraham, is concerned with the stage works, but concentrates on Rosamunde and is, unfortunately, full of errors of fact.

Recently published books, such as the Brown biography, show a tendency to study the operas more carefully and to consider their value more seriously than earlier writings. But a final judgement of their value or lack of value must, as Brown says, remain in abeyance until they can be seen and heard in a really good stage performance.9 Perhaps, when the twentieth century outgrows its fear and dislike of the products of the nineteenth, these works and hundreds of other similarly forgotten but worthy ones will be discovered by performers, record manufacturers, and public, just as in recent years these groups have discovered thousands of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century compositions. Then every

musician and every opera goer will be able to form his own opinion on these pieces.
## APPENDIX

### CATALOGUE OF STAGE WORKS

#### Operas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Libretto</th>
<th>Date Composed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Der Spiegelritter, operetta (unfinished)</td>
<td>August von Kotzebue</td>
<td>1812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Des Teufels Lustschloss</td>
<td>August von Kotzebue</td>
<td>1813-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrast (unfinished)</td>
<td>Johann Mayrhofer</td>
<td>1815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudine von Villa Bella, operetta (incomplete)</td>
<td>Goethe</td>
<td>1815</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fernando, operetta</td>
<td>Albert Stadler</td>
<td>1815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Die Freunde von Salamanka, operetta</td>
<td>Johann Mayrhofer</td>
<td>1815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Der vierjährige Posten, operetta</td>
<td>Theodor Körner</td>
<td>1815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Die Bürgschaft (unfinished)</td>
<td>?, based on Schiller's poem</td>
<td>1816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Die Zwillingebrüder, operetta</td>
<td>Georg Ernst von Hofmann</td>
<td>1818-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakuntala (sketch)</td>
<td>Johann Philipp Neumann (after Kalidasa)</td>
<td>1820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfonso und Estrella</td>
<td>Franz von Schober</td>
<td>1821-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fierrabras</td>
<td>Joseph Kupelwieser (after Calderón)</td>
<td>1823</td>
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<tr>
<td>Die Verschworenen (later called Der häusliche Krieg)</td>
<td>Ignaz Franz Castelli, based on Aristophanes's Lysistrata</td>
<td>1823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Libretto</td>
<td>Date Composed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Der Graf von Gleichen (sketch)</td>
<td>Eduard von Bauernfeld</td>
<td>1827-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Die Minnesänger (lost)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1815 (?)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Other Stage Music</th>
<th>Written for</th>
<th>Date Composed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Die Zauberharfe, melodrama</td>
<td>Georg Ernst von Hofmann's play</td>
<td>1820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosamunde von Cyprenn</td>
<td>Helmina von Chézy's play</td>
<td>1823</td>
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