

German Lieder for Voice, Piano and Horn from the Early 19th Century – An Original Sound Expression

Ioana Luminița VASILE¹

Abstract: *In the sphere of chamber sonorities, the German Lieder for voice, piano and horn from the beginning of the 19th century are occupying a special place. These lieder are complex, are bringing together three different, seemingly contrasting instruments, and the sound that results produces a memorable impression on the audience. In Romania, these lieder are not as well known as they are in Germany or in other Western European countries. In Germany there is also a long tradition in the construction of brass instruments and their interpretive study. Another German tradition is that of amateur brass bands, which are present in every town or village at the community events. In this way, the presence of the horn in German vocal-chamber works, as well as their large number, can be explained. I believe that the lieder for voice, piano and horn deserve to be brought to the attention of the Romanian public, due to their musical qualities and innovative elements.*

Keywords: *Lied; horn; marching band; German countries; composers of the 19th century; Romanticism;*

Introduction

I discovered the Lieder composed for voice, horn and piano four years ago, out of a desire to collaborate with my brother, who is studying the French horn. At first, I was intrigued by this timbral association, unusual for the Romanian and Balkan space. However, after listening to the first recording of the lied "Auf dem Strom" D 943 by Franz Schubert, performed by soprano Barbara Hendricks, hornist Bruno Schneider and pianist Radu Lupu, I considered that these lieder are worth being researched and brought to the attention of the Romanian public.

In the course of my research work, I learned that there are a relatively large number of opuses dedicated to this type of vocal-chamber work, both in France and Italy, and especially in Germany. Many of these are written in the 19th century, but there are also many lieder composed in the 20th century. I focused on researching German lieder for voice, horn and piano from the beginning of the 19th century, because I wanted to know more about the origins of this phenomenon and I wanted to find answers to several questions: why were so many works composed for this type of chamber ensemble and why important composers such as Franz Schubert, Louis Spohr or Franz Lachner chose to dedicate works to this chamber ensemble group? The answers were not slow to appear and were closely related to the economic, political, social and cultural development of Prussia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire which were at that time.

¹ Third year PhD student, "George Enescu" National University of Arts Iași, vasile_ioana_luminita@yahoo.com.

1. Franz Schubert - "The Father of the Lied" *Auf dem Strom*

Regarding the lied genre "Schubert is considered the father of the genre, as Haydn created the string quartet and Liszt the symphonic poem."² About Schubert, Franz Liszt said: "Harmony, freshness, power, charm, reverie, passion, tranquility, tears and flames that come from the depths of your heart and the height of your spirit, you would almost make people forget, dear Schubert, the greatness of your mastery by the delight of your heart."³

Franz Schubert definitely and irrevocably influenced the lied genre. "It cannot be said that the lied did not exist as a genre until the 18th century. From the point of view of content, it was reduced to simple songs or romances, based on lyrics - most of the time - less inspired and deep, sometimes melodramatic and restricted in terms of theme, and the instrumental part, limited to a simple accompaniment."⁴ If until then the lieder were simple songs accompanied by the piano, starting with Schubert, the piano takes over the soloist responsibilities of the voice, actively participating in creating the sound image of the musical piece. In this way the composer also proceeded with regard to the horn, in the chamber ensemble voice – horn – piano: the two instruments have interpretative roles equal to that of the voice.

The song *Auf dem Strom* („On the River”) D 943 was composed in 1928, especially to be performed by the tenor Ludwig Tietze and the horn player Josef Rudolf Lewy, on the occasion of the only concert with pieces entirely composed by Schubert. The lied was published as posthumous opus 119 in October 1829. The date of this concert coincides with the one-year commemoration of the great Ludwig van Beethoven, whom Schubert admired and respected all his life. It is very likely that Schubert composed the lied *Auf dem Strom* with the thought of honoring Beethoven's memory, if we consider the farewell message of the lyrics and the unfulfilled love of the narrator (the same motif of unfulfilled love as in the famous lied cycle composed by Beethoven: *An die ferne Geliebte – To the distant beloved* op. 98).

The choice of the horn as the third instrument in the ensemble was not accidental. At that time, the french horn was going through great transformations: pistons and valves that made it much easier to play this instrument were invented and that fact increased its ambitus and gave it lightness in interpretation. Beethoven used the horn a lot in his compositions, both as an important element in the orchestra (it is present in all his symphonies, and in the III Eroica symphony, the VI Pastorale and the IX the horn has important solo passages), as well and as a solo instrument (Sonata in F major Op.17) or in chamber music (Septet op. 20, Quintet for oboe, 3 horns and bassoon WoO 208, Sextet for 2 horns and string quartet op. 81b or Octet op. 103). The horn has long been associated with the archetypal figures of the hero and the hunter, and with qualities such as courage, strength of character and ambition. In the case of the lied *Auf dem Strom*, the presence of the horn can lead us to associate it with the figure of the hero much admired and honored by Schubert.

² Carmen Chelaru. 2020. *Cui i-e frică de istoria muzicii?*. vol. II, ediția a II-a. București: Editura Muzicală, p. 248.

³ Mme. Maurice Gallet. 1907. *Schubert et le Lied*. Paris: Ed. Perrin & Cie, Libraires-Éditeurs, Librairie Academique.

« Harmonie, fraîcheur, force, charme, rêverie, passion, apaisement, larmes et flammes qui se dégagent des profondeurs de ton cœur et de l'élévation de ton esprit, tu ferais presque oublier, cher Schubert, la grandeur de ta maîtrise par l'enchantement de ton cœur. » (trad. în limba engleză de Ioana Luminița Vasile).

⁴ Dumitru Bughici. 1978. *Dicționar de forme și genuri muzicale*. București: Editura Muzicală, p.170.

Auf dem Strom Auf dem Strom is not an easy piece of music. Being composed for the tenor Ludwig Titze⁵, who had a supple voice with real qualities and facility in the high register, the vocal melodic line is difficult, which is one of the reasons why this beautiful lied is approached quite rarely.

Auf dem Strom.
Gedicht von L. Rellstab.
Für eine Singstimme mit Begleitung von Waldhorn und Pianoforte
Schubert's Werke. componirt von Serie 20. N^o 568.
FRANZ SCHUBERT.
Erschienen als Op. 119.

März 1848.

Mässig.

The image displays a musical score for the lied 'Auf dem Strom' by Franz Schubert. It is arranged for Waldhorn in E, Singstimme (voice), and Pianoforte. The tempo is marked 'Mässig.' (Moderate). The score shows the beginning of the piece, with the piano introduction and the vocal entry. The piano part features arpeggiated triplets in the right hand, which imitate water waves. The vocal line is in a high register, reflecting the original performance by tenor Ludwig Titze.

Musical example no.1: *Auf dem Strom*, D 943, Op. 119, F. Schubert, mäs. 1 – 7.

And the part reserved for the horn player is very demanding, especially in relation to the voice: in this context, the instrumentalist is required to possess a fine musical ear and musicality, to know when to help the voice stand out and when to highlight the horn. The piano is the link between the voice and the horn and it also establishes the sound framework of the lied's environment (the arpeggiated triplets in the right hand imitate the water waves, a frequent motif in Schubert's lieder).

The introduction is reserved for the piano and the horn, which together establish the opening atmosphere of the lied and prepare the entrance of the voice, which shares with the audience, with a mixture of longing, sadness and hope, the pain of being away from the person and the places he loves. It's a gallant song, built in part on a simple, but memorable tonal arpeggio.

⁵ Tenor german, (1797-1850), membru al Capelei Imperiale și a Tonkünstler-Societät. Vezi: ****Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. 1910. Edited by J. A. Fuller Maitland, Vol. V. New York: The Macmillan Company, p. 129.

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Auf dem Strom' by Franz Schubert, measures 16-23. The score is written for voice, piano, and horn. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The piano accompaniment features a characteristic arpeggiated texture. The lyrics are: 'Nimm die letz - ten Ab - schieds - küs - se, und die we - hen - den, die Grü - sse, die ich noch an's U - fer'.

Musical example no. 2: *Auf dem Strom*, D. 943, Op. 119, F. Schubert, mäs. 16-23.

The lyrics written by Ludwig Rellstab (who also wrote the lyrics for most of the Lieder in the Swanengesang D 957 cycle, including the famous Serenade - Ständchen) are structured in five stanzas of eight lines, each of which is delimited by an interlude supported by the piano and the horn. The song ends with a Coda in which the last lines of the penultimate stanza are resumed, but using another melodic line, more tender and smoother at the beginning, which expresses the hope of a future reunion with the loved one: *Bei der Sterne mildem Scheine / Nannt' ich sie zuerst die Meine; / Dort vielleicht, o tröstend Glück! / Dort begeg' ich ihrem Blick.* ("In the gentle glow of the stars / I first called her mine / There, perhaps, O merciless fate! / There I shall meet her glow."). The piano resumes its arpeggiated accompaniment, and the horn answers him again, like an echo. The verses are repeated, gradually accumulating melodic tension, which calms down at the end of the lied, as a sign of resignation in the face of implacable destiny, dominated by the Divinity. Teamwork is very important in studying this lied: it is necessary for the three performers to discuss together and find a common sound image to follow during rehearsals until they reach the final result.

The lied *Auf dem Strom* inspired other composers to dare to choose the horn in relation to the voice and the piano, to give the audience memorable feelings and sound images.

2. German Composers of Lieder for Voice, Horn and Piano

The success of the *Auf dem Strom* lied proved that the unusual pairing of the horn with the voice was inspired: "The horn is the most versatile of the brass instruments, from a timbral point of view. [...] because the horn can sonically homogenize with any from the instruments in

the orchestra. It impresses with its noble, generous sound, so suitable for cantilenas, but also with its penetrating and consistent sound in passages loaded with brilliance. "⁶

Over time, several composers, both German, Italian and French, have chosen the chamber ensemble consisting of voice, horn and piano to create lieder with an impact on the public. One of these was Heinrich Proch⁷, whose lied *Das Alpenhorn* ("The Horn of the Alps") op. 18, published in 1836, had a resounding success at the time. Other lieder composed by him for this formula are: *Mein Reichtum* ("My Wealth") Op. 4 and *Der sänger und der wanderer* ("The Singer and the Wanderer") Op.31, *Die Mutter Wird mich Fragen* Op.159 ("Mother will ask me"); *Der Wanderer* Op.10 no.1 ("The Wanderer") or *Unter den Dunklen Linden* Op.122 ("Under the Shady Limes").

The famous violinist and composer Louis Spohr⁸, (inventor of the contrachin that is indispensable to violinists today), composed *Lied der Emma* ("Emma's Lied") WoO 92 for voice, horn and harp or piano in 1825. His wife was a talented harpist and Ludwig Spohr (by his real name) dedicated many compositions to her and for her favorite instrument, among which is the aforementioned lied. He also composed many duets for violin and harp which the couple performed on their long tours of Western European countries. Johann Wenzel Kalliwoda⁹ composed in 1839 the lied *Heimweh* ("Homeloving") WoO IX/19 for voice, horn and piano, and Carl Banck¹⁰ wrote *Abendruh* ("Evening Rest").

An example of a cycle of lieder for this chamber ensemble is *4 Gesänge* ("4 Songs") Op.117 composed by Carl Gottlieb Reissiger¹¹, a personality who influenced in a beneficial way the musical life of the city of Dresden, through his activity as music director of the Dresden Opera and Kapellmeister of the Court of Dresden, where he was the successor of Carl Maria von Weber.

Franz Lachner¹² was one of Franz Schubert's close friends from the last period of his life and participated in his famous evenings generically called Schubertiade. Lachner was a prominent figure in German musical life, holding the position of Kapellmeister in Mannheim and later the same post in Munich. He composed several lieder for voice, horn and piano: the lied cycles *4 Lieder* Op. 27 ("4 Lieder"), *Waldklänge* Op.28 ("Forest Sounds"), *3 Lieder* ("3 Songs") Op. 30, *4 Gedichte* ("4 Poems") Op.34 or the lied *Frauenliebe und Leben* Op.59 ("Woman's Love and Life"). His younger brother, Ignaz Lachner, also a talented musician and composer, composed lieder for voice, horn and piano, such as: *An die Entfernte* ("Far Away") Op.23, *Überal du* ("Wherever You") Op.17 or *2 Lieder*, Op.43.

⁶ Cristian Borcan. 2020. "Principii esențiale ale inițierii și dezvoltării cântatului la corn". In *Porți deschise către performanța muzicală instrumentală și vocală* (Ghid pedagogic), coord. Cătălin Crețu, Cristina Popescu-Stănești. București: Editura Universității de Muzică București, p. 263.

⁷ ****Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 1908. Edited by J. A. Fuller Maitland, Vol. V. New York: The Macmillan Company, p.815.

⁸ *Ibidem*, vol. IV, pp.638–643.

⁹ *Ibidem*, vol. II, p. 558.

¹⁰ Compozitor german, (1809-1889) Vezi: <https://www.conbrio.de/content/buch/regensburger-studien-zur-musikgeschichte/carl-banck-und-die-musikkritik-dresden-1846> accesat în data de 17.05.2023.

¹¹ ****Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. cit., Vol. IV, p. 59.

¹² *Ibidem*, vol. II, p. 617.

3. The Influence of Lieder for Voice, Horn and Piano

Lieder composed for voice, horn and piano brought an element of novelty, complementing the sonorous richness of the vocal - chamber repertoire of the early 19th century. The horn was one of the instruments that underwent great transformations and improvements during that period, and as a result, it became a more accessible instrument with a richer sound and an expanded ambitus. So, it could easily be included in the chamber ensembles, even in the vocal-chamber ensembles.

The industrial revolution led to an increase in the standard of living of the population, facilitated access to education for a large number of people and led to the development of the middle social class. Cultural life gradually developed and enriched. Music became accessible to a growing number of people who were interested in learning and purchasing musical instruments and sheet music. The musical instrument manufacturing industry and sheet music publishers developed in line with the population's demand. In many homes belonging to the bourgeoisie, children were encouraged to learn musical instruments and chamber music was frequently played in the family.

Brass bands appeared in most German towns, regardless of their size (villages, cities), as a result of an initiative by the church, which wanted to bring religious music closer to the parishioners and involve them directly in the religious service, following the exhortation of psalm 150 of David: "Praise Him with trumpets!". In this way, the horn became a very popular instrument, accessible to many people.

Apart from religious songs, people used to sing lieder and chamber music together as a recreational activity. This explains the large number of compositions for voice, horn and piano in the 19th century, despite the fact that approaching an instrument like the horn is not easy, especially in relation to the voice: "No instrumentalist is perfect in terms of intonation, but the horn's reputation for being difficult and considerably more likely to cause fakes is both an advantage and a curse. Most performers will accept that their task is difficult and they would don't mind the general public being aware of it, but it's annoying that so many listeners and critics wait for slip-ups and then comment: "The bugler missed a note", especially if it's the only note in the concert that was missed."¹³

From a vocal point of view, the interpretation of lieder for voice, horn and piano requires a flexible technique, based on good communication and coordination with the other members of the ensemble. The ensemble members must decide together the final sound image of each lied element that they will share with the audience. Each musician has an important role in the ensemble, they often dialogue, the main theme passes from one instrument to another. "Art is the ability to portray reality through the comprehension (not the experiencing) of all the emotions that any person may be forced to encounter. To acquire the ability to simulate the entire gamut of human emotions, which far exceeds what any individual can ever expect to personally encounter, is to successfully ply one's craft to its fullest artistic realization"¹⁴

Even if they are demanding to perform, the lieder for voice, horn and piano have remained in the repertoire of great performers, such as: Marie McLaughlin, Barry Tuckwell, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Joan Sutherland, Richard Bonyngne, Barbara Hendricks, Bruno Schneider or Radu Lupu.

¹³ Barry Tuckwell. 2002. *Horn*. Yehudi Menuhin Music Guides. London: Kahn & Averill, p. XVII.

¹⁴ Richard Miller. 2000. *Training soprano voices*. New York: Oxford University Press, p.159.

4. Conclusions

Lieder for voice, horn and piano represent a new element for the audience and a challenge for the performers, who must adapt to this unique and unusual formula for the Romanian space. Unlike the German countries, in Romania there is no tradition regarding the study of brass instruments. Only in Transylvania, due to German influences, there are still brass bands in villages or communes with Saxon descendants. For example, the brass band in Petrești (Petersdorf) near Sebeș has a tradition of over 100 years, being founded in 1879 by Michael Thut, preacher, organist, then conductor and leader of the brass band.

Over time, the horn went through a long series of transformations that improved the sound and made it easier to use. The human voice has evolved permanently and gradually, in perfect harmony with musical styles, gaining in volume, sound penetration and virtuosity. Both are untempered musical instruments, for which the performer uses the column of air generated by the lungs and directed by the diaphragm to shape and project the sound. The difference between them is that, in the case of vocal soloists, the sound is formed in the larynx, under the action of the column of air on the vocal cords, and is projected into the resonating cavities of the cranial box, to be amplified and projected to the audience. In the case of horn players, the sound is formed with the help of the lips and is conducted through the tubing of the instrument, with the help of the air column and the pressure exerted by the diaphragm and the lower abdominal girdle of muscles; the sound vibrations are amplified and the pistons have the ability to change the pitch of the sound, which is propagated through the funnel of the instrument

Lieder for this type of chamber ensemble can be successfully presented to the Romanian public, because they are original, have a special but surprisingly pleasant timbral sound, and the melodic lines are beautiful and easy to remember.

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