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Creating a 'Classic' in the Programme Notes of the Crystal Palace Saturday Concerts

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The Crystal Palace held a key position in London concert life during the 1860s and 70s as one of the few public venues to host high quality orchestral music. Importantly, audience members were able to buy single tickets on the day, as opposed to the prevailing practice of paying for a whole-season subscription, making the Saturday Concerts accessible to a much greater range of people. To cater to this newly-broadened audience, the programme booklets featured lengthy programme notes, a form of writing that was still in its infancy (the earliest examples date from the 1840s). These notes were a crucial part of the institutional context for performances of new or unfamiliar music in the nineteenth century, helping create the idea of 'classic' works and composers at the key moment of first impressions.

The Saturday Concerts were especially important for Schubert reception in Britain. The promotional efforts of August Manns, the conductor, and George Grove, then Secretary of the Crystal Palace Company, led to important performances of several early symphonies and the incidental music for Rosamunde. *Grove's programme notes were especially influential on an audience that had never heard this music before. A close examination Grove's texts shows how they made 'classics' of Schubert and his music, referring to financial status, gender, religion, classical history, and imperial identity. This strategy was common to all composers that Grove and Manns wished to promote, though Schubert required special handling on certain key issues. However, these texts also suggest that 'classic' did not necessarily equate to 'canonic'. After all, the ideological promotion of Schubert often failed to secure his works a permanent place the repertoire of the Saturday Concerts. Overall these programme notes suggest some complexity to the emergence of 'the classics', and provide valuable insights many areas of Victorian thinking around music.*

This article uses the programme notes from the Crystal Palace Saturday Concerts during the 1860s, 70s and 80s as case studies for examining the discourses around 'classic' composers.[1] As a starting point for how the Crystal Palace audiences at this

[1] Citations for programme booklets are constructed as follows: location, date (if not cited), position of the concert in the season (1, 2, 3, etc.): page number. The location sigla are taken from the Online Catalogue of RISM Library Sigla (www.rism.info/en/sigla.html#c2487), with the addition of -B and -L suffixes to indicate loose or bound copies.

time might have understood the term, we could consider Hubert Parry's 1878 definition in George Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*:

> CLASSICAL is a term which in music … is used of works which have held their place in general estimation for a considerable time, and of new works which are generally considered to be of the same type and style. Hence the name has come to be especially applied to works in the forms which were adopted by the great masters of the latter part of the last century[2]

Parry emphasizes ideas of longevity and greatness, and the latter in particular suggests that 'classical' offered a high status for both composer and music. Importantly, although it was especially useful for music from 'the latter part of the last century', Parry's definition states that it also applied to 'new works' that formed part of the lineage.

Those who wrote the programme notes for the Saturday Concerts would have certainly valued these ideas, as they boosted the repertoire that was being performed; however, they tended not to draw on the language of 'classic' status directly, or at least not in isolation. Instead, the idea of high value for a composer and their music was conveyed through a range of discourses, such as personal expression, artistic and financial struggle, gender, religion, Greco-Roman antiquity, and imperial identity. Indeed, multiple discourses might appear over the course of a programme note, blending together to form a mutually supportive framework. Some of these discourses have been outlined by existing scholarship, such as Mark Evan Bonds's recent discussion of the 'Beethoven Syndrome' as a model for understanding music as expressing the emotions of the composer (as discussed below). Others suggest that music could have been meaningful to Victorian audiences in ways that the composers could not possibly have intended, pushing into terrain that is much less explored in the literature.

Nonetheless, Victorian programme notes also suggest that 'classic' status for any given composer was still contested. After all, any case made for a composer's status carried an implication that their work required critical support; in principle, such efforts would have been superfluous for composers whose status was unquestioned. Further complications arise when we examine the practicalities surrounding the composers who were presented as 'classic' in the programme notes, namely that praise for their music may not have been matched by frequent performances. For the purposes of this paper, I will argue that this gap between rhetoric and repertoire represents a corresponding distinction between 'classic' and what we might refer to instead as 'canonic'. The limited scope of the present study precludes any in-depth engagement with the now-extensive musicological literature on the latter term. Nonetheless, the connection between 'canonic' status for works or composers and frequent performances pervades the work of important canon scholars such as Kerman, Bergeron, Citron, Weber, and so on, suggesting that it does form an important element of what the term means to us now.[3] With this distinction in mind, it

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[2] Quoted from George Grove, ed., *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1879): 365. The earlier date derives from fact that the serialized fascicles that were released before the collected volumes, with 'Classical' appearing in No.3 from July 1878. See Leanne Langley, 'Roots of a Tradition: The *First Dictionary of Music and Musicians*', in *George Grove, Music and Victorian Culture*, ed. Michael Musgrave (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003): 190.

[3] Respectively: Joseph Kerman, 'A Few Canonic Variations', *Critical Inquiry* 10/1 (1983): 107–25; Marcia J. Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

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becomes possible to observe that a composer or their works could be presented as 'classic' during the Victorian era without being 'canonic', with the latter status perhaps to come in time, but which also might never materialize.[4]

The Crystal Palace programme notes drew on these discourses for a number of composers who would become central to the 'classical' repertoire as it emerged, including Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Haydn, and Mozart, among others. Their works clearly fitted into the idea of 'classical' we see in Parry's definition above, ostensibly surviving the decades that had passed since their composition and following the models of the 'great masters', and the full range of discourses outlined above appeared frequently in the Saturday Concert programme notes. For the sake of focus, this article will mainly discuss the notes written for Schubert's orchestral music across this period. This repertoire is especially valuable for the present study as it was more-or-less unknown for the first half of the century. The early symphonies in particular had remained in manuscript and unpublished, and most likely went unperformed in the composer's lifetime.[5] The performances of these works at the Crystal Palace were the first opportunity for anyone, experienced listener or otherwise, to hear this music, and the programme notes for these occasions were therefore unique opportunities to establish Schubert's reputation among the general public. This article uses these notes as test cases for the wider understanding of what it meant for a composer's music to be constructed as 'classic', demonstrating the overarching patterns for how other major composers were discussed. Although there are some aspects that are particular to Schubert, and may be of interest to those seeking to broaden their understanding of Schubert reception in Britain, the aim here is to outline the general characteristics of a 'classic' framework that was deployed much more widely than just for Schubert.

George Grove (1820–1900), then the Secretary of the Crystal Palace Company, wrote the vast majority of the Saturday Concert programme notes on Schubert. His later involvement in the *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1878–1887) and principalship of the new Royal College of Music gives his notes a special place in the discipline of musicology as it was developing in Victorian Britain. Indeed, his research into Schubert's life and work for the Crystal Palace programme notes was one of the key factors behind his decision to create the *Dictionary*. Indeed, his research into Schubert's life and work for the Saturday Concerts was one of the key factors behind his decision to create the *Dictionary*, and his programme notes formed the backbone of many of his own entries. The influential position the *Dictionary* came to hold gave these writings an unusually long reach, shaping ideas about Schubert for many decades after it was published.[6]

Press, 1993); Katherine Bergeron and Philip V. Bohlman, *Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its Canons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); and William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[4] For a discussion of the distinction between classic and canonic status, see the introduction of this issue.

[5] For a recent discussion of nineteenth-century ideas of 'genius' across a range of contexts, see Joyce E. Chaplin and Darrin M. McMahon, eds., *Genealogies of Genius* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). For a specifically musical treatment, see Tia DeNora, *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius: Musical Politics in Vienna, 1792–1803* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

[6] For example, Fuller-Maitland's second edition of the *Dictionary* from 1904 retained most of Grove's original Schubert entry, edited by William H. Husk (vol. 4, pp. 280–335).

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Aside from their influential position, there are two factors that make Grove's programme notes so useful for a study of 'classic' status. Firstly, Grove was clear about his position as an amateur writing for other amateurs. As part of an outline of how he got started writing programme notes in 1880, he stated: 'I wrote about the symphonies because I wished to make them clear to myself, and to discover the secret of the things that charmed me so and then from that sprang the wish to make other amateurs see it in the same way'.[7] Even 16 years later, the preface to his book *Beethoven and his Nine Symphonies* shows that his sense of his amateur status had not abated:

> This book is addressed to the amateurs of this country … In short, it is a humble endeavour to convey to others the method in which an amateur has obtained much pleasure and profit out of works which in their own line are as great as Shakespeare's plays. It would be presumptuous in me to attempt to interest professional musicians, who naturally know all that I have been able to put together, and much more; and in a more complete and accurate manner.[8]

The same sense of humility and personal touch came out in his programme notes. Alongside the personal pronouns that many other authors avoided, there is an acknowledged uncertainty regarding the value of his own opinions, and a clear sense of deference to more august authorities. This meant that he was engaging with the audiences of the Crystal Palace as an equal, not a superior, and had recent experience of his own to inform what might be useful to an audience who might be hearing these works for the first time.

Secondly, Grove was keenly aware of the need to produce appropriate text for the circumstances: his public journalism, his programme notes, and his *Dictionary* entries all adopt different approaches, especially on how to balance between 'factual' information, more interpretive or figurative language, and descriptions of the music itself. He spelled out his awareness of these different requirements in a footnote to his entry for 'Beethoven' in the *Dictionary*, stating that he had taken fewer citations from a *Macmillan's Magazine* article by Dannreuther than he might have done because 'the style of his remarks is not suited to the bald rigidity of a Dictionary [sic] article'.[9] We can therefore assume that Grove's programme notes were appropriately tailored to their environment, and for this reason, they will be the only writings discussed here.[10]

Programme Notes and Listening Practices

Programme notes – essays printed in concert programmes to explain the music to the audience – were a new form of writing for the nineteenth century. Catherine

[7] As cited in Charles Graves, *The Life and Letters of Sir George Grove* (London: Macmillan, 1903): 52.

[8] George Grove, *Beethoven and his Nine Symphonies* (London: Novello, Ewer and Co, 1986): v.

[9] George Grove, ed., *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 1st ed., 4 vols (London: Macmillan, 1879–1889) 1:207n1.

[10] There may be further context for Grove's thoughts about Schubert in his writings elsewhere, but these other writings would need equivalent contextualization for their respective audiences to be properly understood. There is plenty to unpack here about what Grove thought programme note readers would want, especially within the specific environment of the Crystal Palace.

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Dale's work traced the earliest examples to the Reid Concerts in Edinburgh, beginning in 1840, but as a wider phenomenon it seems to have emerged in a number of locations independently across the 1840s.[11] Chamber music seems to have been a particularly consistent beneficiary of these explanatory texts, especially at John Ella's Musical Union Concerts and the Beethoven Quartet Society Concerts in London.[12] Notes for orchestral concerts seem to have emerged more haphazardly, in keeping with the greater difficulty of organizing larger events. Some institutions, such as the New York Philharmonic and the Philharmonic Society in London, provided the odd text here and there, but with no consistent offering, and with no evidence that their respective practices were known to each other.[13] As orchestral concerts became more common in the 1850s and 60s, though, the provision of programme notes to go with them increased as well.[14] Whatever the geographical origin or type of music explained, the scholars who have studies these texts agree that they seem to reflect a new feeling that the audience should pay detailed attention to the music, and that, crucially, they should understand and value the music they were hearing.[15]

Part of the background to this phenomenon was the changing audience for orchestral music: with wealth and leisure time rising during the nineteenth century, there emerged a new group of people eager to use these gains to develop their cultural aspirations.[16] Institutions and organizations began responding to their wishes, offering products and events at which they could spend their

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[11] Catherine Dale, 'The 'Analytical' Content of the Concert Programme Note Re-Examined: Its Growth and Influence in Nineteenth-Century Britain', in *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies*, Vol. 2, ed. Jeremy Dibble and Bennett Zon (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002): 199–222. A seemingly independent example includes the extensive notes for orchestral music at the concerts given by the Hargreaves Society in Manchester from 1841, written by the honorary secretary of the society, Charles Sever (Rachel Johnson, personal communication).

[12] Christina Bashford, 'Not Just "G": Towards a History of the Programme Note', in *George Grove, Music and Victorian Culture*, ed. Michael Musgrave (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003): 115–43.

[13] All of the New York Philharmonic programme booklets, dating back to the orchestra's founding in 1842, have been digitized and can be freely consulted at http://archives.nyphil.org/performancehistory/#program. It appears that the Philharmonic Society programmes have not yet been digitized; significant physical collections are held at the Royal College of Music and the British Library.

[14] Of particular importance for the present study are the notes for the New Philharmonic Society from 1852, as discussed in Bashford, 'Not Just "G"', 119. For a discussion of the widening dissemination of programme notes more generally, see Christina Bashford, 'Educating England: Networks of Programme-Note Provision in the Nineteenth Century', in *Music in the British Provinces, 1690–1914*, ed. Rachel Cowgill and Peter Holman (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007): 349–76.

[15] Catherine Dale, 'Britain's "Armies of Trained Listeners": Building a Nation of "Intelligent Hearers"', *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 2/1 (2005): 93–114; Christina Bashford, 'Concert Listening the British Way? Program Notes and Victorian Culture', in *The Oxford Handbook of Music Listening in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Christian Thorau and Hansjakob Ziemer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019): 187–206.

[16] Key texts around this idea include Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830–1885* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978); and William Weber, *Music and the Middle Class: The Social Structure of Concert Life in London, Paris and Vienna between 1830 and 1848*, 2nd ed. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

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money, but in the case of orchestral music they might have come up against the issue of keeping this new audience engaged. The expense of running an orchestra meant that the few existing organizations which did so were socially and financially exclusive, and as a result the average middle-class concertgoer might have had little experience of hearing live orchestral music. The pieces performed by these orchestras could feature 30 to 40 minutes of unfamiliar instrumental sound with no lyrics or libretto to explain what it all meant. How were those who were used to shorter instrumental works or songs from a domestic context to make sense of it? And just as importantly, how were the organizers going to persuade them that this experience was worthwhile and ought to be repeated? Moreover, this period saw the creation of increasingly lengthy and complicated symphonic works across Europe, and the rediscovery of older repertoire which had previously gone unheard; even more experienced listeners might have required some context and guidance to understand it. Programme notes were ideally placed to mediate these experiences, surrounding the music with words and ideas that served to guide the listener through their encounter with the otherwise 'abstract' sound. By examining the social and cultural discourses that the authors drew on in their explanations, we gain an unusually direct insight into one of the critical moments that shaped and guided the first impressions of those who were new to this music. Such texts therefore form ideal source material for a study of how institutions and promoters created the idea of a 'classic' status for certain key composers and works.

Crystal Palace Programme Notes as Sources

As a building, the Crystal Palace is perhaps best known as the venue for the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations in 1851, a showcase of raw materials, machinery, luxury goods, and so on, drawn from Britain, its colonies, and a large number of European, Asian and American countries.[17] Around six million people attended in five months, but the event was only ever intended to be temporary. After it was over, the dismantled building was bought by the newly formed Crystal Palace Company, including the original designer Joseph Paxton, and rebuilt and enlarged at a new location in Sydenham, South London. Like its previous incarnation, this new Crystal Palace did not have any space dedicated to music when it opened in 1854. It was the outstanding success of August Manns's Saturday Concerts (transforming the resident brass band into a symphony orchestra) that eventually motivated the building of a dedicated concert hall on the garden-side of the central transept. Even then, work was slow: the temporary structure erected in 1856 did not become fully enclosed until 1865. Internal remodelling in 1868 then gave it the shape it would hold for the rest of the series, a space in which an audience of four thousand could be entertained by up to three hundred performers.

There are two features of the Crystal Palace Saturday Concerts and their programme booklets that are worth outlining at the start, as they make the associated programme notes especially useful for a study of the discourses underlying the presentation of unfamiliar music. The first was the fact that the series did not

[17] The factual information regarding the Crystal Palace and the Saturday Concerts in this section is mainly drawn from Michael Musgrave, *The Musical Life of the Crystal Palace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

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require a subscription to attend (a payment for all of the season's concerts at once), as was the case for many other orchestral concerts during this period. For example, the Philharmonic Society concerts were only available by subscription until the late 1860s, with the additional requirement that one could only join through the introduction of an existing member (and applications could be denied), ensuring that only the social and musical elite would be admitted.[18] In contrast, all that was needed to attend the Saturday Concerts from the very beginning was the means to get to there and the money for a ticket, which could be as cheap as one shilling (from 1870 onwards). A season ticket to the Palace or a subscription to the concerts were available to those who could afford them, but it was also possible to attend only once or twice a year, as frequently or not as finances and interest allowed. On a related note, the placement of the Concert Room within a venue that was intended for entertainment in its own right meant that the audience might not even have intended to hear a concert that day. While the Concert Room was still unenclosed, everyone in the building would have been able to at least hear the music regardless. Once the Room became properly enclosed, the ability to buy a single ticket might have enticed those who had not attended before to stay and listen.

Correspondingly Grove had to assume that, at any given Saturday Concert, there might have been people in the audience (and therefore reading his programme notes) who were attending an orchestral concert or hearing this particular music for the first time. Moreover, as already noted, the Saturday Concert performances were often the first occasion that anyone would have had to hear Schubert's orchestral works, even specialists would not have known it already and might need some context. The information which follows illustrates the way Grove responded to this challenge in more detail, but in summary we can say that he was generally inclined to repeat information that might have been unnecessary for regular attendees. Even his new programme notes from the early 1880s were still describing Schubert's music as though the reader might not have heard of him before, to say nothing of the notes that were simply reprinted from earlier performances of the same works. The discourses he drew on therefore remain relevant to a study of how a 'classic' or high-status composer was constructed for new audiences even though the material discussed below spans a 20-year period.

The second important feature of these texts is the fact that they were not straightforwardly puff pieces for the music or for the concerts. Even amid his substantial promotional efforts for Schubert, Grove still criticized the music where he felt it appropriate. The programme note for the world premiere of the First Symphony (D.82) in 1881 concluded with a statement in which he qualified his praise of the whole work by describing it as 'not strikingly original', and the following week he described a passage of the Second Symphony (D.125) as showing Schubert's 'youth and want of experience'.[19] Practicalities further underline the point that these texts could not have served as advertising, since the evidence suggests that they were not available far enough in advance of the concert itself. Booklets could provide details of relatively last-minute changes of programme, and on the single occasion on where Grove provided a date for his programme note, it

[18] Single tickets were made available, and more widely so from 1868 onwards, but it took time before serious appeals to a wider public got going. See Cyril Ehrlich, *First Philharmonic: A History of the Royal Philharmonic Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995): 14, 112.

[19] Respectively: GB-Lbl-B, 05/02/1881, 12: 372, and GB-Lbl-B, 12/02/1881, 13: 399.

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was two days prior to the concert for which it had been written.[20] Assuming that some time would have to be required for printing, the most likely scenario is that these booklets could only have been acquired at the Crystal Palace on the day of the concert, and would only be a desirable purchase if one already had a ticket. In strictly economic terms, any advocacy for the music would have been unnecessary; the financial transactions had already taken place. Grove could have written with a more balanced perspective on the music if he so wished.

Of course, this is not the whole picture, as the booklets and the notes were still promotional in a more general sense. Each booklet featured a notice for the concert the following week, as well as for the Daily Music at the Crystal Palace and other performances in the Theatre. These notices were fairly low-key and factual, and rarely contain any specific exhortation to attend, but would no doubt have been encouraging. Moreover, any of the positive descriptions of either pieces or composers which litter the programme notes (of which we will see plenty of examples shortly) should be understood as an attempt to persuade the audience to value this music and the performance of it, and (on some level) a push to attend subsequent events. Nonetheless, the nuanced opinions in the text and the lack of advance availability mean that we can read these programme notes without as generous a pinch of salt as we might have to take for contemporary advertising.

Schubert at the Crystal Palace

None of this is to say that these are unbiased texts. There is no doubt that the main actors at the Crystal Palace had some attachment to Schubert. The conductor of the Crystal Palace Band, August Manns (1825–1907), provided the initial impetus: knowing the high esteem in which it was held by Mendelssohn and Schumann, but without having heard it himself, he insisted on performing Schubert's Ninth Symphony (D.944) in 1856. Grove had to be brought from his office to listen to a rehearsal before he could be persuaded that it was worth the effort.[21] This starting point led to Grove's growing appreciation of Schubert's music and his increasingly active research into Schubert's life and work.[22] Grove's well-documented trips to Vienna with Arthur Sullivan in 1866 and 1867 are a particularly important part of this story: meeting Eduard Schneider, Schubert's nephew, they were able to gain access to several unpublished manuscripts, including the Fourth and Sixth Symphonies (D.417 and D.589 respectively), and performance material for the incidental music to Rosamunde (D.797). Performances were mounted at the Crystal Palace, and the programme notes often hinted at the 'rediscovery' story via reference to the owner of the manuscripts. The note on the Fourth Symphony from 1868

[20] The date given at the end of the note for Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is 'April 23rd 1874', GB-Lbl-B, 22/05/1875, Second Summer Concert: 64 (851 written over). Strictly speaking the date is over a year earlier than the booklet it was printed for, but the note is identical to the one given on 25 April 1874, so we can assume that the April date refers to that concert instead (the date was not given in the booklet for the earlier concert).

[21] John Reed provides a summary of this story in 'Schubert's Reception History in Nineteenth-Century England', in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. Christopher Howard Gibbs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 261.

[22] For a detailed elaboration of Grove's extensive involvement in Schubert's revival, see Michael Musgrave, 'The Making of a Scholar: Grove's Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Schubert', in *George Grove, Music and Victorian Culture*, ed. Michael Musgrave (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003): 97–100.

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is a good example, with its mention of Dr Schneider, 'an advocate of Vienna', and the 'kind readiness with which he allowed the representatives of the Crystal Palace Company to take a copy of it'.[23]

As well-documented as Grove's Schubert research is, there is now plenty of scholarly literature which suggests that Schubert's music was not as entirely unknown as the Crystal Palace programme notes from the late 1860s often made it seem. If nothing else, the notes from this period were building on nearly ten years of intermittent Schubert performances at the Crystal Palace itself, including several performances of the Ninth Symphony. The Saturday Concerts might have offered the first opportunities for a wider audience to hear Schubert's orchestral music, but performances of Schubert's music in general were also gathering pace elsewhere, as John Reed has outlined in his chapter on Schubert reception in Britain.[24] For example, he discusses Charles Hallé's performances of a number of the piano sonatas and other solo works at the Monday Popular Concerts from the late 1850s, where audiences would also have been able to hear the string chamber music. No doubt Manns and Grove would have preferred the idea that the Crystal Palace had led the way, as was implied by a short notice in the 21 December 1867 programme stating a growth in appreciation for Schubert's music in Paris.[25] However, only a year after the Vienna trip, the music brought back could not have had such an immediate impact on the tastes of French audiences; there must have been some significant pre-existing groundwork. A slight hint of this appears in an anonymous note for the Overture to *Alfonso and Estrella* (D.732) on 3 November 1866, which states that 'This gay and brilliant orchestral prelude to one of Schubert's operas deserves a better fate than it has hitherto found. In Germany it is often performed, but in England has not yet been heard'.[26] Such references to previous performances given elsewhere are understandably rare given how important it was to Manns and Grove that the Saturday Concerts were seen as a vanguard of Schubert's music.

The important point for the present study is that these early notes in the 1860s took for granted that the audience would not know this music already. For example, the reference to Dr Schneider in the 1868 note for the Fourth Symphony (cited above) was repeated in the note for the *Rosamunde* music a few weeks later, with the owner of the manuscripts presented on this occasion as 'a well-known amateur of Vienna'.[27] Grove evidently did not expect total continuity of audience at these concerts from week to week. Each note had to approach the task as though first-time attendees might be reading, or at least those who had missed the previous occasion. The early notes outline who Schubert was on a regular basis, and often described the 'recent' discovery and reappraisal of his music in the world at large. The following statement from the note for an Overture 'in the Italian Style' in 1866 is characteristic:

> The overture was played at Vienna in 1818, but then neglected with the rest of Schubert's orchestral works, till through the recognition of Mendelssohn and Schumann they have at length begun to be esteemed at their right value.[28]

[23] GB-Lbl-B, 29/02/1868, 20: 6–7.
[24] For more details see Reed, 'Schubert's Reception History'.
[25] GB-Lcm-B, 21/12/1867, 14: 14.
[26] GB-Lcm-B, 03/11/1866, 5: 16.
[27] GB-Lbl-B, 28/03/1868, 24: 6.
[28] GB-Lcm-B, 01/12/1866, 9: 16.

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Notable here is the implicit authority provided by the approval of those more-established 'classics' Mendelssohn and Schumann. A year later, an 1867 version of the Ninth Symphony programme note made it clear that the agenda had still not been sufficiently established:

> within the last few years his great orchestral works are beginning to force their way to that high level in the popular favour to which their great merits and beauties fully entitle them. Of the last mentioned works the most important are his Symphonies.[29]

Not only do we get yet another affirmation of Schubert's growing reputation for the benefit of anyone new, we also see a claim that the symphonies (i.e. the pieces that the Crystal Palace could lay the most convincing claim to promoting) were the most significant part of Schubert's output.

By this point, works by Schubert had been appearing intermittently in the programmes for around ten years, and the previous few years had seen a particularly intense burst of activity and associated programme notes, so such promotion could have been deemed unnecessary. So long as there was even a possibility that someone present was hearing Schubert's music for the first time, though, such efforts would still be required.

The sections which follow outline some of the discourses that these notes drew on for the benefit of this particular audience, showing how they shaped the ideas surrounding this still-unfamiliar music. As the author of most of the notes on Schubert, Grove receives the most attention, but it is important to remember the role played by Manns. As the musical director of the Crystal Palace Band, he had the last word on all programming decisions, and the extensive appearance of Schubert's music must have reflected his preferences as much as those of Grove. He also wrote a small number of notes for Schubert, mainly in the earlier years of the concerts, as well many more for other composers as the series continued. The greater attention given to Grove's advocacy of Schubert was a sore point for Manns, despite Grove's efforts to redirect the attention where it was due.[30] We can therefore assume that any opinions that Grove offered about Schubert might have drawn on conversations with Manns, even if they do not directly indicate it.

Underlying Discourse: Expressive Theory of Art, or the Beethoven Syndrome

Lying behind many of the other discourses surrounding 'classic' composers at the Crystal Palace was an especially fundamental idea to do with the connection between the music and the composer's emotions. M.H. Abrams first outlined this idea in his 1953 book *The Mirror and the Lamp*, referring to it as the 'Expressive Theory of Art' and discussing it mainly in a literary context.[31] Mark Evan Bonds's recent book on the subject builds on Abrams's work in the context of music, reformulating it as the 'Beethoven Syndrome' to reflect the fact that Bonds sees Beethoven's works in particular as opening the critical floodgates:

[29] GB-Lcm-B, 14/12/1867, 13: 5.

[30] Scott Messing discusses Manns's bitterness in *Schubert in the European Imagination* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2006): 181.

[31] M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953).

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> by the middle of the nineteenth century listeners were routinely hearing Beethoven's music as a revelation of his soul, and they regarded his soul, in turn, as the key to understanding his music. Critics eagerly mapped his life onto his works and his works onto his life. This new way of listening, moreover, extended well beyond Beethoven: audiences were now predisposed to hear the music of *all* composers – particularly their instrumental works – as a personal outpouring of the self, a form of sonic autobiography.[32]

Whichever title we use to describe the phenomenon, this sense that music represented a personal outpouring of the composers' thoughts and emotions underpinned the vast majority of Saturday Concert programme notes, though some authors invoked it more directly than others.

Grove's notes were especially upfront about his search for knowledge of all the events in a composer's life and of the content of their letters in order to establish the thoughts they must have been attempting to express in their compositions. His notes for Schubert are no exception, going so far as to actively connect physical appearance and musical aesthetics in the 1868 note for the Fourth Symphony (D.417):

> His face was one which was evidently heavy in repose, but surely with his genial disposition, and with the brilliant imagination and soft sweet heart which are present in every bar of his music, he must have had one of the most changeable countenances ever possessed by man. … He was about 5ft. 6in. high, thick set, and of solid make, black hair, and short sighted, for which he wore glasses.[33]

Here Grove is so certain of the connection the between the person and the music that the latter is offered as evidence of the former: highly expressive music suggests to Grove that, physically, Schubert must have been very expressive too, even if the picture he cites suggests otherwise.

As time went on Grove's developing research gave him more details about Schubert's life to draw on for explanations. The same 1868 note on the Fourth Symphony stated that it was not clear what 'tragical' event in his life might have inspired it (referring to Schubert's own epithet on the score), speculating that it might have been 'some passing love affair which though "tragical" enough at the moment was soon forgotten (as one forgets at 19), and may even have melted away as the Symphony occupied his brain and his fingers'.[34] Grove had no doubt that there must have been some immediate emotional reason for Schubert's title and use of the minor mode, he simply did not yet know what it was. By 1873 he had clearly received new information, and the updated explanation went into the note for the premiere of the Fifth Symphony (D.485):

> In the 'Tragic Symphony' [No.4] Schubert probably entombed the anxieties and disappointment attending his attempt and his failure to obtain the modest post of Teacher to the Music School at Laibach. By the end of September, however, he had worked off all recollections of disappointment, and not a trace of any such feeling is to be found in the Symphony [No.5].[35]

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[32] Mark Evan Bonds, *The Beethoven Syndrome: Hearing Music as Autobiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020): 1.

[33] GB-Lcm-B, 29/02/1868, 20: 8–9.

[34] GB-Lcm-B, 29/02/1868, 20: 5–6.

[35] GB-Lcm-B, 01/02/1873, 14: 285–286.

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Now that the emotional origins of the Fourth Symphony were adequately grounded in biographical detail (with only a little hedging in the 'probably'), Grove could then offer a smooth narrative transition to the happier mood of the Fifth Symphony.

The assumption of a direct link between the composer's emotional state and the mood of the music meant that the absence of an obvious connection had to be carefully handled. The note for a performance of the Octet (D.803) on 14 March 1874 is a particularly interesting example. After quoting a letter that Schubert sent around the time of its composition Grove stated:

> The Octett, with all its earnestness and depth of feeling, can hardly be said to reflect so forlorn a state of mind as this letter does. Probably Schubert, like other people of sensibility, found relief in the confession of his misery, and felt it less after having unburdened himself; and when dealing with the vaguer images called up by his music he may have forgotten the more definite distresses which too often found vent in his letters.[36]

Grove had been forced to adopt a speculative approach to understanding the disjunction of mood and music in the face of conflicting biographical information.[37] This particular image, of his troubles melting away while composing, is one he came to rely on heavily in subsequent Schubert notes whenever the mood failed to match the biography.

For all that Bonds's work is important in establishing the historical emergence of a perceived biographical connection between composers and their music, what follows moves beyond it in two key ways. First, Bonds understandably focuses on contemporary texts which state the connection between emotion and work directly. However, the programme notes examined here do not always specify a connection between biography and music. Substantial sections might seem at first glance to be 'neutral' presentations of facts about a composer's life. Nonetheless, the broader critical context that Bonds vividly outlines, in which a hermeneutic model of understanding music prevailed, suggests that even 'neutral' biography must be understood as providing meaning for the music too. In other words, *all* information about a composer's life could be relevant for understanding the music, regardless of whether a connection was stated. Moreover, we need to see this connection operating in both directions: any passage which appears to be discussing the music would have been implicitly understood as relating to the composer as well, even if the author did not say so. As we will see, this was especially important for Schubert, giving Grove a tool to boost Schubert's reputation by implication, while sidestepping the concerns that were already circulating at the time about the composer's character.

This latter point draws attention to the second and perhaps more subtle issue with Bonds's discussion of the 'Beethoven Syndrome', namely that his close

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36 GB-Lbl-B, 14/03/1874, 20: 485.

37 In light of passages like these, it is not surprising that scholars who have studied nineteenth-century musical biography have generally come to the conclusion that they are founded on myths, illusions, and narrative tropes drawn from fiction. See, for example, Jolanta T. Pekacz, 'Memory, History and Meaning: Musical Biography and Its Discontents', *Journal of Musicological Research* 23/1 (January 2004): 39–80; Jolanta T. Pekacz, ed., *Musical Biography: Towards New Paradigms* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); and Christopher Wiley, 'Re-Writing Composers' Lives: Critical Historiography and Musical Biography' (PhD Diss., London, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2008).

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focus on composer autobiography might leave a reader with the impression that this was the *only* story that programme note authors and audiences were hearing in otherwise wordless instrumental music during the nineteenth century. For example, his overall narrative posits the twentieth century as the moment where the idea of composer autobiography began to fade in value:

> In the years immediately after World War I, however, leading composers and critics began to turn their backs on the aesthetics of self-expression. Neoclassicism and the New Objectivity rejected subjectivity as the principal basis of expression not only in music but in all the arts, ushering in a return to an earlier conception of expression as a dispassionate construct.[38]

Here Bonds seems to be suggesting that, without a story of personal expression behind it, music could be understood by its creators as now meaning less than it did before, becoming 'dispassionate'. We are left with the slightly misleading impression that, once the biographical aspect had fallen away, there were no other interpretative strategies left for audiences to engage with.

Such other interpretations were clearly beyond Bonds's remit, so this article builds on his work by demonstrating that there were in fact a broad range of discourses that a composer and their music could become entangled with as part of a drive to make sense of the music for a new audience. None of these ideas were necessarily discussed in terms which suggested that the composer intended them, and indeed we will see some passages from the notes that link the music to concepts that Schubert could not possibly have meant. Understanding the full range of these discourses gives us critical insights into the question of how it is that Schubert came to be presented as a 'classic'.

'Poor Schubert'

Starting with one of the most straightforward discourses, a sense of 'classic' status can be clearly read in Grove's wholeheartedly endorsement of the image of Schubert's whole life as a personal and financial struggle, an idea which Christopher Gibbs summarized as 'Poor Schubert'.[39] We have already seen the personal struggle as part of the note on the Octet cited above where Grove imagined how composing this work soothed Schubert's troubles. It also featured the entirety of a particularly mournful letter to Leopold Kupelweiser (1796–1862), of which the following passage can be taken as characteristic:

> In a word, I think I am the most unhappy miserable man in the world. Picture to yourself a man whose health can never again be right, and who from despair about it makes the matter always worse instead of better; fancy, I say, such a man, whose brightest hopes have come to nothing, to whom love and friendship yield

[38] Bonds, *The Beethoven Syndrome*, 13.

[39] Christopher Howard Gibbs, '"Poor Schubert": Images and Legends of the Composer', in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. Christopher Howard Gibbs(Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 36–55. Gibbs mainly discusses German sources, so does not mention Grove's writing. David Gramit does discuss Grove's role in Schubert reception, but does not mention the 'Poor Schubert' image specifically. David Gramit, 'Constructing a Victorian Schubert: Music, Biography, and Cultural Values', *19th-Century Music* 17/1 (1993): 65–78.

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> nothing but pain, whose inspiration for the beautiful (at least in any active form) threatens to desert him, and ask yourself if he is not an unhappy miserable creature.[40]

The first few lines of 'Gretchen am Spinnrade' follow immediately thereafter ('Meine Ruh ist hin' etc.). Such passages could then be blended with the issue of financial hardship, adding further weight to the overall sense of personal struggle, as we see in Grove's note for the premiere of the First Symphony in 1881:

> Poverty and the inevitable anxieties attendant upon it stuck to him all his life. A letter to his elder brother, dated November, 1812, has been preserved, which gives a sad picture of the actual misery which this growing genius of fifteen passed his days … It begs for a few pence, and speaks of 'the eight long hours of hunger that had to be passed between a poor dinner and a meagre supper', and of 'a roll, or an apple or two', as unattainable luxuries, which he would gladly enjoy if he could but afford them.[41]

With such emotive primary material at hand, Grove was at ample liberty to speculate more broadly in the case of other compositions.

Discussions of suffering and hard work permeated notes on a number of high-status composers, though, regardless of whether primary material to support it had survived, suggesting that it was a key component in 'classic' status in its own right rather than something particular to Schubert. On the most general level, we might point to the Romantic notion of the 'struggling artist', a lone, heroic figure toiling away against numerous obstacles to achieve their creative goals.[42] In the specific context of Victorian Britain, this idea gained particular moral force through the notions of 'self-help' popularized by Samuel Smiles, an individualistic approach to learning and education centred on one's own personal efforts to improve.[43] Tellingly, such references do not seem to have been tempered by any concerns to do with social class. It is hard to imagine that Grove would emphasize the image so consistently over so many years had he expected the audience to view Schubert's low social standing in negative terms. Overall, the narrative of triumph (artistic if not financial) against adversity seems to have more gained more support for Schubert than it risked in discussing poverty at all.

Gender

While the discourse of financial struggle fits well with Bonds's conception of the Beethoven Syndrome, suggesting that Schubert's music expressed the hardship

[40] GB-Lbl-B, 14/03/1874, 20: 484.

[41] GB-Lbl-B, 05/02/1881, 12: 368.

[42] This trope is discussed (among others) as part of Christopher Wiley's survey of late Victorian biographical tropes in Christopher Wiley, '"A Relic of an Age Still Capable of a Romantic Outlook": Musical Biography and The Master Musicians Series, 1899–1906', in *Lives of the Disciplines: Comparative Biography*, ed. E.S. Shaffer, Comparative Criticism 25 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004): 161–202. Full-length studies of the trope in itself are rare, though one exception is Erika Schneider, *The Representation of the Struggling Artist in America, 1800–1865* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2015).

[43] For discussion, see Asa Briggs, 'Samuel Smiles: The Gospel of Self-Help', in *Victorian Values: Personalities and Perspectives in Nineteenth-Century Society*, ed. Gordon Marsden (London: Longman, 1990): 85–96. Briggs points out that Smiles thought the fact that his work embodied long-standing common-sense principles, rather than original notions, was its primary strength. See also Alex Tyrrell, 'Voluntarism and Self-Help', in *The Victorian World*, ed. Martin Hewitt (London; New York: Routledge, 2012): 346–61.

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he endured during his life, the gendered language we see in these notes starts to push the music into meanings that were less obviously connected with Schubert's intentions. There is no doubt that Grove's invocations of gender participated in creating a sense of 'classic' status for Schubert and his music, but there is considerably more complexity here than the issue of personal and financial suffering.

One issue in particular is specific to Schubert rather than common to all high-status composers, namely the idea that he that represented the feminine counterpart to Beethoven. The common perspective for present-day scholarship, as outlined by David Gramit and Scott Messing, is that this idea came to settle on Schubert during the second half of the nineteenth century, and created considerable problems for the reception of his music. Messing in particular shows how this discourse originated in Schumann's idea of the *Mädchencharakter* of Schubert and his music. Messing also argued that, as this idea gained hold in Victorian Britain, it lost the positive associations that Schumann had intended behind this description and instead became another point against Schubert for his Victorian critics, drawing in particular on writings from the 1880s by authors such as Henry Heathcote Statham and George Bernard Shaw.[44] Grove was certainly aware of this understanding of Schubert's music, as we can tell from his note on the Octet from 1874:

> Schubert's relation to Beethoven has been well compared to that of a woman to a man … Schubert is more impulsive, more communicative, more diffuse, more plastic, perhaps more tender – or oftener tender – than Beethoven; while he is less on his guard, less reserved, less economical of means to ends, less sternly determined to reach the one end in view.[45]

This note could have had a considerable negative impact on those who were hearing Schubert's music for the first time, shaping the wider discourse of gender around Schubert's music among the general public and preparing the ground for later attacks on Schubert's music. After all, there was considerable contemporary anxiety around the idea of men having any involvement at all in the implicitly feminine activity of music-making, as demonstrated by many scholars across a range of different contexts.[46] Describing Schubert as in some way feminine in a programme note would have only provided further fuel for hostile critics. We could further speculate that the men in the audience at the Crystal Palace, who already worried about what attendance at a concert might mean for their self-image, would feel further suspicion attached to enjoying any music that had been presented as having feminine qualities.

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that the 1874 note on the Octet is entirely unique. None of Grove's other notes for any other composer (let alone one with 'classic' status) made this kind of connection. Even the note on the Octet hedges

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44 See Messing, *Schubert in the European Imagination*, chap. 5, 176–209.

45 GB-Lbl-B, 14/03/1874, 20: 485.

46 Key scholarship in this regard includes Derek B. Scott, 'The Sexual Politics of Victorian Musical Aesthetics', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 119/1 (1994): 91–114; Karen Yuen, 'Bound By Sound: Music, Victorian Masculinity and Dante Gabriel Rossetti', *Critical Survey* 20/3 (2008): 79–96; and Christina Bashford, 'Historiography and Invisible Musics: Domestic Chamber Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 63/2 (2010): 291–360.

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on the issue later in the same paragraph, which concludes with the suggestion that Schubert and Beethoven were not actually so different:

> But in melody, in harmony, in effect, in power of enchaining and entrancing the hearer, and of attaching him to the composer, there is very little to choose between these, the two greatest musicians since the Revolution.[47]

If Grove had wanted to leave his audience with the impression of some equivalence between Schubert and Beethoven, it seems odd that he would mention the earlier gendered comparison at all. Indeed, it never appears in any of his subsequent notes on Schubert.[48] Comparisons with Beethoven continued, but instead took a very different approach, as we see in the note for the premiere of the Third Symphony (D.200) in 1881:

> The advance [of the Third Symphony] on the two former ones is however unmistakeable … Of course, when one talks of advance, one is always thinking of Beethoven as a standard. But one must remember that where Schubert's Symphonies were months, Beethoven's were years apart; and also that Beethoven did not complete his first Symphony till he was very nearly the age at which Schubert died, with his ninth under his pillow.[49]

Grove is here attempting to smooth over the different trajectory of the Beethoven and Schubert symphonies, pointing out that Schubert had composed nine in the same amount of time that saw Beethoven producing only one. He therefore implies that each Schubert symphony could be expected to deviate less from its predecessors, since they were composed in comparatively quick succession, rather than the more widely spaced Beethoven examples, which therefore show bigger jumps in style. Passages like this indicate a need to account for the difference between their music (perhaps Grove now expected the audience to have already encountered some of the more critical opinions) but present it as a practical matter to do with the different trajectories of their lives. There are no longer any direct references to gender, in keeping with the treatment of other high-status composers.

Having said that, when we turn to the descriptions that Grove gave of Schubert's music itself we can see that the gendered discourse is not only very much still present but also, if anything, just as likely to invoke ideas of masculinity. This could be extremely direct, such as the description of the Scherzo from the Seventh Symphony (D.729 – in a completion by John Francis Barnett) as 'a lively, manly example of the tribe, recalling the best characteristics of Beethoven'.[50] Moreover, Grove's frequent use of adjectives such as 'bold', 'vigorous', or 'forceful' point in very different direction to Schumann's idea of *Mädchencharakter*. The 1881 note for the Third Symphony is characteristic, using this language to describe both individual passages (a modulation is described as 'not remarkable, but the vigour and dramatic character are very much so') as well as overall movements (for the Finale: 'The vigour and impetuous, unresting force of the music are quite

[47] GB-Lbl-B, 14/03/1874, 20: 485.

[48] Interestingly, the passage did reappear for Grove's *Dictionary* entry on Schubert (vol. 3, pg. 364), so he must have continued to think that the image was correct even as he stopped mentioning it in the programme notes.

[49] GB-Lbl-B, 19/02/1881, 14: 432.

[50] GB-Lbl-B, 05/05/1883, 22: 705.

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extraordinary'). These passages sat side by side with those that presented a more feminine understanding of the music, but this was the case for all composers; after all Grove's descriptions of Beethoven's second subjects were just as likely to attract feminine imagery as any equivalent passage from a Schubert work (e.g. 'simply and grandly beautiful as the greatest Roman lady' for the *Coriolan* Overture).[51]

In the absence of any directly gendered description of the composer himself, then, it seems plausible that these kinds of passages would have played their own role in shaping the audience's sense of Schubert's gender identity. It would fit with the sense we get from Bonds's Beethoven Syndrome that underpins all of the notes (as outlined above) that the life of the composer and the music were heavily intertwined. If the audience could be persuaded that the music was sufficiently masculine (at least enough of the time) then they might well have seen this as a reflection of the character of the composer. By letting the music stand in for the composer, Grove was able to present a more masculine image that would have boosted Schubert's 'classic' status among those who were encountering the music for the first time without having to discuss biography or directly address any concerns about femininity.

On a final note, it is also important to recognize that gendered vocabulary was often invoking another discourse, namely that of familial roles. Notes for many high-status composers feature references to pieces of music as daughters, sisters, brothers, cousins, and so on, images that would be immediately comprehensible to any member of the audience regardless of their familiarity with the music. So where Schubert was presented in more masculine terms, it might not be just as a man but also as a father. Grove used this image in a few contexts, most surprisingly in relation to orchestral instruments, as we see in the note for the Ninth Symphony from 25 November 1876:

> Formerly they [the trombones] were used for effect, to deepen a shadow here, or to bring out a spot of bright colour there; but [Schubert] has released them from that exclusively subordinate position, and given them independent parts of their own, and a new office in the great family of the Orchestra.[52]

It is the fatherly image that Grove assigns Schubert which gives the composer the authority to change the position of the trombones in the orchestral hierarchy, here explicitly identified as being a 'family'. Perhaps more straightforwardly, the interactions between composers were often portrayed in familial terms, and Schubert could benefit from the fact that such connections were not confined to composers who had actually met each other. For example, Grove's note for Brahms's First Symphony on 31 March 1877 described the second movement with particular reference to Schubert:

> It is full at once of beauty and passion, and is instinct [sic] with the spirit of that great Viennese master [Schubert] of whom Mr. Brahms is in many respects the true successor.
>
> It opens with the following theme – at once beautiful, passionate, and original – of the melody and harmony of which Schubert himself might be proud … [53]

[51] GB-Lcm-B, 15/01/1870, 13: 2.
[52] GB-Lbl-B, 25/11/1876, 9: 277.
[53] GB-Lbl-B, 31/03/1877, 21: 684.

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A little later, still describing the second movement, Grove says:

> The opening melody then returns in its original key, but is prolonged into a passage for the Oboe, with an answer from the Clarinet, the sound of which shows how deeply Mr. Brahms has imbibed Schubert's spirit in the combination of his darling Wind instruments. When the Clarinet enters, it is almost as if we saw the author of the 'Unfinished Symphony in B minor' standing in the orchestra, and saying, 'So would I have it'.[54]

The use of the word 'successor' is particularly redolent of a familial lineage between the composers, and the portentous words notionally uttered by Schubert's spirit seem to carry additional fatherly weight. These passages are all the more striking for the fact that it is Schubert who is depicted as passing the torch rather than Beethoven. Grove's note does not even mention Beethoven by name (overlaps with the Ninth Symphony in the final movement are noted by the symphony number alone) let alone anything about his general influence on Brahms's work. As well as adding to the masculine descriptions of the music, these passages remind us that contemporary understandings of identity may have been more complex than the single issue of gender by itself.[55]

Religion and 'Classical' Culture

As important as the discourses of poverty, gender and familial roles were for understanding Schubert's music at the Crystal Palace, they are by no means alone. Grove drew on many areas of Victorian cultural and social thought to build a sense of 'classic' status for the composers he was most keen on and their music. These discourses undermine any sense we might have of the dominance of the Beethoven Syndrome for understanding music during the nineteenth century, as ideas of religion or 'classical' culture were generally invoked without any concern over whether Schubert could have had these thoughts about his own music. After all, there was no need to be rigorous or consistent about the choice of language or imagery when addressing the general public; any metaphor or comparison which helped new audiences make sense of the wordless instrumental sound they were hearing for the first time would have served the purposes of the programme notes.

The religious discourse that Grove drew on for many composers and pieces would have been especially useful in this sense.[56] On a practical level this kind of writing would have tapped into the fact that, as Timothy Larsen has pointed

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[54] GB-Lbl-B, 31/03/1877, 21: 685.

[55] It also suggests that there might have been underlying familial resonances to the otherwise neutral-seeming ideas of succession that lay behind nineteenth-century constructions of genius, at least in the context of programme notes. See, for example, DeNora, *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius*, chap. 5, 83–114.

[56] Literature on the use of a religious discourse in nineteenth-century discussions of music includes Jim Obelkevich, 'Music and Religion in the Nineteenth Century', in *Disciplines of Faith: Studies in Religion, Politics, and Patriarchy*, ed. Jim Obelkevich, Lyndal Roper, and Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987): 550–65; T.C.W. Blanning, 'The Commercialization and Sacralization of European Culture in the Nineteenth Century', in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern Europe*, ed. T.C.W. Blanning (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996): 120–47; Bennett Zon, *Music and Metaphor in Nineteenth-Century British Musicology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); and Alisa

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out, the Bible was the primary text used for teaching literacy skills to children across the whole social spectrum.[57] Grove could use biblical language or draw on Christian imagery safe in the knowledge that anyone who could read the notes would be guaranteed to get the references, giving them important ideas to latch onto in their understanding of the music. In the process, the use of religious imagery to explain the music would link both pieces and composers with Christian morality, strongly implying that both were ethically acceptable and even beneficial for the respectable listener.[58] This would form an important pillar for 'classic' status in Victorian Britain.

The religious discourse in Grove's notes on Schubert operated on a number of levels. There were occasions were Grove made the connection with Christianity clear, such as the introduction to his 1881 essay outlining the possibility of a missing symphony.[59] Here he states that 'the whole of Schubert's Symphonies may be said to exist for the ear only through a kind of Resurrection from the dust', invoking the Christian faith in the afterlife (to say nothing of Jesus himself) through the formal capitalization of 'Resurrection'.[60] The music itself could also be presented with sacred overtones, as we see from the following passage on the second subject of the *Unfinished* Symphony:

> This artless and charming theme is played with and brought back again and again, and interrupted by bursts of wild savage modulation, through which its familiar simple grace passes unscathed like some pure innocent Christian martyr through the fires of her heathen prosecutors.[61]

On a similar basis (albeit without the word 'Christian' but still clear enough), an early version of Grove's note on the Ninth Symphony from 1867 described a 'wonderfully touching' passage in the second movement 'where the horn sounds faintly note after note, while the rest of the orchestra is all hushed and still, as if an angel had descended into the room and were gliding about among the instruments'.[62] In other cases it is Grove's use of spiritual language in a more general sense that shows the religious discourse operating in the background. For example, when Grove expanded note for the Fourth Symphony for the second performance in 1870 (now featuring a more detailed outline of the music itself), he described the second movement as follows:

Clapp-Itnyre, *Angelic Airs, Subversive Songs: Music as Social Discourse in the Victorian Novel* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002).

[57] Timothy Larsen, *A People of One Book: The Bible and the Victorians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): 4.

[58] The classic contemporary text in this regard is Hugh Reginald Haweis, *Music and Morals* (London: Strahan & Co., 1871). The fact that the author was an Anglican cleric is especially relevant here.

[59] The essay itself was reprinted from his article in *The Athanaeum*, but the introduction was new for the programme booklet.

[60] GB-Lbl-B, 19/11/1881. We might also note the overtones of the Passion in the 'Poor Schubert' image outlined above.

[61] GB-Lcm-B, 26/04/1873, Manns' Benefit: 564.

[62] GB-Lcm-B, 14/12/1867, 13: 7. Normally Grove is fairly consistent in citing his sources, so it is surprising that he does not draw attention to the fact that he is translating/paraphrasing Robert Schumann, who described this moment in almost identical terms in his 1840 *Neue Zeitschrift* review of the Ninth Symphony.

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> One hardly dares speak of art in connexion with such strains – even of skilful concealment of art. The music is too spontaneous, too native, and would seem rather to have come direct to us from its own original heavenly fount, than to have flowed through any earthly channel.[63]

Christianity is not directly invoked, but the use of the word 'heavenly' and its contrast with the word 'earthly' is undoubtedly a religious reference, regardless of whether or not a specific biblical image was intended. As with the references to gender discourses in the previous section, these passages might have been strictly about the music alone, but with the music and the creator so closely bound together it seems clear that they at least imply a sense of religious value for Schubert himself.

Christianity is not the only religion to make an appearance in the Crystal Palace notes: occasionally we see references to ancient Greek or Roman mythology as well. Grove's note for the Ninth Symphony suggested that the last movement might represent the legend of Phaeton and the Horses of the Sun, an image that he retained and developed as he rewrote this note over time.[64] We might also note the announcement that appeared in a programme from January 1881 stating that all eight surviving Schubert symphonies were to be played in order over the next few weeks. Here Grove justified the effort by stating that it represented a 'study of the progressive development of one of the most remarkable geniuses in the whole Pantheon of Music',[65] invoking the building in Rome that had been originally designed to display the gods of the Greco-Roman religious tradition. Not all of the references to 'classical' culture were necessarily drawing on the religious dimension of the ancient past: in a note from 26 April 1873, for example, Grove described the Unfinished Symphony as 'a torso, like some of the finest remains of ancient art, like the Psyche from Naples for instance'. However, it seems important to note that references to 'classical' history and mythology do have such references to ancient religious thought in them. Other authors working on Victorian engagements with the past have noted the slippages that occur at this time between descriptions of ancient Greek and Roman culture and contemporary understandings of Christianity.[66] Given Grove's own theological interests (co-editor of William Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, co-founder of the Palestine Exploration Fund, etc.), it would make sense if he was prone to the same kinds of overlaps.

By itself the discourse of classical culture seems an entirely logical component of 'classic' status for a composer, given that the word itself is the same. It would have tapped into a widespread Victorian fascination with ancient culture, and would have made the music easily comprehensible to an audience who were familiar with these images and ideas already.[67] However, if there is any slippage in these

[63] GB-Lcm-B, 22/01/1870, 14: 20.

[64] GB-Lcm-B, 27/03/1869, 23: 11.

[65] GB-Lbl-B, 05/02/1881, 12: 390.

[66] See for example Leanne Hunning's discussion of early nineteenth-century depictions of Spartacus in 'Spartacus in Nineteenth-Century England: Proletarian, Pole and Christ', in *Remaking the Classics: Literature, Genre and Media in Britain 1800–2000*, ed. Christopher Stray (London: Duckworth, 2007): 1–20. See also Éva Kocziszky's chapter 'Karl Ottfried Müller and the "Patriotic" Study of Religion', in *Multiple Antiquities, Multiple Modernities: Ancient Histories in Nineteenth Century European Cultures*, ed. Gábor Klaniczay, Michael Werner, and Ottó Gecser (Frankfurt: Campus, 2011): 513–26.

[67] See for example, various chapters in Christopher Stray, ed., *Remaking the Classics: Literature, Genre and Media in Britain 1800–2000* (London: Duckworth, 2007).

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notes between Christian and Greco-Roman ideas, then it might signal something deeper than a simple sense of 'oldness' and venerability for the word 'classical'. Instead, I would argue that these two discourses, both the 'classical' and the Christian, share common overlaps with a Victorian sense of imperial identity.

Imperial Identity

The idea of 'Imperial' identity may strike the reader as somewhat unusual when discussing 'classic' status. 'National' identity has been the far more common subject for discussions of Victorian musical thought, serving as the basis for an entire sub-discipline of nineteenth-century musicology. However, it does not fit the evidence here, as Grove's notes never mention a national identity for Schubert. Although the biographical information necessary for such an interpretation is present (there is no attempt to cover up Schubert's birthplace or major locations in his working life), the information is never brought to bear on how the music should be listened to or understood. The existing scholarship on British musical 'Germanophilia' in the Victorian period suggests that an author who wanted to promote a composer might flag its Germanic qualities, but this language is completely absent.[68] The words 'German' or 'Austrian' never appear in any of the notes on Schubert; nor are there any references made to any of the Victorian racial stereotypes that occasionally appeared for other composers, such as Teuton (or Saxon), Celt, or Slav.[69]

This mode of understanding a composer was certainly available to contemporary programme note authors: Edward Dannreuther's note for a performance of Grieg's Piano Concerto at the Crystal Palace described the composer as 'a slight-built, retiring youth, of a typical northern physiognomy, flaxen hair, and large

[68] The classic text here is Robert Stradling and Meirion Hughes, *The English Musical Renaissance, 1840–1940: Constructing a National Music*, 2nd Edition (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).

[69] For a general overview of European racial ideas in the nineteenth century see Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1996). For more specific discussions of the racial ideas behind British Anglo-Saxonism see Peter Mandler, '"Race" and "Nation" in Mid-Victorian Thought', in *History, Religion, and Culture: British Intellectual History, 1750–1950*, ed. Stefan Collini, Richard Whatmore, and B. W. Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 224–44; Peter Mandler, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); and Edward Beasley, *The Victorian Reinvention of Race: New Racisms and the Problem of Grouping in the Human Sciences* (New York: Routledge, 2010). Catherine Hall and Edward Lengel have discussed the 'Celt' in Victorian thought in Catherine Hall, 'The Nation Within and Without', in *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the British Reform Act of 1867*, by Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland, and Jane Rendall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 179–233; and Edward G. Lengel, *The Irish Through British Eyes: Perceptions of Ireland in the Famine Era* (Westport: Praeger, 2002) respectively. The British perspective on Russia is discussed in, for example, Anthony Cross, ed., *'A People Passing Rude': British Responses to Russian Culture* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2012) but without any discussion of the 'Slav' as a racial type. As yet there appears to be no musicological literature that examines how Victorian racial discourses impacted on contemporary British musical thought. However, for excellent discussions of racial ideology and music in various other contexts, see Julie Brown, ed., *Western Music and Race* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

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dreamy blue eyes, very quiet, self-absorbed, and industrious'.[70] Dannreuther then used this trope to explain the music itself later on in the note, hearing 'reminiscences of Norwegian pipe music' throughout, mainly in the second and third movements.[71] As we have already seen, nothing of this kind appears in Grove's description of Schubert's appearance from 1867. No connection was drawn between his physical appearance and his geographical origins, and Grove never used this lens as part of his interpretation of the music. There was nothing to stop audiences interpreting Schubert nationally of their own accord, but Grove did not actively make the connection in the way that Dannreuther did for Grieg. Such explanations would no doubt have helped an audience make sense of Schubert's music in much the same way as the other discourses discussed above, so why did Grove leave it out?

The one word that does appear for Schubert, 'Viennese' (in the note for Brahms's First Symphony, also cited earlier), gives us a clue as to why a national discourse seems to be missing: it reminds us that Schubert was from an empire, not a nation. The distinction is crucial for the Victorian perception of Viennese composers as empires behave very differently from nations on the issue of identity. As Krishan Kumar has recently argued in a chapter on the lack of English (as opposed to British) nationalism in the Victorian period:

> Imperial nations, precisely because they are imperial nations, have reason to play down their own nationalism, in the interests of maintaining control over multinational entities. For the English to have trumpeted their own national identity would have been to risk offending the many other nations who were *de facto* under their rule.[72]

Kumar's assessment is equally applicable to the Austro-Hungarian Empire (referred to as a 'Dual Monarchy' after 1867): as a dominant part of a multi-national political unit, Austria *per se* would not have been at the forefront of British perceptions of the empire as a whole. The fact that the British held a non-national sense of the Habsburgs is supported by Tibor Frank's work on the period of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867.[73] In particular, he implies that the British considered the Germanic population within it to be just one group among many, expressing considerable concerns about how it might behave in the run up to the Austro-Prussian war of 1866.[74] If the British did not think of the Habsburg Empire as a nation, this goes some way to explaining why the word 'Austrian' does not feature as part of the vocabulary of any of the authors of programme notes at the Crystal Palace for any of the composers associated

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[70] GB-Lbl-B, 18/04/1874, 25: 617. Dannreuther's language is very much in keeping with contemporary perceptions of Norway and Norwegian-ness, as outlined in Peter Fjågesund and Ruth A. Symes, *The Northern Utopia: British Perceptions of Norway in the Nineteenth Century* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003).

[71] GB-Lbl-B, 18/04/1874, 25: 617. For more on how Norwegian national stereotypes influenced reception in London, see William Drummond's article in this volume.

[72] Krishan Kumar, 'Varieties of Nationalism', in *The Victorian World*, ed. Martin Hewitt (London: Routledge, 2012): 166–7.

[73] Tibor Frank, *Picturing Austria-Hungary: The British Perception of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1865–1870* (Boulder: Center for Hungarian Studies and Publications, 2005): 11.

[74] The concern was that the Germanic population would side with the nationalist Hungarians, destabilizing the monarchy. Frank, *Picturing Austria-Hungary*, 147–8.

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with Vienna.[75] The city and its inhabitants would not be presented as national products if they were understood to be part of a different kind of political entity altogether.

We can go further than this, though, as Grove's notes on Schubert seem actively engaged in separating the composer from his cultural context rather than merely omitting a national discourse. After all, a composer associated with an empire, presented without the kinds of national ties or racial characteristics that we saw for Grieg, would have been much easier to relocate. In this context we can see that the classical discourse in Grove's notes on Schubert was not a neutral choice: the Victorians were obsessed with their own status as inheritors of Greek and Roman culture (which was, after all, the result of an empire too). As Frank Turner put it in one of the earliest studies on the subject:

> For the Victorians the figures from antiquity were not the 'Ancients' but distant contemporaries who had confronted and often mastered the difficulties presenting themselves anew to the nineteenth century.[76]

The last two decades have seen an explosion of interest in Victorian understandings of antiquity, with a large number of books outlining a hugely complex range of interactions, from the conservative to the revolutionary.[77] The field is far too broad to engage with fully here, but the overall message is clear: ideas about ancient Greek and Roman culture formed a deeply embedded part of Victorian identity across the whole social spectrum. In a roundabout way, then, Grove's attempts to tie Schubert to classical culture may have made him 'one of us' in the process, transferring him from one imperial context to another via a discourse of antiquity that was in itself imperial.

On a more direct level, there is a sense of British imperial discourse through Grove's frequent use of poetry by Alfred, Lord Tennyson to explain both Schubert's music and aspects of his life. Tennyson was Poet Laureate from 1850 until his death in 1892, and eventually became a member of the House of Lords (1884), and was therefore a central figure in British cultural and political life through the period under investigation. A quote from *The Princess* ('The horns of Elfland faintly blowing') appears in relation to the opening of the Ninth

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[75] This is not to say that race was absent altogether: in an 1867 note Grove described C.F. Pohl's book on Mozart and Haydn in London as being from Germany (GB-Lcm-B, 16/11/1867, 9: 5), when in fact it had been printed in Austria, indicating a certain degree of racial slippage. The point is that, as the subsequent discussion will show, certain composers were more likely to be interpreted 'imperially' rather than racially.

[76] Frank M. Turner, *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981): xii.

[77] The following is a very small selection: Shanyn Fiske, *Heretical Hellenism: Women Writers, Ancient Greece, and the Victorian Popular Imagination* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008); Simon Goldhill, *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity: Art, Opera, Fiction, and the Proclamation of Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); Edmund Richardson, *Classical Victorians: Scholars, Scoundrels and Generals in Pursuit of Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). The edited volume by Klaniczay, Werner and Gecser is especially useful in this regard, showing how a number of nations across Europe were all engaged in the same attempt to stake a claim on ancient culture. However, there is no chapter on Victorian Britain. Gábor Klaniczay, Michael Werner, and Ottó Gecser, eds., *Multiple Antiquities, Multiple Modernities: Ancient Histories in Nineteenth Century European Cultures* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2011).

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Symphony from 1874 onwards, and lines from *In Memoriam* are used to describe the composer more generally in the note on the Second Symphony from 1877, where Grove states that:

> Like his other Symphonies, and the larger proportion of his genial and beautiful music, it seems to have been written because he liked it, and because he could not help it.
>
> I do but sing because I must,
> And pipe but as the linnets sing.[78]

If there was any doubt that the references to Tennyson had local significance, then a (mis)quote from *In Memoriam* at the start of Grove's 1881 essay outlining the prospect of an undiscovered symphony makes it clear:

> I may, perhaps, be allowed to hope that the missing one … may, in the words of our great living poet,
>
> Become an autumn [April in original] violet,
> And bud and blossom like the rest.

For a readership based primarily in London, the 'our' makes Tennyson's origins clear, and suggests that the British resonances might also have reflected on Schubert and his music for the audience at the Saturday Concerts. Grove's use of English poetry to explain the pieces being performed at the Crystal Palace (especially Tennyson, but not limited to him) was common to his notes for many of the composers who would eventually gain 'classic' status, including Bach, Mozart, Schumann, Brahms, Haydn, Mendelssohn, and Beethoven.[79] Haydn and Mendelssohn were also bolstered by extensive descriptions of their activities in England, and the notes on Beethoven featured regular and extensive comparisons with Shakespeare. German-language poetry that these composers might have actually known is entirely absent, even in translation.

On their own, these references might have been simply a reflection of Grove's personal taste in poetry. Equally, since the purpose of the notes was to make music more accessible to non-musicians, it would have made sense for Grove to pick poetry that was likely to be familiar to the Crystal Palace audience. However, to put it crudely, making things accessible allows people to take them and make them their own. Moreover, when we bring the poetry references together with the religious and classical discourses, the latter tapping into Victorian Hellenism, and exploiting the movability of imperial (and therefore non-national)

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[78] GB-Lbl-B, 20/10/1877, 3: 73.

[79] Readers familiar with Victorian musical culture might be surprised to note that Handel is absent from this list. There is no space to outline it here, but overall, the notes at the Crystal Palace were beginning to put Handel at arm's length during this period, with references to his Germanic accent and 'countrymen'. This is consistent with the increasing distrust of Handel as a British icon noted in, for example, Roberta Montemorra Marvin, 'Handel's *Acis and Galatea*: A Victorian View', in *Europe, Empire, and Spectacle in Nineteenth-Century British Music*, ed. Rachel Cowgill and Julian Rushton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006): 249–64. This observation provides further evidence for the idea that 'Germanness' was not as wholeheartedly valued as previous scholarship would suggest.

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products, there was plenty of material in the programme notes to give the audience a pervasive sense that Schubert really belonged to Britain.[80] It is equally important to note, following the discussion above, that these ideas are completely detached from Schubert's own thoughts and emotions. There is no sense whatsoever that Grove thought of Schubert as deliberately intending to convey a quasi-British quality to his music, suggesting that a Beethoven Syndrome-based expressive understanding of music only went so far in providing meaning for the music.

We could even go so far as to suggest that if composers such as Schubert had truly been enlisted for the British Empire, we might expect to see performances of their music presented as a source of pride, such as we can detect behind Grove's more boastful references to the place of Schubert's music at the Palace. Grove's 1881 announcement of the run of all the symphonies is an especially good example, stating that Crystal Palace audience is already more familiar with Schubert's music 'than the audiences at any other concert room in Europe', and describing the Ninth Symphony as 'the great work in C major which is so justly the pride of the Saturday Concerts'.[81] The overtones of the very building itself may even have played a role: after all, the Crystal Palace was the outstanding icon of the 1851 Great Exhibition, which has been frequently noted for its role in the British imperial project.[82] In its Sydenham incarnation, the Palace continued to display treasures from around the world, including the Egyptian Court, the Alhambra Court, the Chinese Court, and (of particular relevance for this discussion) the Greek and Roman Courts. Surrounded by the literal trappings of empire, an imperial discourse could have had a significant part to play in any 'classic' status for the music when heard for the first time by a British audience at the Crystal Palace.

Destabilising 'Canonicity'

It will be clear by now that the various discourses outlined above did not exist in isolation, but rather blended together in ways that might seem contradictory when viewed with an entirely rational eye. Ideas of poverty and personal struggle, masculinity (alongside femininity), Christian morality, classical culture, and British imperial identity all intermingled to create a sense of high status for Schubert. All of these elements transferred directly to the music via the idea of composer expression and back to Schubert himself again via the same route, but could also be entirely disconnected with whatever Schubert himself might have actually been intending to express in his music. This cultural operation, common to all composers who Grove wanted the Crystal Palace audience to value, could easily have given Schubert a position we would now describe as 'classic'. Indeed the references to classical and imperial culture make the word especially apposite.

However, there are two important caveats we must raise here. The first is that we could just as easily interpret these references as actively creating 'classic' status for Schubert, not that one already existed. In other words, the strenuous efforts to

[80] Leanne Langley has touched on this issue in a study looking at 'What Schubert did for Britain' rather than the usual reverse question. See 'Reception and Beyond: New Thoughts on Schubert in 19th-Century England', *The Schubertian* 58 (January 2008): 8–16.

[81] GB-Lbl-B, 05/05/1881, 22: 389–90.

[82] See, for example, Jeffrey A. Auerbach and Peter H. Hoffenberg, eds., *Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

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promote Schubert in these programme notes might reflect the fact that he was *not yet* a 'classic'. After all, as we have seen, Grove's notes tended to take for granted that there might be new members of the audience at any given concert. Those people might have not heard any of Schubert's orchestral music before and might need to be convinced of its value. Week after week, his notes for Schubert would offer the same discourses for the benefit of these listeners (reinforced by the notes that were reprinted without modification for subsequent performances) even as the regular attenders must have become very familiar with these ideas. The creation of a 'classic' was clearly an ongoing process rather than something with a fixed end-point.

The second caveat is an extension of the first: the idea of a 'classic' did not necessarily translate into 'canonic', at least on the matter of repertoire as outlined above. For all that the notes worked to create an elevated status for Schubert and his music, it was not necessarily backed up by frequent performances, at least not all of the time. Schubert may have received a half-concert devoted to his music in 1873, a whole concert in 1880, and a complete run of his complete symphonies across eight weeks in 1881, honours which were reserved solely for the highest status composers.[83] However, for the vast majority of the period under discussion, his work appeared in comparatively heterogeneous programmes mixing vocal and instrumental music, presented alongside many other composers both living and dead. One could certainly note, as with Mendelssohn or Beethoven, that Schubert's name appears fairly frequently from concert to concert; but this would miss how much other material was being performed at the Crystal Palace. The summary of works performed in a year, usually provided in the last booklet of the season, could list up to 50 names, from Abt to Veit via Lemmens, Molique and Randegger. The names of 'canonic' composers stand out if one is primed to see them, but might not have done so to those were hearing the music or attending a Saturday Concert for the first time (and who might not have necessarily come again).

It also seems relevant that, for all that it was promoted, Schubert's pieces were not treated as inviolable wholes that must be performed in the manner intended by the composer, as we might expect from Lydia Goehr's notion of the 'work concept' (an idea that is often taken to suggest 'canonic' status for composers and their music).[84] Sometimes individual movements of symphonies or other large works were performed separately. This included the chamber music such as the Octet and the *Death and the Maiden* Quartet (D.810), with the latter in fact only ever represented by the second movement; the other three movements never appeared at the Saturday Concerts. No doubt time pressures were a factor in not performing whole works, but there must also have been a sense that the audience and/or performers preferred these movements over the others. Moreover, both were

[83] The following are the only other composers to benefit from such treatment, with whole- or half-concerts (at least four pieces) devoted to their music between 1856 and 1887: Spohr (1859, 1884), Beethoven (1861, 1870, 1876, 1877, 1885, 1887), Rossini (1868), Mendelssohn (1870, 1871, 1872, 1876, 1878), Mozart (1872, 1873, 1874, 1885), Sterndale Bennett (1875), Weber (1875, 1886), Wagner (1876, 1883), Rubinstein (1877), Bach (1885), and Liszt (1886, twice). This is not including occasions when a single large-scale work took up all or most of the programme.

[84] As articulated in Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

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performed by the whole string section, with double basses added according to Manns's judgement, rather than the chamber groups that Schubert had intended.[85]

Most importantly, the place of Schubert's orchestral music in the repertoire was not as stable as the regular appearances of his music from the late 1860s to the early 1880s might have suggested. For example, the early symphonies did not establish themselves as regular features. After its British (and probably world) premiere on 21 November 1868, the Sixth Symphony had to wait 13 years before being performed again as part of the run of all Schubert symphonies in 1881. Similarly, the only outings the Second Symphony received in the period under examination were the premiere in 1877 and the 1881 run. The Fourth and Fifth Symphonies fared slightly better, with one performance each between their premieres in 1868 and 1873 respectively and the 1881 run, but each still had a gap of two years between premiere and next performance, and six or 11 years respectively following the second performance before being heard again. After the 1881 run, there is no sign of any of these symphonies being performed again for at least the next six years. The Eighth and Ninth Symphonies appeared around once a season each, so no performances of any of the others for many years at a time suggests that there was little appetite to hear them.

These observations should be understood in light of the argument that Colin Eatock makes in his work on Manns's plebiscite concerts from 1880 and 1887 (where the listeners voted on which pieces would be included). Here he gives particular attention to the role of the audience in determining the repertoire for concerts and any emerging sense of a 'canon':

> While the leading critics of Victorian Britain were respected and influential, they did not possess sufficient cultural authority to unilaterally establish canonicity. Critics, conductors, performers, impresarios, and pedagogues could and did use their prominent positions to nominate works and composers for canonization. However, in order for canonic status to be fully achieved, their nominations had to be ratified by the broad musical public (which was probably less concerned with lofty ideas about canon formation than it was with identifying favorite works). It was not enough for 'musical authorities' to tell concertgoers that a composer was 'great' or a work was a 'masterpiece': the public had to be convinced of it, or a work's canonicity was less than fully established.[86]

With this image in mind, and based on the evidence presented above, I propose that the common ground on Schubert was still being sought during the period under examination. It suggests that some aspect of audience taste was behind the lack of repeat performances for the early symphonies, not just a lack of input from the top. It would explain why we see an inconsistency between the promotional material in the programme notes and the actual programming practices: both popularity and ideology were simultaneously shaping the repertoire at the Crystal Palace, and not always in the same direction. Grove might have wanted

[85] Manns outlined his approach and justified his decision in an open letter printed for the performance of Mendelssohn's Octet by the whole string section on 30 October 1869. Performances of chamber music by the whole string section were never subsequently explained or justified.

[86] Colin Eatock, 'The Crystal Palace Concerts: Canon Formation and the English Musical Renaissance', *19th-Century Music* 34/1 (2010): 95.

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the audience to value the music, but there was no guarantee that he would achieve that goal in the long term.

Conclusion

For all that we might recognize that 'classic' did not necessarily equal 'canonic' during this period, we could still say that the discourses around Schubert all provided a strong foundation on which later, more overtly 'canonic' efforts could be built. These texts set up both composer and music in a mutually reinforcing framework encompassing many key Victorian values. They gained an especially powerful boost by exploiting the crucial moment of first impressions, given that many of these notes appeared for first performances of pieces, and were likely read by a number of people who were hearing even some of the more-established repertoire for the first time. They also remind us of many of the contingencies of this early stage of 'canon formation', and of the dangers of assuming that its shape was always inevitable, as Schubert's place in it was clearly not guaranteed even after Grove's extensive promotional efforts. Nonetheless, a general public that already had a sense of a composer as religious, nobly ancient, somehow 'ours', and manly (with any wavering quickly discarded), would no doubt be more amenable to a more exclusive diet of such 'classics' as the standard repertoire became more limited towards the end of the nineteenth century and beyond.

These notes also raise several more general questions about the understanding of music in nineteenth-century Britain. For example, it is striking to note that the emergence and growing popularity of programme notes as a form occurred during a period that is still commonly assumed to have seen the settling of 'absolute' music's supremacy.[87] While there can be no doubt that the status of non-narrative works such as symphonies and concerts rose significantly during this time, the phenomenon of programme notes suggests that it was because the stories associated with music had moved to a new arena rather than going away altogether. To put it bluntly, it seems that music never became genuinely 'absolute', even as critics actively promoted the idea that it should be thought of as such.[88] After all, such authors were tied exclusively to texts such as programme notes to spell out this idea to audiences; in the end it became yet another story about music. Moreover, the public dissemination of these stories concurrently with (or even prior to) the emergence of musicology as an institutionalised discipline means that present-day scholarship might have been shaped by programme note writers as much as by more formal academics.[89] There is clearly still plenty of work to be done understanding the stories that programme notes were telling about composers and their music, offering insights into Victorian society, the place of music and various kinds of music historiography within it, and the emergence of the discipline.

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[87] See, for example, Mark Evan Bonds's full-length study of the concept: *Absolute Music: The History of an Idea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). See also Max Paddison, 'Music as Ideal: The Aesthetics of Autonomy', in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 318–42.

[88] I explore this topic further in 'Telling Stories About Music in the Crystal Palace Saturday Concerts, 1865–1879', *Musical Quarterly* 105/3–4 (2022): 406–32.

[89] See my chapter '"Applied" before Musicology? George Grove, Programme Notes, and the *Dictionary*' in *The Routledge Companion to Applied Musicology*, ed. Chris Dromey (New York: Routledge, 2024): 46–54.

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