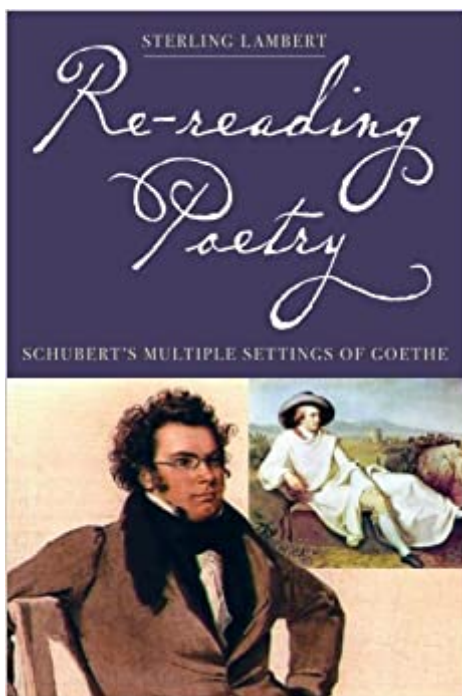


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Re-reading Poetry: Schubert's Multiple Settings Of Goethe



Synopsis

One of the most important aspects of Franz Schubert's song production has remained relatively neglected: the many occasions on which he set poetry to music more than once. This practice of returning to poems, and responding to them anew, is unusual and suggests a greater degree of literary sensitivity on the part of Schubert than is often ascribed to him. In contrast to his similarly frequent tendency to produce revised versions of songs, Schubert's resetting of poetry results in completely new songs. The presence of residues of earlier settings in later ones prompts consideration of the degree to which resettings are to some extent 'radical revisions' of their predecessors. It also raises questions as to what those residues might signify about how and why Schubert reset poetry. Nowhere are such issues more fascinatingly and comprehensively illustrated than in Schubert's multiple settings of the poet who was more important to him than any other: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. In recent years, a renewed interest in the relationship between Goethe and Schubert has demonstrated that the two men had more in common than has historically been supposed. A specific bond between them lies in Goethe's recognition that his poems could be read in more than one way. Re-reading Poetry uncovers an important shared outlook between composer and poet.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

(A) well-informed and eloquently written account of Schubert's Goethe settings which can be warmly recommended. AD PARNASSUM The considerable scholarship contained in this volume has implications beyond its immediate focus. Through his exploration of Schubert and Goethe, Lambert

illuminates the dynamic relationship between the disciplines of literature and music more generally and demonstrates that taking a close look at well-written material has endless rewards. (...) It is fiendishly difficult to analyze genius based in subtle nuance, but the angle Lambert takes allows him to make a valiant attempt and a true contribution to the field. OPERA NEWS Lambert's close analysis of each setting of each text corrects a false impression that has persisted far too long in much of the writing about Schubert's songs: that we should only be concerned with the final setting, and that the earlier ones should be relegated to the composer's waste heap of unsuccessful attempts. MUSIC AND LETTERS

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