

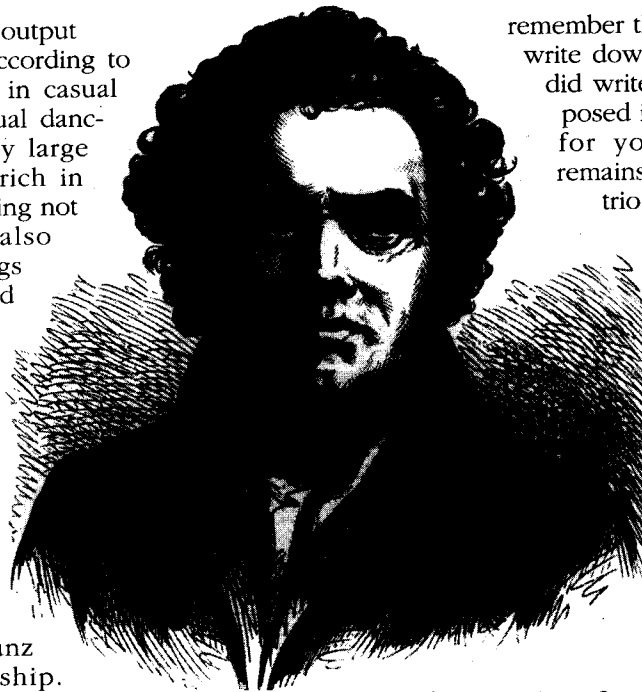
# Schubert's Dances

By JOSEPH SMITH

Much of Schubert's vast output of dances for piano, according to his friends, originated in casual improvisation to accompany actual dancing. Nevertheless, an amazingly large proportion of the dances are rich in genuine musical interest, possessing not simply melodic grace, but also sophisticated harmonic shadings and contrapuntal textures, and delicate, evocative piano writing. Of these dances, one (D. 610) stands out by virtue of its curious inscription: "Trio, to be regarded as the lost son of a minuet, written down by Franz Schubert *mpia* [abbreviation for Latin *legalese*: by his own hand] expressly for his beloved brother in Feb. 1818." (The brother is probably Ferdinand, with whom Franz had the closest relationship. Ferdinand was a good enough musician to have a real appreciation of his brother's genius, and, after his death, made continuing efforts to secure performance and publication of the posthumous works.) The inscription is more tantalizing than informative.

The renowned Schubert scholar Maurice J.E. Brown, whose 1958 critical biography so convincingly dispelled the sentimentally exaggerated myth that Schubert was a Forrest Gump-like idiot savant, hazarded the speculation that the trio belongs to the Minuet in C sharp minor (D. 600), and accordingly dated this minuet "late 1817." The later scholars who edited the new complete Schubert edition feel that hard facts go against the theory. They date the minuet from 1813 or 1814, citing as evidence the handwriting, the instrumental indication "Clav" (which he never used after the first half of 1814) and the fact that it appears on the same page as sketches for the first Mass, from this period.

On the other hand, even if we grant that all this information is correct, it would not absolutely disprove Brown's guess. Notice that Schubert's date on the manuscript of the trio marks the occasion of his *writing it down* for his brother, not necessarily the same date as its composition. Let us imagine, for the sake of argument, the following scenario: Schubert composes both minuet and trio around 1814 and plays them in the presence of Ferdinand. In 1818, Ferdinand says to Franz, "Remember that minuet you composed a few years ago—the one I like so much?" Franz answers, "The one with the counterpoint? I think I remember the trio—does this sound right?" "Yes! Please write it down for me." "Well, I don't



remember the minuet well enough, but I'll write down the trio if you like. I think I did write out the minuet when I composed it—if it turns up, I'll copy it out for you." One further objection remains to the theory that minuet and trio belong together (an objection, by the way, not raised by the editors of the new complete Schubert edition). The trio is anacrustic—it begins with a quarter note upbeat, and its last bar ends after the second beat, whereas the minuet is not—it begins on the first beat. This combination seldom occurs in Schubert: usually, minuet and trio (or scherzo and trio) will be the same in this respect. (However, there does exist one notable exception—the minuet of the

late C minor Sonata begins without upbeat, its trio with upbeat, necessitating a metered silence between minuet and trio.) To play D. 600 and D. 610 as one, we must add two bars to the minuet (to be precise, one and two thirds of a bar)—two, not simply in conformity to the phrase structure of these individual pieces, but because the steps to a minuet demand an even number of bars; after the Trio, a quarter notes rest, and "Men. Da Capo."

As long as the scholars disagree with one another on whether these pieces were conceived as one, I will throw in my two cents. In fact, I think it unlikely that they were composed together. Nevertheless, I am in total sympathy with Brown's desire to unite them. Individually, each is too short to encourage public performance. And, unlike the elfin D minor trio to the F major minuet (D. 41, No. 9, from 1813), which has been included in several teaching anthologies as an independent excerpt, D. 610 is too difficult for most children. Since, therefore, if only by some happy accident, D. 600 and 610 are plausibly related in key, as well as in textures which avoid pianistic formula and suggest instrumental ensemble writing, why not link them—at least, until some other Schubert minuet comes forward to claim paternity of the orphaned trio. ■ See Schubert's music on the next page.



See Joseph Smith's comments on these Schubert pieces, and an explanation of why they might be played together, on page 15.

# MENUETT

D. 600

FRANZ SCHUBERT

The musical score for Schubert's Minuet in G major, D. 600, is presented in six systems. Each system consists of a treble and bass staff. The piece is in 3/4 time and G major. The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. The first system begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

# TRIO

D. 610

FRANZ SCHUBERT  
(1797-1828)

## Minuetto

*sempre legato*

First system of musical notation (measures 1-5). The right hand (treble clef) is marked *f* and *fz*. The left hand (bass clef) is marked *sempre staccato*.

Second system of musical notation (measures 6-11). The right hand (treble clef) is marked *fz*. The left hand (bass clef) is marked *sempre staccato*.

Third system of musical notation (measures 12-17). The right hand (treble clef) is marked *fz*. The left hand (bass clef) is marked *fp* at measures 15, 16, and 17.

Fourth system of musical notation (measures 18-24). The right hand (treble clef) is marked *fz*. The left hand (bass clef) is marked *fp* at measure 18 and *staccato* at measure 24.

Fifth system of musical notation (measures 25-30). The right hand (treble clef) is marked *fz*. The left hand (bass clef) is marked *fz* at measures 25 and 26.