



# Schubert: The Music and the Man

*Brian Newbould*

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Of all the great composers, none, not even Mozart, has been so dogged by myth and misunderstanding as Schubert. Since the 1920s, when the musical *Blossom Time* hit the stage, the notion of Schubert as a pudgy, love-lorn Bohemian *schwammerl* (mushroom) scribbling *gemülich* tunes on the back of menus in idle moments has never been quite eradicated. But in this major new biography (the first comprehensive work on Schubert in over fifty years) Brian Newbould lays to rest the stereotype of the composer plucking melodies out of the air, relying on instinct more than well-honed craft. Instead he paints a vivid and compelling portrait of a man who was compulsively dedicated to his art, a composer so prolific that he produced roughly one thousand works in an eighteen year period.

Gifted with an intuitive know-how, coupled with a Mozartian facility for composition, Schubert combined the relish and wonder of an amateur with the discipline and technical rigor of a professional. He moved quickly and comfortably among genres, and sometimes composed directly into score; but many pieces required painstaking revision before they satisfied his growing self-criticism. Examining afresh the enigmas surrounding Schubert's religious outlook, his loves, his sexuality, his illness and death, Newbould offers above all a celebration of a unique genius, an idiosyncratic composer of an astonishing body of powerful, enduring music.

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