



SCHUBERT.

SCHUBERT is, above all musicians, the poet of moods. Of all the really great musicians he is the most sensitive to impressions coming from without. He is for ever giving expression to something that has been aroused in his soul by an external stimulus. That is why he is essentially a lyric poet, incapable of the prolonged and logical development of the epic. Beethoven gave expression to the development of the inner life. His work reveals a profound nature of extraordinary depth and integrity, capable of an organic growth uninfluenced by what he called "the storms of circumstance." Mozart, although he was, later in his life, influenced by experience, was for the most part, as independent of the teachings of life as is a mathematician. The world he created has its own laws and exists in its own right. It is not a copy of the world of experience, nor does it express the composer's reactions to it. It is as ideal as, and even more beautiful than, the world of pure mathematics. But Schubert was at the mercy of every wind that blew. A storm, the sudden vision of a field of flowers, a girl's sigh, the solemn pulse of the ocean, were events that Schubert accepted with a pure sensitivity almost unequalled, and were immediately transmuted, by his rich and delicate nature, into sound. Hence the fact that he was, from the beginning, primarily a song-writer, and that he wrote his songs in extraordinary abundance and with extraordinary rapidity.

A song expresses, for the most part, a mood. It seizes a transient emotion on the wing, as it were. A great song-writer must be, above all, rich in responses. We may say, indeed, that his emotions must be easy and fluent rather than profound. It is not his task to explore an emotion, as Beethoven did, to

# The Poet of Moods SCHUBERT

By I. W. N. SULLIVAN.

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Schubert will be the subject of a broadcast from 3YA, Wednesday, December 9.

grasp it in all its complexity, to make it even more profound. This requires a degree of profundity, and a power of development, for which the song is an altogether inadequate medium. The function of a song-writer is to present an emotion in its immediacy, without pondering upon its significance. To this end the song-writer must have a most delicate and responsive nature. He is likely, indeed, to be comparatively lacking in depth and "balance." His inner life will be extraordinarily rich and varied, but it is not likely to show a steady development.

HALLUCINATED and absorbed as he is by the lovely and distracting surfaces of things, he is not likely to develop a philosophy of life nor to make his career as an artist a step by step progress toward some distant goal. He is likely, in fact, to seem something of a dreamer

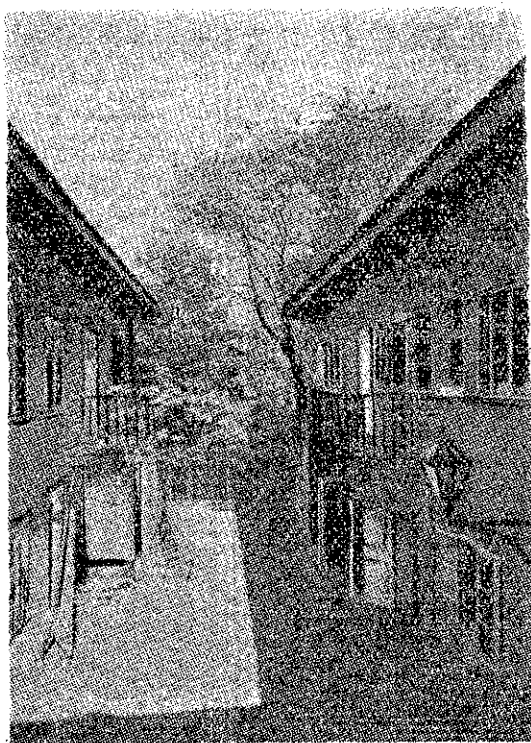
—even a drifter. The value of his work will depend on the range and acuteness of his sensibilities, and on his power to convey his impressions. Essentially he is to be regarded as a sensitive and transfiguring magic mirror. His function is to reflect life, not to understand it or to justify it.

We find in Schubert all the characteristics of the great song-writer. To his contemporaries he seemed to lack strength of character, to be incapable of a fixed purpose. His lack of material success they attributed to his laziness, his shiftlessness. They regarded his extreme sociability as almost a vice. Schubert knew nothing of loneliness. He was always surrounded by a group of friends, writers, painters, musicians. He spent much of his time in taverns, talking and hearing talk. He loved going to fresh places and meeting fresh people. He was eager, intensely alive, avid of impressions. And, indeed, these changing impressions, these varied emotions, were the food on which Schubert the artist lived.

When life seemed flat he would go to a wine cellar and there spend the little money he had on drink. The drink excited him; it enabled him to dream and see visions; it made life worth living again. These characteristics are what we should expect from his music.

No artist ever lived whose sensibilities were so delicate and numerous. In the hundreds of songs that Schubert has written we find expressed a really amazing variety of impressions. It seems that he could seize and body forth any mood, however elusive, however transient.

His emotional nature stirred to the slightest impulse; it was, as it were, adjusted with infinite delicacy. And his work suffers, of course, from the disadvantages that attend such facility. He was incapable of the logical expansion of an idea, of the profound and unflinching development of an emotion. He was incapable of the intensity of realisation, and also of the coherence, displayed in such a work as the slow movement of Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony," for example. It is for this reason that Schubert's large scale compositions, although they contain some of his most wonderful music, do not exhibit the mastery we find in his songs. Schubert was incapable of a really sustained flight. But although Schubert could not (Concluded on page 30.)



SCHUBERT'S BIRTHPLACE.

The inner court of the house in Vienna where the greatest of all song-writers was born in 1797.