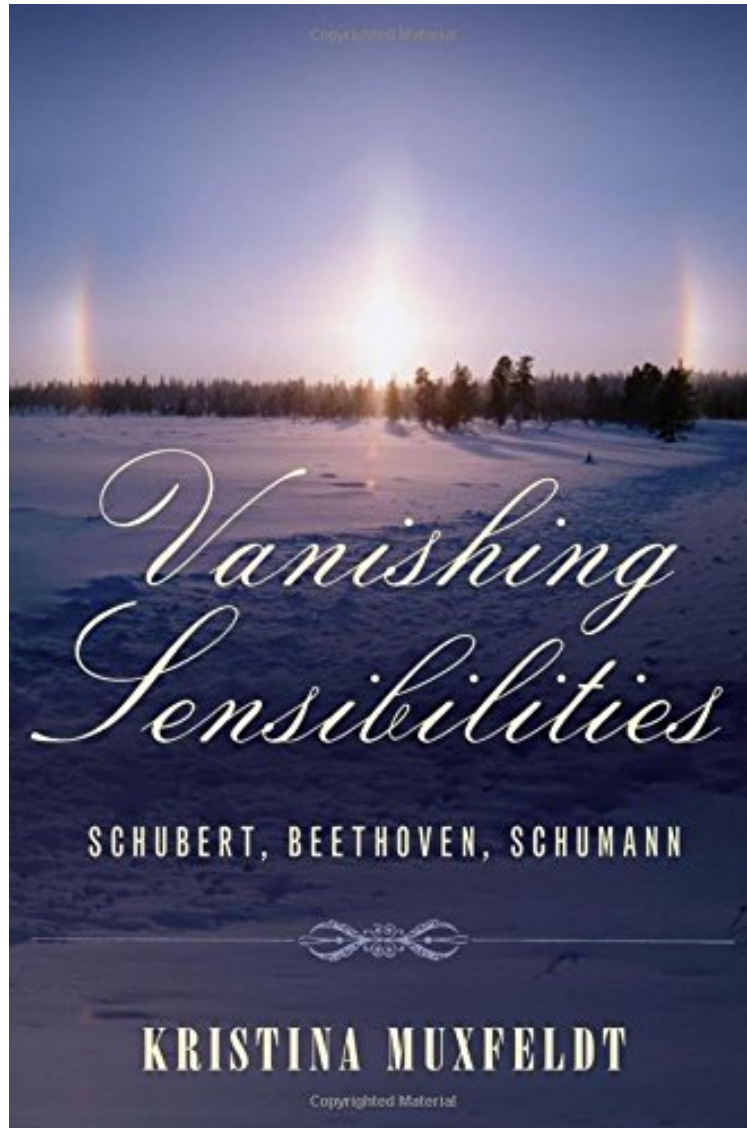


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## Vanishing Sensibilities: Schubert, Beethoven, Schumann

*Kristina Muxfeldt*

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**Kristina Muxfeldt : Vanishing Sensibilities: Schubert, Beethoven, Schumann** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Vanishing Sensibilities: Schubert, Beethoven, Schumann:

Vanishing Sensibilities examines once passionate cultural concerns that shaped music of Schubert, Beethoven,

Schumann, and works of their contemporaries in drama or poetry. Music, especially music with text, was a powerful force in lively ongoing conversations about the nature of liberty, which included such topics as the role of consent in marriage, same-sex relationships, freedom of the press, and the freedom to worship (or not). Among the most common vehicles for stimulating debate about pressing social concerns were the genres of historical drama, and legend or myth, whose stories became inflected in fascinating ways during the Age of Metternich. Interior and imagined worlds, memories and fantasies, were called up in purely instrumental music, and music was privately celebrated for its ability to circumvent the restrictions that were choking the verbal arts. Author Kristina Muxfeldt invites us to listen in on these cultural conversations, dating from a time when the climate of censorship made the tone of what was said every bit as important as its literal content. At this critical moment in European history such things as a performer's delivery, spontaneous improvisation, or the demeanor of the music could carry forbidden messages of hope and political resistance--flying under the censor's radar like a carrier pigeon. Rather than trying to decode or fix meanings, Muxfeldt concerns herself with the very mechanisms of their communication, and she confronts distortions to meaning that form over time as the cultural or political pressures shaping the original expression fade and are eventually forgotten. In these pages are accounts of works successful in their own time alongside others that failed to achieve more than a liminal presence, among them Schubert's *Alfonso und Estrella* and his last opera project *Der Graf von Gleichen*, whose libretto was banned even before Schubert set to work composing it. Enlivening the narrative are generous music examples, reproductions of artwork, and facsimiles of autograph material.

"Vanishing Sensibilities stages uncanny encounters with historical familiars: we hear the rustle of their voices, sense the aura of their secret histories and desires. By refusing to take her subjects at face value, Kristina Muxfeldt grants them a more humanly plausible range of tone and intent." --Scott Burnham, Scheide Professor of Music History, Princeton University

"Over the last fifteen years, Kristina Muxfeldt has emerged as a voice of reason in debates concerning meaning in 19th-century music. *Vanishing Sensibilities* brings several of those articles together in a volume that advances a more ambitious argument than could be set forth in separate essays. In her superb discussions of operas and songs by Schubert, Schumann's *Frauenliebe* songs, and works by Beethoven, Muxfeldt demonstrates the kinds of insights available only through the painstaking reconstruction of the composer's own context." --Susan McClary, Professor of Music, Case Western Reserve University

"Worth the effort to discover Muxfeldt's rich, new ideas...Recommended." --Choice

"Muxfeldt often succeeds in unraveling the complexities and nuances of the past and is unafraid to lose herself in the largely uncharted terrain of the nineteenth century." --Notes

"Besides the refined prose, meticulous and up-to-date research, and excellent apparatus...the book is captivating above all because of its unpretentious yet sophisticated hermeneutic dialogic structure." --Goethe Yearbook

"The author's pleasure in and passion for her subject(s) is manifest in every carefully crafted, softly provocative chapter...*Vanishing Sensibilities* is dedicated to Charles Rosen. Muxfeldt shares his keen sense of poetic and musical vitality and eye for significant details, as well as the gift of asking probing questions of the material in hand. I can imagine no finer memorial." --Nineteenth-Century Music

"A deeply insightful book and a rewarding read...Muxfeldt introduces *Technicolor* to the subject of musical meaning, wonderfully illuminating the hazy landscape of hermeneutic studies." --Journal of the American Musicological Society

"Kristina Muxfeldt's book is therefore warmly recommended not only to all who are interested in Beethoven, Schubert, or Schumann and their times, but also to everyone who finds music more fascinating when it heard as part of a history of mentality and cultural history, and not least also to those who study or teach music history and who will find here a rich collection of compellingly discussed examples." --Schubert-Perspektiven

About the Author Kristina Muxfeldt is a musicologist on the faculty of the Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University. She specializes in music history, and the intersections of analysis, biography, and reception, especially the cultural and social environment around early nineteenth-century music in Vienna. She taught previously at Yale University and has held visiting appointments at the University of Illinois, Princeton University, and the University of Notre Dame.