

**Karoline Eberstaller: Is She the Real Link  
between  
Franz Schubert and Anton Bruckner?**

**Janet I. Wasserman**

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## **Karoline Eberstaller: Is She the Real Link between Franz Schubert and Anton Bruckner?**

To read the name of Karoline Eberstaller (1812-1902) joined closely with those of Franz Schubert (1797-1828) and Anton Bruckner (1824-1896) is to experience a shock of non-recognition. The information alleging a connection relates to the young Bruckner's years in the Upper Austrian town of Kronstorf (or Kronsdorf), between Enns and Steyr. Bruckner often visited Steyr to play the famous Krismann organ in the parish church. The reference in question, in a 1970 biography of Bruckner by Hans-Hubert Schönzeler, speaks of Bruckner's

contact with Karoline Eberstaller, the daughter of a French General, who had played piano duets with Schubert whenever he stayed in Steyr during the last years of his life. Karoline Eberstaller now introduced Bruckner to the Romantic world of Franz Schubert. Together they played his music for piano duet and for two pianos, and thus a new facet was given to the musical vision of the young Bruckner<sup>1</sup>.

This is an astonishing assertion, especially as one finds that it had already a rather long history before it was retailed, thus, to the larger non-specialist reading public in 1970, and has continued to appear in a variety of scholarly and popular works since that time.<sup>2</sup> It is known, of course, that Schubert did make several visits to Steyr and other places in Upper Austria. Furthermore, Bruckner spent many years working in Upper Austria until he finally left for Vienna in 1868, and he later visited and stayed in Steyr during summer holidays in the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s. It is astonishing, however, that the insertion of Karoline Eberstaller as the pivotal link between these composers has, for so long, failed to be subjected to tests of historical authenticity and veracity through a search for primary sources, and so to have been validated or discredited or, at the least, have been identified explicitly as an open historical question. It is only within the last half decade or so that a mild and gradual re-appraisal of this assertion has begun to receive consideration.

The ultimate printed source of the Eberstaller legend and the model for all subsequent versions of it appears to be a passage in the first volume of a four-volume comprehensive biography of Bruckner (published 1922-1937) that was based on materials collected by August Göllerich and edited by his collaborator Max Auer (1880-1962).<sup>3</sup> The earliest book-length biography of Bruckner, however, was by Rudolf Louis in 1905. Louis' report concerning Bruckner's youthful engagement with the town of Steyr mentions the great organ and the friendliness of Bruckner's reception there, but does not name Eberstaller anywhere in the book.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, a biography of Bruckner written by Max Auer in response to Louis' work, which was completed by 1908 but not published until 1923, also contains no mention of Eberstaller.<sup>5</sup>

When Göllicher died in 1922, Auer published the chapters concerning Bruckner's early life that Göllicher had completed as Volume 1 of *Anton Bruckner: Ein Lebens- und Schaffensbild*.<sup>6</sup> It is here that the name of Eberstaller first appears:

“Freundschaftliche Bande knüpften sich in diesen ersten Steyrer Tagen mit dem Schulgehilfen Georg Pointner von Gleink, 1879-1888 Bürgermeister von Steyr, und mit Karoline Eberstaller, der Tochter eines französischen Generals, die mit Schubert vierhändig gespielt hatte.

Sie ward ihm Führerin durch die Schaffenswunder dieses Tondichters, welchen er bald zu seinem besonderen Liebling und Vorbild erkor, von dem er nie genug in Erfahrung bringen konnte.”<sup>7</sup>

From here, the Eberstaller legend entered the tradition of Bruckner scholarship and has remained (until very recently) untested and unverified for nearly eighty years.

In 1927, the Upper Austrian journalist Gregor Goldbacher published a newspaper article, “Karoline Eberstaller, die letzte Freundin Franz Schuberts,” followed by “Von Franz Schubert bis Anton Bruckner. Die hervorragendsten Meister zweier weit auseinanderliegenden Musikepochen persönlich gekannt—Was wir von der Steyrerin Karoline Eberstaller wissen,” in 1944.<sup>8</sup> After Gregor Goldbacher's 1927 newspaper article came an article by Max Auer in June, 1928, which is a wholly uncritical retelling of Goldbacher's article of the previous year.<sup>9</sup> These newspaper articles, as perhaps also Auer's expanded version of Göllicher's passage in the various editions of his *Anton Bruckner-- Sein Leben und Werk*,<sup>10</sup> represent a branch in the tradition—an increased focus on the figure of Eberstaller *per se*. Until quite recently, this focus also has tended to perpetuate the legend rather than to lead to a resolution of it.

Finally, there is the tradition of Schubert scholarship to consider in relation to the Eberstaller legend. For example, in *The Schubert Reader*, a basic documentary authority on this composer, the only mention of Karoline Eberstaller is found in Otto Eric Deutsch's editorial note: “The adopted daughter of Dr. Franz Xaver Krugluger, Karoline Eberstaller [born Steyr, 1812], who lived with the doctor at Schellmann's house, boasted in old age of having been Schubert's friend.”<sup>11</sup> The tone of “boasted in old age” is a signal that Deutsch was not pleased with this allegation. In general, it would be fair to say that among Schubert scholars, Eberstaller is not recognized as a link between Schubert and Bruckner and that, therefore, from this side as well very little effort has been expended to investigate the matter.

The connections between Karoline Eberstaller and the two composers revolve around the Upper Austrian town of Steyr. Therefore, it is vital to establish that the existing chronological information in the standard literature on both Schubert and Bruckner supports their presence and activities in the town at the appropriate times. This is not difficult to accomplish. However, whether this would establish the connecting link in the person of Karoline Eberstaller is a related

but separate evidentiary issue. In the case of Schubert, he made visits of varying duration to Steyr in 1819, 1823, and 1825. Assertions are still made, including on an Austrian government website,<sup>12</sup> that Schubert visited Steyr in 1827; this is not so. In the summer of 1819, Schubert and his new friend, the noted opera singer Johann Michael Vogl (1768-1840) together made a visit to Steyr, which was Vogl's hometown.<sup>13</sup> Vogl stayed at his father's house while Schubert lodged at the house of Dr. Albert Schellmann (1759-1844), a family friend of Vogl. Schubert, however, took his meals at the house of Josef Koller (1780-1864).<sup>14</sup> Schubert and Vogl made a repeat visit in 1823, possibly with the same lodging and meal arrangements for Schubert.<sup>15</sup>

Many of the children and adults with whom Schubert had contact, in Steyr as elsewhere, had musical education, and often they became highly proficient. This was the *Biedermeier* era of *Hausmusik*, at the beginning of the greater dispersion of the piano as a household instrument, when musical literacy, appreciation of music, and singing ability or command of a musical instrument were the hallmarks of a refined spirit and a cultured family environment. Schubert's visits in Steyr were quite musical. Dr. Schellmann was an accomplished pianist as was his son, Albert (1798-1854), a friend of Schubert.<sup>16</sup> The Schellmanns were a musical family; so musical, in fact, that there is an album leaf on which Schubert dedicates an Ecosaise (D145/8) to a daughter, Seraphine Schellmann (?-1857).<sup>17</sup> Schubert's meals at the Kollers brought him in contact with yet another musical Steyr family, and he played "most evenings" at the Kollers with their daughter Josefine (1801-1874), nicknamed Pepi, who, Schubert said, "plays the piano well, and is going to sing several of my songs."<sup>18</sup> Schubert, it is said, wrote the Piano Sonata in A major (D664) for Pepi Koller.<sup>19</sup> Vogl and another Steyr friend, Albert Stadler (1794-1888), sang during those musical evenings.

Karoline Eberstaller's early life as originally reported allows the following points to be stated. She was born on March 2, 1812.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, Karoline was a very young girl of seven at the time of the first Schubert visit in 1819. During Schubert's next visit, in 1823, she was eleven, and at his last visit in 1825, Karoline would have been thirteen years old. Schubert may have been ill during his 1825 visit and would have had less time to engage in a round of social duties.<sup>21</sup> Karoline may have studied piano, and she may have become fairly proficient over the years; however, I have found no mention anywhere about her piano lessons, or whether it was a local teacher or a family member who gave her lessons. Apparently, Karoline herself is the only witness for her piano playing. Karoline Eberstaller was living at the house of Dr. Schellmann. Furthermore, she was the goddaughter of Therese Koller (1783-1853), the wife of Josef and mother of Josefine.<sup>22</sup> Thus, Karoline could have had a connection with Schubert in Steyr via the Schellmanns and the Kollers. To place this possible connection into perspective, however, it should be noted that Josefine Koller was already a young woman in 1819 when she first met Schubert while Karoline was only in her mid teens when Schubert died in 1828.

Schubert did not often have contact with small children outside of his own family (he had much younger step siblings), but enough is known and expressed in his letters—about the Esterhazy daughters and little Faust Pachler, for example—to surmise that when a friendly or close familial relationship was established, Schubert would have made note of it, or some of his friends would have known of it.<sup>23</sup> At the start of his 1819 stay in Steyr, Schubert wrote of the eight pretty girls at the Schellmann house, five of them the daughters of Dr. Schellmann.<sup>24</sup> Also living in the Schellmann house was the district commissioner Weilnböck, who had three daughters.<sup>25</sup> One of these Weilnböck daughters, Antonie (?-1863), later married Schubert's friend Albert Stadler.<sup>26</sup> The five Schellmann and three Weilnböck daughters together match Schubert's tally of eight girls in the Schellmann house. Within the documentation known at present, no mention is made by Schubert of Karoline Eberstaller in any regard, piano playing or otherwise. No mention is made of Karoline Eberstaller by any of those whose comments or writings about the Viennese master appear in Deutsch's *Memoirs*.

Like Steyr, Enns is not unimportant in this story because Karoline had Eberstaller family relatives in Enns who were known to Enns resident, teacher and organist Leopold von Zenetti (1805-1892).<sup>27</sup> Zenetti later became Bruckner's theory teacher during the time Bruckner lived in the area.<sup>28</sup> Nothing more is known of the Eberstaller relations in Enns, although Zamazal, a Bruckner scholar, apparently intended to continue working in this area.<sup>29</sup> Bruckner's presence in Upper Austria speaks to his profound connection with this province, beginning with his birth in 1824 in Ansfelden, near Linz, into a family several generations in the locality. Merely to name the places where Bruckner lived, studied, visited, worked, and, later in life, vacationed is a guide to the local geography: Ansfelden, Hörsching, St. Florian, Windhaag, Kronsdorf, Enns, Steyr, Linz. Until his move to Vienna in 1868, Bruckner spent his first forty-four years in Upper Austria. But when and where—and if—he met Karoline is not at all clear. Bruckner's correspondence and any memoirs, his own or by others, require careful reading to establish and verify a meeting and subsequent relationship between him and Karoline. Such a relationship would need to document that the two did indeed play piano together, especially Schubert's music for piano four hands.

The claim that Karoline Eberstaller had a friendship with each of these composers individually is, thus, undocumented. The claim that she was the daughter of a French general probably is fanciful also—no matter who was the source of this allegation—and it is not supported by the chronology of the last French invasion of Upper Austria. This area was, indeed, invaded and occupied by Napoleon's army three times in the early nineteenth century: 1800, 1805, and 1809. Linz, Steyr and Enns were occupied by the invading French. Napoleon himself spent three days, 4-6 May 1809, at Schloss Ennsegg during a local battle at the Ennsbrücke. The French troops finally left Steyr in January, 1810.<sup>30</sup> Upper Austria, as well as the rest of the

country, suffered increasingly during the entire decade from the effects of the repeated invasions and occupations. Economic distress and social dislocation were the real and long term aftermath, and it was some time before Upper Austria was able to regain some economic and financial stability.<sup>31</sup>

Was there fraternization between the occupying troops and the local inhabitants during this era of Napoleonic invasions? If history is any guide to what happens during occupations, one may safely assume that French troops and the local Austrians, including residents of Steyr and Enns, had some sort of interaction. However, there is no historical evidence that any high French officer remained in the Enns-Steyr locale after the end of the last French occupation and troop withdrawal in January 1810. Since Karoline was born in March, 1812, her conception nine months earlier would have meant that this unknown French general was still in the vicinity during June of 1811, i.e. almost a year and a half after the last of the French occupying forces departed. It seems unlikely that Napoleon would have allowed one of his generals to dally while the French were fighting the English in the ongoing Peninsular Wars in Spain and Portugal and with Napoleon's 1812 invasion of Russia looming.

Goldbacher's newspaper article, moreover, also names Franz and Katharina Eberstaller as Karoline's birth parents; Franz was a local merchant. There are further discrepancies in the early telling of Karoline's story. It was said that these parents soon died, but no dates or causes of their deaths were revealed. Karoline was supposed to have been adopted by a local physician, Dr. Franz Xaver Krugluger, but no adoption date was provided, and no one could say how old Karoline was at adoption, if in fact she ever had been legally adopted. She was supposed to have lived with Dr. Krugluger in the Schellmann house, but no mention was made of a Frau Krugluger. Since Therese, or Theresia, Koller—Josef's later ennoblement added a *von*—was Karoline's godmother, one might ask why she and her husband did not assume responsibility for raising the orphaned child. Dr. Krugluger's death date, 12 July 1855, also was first given in Gregor Goldbacher's 1927 newspaper article. Nothing more was told about him despite his quite laudable act of adopting an orphan who was later known in the vernacular as "Krugluger Lini." Karoline retained the family name Eberstaller her whole life and never, as far we can tell, officially assumed the name of Krugluger. As was the case with Karoline's Austrian birth parents, no further mention or information was available about Dr. Krugluger until the 1997 report of the Anton Bruckner Institut Linz (ABIL) was published in 1999.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, Karoline was supposed to have lived for a time in Munich but eventually returned to Steyr.<sup>33</sup> What would have been involved in her move to Munich? Was it for reasons of employment, or betrothal or some other personal reason having to do with her hometown? Goldbacher did not say, and to date no one has been able to sort out this story of Karoline's absence from Steyr for a

number of years. Steyr is almost equidistant between Munich and Vienna but is slightly closer to Vienna; why a move to Munich and not Vienna?

If, as I believe is the case, Karoline's claims of friendship with Bruckner are false, it is obvious that she could not and would not have made the claim to Bruckner's friendship until he had achieved some measure of fame. Therefore, her claim to a relationship with Bruckner can only date to a time when she was already in old age.<sup>34</sup> While Schubert had met with local renown in Vienna and Upper Austria during his short life, here again Karoline had to wait until that renown had spread far and wide and Schubert's name had reached the pinnacle of fame.<sup>35</sup> And, again, that pinnacle was reached much later in the nineteenth century when Karoline was a gray-haired old lady in a modest bonnet, as depicted in her portrait by local artist Josef Diltsch (1863-1931), which is in the Steyr Museum.<sup>36</sup> There was a confluence in Karoline's life, at a great age, of Schubert and Bruckner that appeared to be an irresistible opportunity. Apparently, Karoline had never married. By 1902, when she died, Karoline undoubtedly had few contemporaries alive to contribute to the historical record.

Do the chronologies support Karoline's contentions of personal experience of Schubert's and Bruckner's presence in her hometown? Certainly, they do. Schubert and Bruckner indisputably were visitors to Steyr during Karoline's lifetime.<sup>37</sup> The city has memorial monuments to both composers and commemorative plaques on local buildings citing their presence there. The monuments to Schubert and Bruckner are, of course, genuine municipal honors in recognition of their accomplishments and greatness.<sup>38</sup> There are also memorials in Steyr to Karoline Eberstaller, especially the *Grabkreuz* erected in her honor in 1928 during the Schubert centennial commemoration. The commemorative speech at the dedication of the *Grabkreuz*, delivered by Steyr notable Dr. Hermann Spängler, refers to Karoline's adoptive father as "Dr. Franz Grubglucker," referring to the physician Dr. Krugluger. Spängler's speech contains other inaccuracies and is, in its totality, the complete legend retold as it appeared in Goldbacher's 1927 article including mention of the portrait of Schubert over Karoline's bed.<sup>39</sup> These public artifacts—newspaper articles, *Grabkreuz*, local commemoration—do not indubitably support her own claims to intimate friendship with Schubert and Bruckner, nor do they support Karoline's claim, now continued by others, that she holds responsibility for an indelible artistic transmission from one famed composer to another. Karoline's supposed French paternity likewise may be considered a self-promoting rumor and a winked-at romantic notion.<sup>40</sup> As far as the historical record is concerned, the Schellmanns, Kollers, and Stadlers, and any descendants, remain silent about Karoline. Nothing is heard from any Schubert, Paumgartner, Spaun, Vogl, Krugluger or Eberstaller, or their descendants.

It should be emphasized yet again that the Schubert musical tradition in Upper Austria as well as, of course, the great Bruckner musical tradition there is well-documented.

These traditions formed independently and, at some point, intersected, as do many cultural developments, especially those in similar social environments. This intertwining of traditions is quite natural in the arts and is especially meaningful in music. Upper Austria—especially Steyr and Linz—and Graz were rich in musical resources and interest for Schubert as well as being places where he encountered profound admiration for his compositions and deep appreciation for himself. Bruckner’s music was born and nourished in Upper Austria. By the time Bruckner left for Vienna, his familial, personal and professional identifications with Upper Austria were deeply felt and he never forgot them. This impact was never made clearer than in Bruckner’s wish to be buried near the great Krismann organ in Steyr’s parish church. Both the Schubert and Bruckner musical traditions continue, each maintaining its own powerful momentum, and have expanded beyond the borders of Upper Austria into a profound and worldwide appreciation of both composers.

The earlier version of events in Karoline’s life as I have outlined it above—a version still supported today by some—clearly had left several questions to be asked, some of which now have begun to be answered by the most recent research. Did Karoline’s early loss of her mother and her later “adoption” breed a fantasy that invented a glamorous father? Was Karoline, in truth, born illegitimately, or did she only wrongly suspect that this was so because she had been adopted? Was Karoline ever really legally adopted at all? Was Krugluger only a temporary foster parent until the father remarried? We now know that her biological father, Johann, lived until 1836 when Karoline was about twenty-four years old. It is difficult to understand the reason for the earlier change in Karoline’s living arrangements, joining Dr. Krugluger, especially since she had a godmother in Frau Koller. If the story is a fantasy of Karoline’s, was it merely a comforting refuge in the face of possible social stigma or perceived local gossip? Was the reality of the loss of her mother too painful for a newly orphaned child whose father was thought not as successful a figure as were the Schellmanns and Kollers? Again, there may have been confabulation on all sides to muddy the historical record. More reliable documentation has begun slowly to emerge.

Some answers are provided in the parish record, “Taufbuch der Stadtpfarre Steyr, Band IX, S.134, Jahr 1812”, for Karoline’s birth and the naming of her godmother, cited in footnotes to Zamazal’s 1997 article in the section providing the text of Spängler’s 1928 dedicatory speech.<sup>41</sup> Also in Zamazal’s footnotes, Dr. Krugluger is identified in the parish “Totenbuch,” as having been born in 1775, thus making him an almost exact contemporary of her father Johann.<sup>42</sup> The Linz Diocese now has a web site with a link to the Stadtpfarre Steyr, but parish records are not available online. In Austria, as elsewhere, the Roman Catholic Church’s parish records are vital primary sources in which are recorded births, marriages, deaths, burials, baptisms, school

attendance, and possibly adoptions. No parish records have been cited about Karoline's early life, especially about her schooling or her supposed adoption by Dr. Krugluger, nor have any documents in local municipal archives been cited.

What more has been learned of Karoline and of Karoline's parents has been through recent publications of the Anton Bruckner Institut Linz (ABIL).<sup>43</sup> As of 1997, we now know the dates for Karoline's parents: Johann Evangelist Andreas Eberstaller (1774/75-1836) and Katharina née Wurm (1772-1822). Karoline's mother died when she was about ten years old—surely a traumatic event with lasting psychic wounds. Not only was there the maternal loss but also a *Stiefmutter*—a stepmother, Julianna Koch (c.1783-1831), who married Johann Eberstaller in 1826 and whose role in Karoline's life is in shadows. Karoline's father did not prosper either as a merchant or as a civil servant and had to leave his Steyr house to take up residence in a suburb. However, Johann Eberstaller may have left a more substantial estate than has been credited in his daughter's story. It is unlikely that Karoline went to live in the Schellmann house with Dr. Krugluger until the death of her birth mother in 1822, when any alternative living arrangement for the newly orphaned child would reasonably have been made. It seems unlikely that she would have remained with Dr. Krugluger when her father remarried in 1826 and now could provide a maternal presence for his daughter (or daughters).

However, the new data still leave open the possibility that Karoline was, as has been stated, in the Schellmann house and may well have seen and been introduced to Franz Schubert during his 1823 and 1825 visits to Steyr. Her testimony, then, would join that of others that later correctly claimed knowledge of his time there. Karoline may have heard more about him during the several quasi-Schubertiades in the homes of his Steyr hosts. Perhaps after he left, when his visits were over, Schubert remained the subject of conversation among the new friends and acquaintances he had made in Steyr. After his early and unexpected death these loving friends mourned him and spoke warmly and sadly of him, as the *Memoirs* show. All this talk of Schubert would have left its impression on Karoline. Did Karoline play fourhanded piano with Schubert? Only Karoline would have truly known. No one else can say with any certainty. But no one else makes any mention of little Karoline and Schubert together, at the piano or any other place. With Karoline firmly within the Schellmann and Koller family orbits, these families left nothing on the record, available to date, about what would have been a remarkable experience for a fortunate little girl.

Bruckner first visited Steyr from 1843 to 1845; Karoline would have been now a woman in her early thirties. Since the dates are unknown for Karoline's alleged trip to live "abroad," no one can yet say for certain that Karoline was even in Steyr during the early years of Bruckner's association with the city. No police or other official record of a Karoline Eberstaller living and/or working in Munich has yet been discovered. Nor has the claim that there is or was a

portrait of her in a Munich museum been substantiated.<sup>44</sup> It still appears that Karoline never married. While she is supposed to have spent some time away from Austria, she ultimately returned to Steyr where she spent the remainder of a very long and pious life; sometimes, it has been claimed, in near poverty, dependent late in life on local charitable support for the aged. Did her father not leave an estate, or was it not of enough substance to enable Karoline to maintain herself? If Karoline descended into near-poverty, how and why did this happen?

Did Karoline meet Bruckner and teach him Schubert's piano pieces and possibly his Lieder? At the time of Bruckner's 1868 departure for Vienna he was a profoundly accomplished composer and musician, and an organist of repute since his youth. His Symphony in F minor ("No.0") was composed in 1863 and his Symphony no. 1 in C minor was composed in 1865-66; a later first revision is known as the "Linz version." During his years at St. Florian, Bruckner delved deeply into the music of several eras—Renaissance, Baroque, Classical and Romantic—and he was known to have studied Schubert's secular works during this time. Any authoritative catalogue of Bruckner's works will show that Bruckner was greatly active as a composer and musician during his years in Upper Austria. Needless to say, Bruckner was, quite obviously, capable of learning and appreciating the music of Schubert without the claimed intervention of someone whose musical education and pianistic abilities remain a mystery.<sup>45</sup>

Since the few, early, published though uncorroborated biographical facts about Karoline appeared in local Upper Austrian newspaper articles, two of them authored by Gregor Goldbacher, one may ask why they happened to be written by Goldbacher and no one else? The little that can be gleaned about Goldbacher from a far remove is that he was born in 1875 and died in 1950. He was a local schoolteacher who wrote a number of short historical studies about Upper Austria and Steyr, and he seemed to be something of a local, unofficial Steyr historian. He also compiled at least a half dozen works on poetry composed in the local dialect. His 1927 newspaper article on Karoline and Schubert was undoubtedly spurred on by the forthcoming 1928 centennial observance of Schubert's death. As of this writing, there are thirteen entries listed for Gregor Goldbacher in the catalog of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, sufficient to indicate that he was an active and prolific writer, and probably well known to the interested Steyr public. Goldbacher may have been the perfect candidate to become the promoter of a legend.

The areas of Karoline's life yet to be investigated and verified in order to help complete the historical record as far as possible are:

- clarification of Johann Eberstaller's life from the time of his wife's death to his remarriage, a period of four years
- an estimate of the estate left by Johann Eberstaller

- the position of Dr. Krugluger in Steyr and in Karoline's life
- the locality "abroad" where Karoline went for an unspecified number of years and why Munich was cited as being that place
- the year in which Karoline returned to Steyr from "abroad"
- identification of any sister and of other family members including the Enns relatives
- the means Karoline pursued to support herself in light of her spinsterhood
- evidence of piano study by Karoline; Zamazal indicates that upon Karoline's death no music material was found in her living quarters
- memoirs by those who may have had contact or conversations with Karoline, i.e., journalist Gregor Goldbacher and painter Josef Diltsch among others
- the reason why Karoline's portrait was painted in the first instance by Diltsch: why was it done, as purported, in the year of her death (she died in March) and who commissioned it?
- the claim that a portrait of Schubert hung over Karoline's bed
- Deutsch's source for his editorial note about Karoline's "boasting in old age": was it Goldbacher's article?
- any local newspaper articles about Karoline during her lifetime
- remaining parish and municipal records which might contain more answers.

March 2002 marked Karoline Eberstaller's 190<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary as well as her 100<sup>th</sup> death anniversary. This is undoubtedly a significant dual occasion for the city of Steyr. Steyr helped to make Karoline Eberstaller into something of a local heroine—albeit a self-proclaimed legend in her own time. Steyr also made her name, portrait, and memorial site prominent, thus ensuring the continuation of the legend and yet another reason to visit there—as if Schubert and Bruckner were not enough of a claim to fame for this celebrated city. So the legend continues, with the World Wide Web picking up in this electronic era where mere print left off, and is being circulated without any attempt to verify the claim to a vaster audience than all the readers of the *Linzer Tages-Post* (or the *Oberösterreichische Nachrichten*, under its current name). In time, Austrian historians, who have easier or sole access to primary sources, may well deliver more unimpeachable documentation to solve the many open and speculative questions that remain about Karoline Eberstaller and the claimed link between Schubert and Bruckner, fatal though this might be to the legend of a French general's daughter.

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## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Hans-Hubert Schönzeler, *Bruckner* (New York: Grossman, 1970), 27.

<sup>2</sup> A sample of such appearances since 1970 includes: Franz Grasberger, “Schubert und Bruckner,” in *Schubert-Kongress Wien 1978. Bericht* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1979), 216 who states: “Bruckners kontakte zu Steyr waren besonders eng, die Schubert-Tradition der Stadt wurde verkörpert durch Karoline Eberstaller, mit der Bruckner vierhändig spielt”; Elisabeth Maier, “Anton Bruckners Arbeitswelt,” in *Anton Bruckner Dokumente und Studien*, vol. 2, ed. Franz Grasberger (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1980), 162 n. 8; Franz Scheder, *Anton Bruckner Chronologie*, 2 vols. (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1996) 1:31 and 2:119; Erich Wolfgang Partsch, *Anton Bruckner in Steyr: “Wo ich alljährlich so gerne weile”; eine Ausstellung im Stadtpfarrhof 15. Juni – 28. Juli und 15. September – 27. Oktober 1996* (Steyr: Stadtpfarramt Steyr, 1996), 15; Derek Watson, *Bruckner*, New York: Schirmer, 1975/1996), 7; Leopold Nowak, *Über Anton Bruckner: Gesammelte Aufsätze 1936-1984* (Vienna: Musikwissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1985), 155, 189; and Leopold Nowak, *Anton Bruckner: Musik und Leben* (Linz: Rudolf Trauner Verlag, 1995), 60: “Er sollte in Steyr noch einen anderen Einfluss erfahren: den Franz Schuberts. Der Liederfürst war 1819, 1823 und 1825 in Steyr gewesen und hatte mit einer Dame namens Karoline Eberstaller auch vierhändig gespielt.” Haymo Liebisch, *Anton Bruckner, einst und jetzt. 1824 bis 1896. Ein Bericht* (Steyr: Ennsthaler Verlag, 1996), 83-84 describes Karoline Eberstaller as a French general’s daughter and emphatically places her within the Schubert and Bruckner tradition, mentioning her as the partner in four-handed piano playing with both composers.

<sup>3</sup> Gabriel Engel, “Bruckner and the New Generation,” *Chord and Discord: Official Journal of the Bruckner Society of America* 1, no. 2 (November 1932): 8-11 relates in rather starry-eyed fashion the story of how Auer and Göllicher met and became associated in their ongoing lifetime collaboration on the biography of Bruckner. Engel also reviews the history of works published on Bruckner up to 1932. Göllicher had been appointed by Bruckner to be his official biographer.

<sup>4</sup> Rudolf Louis, *Anton Bruckner* (München: Georg Müller, 1905), 22-3.

<sup>5</sup> Max Auer, *Bruckner* (Zurich: Amalthea, 1923). The history of this work is reported in Engel, “Bruckner and the New Generation,” 9.

<sup>6</sup> August Göllicher and Max Auer, *Anton Bruckner: Ein Lebens- und Schaffensbild*, 4 vols. (Regensburg: G. Bosse, 1922-1937; reprinted 1974). Auer’s name appears nowhere on the title pages of the original edition of this first volume of the four-volume work, in any capacity. All subsequent volumes of the work say “von August Göllicher, nach dessen Tod ergänzt und herausgegeben von Max Auer.”

<sup>7</sup> Göllicher, *Anton Bruckner: Ein Lebens- und Schaffensbild*, 227-8. Göllicher relates this story in the context of the years 1843-1845.

<sup>8</sup> Gregor Goldbacher, “Karoline Eberstaller, die letzte Freundin Franz Schuberts,” *Linzer Tages-Post*, 20 February 1927, p. 7; Gregor Goldbacher, “Von Franz Schubert bis Anton Bruckner. Die hervorragendsten Meister zweier weit auseinanderliegenden Musikepochen persönlich gekannt - Was wir von der Steyrerin Karoline Eberstaller wissen,” *Oberdonau-Zeitung*, 25 March 1944, p. 3. Goldbacher’s 1944 article is merely a re-hash of his earlier 1927 rendition of the Eberstaller – Schubert – Bruckner story.

<sup>9</sup> Max Auer, “Anton Bruckner und Franz Schubert,” *Linzer Tages-Post*, 17 June 1928, pp. 1-2.

<sup>10</sup> The earliest version of this that is still available appears to be Max Auer, *Anton Bruckner. Sein Leben und Werk. Mit 309 Notenbeispielen und 31 Abbildungen*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Vienna: Musikwissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1934); the Eberstaller passage is on p. 42.

- <sup>11</sup> Otto Erich Deutsch, *The Schubert Reader: A Life of Franz Schubert in Letters and Documents* (New York: Norton, 1947), 122.
- <sup>12</sup> In 2001, at the URL <[http://www.austria-tourism.at/personen/bruckner/bru5\\_e.html](http://www.austria-tourism.at/personen/bruckner/bru5_e.html)>
- <sup>13</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert Reader*, 121-125; Brian Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 166.
- <sup>14</sup> Deutsch, *ibid.*, Newbould, *ibid.*
- <sup>15</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert Reader*, 282, 284, 286-8.
- <sup>16</sup> Peter Clive, *Schubert and His World: A Biographical Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 175-6. For a thorough survey of the era of fourhanded piano music, see Thomas Christensen, "Four-Handed Piano Transcription and Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Musical Reception," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 52, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 255-98.
- <sup>17</sup> Franz Schubert, *Ecossaise D145/8; Albumblatt für Seraphine Schellmann. Faksimile nach dem Autograph in der Musiksammlung der Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1990); Deutsch, *Schubert Reader*, 287-8, 316.
- <sup>18</sup> Clive, *Schubert and His World*, 99-100; Deutsch, *Schubert Reader*, 121.
- <sup>19</sup> Newbould, *Schubert*, 166. Deutsch is silent on this in the *Schubert Reader*.
- <sup>20</sup> Eberstaller's birth and death dates first appear in Goldbacher, "Karoline Eberstaller, die letzte Freundin Franz Schuberts," as 2 March 1812 – 25 March 1902. Manfred Brandl, *Neue Geschichte von Steyr: vom Biedermeier bis heute* (Steyr: W. Ennsthaler, 1980), 281 states that "Caroline's" dates are "2.3.1813 - 25.3.1903." This is very possibly a typographical error regarding the years. Despite this discrepancy, Brandl is the only one who notes the following: "Am 5. November 1953 beschloss der Stadtrat die Übernahme von Gräbern als Ehrengräber der Stadt: ... Karoline Eberstaller." However, no mention is made by Brandl of Bruckner's years in Steyr or of contact between Karoline and Bruckner.
- <sup>21</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert Reader*, 426, 434-43.
- <sup>22</sup> Ernst Hilmar and Margret Jestremski, eds., *Schubert-Lexikon* (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1997), 445-6. The *Lexikon* entry cites Goldbacher as documentation.
- <sup>23</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert Reader*, and Otto Erich Deutsch, *Schubert; Memoirs by His Friends*, trans. Rosamond Ley and John Nowell (New York: Macmillan, 1958). An exhaustive survey in both volumes of all entries containing the names of known Steyr, Linz and other Upper Austria residents fails to find any mention of Karoline Eberstaller excepting Deutsch's own editorial note, referenced above in Note 11. Schubert included in his letters to friends and family members mention of new babies and young children, and he inquired after their well being and sent greetings.
- <sup>24</sup> Deutsch, *Schubert Reader*, 122.
- <sup>25</sup> Clive, *Schubert and His World*, 99-100; Deutsch, *ibid.*
- <sup>26</sup> Clive, *Schubert and His World*, 99-100.
- <sup>27</sup> Elisabeth Maier and Franz Zamazal, *Anton Bruckner und Leopold von Zenetti*, vol. 3 of *Anton Bruckner; Dokumente und Studien* (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1980).
- <sup>28</sup> Elisabeth Maier, "Anton Bruckners Frühwerk – Einflüsse und Vorbilder," in *Anton Bruckner und Leopold von Zenetti*, Elisabeth Maier and Franz Zamazal, 127-61 (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1980).

<sup>29</sup> Maier, “Anton Bruckners Frühwerk,” 150, n. 34: “Die Steyrer Familie Eberstaller hatte Verwandte in Enns, die mit Zenetti in Kontakt waren. Diesen möglichen Bezügen wird Franz Zamazal künftig gesondert nachgehen.” By 1848, Enns had 379 residences and 3,251 inhabitants, see Gottfried Kneifel, ed., *Mein Enns: Beiträge zur Geschichte der ältesten Stadt Österreichs* (Linz: Landesverlag, 1988), 103-4.

<sup>30</sup> The city of Enns has a Website at <<http://www.enns.cc>> on which is posted historical information about the French invasion and Napoleon’s visit, see “Geschichte”; Franz Xaver Pritz, *Beschreibung und Geschichte der Stadt Steyr und ihrer nächsten Umgebung* (Steyr: Verlag Wilhelm Ennsthaler, 1837; reprint 1965), 356-65.

<sup>31</sup> Stella Musulin, *Austria: People and Landscape* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971); Stella Musulin, *Vienna in the Age of Metternich: From Napoleon to Revolution, 1805-1848* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975); “Die Geschichte der Stadt Steyr”, contains references to the three French occupations in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century at <<http://www.upperaustria.org/region/steyr/land/geschich.htm>>; Friedrich Max Kircheisen, *Bibliography of Napoleon: A Systematic Collection* (London: Low, Marston, 1902); Pritz, *Beschreibung und Geschichte der Stadt Steyr*, 356-65.

<sup>32</sup> Goldbacher, “Karoline Eberstaller, die letzte Freundin Franz Schuberts,” was for a long time the only published source that gave the names of Karoline’s birth parents. This now has been amended with Franz Zamazal, “Oberösterreich als Schubert-Quelle: Was kannte Bruckner von Schubert?” in *Bruckner-Symposion: Bruckner - Vorbilder und Traditionen: im Rahmen des Internationalen Brucknerfestes 1997, 24.-28. September 1997: Bericht*, ed. Uwe Harten (Linz: Anton Bruckner Institut Linz, 1999), 117-176.

<sup>33</sup> Goldbacher, “Karoline Eberstaller, die letzte Freundin Franz Schuberts.” Goldbacher’s relating of Karoline’s stay in Munich is difficult to credit. Zamazal, “Oberösterreich als Schubert-Quelle,” to the contrary, cites the complete absence of supporting documentation for a stay in Munich in that city’s police records.

<sup>34</sup> After Bruckner went to Vienna in 1868, his ascent to recognition was slow. However, Bruckner had his first big public success in 1884 (at age 60), and in the years immediately following, he was acclaimed around Europe and the United States. At his death, in 1896, Bruckner was famous; his funeral was widely noted and well attended by other famed Viennese. Bruckner died the year before the Schubert birth centenary but, of course, the centenary celebration required some years of preparation including publishing a formidable collection of Schubert’s compositions. There must have been some public awareness of the juxtaposition of the two events, in Steyr as well as in Vienna.

<sup>35</sup> While Schubert’s posthumous fame grew slowly after Schumann’s discovery and Mendelssohn’s first performance of the Great C Major Symphony (fp=1839), by the time of Schubert’s birth centenary in 1897, he was widely known and admired in classical music at home and abroad, and the devoted Vienna public awaited the centenary celebration, as did the publics in the rest of Austria. By the early 1880s, Schubert was widely known to the international music public. By the early 1890s, Schubert was an acknowledged master and a great name.

<sup>36</sup> Goldbacher, 1927 and 1944. Goldbacher mentions the Steyr Museum portrait of Karoline. Zamazal, “Oberösterreich als Schubert-Quelle,” reproduces photographs of the portrait, said to be painted in the year of Karoline’s death.

<sup>37</sup> To the sources cited above may be added Maurice J. E. Brown, *Schubert: A Critical Biography* (London: Macmillan, 1958), 166, 169, 172; Newbould, *Schubert*, 212; Elizabeth Norman McKay, *Franz Schubert: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 226 for Schubert. Bruckner’s life, studies, and works, including his years in Upper Austria, are well documented by the Anton Bruckner Institut Linz (ABIL). Listed among ABIL’s *Publikationsreihen - Weitere Projekte* is Erich Wolfgang Partsch, “Anton Bruckner in Steyr,” under “Weitere Projekte” at Kommission für Musikforschung at <<http://www.oeaw.ac.at/mufo/Abil.html>>.

<sup>38</sup> In Wilhelm Ennsthaler, *Steyr; ein Bildwerk, mit 73 Bilder* (Steyr: Ennsthaler Verlag, 1966), not a single reference is made to Karoline nor is any photograph devoted to her while Bruckner's 1898 monument by noted sculptor Viktor Tilgner is shown. The only reference to Schubert is in describing Michael Vogel [*sic*] as Lieder singer and Schubert interpreter; Vogl's memorial tablet in Steyr is noted.

<sup>39</sup> The text of Spängler's 1928 dedicatory speech appears in Zamazal, "Oberösterreich als Schubert-Quelle," 170-2.

<sup>40</sup> Elisabeth Maier, *Anton Bruckner. Stationen eines Leben* (Linz: Landesverlag, 1996), 38.

<sup>41</sup> Zamazal, "Oberösterreich als Schubert-Quelle," 170 n. 182.

<sup>42</sup> Zamazal, "Oberösterreich als Schubert-Quelle," 170 n. 187.

<sup>43</sup> In addition to Zamazal, "Oberösterreich als Schubert-Quelle," included in the report on the *Bruckner-Symposion* of 1997, both cited above, there also is Uwe Harten, ed., *Anton Bruckner: Ein Handbuch* (Anton Bruckner Institut Linz) (Salzburg: Residenz Verlag, 1996); see especially p. 139.

<sup>44</sup> Zamazal, "Oberösterreich als Schubert-Quelle,"

<sup>45</sup> Most recently, Professor Crawford Howie of the University of Manchester, in his *Anton Bruckner—A Documentary Biography*, vol. 1 (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), 24 n. 51 has inserted a cautionary note regarding the use of the Eberstaller myth. In a personal communication to me in October 2003, Professor Howie said further: "Franz Zamazal, who has access to all sorts of archival material, has more or less proved beyond reasonable doubt that Bruckner and Eberstaller didn't meet in the 1840s. There is, of course, the possibility that they met in the 1890s, but I don't think that they would have played Schubert piano duets!"