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The Compositional Art of Clara Schumann: Perspectives on Selected Lieder as Informed by Text-to-Music and Music-to-Text Approaches

by

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ABSTRACT

In the last two decades there has been a surge of interest in Clara Schumann’s life and compositions. Scholarship regarding her lieder, however, has not been so abundant. Now that Schumann has been brought to our attention, the clear and present need is to explore her work in greater detail. I address this need by examining a selection of Schumann’s lieder from two distinct approaches in lieder analysis. In the first approach, text-to-music, my analyses of three lieder of Schumann are informed by Lawrence Kramer’s concept of “outdoing,” as well as the concept of “artistic space.” The second approach, music-to-text, examines the musical portrayal of poetic personae through tonality in three separate lieder, and, to a large extent, is viewed through Kofi Agawu's method for lieder analysis. What is revealed is that Schumann’s lieder style complements the text to an astonishing level and seeks to add her own artistic imprint.
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*Da mihi multa basia mea bella peulla!*

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Most of all, I would like to thank my wife, Eun-Young Kim, to whom I dedicate this thesis, for her support on all fronts, and to whom the Latin phrase above is intended.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Prelude

In the last two decades there has been a surge of interest in Clara Schumann’s life and compositions. The most notable publications regarding her life are Nancy Reich’s *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman* and Joan Chissell’s *Clara Schumann: A Dedicated Spirit*.¹ Scholarship regarding her lieder, however, has not been so abundant. The authors noted above address Schumann’s lieder, but ultimately, the topic is beyond the scope of their work. There have been more in-depth inquiries into Schumann’s lieder, namely Marcia Citron’s 1986 article “Women and the Lied, 1775-1850,” Lorraine Gorrell’s *The Nineteenth-Century German Lied*, Pamela Susskind Pettler’s “Clara Schumann’s Recitals, 1832-1850,” and a dissertation by Nancy Walker titled “A Stylistic Analysis of Selected Lieder of Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel and Clara Wieck Schumann.”² In addition, articles involving the joint compositional efforts of Clara and Robert Schumann were prominent in the 1990s; two of the most informative are Rufus

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Just in the most recent years have Schumann’s lieder been brought to life through recordings by renowned singers. Barbara Bonney has recorded Schumann’s Op. 13 collection on Polygram, Graham Johnson has recorded most of Schumann’s songs in his Hyperion series with various male and female singers, and Bo Skovhus, under the Sony record label, has recorded eleven of Schumann’s songs. This attention is warranted. Many of Schumann’s lieder are incredibly beautiful and display the insights of a sensitive and passionate composer. As a group, her lieder explore a wide range of emotions and would afford the singer excellent material from which to draw for recitals.

More work needs to be done in the area of Schumann’s lieder. Now that Schumann has been brought to our attention (in large part due to the wave of scholarship in the 1980s regarding female composers) by the authors and singers noted above, let us explore her work in greater detail so that we may come to better know the art of this talented composer.

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Clara Schumann’s placement among nineteenth-century composers and performers is unique in many ways. As a touring concert pianist, she flourished between the years 1830 and 1856. During this time she had a profound impact upon audiences. She dazzled concert goers and members of music circles in most cultural centers in Germany, in Paris, and toward the end of her career, in England. Her technical gifts at the piano were apparent from the very early age of ten. But it was her interpretive powers that made her a champion among other musicians and critics of the day. Her repertory drew heavily upon Beethoven sonatas, and by her early adult life, the works of her husband, Robert Schumann. Audiences loved her. On some occasions when Robert and Schumann appeared to the public as composer and performer, Schumann was clearly the audience’s hero, much to the embarrassment and sometimes anger of Robert.

Schumann’s life was filled with tragedy and triumph. Her break with her father in the late 1830s remained a difficulty for her entire life. She would outlive her husband and five of her eight children. Schumann knew of sacrifice--she often suppressed her own desire to perform so that Robert could have the “career that he deserves.” And when money was needed, she did not hesitate to give concerts to raise money. While in Düsseldorf in the early 1850s, her efforts to support the family, care for the mentally ill Robert, plan concerts, and perform can only be described as herculean.\(^5\) Surely we can sympathize with Schumann. Yet as we look back on her life over a century later, we see that it was not defined by the tragedies that she endured, but rather the way in which she responded to misfortune.

\(^5\) For more information, see Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 101-126.
The Life of Clara Schumann

Clara Schumann was born Clara Josephine Wieck on 13 September 1819 in Leipzig. At the time of her birth, both of her parents were affiliated with music. Her father, Friedrich Wieck (1785-1873), had just begun to establish himself as a piano teacher. Her mother, Marianne Tromlitz Wieck Bargiel (1797-1872), was a skilled pianist and accomplished singer, who often sang solos at the well-known Gewandhaus in Leipzig on a weekly basis.

Friedrich Wieck possessed a naturally keen understanding for teaching and for music. Initially, his career of choice was the ministry. Yet after graduating from the University of Wittenberg, he took employment as a Hauslehrer, or a private tutor, for the children of a wealthy family. While in this position, Wieck gained invaluable experience by testing new learning methodologies on his young pupils. Being a keen observer, he was able to note which methods worked the best in aiding memory, ease of learning, and the enjoyment of learning, and it was most likely during this time that Wieck’s incredible confidence as a teacher was established. His talent in music, however, remained latent until his thirtieth year. The household in which Wieck was brought up was not a musical one. And with the exception of the music that he heard in Church and a few small-town performances by local musicians, Wieck’s experience with music was nil. Spurred on by a favorable comment from Carl Maria von Weber regarding a few piano compositions that Wieck had sent him in 1815, Wieck left his position as a tutor and established himself in Leipzig as a piano teacher and in the business of renting and selling pianos.

At the time when Wieck embarked upon his new musical career, his most outstanding and life-long traits began to surface, namely, his business savvy and his
unbridled ambition to succeed in musical circles. From his comments in Clara’s diary, the reader senses that every decision regarding business and Clara’s upbringing, especially her musical education, was planned down to the smallest of details. Even marriage, it seems, was considered by Wieck as a means to improve his status, which he did by marrying Marianne Tromlitz. Tromlitz was a famous singer in Leipzig at the time and was also a skilled pianist who later taught the more advanced piano students of Wieck—all this while managing the household, of course.

Wieck’s over-demanding, obsessive nature cannot be overstated. Everyone from household members to close friends and business associates were affected by Wieck’s drive to success. His desire to establish himself led more often than not to the exploitation of others. Such was the trainer, mentor, friend, and father of Clara Wieck.

**Early Musical Training**

The circumstances that surround Clara’s first formal piano lesson, on 27 October 1824, were not emotionally ideal for a child. The differences between Wieck and his wife, Marianne, were irreconcilable (one can easily imagine that this was in large part due to Wieck’s unyielding nature) and the two parted on 12 May 1824. Because

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6 Nancy Reich writes, “[His daughter’s instruction] was a planned program that included supervision of her every waking hour. From the moment Clara was returned to her father’s home, a few days after her fifth birthday, she was in training.” Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 21.

And later Wieck would write, “The whole education from the earliest youth must be planned accordingly.” Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 21.

7 Reich suggests that Wieck’s customers and students tolerated his behavior because they valued his many skills, talents, and intellect. Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 9.

8 Wieck and Marianne were divorced on 22 January 1825.
children were considered property under Saxon law, Wieck was given sole custody of the
three oldest children—Clara, Alwin, and Gustav. The fourth child, Victor, who was 12
months old at the time, stayed with his mother, but later died on 2 January 1827. Wieck
allowed Marianne to keep Clara until the child’s fifth birthday, 13 September 1824. On
17 September Clara arrived in Leipzig. Of the three children in the Wieck household, it
was upon Clara that Wieck bestowed all of his affection and attention. In fact, Wieck
often physically abused Alwin and Gustav and neglected their educational and musical
upbringing.\textsuperscript{9}

One aspect of Clara’s early life of particular interest is that she did not speak until
after her fourth year.\textsuperscript{10} This extraordinary fact is recorded in the diary that her father
started for her when she was seven.\textsuperscript{11} Her parents assumed that Clara had difficulty in
hearing because she seemed uninterested in her surroundings. It was at the time of her
first piano lessons with two other girls that Clara began to speak in complete sentences.

The earliest of Clara’s piano training focused on position, phrasing, and a singing
tone, and she was able to learn the music by ear without difficulty.\textsuperscript{12} Wieck purposefully
avoided teaching her to read music in part out of concern that she might neglect these

\textsuperscript{9} Robert Schumann gives a vivid account of Wieck beating his son, Alwin, in his diary
entry dated 21 August 1831. Quoted in Reich, \textit{Clara Schumann}, 34.

\textsuperscript{10} Dr. Anna Burton has suggested that Schumann’s condition may be attributed to
“selective mutism” due to emotional conflicts. See Reich, \textit{Clara Schumann}, 37.

\textsuperscript{11} The childhood diary of Clara is a significant document. Wieck used the diary mainly
as a tool to guide Clara to do as he wished, and he often wrote in Clara’s “voice.” Clara
also learned how to arrange a concert tour, which was valuable later on in her Dresden
and Düsseldorf years. For more information on the diary, see Reich, \textit{Clara Schumann},
20.

\textsuperscript{12} Reich, \textit{Clara Schumann}, 14, 21.
fundamental necessities (mentioned above), and in part so that she could become acquainted with music in a more natural manner. Self-discovery was an important aspect of Wieck’s teaching. By the spring of 1825, Wieck began to train Clara on a one-on-one basis; her instruction was systematic. By age seven, an early practice regimen, as designed by her father, was set in place. This consisted of a one-hour piano lesson and two hours of practice. From the age of five to the age of nine, Clara studied piano with her father and came to be known as a child prodigy in Leipzig.

In her father’s mind, the importance of Clara’s musical education far outweighed that of her formal public education, which lasted no longer than 18 months. Beginning in January 1825, Clara attended a neighborhood primary school for six months, after which she attended the Noack Institute for about another year. Perhaps because of his background as a tutor, Wieck left Clara’s education to a private tutor. (There is little doubt that Wieck arranged these lessons.) Overall, Clara’s education consisted mostly of reading, writing, and French and English (languages that Wieck thought would come in handy on her concert tours).\textsuperscript{13}

Later on, when Clara was eleven, she would begin musical training in other areas to round out her musical abilities. And her instructors were by no means second-rate. She took private lessons in theory and harmony with Christian Theodore Weinlig, cantor of the St. Thomas Church, and composition lessons (with a focus on counterpoint) with Heinrich Dorn, director of the Leipzig Opera. Other lessons included score reading and instrumentation, and violin lessons with Herr Prinz, both of which began in February 1831. And in April 1833, voice lessons with her father commenced.

\textsuperscript{13} Reich, \textit{Clara Schumann}, 21.
**Early Career**

Clara’s earliest performances took place at the age of eight among friends and family in her own home. In 1828 the Wieck residence was the meeting place of a music circle that included a number of highbrow people in the musical community, including music publishers and music editors. In addition, local and traveling musicians would visit and play their work. The setting gave Clara the opportunity to perform with many professional musicians. Also in 1828, on 3 July, Clara gained a stepmother by the name of Clementine Fechner. Clementine’s role in the family, as established by Wieck, was strictly that of housewife. She cared for the children, cooked, and cleaned while Clara and Wieck were busy with music.

Clara’s first public performance took place on 20 October 1828 at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, where she played a duet with another student of her father. Her next performances were private concerts that took place in Dresden between 6 March and 7 April 1830. These concerts, her father had hoped, would lead to invitations to play at various courts, especially in Vienna and Berlin. The trip was extraordinarily successful.\(^{14}\) Her first solo concert was performed at the Gewandhaus on 8 November 1830. This moment marks a point from which Clara often found herself in the spotlight. The success of the concerts in Leipzig convinced Wieck that Clara was ready for Paris, the place where musicians of the day made their careers. The trip to Paris, which lasted from September 1831 to 1 May 1832, did not end in failure, but it was clearly not the success for which Wieck had hoped.\(^{15}\) There were great moments, however. Along their journey

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\(^{14}\) Reich notes, “Clara was invited everywhere; aristocratic ladies vied with each other in bestowing rings and chains.” Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 24.

\(^{15}\) Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 29.
to Paris, father and daughter stopped to play in a number of Germany cities. In Weimar, Clara played for the German literary giant, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The greater parts of the next two years were spent preparing and touring local cities in Germany, namely, Altenburg, Zwickau, Schneeberg, Chemnitz, and Karlsbad.

**Robert Schumann**

It is likely that Robert Schumann first came into contact with Clara on 31 March 1828, during a musical evening at the home of Carus.\(^\text{16}\) Upon hearing Clara play at this event, Robert was thoroughly impressed by her technique and asked Wieck to be his piano teacher. Robert studied with Wieck for the remainder of the year, and in October 1830 Robert became a live-in pupil of Wieck. Robert’s relationship with Wieck was son-to-father in many ways.\(^\text{17}\) For example, Robert would come to seek and depend upon Wieck’s approval for many things in much the same way that Clara did. Wieck’s keen intellect and observant nature allowed him to see the potential in Robert’s piano playing and his creative genius.

When Robert moved in with the Wieck’s in October 1830, Clara’s interest in Robert was just what any nine-year-old girl’s reaction would be—-a playful interest in the new person in the house. Robert played games with Clara and her brothers and told them stories. Both pianists took their lessons and spent long hours practicing.

\(^\text{16}\) Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 38.

\(^\text{17}\) Reich comments that in Robert’s eyes, Wieck seemed almost superhuman, and Robert desperately wanted Wieck’s affection and approval…” (Reich, 2001, 41). Furthermore, she suggests that Robert yearned for the stability and firmness of an association with Wieck. See Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 41,48.
The Courtship

Robert and Clara began to show marked affection for one another sometime after the fall of 1835. And this affection was prompted, in part anyway, by Robert’s engagement to Wieck’s new live-in pupil, a young woman by the name of Ernestine von Fricken.\(^\text{18}\) Regarding Clara’s relationship to Robert, we know that she considered him her “special friend” by the time of Ernestine’s arrival in Leipzig in April 1834. If any stronger feelings existed at this point, they remained unspoken.\(^\text{19}\)

Sometime after mid-September in 1835, Robert and Clara fell in love. Robert’s engagement to Ernestine was long over. And their letters from this time, as well as many recollections written at a later date, reveals that in December 1835, Robert and Clara had shared many intimate moments with one another.

It should be no surprise that Wieck disapproved of the relationship. Robert, however, was convinced that Wieck would approve of the match. By the time of Robert and Clara’s secret engagement, Robert had given up on a career as a concert pianist (because of a permanent injury to his finger), but he was making his mark as a composer and as editor and publisher of his journal, Neue Zeitschrift für Musik, in Leipzig. Furthermore, he was well respected by his peers. But Wieck depended upon Clara for everything. The marriage of his daughter meant that his lifeblood to fame, his connection with the upper circle of society, and his financial security would be in jeopardy, if not

\(^\text{18}\) Two of Robert Schumann’s compositions, Carnaval, Op. 9 and Etudes symphoniques, Op. 13, which were both completed by 1835, were inspired in part by his relationship with Fricken. In Carnaval, Robert Schumann derived many of the motives from the name of Fricken’s hometown, Asch. See “Robert Schumann,” The New Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 2\(^{nd}\) ed.

\(^\text{19}\) Reich, Clara Schumann, 46.
severed. More importantly, Wieck had invested the last eleven years of his life molding Clara to be the greatest virtuoso of the day. There is no question as to the amount of time that he had invested in Clara’s future, and there are many records that imply that the extent of his duties was exhausting. Another reason for Wieck’s objection to the marriage is that it is possible that Wieck knew about Robert’s dealings with other women, and he was certainly aware of Robert’s suspicious mental health and his attacks of fear.

Wieck made many attempts to discourage Robert from pursuing Clara. In mid-January 1836 Wieck took Clara to Dresden, but Robert managed to visit her sometime in February while Wieck was away on business. When Wieck learned of their meeting, he threatened to shoot Robert if Clara saw Robert again. And for eighteen months there was no correspondence between Clara and Robert. Clara spent much of this time practicing and touring. From February to April of 1836 she traveled to Dresden, Görlitz, and Breslau. And later, in September, she toured Naumburg, Jena, and Weimar. She often programmed Robert’s works, such as his Toccata and First Piano Sonata. For Robert, the separation marks one of his periods of genius in piano composition. Within this time, he composed the Davidsbündlertänze, the Fantasiestücke, the Fantasy in C Major, and the three piano sonatas. There is no doubt that the longing and uncertainties of these months of separation were to fuel compositions for both composers in later years.

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20 Reich notes that Wieck had to perform the same chores - find lodging, provide himself and his child with food, cajole prospective patrons, make the proper contacts, rent the halls, try out the pianos, calculate which piece would have the best effect, publicize the event, and collect the money. Reich, Clara Schumann, 28.

21 Reich, Clara Schumann, 48.
The silence between Robert and Clara was broken sometime shortly before 13 August 1837 when Ernst Adolph Becker, a mutual friend of Clara and Robert, agreed to pass a message from Clara to Robert. The following day they were secretly engaged. In the meantime, Wieck had begun to show Robert more favor. Armed with high hopes and the encouragement of friends, Robert asked Wieck for Clara’s hand on her birthday, 13 September 1837. Wieck was enraged. His refusal forced Clara to decide between the two most important men in her life. Her love for Robert would eventually prove more powerful, but at the cost of extreme distress.\textsuperscript{22}

Surprisingly, Clara continued to perform during these uncomfortable times. A tour with her father to Vienna was one of her most successful. Wieck viewed it as his greatest artistic and financial triumph.\textsuperscript{23} As the tension became greater between Clara and her father, Clara decided to separate from Wieck by arranging another concert tour to Paris, which lasted from 6 February to 14 August 1839. It was the first trip in which Clara was without Wieck’s expertise in planning and his emotional support. In a surprise about-face, the man who used his keen mind to present Clara to the public as the eminent concert pianist began to sabotage her efforts by withholding advice and fatherly love. (His doing so was certainly meant to show Clara that she depended solely on him.) But the most malicious efforts would follow shortly. In April 1840, for example, Wieck sent Alwin to demand that Clara pay for his violin lessons; soon afterward Wieck spread word throughout Leipzig that Clara would return, begging for his help. Furthermore, Wieck

\textsuperscript{22} Reich comments that Clara’s effort to break with her father caused her extreme anguish, and the conflict within her continued to the eve of her marriage, and even beyond. Reich, \textit{Clara Schumann}, 55.

\textsuperscript{23} Reich, \textit{Clara Schumann}, 56.
sent ill-intentioned letters to Hamburg and Berlin just before Clara was about to appear there in concert. The famous court battle soon followed. On 15 June 1839 Clara petitioned the Court of Appeals for permission to marry without her father’s approval. The court consented to marriage on 1 August 1840, and Robert and Clara were married less than six weeks later, on 12 September 1840, one day before Clara’s twenty-first birthday.

**Married Life**

The early years of marriage were happy times for Clara and Robert. They lived in Clara’s home city, Leipzig, in an apartment on the second floor. The two decided to start an *Ehetagebuch*, or marriage diary, in which they would alternate composing weekly entries. As one might suspect, the earliest of entries concern love, gratitude, and joyful thoughts about their future. But after the initial excitement of marriage waned, we find entries of complaints and concerns. Overall, the diary was a means through which Clara and Robert could communicate more effectively. One senses that the Schumann’s were starting a completely new life together. Clara wrote in the diary, “We are enjoying a happiness that I never knew. My father always mocked at the so-called domestic bliss. How I pity those who do not know it; they are only half alive.” Many of the problems

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24 Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 75.

25 Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 82.

26 Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 85.
that had plagued them in the years immediately preceding their marriage were laid to rest—the two were now together, and Wieck had no say in matters.27

With marriage, however, came new challenges for Clara. Robert’s duties as composer and as editor stifled Clara’s artistic needs in many ways. Because Robert was often busy, many (if not all) of the household duties fell to Clara, not to mention the fact that Clara was busy with their newborn child, Marie. And because Robert needed a quiet environment while composing, Clara was unable to carry on with practice—a routine which she found necessary for her well-being. Married life contrasted greatly with her previous lifestyle. She often complained in the diary that her playing was “falling behind.” Furthermore, the adulation that audiences bestowed upon her and the ever-present attention of her father were no longer a part of her life. Another consequence of Robert’s duties was his lack of attention to Clara.

The year 1842 brought a much-desired revival of Clara’s concert career. In the months between January and April, Clara played at least fifteen concerts in Hamburg and Copenhagen. In light of the fact that Clara could have earned enough money to support the entire family with a concert career, it is surprising that Robert would not hear of it. Nancy Reich points out that Clara could earn more in a three-week concert tour than Robert could in an entire year from editing his journal and composing.28

27 Wieck would, in May 1842, request that they reconcile their differences. Though Clara agreed, she never regained her trust in her father, and both she and Robert suspected bad faith for years after the reconciliation. For more information, see Reich, Clara Schumann, 83.

28 Reich, Clara Schumann, 90.
Later Married Life

In the later years of their marriage, Clara still managed to tour on occasion, both for the love of performing and for financial reasons. Notable tours include a five-month tour to Russia between January and May 1844, and a concert tour to Vienna between November 1846 and February 1847. After these tours in which she was treated highly among the aristocracy, her role of Hausfrau was always waiting for her back at home. Clara did not necessarily dread returning to her role as a housewife, but as mentioned earlier, her household duties never left ample time for meaningful practice at the piano. Surely this dampened her spirits. And Robert’s deteriorating mental state profoundly worsened during the trip to Russia, adding a new concern for Clara.

Hoping that a geographic move might help alleviate Robert’s mental anguish, Robert’s doctor recommended a trip to Dresden. In this city the air was better, and at the time there was less hustle and bustle than in Leipzig. And so the Schumanns moved to Dresden on 13 December 1844. In spite of ill health, Robert was very productive in composing. Money came from a few of Robert’s compositions, and Clara was able to contribute just over 900 taler between 1846-47 from concert tours. In addition, both husband and wife earned money teaching piano and composition. Clara’s pregnancies (five within five years), one ending in a miscarriage, kept her from touring a great deal. Furthermore, Robert’s ill health and her commitment to helping her husband in all facets of his duties greatly restricted her practice time.29

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29 Reich comments, “Because of his recurring illnesses and his total self-absorption when he was working, she began by participating in and then taking over many of his responsibilities, a situation he seemed to accept willingly, though it is difficult to imagine he did not feel some resentment.” Reich, Clara Schumann, 109.
In September 1850, the family moved to Düsseldorf. The period marked a time of Clara’s resurgence as a concert pianist. The years between 1850 and 1856 saw an outstanding number of performances. One senses that Clara’s years in Düsseldorf were the busiest of her life. Between 16 October and 21 December 1854, Clara played 23 concerts in cities such as Hannover, Leipzig, Berlin, Hamburg, and Frankfurt. In addition, her involvement in Robert’s duties (he was music director of the Municipal Orchestra and Chorus) was increasing, and with the birth of Felix (11 June 1854), the total number of the household, including Clara, would be nine.

By mid-February 1854 Robert’s mental anguish was severe. He requested to be put in an insane asylum on 26 February, and the next day he attempted suicide. The doctors feared that a visit from Clara or immediate family would upset Robert and cause his condition to worsen. Clara would not see Robert again until two days before his death, which occurred on 29 July 1856. In later life, Clara Schumann would depend a great deal upon the friendship of Johannes Brahms, whom the Schumanns met in Düsseldorf on 30 September 1853, for advice, support, and help in caring for her children.

**Later Life**

After Robert’s death, Clara continued to go on concert tours until 1873 in order to support her large family. In 1857 she moved the family to Berlin to be closer to her mother and to have a better point of departure, which enable her to travel less, for her tours. Clara began working as editor on Robert’s collected works in 1877. In 1878 Clara moved the family to Frankfurt and began working at the Hoch Conservatory where she was a renowned teacher. Her last concert was performed in March 1891. On 26 March
1896 Clara suffered a stroke at the age of seventy-six and died shortly afterwards on 20
May 1896.

My examination of selected lieder of Schumann is introduced in Chapter two by a
brief presentation of the aesthetic framework in which Schumann composed. Because
Schumann was a forerunner in the performance of lieder in early concert life in the
nineteenth century, the geneses of many lieder are discussed, as well as her *Liederjahre*
in general. Chapter three addresses some of the prominent aspects of Schumann’s lieder
style, such as characteristics of the vocal line, the relationship between musical/ poetic
form, and accompanimental style. Chapter four deals with the analyses of three lieder
("Die stille Lotosblume," "Liebeszauber," and "Ich stand in dunklen Träumen") from a
text-to-music point of view in which I attempt to show that Schumann adds a distinct
musically artistic imprint to some of the poems she set. I divide this approach into two
categories: complementing and outdoing. Complementing refers to the way in which the
composer musically portrays obvious aspects of the text. Outdoing is a term coined by
Lawrence Kramer, and I use the term to identify ways in which Schumann's setting
provides a meaning that is not explicit in the text. In Chapter five I examine the musical
narrative of three separate lieder ("Sie liebten sich beide," "Volkslied," and "Oh wheh des
Scheidens, das er tat") and discuss the portrayal of personae in the accompaniment. My
approach to this is strongly based upon Kofi Agawu's method of lieder analysis, which
roughly speaking, involves the collection of musical features whereby a musical narrative
is put together, then a contextual reading of the text is developed. The information of
these two is compared, and extra-musical elements such as biography and reception are
factored in. In this approach, musical devices become potential vehicles for the portrayal of poetic ideas.

I hope to show through my approach that Schumann’s lieder merit a closer examination by scholars and singers alike. From a compositional point of view, Schumann’s lieder are fascinating, and they exhibit the mind of a composer who is sensitive to poetic nuance. From an aesthetic point of view, many have astounding beauty, while others are wonderfully dramatic.
Chapter 2

Aesthetics of the Nineteenth-Century Lied

By the time of Clara Schumann’s birth in 1819, the musical and poetic artistry in the lied had just begun to surpass that of its simpler, strophic, and predominantly folk counterpart of the final quarter of the eighteenth century. Immediately prior to 1819, the lied had begun to emerge as an art form in which evocative musical ideas conveyed the composer’s reading of the poem. Many of the traits that characterized the lied just before the turn of the century never completely disappeared from nineteenth-century compositions, however. In fact, elements such as folk and romantic characteristics exerted a profound influence upon lieder composition well into the later quarter of the nineteenth century. Because of this co-existence, it is necessary to survey the tendencies of the aesthetic of lieder composition that occurred roughly between 1770 and 1840, and examine the ideologies that continued to influence this genre.

Although technical aspects of lieder composition became more complex between the years 1770 and 1840, lieder written within this period share some basic characteristics. An operant definition for the lied might be: a short composition for piano and voice in which the composer seeks to interpret the poem on some level. At times this level might be as simple as communicating the mood of the poem, or as complex as interpreting the message of the words through musical means. As one suspects, the level

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1 One thinks of the folk elements found in so many of Brahms’s lieder. For more information, see Virginia Hancock, “Johannes Brahms: Volkslied/ Kunstlied.” In German Lieder in the Nineteenth Century, ed. Rufus Hallmark (London: Schirmer, 1996), 119-152.
in which this is done differs greatly from composer to composer and becomes remarkably progressive once the early compositions of Franz Schubert become known.

**The Lied**

The German lied from around 1770 to about 1815 is characterized by simplicity in many ways. The vocal line often had a narrow range. The piano accompaniment frequently doubled the vocal line to keep the singer on track tonally, and the texture of the accompaniment was generally thin. Most of these settings were strophic. Few modulations occurred, if at all, and if they did, they were nearly always either from the tonic to the dominant and back again, or from the major to the tonic or relative minor.²

Such simplicity appealed to amateur musicians, most of whom belonged to a growing middle class in Germany and who took delight in performing lieder within the private setting of their homes. As one can imagine, vocal prowess and pianistic dexterity were not required abilities to perform these lieder. Both the amateur and professional composer targeted this audience, composing works with these groups specifically in mind.³ As is apparent from the many publications of the time, the genre enjoyed great popularity among the middle class. Songs were published in bound volumes. The subject matter of many of these poems consisted both of light-hearted subjects of love,

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³ Smeed notes that title pages and prefaces constantly stress that the songs are intended for “beginners” or “those unpractised in singing and playing.” Smeed, *German Song*, 62.
feasting, drinking, and of more serious subjects such as death. Books of songs for Masonic lodges were also prominent.  

Because the German lied combines poetry and music, it is not surprising that this rise in interest in the genre was precipitated by an interest in folk poetry. J.W. Smeed cites J.G. Herder’s essay “Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker” and his anthology Volkslieder, later renamed Stimmen der Völker in Liedern, as the “primer movers” in the emergence of the popularity of folk poetry from about 1770 onwards. In these works, Herder encouraged poets to seek out surviving examples of folk songs for inspiration, believing that folk poems provided both the material and the models upon which contemporary poetry should be based. Herder’s views had a profound inspirational effect upon poets and composers. His ideas about folk poetry inspired the young Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), who was still a student in Strasbourg and under the private tutelage of Herder. Goethe took Herder’s suggestion to gather folk poetry to heart. Poets began mimicking the folk-song, real and

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4 Smeed, German Song, 62-67.

5 Smeed, German Song, 20.

6 Smeed writes, “…the more regular, correct and learned [the poem] is, the further it has removed itself from its true (primitive) sources. Hence, Herder mocks those who despise folk poetry because it is unpolished and technically “incorrect”, and instead prizes it for its spontaneity, its closeness to the daily reality of shared experiences, its concrete and dramatic terseness and its immediate rhythmic and melodic appeal.” Smeed, German Song, 21.

imitated, which served as the catalyst for an entirely new lyric style that became known as *im Volkston*, or “in the folk song” style.

Smeed notes that the most famous and influential work for these lieder is J.A.P. Schulz’s *Lieder im Volkston* (3 parts, 1782-90). The collection contains many short lyrics by Voß, Stolberg, Claudius, Hölty, and Bürger that include both serious and lighthearted texts. The music is structurally simple and intended to make the songs easy to memorize. Schulz strove to make the melodies folk-like without having based them specifically upon actual folk melodies. When the first part of *Lieder im Volkston* was published in 1782, it instantly become popular and was much imitated.

The typical lied before 1800 is best characterized by Goethe’s preference for the settings of his poems by Reichardt and Zelter. The settings “highlighted the poetry without drawing too much attention to the music; the text was rarely dominated by its musical settings, and its interpretation by the music was limited to general mood or atmosphere.” Given this context, it is not surprising that the poet was accorded status equal to or of greater status than the composer. Lorraine Gorrell notes that title pages often included both the name of the poet and the composer, with both names in the same

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8 For more on notable composers of the period, such as Johann Friedrich Reichardt (1752-1814) and Karl Friedrich Zelter (1758-1814), see Plantinga, *Romantic Music*, 112.


9 For more information, see Smeed, *German Song*, 24.

size script, and usually with the poet’s name listed at the top. Finally, it should be said that Goethe’s belief that music should be subservient to the words dominated the early lied, possibly until the appearance of Franz Schubert.

These were merely tendencies, albeit overwhelming tendencies, in lieder composition. Within this pervading simplicity, there is a marked movement towards greater complexity. For example, the composer’s voice began to show up in a multitude of ways (perhaps most evident in dramatic piano accompaniments, experimentation with form, and repetitions of words or lines from the poem itself). Smeed cites the rearrangement of the text as the main indicator for the emergence of the composer’s voice. Notable composers of the time such as J.R. Zumsteeg and C.P.E. Bach often went beyond conventional practice with modulation. Zumsteeg, in addition, often used harmony as the major expressive means and interpretive device in a song. Chromatic progressions, diminished and augmented chords, and dramatic interrupted cadences suggested profound emotive connections, the general drama of which hints towards the accompanimental style of Franz Schubert.

These changes in the accompaniments were no doubt influenced a great deal by poetry with a more expressive and dramatic intent. The emotional progression of the increasingly popular ballad (popular with poets such as Goethe and Heine, and

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12 Smeed writes, “The much discussed question of whether a song realises, transforms or even “destroys” the poem was to be fuelled by nineteenth-century composers, many of whom were to rearrange or expand their chosen texts quite drastically.” Smeed, *German Song*, 80.

13 For more information on these devices, see Smeed, *German Song*, 72-77.
composers such as Carl Loewe [1796-1869] and Franz Schubert) called for a flexibility in musical language.\textsuperscript{14}

The turn of the century saw an increase in the production of lieder, with many amateur composers trying their hand at setting texts. Smeed notes that it was nothing for an energetic man to produce a hundred or more songs in the course of a long career devoted to various forms of musical activity.\textsuperscript{15} Lieder became more adventurous in many ways.

Overall, nineteenth-century song composition is representative of a change in composers’ desire for a new text. Although an interest in folk elements still existed, composers began to set the texts of more expressive, more lyrical poetry. With musical settings of the poems by Goethe, Heine, and Lenau, the harmonic vocabulary and the composer’s tools in general changed to include more dramatic characteristics and means of portraying a wider range of emotion. Interestingly, the poet who had the most influence upon these changes was Goethe, who, as has been mentioned, favored the words over the music. Seelig notes that this influence of poetry over composers can be found in both the variety of forms and themes of Goethe’s poetry, which profoundly

\textsuperscript{14} Harry Seelig points to the ballad as a particularly important source in the development of drama in the art song. He writes, “Because this genre can be characterized as a combination of epic, dramatic, and lyric elements, its appeal to composers who want to tell a story as dramatically as possible, even while they evoke a pervasive mood, is obvious.” Harry Seelig, “The Literary Context: Goethe as Source and Catalyst,” in \textit{German Lieder in the Nineteenth Century}, ed. Rufus Hallmark (New York: Schirmer, 1996), 17.

Smeed also notes the importance of the ballad in the development of dramatic aspects of the accompaniment: “Early through-composed settings of long ballads will occasionally contain \textit{agitato} passages in the accompaniment to match dramatic points in the narrative and Zumsteeg is capable of making demands on the player’s agility, above all during his rare attempts at ‘pictorial’ keyboard writing.” Smeed, \textit{German Song}, 71.

\textsuperscript{15} Smeed, \textit{German Song}, 105.
influenced a diversity of lyric outpouring from poets, as well as the content, the style, and
the form used by composers. ¹⁶ In general, Schubert has been considered by many
scholars as the “father of the lied,” as the innovator who changed the lied into the genre
of the miniature masterpiece or musico-poetic powerhouse of the nineteenth century. ¹⁷

Another interesting trend in lieder composition concerns the composer’s choice of
text. The strong emphasis found in this new lyric poetry on common human experiences
such as unrequited love, the complexities of personal relationships, and death, provided
themes with which the common person could relate. And this included composers, of
course. Composers began to set specific texts as an outlet for this emotional energy. An
early example of this is the settings by a fourteen-year-old Schubert, who, according to
his selection of the poems “Hagers Klage,” “Der Vatermörder,” and “Leichenfantasie,”
appears to express the turbulent relationship that he had with his father. ¹⁸

In addition to the new lyric poetry, the advancements in the piano had a profound
effect upon lieder composition in the beginning of the nineteenth century as composers

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¹⁷ In regard to innovations of Schubert, Susan Youens states, “The sum total of his
harmonic originality, his master of melodic beauty (or his willingness to abdicate this in
the service of musico-poetic revelation), and the depth to which he delved beneath the
surface of his chosen verses constitute nothing less than a new aesthetic of the lied.”
Susan Youens, “Franz Schubert: The Prince of Song,” in German Lieder in the

See also Kristina Muxfeldt, “Schubert’s Songs: The Transformation of a Genre,”
in The Cambridge Companion to Schubert, edited by Christopher Gibbs (Cambridge:
Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997): 121-137 and Smeed, German Song, 107-117.

Musicians, 2nd ed. “Hagers Klage” deals with a father’s cruelty to his son.
became aware of its capabilities in producing a vast array of musical effects. In addition, the piano had a profound influence upon the rise of female composers of the lied.¹⁹

Lieder performance in the home continued to flourish in the early nineteenth century. Performances in which there were a greater number of attendees (maybe 20 or more) were arranged for private parties, and at times were isolated to the music salons of the cultivated bourgeoisie. It was unusual for lieder to be performed in the concert hall proper, especially from 1800-1830. Schubert accompanied many singers in the performance of his lieder in these salons.²⁰ *Schubertiaden*, or “evenings of Schubert’s songs,” were arranged often by Schubert’s friends, and many of his songs were first heard in these type of settings.

**Clara Schumann’s Lieder: Performance and Geneses**

Interestingly, the concert performances of Clara Schumann (then Wieck) played a prominent role in the public performance of lieder in the late 1820s and early 1830s.²¹

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²¹ From now on, I will refer to Clara Schumann as “Schumann.”


Schumann’s first concert of 1828 featured Schubert’s “Die Forelle,” and “Gretchen am Spinnrade” and “Erlkönig” (of which she owned an autograph) were on
We know from a concert program from her first concert tour that she composed two lieder that were performed in Kassel on 13 December 1831. Overall, the program consists of music for solo piano, piano with other instruments, a vocal duet, and four lieder. It is certain that two of the four lieder presented were composed by the young Clara Wieck, and included “Alte Heimath” (by the poet Justinus Kerner) and “Der Traum” (by the poet Christoph August Tiedge), both of which have been lost. As is apparent from these early programs, Schumann’s repertoire was steeped in “superficial brilliance,” and the programs promoted a “showy atmosphere” that was meant to dazzle the public with the advancements in the piano. Therefore, while it is possible that these lieder provided a break from the virtuosic show of Schumann’s piano playing, they were many of her early concert programs. See Nancy Reich, “The Lieder of Clara Schumann.” American Brahms Society Newsletter Vol. 12, no. 2 (Fall 1994): 2.


A lied by the name of “Der Wanderer” also appeared on this early program, which lists Clara Wieck as the composer. There has been some speculation about authorship regarding this song, however. The article in the New Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians, written by Nancy Reich, lists “Der Wanderer” as a doubtful composition of Schumann’s. See Reich, “Clara Schumann,” in New Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 2nd ed.

Joachim Draheim and Brigitte Höft state that they have considerable reason to believe that Clara Schumann composed the two Kern songs, perhaps with the help of her father, Friedrich Wieck. They note that indeed “Der Traum” and “Alte Heimath” are presently considered lost, and that “Der Wanderer” was published in Leipzig in 1875 by Leuckart under the name of Friedrich Wieck together with a third Kern song titled “Der Wanderer in der Sägemule.” See “Clara Schumann: Sämtliche Lieder,” Vol. 2, eds. Joachim Draheim and Brigitte Höft (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1992): 59.


also meant to impress members of the audience. Overall, the variety of music on the program was meant to showcase Schumann as a sort of Wunderkind, both with the artistry of her interpretive abilities and with her compositional ability in a variety of genres. Nancy Reich has noted that Schumann sang her lieder in some performances (presumably accompanying herself), though such events were rare, as Schumann preferred to accompany rather than sing.\(^{25}\)

Beside the three lieder noted above, there is no evidence that Schumann composed lieder again until after her marriage to Robert in September 1840. And the lieder she composed were usually for Christmas or birthdays or at her husband’s special request. It is apparent from early on that Schumann was not comfortable in composing lieder. Robert Schumann repeatedly asked Schumann to compose. One of the earliest requests came in March 1840, just months prior to their marriage, in which Robert writes, “Clärchen, don’t you have something for my [Neue Zeitschrift für Musik] supplement?...Do you perhaps think that just because I am composing so much, you can be idle. Just compose a song! Once you begin, you cannot leave it. It is far too seductive.” Another example dates from May of the same year. Robert writes, “Now write and tell me what you are seeing and hearing – and composing. Just try composing a song; you will see how well it will go for you.”\(^{26}\) We might infer Schumann’s hesitancy in composing lieder by the pleading tone and repeated requests of Robert Schumann.

In December of 1840 Schumann responded to Robert’s requests, composing three lieder, which she presented to him as a Christmas present. Her reluctance to compose is


\(^{26}\) For these two statements, see Nancy Reich, “Lieder of Clara Schumann,” 2.
present in an entry in their Ehetagebuch or marriage diary; the entry dates from mid-December. Schumann writes, “Whenever Robert went out of the house, I spent my time in attempts to compose a song (something that he [the italics is mine] always wanted), and finally I succeeded in completing three, which I will present to him at Christmas.”

The three songs that she presented him are “Am Strand,” “Ich stand in dunklen Träumen,” and “Volkslied.” The first song is by the poet Robert Burns and the other two by Heinrich Heine.

Schumann’s next group of lieder was composed in the months just prior to June 1841, and again at the request of Robert. His final idea (and possibly Schumann’s as well) was to combine some songs of his that he had composed in January 1841 by the poet Rückert with some newly composed songs by Schumann. Robert’s desire to join Schumann’s work with his own had been in the making at least since 13 June 1839, at which time Robert penned a note to Schumann saying, “we shall publish a good deal under both our names; posterity shall regard us as one heart and one soul and not find out what is yours and what is mine. How happy I am.” For Robert, the joint-publication of his work with Schumann’s compositions was a symbolic joining of their ideas, their

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28 Later on Robert set the same text as “Volkslied” which is known as “Es fiel ein Reif in der Frühlingsnacht”

“Am Strande,” also listed as “Am Strand,” was published in the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik in July 1841, and “Ich stand in dunklen Träumen” was published in 1843 by Breitkopf & Härtel as No. 1 of Schumann’s Op. 13.

spirit, and their love. These songs, which make up the Liebesfrühling lieder, are further connected by a “Clara” motive that recurs in a number of songs throughout the cycle.\textsuperscript{30} Frustrated with the process of composing upon demand, Schumann wrote in her diary shortly after 11 January 1841, “...it simply won’t go at all – I have no talent whatsoever for composition!”\textsuperscript{31} By 8 June 1841, however, Schumann presented Robert with four songs--“Die gute Nacht,” “Er ist gekommen,” “Liebst du um Schönheit,” and “Warum willst du andre fragen”--the last three of which were included in the Liebesfrühling cycle as No. 2, No. 4, and No. 11 respectively. These songs were sold to Breitkopf & Härtel, and Schumann received the first printed copy on her birthday in 1841. And as Robert hinted at in his letter from 13 June 1839, the title page of the collection, which lists the work as Op. 37 and Op. 12, offers no suggestion as to the authorship of each song.\textsuperscript{32}

The next period of lieder composition came approximately one year later (1842) when Schumann presented Robert with “Liebeszauber” and “Sie liebten sich beide.” Robert praised the works in the marriage diary, which reads, “…the most successful pieces she has written up to now.”\textsuperscript{33} And in the following year (1843) she once again presented Robert with songs: “Loreley” by Heine, “Ich hab in deinem Auge” by Rückert, and “O weh des Scheidens” also by Rückert. Three years later Schumann set two poems by Friederike Serre, “Beim Abschied” and “Mein Stern,” sometime between 25 May and


\textsuperscript{31} Boyd, “The Liebesfrühling Lieder,” 147.

\textsuperscript{32} Reich, Clara Schumann, 249.

\textsuperscript{33} Joachim Draheim and Brigitte Höft, “Clara Schumann: Sämtliche Lieder,” 60.
29 June 1846.\textsuperscript{34} Her final year of composition for lieder was in 1853. In May of that year Schumann had begun working on songs by Hermann Rollett from “Jucunde,” which were finished by 22 June 1853. Her last song, “Das Veilchen,” was finished on 8 July 1853.

Robert’s encouragement prompted the publication of many of Schumann’s songs. Apparently, Schumann did not feel that her lieder compositions were of merit, and her surprising lack of confidence in her compositional abilities is rampant throughout her correspondence with Robert. According to Marcia Citron, many female composers have had this ambivalence toward composition.\textsuperscript{35} In many of these letters Schumann writes of her “weak attempts” at composition. One that is precisely indicative of this is found in a letter to Robert that dates from mid-December 1840 in which Schumann writes:

I just cannot compose, I too am quite unhappy about it, but it really doesn’t go. I haven’t any talent for it. Don’t think it is laziness. And now, you want me to do a complete song —I couldn’t do that \textit{at all}; to compose a song, to understand a text thoroughly, one needs genius for that…\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{34} “Mein Stern” was published in May 1848 by the London publisher Wessel & Co. in a version with a German and English text (“O Thou my Star”) for a charitable purpose. The dedication reads: “Composed and Presented to the German Hospital at Dalston, On the occasion of the First Fancy Fair held in aid of the Funds of that Institution.” These songs were composed for Friederike Serre, the wife of the poet, and the hostess to Schumann during various times in 1837-38, when Schumann sought refuge from the confrontations with her father. See “Clara Schumann: Sämtliche Lieder,” 60.

\textsuperscript{35} Citron writes of an “anxiety of authorship” in women composers which often translates into ambivalence and even more so into a lack of confidence in their ability in light of the male-dominated musical canon. Citron raises many pertinent questions regarding what influenced Schumann to feel that her work did not deserve the merit afforded to male composers. This self-doubt affected other contemporary female composers, especially Fanny Hensel (1805-47). For more information, see Marcia J. Citron, \textit{Gender and the Musical Canon} (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 57-79.

\textsuperscript{36} Nancy Reich, “Lieder of Clara Schumann,” 2.
Of all of Schumann’s published lieder, Robert seems to have had the most influence in publishing Ops. 12 and 13. The specifics regarding the publication of Op. 12 have already been mentioned; for Op. 13, songs were gathered from her output between 1840 and 1843 and published by Brietkopf and Härtel in 1843. (See Figure 2.1 for a list of Schumann’s published cycles, all of which were published by Brietkopf and Härtel.) There is a dedicatory preface to Queen Caroline Amalie of Denmark, whom Schumann had visited in Copenhagen in 1842.

Figure 2.1

Op. 12 Liebesfrühling Lieder (1841)
Er ist gekommen Op. 12, No. 2 Friedrich Rückert
Liebest du um Schönheit Op. 12, No. 4 Friedrich Rückert
Warum willst du and’re fragen Op. 12, No. 11 Friedrich Rückert

Op. 13 Sechs Lieder mit Begleitung des Pianoforte (1843)
Ich stand in dunklen Träumen Op. 13, no. 1 Heinrich Heine
Sie liebten sich beide Op. 13, no. 2 Heinrich Heine
Liebeszauber Op. 13, no. 3 Emanuel Geibel
Der Mond kommt still gegangen Op. 13, no. 4 Emanuel Geibel
Ich hab in deinem Auge Op. 13, no. 5 Friedrich Rückert
Die stille Lotosblume Op. 13, no. 6 Emanuel Geibel

Op. 23 Sechs Lieder aus “Jucunde” von Hermann Rollet (1856)
Was weinst du, Blümlein Op. 23, no. 1 Herman Rollet
An einem lichten Morgen Op. 23, no. 2
Geheimes Flüstern hier und dort Op. 23, no. 3
Auf einem grünen Hügel Op. 23, no. 4
Das ist ein Tag, der klingen mag Op. 23, no. 5
O Lust, o Lust Op. 23, no. 6

Though many of Schumann’s songs were published in her lifetime, it is curious that many fine settings were not, especially “Volkslied,” “Lorelei,” and “Oh weh des
Scheidens, das er tat,” nor is there any record of these lieder being performed on her concerts.

With the exception of her first three lieder of 1840, there is strong evidence to suggest that Robert exerted a strong influence on which text Schumann chose for setting. This is most obvious in regard to the poetry of her Op. 12. Hallmark and Boyd speculate upon the interesting issue of collaboration between Robert and Schumann for these songs.\textsuperscript{37} Boyd claims that Schumann’s diary entry for the week January 11-16, 1841 appears to substantiate the notion that Robert chose the texts for her Op. 12. She wrote: “Several times already I’ve gotten myself to work on the poems by Rückert that Robert had copied.” Boyd cautions, however, that both composers, at one time or another, entered poems in the Abschrifttenbuch.\textsuperscript{38} Therefore, such a notion remains speculative.

Regarding the performance of her lieder on her own concerts, it has already been mentioned that Schumann’s earliest three had been composed for such purpose (now lost). But what of the later songs from 1840-1853? Reich notes that these songs were conceived for concert performance, and though Schumann was hesitant about programming her own works for her concerts, her most common selection was frequently a song.\textsuperscript{39} According to Reich, Schumann favored “Warum willst du and’re fragen,” performing it at no fewer than ten concerts during her career. “Liebeszauber” had five performances, and “Ich stand in dunklen Träumen,” “Der Mond kommt still gegangen,”


\textsuperscript{38} Boyd, The Liebesfrühling Lieder, 146; emphases are original.

\textsuperscript{39} Reich, “Lieder of Clara Schumann,” 2. We may conclude that after Schumann’s break from her father, Friedrich Wieck, she was responsible for choosing her own material.
and “O Lust, o Lust” were programmed at least three times. Pettler’s findings from the archives at the Robert-Schumann-Haus in Zwickau offer additional information about lieder performances: “Am Strande” was performed in Leipzig on March 31, 1841 at the Gewandhaus, and “Er ist gekommen” was performed in Königsberg in 1844.

From what can be gathered by surveying the poetry of Schumann’s songs, her inclination was to set poetry that is best classified as Romantic lyric poetry. Hallmark’s division of poetry and song into lyrical, dramatic, narrative, and folk sections places the overwhelming majority of Schumann’s songs most strongly into this lyrical category according to the characteristic of the speaking persona as the lyrical self. This persona expresses itself about or in relation to the love of another, of nature, and God. A group of lieder, however, can be considered as outside of the lyric realm: the presence of a narrator in “Lorelei,” “Sie liebten sich beide,” and “Volkslied” places these songs within the narrative category.

We now turn our attention to surveying the compositional aspects of Schumann’s songs, focusing on characteristics of the vocal line, the formal characteristics, and the accompaniment.

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40 Reich notes that her findings are taken from the 1,299 programs that are preserved in the Robert-Schumann-Haus in Zwickau. See Reich, “The Lieder of Clara Schumann,” 2.

41 Pettler, “Clara Schumann’s Recitals,” 74. Pettler also lists two unidentified lieder: one by Rückert (Schumann composed six lieder by this poet) performed in Bremen 1842, and a “Lied” performed in Leipzig in 1844.

Chapter 3

Compositional Aspects of Clara Schumann’s Lieder

Clara Schumann’s lieder are firmly placed within the Romantic tradition. It seems obvious to say that Schumann was steeped in the music of her day, but perhaps this point needs to be emphasized, especially in regard to her lieder compositions. Schumann’s lieder were, in many ways, reflective of the style of the day. Juxtaposed with common practice tonality, her harmonic vocabulary is extensive, often using coloristic shifts between major and minor as well as deviations from expected cadence points. Though Schumann’s lieder do not seem experimental for the time, they do have characteristics that suggest that she sought to explore a broad emotional range of the lied. Some of her lieder have a virtuosic accompaniment, a quality that is not overwhelmingly common in the period. And the expressive power of the continuously developing tonal language of the period is inherent in her lieder, such as the employment of chromatic third relations.\(^1\)

In addition, chromaticism often plays an integral role in both the accompaniment and the vocal line. By surveying her lieder, we see the direct influence of Franz Schubert, especially in Schumann’s use of piano figurations, and Robert Schumann, as noted by the presence of interludes and postludes, both of which show an inclination toward commenting upon the subject matter of the poem. In this chapter, I will examine some of

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\(^1\) One instance of a chromatic third relation is found in an early example of Schumann’s lieder, “Die gute Nacht, die ich dir sage” (1841). The first section (mm. 1-25) is in F major, followed by a second section (mm. 26-38) in D-flat major (a relationship of I-V@I), and returning to F major (38-56).
the most common characteristics of Schumann’s vocal line, formal organization, and accompaniment.

**Characteristics of the Vocal Line**

“Er ist gekommen” is exemplary of Schumann’s lieder style in many ways, namely, the segmentation of vocal phrases and the economic use of melodic and rhythmic material. The lied begins with eight measures that are best described as eight separate progressive phrases. These phrases open up from the i of f minor and progress either to a V or viiº triad (most commonly the second inversion of both chords). Textually, a single poetic line is divided evenly into two short segments so that one musical phrase (in this case, one measure) corresponds to a half-line of poetry. This segmenting of the text is a common occurrence and points toward an economic use of melodic and rhythmic material that is common in Schumann’s lieder. In this case, the text “Er ist gekommen, in Sturm und Regen,/ ihm schlug bekloffen...” is divided into three one-measure phrases: “Er ist gekommen,/ in Sturm und Regen,/ ihm schlug bekloffen...”² Schumann transmits this breathless quality into musical language by pairing these lines with the same rhythmic motive: † † f f. ≈ ± ± ±. A similar occurrence takes place in “Am Strande.” In this lied, Schumann evenly divides lines one and three of the first stanza, so that line one reads “Traurig schau ich/ von der Klippe” and the third line, “und mit Inbrunst/ fleht die Lippe.” The two segments of the first line are paired with: ± ± ±

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² This segmented passage is difficult to translate. The full line "Er ist gekommen in Sturm und Regen,/ ihm schlug bekloffen mein Herz entgegen" translates as "He came in storm and rain,/ my anxious heart beat against his."
\( f \pm \cdot \pm \dagger \) in \( \mp \) time (mm. 5-6), and the two segments of the third line are paired with: \( \mp \mp \pm \cdot \pm \cdot \). (mm. 9-10).

Interestingly, these concise phrases can serve either dramatic purposes or lyric purposes. A notable lyric usage of this motivic economy is found in mm. 34-38 of “Er ist gekommen,” at which point the vocal line is made up of five successive repetitions of the rhythm \((\pm \cdot f \pm f f)\), which is paired with the final three lines of the poem: “Nun ist gekommen des Frühlings Segen./ Der Freund zieht weiter, ich seh’ es heiter,/ denn er bleibt mein auf allen Wegen” (Now has come the blessing of spring./ My love travels abroad, I watch with cheer,/ for he remains mine, on any road). One might think of the recurrence of similar rhythmic material in a melodic line to be detrimental to its beauty. But in “Die stille Lotosblume,” Schumann skillfully handles the setting of every poetic line to the same rhythm \((f \mid \pm \cdot f f f)\).

Overall, the vocal phrasing of Schumann’s lieder almost always corresponds with the poetic phrasing, whether on the level of these concise phrases, or long phrases in which two textual lines are enjambed to make up one large musical phrase. Another vocal style that can be found in Schumann’s lieder on occasion is a speech-like style, which seeks to capture the inflection of the voice. The most notable example is “Oh weh des Scheidens, das er tat,” which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

In many of Schumann’s lieder, text-painting comes by way of the use of non-harmonic tones to stress key words, the most prominent of which is the accented passing tone. The use of chromatic turns and leaps to high and low registers from the middle also are common. (Leaps to \( a5 \) from the middle register occurs in a few songs from
Schumann’s Op. 23. See “Was weinst du, Blümlein” and “An einem lichten Morgen.”) As we shall see, harmonic color also plays an interesting role in highlighting certain aspects of the text, especially harmonic shifts from the major to the parallel minor. Schumann wrote well for the voice. Throughout most of her lieder, the tessitura closely follows the emotion inherent in the text. The melodic lines are mostly in conjunct motion, and lie predominantly in the middle to low register, and are well suited for soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, or baritone. Op. 23 is the exception. This collection of songs seems to mark a change in Schumann’s vocal writing, in that she now uses the a5. In addition, the tessitura in general seems more appropriate for a soprano, often hanging around e4.

**Formal Characteristics**

An examination of the formal characteristics of Schumann’s lieder reveals that she is most interested in portraying emotional shifts, which are inherent in the poetic text. That being said, most of Schumann's lieder are in a modified-strophic or through-composed form. These shifts can be subtle or explicit and are signaled by a significant modal, rhythmic, or textural change in the accompaniment, and often employing two or more of these characteristics. (Some of the more subtle methods will be discussed in Chapter 4.) Again we turn to “Er ist gekommen,” a lied in which Schumann contrasts sections of angst with sections of tender, heart-felt reflection.

The apprehensive, introductory section (mm. 1-8) has been discussed above, but it is important to remind the reader that this section is in f minor. Schumann’s first shift occurs between mm. 8-9 as she directly modulates from the V 6/4 in f minor to the V 4/3

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3 An example of the latter is “Ich hab’ in deinem Auge.”
of the relative key, A-flat major, where an interlude prolongs the dominant for two measures (Ex. 3.1).

![Musical example](image)

*Example 3.1 Clara Schumann, "Er ist gekommen," mm. 8-11*

The modulation from dominant to dominant, going from F minor to A-flat major, is striking, and it reveals the importance that Schumann’s places upon adhering to poetic shifts. It should be said that m. 9 is by no means an arrival in any sense, but rather it is still in a transitory movement toward m. 11. This is evidenced by the sixteenth notes on beat 4 of m. 9 and m. 10. In m. 9 Schumann deliberately inserts a D-natural so as to arrive on D-flat on beat 1 of m. 10, instead of C, which comes as the third of the tonic in m. 11.

The reflective section begins in m. 11 in A-flat major, the text of which is juxtaposed with excited text of the first two lines: “Wie könnt’ ich ahnen, daß seine Bahnen/ sich einen sollten meinen Wegen?” (How could I have known, that his path/ should unite itself with mine?). And yet even here the phrases begin in a progressive

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4 This is a delicate interpretive moment, which is best done justice by observing the *piano* marking in m. 9, as well as respective occurrences. Doing so results in a less jarring effect.
manner, going from I to V6/5, so that harmonically, the first moment of repose is achieved in m. 15 on beat two (here we get the strongest cadence in the tonic key thus far--V6/5 to I). Furthermore, we see that for the first time Schumann deviates from her short, one-measure phrasing by inserting a two-measure vocal phrase (mm. 13-15). This restful moment is fleeting, however. Keeping with the established accompanimental pattern of quarters in the left hand and sixteenths in the right in m. 15, Schumann moves easily into the following f minor section (which repeats from m. 5), thwarting any sense that this moment was a strong arrival. The transition back to the angst section (in f minor) is more fluid, though the modulation is still direct: I of A-flat major to vii\(^a\) 6/5 of f minor in mm. 15-16. Once again, Schumann prolongs the dominant--here of f minor. Because it is only necessary for her to achieve the V in order to strongly arrive in f minor for the following section, she only has to repeat the measure. In this first stanza (mm. 1-17), we become aware of the interplay between the tonic and the relative minor (this section is presented three times throughout the lied), and it becomes interesting as to which tonality will eventually win out. Tension and relaxation, therefore, play a prominent role in the lied.  

The section that begins the final repose of the narrator (m. 24) is signaled by the use of longer vocal phrases, which are juxtaposed with those of the short fragment-like

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5 This contrast between strong emotions is a characteristic that Schumann often emphasizes in her piano accompaniments. For other examples in which Schumann clearly presents emotional shifts, see “Am Strande:” lines 1-6/ mm. 1-18; lines 7-12/ mm. 19-32; and lines 13-16/ mm. 33-54. Also see “Lorelei” and the textual shifts that appear in m. 20 to signal the entrance of the Lorelei. The pianistic texture at this point returns in m. 45 when the boat is mentioned, and signals the object, which the Lorelei means to destroy. Also, another shift occurs in m. 39, which signals the musical warning that we heard at the beginning of the song in m. 4.
phrases of the first major section. Here we become even more aware of Schumann’s interest in portraying shifts of emotion, which takes precedence over the stanzaic layout. In a sense, Schumann corrects the irregularity of the emotional segmentation established by the first two stanzas of Rückert’s poem.\(^6\) In this third stanza, the emotional shift occurs between the first and second line. Schumann’s method of dealing with this is by repeating the first line of the third stanza, resulting in a remainder of three lines of text. Schumann elaborates upon these final three lines, setting them to 19 measures of new, through-composed music, whereas for the musical material of the first two stanzas, she used 9 measures (interludes included) of strophic music. Furthermore, this final section is divided into two distinct musical textures (the first is mm. 24-33, the second mm. 33-40), the second of which is more homorhythmic. The first of these sections ends in m. 33 in D-flat major, whereas the concluding section ends in m. 40 in the tonic, A-flat major. The postlude recalls the one-measure phrasing of the opening, beginning with the tonic in each measure and ending with the V6/5 or vii\(^6\). The lied concludes with arpeggiated sixteenths on the tonic triad.

Schumann’s interest in portraying the emotional progression is evidenced in other ways, such as the use of directional tonality in “Er ist gekommen” and “Am Strande.” That is to say that both lieder begin and end in a different key, in these lieder, f minor to A-flat major and e-flat minor to E-flat major respectively. In both cases, the move to the relative or parallel major is suggestive of the resolved feelings of the narrator. This tonal

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\(^6\) In the first two stanzas, the emotional division was between the second and third lines.
layout is surprising, because at the time Schumann was composing, such tonal plans were by no means the norm in lieder composition.7

Responding to the natural rhythm of the poetry, most of Schumann’s lieder are made up of balanced phrases with antecedent-consequent tendencies. But this is not true in the tonal sense; in fact, it is rare for the first phrase of the vocal line to end on a V and the following phrase to end on the tonic. (“Sie liebten sich beide” is one of the few with a traditional (V-I) relationship.) It is far more common for the opening phrase structures to end on the V of either the tonic or a closely related key. This is best exemplified in “Warum willst du and’re fragen.” The abundance of non-harmonic tones in the introduction suggests an oscillation between the chords D@ and A@, but the pedal bass on A@, as well as the key signature, informs us that the key is indeed A-flat major. By the end of the first phrase (m. 8), we have moved from the slight sense of ambiguity to a clear half cadence in f minor. The next phrase begins on an aø7 chord and B-flat major is later tonicized in m. 10, moving through dø7 to arrive on an Eb 6/5 in m. 12, where the first stanza ends. A voice-leading graph gives no doubt that Schumann is headed toward the V6/5 in m. 12 (Ex. 3.2).

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7 For more information, see Deborah Stein and Robert Spillman, Poetry into Song: Performance and Analysis of Lieder (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 133.
Example 3.2 Clara Schumann, "Warum willst du and're fragen," mm. 7-12

This emphasis on tonal progression is an important aspect of most of Schumann’s lieder. In essence, it is another way in which Schumann portrays the emotional progression or the continuity of the poem. “Warum willst du and’re fragen” is a three-stanza poem in which the narrator’s point is presented in the final line of each stanza. This point is that the narrator’s eyes truly reveal his/her love for the one who is being addressed. Schumann’s tonal progression implies that with each concluding stanza, the narrator’s emotion becomes stronger. In the second stanza (mm. 12-20), the corresponding cadences are on the V of f minor and the V7 of D-flat major.

Interestingly, the piano emphasizes the intensity of the narrator’s emotion by cadencing in D-flat major in m. 21. (This will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.) In the third stanza (mm. 24-32), the arrivals are on the V of f minor and a tonicized D-flat (arrived at through a V-I cadence). But Schumann has not arrived at the tonic yet. In order to do so, she repeats the final two lines of text during which she modulates to arrive back in the tonic, A-flat in m. 38. The tonic key is emphasized by the postlude, which prolongs it for the final five measures.  

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8 There is one notable instance, however, when she deliberately ignores the natural rhythm of the poetic line. This occurs in “Die gute Nacht, die ich dir sage.” In this
Schumann's Accompanimental Style

Schumann’s accompanimental style is diverse in that the textures she employs encompass the three main types of piano accompaniment. These include a homophonic or chordal texture in which the accompaniment provides a harmonic foundation to the vocal line; a more complex relationship between vocal line and accompaniment such as when the accompaniment has a more melodic component or an occasional countermelody to the vocal line; and a prominent contrapuntal style in which the accompaniment has significant melodic independence from the vocal line. The lieders of Schumann that fall into the first category, or the homophonic style, are generally strophic or modified-strophic and include “Der Mond kommt still gegangen” and “Liebst du um Schönheit.” Songs that can be placed within the second group include “Liebeszauber” (because of its vocal doubling) and “Ich hab’ in deinem Auge.” In the third group, or contrapuntal group, we can include “Sie liebten sich beide,” “Volkslied,” and “Oh weh des Scheidens, das er tat.” When categorizing Schumann’s lieders by accompanimental style, one might argue that a fourth group exists—a virtuosic group. In this group we can include “Er ist gekommen,” “Am Strande,” “Lorelei,” “An einem lichten Morgen,” and “Mein Stern.”

example the textual phrases are elongated to such an extent that the abab rhyme scheme is almost indistinguishable.

9 For more information about accompaniment styles, see Stein and Spillman, Poetry into Song, 62-3.

10 The question as to why so many of Schumann’s lieders were not published remains open. From this group of virtuosic pieces, only two were published: “Er ist gekommen” and “An einem lichten Morgen.” It is possible that Schumann thought that many of her unpublished lieders were too difficult for amateur performers. I should point out that “Er ist gekommen” was published at the request of Robert Schumann, and some could argue that “An einem lichten Morgen” is not difficult pianistically, though coordinating piano and voice is no easy accomplishment.
The range of the accompaniment in many of Schumann’s lieder is approximately from c1 to a5. Occasionally, the left hand will double the bass line at the octave, and therefore extend beyond this range. And in the upper register, whenever the right hand reaches beyond c6, it is almost always in an interlude or postlude.

Piano figurations in Schumann’s lieder often supply musical effects, and there are a variety of examples of word painting. The repeated triplet figuration found in “Liebeszauber” suggests the movement of love’s song. And in “Die stille Lotosblume” the triplet followed by four eighths is suggestive of the rippling water.11 (This will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 4.) It is interesting to note that Robert Schumann was critical of composers who used accompanimental figurations throughout their songs. Robert wrote in the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik: “With Franz Schubert the retention of a single figure throughout the whole song appeared as something new; young composers should be warned against letting this become a mannerism.”12 Rufus Hallmark comments that Robert’s songs often made use of such figurations, and that indeed, he favored such a technique when the composer was able to vary it and provide contrast.13

Some of Schumann’s lieder have accompanimental personae. These personae can refer either to a separate dimension of the vocal persona, whereby the accompaniment may present something that might be in the narrator’s mind, or an entirely different force, such as fate or another person. (This topic will be examined in detail in Chapter 5.)

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11 For more information about piano figurations in the lieder of other nineteenth-century composers, see Stein and Spillman, Poetry into Song, 96.


Melodic Interest in the Piano

Most often, the vocal melody in Schumann’s lieder is doubled by the upper voice in the accompaniment. In fact, there are only a few of Schumann’s lieder in which the accompaniment does not have a significant melodic function, as found in “Am Strande,” and “Mein Stern.” In these examples, the accompaniment is restricted to a quick, arpeggiated style that is best described as supportive to the vocal line. In some cases, such as “Der Mond kommt still gegangen,” the piano merely shadows the vocal line, touching upon it sparingly.

Interestingly, the piano occasionally has more melodic interests than the vocal line. A good example of this is “Ich hab’ in deinem Auge.” In this lied, the vocal line is incorporated into the piano accompaniment, but the accompaniment “sings” more than the voice. For example, in m. 1 the accompaniment begins the full melodic line with a one and a half-beat pick-up, whereas the voice enters on a single eighth-note pick-up. This aspect of the piano becomes more obvious in the interlude in mm. 8-11. At this point the piano seems to represent the narrator’s consciousness, conveying the joyful reflection upon his/her beloved’s youthful image. The interlude is balanced by the postlude, which begins in m. 28 and resolve’s the interlude’s dominant E-flat pedal. The two are rhythmically the same. Melodically, however, the postlude climbs to a Bb before sounding a dramatic A-flat chord (distinguished by the first use of pedal in the song) with an Eb in the top voice, the point which Nancy Walker considers to be the climax of the song.¹⁴

In “Warum willst du and’re fragen” we see another interesting moment in which the accompaniment stretches beyond its traditional role. In m. 20-21 the accompaniment clearly completes the narrator's thought (see the above reference to this lied), emphatically arriving on the new tonic D-flat major through a V7 - I cadence (Ex. 3.3).

Example 3.3 Clara Schumann, "Warum willst du and’re fragen," mm. 17-21

The burden of portraying the emotional element in Schumann's lieder falls overwhelmingly upon the accompaniment; the melodic lines found in the voice often are not expressive in and of themselves. On occasion, the accompaniment may color the vocal line, giving the text a greater emotional depth. One of the most significant ways in which Schumann does this is by moving to the relative or parallel minor. In the next chapter, I will examine the significance of this more closely.
Chapter 4

Text-to-Music: Complementing and Outdoing in Three Lieder

Kramer’s “Outdoing” and Rilke’s “Artistic Space”

In Robert Schumann’s review of a volume of lieder by Norbert Burgmüller, he writes, “His foremost concern is – as it should be with everyone – to recreate in a subtle musical realization the most delicate effects of the poem. Seldom does any connotation escape him; nor, if he has grasped it, does his interpretation of it miscarry.”¹ What is revealed in Robert Schumann's critique is that he is concerned with the composer's artistic judgment in supplementing the text – one that, in this case, goes beyond a mediocre setting, capturing “the most delicate effects of the poem” – and the extent to which the composer does so.

In considering this revelatory statement, we should not be surprised that scholars and critics have long debated the relationship between word and music in the lied. In their discussions, they are rarely in agreement with the belief held by the general public that song is defined as the musical setting of a poem that is supplementary expression of poetic meanings, and therefore mimetic of the text.² The problematic aspect of this

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² The article is titled “Drei gute Liederhefte” (Three good song volumes) and is printed in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Volume 13 (1840). The work that Robert Schumann reviewed is Burgmüller’s op. 10. See Plantinga, *Schumann as Critic*, 175.

definition, at least to a great extent, is that it does not fully consider the composer’s artifice -- that is, the extent to which composers complement the text (as is revealed by Robert Schumann’s critique), and/ or their propensity to musically provide their own artistic comment or interpretation.³

In her chapter “Poetry and Music,” Gorrell quotes Paul Henry Lang on Schubert, a statement that is descriptive of Lang’s desire for what might be considered such an elevated setting. Lang writes:

The supplementary expressions to which Kramer is referring may be summed up as the musical portrayal of the action with which the poem is concerned. Kramer refers to this musical portrayal as “translation effects,” as exemplified in the hurdy-gurdy imitation that accompanies “Der Leiermann,” from Die Winterreise, and Schoenberg’s use of E--major triads in Pierre Lunaire to evoke an “old fragrance from Märchen-times.” Most songs are complementary in this way to some extent.

In addition, this statement is a testament to the many exciting ways in which lieder composers set text. For more information, see Suzanne M. Lodato, “Recent Approaches to Text/ Music Analysis in the Lied: A Musicological Perspective.” In Word and Music Studies Defining the Field: Proceedings of the First International Conference on Word and Music Studies at Graz, 1997, eds. Walter Bernhart, Steven Paul Scher and Werner Wolf (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1999), 95-112. This article offers an excellent overview of the most current approaches in lieder analysis. The majority of the article explains Kofi Agawu’s view of four models of lieder analysis, and offers an occasional critique of his methods. Other approaches are explained in detail: studies in text declamation, music as related to semantic textual meaning, deep structural and procedural homologies in music and text, and how text stimulates important changes in the composer’s musical language. The bibliography is outstanding for anyone interested in word-tone relationships; it includes 35-40 sources.

³ Obviously, there are many ways in which a composer can provide his or her own comment. Also, it can be argued that once a composer sets a text, no matter what type of setting, he or she provides their artistic comment. Here, I am referring to the potential of the composer altering the meaning of the poem, or providing a comment that is not explicit in the text, as will soon be discussed.
The eighteenth century neglected the song as being incompatible with a purely musical approach to vocal music... Schubert... was far more creative in the purely musical sense than any other song writer, with the occasional exception of Schumann and Brahms. Had he accepted the romantic dictum of the poet’s absolute supremacy, *merely providing music to the text* (the italics is mine), he would not have created the modern song...  

Lang’s comment regarding the composer who "merely provides music to the text" is descriptive of the simplest of musical settings--those having accompaniments with the sole function of providing a harmonic foundation for a melody, such as those that might be found in nursery rhymes. Schubert’s art, as Lang proposes, goes beyond such a setting. Lang fails, however, to describe the manner in which Schubert achieves this. For elaboration, we go to Lawrence Kramer.

In his chapter “Song” in *Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After*, Kramer discusses in greater detail the concept that Lang hints at. In Kramer’s attempt to distinguish compositional, artistic factors that go beyond mimetic settings (see footnote 2), he cites Edward T. Cone’s view that poetry, for the composer, is only part of the “raw material” for composition.  

In offering this statement, Kramer alludes to something in the composer’s setting that is extra-artistic, something that the composer adds that is not inherent in the text. One of the methods that Kramer discusses in referring to this concept is “outdoing.”

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6 For Kramer’s views on the various ways in which music disarticulates poetry, see Kramer, *Music and Poetry*, 143-161.
Kramer presents the broad framework for outdoing by suggesting that the text, in general, is less than high art. He writes:

…the poem does not have to operate as poetry, but only as language. Most often, a song based on such a marginal text will treat it directly as a verbal failure. The fictional framework will be shown up as flimsy; the song will brush it aside, belie it, with an obviously more resonant fiction of its own.\(^7\)

For an example of outdoing, Kramer uses Schubert’s “An mein Herz,” a poem by Ernst Schulze. In this uneventful, "breathtakingly banal" text, the speaker gives in to his emotion and laments the loss of his beloved by producing a ruminating string of clichés. The poem is further characterized by its slow pacing, reasoned calm, and muted close. Schubert’s approach to the text is to ignore these aspects of the poem. Instead of portraying the poem’s resignation, Schubert's settings moves in what Kramer describes as “a zone of feeling – of rampant subjectivity, manic, defensive, duplicitous – that is not simply left out of Schulze’s test (sic) but is simply inconceivable in terms of the text’s tepid, idealizing rhetoric.”\(^8\) Schubert’s devices for overriding the mood are his use of *forte* and *piano*, major and minor, and a chain of agitated ostinato chords, which lead to an abrupt close. Also, the vocal line is uncomfortably fast, turning the speaker’s lines into “distraught patter.”

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\(^7\) Kramer, *Music and Poetry*, 143.

\(^8\) Kramer, *Music and Poetry*, 144.
Kramer’s example of outdoing is explicit. In this case, the fictional framework is completely disregarded. ⁹ This “casting aside” of the text is not necessary, however. Kramer’s concept of outdoing is of value to this study in that it rests upon the necessity that the musical setting suggests an imaginative space that the text is unable to occupy. ¹⁰ A musical setting that is in agreement with the text, yet also provides a more resonant fiction, may also be considered as outdoing.

Carl Schachter’s discussion of Schubert’s “Der Jüngling an der Quelle” is a case in point. Schachter focuses upon the final two lines of the poem, which Schubert altered slightly from “mir zu” (to me) to “dir nach” (for you). These lines are as follows:

ach, und Blätter und Bach  
seufzen: Luise! dir nach.  

ah, and leaves and brook  
Sigh, Luise, for you.  

Schubert complements the text in part by providing an accompaniment that imitates the sound of the leaves and the brook. In the introduction, the accompaniment centers on the broken third c♯² and e², which later returns more prominently in the postlude as the singer repeats the girl’s name (also on the pitches c♯² and e²). As the song continues, the

⁹ A noticeable feature of this example is Schubert’s method of supplying a musical reading that is contrary to the text. Musical readings that rewrite the text are better explained under a method that Kramer later refers to as “expressive revision” (Music and Poetry, 146). In the “An mein Herz” example, therefore, Kramer’s point is taken by this author to be that Schubert’s setting provides a more “resonant fiction” than does the poem.

¹⁰ Kramer, Music and Poetry, 145.
listener hears this indistinct pattern transformed into a clear one; the sounds of nature
become the girl’s name as the accompaniment takes on a definite shape of the motive.\footnote{11}
Schachter writes:

In creating his musical image Schubert reaches a far higher level of
artistry than [the poet, Johann von] Salis-Seewis, for the poem, charming
as it is, merely asserts that the leaves and brook sigh the girl’s name. Of
course the name itself – “Luise” sounds more like whispering leaves and
water than say, “Katinka” would. But this is the easiest kind of
onomatopoetic effect, with little inner connection to the poem as a whole.
In Schubert’s song, on the other hand, the musical image is, in symbolic
form, what the words talk about; it grows out of the earlier part of the
song with wonderful naturalness.\footnote{12}

As Schachter points out, Schubert’s setting of “Der Jüngling an der Quelle” outdoes its
text by providing a space that the text is unable to. It is within this definition that I wish
to view the three songs of Schumann later in this chapter.

Another useful term that Kramer introduces, though this one by way of Rainer
Maria Rilke, is “artistic space.” By looking at Schumann’s selection of poetry through
this concept of artistic space, we are able to lay a foundation for examining her lieder and
surveying the complexity of the text, thereby getting a better sense of the poetry that she
selected and the manner in which she both complements the text and fills the artistic
space. Rilke, complaining about his poetry being set to music, writes:


\footnote{12} Schachter, \textit{Motive and Text}, 64.
I am...quite sincerely averse to any accompaniment – musical as well as illustrative – to my works. It is after all my aim to fill with my own creative output the whole artistic space that offers itself to an idea in my mind. I hate to believe...that there could be any room left over for another art, which would itself then be interpretative and complementary...\textsuperscript{13}

The term “artistic space” is useful in determining the level of difficulty that a musical accompaniment will encounter in complementing the full poetic meaning of a text. It also serves as a gauge to the poem’s quality--its succinctness and completeness of artistic thought, as well as its complexity. And complexity is key, because many of the simplest poems are succinct and “complete,” yet lack multifaceted relationships. Poems with an abundance of artistic space tend to have a singleness of purpose and a narrow interpretive range. The greater the artistic space in a poem, the greater the possibility that a musical setting is able to complement the text in a manner that offers no hindrance to the poetic reading. We will encounter a poem of this type when we examine Schumann’s musical setting “Die stille Lotosblume.”

Poems with less artistic space tend to be of a more complex type as characterized by a broad interpretive range in regard to the poem as a whole as well as individual words and phrases and their relationships. It might be said that poems with less artistic space are often classified as high poetry. Because of the complexity of poems such as these, a musical setting is often challenged to set the various subtleties that give the poem its fullness of meaning. As a result, the composer must consider as irrelevant whatever

cannot be realized in his reading. A poem of this complexity will be examined when we discuss Schumann’s setting “Ich stand in dunklen Träumen.”

Kramer’s approach to lieder analysis, as exemplified in this chapter, is to a large degree text-based. In this “method,” the text is examined first, and a correlation is then sought out in the music. Furthermore, it is representative of the most typical approach as to how scholars have analyzed lieder. Generally, meaning is arrived at in a rather non-methodological manner--mostly through happenstance--and can be sporadic to a great extent. Musical analogies are often identified that relate primarily to specific dramatic points or to overall mood. Such analyses usually seek to locate specific word-music relationships that the composer has musically highlighted and then seek to determine what methods he or she used to heighten the meaning of the text. Some common means include analysis of form, non-resolution, shifts in tonality or texture, and emphasis on a word or phrase through a variety of musical means.

**Organization, Progression, and Imagery in Poetry**

In determining the amount of artistic space in a poem, it is paramount that we consider on what level(s) the poem is successful. Before we look at the first example, we need to discuss three characteristics of poetry: organization, progression, and imagery.

There is a vast amount of organization in poetry; patterns abound even to the smallest of details. One of the most common means by which poets group emotion or events is by stanza. As is typical in German Romantic poetry, stanzas usually total in number from 3-8 and consist of four to five lines per stanza. For example, let us say that

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a poem is about a man who is describing his day’s journey through the forest. Stanza one might discuss the morning, stanza two the afternoon, and stanza three the night. Yet poetry is not always this simple; poets may include far more variety, as will be discussed later. Another common occurrence is the grouping of emotion or events by two lines, or by couplet.

It may follow that this grouping is made more obvious by the end-rhyme, such as a couplet resulting in an *aa* rhyme scheme. This is not necessary, however, as many groupings exist that end *ab*. The difference between the two is the finality that the reader experiences in the first, and the sense of expectancy in the latter. A poem may contain internal shifts, while keeping its four-line stanzaic structure. That is to say, the emotion may jump across the stanza, setting up an emotional pattern that is at odds with the stanzaic structure. Overall, when studying poetry, one should note the shifts in the established pattern or form, and become sensitive to what is at times a complex relationship between structure and emotion.\(^\text{15}\)

Inherent in most German Romantic lyric poetry is a progression of some sort. The progression of a poem is a sketch, or an outline – a sort of emotional skeleton. When one is considering the successes of a poem, it is important to take into consideration the manner in which the poem progresses. A preliminary analysis of this aspect seeks to identify breaks or shifts, and overall organization. Shifts may be evoked by a change through the intensification of feeling. Other common shifts include a change in time, a

change from reality to imagination, a turning of attention from one object or image to another, or cause and effect.

For example, a lover may begin to pour out his soul, whereas earlier he may have simply been praising his lover. This may easily constitute a shift. Or a poet may abruptly turn from talking about a babbling brook to an eagle flying overhead. Espying these shifts is often key to interpreting a poem or “following” the poem as the poet intended. The grouping of ideas, therefore, is also important to recognize. Perhaps the babbling brook and the eagle that flies overhead are actually one group, and the shift that the poet intends is actually the next stanza that may discuss two people walking on a nearby path. Poets are very skillful and inventive in this regard, and therefore it is important to keep in mind that many techniques exist for emotional shifts in poetry, and it is often best to read poetry in a holistic manner.

If we were to examine the most basic structure of many poems in German lyric poetry of the nineteenth century, we would realize that many follow a similar progressive outline. Many poems begin with expository material, which progress subtly to a moment of heightened emotion. That is to say, after a somewhat expository paragraph, the stanzas that follow are a simple continuation or filling out of the expository material leading to a climax or moment of fulfillment, which is widely known as the epigrammatic style. More often than not a composer will set such a poem of such progression in a modified-strophic manner, deviating from his course only somewhere in the final stanza in order to highlight the moment of impact.
Schumann’s “Die stille Lotosblume”

Let us now consider the text of Schumann’s setting “Die stille Lotosblume,” Op. 13, no. 6 (figure 1). The poem is by the German poet Emanuel Geibel (1815-1884).\(^{16}\)

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Die stille Lotosblume
steigt aus dem blauen See,
die Blätter flimmern und blitzen,
der Kelch ist weiß wie Schnee.

The quiet lotus-blossom
ascends from the blue pond,
its leaves glimmer and sparkle,
its bud is white as snow.

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\(^{16}\) The poem’s original title is “Die stille Wasserrose,” published as poem IX in Geibel’s *Lieder als Intermezzo* (1837). Thus far, the earliest version of this poem found by the author is in Emanuel Geibel, *Gedichte*, (Stuttgart: J.G. Cotta, 1870), 57. The differences between Schumann’s text and Geibel’s is that in this 1870 version the first line reads “Die stille Wasserrose,” and line 3 of the third stanza reads “Die feuchten Blättern zitern” (The wet leaves tremble.) While it has not yet been determined why these changes were made, and by whom, they are obviously more poetic. Kurt Stephenson considers the change from “Wasserrose” to “Lotosblume” more emotional and connotative to the image of longing.” K.G. Fellerer, gen. Ed., *Anthology of Music*, 30 vols (Köln: Arno Volk Verlag, 1961), vol. 21: *Romanticism in Music*, by Kurt Stephenson, p. 101. Quoted in Nancy Walker, “A Stylistic Analysis of Selected Lieder of Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel and Clara Wieck Schumann,” (D.M.A. diss., University of Indiana, 1988), 84. In regard to the third line of the first stanza, I think that the line as Schumann set it is more sensitive to the soft-white and soft-green colors that the imagery in the poem provokes. A final discrepancy between Schumann’s version and Geibel’s is a dash in Geibel’s version after the first couplet in the final stanza, which reads, “Und will im Singen vergehn –.” In figure 1.1 I present Geibel’s version to provide evidence that Geibel sought to distinguish the “human question” from the rest of the poem.

Geibel’s early poetry, as found in his collection *Gedichte* (1840), has been described as staying within the tradition of the folk-song, and therefore simple in tone. These poems portray the scenery and society of Germany before the 1830s, and the theme of *Wanderschaft* (wandering) is dominant, and portrays the wanderer’s experience of the changing seasons and nature in general. Wulf Koepke, “Emanuel Geibel,” in *Nineteenth-Century German Writers, 1841-1900*, Vol. 129, *The Dictionary of Literary Biography*, edited by James Hardin and Siegfried Mews, 101-109. Detroit: Gale Research, 1993.
Da gießt der Mond vom Himmel
all’ seinen gold’n en Schein,
gießt alle seine Strahlen
in ihren Schoß hinein.

Im Wasser um die Blume
circles a white swan
treibt ein weißer Schwan
it sings so sweet, so softly
er singt so süß, so leise
and looks upon the blossom.
und schaut die Blume an.

Er singt so süß, so leise
It sings so sweet, so softly
und will im Singen vergehn –
and wants in song to perish
O Blume, weiße Blume,
O blossom, white blossom,
kannst du das Lied verstehn?
can you understand this song?

The poem consists of four stanzas, each with a rhyme scheme of abcb. The structure of the poem is fairly simple: the first stanza focuses on the image and surroundings of the lotus-blossom. To take stock of this stanza, we know that the lotus-blossom is in a blue pond, its leaves sparkle, and its bud is as white as snow. So far, the purpose of the poem is not clear, but the poet connotes certain Romantic ideas by his word choice – innocence, purity, nature, and birth. There is great intimacy in the word “stille,” and the imagery present in the third line is powerful in stirring the imagination.

In the second stanza, the poet changes gears slightly; he expands the reader’s visual horizon upward, towards the moon, and then directs us back to the blossom. Judging the meaning of the poem from this stanza, one may think of the word “nurturing.” When we consider the two stanzas together, we note that the progression has been very natural. The demands of the poet are nil up to this point; we are simply asked to imagine the objects in the manner in which he has described them.

In the third stanza, the poet introduces the white swan that circles the blossom and stares as if intrigued or in contemplation. It is this relationship between the blossom and
the swan that the poet wants us to contemplate for a moment. The blossom evokes a response in the swan, causing it to let out a cry, possibly in acquiescence to the blossom. This is a very intimate moment; the imagery is profound. It seems that the poet wishes the emotion to continue into the fourth stanza. The poet’s choice in words, “und will im Singen vergehn” (and wants in song to perish) in the fourth stanza, approaches something akin to ecstasy.

The fourth stanza signals the end of the poem by the repetition of the third line in the previous stanza. In spite of the imagery present in the poem, the purpose of the poem is the final two lines, “O Blume, weiße Blume,/ kannst du das Lied verstehn?” (O blossom, white blossom,/ can you understand this song?) The question implies a human element; the poet’s intention here is to provoke the reader to contemplate the romantic ideology that claims that all things within nature are interconnected.

The progression within and between all the stanzas is very natural and subtle. (It would be detrimental to the poem if it were otherwise.) The slow unfolding of the poem is most likely a technique used by the poet to represent the budding flower. Thought is grouped by stanza: the lotus-blossom – moon and nurturing – blossom and swan – moment of impact. As the poet leads us along, by the end of the third stanza, the reader is left with a sense of expectancy. We are not aware of the poem’s point until the fourth stanza, third line. The poem is almost daydream-like; its principal “hook” is imagery, abounding in soft white and green colors, and glimmering light.

The simplicity of the poem suggests a significant amount of artistic space. The composer is free to set the text in a mood-based type of setting if he or she chooses. The point is that this type of setting would not interfere with the text of the first three stanzas.
So, on a simple, complementary level, we expect a modified-strophic setting consisting of similar musical material for the first three stanzas, and an altered setting for the final stanza, which highlights the moment of fulfillment of the poem.\footnote{For more information about poetic and musical form, see Jack M. Stein, \textit{Poem and Music in the German Lied from Gluck to Hugo Wolf} (Cambridge, Harvard U. Press, 1971), 15-17. Also see Gorrell, \textit{The Nineteenth-Century German Lied}, 23-26.}

With this in mind, we now turn our focus to the musical aspects of Schumann’s setting of “Die stille Lotosblume.” Her setting shows sensitivity to the poet’s intentions by complementing a multitude of aspects (as mentioned above) inherent in the poem, while outdoing other aspects in a very tasteful manner.

**Schumann’s Complementing**

Schumann complements the poem by unifying the first three stanzas in a variety of ways, and by providing the poet’s given progression through musical means. There is a rhythmic motive consisting of a triplet figure followed by eighths that is omnipresent in the song. This motive provides a general, atmospheric quality to the music that is suggestive of the rippling, or ebb and flow of the water of the pond, and is the foundation upon which the song rests.

The form that she uses is a “complex” modified-strophic form, which provides unity. The first couplet of stanzas one through three begins with material that is almost identical, the only differences being that in mm. 12 and 23 she adds a one-beat extension on beat 2 to allow a more successful setting of the text. In order to get back on track tonally, she adds a diminished 4/2 chord on beat one of mm 13 and 24.
The second couplet of stanzas one and two respectively is slightly different in tonality. In the first stanza, Schumann approaches the Eb7 in m. 10 by a D-flat major – B-flat minor 7 (Ab: IV – ii7) progression, whereas in the second stanza she approaches the Eb7 in m. 18 by a borrowed D-flat minor, which then progresses to Bb minor 7 and then to Eb7. In the second couplet of the third stanza, beginning in m. 25, though the vocal line is almost identical, she goes through an unstable period from mm. 26-30 (from E-flat major to G-flat major, eventually arriving at C-flat major in m. 29).

It is at this point that the modified-strophic setting breaks down. The complexity is due in part to Geibel’s repetition of the third line of the third stanza, “Er singt so süß, so leise” (It sings so sweet, so softly), for the first line of the fourth stanza. Schumann makes this section more ambiguous by providing an interlude between the second and third lines of the fourth stanza, and then repeats the final two lines of text. Though the triplet figure is still present in the accompaniment (beginning in m. 35), the progression in the final couplet is new, touching on A-flat major, Db-flat major, f minor, and concluding on a dominant seventh of A-flat major.

Another means by which Schumann complements the song is through the use of the E-flat chord (V), and she uses this chord in two important ways. The first way exemplifies the emotional continuity of the first three stanzas at cadences. Both the first and second stanzas conclude on the V7. The second way she uses this chord is highlighted in the beginning two measures and final two measures of the song. Both make use of the same half cadence – a D-flat major chord (IV with an accented Eb in the bass) to an E-flat seven chord (V7). And so the song ends as it began. The half cadence is not so much of a structural alteration to the poem, as it is meaningful to the poem itself.
To end as she began ties into the Romantic ideology of continuous cycles, especially in nature.

Schumann further exemplifies the poet's natural, progressive form leading to a moment of impact through a recurring rhythmic motive in the voice. This motive consists of a dotted quarter followed by eighths (first given in the voice in m. 3) that usually correspond to the triplet figure noted above. She deviates from this form only in the final couplet (mm. 35-36), signifying the moment of greatest intensity, and she returns to the rhythmic pattern for the last line (mm. 41-42). Of the 12 lines in the first three stanzas, all begin with this rhythm or a slightly modified version. (This modified version is made up of a quarter followed by four eighths and is used for the sake of an added syllable on beat 2 [see mm. 13, 15, and 24]). This pattern is broken in m. 35 (the last two lines of the final stanza), the place that ends the progression and reaches its climactic fulfillment in the form of a question. And again, the continuous use of the two rhythmic patterns (the two phrases of the first two stanzas) up to this point has given us a sense of expectancy, and when this expectancy is thwarted in the third line of the fourth stanza, we are well aware of it. She does this, of course, to emphasize the poet's dramatic point. The return to the expected rhythm in the last few bars provides a sense of unity and closure. Another way that Schumann gives this impression is by allowing the voice to rest upon the root of a chord (V7) at the end of both the second and the final stanzas (mm. 18 and 43 respectively); it never has the tonic note in an A-flat major triad. It should be said, however, that despite these two suggestions of resolution, this closure is
incomplete. By having the song end on the V7, Schumann suggests the perpetual human question that is important to Geibel’s text, “Kannst du das Lied verstehn?” — a question that goes unanswered.

Both Chissell and Gorrell refer to this function of the unresolved dominant as a response to the final question. In addition to this comment, and, as I alluded to earlier, the use of this cadence for both introductory and closing material also suggests the completeness of poetic thought. Schumann, therefore, musically implies the dichotomy of both resolution and non-resolution in a significant way.

**Schumann’s Outdoing:**

The term “outdoing” suggests the extra-artistic contribution of the composer’s art. It is a fine-tuning of sensibility. One of the ways in which Schumann outdoes the text in “Die stille Lotosblume” is by setting the third line of stanzas one through three and the first line of the fourth stanza in a way that brings the imagery to the forefront of the experience of the listener. In the first three stanzas this is accomplished through the use of e-flat minor. The corresponding measure numbers are mm. 7-8, mm. 15-16, and mm. 26-27. These minor mode sections provide a stark contrast to the preceding E-flat major.

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chord and suggest an intimacy and an intensity of feeling, as well as an addition to the mysteriousness of the scenery (Ex 4.1).\(^{20}\)

![Musical notation](image)

Example 4.1 Clara Schumann, "Die stille Lotosblume," mm. 6-8

These instances in the song are imaginatively turbo-charged; they are moments of repose within the stanzas, which provide relief to the musical balance of the first couplet in the stanzas. They have a connotative meaning in an atmospheric sense, kind of like a motive that attaches itself to an image.

This effect is repeated with astounding emotional energy in the fourth stanza. The repetition of the third line/third stanza that takes place in the first line/fourth stanza

\(^{20}\) A sudden shift to the parallel minor mode occurs in Schumann’s unpublished song “Beim Abschied” in mm. 13-14. In this song, this device draws attention to the text in the strophic setting and has a similar intimate implication. A similar occurrence takes place in “Liebst du um Schönheit,” as pointed out by Marcia Citron. Citron notes the sudden change in mode from D-flat major to D-flat minor in m. 5, as “an effective use of harmonic color.” Marcia Citron, “Women and the Lied, 1775-1850,” in *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950*, edited by Jane Bowers and Judith Tick (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 238. The technique in this instance does not heighten the text to the same degree as the two examples that I provide, but rather it emphasizes an emotional shift inherent in the poetry, and therefore might be fairly labeled as “word painting.”
provides a wonderful offset. And at this point in Schumann’s setting (mm. 30-31), she saves some of her best magic.\(^{21}\) We recognize the music as similar to the e-flat minor sections discussed above, but this time they are presented in C-flat and G-flat major (Ex. 4.2).

Example 4.2 Clara Schumann "Die stille Lotosblume," mm. 29-31

The fluctuation between tonalities against the monotonous G-flat in the voice provides an atmosphere of clarity that has not yet been heard in the song.\(^{22}\) Though not the climactic

\(^{21}\) Gorrell refers to the overall mood of the song as reflecting a “pensive intimacy.” Surely, she is alluding to this moment. In her discussion, however, she refers only to the mechanics of the passage by stating, “...[The song] moves through a delicate array of keys at the beginning of the second stanza...by lowering the third of several chords, moving from A-flat major through D-flat major to C-flat major with a relatively static vocal line, as the swan circles the lotus flower.” Gorrell, *The Nineteenth-Century German Lied*, 186-7.

\(^{22}\) Chissell, when referring to mm. 29-33 of “Die stille Lotosblume” at the point when the swan circles the blossom, states, “...an A-flat major setting of Geibel’s “Die stille Lotosblume,” comes still closer to Schumann because of a new subtlety in word painting...” See Chissell, *Clara Schumann*, 82.
moment, it is the most beautiful moment. Furthermore, it goes beyond mere “word painting” because it fills a space that the text cannot.

Schumann imposes a structure on the text that is not obvious in the poem. I have discussed the progressive structure of the poem that consists of the grouping of stanzas one through three, and separately, stanza four. Though Schumann portrays this musically through the rhythmic motive, she also suggests another structure by dividing the poem between stanzas two and three. This is accomplished through the presence of an interlude and the first occurrence of the vocal line resting on the root of the chord in m. 18.

The division serves the purpose of providing a balance to the musical structure; more important, it introduces the magnificent encounter between the blossom and the swan. The playing out of this relationship pushes to the end of the poem. It is musical complementing such as this that borders on outdoing (similar to Schumann’s use of the V chord to connote non-resolution), because it makes relationships in the text explicit that might have gone unnoticed in a poetic reading. The second half of this division seems to be of significance because Schumann begins to supply us with a new motive (labeled $a$ in Ex. 4.3) that is first heard in the soprano line of the accompaniment in mm. 18-19.
Example 4.3 Clara Schumann, "Die stille Lotosblume," mm. 18-19

This motive recurs in important places throughout the remainder of the song and gains notable significance in the C-flat major, G-flat major section in mm. 30-31 (See Ex. 4.2). The motive is presented again in mm. 35-36, and returns in the postlude. Its musical purpose is to prolong the dominant. (Its emotive purpose will soon be discussed.) In mm. 18-21, 35-38, and 43-45, the harmony is stagnant, reiterating the E-flat 7 chord. Musically, this further emphasizes the non-resolution upon which the text rests.

In addition to structural divisions, the interludes in the song provide moments for reflection. The interlude that appears in mm. 34-35 exemplifies this. Practically speaking, it separates the story from the human question, “Kannst du das Lied verstehn?” (Can you understand this song?). From an emotional point of view, its minor tonality (a-flat) recalls the magic of the e-flat minor sections, as does the presence of the a motive that follows in mm. 35-36. Still emotionally charged from its initial entrance, the motive reappears here and in the postlude, in m. 43, the experience reverberating through the poet’s memory, especially in these final measures.
Schumann’s “Liebeszauber”

Another song in which Schumann complements and outdoes the text is in her setting of a poem titled “Die Liebe saß als Nachtigall,” also by Emanuel Geibel.  
Taking cue from our first example, we consider the next example from the emotional progression as experienced by the reader. The poem consists of five stanzas in a simple abab rhyme scheme. The progressive structure is slightly different from our previous example in that “Liebeszauber” is not as sectionalized as “Die stille Lotosblume,” but rather it progresses more steadily. Here we see that the first stanza provides strong expository material (see Figure 4.2).

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23 “Liebeszauber” is also Schumann’s title. This poem is from Geibel’s Lieder als Intermezzo marked as poem XVII. Geibel, Gedichte, 66. The discrepancies between the text set by Schumann (printed above) and the text found in the 1870 J.G. Cotta publication consist of differences in punctuation and the changing of the “Wiederhall” in the original to “Widerhall” in Schumann’s version, the former probably being an older usage of the word meaning “echo.” The semicolon is never used in the 1870 version, and the only apostrophe occurs at “Stund’” in the final couplet. More interesting is Geibel’s use of the dash in the penultimate couplet (given in figure 4.2). As in the previous poem discussed, Geibel once again distinguishes the final couplet from the rest of the poem, and the second line of the final stanza even more so. It reads, “Und hörte auch den Schall –”.


Chissell refers to the song as “prosaic.” Chissell, Clara Schumann, 82.
Figure 4.2
Section 1
(a) Die Liebe saß als Nachtigall
im Rosenbusch und sang;
es flog der wundersüße Schall
den grünen Wald entlang.

Und wie er klang, da stieg im Kreis
aus tausend Kelchen Duft,
und alle Wipfel rauschten leis',
und leiser ging die Luft;

(b) Die Bäche schwiegen, die noch kaum
gleißschert von den Höh'n,
die Rehlein standen wie im Traum
und lauschten dem Getön.

Und hell und immer heller floß
der Sonne Glanz herein,
um Blumen, Wald und Schlucht ergoß
sich goldig roter Schein.

Section 2
Ich aber zog den Weg entlang
und hörte auch den Schall. (−)
Ach! was seit jener Stund' ich sang,
war nur sein Widerhall.

I walked along the path
And also heard that sound. (−)
Alas! Whatever I've sung every hour since,
Was just its echo.

If we were to chart the progression of this poem, we see that it has a beginning
(section 1-a), a middle (section 1-b), and an end (section 2). The first stanza provides
expository material, and what immediately follows in stanzas two through four is a
simple expounding upon that material. More specifically, the first stanza provides the
place of departure for love’s sound, introducing the metaphor of love as a nightingale
whose tone rings throughout the forest. The journey of this traveling tone is taken up in
stanzas two through four. In the second stanza, the excitement and exhilaration of the
poem comes from the image of the reader being whisked along, so that the reader is not a
mere observer of the image of love, but sees through the eyes of love as it travels
throughout the forest. We see the buds of the second stanza, and the brooklets and fawns
of the third stanza. This feeling of movement is implied in the choice of verbs
throughout the middle section: “stieg im Kreis, ging, floß, and ergoß” (there rose in a
circle, blew, flowed, gushed). In the fourth stanza, the culminating image is presented: a
refreshed, sun-bathed forest.

The poem reaches its fulfillment in the fifth and final stanza. The speaker, who
happened to hear this sound, voices his inability to recapture or recreate this beautiful
experience himself. The moment of greatest impact is the last couplet: “Ach! was seit
jener Stund' ich sang/ war nur sein Widerhall.” (Alas! Whatever I’ve sung every hour
since/ was just its faint echo.)

The theme of the poem is vague, but seems to portray a relation to a re-creation
poem coupled with a pureness of nature theme. The poem relies heavily upon imagery,
especially in portraying the sound’s movement. The speaker’s desire to reproduce the
sound is not necessary, because we have experienced it through his telling. Kramer’s
concept of artistic space is pertinent here. An analysis of the poem reveals that there is a
significant amount of artistic space in that the poem presents few, if any problems in
regard to interpretation.

**Complementing in “Liebeszauber”**

The form that Schumann chooses for “Liebeszauber” is also a “complex”
modified-strophic setting. She divides the poem into two major sections: stanzas one
through four make up the first section, while the fifth stanza is in a section all its own.
She further divides the first section into fairly equal units: stanzas 1-2 (mm. 1-16), and stanzas 3-4 (mm. 18-39). The division is suggested by a two-measure interlude beginning in m. 15. Stanzas one and three are almost musically identical, and the first couplet of stanza two begins in the same manner as stanzas one and three. The difference, therefore, is the second couplet of stanza two, and the entirety of stanza four.

As we saw in “Die stille Lotosblume,” Schumann here again complements many characteristics of the poem. The first, as mentioned above, is the large-scale division of the poem. Perhaps the most notable aspect, however, is movement. This is portrayed in a variety of ways. This is one of the few songs of Schumann in which the vocal line begins the song, suggesting the fast pacing that the text connotes. And similar to “Die still Lotosblume,” the voice does not rest on the root (in this case the tonic) until the final word of the fourth stanza (m. 39), where Schumann divides the sections. Another important feature is that the eighth-note triplet figure is present in the accompaniment in all but the final two measures of this 54-measure song. The conjunct motion of these figures is also suggestive of movement. When entering a stanza, Schumann uses a downward movement (often chromatic) to imply a quickening of the pace. (See mm. 8, 18, 26, and 39.) The ebb and flow of these moments are suggestive of the sound of love rising, reaching a point of suspension, and then plummeting downward, winding its way through the forest, and twisting and turning here and there. Tonally, Schumann also portrays movement. The second couplets of stanzas one and three cycle through f minor and B-flat major with 10 beats (see mm. 5-8). This material is presented over a B-flat pedal that is resolved in m. 8, at which point the B-flat chord is reestablished as the V7 of E-flat major, which sets up the V-I entrance to the second stanza.
Outdoing in “Liebeszauber”

A look at how Schumann outdoes the text begins with a discussion of the overall form. We have already discussed how she divides the poem into two major sections. A more banal setting would be a modified-strophic form in which stanzas one through four are presented with similar, if not exact, musical material. There is little here poetically to suggest otherwise. One of the ways in which Schumann outdoes the text is by setting it in a “complex” modified-strophic form. Poetically, stanzas one through four follow a very natural, unchallenged emotional progression. To disrupt that progression slightly with different music is to draw attention to those moments in the song.

What is of interest in regard to outdoing is that Schumann gives the final line of the second stanza a peculiar setting that returns later (Ex. 4.4).

Example 4.4 Clara Schumann, "Liebeszauber," mm. 14-16

It is a simple motive (a repeated G that skips up to C and steps down to B natural) which quickly modulates from c minor to G major, and is paired with the phrase “...und leiser ging die Luft” (...and more softly blew the wind). The motive is then emphasized,
gaining importance in the listener’s experience, through a repetition in the
accompaniment, in mm. 16-18. It is one of the few resting places in stanzas one through
four. I mentioned earlier that this interlude divides up the first section into two equal
halves, but I also think that Schumann implies a moment in which “love” renews its vigor
in mid-flight. And as seen in “Die stille Lotosblume” when Schumann uses the minor
key for moments of intimacy and refinement, so it is here. Though the lied cycles
through a variety of keys, this section is the most substantial in a minor key.
Furthermore, the diminuendo and pianissimo in m. 14 strengthen its prominence.

The motive recurs in the final stanza. This time, however, it is presented a major
third down (beginning on Eb), at m. 41.\(^{25}\) The listener is vaguely aware that this motive
in the vocal line has occurred before. And in m. 45, it is then presented in the key in
which it first appeared (c minor).

What is peculiar is that the text underlying this point (m. 45) is “Ach! Was seit
jener Stund’ ich sang...” (Alas! Whatever I’ve sung every hour since...). This is
followed by a descending B-flat line that rises again only to fall and rest on the tonic E-
flat major. This music is paired with the final lines, “war nur sein Widerhall” (was just
its echo). So, Schumann outdoes the text by including in the speaker’s comment (the

\(^{25}\) Schumann is passing into the human element here, presented as section two in figure
4.2. She follows Geibel’s dramatic intent by musically distinguishing this stanza from
the previous material. The vocal line ending firmly on the tonic in m. 39 (the end of the
fourth stanza) suggests that this section is a coda, but we soon discover otherwise. In the
setting of this final stanza, she has established a stagnant tonal area through the use of an
E-flat pedal and a chordal fluctuation between E-flat major and f diminished chords (see
mm. 39-45). This is remarkably different from the beginnings of the other sections, as
stated earlier.

To further distinguish this section from the previous material, mm. 41-44 are
among the very few where the vocal line is not explicitly doubled in the accompaniment.
final stanza) the motive that can only touch upon love’s song. What she had established earlier as an intimate moment is presented here as a reiterated fragment. And the final measures of the vocal part, mm. 47-51, though eventually arriving in E-flat major, cannot duplicate love’s song, as it has been presented in the opening couplets of stanzas 1 through 3. Overall, the final stanza is anti-climactic, and the pacing slows considerably. The postlude serves as an afterthought.

What these settings of Schumann’s reveal is a sensitivity to the emotional progression of the poem, a desire to complement the text on a variety of different levels, and an interest in adding her own artistic comment. Schumann does not attempt to outdo every text that she sets, however, as we shall see in her next setting, nor does it appear that she selects poetry with this in mind.26

Schumann’s “Ich stand in dunklen Träumen”

The next setting to which we will now look is Schumann’s “Ich stand in dunklen Träumen”, no. 1 from her opus 13.27 The poem appeared in Heinrich Heine’s Die Heimkehr (1823-4) as number XXIII and was published in Buch der Lieder (1827).

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26 For compositional difficulties in setting poetry with complex relationships, see Stein, Poem and Music, 9-27 and Kramer’s topics on deconstruction, Music and Poetry, 125-170.

27 Discrepancies exist between the text that Schumann set and Heine’s poem. The spelling, as presented here as “dunklen,” will become clear later when I examine Heine’s text.
Figure 4.3

Ich stand in dunklen Träumen
Und starrte ihr Bildness an,
Und das geliebte Antlitz
Heimlich zu leben begann.

I stood in darkened dreams
And stared at her portrait,
As that beloved countenance
Came to life in that familiar way.

Um ihre Lippen zog sich
Ein Lächeln wunderbar.
Und wie von Wehmutstränen
Erglänzte ihr Augenpaar.

Around her lips there grew
A wonderful laughing smile.
And the melancholy tears
Glittered and filled her eyes.

Auch meine Tränen flossen.
Mir von den Wangen herab
Und ach, ich kanns nicht glauben
Daß ich dich verloren hab!

My tears also flowed
Mournfully down my cheeks.
Alas, I cannot believe
That I have lost you!

An overview of the poem is helpful. It is not clear from the first stanza as to whether the poet is thinking about his beloved or looking at a picture of her. Nonetheless, the reader is aware that the speaker is slightly troubled. By the second couplet, the image of his beloved is in his mind and begins to take on a warm expression, as if recognizing and greeting the speaker. Familiarity turns to joy at this reunion, and then tragically to the realization that this is fantasy. Her image is all the more real to the speaker because she reacts to this awareness first, as noted in the second couplet of the second stanza, “Und wie von Wehmutstränen” (And how the melancholy tears). As her tears flow, his follow. The speaker calls out, voicing his anguish (in the present tense).

As Kramer mentions, it is difficult to find artistic space in many poems by great poets. And this is one such poem. The artistic thought is precise; the poet would be challenged to add to or take away from the poem in a way that better fulfilled its meaning. The composer, therefore, is theoretically limited in the choice of what will be

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28 Kramer, Music and Poetry, 145.
portrayed or complemented. More important, the poem can be sectionalized or explained in ways that are not commensurate with the stanzaic format, opening up structural decisions for the composer. Heine’s poem, therefore, is much more complex than the previous two in that the emotional and structural progressions differ. We will take a closer look at the poetic structure and emotional progression.

“Die stille Lotosblume” and “Liebeszauber,” as I noted earlier, are fairly simple in that they begin with expository material and progress naturally to a moment of impact. Furthermore, these poems deal primarily with one mood, whereas in “Ich stand in dunklen Träumen” the progression is not so much an expounding upon material presented in the initial stanza, as it is governed by subtle structural changes that are based upon emotional shifts. The speaker’s mood is drastically altered from joyfully reflecting upon his lost beloved to emotionally breaking down. The interpretation of where these shifts occur, if indeed this is of interest to the composer, would tend to affect greatly how the poem is set.

An analysis of Heine’s poem reveals that the first shift comes in the third line when we enter the poet’s mind, sharing in his experience, as his beloved comes to life through the poet’s joyful recollection of her smile. Beginning with the third line, the emotional swell begins. This final couplet is elided to the first couplet of the second stanza (the emotion jumps across) because the poet’s imaginative response continues with “Um ihre Lippen zog sich/ Ein Lächeln wunderbar” (Around her lips there grew/ A wonderful laughing smile). In a sense these lines modify the last couplet of the first stanza. (See figure 4.4 for the layout.)
In the third line of the second stanza we are reacquainted with the melancholic mood of the poem. Here we are reminded by the beloved’s “Wehmutstränen” that a reunion, in fact, is not to take place. This point is what I like to call the “choking” moment; it is turbo-charged with emotion, and is a marked emotional change from the first section.\(^{29}\) And like the elision of mood from stanza one to stanza two, as noted above, we also see the same type of elision here. With the mention of the “Wehmutstränen” in the third line, second stanza, another progression or emotional swell begins and continues through the second line of the third stanza. This grouping is further strengthened by the poet’s tears flowing like those of his beloved’s, as marked by “Auch” (Also) in the third stanza.

The next “choking” moment begins in the third line, third stanza with the climactic “Und ach...” (Alas...). Overcome with emotion, the poet utters aloud, speaking directly to his beloved. A progressive layout of the poem interpreted in this way is as follows:

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\(^{29}\) A moment such as this is known as \textit{Stimmungsbrechung}, which Hanna Spencer translates as a “break of mood.” Hanna Spencer, \textit{Heinrich Heine} (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 23. Spencer continues, “The sudden change of mood became a characteristic feature of the \textit{Buch der Lieder}, known as \textit{Stimmungsbrechung}. In its early form it had ensued from the dream situation, when fantasy inevitably ended with a return to reality. But from \textit{Lyrisches Intermezzo} onward, this awakening takes on many guises that are symptomatic of that tension between nostalgia and disillusion, romantic sentiment and critical judgment, emotion and intellect which inform Heine’s entire work and being” (23).
By having a stanzaic and emotional organization that are at odds with each other, Heine disarticulates his material, the purpose of which is more far reaching than one might expect. Heine establishes a stanzaic pattern that the reader expects the poem to follow (\textit{abcb}). The \textit{emotion} of this pattern is broken in the first stanza, and more dramatically so in the second stanza. In the third stanza there is a return to the previously established pattern. The emotional grouping that he outlines, therefore, is given resolution by the final couplet in a strange Heine-esque way.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{30} For more on resolution in poetry, see Kreuzer, \textit{Elements of Poetry}, 53.

Hanna Spencer writes of Heine’s style in general, “With ‘Lyrisches Intermezzo’ and ‘Heimkehr’ we come to the poems with which Heine’s name is most commonly identified. Here he developed some of his most characteristic features: his flair for epigrammatic brevity and suggestive terseness that leaves room for the reader’s imagination, his vivid imagery, his musical phrasing, his unexpected ironic turns and brilliant quips. Among these poems we find many of Heine’s most renowned gems (15).”

And later, “Readers come to expect the tongue-in-cheek punch lines and ironic reversals as quintessential Heine. It should be noted that Heine’s irony does not fall into the category of “Romantic irony” associated with other poets of the era. Unlike the ironic flights of the Romantics which allow them to escape from reality, Heine’s irony has
Because of the complexity of this poem, a composer might use a variety of structures in setting the text, depending on what the composer wishes to capture, whether it is the overall mood, the change from reflective joy to despair, or the continuous build-up to despair. A setting that seeks to emphasize the emotional progression of the poem would most likely be a through-composed or arch form (more detailed than ABA), which would easily accommodate the mid-stanza shifts. Other popular structures such as modified-strophic form or ABA are more likely to lose many of the subtleties inherent in Heine’s poem.\textsuperscript{31} We now turn to Schumann’s setting of “Ich stand in dunklen Träumen,” and our focus is on two things: how she complements the text and how she divides it.\textsuperscript{32}

**Complementing in Schumann’s “Ich stand in dunklen Träumen”**

Schumann opens the song with a five-measure introduction in E-flat major that establishes a sympathetic mood. Within the first six beats there is a progression to B-flat major. This chord serves as a common chord that leads back to the tonic in m. 4. Within the first three measures, Schumann introduces an important, recurring musical device that prolongs resolution. Beginning on beat three of m. 1 there is chromatic passing in three precisely the opposite effect; it bursts the idealistic bubble by confrontation with reality (23).”

\textsuperscript{31} This list of possible settings is in no way meant to be exhaustive, nor the final word. I am only suggesting ways in which composers may approach structure in setting this song.

\textsuperscript{32} We will examine Schumann’s published version of this song, whose title is “Ich stand in dunklen Träumen.” The cycle to which it belongs was dedicated to the Danish Queen Caroline Arnalie sometime around 1843. By the time the cycle was published in January 1844, song no. 1 bore the title given above. Her unpublished version, which is titled “Ihr Bild,” is the original version and contains discrepancies of interest, some of which will be touched upon in the follow section. For more information, see Clara Schumann, eds.
voices that makes up an a° 4/3 that should resolve to B-flat major. Instead, the upper voice becomes an appoggiatura (supported by an inner voice in the piano) and resolves on the second beat (Ex 4.5).

Example 4.5 Clara Schumann, "Ich stand in dunklen Träumen," mm. 1-4

Similar devices are used throughout the song. They are expressive of the speaker’s emotion (sometimes disturbing, sometimes longing) in that Schumann pairs these non-harmonic tones with key words. This device appears in mm. 1-2, 6-7, 10-11, 16-17, 20-21, 24-25, 29-30, and 31-32. For example, in mm. 10-11, the duration of the dissonance is two beats and occurs with chromatic passing tones that stress the word “Antlitz” (face, countenance). Here Schumann seems to be going more for intensity of heart-felt emotion than for disturbance. This same “effect” occurs in mm. 16-17, paired with the phrase “Um ihre Lippen zog sich” (Around her lips there grew). The use of this device also

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Joachim Draheim and Brigitte Höft. Sämtliche Lieder für Singstimme und Klavier, band II (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1990), 59-60.
occurs in the dramatic sections of the second stanza, mm. 20-21, paired with the line “und wie von Wehmutstränen” (and how the melancholy tears).

By examining Schumann’s two versions of this song, one becomes aware that she “corrects” the placement of insignificant words on strong beats where possible. She was, therefore, obviously sensitive to word stress. This mostly concerns the use of the dotted quarter.\(^{33}\) I would like to add that the words paired with this figure are usually of significant emotional importance: “starrte” (stared) in m. 8, “ach” (alas) in m. 28, and “dich” (you) in m. 30. In the original version, the vocal line strongly follows the rhythm of speech until m. 11 on “das” (an odd word to place on a dotted-quarter [Ex. 4.7]), but this is “corrected” in the published version (Ex 4.6). She settles for the quarter-note on the more anticipatory “und” (and) followed by eighths, thereby shifting the emphasis more to “geliebte Antlitz” (beloved countenance) through the strong perfect-fourth movement followed by chromaticism.

\[^{33}\text{Walker notes that the rhythmic motive of the pick-up followed by a dotted quarter note occurs eight times in the song. Walker, “A Stylistic Analysis,” 73.}\]
Another instance of this occurs with the final line of text, “daß ich dich verloren hab!” (that I have lost you!). In the unpublished version this occurs in mm. 30-32 (Ex 4.9). Here the strong emphasis is on “ich” (I), provided by an eighth note followed by a quarter note paired with the words “daß ich…” (that I), with “ich” occurring on beat one. Schumann “corrects” this in the published version by changing the emphasis to “dich” (you) on beat 1 through the syllabic pairing of “daß ich dich” with two eighths followed by a dotted-quarter (Ex. 4.8).34

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34 Also by comparing the two versions, one wishes that Schumann could have fixed certain elements and left others alone. The spacing between the chords in the introduction of the unpublished version (mm. 5 and 6) is more sensitive to the overall poetic idea than the direct lead-in found in the newer version in m. 5. In another place, Schumann begins the second stanza with a quickness of thought by setting “Um ihre Lippen” to a descending Bb to Eb eighth-note pattern, which begins on the upbeat of 1 in m. 17. In the published version, she chooses to set the vocal line in a rather mechanical way by reiterating the piano melody in mm. 13-15.
The last topic that I would like to discuss in regard to complementing in this song involves the use of a motive, which is presented in the introduction in mm. 2-4 and is comprised of 4 beats. The motive begins on an eighth-note Bb, ascends to a dotted-quarter Eb, and descends stepwise to G by way of two sixteenths followed by three eighths (see Ex 4.5). If the musical device that prolongs resolution represents the melancholic mood of the poet in the introduction, then surely this new motive represents
his joy through its light-hearted nature and strong progression (V6-IV6-V6-I). This motive is presented five times in the song: three in the piano only (mm. 2-4, 7-9, and 32-34), once in the voice alone (mm. 17-19), and once in the voice and piano simultaneously (mm. 26-28), though slightly varied.

The tonality is largely based in E-flat major. It briefly visits B-flat major in various places and A-flat major in mm. 23-24, as well as slipping into minor keys (c and f) in the dramatic sections between mm. 19 and 27.

**Schumann’s Structure**

The structure that Schumann adopts to set the text is similar to the one that I have outlined above in figure 5. According to her grouping, however, the first stanza is a single unit, which she treats as an antecedent-consequent relationship.

One of the interesting aspects of Schumann’s setting is that she places us in the mind of the poet after this first stanza. This is noted by the short interlude in the right hand of the piano – the descent from B-flat to D, which is followed vocally in m. 15. It is a crafty device that suggests the reflection of the poet before he speaks. Therefore, Schumann’s interpretation emphasizes this joyful moment, although brief, when the poet remembers the smile of his beloved. This is also noted by the return of the motive in E-flat major from the introduction, now presented in the vocal line in m. 17. This “forethought” device is special treatment, for a device of its likeness does not occur anywhere in the song other than this point. It also marks a three-phrase grouping that is unique to the predominant two-phrase groupings in the song. Schumann probably set the entire first stanza as one group in order to establish the song adequately. Doing so does not greatly upset the interpretation that I have laid out above.
The pacing from m. 19 onward is almost full-speed, and the groupings are easily discerned. Schumann groups lines 3 and 4 of the second stanza and lines 1 and 2 of the third stanza as I have in my interpretation. Her method for grouping lines 3 and 4 of stanza two is through a change from E-flat major to the relative c minor in m. 20. These two lines are further grouped by a common motive (G – F♯ - G – A). The accented passing tone on B-flat on the down beat of m. 21, at “Wehmutstränen,” recalls the accented passing tone on “Träumen” of m. 7, thereby further suggesting the poet’s grief.

Schumann elides this couplet with the third stanza, which moves to A-flat major. Furthermore, the two aforementioned groupings (mm. 23-27) are also grouped by a common motive that outlines C up to F and down to B-natural. At any rate, the four lines mentioned above are grouped by motives, mood, and the expectancy of the last line of the second stanza, as noted by the a diminished 4/2 chord that resolves to the E-flat 7 (first line third stanza). According to this setting, this section is the point of greatest emotion in the poem, as suggested by the general restlessness of the music, the quickness of pacing, and the unstable progression.

The final couplet (beginning in m. 27) is elided to the previous section, which adds a degree of strength to the poet’s final cry. This is set off from the preceding section through the return of the “light-hearted” motive found in the introduction. A layout of the poem as set by Schumann is as follows:

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35 Gorrell comments that the overall mood of the song conveys the delicacy and fragility of the poem. Gorrell, *The Nineteenth-Century German Lied*, 186. I find this statement difficult to understand, because of the dramatic quality the song takes on around m. 20.

36 There are hints of c minor and an arrival in A-flat major in m. 24, which then touches upon f minor.
Figure 4.5

Ich stand in dunklen Träumen  
Und starrte ihr Bildness an,  
Und das geliebte Antlitz  
Heimlich zu leben begann

Um ihre Lippen zog sich  
Ein Lächeln wunderbar  
Und wie von Wehmutstränen  
Erglänzte ihr Augenpaar.

Auch meine Tränen flossen.  
Mir von den Wangen herab  
Und ach, ich kanns nicht glauben  
Daß ich dich verloren hab!

So we see that Schumann offers a structure that is similar to Heine’s (see Figure 4.4), and she seeks to mirror the emotional shifts by sectionalizing through the use of common motives and tonality. But what do we make of the song ending in the major mode? It is possible that Schumann was thinking of a musical portrayal of Heine’s poetic, structural resolution, as emphasized through the return of the “light-hearted” motive presented in the introduction. Schumann was no stranger to Heine’s poetic style, which has already been described as epigrammatic. The song that follows “Ich stand in dunklen Träumen” in Opus 13, “Sie liebten sich beide,” is by Heine, as are two of her unpublished songs, “Volkslied” (1840) and “Loreley” (1843). Robert Schumann set numerous poems by Heine including two cycles: the Heine Liederkreis, Opus 24 (1840),

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37 Chissell writes of “Ich stand in dunklen Träumen,” “Only the closing ‘und ach, ich kanns nicht glauben, dass ich dich verloren hab!’ blandly repeating the song’s opening phrase betrays a Clara more concerned with musical symmetry than the poetic message.” See Chissell, Clara Schumann, 82.

38 See footnote 30.
and *Dichterliebe*, Opus 48 (1840). Furthermore, it is obvious in her unpublished version that Schumann was well aware of the emotional weight of the final couplet, ending the last line on an emphatic c-sharp diminished 4/2 with a stabbing e-natural in the vocal line, which deviates from the expected E-flat major chord (compare Ex. 4.8 and Ex. 4.9). In her published version (Ex. 4.8), perhaps Schumann chose to mimic Heine’s ironic structural resolution with a musically ironic equivalent by returning to E-flat major.\(^{39}\)

Of the lieder examined thus far, ones sees that Schumann sought to portray the text through a heightened sense of complementing, and that her songs were shaped by the poet’s intentions, especially the emotional progression. According to at least one scholar, Ernest Newman, such adherence is the sign of a great composer.\(^{40}\)

\(^{39}\) It is possible that Edvard Grieg was also concerned with showing this poetic relationship between opening and closing couplets in his setting “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen”, op. 2 no. 3 (1861). Though he does not follow the pattern to the extent that I have given above, Grieg distinguishes the two couplets from the body of the poem by setting their first lines (line one of stanza one and line three of stanza three) to the same five measures of music. For other ways in which composers have approached this poem, see Hugo Wolf’s “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen” (1878) and Franz Schubert’s “Ihr Bild”, no. 9 from *Schwanengesang* (1828). In Schubert’s setting, he deconstructs Heine’s emotional progression, placing emphasis on the speaker’s pain caused by his loss and the cruelty of fate through what Kramer calls “expressive revision,” 146. In Schubert’s setting, the speaker is unable to escape his loss, as noted in the subtle and emphatic returns to B-flat minor, which stress the cruelness of fate. Schubert’s setting, therefore, is far more psychological. Emotion does not un-fold as in Schumann’s setting, but rather its pervasiveness is portrayed in the octave B-flats that make up the introduction, allowing Schubert to establish a blanket mood of despair. This enables him to introduce subtle shifts in the song that play off this foundation. The preceding analysis of “Ihr Bild” is mine.

Chapter 5

Music-to-Text: The Musical Portrayal of Personae in Three Lieder

We saw in Chapter 4 how Schumann uses a variety of musical devices to highlight important features of the poetic idea. These devices included the use of melodic and rhythmic motives that complement the poem’s mood, progression, and unity. Also, I noted Schumann’s use of a change in the quality of chords to mark sudden emotional shifts. One of the main ideas that emerged from Chapter 4, therefore, is Schumann’s interest in portraying a reading of the poem that she feels is closest to the poet’s reading, while at times adding her own artistic contribution to the poem’s meaning.¹

In this chapter, we will explore Schumann’s musical portrayal of personae in “Sie liebten sich beide,” “Volkslied,” and “Oh weh des Scheidens, das er tat.” This concept implies that the song consists of a purely musical narrative, which often (though not always) runs parallel with the text. As will be seen, musical devices such as cadences, modulations, prolongation of the dominant, and moments of tonal instability become potential vehicles in the portrayal of poetic ideas, as do other musical devices. An analysis of the musical narrative seeks to identify such moments, as well as offer interpretive insight into their relationships with the text. My approach in analyzing the

¹ Such acquiescence to the poet’s original idea may be seen as an abiding characteristic of the first half of Schumann’s life. As has been noted by many scholars, Schumann often suppressed her own musical judgment.
following songs is different from the text-to-music approach in the preceding chapter in that I will now depend upon Kofi Agawu’s “informal” method for lieder analysis.²

The most significant differences between a music-to-text approach (as Agawu’s method proposes) and a text-to-music approach are: meaning is informed by a foundation that is purely musical; voice-leading techniques are considered; textual and musical moments that offer indifferent or contradictory meanings are given substantial weight in the final analysis of the setting; and great importance is placed upon continuous meaning.³ This method, therefore, seeks to provide a thorough analysis, as opposed to a simple (and sometimes random) reading. Therefore, in the following analyses, the richness of Schumann’s settings will be revealed.

A brief explanation of Agawu’s method is necessary.⁴ The method consists of three large-scale stages (some with sub-stages) that are meant to provide the analyst with a way of thinking through an analysis. Figure 5.1 is a reproduction of Agawu’s procedure.⁵

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³ Informed by the analyses of Chapter 4, in which Schumann sought to mirror the poet’s intentions, an encounter in which Schumann contradicts the meaning of the text is rare, if not non-existent.


Figure 5.1

Stage 1a: Informal data-gathering: collect as many significant musical features of the song as possible.
Stage 1b: (More) formal data-gathering: use an explicit method (such as a voice-leading graph) to generate more data and to revise or reorganise previously collected data.
Stage 1c: Preliminary interpretation 1): develop metaphors for ‘purely musical’ devices.
Stage 2a: Develop a contextual reading of the text.
Stage 2b: Preliminary interpretation 2): compare the results of 2a with those of 1a, 1b and 1c.
Stage 3: Explicit interpretation: “Narrativize” the various profiles and data assembled in stages 1a, 1b, 1c, 2a and 2b, adding information from ‘external’ sources, including style, biography and reception.

The first stage involves the gathering of musical data. As Agawu’s analysis of Robert Schumann’s “Seit ich ihn gesehen” shows, this stage of gathering seeks to identify musical occurrences that have potential for semantic meaning, no matter how slight. That being so, perhaps some analyst will balk at the careful attention that is given to each detail. It should be said, however, that in this stage, the analyst is merely gathering information that might become significant later. The second sub-stage involves the use of an explicit method, such as a voice-leading graph, which is used to generate and reorganize the data already collected. At this stage, metric and harmonic reductions, and motives are identified. The last sub-stage of this first section involves assigning

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6 The information that Agawu “gathers” from the first seven beats of the song might seem exaggerated to some. For example, he notes the progression I-IV-V7-I which “alerts us to the dialectical relation between opening and closing” which we expect to play a significant role in the song. In addition, the word ‘Seit’ marks an indistinct time in the past when the discussion between the personae took place. And furthermore, Agawu writes, “Since I first saw him’ encapsulates the tension between closure and non-closure implicit in the harmonic progression. ‘I’ and ‘him” are the essential and opposing terms in the drama.” Agawu, “Theory and Practice,” 16.
metaphors for the collected musical events. Potentially, this is a problematic stage because it is likely to yield contrary meanings. Agawu acknowledges this, and encourages this free interpretation of musical events based upon the fact that music-technical devices are capable of supporting not only a variety but often a contradictory set of verbal-semantic meanings.⁷

The second large-scale stage involves a contextual reading of the composer’s reading of the text. Agawu warns that the analyst should develop an interpretation based upon the technical framework supplied by the composer. Of special importance at this stage is the documentation of three types of occurrences: those moments in which text and music reinforce each other; those moments in which music and text contradict each other; and those moments in which text and music are indifferent. Agawu’s method places great significance upon such moments which seem indifferent and contradictory. According to Agawu, the abundance of song analyses are one-sided in that they only consider moments in which text and music reinforce the poetic idea.⁸

The sub-stage of this second stage involves the process of capturing all possible bases for connection among musical and textual domains. This information is combined with information gathered from the intertextual space of the song to make up stage 3,  

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⁷ Agawu claims that by not discounting any of the semantic possibilities suggested by these devices, the analyst prepares the ground for a richer and truer characterization of the work. Agawu, “Theory and Practice,” 12.

⁸ Agawu is working from the premise that any method of song analysis that seeks only correspondences, or privileges them at the expense of non-correspondences is fundamentally flawed.

And earlier, he writes, “Aspects of the text that do not seem to have been readily translated into, or appropriated by, the music must be acknowledged as positive residues. Similarly, poignant and beautiful musical events that do not seem in any obvious way
which seeks to move from invariant meanings to specific, contextual meanings. Also at this stage, “external” factors deriving from biography, intention, and contemporary response can be factored in. The following analyses will not attempt to highlight a step-by-step process of an application of Agawu’s method to the lieder of Schumann. The immediate description of Agawu’s method is intended only to provide the reader with a basis for the method of analysis.

The Musical Narrative of “Sie liebten sich beide”

“Sie liebten sich beide” is a strophic setting in g minor that structurally consists of a four-measure introduction (the phrasing is 2 + 2), two almost identical stanzas (the first couplet is 2 + 4, the second is 2 + 2), and a postlude (2 + 4). A closer look at the components of some of these phrase structures reveals what is at times an interesting tonal relationship.

The bass emphasizes the tonic key of g minor by its reiteration on the first beat of the initial measures. The intensity of the phrase builds through an ebbing soprano line. The climax of the phrase comes in the third measure, where there is a tonal shift from the established g minor tonal area to the c minor tonal area through the use of a G b9 chord. Aurally, this contrast between the g minor and G b9 chords is unique. The G b9 chord arrives at its tonic, c minor, albeit briefly in m. 4, at which time the music begins to return back to the tonic, g minor (Ex. 5.1). Is this something that will be played out in the song?

motivated by the text remain an essential part of the fund of insights that this second stage produces.” Agawu, “Theory and Practice,” 12.
The G b9 chord, therefore, seems intrusive here, drawing significant attention to this moment. And it continues to emerge in the musical fabric throughout the song. (All corresponding measure numbers are mm. 6-7, 16-17, and 20-21.) Within this four-measure introduction, therefore, we have a significant occurrence: a considerable rise in intensity, which builds to the intrusive, G b9 chord. Once achieved, the phrase relaxes back to the established tonic.

This introductory material serves as a musical refrain throughout the song. It recurs after the first stanza in m. 15 (which is identical to the first four measures), and in an altered form in the postlude, beginning in m. 29. And it is here in the postlude that it has a most peculiar function. The musical ebb and flow is maintained, yet the harmonic make-up of the first two measures has been replaced with a tonal area that sustains the Gb9 chord (mm. 29-31.) (This will be discussed later in greater detail.) This moment is further distinguished by the use of the low register in m. 29 on g (the lowest note in the song), and its pianissimo marking (the quietest in the song). It is almost anticlimactic.

Another function of the introductory material is that it serves as the musical foundation for the first couplet of both stanzas (though in a slightly altered form). In the
corresponding third measure (m. 7), the progression Vb9/ iv is quicker than when it appeared in the introduction. In m. 7 the progression occurs within the space of two beats, whereas in the introduction this progression occurred over three beats. Schumann's reason for altering this spot is most likely to pass to the dominant in m. 8.

Here (in m. 8) the music does not pass through the ii or iv, but progresses to the V by way of passing tones over a dominant, pedal bass. The first beat of measure 8 may be of significance because it is the first time that the music can only be described as passing. Perhaps this is just filler, however. Of greater significance is the pedal d, which is sustained over five beats and emphasized by the addition of the lower octave in m. 9. Up to this point, the harmonic rhythm has been considerably quick--the pause here is noted. In addition, the two-measure phrasing is disrupted by this four-measure phrase (mm. 7-10).

After the first moment of silence in measure 10, the music reenters in tonal flux, upsetting the harmonic direction (though aurally it sounds like c minor). The vocal register for this phrase is low (it has dropped an octave), and the vocal range is only a minor second. It seems that Schumann intended this point to be more dramatic than the previous material, as is obvious by the increase in dynamics--from piano to mezzoforte (m. 10). The rest in m. 10 and the unidentifiable chord in m. 11 draw our attention to this point, marking it as a profound moment. Two quick progressions follow in mm. 11-15, and the harmonic rhythm is considerably faster. The first authentic cadence sounds in m. 12, coupled with the lowest sounding notes thus far.

The next measure, m. 13, begins piano, and is of interest because it begins with a hollow chord (a and g) that might be interpreted as an a half diminished 7. This is
another means of capturing the attention of the listener. In addition, the vocal line becomes disjunct and is not doubled by the accompaniment for the first time. The cadence is a 4-3 suspension, and \textit{rubato} is implied by the \textit{decrescendo}.

The music for the second stanza is, for the most part, the same. In m. 19, however, Schumann uses an F♯⁹ 4/3 diminished chord on beat two for no apparent musical reason. In the first stanza (at m. 5), this chord was D major (V7). Though the dominant function is sustained in the F♯⁹ diminished 4/3 chord, it is less stable than the V.

Musically, Schumann has drawn the attention of the listener to many notable areas: the harmonic struggle in the introduction, the sustained V in m. 8, a cadence at an interesting point in m. 12, and the disjunct vocal line beginning in m. 12.

\textbf{The Poem}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
Nie liebten sich beide, doch keiner \hspace{2cm} They loved one another, but neither \\
Wollt’ es dem andern gestehn; \hspace{2cm} would to the other confess; \\
Sie sahen sich an so feindlich, \hspace{2cm} They saw each other as hostile, \\
Und wollten vor Liebe vergehn. \hspace{2cm} Yet wanted to perish from love. \\
Sie trennten sich endlich und sah’n sich \hspace{2cm} Finally, they parted and saw each other \\
Nur noch zuweilen im Traum; \hspace{2cm} Only now and again in dreams; \\
Sie waren längst gestorben \hspace{2cm} They died long ago \\
Und wüßten es selber kaum. \hspace{2cm} And were scarcely aware of it.
\end{tabular}

"Sie liebten sich beide" is poem XXXIII in Heine’s \textit{Die Heimkehr} (1823-4). The irony and tragedy of the poem is typical of Heine. Its theme is the transgression against love through non-consummation. The personae have a burning love for each other, yet
are unable to share this love out of fear that the other does not feel the same. The
dichotomy that is often present in Heine’s poetry is given here in the inner and outer
feelings of the personae. Inwardly, they are filled with a love of such intensity, while
their outward expression is presumably nil (or insubstantial enough for the other to
detect). This unfulfilled love is the death to which Heine refers in the second stanza,
third line.

The Reading

I find one of the most peculiar aspects of this song to be Schumann’s use of g
minor and c minor as chordal sonorities. Perhaps of greater significance is the way
Schumann vacillates between these chords. In the introduction, she sets up an interesting
tonal relationship that calls into question the immediate key, and in doing so, she sets up
an interesting, coloristic experience. She accomplishes this by immediately juxtaposing g
minor with c minor through the i of G minor (the final uh of beat two) to the V of c minor
(beat one of m. 3), resulting in a chordal progression of g minor to G major, which arrives
back to the original g minor tonality within two beats (beat one of measure four).9 When
the words of the poem enter, we begin to suspect a meaningful connection with this
introduction. Before I discuss this in greater detail, I would like to present how
Schumann highlights meaningful aspects of the text.

Beginning in m. 6, “doch keiner” (yet neither) is emphasized by its high register
and its rhythmic isolation from the other text. Further qualifying the pensive mood is the

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9 One may rightly analyze the Gb9 in m. 3 as Vb9/ iv. At this point, I am most interested
in the quality of the chords and the chords themselves than tonality. The significance of
this will be seen later on when I discuss the idea of personae.
G b9 chord in m. 7, which quickly passes to c minor where it becomes the iv of g minor. The next textual line, "wollt’ es dem andern gestehn" (would to the other confess), represents the personae’ transgression against love. Schumann highlights this offense in numerous ways: by sustaining the note in the vocal line for four beats, by the duration of the pedal d (V of g minor), and by the addition of the lower octave in m. 9, while the accompaniment seems to dwindle on tragically in right hand of the piano in m. 9. An additional thing to be said about this phrase is that the harmonic rhythm at this point slows significantly, prolonged by a two-measure extension that begins in m. 9.

The rhetorical pause in m. 10 significantly weighs and complements the established mood. Here the text is set in the gravest of manners: the use of the lowest vocal register in the song, and its mere fluctuation beyond a monotone. The entrance of the octave c in m. 11 is haunting, further complementing this declaratory, somber moment. The text merits such a setting, because it is here that we learn the cause of the personae’ inability to inform the other of their feelings: "Sie sahen sich an so feindlich" (They saw each other as hostile). As stated above, the harmonic rhythm is upset at this point, drawing attention to this moment in flux. The most profound feature of the phrase, however, is the authentic cadence in m. 12 that punctuates their tragic flaw (Ex 5.2).
Example 5.2 Clara Schumann, "Sie liebten sich beide," mm. 10-12

Though this cadence comes at an unusual time, and is structured in chordal inversion (V4/2 - i6) instead of a stronger version in root-position, it might be argued that this moment is distinguished by serving as the first arrival point to which the song aims. In addition, this cadence is marked as belonging to one of the few progressions in the song, in mm. 11-12 (ii-iv6/4-V4/2-I), and therefore, is a moment in which the pace quickens considerably.

The strangely melodic, yet disjunct vocal line of the following phrase, “und wollten vor Liebe vergehn” (Yet wanted to perish from love), may be an attempt to portray the unmentioned love of the personae. Its expressive leap of a sixth seems to venture out from the preceding, reiterated line. This wager proves fruitless, however, as forecasted by the hollow (open) a 7 chord in m. 13. Hopelessly, the rhythmically off-putting line finds its way back to the tonic of g minor.

Many of the music-text correlations described above have equal weight in the second stanza. The fact that some instances lack the profundity of their predecessors does not diminish the remainder of the song, however, because Schumann has already
made her point. The first stanza provides the emotional impact necessary to carry the implied meaning into the second stanza.

An alteration of interest is the $\text{fl}^0 4/3$ on beat two of m. 19. Here, Schumann pairs the $\text{vii}^0 4/3$ chord with “endlich” (finally), in what seems at first glance to be an unusual combination. In the first stanza, this chord was D major (V), and the music that follows is identical to the music of the first stanza. Though musically subtle, the moment marks an interesting decision made by the composer. I think that it is safe to say that Schumann was thinking about a more sullen mood for this stanza, as portrayed by the new chord, and emphasizes “endlich.”

The rest in m. 24 has equal weight with its counterpart in m. 10, though the text that follows is more bleak: “Sie waren längst gestorben” (They died long ago). As one expects, “gestorben” (died) is paired with the authentic cadence in m. 26. The final line, “und wußten es selber kaum” (and scarcely knew it), begins in m. 26 and takes on a slightly different meaning from its counterpart. Here the disjunct vocal line suggests both the aimless, hopeless venture of love as well as the naivete of the personae.

The song as I have discussed it up to this point has dealt primarily with the personae and their tragic hesitance. But where is love in this setting? As discussed earlier, the postlude has a peculiar function. The cadence at mm. 28-29, with its 4-3 suspension, has the remnant of species counterpoint. And because of the D major to G b9 “cadence,” it is almost picardy-like (Ex. 5.3).
Example 5.3 Clara Schumann, "Sie liebten sich beide," mm. 28-31

In my description of the introduction, I have portrayed it as a struggle: a quick, intense building from g minor to the protruding G b9 chord, which, once achieved, shortly comes to rest upon the tonic g minor. G b9 is an extended dominant harmony of c minor, though it seems that tonality has less to do with this story than the quality of the chords—at least in the beginning. If a metaphor is to be assigned to the G b9 chord, it is best described perhaps as a metaphor for the poem’s third persona (love), while the g minor is a metaphor for the flaw of the personae. The introduction is the inner struggle of the personae. Love attempts to blossom in G b9 but itself is flawed by its b9 (which links it to c minor). Musically, this refrain functions as an underlying presence rather than marking specific points of meaning when paired with the text. Gloom pervades the poem, as does Schumann’s setting.

The similarity between this phrase and the introduction has already been discussed. By this point in the text, the failure of the personae has already been noted. Perhaps this last phrase is a portrayal of love’s final attempt to move the personae to action before succumbing to their depravity.
Both poem and aspects of the musical personae echo many of the experiences between Schumann and Robert regarding unspoken love. The relationship between poem and their experience does not translate on all levels, however. The same can be said of all of Schumann’s settings. It is quite possible that only certain aspects, or fragments of the poem sparked Schumann’s sympathy or imagination.

“Sie liebten sich beide” has some resonance with the unspoken feelings that the Schumanns shared before December 1835. We know that Schumann and Robert showed a “special affection” for one another as early as 1833.¹⁰ Schumann’s infatuation with Robert was long-standing—lasting from sometime in 1833 to early December 1835. In a letter to Robert dated 4 March 1838, Schumann wrote of a significant feeling she had for Robert when he visited her home:

When we [Robert, Ernestine, and Schumann] went for a walk, and you only talked with Ernestine - and played around with me - I had the strangest feelings in my heart (as young as it was, it was already beating very warmly for you)...At the time, I already thought that it would be quite nice if you would become my husband one day.¹¹

The difficulties of unspoken love were not to occur until April 1835, however. Upon returning from Leipzig, Schumann learned that Robert was engaged to Ernestine

¹⁰ Reich has noted that in Philipp Spitta’s 1882 biography of Robert Schumann, Spitta had written that a special affection existed between Robert and Schumann as early as 1836. Schumann corrected the entry to read “Already in 1833.” See Reich, Clara Schumann, 45.

von Fricken. Schumann, in a letter to Robert on 13 January 1839, wrote of the moment:

“How clearly I can recall the first afternoon after our return from Hamburg, when you came into the room and barely said hello; I went to Auguste who was with us then and said tearfully, “Oh I don’t love anyone but him, and he didn’t even look at me!” 12 Robert wrote of the same moment on 11 February 1838:

...I still remember the first time I saw you at 12 o’clock noon...and I saw a secret trace of love deep in your eyes - you know what happened then. I broke with Ernestine because I had to...meanwhile my feelings about you were wonderfully confused; I wanted to convince myself that I loved you only as a friend - then as an artist - how my heart suffered at that time... 13

It was not until early December of 1835, as Schumann was showing Robert down the stairs at her parents’ house, that Robert declared his love. 14 And so for approximately eight months, a secret love between Schumann and Robert was shared. Robert’s letter above from 11 February hints at the notion that he contemplated not telling Schumann. The question must have arisen in Schumann’s mind as to their outcome if Robert never told her of his feelings.


14 For more information, see Berthold Litzmann, Clara Schumann: An Artist’s Life, trans. Grace E. Hadow (London and Leipzig: Macmillian and Breitkopf & Härtel, 1913), 78.
The Musical Narrative of “Volkslied”

“Volkslied,” an unpublished song, is in ABA form with a postlude. The three-measure introduction makes use of a similar melodic device found in “Sie liebten sich beide” to portray tension.\textsuperscript{15} These swells cannot be described as more than a murmur, however. Reaching its apex in m. 3, the phrase settles in m. 4 with the entrance of the text and the establishment of f minor. The song begins on a reiterated c. Though the four flats inform us that the key is f minor, if we trust our aural sense, we cannot be so sure. The pulsing of the eighth-note c focuses our attention upon this pitch. The ascending eighth-notes that enter at the end of m. 1 lead to the f minor chord, which surprisingly gives a sense of tension. The phrase then relaxes to the V 4/3, at which time the c returns to its pulse. These actions rob the tonic chord of its function of finality (Ex 5.4).

\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example54.png}

Example 5.4 Clara Schumann, "Volkslied," mm. 1-4

\textsuperscript{15} Nancy Reich writes, “Robert Schumann generally made all the decisions about the publication of Clara’s works; one can only speculate about his reasons for not releasing his wife’s setting.” Nancy Reich, “The Lieder of Clara Schumann,” \textit{American Brahms Society Newsletter} vol. 12, no. 2 (Fall 1994): 4. It is possible that Robert saw these two introductions as being too similar.
The insistent c ceases with the entrance of the text in m. 4, and the accompaniment adopts a more supportive role to the vocal line. The next six measures that make up the first stanza are presented in four irregular phrases. The first phrase builds (roughly outlining a c chord) and ends on a sustained V chord in m. 5. This phrase is elided to the next by a V – i movement. Here the texture thins considerably by way of an arpeggiated f minor chord in mm. 5-6, which begins to pull away from the tonic, f minor, moving toward the relative major, A-flat. After this, the texture thins again, but this new phrase outlines a B-flat minor triad. Presumably, by this point we have returned back to f minor through the common chord B-flat minor (ii in A-flat major, and iv in f minor). The phrase ends on the V of f minor in m. 8. The fourth and final phrase of this section is distinguished from the previous ones by the rests in the accompaniment, followed by a punctuated iv 6/4 – V progression in f minor in m. 8. Here the voice is alone for the first time.

The notable feature of this section is the downplaying of the function of the tonic, and the emphasis on the dominant, as noted by the important arrivals in m. 5 and m. 8. This final phrase of the section is elided into the following section in m. 10. This lead-in is similar to the one in the introduction in m. 3, as noted by the descending soprano.

The downplaying of a tonal center in this first section makes the arrival of A-flat major in m. 10 more prominent. This section is comprised of four phrases and is characterized by its strong dominant-tonic relationship in the tonal areas of A-flat major and D-flat major, as well as its more song-like character. More significant is the emergence of a motive first presented in the voice beginning in m. 9 (the final un) and
extending to m. 11. The motive sounds again in the piano in m. 11, and again in the 
voice in mm. 11-13, but this time a fourth higher. A tonally unstable passage follows. 
Here, the vocal line descends, and there is a “relaxing” of the excitement. The vocal line 
ends abruptly while the music continues its descent to the V of f minor in m. 16, at which 
time the introduction repeats.

The first three phrases of the repeat are almost identical to the first A section. The 
exceptions are: the eighth-note c is continuous in mm. 16-18; the textures are fuller at 
times (the lower octave has been added in mm. 19-20); and the vocal line in mm. 21-22 
takes on a more melodic character than its counterpart in mm. 5-7. In m. 23, Schumann 
moves to an octave a-flat instead of the V of c minor as given in m. 8. Upon hearing the 
octave e-flat in m. 24, beat two, one almost hears beat two as the V of a half cadence. 
Following this is the iv 6/4 - V progression first heard in m. 8. Mm. 23-26 contain 
interesting material, the tonal pattern is A-flat major to f minor to C major; the last is no 
doubt a bold tonicization.

The postlude is characterized by an f minor tonality and an abundance of 
rhythmic movement. In addition, the motive that first appeared in the B section in A-flat 
major is present, though now it is woven throughout the musical fabric in f minor. It is 
easily identified aurally by the downward movement. The completion of the motive is

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16 In mm. 21-22 a pick-up note and two beats of new music are inserted in the vocal line, 
beginning with the final eighth note in m. 21: f ⌚ ± f ±.. It is likely that this 
new music serves a greater purpose than simply being indicative of a problematic setting 
of the text. To solve the apparent problem of syllabic setting, while still keeping the 
original setting beginning “sie haben gehabt...” on the uh of beat two, Schumann could 
have divided the first beat of m. 21 into two eighth-notes.
thwarted in mm. 29-30 in the tenor. One might argue that the motive appears in the final two measures, and at this point, for the first time in the tonic.

The Poem

“Volkslied” is Schumann’s title. The poem is known generally as “Es fiel ein Reif in der Frühlingsnacht” and has been attributed erroneously to Heinrich Heine. It is printed as the second poem in a section titled Tragödie. Heine prefaces the poem: “Dieses ist ein wirkliches Volkslied, welches ich am Rheine gehört” (This is a folksong that I heard on the Rhein). In addition, the subject matter of the poem marks this text as an interesting choice for Schumann. The song was composed in 1840, possibly after her marriage to Robert in September of that year. As will be seen, the musical language of “Volkslied” is significantly different from Schumann’s other songs.

Figure 5.3

Es fiel ein Rief in der Frühlingsnacht, Frost fell during the spring night.
er fiel auf die zarten Blaublumelein: It fell on the delicate blue flowers:
Sie sind verwelkt, verdorrt. They faded and withered.

Ein Jüngling hatte ein Mädchen lieb; A young man once loved a young woman;
sie flohen Heimlich von Hause fort, They secretly fled from home,
es wußt' weder Vater noch Mutter. Unknown to their father and mother.

Sie sind gewandert hin und her, They wandered here and there,
sie haben gehabt weder Glück noch Stern, They had neither luck nor star,
sie sind gestorben, verdorben. They died, they were doomed.

17 Michael Perraudin writes that “Es fiel ein Reif in der Frühlingsnacht” by Zuccalmaglio was almost certainly taken from an earlier publication of it in Rousseau’s Rheinische Flora (January 1825). Perraudin, Heinrich Heine: Poetry in Context: A Study of “Buch der Lieder” (Oxford, New York, and Munich: Berg Publishers, 1989), 148. From now on, I will refer to the author of this poem as “the poet.”

18 Schumann presented her setting to Robert as a Christmas present in 1840.
The poet encourages the reader to recognize the allusion between the flowers and the lovers. The first stanza provides a prelude to the human tragedy. In relation to the *delicate* blue flowers, this frost is implied as a cruel act of nature that the flowers are unable to withstand in their early lives. Therefore, in the second stanza, the adjective "zarten" (delicate) of the first stanza, gains significance. The poet wishes us to view the lovers as delicate, young flowers. As flowers in the spring are newly sprung, so it is with these lovers. In the second stanza, the poem begins to take on a didactic tone. The couple elopes. And without the blessing and support of their parents, they are unable to sustain themselves, possibly because of lack of a foundation or because society turned its back on them.

**The Reading**

The introduction is suggestive of mild, yet bleak weather. Schumann establishes the gloomy setting with the thin texture and the repeated *c*. The slight emotional swell in the introduction almost seems non-threatening. Yet coupled with the ambiguous tonal center (though there is a strong sense of the minor mode), it is enough to imply a depressing atmosphere.

The entrance of the vocal line in m. 4 emphasizes the ambience because of the continuation of the *c*. In a folk song, we almost expect the first interval of the vocal line to be a perfect-fourth. Schumann seems to avoid this intentionally. *C* is emphasized further by the vocal line, which roughly outlines the chord in mm. 4-5. There is no doubt that the f minor arpeggiated chord in mm. 5-6 symbolizes dew drops falling on the delicate blossoms. The text here is "Er fiel auf die..." (It fell on the...). It is not
surprising, therefore, that the immediate tonicization to the relative major, A-flat, in m. 6 is paired with the words “zarten Blaublümelein” (delicate blue flowers). Within the span of mm. 5-7, f minor and A-flat major gain significant meaning in that they become representative of their textual pairings. The B-flat minor arpeggio follows, changing the tonality back to the minor mode (presumably f minor, as the chord is the iv of f minor, and eventually leads to the V). Does the increase in range in m. 7 imply a lighter or harsher frost? The B-flat chord may seem non-threatening here, but at select points in the song it forms a half cadence with the V at moments of heightened emotion. The first instance appears in m. 8 where the iv 6/4-V is paired with the word “verwelket” (withered), and occurs at a musically isolated point in the accompaniment. A b-flat minor 7 is accented on the second syllable of “verdorrnt” (faded) in m. 9.

The vocal line in these first four textual phrases can hardly be described as melodic. The choppiness of the delivery contributes significantly to the drama, as does the irregularity of the phrases. And in this way, Schumann better captures the sense of a dramatic narrator in this first stanza.

As mentioned earlier, the strong arrival to A-flat major in m. 9 marks a significant change in the mood of the song. The text takes on a folk-like beginning that might be akin to “Es war als hatte….“19 The music reciprocates this mood with a chordal eighth-note accompaniment in the jovial key A-flat major. Furthermore, it links the lovers and the flowers by their shared A-flat major tonality (see m. 6). Another notable feature is that the vocal line is now melodic, established here through the use of a motive (Ex. 5.5).

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19 This German phrase is equivalent to the English “Once upon a time...” and appears in one of Heine’s original poems, “Ein Jüngling hatte eine Mädchen,” a poem that Robert Schumann set in Dichterliebe as no. 8.
Example 5.5 Clara Schumann, "Volkslied," mm. 9-12

The text "sie flohen heimlich von Hause fort" (They secretly fled from home) is presented up a perfect-fourth (thereby heightening the emotion), during which the song moves to D-flat major. The climax of the song is presented on a high, sustained $f$ in m. 13, at which point the song reaches its only forte. And as in "Sie liebten sich beide," Schumann highlights the offense, though here through the dynamic and the reiterated $f$. (F minor had been suggested earlier as the key of tragedy.) The final phrase of this stanza, "es wuβt’ weder Vater noch Mutter" (Unknown to their father or mother), is marked by irregularity—the music disrupts the metrical stress on beat 1 in m. 14 (the stress is given on beat 2) and the vocal line ends abruptly (and curiously on an A-flat). In addition, beginning in m. 14, the tonality becomes non-functional, thereby forecasting the return to the A section.

The musical alterations of the third stanza have been noted above. The most significant change is found in m. 23 where the music seems to hint toward A-flat major, as is noted in the octave a-flat. The following progression is ii half diminished 4/3 - I - V. The music is just coming off of the arpeggiated b-flat minor chord. Though its
duration is short, the octave a-flat marks a dramatic point in the song. Here the text is “sie sind gestorben” (They died). Furthermore, the final syllable of “gestorben” is emphasized by the octave e-flat on beat 2 of m. 24.

It is here that the song begins to take a turn that is perplexing, yet curious. Up to this point, the relationship between the tonal centers f minor and A-flat major and the text has been explicit. One may claim that the C-major chord (as V of f minor) has had an ancillary role in the drama by disrupting the finality of f minor, especially in the introduction. There is no doubt that the repetition of this note draws attention. I have discussed also the function of the chordal pattern iv 6/4-V in punctuating “verwelket” ([they] faded). And here in mm. 24-25 we have a similar occurrence on “verdorben” ([they] were doomed). The song then moves through f minor to an immediate modulation to the ii half-diminished 7 of C-major, which is followed by a firm and most curious C-major chord. One questions whether or not with the noted avoidance of f minor and the presence of c throughout the song, if this is the tonality which the entire song has struggled to achieve. An easy solution does not readily present itself, because if this is in fact Schumann’s intention, its picardy-like function sends a confused message.20

The depiction of the tragedy in the postlude is more obvious. It begins with the lovers’ motive that was first presented in the B section in A-flat major, though now firmly in f minor (Ex. 5.6).

20 It is possible that Schumann uses major tonalities for ironic purposes. This is a topic that needs further exploration.
Example 5.6 Clara Schumann, "Volkslied," mm. 27-31

Up to this point, the song has lacked a prominent role of the tonic triad. Tonally, this becomes more obvious with the appearance of A-flat major in the B section. The postlude, therefore, provides a much needed resolution.

While the narrator is obviously one persona who is speaking to an unidentified listener(s), the accompaniment has many functions. Therefore, the role of the piano in portraying the persona in “Volkslied” is a complex one because the accompaniment’s role fluctuates. At times we see that the accompaniment shares the role of the general persona of the narrator, both conveying and complementing his/her monologue. For example, I’ve already discussed the supportive role of the accompaniment beginning in m. 4, where the voice first enters. Another clear example is the B section in A-flat major, where the accompaniment is song-like. In other instances, however, the accompaniment adds an entirely separate dimension. In some cases, this is to the extent that it provokes a response from the narrator, of which there are two notable examples. The first example occurs in m. 7 where the lone b-flat arpeggio is presented (Ex. 5.7).
This moment immediately follows the f minor arpeggio (which was accompanied by the voice) and therefore emphasizes the harshness of the frost, and is something to which the narrator responds. The accompaniment then drops out and the voice enters in m. 8 with “Sie sind verwelket, verdorrt” (They faded and withered). Furthermore, the short phrase that begins with the b-flat arpeggio has a harmonic influence upon the narrator at this point in that the phrase spans the chordal progression from iv to V, the same chords that punctuate “verwelket.” The second example refers to mm. 20-23. The reader will remember that I questioned Schumann’s reasoning for altering her text setting at this point.\(^{21}\) Apparently, Schumann has good reason to do so. In m. 20 the f minor triad is now presented without the voice, and seems to provoke a more sympathetic response in regard to the fate of the lovers from the narrator. One will observe in mm. 21-22 that the vocal line is by far the most melodic in the A sections, and its rising and falling motion suggests marked empathy.

\(^{21}\) See footnote 16.
In other ways, the piano accompaniment is a silent persona that pervades the entire setting. If we allow that the tonal centers f minor and A-flat major represent fate and the lovers’ happiness respectively, then we see that the prelude encapsulates the entire story of the lovers. Beginning on the V of f minor, the phrase reaches its first crest on the downbeat of m. 1, where an f minor chord sounds in first inversion. The next crest, on the downbeat of m. 3, is an A-flat chord, also in first inversion. The introduction then mournfully arrives back at the tonic, f minor and in root position, in m. 4. This is of significance because the only other times in which the tonic is presented in root position is at the corresponding introduction to the third stanza in m. 16, and the final chord of the song. In addition, the large-scale tonal areas of the song are f minor - A-flat major - f minor.

Another significant moment regarding the tonal center A-flat major and the lovers involves a tonal hiatus that occurs in m. 23. Harmonically, the corresponding measure (m. 8) arrives at the V of f minor. At this point, however, the fate of the lovers takes center stage. Just coming off of the B-flat arpeggio, the accompaniment sustains an octave Ab for three beats. Though of a short duration, this is the most suspenseful moment of the song, which reveals the lovers’ ultimate destiny. Interestingly, this moment is followed by the fateful iv-V progression in mm. 24-25.

On first glance, it is surprising that Schumann chose to set this poem given its dreary subject matter. When “Volkslied” was composed in December 1840, the Schumanns were still newlyweds and very happily married. The impending doom that characterizes this poem is in no way indicative of negative feelings that Schumann harbored towards her marriage. The poem does recall the anxieties felt by Schumann
regarding the severing of her relationship with her father, Friedrich Wieck. As was discussed in Chapter 1, Schumann depended upon her father for emotional, financial, and artistic support. And many biographies of Schumann discuss the “extreme anguish” that she felt at the thought of having her father completely out of her life.\footnote{22 See Reich, \textit{Clara Schumann}, 55.}

There are other levels at which this poem may operate. Deeply rooted in the poem is Wieck’s tone that Schumann would not prosper without his help. Also mentioned in Chapter 1 was how Wieck abandoned Schumann at the last moment so that she would have to cancel the tour to Paris or go without him, and how he sought to sabotage her efforts of success. On a different level, the song could be a testament to Schumann’s devotion to Robert. In spite of their perceived downfall, the two lovers do not abandon each other because of the great love that they share.

There is slight musical evidence that suggests that the downfall is the father’s fault in Schumann setting. I spoke earlier about the rhythmic disruption on “Vater” in m. 14 on the second beat. More importantly, the word occurs on an $e$-flat dotted quarter. This note has significant meaning in m. 24, at which moment it sounds in octaves, and on beat two, just after the narrator sings, “sie sind gestorben.”

**The Musical Narrative of “Oh weh des Scheidens, das er tat”**

“Oh weh des Scheidens, das er tat” is a through-composed setting with similar musical material occurring within each of the two poetic stanzas. The first stanza consists of four phrases, which correspond to the four lines that make up stanza one. The given key signature is $e$ minor, yet the song begins on a $V_9$ chord. The dominant is
prolonged in the first three measures, emphasized in the first two measures by octave whole notes, as well as on the first beat of the third measure by a preceding downward descent on the final two beats in m. 2. On the fourth beat of m. 3, there is a push toward tonicizing B major through an a#9, which sounds again on beat one of m. 4 before resolving to the B 6/4 on beat two (Ex 5.8).

Example 5.8 Clara Schumann, "Oh weh des Scheidens, das er tat," mm. 1-4

This highlights a surprising moment in that there is an alternation in the harmonic direction before the song establishes the tonic, e minor. The contour of the vocal line that follows in m. 4 corresponds to the vocal line with which the song began. Most notable is a downward leap of a tritone that the two phrases share: the song began with a descent from c to f#; here in mm. 4-6, the emotion is intensified as noted by the presentation of the interval up a whole step, now from d to g#. Unlike the first two phrases, which occasionally touched upon the i 6/4, phrases three and four are harmonically unstable. In the first phrase, the accompaniment makes no attempt to double the vocal line (the third phrase is outlined in the accompaniment). Only in the second and fourth phrase is such
doubling explicit. The music briefly touches upon a minor in mm. 6-7, as noted by the fluctuating movement from dominant to tonic. Measure 6’s corresponding measure, measure 3, displays a similar fluctuation from V to i (B to e6/4). In m. 7, the B9 chord returns on the third beat and then progresses to the ii half diminished 11, which sounds again on beat one before resolving back to a B chord on beat 2 of m. 8.

Musically, this first section is marked by instability, as is evident by the tritones in the voice and the confused tonality. An analysis of mm. 7-8 suggests that the key is e minor (iv-V9-ii half diminished 11- V), yet with no established tonic, we cannot be sure. Some further observations about this first section are the consistent fluctuation between tension and relaxation. In the first phrase, tension is implied by the tritone, which is followed by a relaxing descent back to the V chord in m. 2 (Ex. 5.8). Another observation of importance is the significance of the note b. With the exception of one beat (m. 6, beat three), this note serves as the bass note throughout the first section. And both of the cadences in the first section end on a b chord. The first cadence, the result of a tonicization by way of parallel tritones, is forced (beats three and four of m. 3.) We may assume, therefore, that b is somehow associated with persistence and instability. It is also important to note the final three notes of the vocal line in phrases two and four: both end with a repeated note that resolves downward. The recurrences of the tritone and this three-note pattern (first distinguished in m. 3 by its tritone leap) add to the narrator’s anguish.

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23 For the sake of simplicity, I will refer to this three-note pattern from now on as “motive a,” which is noted in Ex. 5.8.
The next section begins on the fourth beat of m. 8, and now with the first arrival of the tonic through a V-i progression. This section is peculiar in that it lacks the symmetry of the first section and contains two interludes. The dynamic level has dropped to piano, and the texture has thinned considerably. The rhythm of the soprano line in the accompaniment is identical to the initial vocal line, though the tritone is absent. This short interlude prolongs the tonic, passing from an e minor chord to an f# half diminished 6/5 chord, and arriving again on the tonic in m. 10. The interlude seems to suggest a moment of repose for the narrator. Its thin texture and repetition suggest contemplation or rumination. The interlude is repeated, though it is now paired with the text, and absent a bass line in m. 11.

In m. 13 there is a progression to G major by way of its IV (C major in m. 13). The chordal movement from f# half diminished 4/3 to G in mm. 14-15 recalls the movement of a#9 to B in m. 4. In m. 14 (beat four) the vocal line follows in sequential fashion, here presented up a major third. And the final beat of m. 14 exhibits a non-tradidic dominant to tonic lead-in (as seen in mm. 8-9) into the following dramatic section, at which point the tonality begins to become unstable again. Motive a reappears in this unstable portion at mm. 15-16, 17-18, and in the accompaniment alone in mm. 18-19, and is marked by the remnants of arrival points (mm. 15-16 by F#4/3 to b minor; mm. 17-18 by e#g7 to F#; and mm. 18-19 by e#9/2 to F#6/4) (Ex. 5.9).
The second interlude of the song appears in m. 19 and marks the return of the tritone, as well as reminiscences of the arpeggiated descents first found in m. 3. Also present is the return of the prolonged dominant in mm. 20-22, though now emphasized by an accented grace note, and in m. 22 by the roll of the chord and the use of the pedal. Does this represent the narrator reflecting or the influence of past events?

The remaining two phrases mark a return to the beginning of this section by the octave b-flat followed by the tonic, beginning in m. 22 (beat four). The progression of this final phrase plays out almost identically to its counterpart that first sounded in m. 10, though here it ends by establishing B major as the tonic through an augmented 6th chord to B major.24 Musically, Schumann has drawn our attention to four important features: the tritone, the use of B major as a chordal sonority, motive $a$, and the interludes.

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24 The absence of strong authentic cadences, the emphasis on the dominant, and the movement from c to b in this final cadence gives the piece a Phrygian sound.
The Poem

Figure 5.4

Oh weh des Scheidens, das er tat,  
da er mich ließ im Sehnen!  
Oh weh des Bittens, wie er bat,  
des Weinens seiner Tränen!

Oh pain of parting, that he caused,  
that he has left me yearning!  
Oh pain of pleading, as he pled,  
Of the sorrow of his tears!

Er sprach zu mir: Dein Trauern laß!  
und schied doch selbst in Schmerzen.  
Von seiner Tränen ward ich naß,  
Daß kühl mir’s ward im Herzen.

He said to me: Mourn no more!  
and yet he himself left in pain.  
His tears left me wet,  
and made my heart cool.

The poem is by Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866). The poet encourages the reader to speculate upon the events of the story. Because little context is given, there is a significant amount of interpretive space in the poem. It may be assumed, however, that the man has forced a separation with his lover. The woman longs for the relationship to return to what it once was. Her distress, however, seems to come from his pleading for her to acquiesce to his request for a separation. The second stanza begins with the parting words of the man, which can only be taken as a final attempt to severe the relationship, as noted by the insistence implied by the command form. The departure of the man causes an emotional change in the woman. Spurned by his inability to insist that they remain together, in spite of the unknown circumstances, the woman’s love for the man turns to indifference.

The Reading

Schumann captures the anguish of the narrator in many ways in the first stanza. She provides the musical equivalent to the initial words of the opening line “Oh weh”
(Oh pain) with a tritone. The narrator’s unaccompanied entrance implies the immediacy of her pain, and is characteristic of phrases one and three in this section. The general impulse from tension to relaxation, as mentioned above, suggests that the narrator is overcome with emotion once she begins to express herself. The delivery of the vocal line is very speech-like. The textual lines are spaced far enough apart to reveal her labored feelings. Her longing is emphasized by the repeated $c\#$ (motive a, and arrived at through a tritone) in the vocal line in mm. 3-4, offering a natural stress on beat one of m. 4. Her sorrow becomes greater in the following phrase, as is marked by the movement of the vocal line up a step (now beginning on $d$) and the harmonic instability that completes this section. In the fourth phrase, her sorrow becomes so great that every syllable is punctuated by a quarter note (mm. 6-8). She ascends to the highest note in the song ($g$), ending the phrase with motive $a$. Musically, this first section is a fund for events that recur in the second section. We have been presented with valuable associations: the tritone, motive $a$ (which serves to emphasize emotional highpoints), and the omnipresence of $b$, all of which are associated with different levels of the narrator’s grief.

The most reasonable choice concerning the mode of address in “Oh Weh des Scheidens, das er tat” is that the narrator is speaking to herself. The accompaniment shares the narrator’s persona for most of the song, projection her emotion, especially in the first section. (We see throughout the song that a great portion of the accompaniment doubles the narrator’s voice.) There are subtle occurrences, however, when the accompaniment assumes the more inward role of the narrator’s consciousness. The first example of this occurs in m. 2 where the piano roughly outlines an $a6/4$ chord before arriving on the $b$ in m. 3. One gets the impression that this arpeggiation represents an
inner monologue that prompts the narrator to complete her spoken thought, because this figure serves like a lead-in into the second phrase.

The following e-minor section that begins in m. 8 can only be seen as an emotional response to the previous material. Musically, this second section marks such a significant change from the preceding material that one questions whether or not this accompaniment represents both the male persona (possibly e minor) and the narrator’s changing feelings about her lover. The music is surprisingly cool after such an outpouring of emotion, almost as if the narrator is numb. When we consider the leap downward and similar rhythm that this soprano line shares with the first phrase, we conclude that the memory of her lover is a painful recollection. But the thin texture and the repeated e (first heard in m. 9) could also suggest a growing anger towards him. For example, just after the narrator ponders the recent events she says, “Er sprach zu mir” (He said to me). The rhythm and inflection is so characteristic of angered speech, one senses that the narrator is almost in disbelief.

The words of the man that follow in mm. 12-13 mark a move to the relative major (G) of the tonic e minor. The placement of such a modulation is peculiar here. It almost seems like she is mocking the man. We need no further indication for the ultimate cause of her pain, because it comes flooding back in m. 14: “und schied doch selbst in Schmerzen” (and yet he himself left in pain). Here the texture thickens once again, and the harmony becomes unstable. She expresses herself once again through motive a in mm. 15-16 and 17-18, which is emphasized in the accompaniment in mm. 18-19 (Ex. 5.9). This last occurrence of motive a seems to mark a level of uncertainty in the
narrator’s mind, because here the leading tone chord is in third position and the tonic chord is in first inversion, whereas in mm. 17-18 both chords sounded in root position.

The second interlude, therefore, is appropriate in that the narrator seems to reflect upon her situation one final time--and now for four measures. And so here we return to the narrator’s inner monologue, yet this passage alludes to the narrator’s pain in two important ways: the descending tritone from f# to c and the return of the stagnant harmony of the B9 chord. The two phrases of cascading arpeggios seem like two thoughts that reaffirm what she is about to say. Though firmly on the B9 chord, the first arpeggio outlines the a minor 9 chord as it had done in m. 2. The second arpeggio begins to do the same, yet alters its descent on the downbeat of m. 22 to outline the B9 chord, which is emphasized here by the use of the pedal and the roll of the chord. The reiterated e in the vocal line in m. 23 confirms the narrator’s hardened heart. The tonicization of B major in the penultimate measure is the most revealing aspect of the narrator’s psychological state in that its instability as the tonic is indicative of her unsettled feelings.

As we saw in “Sie liebten sich beide,” one is hard pressed to find a direct musical connection with a specific event in Schumann’s life in “Oh weh des Scheidens, das er tat.” But it is likely that the poem was selected by Schumann because she was able to identify with the poem on some level. Parting was a common occurrence between Schumann and Robert during their courtship, and it was something that Schumann in particular dreaded, especially at times where she did not have the support of Wieck. One famous occasion, Schumann begged Robert for repeated meetings just before his departure to Vienna in late September 1838. Her pleading was to such a great extent that Robert devised an elaborate plan so that he and Schumann could spend two days
together.\textsuperscript{25} In addition, there was the time between February 1836 and August 1837 when Wieck forbade Schumann to see or correspond with Robert.

The poem also recalls a time when Robert was at odds with whom he loved—Ernestine or Schumann.\textsuperscript{26} Nancy Reich states that during the transition between Ernestine and Schumann, Robert seems to have been emotionally attached to both women. After receiving a birthday gift from Schumann, Robert traveled to Zwickau and Asch, Ernestine’s home.\textsuperscript{27} In the letter dated 11 February 1838, Robert speaks of Ernestine in a way that suggests that Robert, at one time, was strongly attached to Ernestine:

\begin{quote}
The only thing that could ruin our happiness someday would be the memory of Ernestine. She might marry and be unhappy; she might grieve and become ill-then you might see a pained expression on my face and could doubt me—only absolute trust can protect us then, the deepest devotion, \textit{saying everything we have on our minds}—that can protect us.\textsuperscript{28}
\end{quote}

Schumann’s jealous and suspicious nature was known to arise, especially early in their courtship and in their marriage. For example, Schumann found it unbearable when Robert praised a young, beautiful, French pianist by the name of Camilla Pleyel. And on one occasion she was blunt with Robert, questioning his inspiration for the first flood of songs that came in February 1840: “How wonderful that you are composing so

\textsuperscript{25} For details, see Reich, \textit{Clara Schumann}, 64.

\textsuperscript{26} See the excerpt from Robert’s letter to Schumann above dated 11 February 1838.

\textsuperscript{27} Reich, \textit{Clara Schumann}, 46.

\textsuperscript{28} Weissweiler, \textit{The Complete Correspondences}, vol. 1, 98.
diligently…but as for the songs, it has occurred to me - is there perhaps some young
nightingale in Leipzig who is inflaming you?"\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{29} Reich, \textit{Clara Schumann}, 78.
Conclusion

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Robert Schumann was instrumental in Clara Schumann’s early lieder compositions that date between 1840 and 1846 in that he made repeated requests for Clara to compose songs. This suggests the possibility that Clara was not necessarily attracted to the lied, although she did compose at least two songs for concert performance that have since been lost.¹ What accounted for Clara’s seeming lack of interest in the lied? Surely the pressure that she felt from her husband’s abilities must have been enormous, especially in light of the fact that by the time of Clara’s attempts in lieder composition in December 1840, Robert had already completed well over one hundred songs in that year alone. Clara had played through these lieder and there can be little doubt that she had realized their astounding beauty and significance, an observation that would certainly discourage Clara in the realization that whatever she produced would be dwarfed by the songs of her husband.

In the correspondence between Clara and Robert, we have evidence of these early nervous pangs. But we do not have any mention of Clara’s feelings toward her songs, at least those composed in the 1840s, while they were in process, nor do we have any mention of her feelings about these lieder as finished products. Is it fair, therefore, to claim that Clara dreaded composing lieder? I do not think so. I think that it is fair to say that Clara dreaded composing lieder under the watchful eye of Robert. The fact that Schumann composed lieder while Robert was out of the house suggests that she required, in fact fought for, the repose of an unobserved, non-critical environment which fuels

¹ See Chapter 2, pp. 26-7.
inspiration and creativity. Furthermore, when Clara returned to lieder composition in 1853, there is evidence that suggests that she truly enjoyed composing songs. In a diary entry dated 22 June 1853 Clara reveals a special happiness in returning to the genre after a seven-year absence:

Today I set the sixth song by Rollett and thus I have collected a volume of songs, which give me pleasure, and have given me many happy hours. There is nothing which surpasses the joy of creation, if only because through it one wins hours of self-forgetfulness, when one lives in a world of sound.

In addition, Clara’s musical judgment was valued by her long-time friend, Johannes Brahms, who often sent Clara his compositions, including his lieder, for her comments.

The lied was a genre in which Clara Schumann excelled. When we examine these songs, we see the work of an inspired composer. As I hope to have shown, the artistry in Schumann’s lieder is rich and thought-provoking, and places her as a prominent lieder composer of the first half of the nineteenth century. Schumann displays a remarkable sensitivity to poetic nuance in that she often complements the text to a striking level and seeks to add her own artistic imprint. And her use of accompanimental personae shows the mark of an artist.

Schumann’s output of lieder is diverse in style, exploring a broad range of emotion, and reveals many sides of her personality. Of her more dramatic lieder, such as “Er ist gekommen” and “Lorelei,” we see an almost unbridled passion in the subject.

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matter that she chose, as well as the virtuosic use of the piano. And as has been
suggested in Chapter 5, Schumann often chose texts with which she could identify.
Therefore, the subject matter of the songs that are concerned with the uncertainty of love,
of separation, and of love in full blossom was very real to her in that these experiences
stemmed from her own. In this way, there is a strong sense of Clara Schumann in many
of her lieder.

As was stated at the beginning of this thesis, Schumann’s works have become
better known in the last twenty years thanks to a handful of scholars and singers. Even
more work and more publicity needs to be done, however. In addition to the six songs
that I analyzed in depth, Schumann has other treasures. “Lorelei,” “Warum willst du
and’re fragen,” and “Am Strande” lend themselves to the type of analyses that I have
outlined in Chapter five. In particular, identifying the musical narrative in her works is
likely to yield exciting results. In addition, it might prove fruitful to become acquainted
with her works for piano and draw comparisons between her pianistic style and the
accompaniment in some of the more virtuosic songs. Another interesting topic in lieder
analysis in general is the idea of rhythmic structure, organization, and the use of rhythm
as motive. I think that more could be done with Schumann’s songs in this regard,
especially in light of the fact that specific rhythms often recur, or variants of those
rhythms, throughout a single song.

In conclusion, it has been a joy analyzing, pondering, and listening to Clara
Schumann’s songs. As with any subject in the history of music, it is best to have an

\[\text{3 Quoted in Joan Chissell, } Clara Schumann: A Dedicated Spirit (New York: Taplinger, 1983), 117.\]
ongoing dialogue with others, enabling us to look at works from different perspectives.

Therefore, Clara Schumann’s lieder await the attention of others.
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