

# MUSICOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS

Volume 11, Spring 2010

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## From the Editor

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I am pleased to present Volume Eleven of *Musicological Explorations*, a journal published by the graduate students in music of the University of Victoria. The intent of the journal is to enrich musicological discourse at the university level, providing a forum for scholarly work by graduate students and faculty.

As an American interested in Canadian music studies, I felt very fortunate to be Managing Editor this year. This issue of *Musicological Explorations* is special for a few reasons. We were proud to highlight the work of two University of Victoria scholars alongside that of our colleague from McGill. For myself and the Editorial Board, the feature of this edition which perhaps stood out the most was the opportunity to review recent Canadian CDs and books. Adding reviews to *ME* seemed a good way to broaden the scope of the journal while at the same time setting a new challenge for the Editorial Board members to meet. We were moved to include these reviews after reading an article entitled “The Current State of Canadian Music Studies” by Robin Elliott featured in the Fall 2009 *Bulletin of the Society for American Music*.<sup>1</sup> Dismayed at what we found in Elliott’s report, the Board decided to dedicate space in this issue to a discussion of select Canadian performing artists, composers, and scholarly subject matter. In this small

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<sup>1</sup> Robin Elliott, “The Current State of Canadian Music Studies,” *The Bulletin of the Society of American Music* 35/3 (2009): 37-38.

way, we hope to have contributed to an answer to Elliott's call for expansion in the area of Canadian studies within universities across Canada. We are also pleased to report that the CDs reviewed in this journal will be donated to the University of Victoria Library.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Board for their work and dedication this past year. I would also like to thank the Faculty Advisor, Dr. Susan Lewis-Hammond, for her invaluable assistance and guidance in producing this year's journal. For their generous funding contributions, we gratefully acknowledge the Faculty of Fine Arts, the Faculty of Graduate Studies, and the School of Music at the University of Victoria. Moreover, proceeds from the sale of books generously donated by the University of Victoria Library greatly assisted this undertaking.

I look to the continued success of the journal and of the authors whose work is published herein. I hope that our readers will continue to support the journal through subscriptions and submissions.

Alisabeth Concord  
Managing Editor

## Grasping Toward the Light: A Reassessment of Wolf's *Michelangelo-Lieder*

Iain Gillis

In surveys of the Lied and of music history, Hugo Wolf is often mentioned, but seldom discussed. He is positioned, rather problematically, at one end of a continuum representing the Lied tradition, with Schubert at the other. The music he wrote is represented by a couple (at most) of his songs, usually presented comparatively next to Schubert's and Schumann's settings of poetry from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahr*. David Ossenkop published an invaluable bibliographic guide on the composer in 1988. One finds few essays or monographs published on the *Michelangelo-Lieder*, and among those few, the great majority date from around the turn of the century by late contemporaries of Wolf's circle (such as Edmund Hellmer) or by his earliest biographers a generation later (notably Ernest Newman).<sup>1</sup> In any case, the extant literature favours the second song, "*Alles endet, was entstehet*," to the near-total exclusion of the other two. Remarkably, John Daverio, in his

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<sup>1</sup> While one cannot dispute the importance of such a publication with respect to Wolf scholarship, I may cite two reservations about it. First, it has been twenty years since it was published, and several publications on Wolf, including those that deal with his *Michelangelo-Lieder* specifically, have come out since then. Second, by virtue of the fact that the biographies by Frank Walker and Ernst Decsey are not cited as treating the cycle even though they are both landmark studies on Wolf's life and works, one may wonder about some of Ossenkop's editorial decisions. He cites Walker's study only in the prefatory remarks and cites Decsey elsewhere, and both of those are well-indexed.

chapter about the song cycle for Rufus Hallmark's volume, makes no mention of the *Michelangelo-Lieder* in the two full pages he devotes to Wolf.<sup>2</sup> Although his is undeniably a monument in Wolf literature, especially in English, Ernest Newman addresses the songs, but does not subject them to any musical or textual analysis.<sup>3</sup> Susan Youens's introduction to her paragraph about the *Michelangelo-Lieder* in *Grove* is indicative of critical reception of the cycle: "At the end, inspiration slipped, regained control, faltered again."<sup>4</sup> This curiously uncritical standpoint that a late change in style is due to a faltering mind is disappointing, but it befell the late Lieder of Robert Schumann, too. Great danger lies in the too-hasty treatment of generalised biography as musicological criticism. That said, it is my contention that Wolf very deliberately associated himself with the lyric persona in the song cycle at hand. His particular appropriation of the genre "Romantic song cycle" evidences his stylistically late engagement with a historical tradition.

I hope that through the present study, Wolf's *Michelangelo-Lieder* may also begin to be appreciated and understood on their own terms. I shall first

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<sup>2</sup> John Daverio, "The Song Cycle: Journeys Through a Romantic Landscape," in *German Lieder in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Rufus Hallmark (New York: Schirmer, 1996): 279- 312.

<sup>3</sup> Admittedly, this was characteristic of other biographies of the time: H.T. Finck's early biography on Grieg springs to mind.

<sup>4</sup> Susan Youens, "Wolf, Hugo: Mature songs," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/52073pg7> (accessed 24 April 2010).



tender a workable definition of “song cycle,” then summarise the key tenets of “late style” as discussed by Edward Said. I will provide a brief compositional history of the songs, and then proceed to analyze them, text and music, in turn. If my tone strikes the reader as personal, I beg his or her indulgence: my personal experience with these songs has been characterised by much retrospection. This retrospective understanding speaks to one aspect of “lateness” that Said does not address, but that is inherent to the phenomenon of music. I hope that the lens of late style may be one through which my analyses of the three *Michelangelo-Lieder* may be seen.

In a sense, my starting point is akin to Ernest Newman's. In the three songs, “the throb of feeling is as profound as in anything Wolf ever wrote”: I was struck by austerity of the set and their effectiveness as a cycle from my first hearing of them.<sup>5</sup> While it is not my goal to suggest why the first and third songs have been neglected, Wolf's own enthusiasm for the second song may have provided the impetus for this trend, as numerous sources cite. Walker quotes a letter from Wolf to his friend, Oskar Grohe: “Most significant, however, seems to me the second poem, which I consider the best that I have so far knocked

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<sup>5</sup> Ernest Newman, *Hugo Wolf* (London: Methuen, 1907), 217. Newman twice makes erroneous statements (pp. 136, 216) about the forms of the poems: he claims that Wolf set three sonnets of Michelangelo's; in fact, only the third of the *Michelangelo-Lieder* has a sonnet as its text.

off.”<sup>6</sup> I experienced the three songs as a cycle – as Wolf himself considered them to be – and have a hard time “hearing” one without the others. This interconnectedness is for me an important criterion toward defining a song cycle.

It turns out that the term “song cycle” is rather difficult to pin down. Numerous eloquent scholars have reached the same conclusion, and the multiplicity of their tentative definitions serves to amplify that truth. John Daverio says succinctly: “Clearly, the song cycle resists definition.” Arthur Komar’s widely cited study of *Dichterliebe* presents “less a set of prescriptions than a series of possibilities” [Daverio’s terms]. Other writers have approached that problematic term in various ways, typically resorting to “types” of cycles (as do Ruth Bingham and Walter Bernhart), problems with cyclical conceptions for analysis (as do Suzanne Lodato and Leon Platinga), or by, not surprisingly in the field of Lied studies, addressing the song cycle primarily as a literary genre (as does Cyrus Hamlin).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Frank Walker, *Hugo Wolf: A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1951), 408. It should be stated that if this is in fact the reason for the virtual overlooking of the remainder of the cycle, then this is a grotesque oversight on the part of those studying Wolf. For instance, Walker also translates two letters, a day apart in March of 1888, from Wolf to his friend, Edmund Lang. On the 20<sup>th</sup>: “*Erstes Liebeslied eines Mädchens* (Eduard Mörike) is by far the best thing that have done up to now.” On the 21<sup>st</sup>: “I retract the opinion that the *Erstes Liebeslied eines Mädchens* is my best thing, for what I wrote this morning, *Fussreise* (Eduard Mörike), is a million times better.” See Walker, *Biography*, 203.

<sup>7</sup> See Bingham in *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*, ed. James Parsons (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004). See all others in

For my purposes, I define the song cycle as having elements of poetic and musical unity. That is, themes and motifs in both the poetic and the musical senses appear from piece to piece. If a meaningful tonal scheme exists (and one does, I believe, in the *Michelangelo-Lieder*), all the better, although this is not necessarily the case for all cycles. In the absence of a discernable narrative (as one can trace, say, in Schubert's *Winterreise*) or one that is implied by the poems' having come from a novel [as is the case in Brahms's *Romanzen*, op. 33 (*Magelone-Lieder*), in which the lyrics are drawn, in order, from Tieck's *Wundersame Liebesgeschichte der schönen Magelone und des Grafen Peter aus der Provence*], conceptualising a common 'Lyric I' for a cycle may be helpful in trying to fashion a narrative, if it aids understanding and makes sense musically. Following Bernhart, I consider the *Michelangelo-Lieder* to be a literary song cycle, that is, to be characterised by the "flux of mental states" experienced by a "lyric persona."<sup>8</sup> This cycle is one that is unified by subtle key relationships and melodic figures, as well as by some of the twenty-four motifs

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the series *Word and Music Studies*. Tellingly, both the first and third volumes of the latter series, from which these examples are drawn, bear the subtitle, "Defining the Field."

<sup>8</sup> Walter Bernhart, "Three Types of Song Cycles: The Variety of Britten's 'Charms'," in *Word and Music Studies*, vol. 3, ed. Walter Bernhart and Werner Wolf with David Mosley (Atlanta: Rodopi, 2001), 211-226.

that Eric Sams outlines as being prominent in Wolf's entire published output.<sup>9</sup>

The greater element of unity, and perhaps the hardest to pin down, is the permeating idea of "lateness." This has been the missing link for my achieving some kind of peace with these songs, and it is important that it has come to me *after* I have come to 'know' the pieces quite well – a sort of late understanding in itself. Following Charles Rosen, Cyrus Hamlin's fourth approach to the Romantic song-cycle is one characterised by "retrospective understanding."<sup>10</sup> Like "song cycle," "lateness" is a slippery term. Said's posthumously-collected essays devoted to the subject address lateness by way of different examples to circumscribe and to illustrate an unnameable thing.<sup>11</sup> In that he draws upon very diverse examples from music, film, and literature, Said's approach is remarkably similar the early Romantics' writings about the fragment: his is a collective work meant to elucidate a concept by outlining, rather than drawing *per se*, much as an art student ends up with the image of a chair by drawing all the "negative spaces" prescribed by its boundaries. Said, a fine rhetorician, lays out some key lines that may be synthesised after

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<sup>9</sup> Eric Sams, *The Songs of Hugo Wolf* (London: Methuen, 1961). Esp. 1-22, 259-262.

<sup>10</sup> Cyrus Hamlin, "The Romantic Song Cycle as Literary Genre," in *Word and Music Studies*, vol. 1, ed. Walter Bernhart, Steven Paul Scher, and Werner Wolf (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1999).

<sup>11</sup> "Lateness" is explored by Edward Said, who borrowed the term from Theodor Adorno's writings on Beethoven.

one has closely read the whole as a kind of distillation, almost an *Umlinie* of Schenkerian analysis.

There is an element of exile that is central to Said's inquiry. He discerns an "overall assumed pattern to human life"<sup>12</sup> that he divides into "problematics, three great human episodes common to all cultures and traditions."<sup>13</sup> These are beginnings, continuity, and the "last or late period of life." The last of these gives rise to Said's study, with its "focus on great artists and how near the end of their lives their work and thought acquires a new idiom, what I shall be calling a late style." Late style can be understood as one of two types: either the "accepted notion of age and wisdom in some last works that reflect a special maturity" or "late style that involves a nonharmonious, nonserene tension, and above all, a sort of deliberately unproductive productiveness going *against*..."<sup>14</sup> It is the second definition that is of particular interest for Said, and for the current study, and it is this quality of against-ness that I have chosen to tentatively summarise by the term "exile." In each of his many examples, Said points to some kind of non-sequitur, a discontinuity. The flexibility of this model of identifying significant departures from a perceived or assumed smooth teleology is its greatest strength: it may be applied equally to concepts with respect to

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<sup>12</sup> Edward Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain* (New York: Vintage, 2006), 5.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

time, or to style — in short, to any human philosophical or philological construction.

Said's examples are in some cases quite interconnected, and these connections take on great significance after the conclusion of the book — that is, retrospectively. Beethoven's late works are characterised by Adorno as being representative of *des "Spätstil Beethovens;"* Adorno carries this notion, according to Said, into his analyses of *Parsifal* and Schoenberg. Adorno's prose, which is well-known and oft-cited for its difficulty and inaccessibility, as well as his chosen subject matter, are indicative of Adorno's own lateness of style. Because of Adorno's "lateness" within the twentieth century, Said extends his inquiry to Adorno's contemporaries. He encounters the traits of resistance and against-ness in Strauss, Britten, and Glenn Gould as well. These traits, of course, are relative to each subject's biography, early- and middle- styles, and the circumstances in which he lived. Said's take on Adorno's reading of late Beethoven is worth quoting at length:

Beethoven's late works remain unreconciled, uncoopted by a higher synthesis: they do not fit any scheme, and they cannot be reconciled or resolved, since their irresolution and unsynthesised fragmentariness are constitutive, neither ornamental nor symbolic of something else. Beethoven's late compositions are in fact about "lost totality," and are therefore catastrophic.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Said, *Late Style*, 13.

One thinks of the jagged opening of the last piano sonata, so far removed from the opening of the Fifth, or of the juxtapositions of 'mini-movements' in the *Grosse Fuge* or the finale of the Ninth. How different is the aesthetic ideal of unity that they present when compared to the finales of those works in which Beethoven first shifts dramatic weight to the last movement, such as the "*Moonlight*" Sonata. For Strauss, on the other hand, the splintering is in a different direction. After *Elektra*, in which Strauss so famously pushed tonal harmony to its limits, his *Vier letzte Lieder*, *Metamorphosis*, and *Capriccio*, among other late works, are characterised by a kind of chronological-stylistic retreat backwards (compared, perhaps, to Beethoven's retreat *inwards*?). This is evidenced by the subject matter of *Capriccio* and at least the harmonic language of those other pieces.

Glenn Gould, whose works include both musical and prosaic compositions as well as virtuosic piano performances, is a late figure on account of his multifarious activities in an age of specialisation (marking him a sort of quirky Renaissance man) as well as for his personal definition of the role of the piano virtuoso. Rather than the piano recital staples of Beethoven, Mozart, Liszt, Brahms, and the like, Gould made a career out of the heady and antique works of Bach, the English virginalists, and the Second Viennese School, as well as composers like Wagner and Strauss, not known for their keyboard works. When he did play repertoire more commonly associated with the virtuoso pianists of his era, his performances sound totally apart. This kind of exile, like that of Beethoven or Strauss in their creative

pursuits, is an intellectual mode that was also explored by Wolf. Said's paradoxical characterisation of late style as being “*in*, but oddly *apart*” from the present is quite helpful in the case of Wolf's *Michelangelo-Lieder*.

Heinrich Walter Robert-Tornow (1852-1895), whose translations of *Michelangelo's Rime* were given to Wolf by his friend Paul Müller as a Christmas present in 1896, had worked from Cesare Guasti's 1863 edition of the complete poems. According to James Saslow, Guasti had grouped the poems by formal type, rather than chronologically, as is now standard.<sup>16</sup> The German scholar Carl Frey was working on a critical edition of the *Rime* that was published in 1897; in his introduction, he reports that “he continually advised Robert-Tornow during the translation work, and that Robert-Tornow in no way considered his work to be finalized.”<sup>17</sup> The *Verein für die Geschichte Berlins* also informs us that although Robert-Tornow took Guasti as his starting point, he entrusted Georg Thouret with the task of seeing the “ready-to-print manuscript” through to publication. Thouret took some liberties, however: “the printed version differs greatly from the manuscript, above all in regards to the ordering of the

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<sup>16</sup> James M. Saslow, *The Poetry of Michelangelo* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1991), 53.

<sup>17</sup> “...dass er Robert-Tornow laufend bei der Übersetzungsarbeit beriet und dass dieser sein Werk keineswegs als abgeschlossen betrachtete.”

<http://www.diegeschichteberlins.de/geschichteberlins/persoentlichkeiten/persoentlichkeitennot/394-robert-tornow.html> (accessed 3 April 2010).



poems.”<sup>18</sup> Using Saslow’s comparative table of ordering in different editions of Michelangelo’s poetry, it is clear that Wolf was, as we have come to expect, very particular about choosing his texts and ordering them as he saw best. Whether the Robert-Tornow translation was ultimately ordered according to the precedent of Guasti or of Frey, Wolf took his three poems from rather disparate parts of the volume and rearranged them (Figure 1). He must have known the volume well to have selected from across the set and yet have maintained his uncommonly high demands of the poetry and of his own musical ability. It is for the latter reason alone, presumably, that of a projected six songs, he “destroyed the fourth and last [that he had completed] as ‘unworthy.’”<sup>19</sup>

**Figure 1: Comparative table of orderings used by Wolf and by possible sources for the Robert-Tornow edition Thouret volume from which he made his selections.**

Wolf	Guasti (page no.)	Frey	Chronological
1	329	36	54
2	350	136	21
3	199	75	76
4	33	109.99	107

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Susan Youens, “Tradition and innovation: the Lieder of Hugo Wolf,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*, ed. James Parsons (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), 219.

I shall address each of the songs in turn. First, Wolf composed them in that order, according to the dated manuscripts as well as references to them in correspondence. Second, Wolf saw them through to publication in his lifetime (while he still had his mental faculties about him) and chose to leave them in that order. Third (a corollary of my second reason), that order is how they are experienced in performance. Following Wolf's own compositional paradigm, I shall begin with the poetry, then turn my attention to the musical notes.

**Figure 2: German, Italian, and English with rhyme schemes for the German and Italian of *Michelangelo-Lieder* No. 1: “Wohl denk ich oft.” The English is rendered literally after the German by Knut W. Barde.**

Wohl denk ich oft an mein vergangnes Leben,	A	I'vo pensando al mio vi- ver di prima,	A	It is quite often that I think of my past life,
Wie es vor meiner Liebe für dich war;	B	Inanzi ch'ì t' amassi, com'egli era.	B	The way it was before my love for you;
Kein Mensch hat damals Acht auf mich gegeben,	A	Di me non fu ma' chi fa- cesse stima;	A	Then no one had paid any attention to me,
Ein jeder Tag verloren für mich war;	B	Perdendo ogni dì il tem- po insino a sera.	B	Each and every day was lost to me;
Ich dachte wohl, ganz dem Gesang zu leben,	A	Forse pensavo di cantare in rima,	A	I thought that I would dedicate my life to song,
Auch mich zu flüchten aus der Menschen Schar.	B	O di ritirarmi da ogni al- tra stiera?	B	As well as flee from human throng.
Genannt in Lob und Tadel bin ich heute,	C	Or si sa 'l nome, o per tristo o per buono;	C	Today my name is raised in praise and criticism,
Und, daß ich da bin, wissen alle Leute!	C	E sassi pure ch' al mondo i' ci sono!	C	And that I exist, - that is known by all!

“Wohl denk ich oft” is an excerpt taken from a much longer poem (“Io crederrei, se tu fussi di sasso”) written in *ottava rima*, stanzas of eight lines that usually comprise eleven syllables. Specifically, the lines that Wolf excerpted for his setting form a *strambotto toscano*. “*Strambotto*” denotes a single stanza of *ottava rima*,

while “*toscano*” refers to the rhyme scheme, abababcc. Robert-Tornow strove to keep the rhyme scheme and meter of Michelangelo’s poems intact. He also preserved a volta, or turning point, at the last couplet when the rhyme scheme changes. The first six lines are a recounting by Lyric I of his past. The narrative voice is the first person singular, and the beloved is strikingly absent. She is replaced instead by the poet’s love for her. It is an important difference, for the direction of the narrator’s intent is completely inward. The tale is selfish one: the first person singular pronoun, in some declination, appears in every line. These lines are primarily a lament of the narrator’s obscurity in his youth.

The parallels to Wolf’s own life are striking: he was a shameless self-promoter who badgered Wagner during the elder master’s visit to Vienna to look at his compositions, and recounted the event late into his life. The third couplet is also telling: Wolf “never stopped specializing in songs” (a fact that he lamented at one point) and was strangely withdrawn from the “Menschen Schar” – a descriptor with derisive animal connotations, that could equally be rendered as “flock” or “gaggle.” It is sufficient here to note that Wolf was not tied down to any one family or fixed address, and that ideologically he strove always to set himself *apart* from his greatest influences – Wagner, Schubert, and Schumann.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Lawrence Kramer treats Wolf’s social withdrawal within a Freudian framework, most convincingly with his analysis of Wolf’s own performance of “Epiphanas.”

The first two couplets introduce our narrator's philosophy of love: it is an enriching force in a person's life, and it is far from a universal privilege. The first couplet establishes the narrator's primacy by his taking possession of the love as a commodity: "meiner Liebe für dich." The second focuses again on the narrator, claiming that he that giveth suddenly had none for himself. It is a pitiful statement that "kein Mensch hat damals Acht auf mich gegeben," and the consequence is that every day was a waste.<sup>21</sup> Before he was able to love another, the narrator could not elicit either external love for himself or artistic expressions of self. In other words, he could in no way stand out.

The final couplet is a marked change. In this, the second of the poem's two discrete moments, all external references drop away in a moment of *Stimmungsbruch*.<sup>22</sup> The love for the absent muse is repossessed and reallocated, evidently upon the narrator himself. Rather than wasting his time pining away for others to love him, he becomes enamoured of himself. The desire to be *known* is revealed to be the true desire of the narrator, not to be loved. He is convinced that his love for himself is enough. He exclaims triumphantly, "Genannt in Lob und Tadel bin ich heute, / Und, daß ich da bin, wissen alle Leute!" If we take this to be representative of Wolf's self-reflection, we might suggest a hint of bitterness, a

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<sup>21</sup> This is a stark contrast to the message in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, set by Brahms as the last of his songs (and powerfully, the last of his *Vier Ernste Gesänge*, also for bass and piano, dating from 1896).

<sup>22</sup> Roughly translated as "mood-break."

type of Romantic irony. Wolf was indeed well-known in his lifetime: he was buried alongside Beethoven and Schubert.

His own romantic life was frustrated, however. His longest-standing romantic relationship was an affair with Melanie Köchert, the wife of the court jeweller, Heinrich, who invited Wolf into his home. If Wolf's true wish was to be loved in a pure and romantic way, that wish was not granted. The proclamation is made to himself, as is the rest of the bitter confession. The consolation is superficial, for the Lyric I, onto whom Wolf mapped himself, knows that if anyone else were listening, he would have no need to proclaim his greatness.

Wolf is no slave to the text, but in this case he follows the lines of the poem in his musical phrasing. The piano's introduction is low in register, both hands in the bass clef, and presents a chromatic line in unison octaves, containing a series of rising and falling semitones. The falling from B $\flat$  to A and the rising pitches D – E $\flat$  – E – F $\sharp$  emphasise the dominant and tonic of G minor quite strongly. It is characteristic of Wolf's harmonic language that he should extend the dominant function as he does. If we take the opening by way of example, we can see that the pitches that immediately precede the tonic, F $\sharp$  and E $\flat$ , along with the A still impressed on the aural memory from the strong beats of the opening, outline a diminished seventh chord, vii<sup>o7</sup>. By resolving to G minor, the horizontalised chord of the first two measures functions precisely as V<sup>7 $\flat$ 9</sup> would, although the root and fifth are omitted. (See Ex. 1)

**Example 1: Chord function duality in the opening of the piano part.**

1 Ziemlich getragen, schwermütig

Wohl denk'

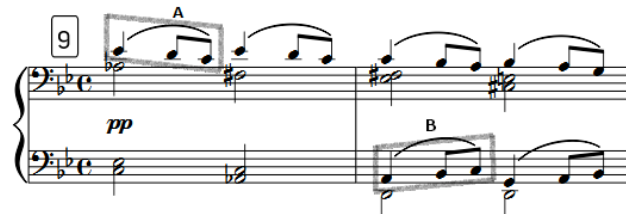
Late nineteenth century harmonic practice would theoretically allow for the resolution of the  $\text{vii}^{\text{o}7}$  to any number of key areas. The introduction of the voice of the Lyric I affirms the dominant function of that chord complex. Furthermore, the root of the dominant is present in all further V – I resolutions (in mm. 7, 9, and 13). Just as the first two couplets are loose variations on the narrator's view of love, the second musical phrase is essentially a variation on the first. The harmonic direction is from i (m. 2) to V/V (m. 4) to  $\text{V}^{(7)}$  (m. 6) in the first phrase, comprising 2 + 2 measures. Measures 2 and 7 begin with the same harmonic progression from i to  $\text{vii}^{\text{o}7}$  ( $= \text{V}^{7\text{b}9}$ ), and the piano figuration in the latter is a derivative of the former. The chromatic raising of  $\text{Eb}$  to  $\text{Eb}\sharp$  in the vocal line at m. 4 is mirrored by a chromatic lowering of  $\text{D}\sharp$  to  $\text{Db}$  in the analogous place in the second phrase, and a motion of  $\text{V}/\text{N} \rightarrow \text{N}$  is introduced. The close of the second phrase is to  $\text{V}^9$ , leading into a dominant pedal preparation for G.

Beginning in m. 9, Wolf introduces the pattern of a melodic descending third in the top voice of the right

hand. This is Sams' "sorrow" motif, "sorrow or despair induced by loss or deprivation."<sup>23</sup> This musical sub-text continues the sentiment of the poem's text in the first two couplets, reinforcing the words' message, and ensuring that the first six lines of the *strambotto* are understood as inextricably linked in Wolf's reading. The motif is taken up in inversion by the left hand. (See Example 2) According to Sams, two converging lines *in the right hand* (my emphasis) symbolizes love in many of Wolf's songs. In "Wohl denk ich oft," the separation of that musical idea between the two clefs may represent the apartness of the narrator from the ideal object of his love.

In m. 11, a further symbol from Sams' catalogue creeps in: that of worship. "A particular rhythm i.e.  $\frac{4}{4}$  ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ very often appears, usually in open fifths in the left-hand piano part."<sup>24</sup> (See Example 3) This foreshadows the narcissistic self-worship of the final couplet.

**Example 2: "Wohl denk ich oft," mm. 9 – 10. "Sorrow" motif in usual form, A, and inversion, B. Piano part only.**



<sup>23</sup> Sams, *Songs*, 17.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

**Example 3: “Wohl denk ich oft,” mm. 13 – 14. “Worship”  
rhythmic motif in lowest voice of LH. Piano part only.**



The sudden shift to E major coincides with the volta of the poem. The third-relation is jarring because of its radically different tonal space. The first 14 measures of the song are very much in G minor, albeit a heavily chromatic G minor that avoids alluding to the submediant. The B $\natural$  “bells” in the right hand of mm. 13 and 14 (see Example 3) not only toll to announce the death of G minor (by annulling the B $\flat$  so prominent in the piece up to then), but also to announce a V – I move to E. A crescendo to fortissimo on the downbeat of m. 15 further signifies the departure from the earlier realm. In contrast to the single accent of the first fourteen measures (on “ganz,” m. 14.4), the music of the final couplet is rife with declamatory accents in the octave-laden piano part. The tessitura is notably higher through these final measures, and the instruction “*gemessen*” tempers the third couplet’s *etwas belebter*.

But what of the bitter reading I had anticipated? The radical tonal departure seems to suggest a rebirth, a genuine happiness. Sams reads it as such, claiming that the narrator’s “suddenly vivid” fame, accompanied by “a paean of exultant fanfare,” coincides with “a strong tonic major chord” at the



words “da bin.”<sup>25</sup> I disagree: the strength of the tonic major is seriously undermined by the voicing of the tonic major as second inversion. This complicates and dulls the vividness of what was only an image to begin with. The vocal line ends on the scale degree of the dominant, a less than convincing statement of authority within the tonal tradition. Wolf further removes the tonic’s authority by a plagal motion to IV: G major tonic is made to wait again by the subdominant fanfare in C major.

The lateness of the moment comes from its breaking away from normal harmonic conventions. Wolf’s ironic treatment of the narrator’s experience is evidenced by his subversive employment of the typical “hero” progression of tonal music (minor to major). The bravado is a lie, and the deception is made all the more poignant by the fact that Wolf wrote to Kauffmann to name “inexorable truth — truth to the point of cruelty” as the highest principle in art.<sup>26</sup> The hero is only a hero in the narrator’s own eyes, and that image is a fleeting one, being a reflection in the water. The ripples that distort that image beyond recognition are the same ripples that delay the progression to G major via E major and C major. A more correct tonal path for the hero paradigm would be dominant-rich, functionally denoted as D/D → D → T. Instead, Wolf turns this progression literally on its head, giving us  $\mathbb{S} \rightarrow S \rightarrow T$ .

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 259.

<sup>26</sup> Walker, *Biography*, 409.

This ironic depiction of a heroic “tale” recalls Adorno on Beethoven’s treatment of death in the latter’s late works: “death appears in a refracted mode, as irony.”<sup>27</sup>

“Alles endet, was entstehet” is usually regarded as the strongest song of the cycle. Wolf set only 12 lines of a 16-line original, a significant departure from his normal practice. Unlike Schubert, for instance, Wolf seldom altered the text of a poem: one is hard-pressed to find many instances in Wolf’s oeuvre of word repetition, or the creation of a refrain when none existed in the poem. It is also quite a different case from the first song, in which Wolf extracted an entire stanza – a whole – from a much larger original (“Wohl denk ich oft,” unabridged, numbers over 100 lines, although certain stanzas are incomplete). Like “Wohl denk ich oft,” “Alles endet” is a fragment: it breaks off midway through the second stanza.

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<sup>27</sup> Said, *Late Style*, 24.

**Figure 3: German, Italian, and English with rhyme schemes for the German and Italian of *Michelangelo-Lieder* No. 2: “Alles endet, was entstehet.” The translation of the final four lines of the Italian, not set by Wolf, are my own. The English is rendered literally after the German by Knut W. Barde.**

Alles endet, was entstehet. Alles, alles rings vergehet,	A	Chiunque nasce a morte arriva	A	Everything ends which comes to be. Everything everywhere passes away,
Denn die Zeit flieht, und die Sonne	B	Nel fuggir del tempo, e 'l sole	B	for time moves on, and the
Sieht, daß alles rings vergehet,	A	Niuna cosa lascia viva.	A	Sun sees that everything around passes away,
Denken, Reden, Schmerz, und Wonne;	B	Manca il dolce e quel che dole,	B	Thinking, speaking, pain, and joy;
Und die wir zu Enkeln hatten	C	E gl' ingegni e le parole;	C	And those who had been our grandchildren
Schwanden wie bei Tag die Schatten,	C	E le nostre antiche prole	C	Have vanished as shadows flee the day,
Wie ein Dunst im Windeshauch.	D	Al sole ombre, al vento un fummo.	D	As a breath of wind dispels the mist.
Menschen waren wir ja auch,	D	Come voi uomini fummo	D	Yes, we once were people too,
Froh und traurig, so wie ihr,	E	Lieti e tristi, come siete;	E	Glad and sad, just like you,
Und nun sind wir leblos hier,	E	E or sian, come vedete,	E	And now we are here lifeless,
Sind nur Erde, wie ihr sehet.	A	Terra al sol di vita priva.	A	Are but earth, as you can see.
Alles ended, was entstehet. Alles, alles rings vergehet.	A	Ogni cosa a morte arriva.	A	Everything ends which comes to be. Everything everywhere passes away.
		Già fur gli occhi nostri interi		Once were our eyes fully whole,
		Con la luce in ogni speco;		With light in each hole;
		or son votî, orrendi e neri,		Now are they empty, horrifying, and black:
		e ciò porta il tempo seco.		That is brought in time's passing.

The narrator of this poem is an Everynarrator of sorts, and the time and place are non-specific. For the only time in the cycle (and more significantly, a relative rarity within Wolf's entire output), the "lyric I" is here instead a "lyric we." The non-specificity and communal aspects of the poem serve to stress the universality of its truth. Indeed, as in Wolf's aforementioned letter to Kauffmann, this universal truth bordering on fate is almost unbearable for its gravitas.<sup>28</sup> The message of the song is bleak and fatalistic, and strongly representative of the Renaissance-era view of death. It is a fear of the afterlife that characterises this view, although "to have fear" is precisely "to be afraid." In a rather ironic twist of the *barzalletta*, or *frottola*, form that the poem assumes, Michelangelo uses that medium to reflect on two concepts of time: human time, which is finite, and divine Time, which is infinite. Robert-Tornow focuses on the cyclical image of "dust unto dust" in his translation, and Wolf picks up on it acutely.<sup>29</sup> That

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<sup>28</sup> Walker, *Biography*, 409.

<sup>29</sup> I believe that Robert-Tornow's translation, while laudable for its retention of the meter of the poem, misses out on some important imagery of Michelangelo's original. Michelangelo thrice uses "sole," the sun, to characterise the eternal, and contrasts this quite starkly with the extinguishable light of human life, seen in the eyes, in the second stanza. With the passing of Time, the sun continues to burn, while human lights go out. The flow of Time cannot be stopped. There is a curious flip-flop of what Robert-Tornow has translated as "Alles endet, was entstehet; alles, alles rings vergehet" in Michelangelo's poem: the opening, "whoever is born must come to death" is not the same as line 12, "everything must come to death." The first utterance is re-

all living things share a common fate is the moral of this dark lesson.<sup>30</sup>

For those seeking an exhaustive study of the motivic coherence of “Alles endet,” I shall point them toward Susan Youens’ 1980 study. In her contribution to *The Cambridge Guide to the Lied*, she distils the construction of the song quite wonderfully:

[T]he music [is] distilled to skeletal essence. Every note in the song is derived from the bleak, unharmonized, four-bar piano introduction, in particular two figures that permeate the song: a descending tetrachord that first appears at the words “Alles endet” in m. 5 and the cambiata-like figure in the piano in mm. 5-6, 7-8, made up of an ascending and a descending semitone at the distance of either a major or a minor third.<sup>31</sup>

The tonality of the piece is torn between the two keys suggested by the key signature, C# minor and E major. The almost coincidental tonality – the oscillation

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stricted to humans (as indicated by “chiunche,” or “whoever,” rather than “qualunche,” or “whatever”) and is qualified by “with the flight of time” and joined to the idea of the sun as a metaphorical stand-in for Time. The second statement of the same idea is bleaker still, restricted not by a passage of time – the gaze of the sun – or even by the condition of having been born.

<sup>30</sup> This song in particular recalls the first of Brahms’s *Vier ernste Gesänge*, in which the narrator philosophizes on the fate common to “Menschen wie dem Vieh,” that is, to return to the nothingness whence they come.

<sup>31</sup> Susan Youens, “Tradition and innovation: the *Lieder* of Hugo Wolf,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*, ed. James Parsons (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), 220-221.

between the two is subtle and frequent – is a compositional-theoretical parallel to the two concepts of time presented in the poem. The flow of Time is also represented in the near-constant steady beat, either as half notes (mm. 5-8) or as pulsing eighth notes (e.g., mm. 9-16, left hand). One particularly interesting response to the text comes in mm. 13-14 (See Example 4). The rhythmic pattern in the vocal line is Sams’ “weakness” motif, here paired with a list of human faculties and experiences (thought, speech, pain, and joy). The weak narrator is reminded of his place in the next measures where the piano, entering [subito] forte and crashing to a fortissimo on a G above middle C (m. 15.3), outdoes the voice in amplitude and range.

**Example 4: „Alles endet, was entsteht,” mm. 13-16.**

A second “motif” moment comes in the following measures. The “submission” motif (a variant interpretation of the “worship” motif heard in “Wohl denk ich oft”) is paired with the “isolation/loneliness” motif: “the right hand has repeated chords, from which the left hand moves away downwards....”<sup>32</sup> (Example 5).

<sup>32</sup> Sams, *Songs*, 13.

**Example 5: “Alles endet, was entsteht,” mm. 17-19.** The submission motive is in the RH piano throughout; the “isolation/loneliness” motif is in the LH piano, mm. 17 and 19 only.

etwas bewegter

und die wir zu En - kei - hat - ten schwan - den die bei Tag die Schat - ten,

etwas bewegter

*p* *pp*

Detailed description: This musical score snippet shows measures 17, 18, and 19. The vocal line (top staff) is in G major, 4/4 time. Measure 17 is marked 'etwas bewegter'. Measure 19 is marked 'pp'. The piano accompaniment (bottom two staves) features a submission motive in the right hand (RH) throughout, consisting of a descending eighth-note scale. The left hand (LH) has a specific motif in measures 17 and 19, marked 'p'.

The concept of cyclicity may be seen as having been composed into existence at several levels: the cambiata figure throughout the piece is built, by definition, on a rising and falling motion. The pairs of chords in mm. 5-6 represent another instance – the balance that is lost by the rising step is restored by the descending step in the following measure. It is worth noting that these devices are in the piano’s part. (Unlike Sams, I am hesitant to call it accompaniment.) The vocal line is full of imbalance, best illustrated by mm. 5-8 and mm. 36-39 (see example 6).

**Example 6: “Alles endet, was entsteht,” mm. 5-8 (= mm. 36-39).** The small notes for “rings vergehet” denote the vocal line in m. 8; the regular notation, m. 39.

5 [= 36] 7 [= 38]

*pp*

Al - les en - det, was ent-ste - het. Al - les, al - les rings ver-ge - het.

Detailed description: This musical score snippet shows measures 5 and 7, which are equivalent to measures 36 and 38. The vocal line (top staff) is in G major, 4/4 time. Measure 5 is marked '5 [= 36]' and measure 7 is marked '7 [= 38]'. The piano accompaniment (bottom two staves) features a submission motive in the right hand (RH) throughout, consisting of a descending eighth-note scale. The left hand (LH) has a specific motif in measures 5 and 7, marked 'pp'.

The only difference between the two settings of the refrain is that in m. 39, the voice ends on B#. The finiteness and flawed nature of mortals' time is represented by the imbalanced downward trajectory of the vocal line. It is built upon descending minor seconds, a well-established symbol of grief, including divisions of the line into Sams' "sorrow" motif. The vocal part also ends on the leading tone. The B# importantly clarifies the tonality as being C# minor, a key that Sams identifies as having been used with some frequency by Wolf when setting poems on the subject of death.<sup>33</sup> There is a reflection on the powerlessness of mortals, recalling in some respects "Wohl denk ich oft," in which the harmonic route to the tonic is driven by the piano and plays a mocking fanfare along the way. Here, it is only the piano that is able to resolve the B# to bring closure to the piece. When it does so, the resolution is to bare fifths and traditional associations with infinity (importantly different from incompleteness) and perfection, or divinity. My commentary on the "lateness" of "Alles endet" shall serve as the conclusion to this essay.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 6. It is not insignificant that the opening octaves, as Sams points out, are strongly reminiscent in "Der Genesene an die Hoffnung," which Wolf had chosen as the first song in the *Mörke-Lieder*. A few comments may be made: the return to what was effectively the beginning of Wolf's career is here reinterpreted in a powerful way. The linear development of that through-composed song result in a teleological progression philosophically more akin to the *Bildung* of the Romantics than the fear of being negated expressed in Michelangelo's poem.



**Figure 4: German, Italian, and English (rendered literally after the German by Knut W. Barde) with rhyme schemes for the German and Italian of *Michelangelo-Lieder* No.3: “Fühlt meine Seele.”**

Fühlt meine Seele das ersehnte Licht	A	Non so se s'è la desiata luce	A	Is my soul feeling the longed-for light
Von Gott, der sie erschuf? Ist es der Strahl	B	Del suo primo fattor, che l' alma sente;	B	Of God who created it? Is it the gleam
Von andrer Schönheit aus dem Jammertal,	B	O se dalla memoria della gente	B	Of a different beauty from the valley of misery,
Der in mein Herz Erinnerung weckend bricht?	A	Alcun'altra beltà nel cor traluce;	A	Reflecting in my heart and evoking memory?
Ist es ein Klang, ein Traumgesicht,	A	O se fama o se sogno alcun produce	A	Is it a sound, a dream vision,
Das Aug und Herz mir füllt mit einem Mal	B	Agli occhi manifesto, al cor presente;	B	That suddenly fills my eye and heart
In unbegreiflich glüh'nder Qual,	B	Di sè lasciando un non so che cocente,	B	In incomprehensibly burning pain,
Die mich zu Tränen bringt? Ich weiß es nicht.	A	Ch'è forse or quel ch'a pianger mi conduce;	A	That brings me to tears? I do not know.
Was ich erschne, fühle, was mich lenkt,	C	Quel ch'ì sento e ch'ì cerco: e chi mi guidi	C	What I long for, the sense of what directs me,
Ist nicht in mir: sag mir, wie ich's erwerbe?	D	Meco non è; nè so ben veder dove	D	Is not within me: Tell me, how do I acquire it?
Mir zeigt es wohl nur eines Andren Huld;	E	Trovar mel possa, e par c' altri mel mostri.	E	To me it reveals only another's grace and love;
Darin bin ich, seit ich dich sah, versenkt.	C	Questo, signor, m'avvien, po' ch'ì vi vidi;	C	I have been their captive since I first saw you.
Mich treibt ein Ja und Nein, ein Süß und Herbe -	D	C'un dolce amaro, un sí e no mi muove:	D	I am driven by a yes and a no, a sweet and a bitter —
Daran sind, Herrin, deine Augen Schuld.	E	Certo saranno stati gli occhi vostri.	E	That, mistress, is the doing of your eyes.

To close his *Michelangelo-Lieder*, Wolf selects the complete “Fühlt meine Seele.” It is a textbook Italian form, with the rhyme scheme abba abba cde cde. In the first half of the octave, the narrator alludes to a

beautiful but bittersweet object, presented as a mirage of some type. The imagery is visual, but amorphous. The memory is of something metaphorical rather than real, imagined rather than experienced. Visual gives way to aural in the second half of the octave: perhaps we are in for a process of elimination of the senses as in Descartes' *Method*. Somehow, sound brings about clarity of experience, but at the cost of the visual. An absence of physical sensation in the first quatrain is replaced by "incomprehensibly burning pain" in the heart and eyes. Tears blur the narrator's vision, recalling the ripples that destroy the narcissistic image in the first poem. The first declarative statement occurs immediately before the volta. The powerlessness of the mortal Everynarrator that is heard so strongly in the second song is echoed and transformed back into the first person singular, thereby organising the entire cycle, with regards to the identity of the lyric persona, into a loose ABA form. As was the case in "Wohl denk ich oft," the narrator is searching for self-completion through love. While in the earlier song, the narrator naively half-believed that he had found a superficial love of his own reflection to be sufficient, in "Fühlt meine Seele," the narrator is aware of the fragile and fleeting nature of that same self-love.

In the first half of the sestet, the narrator is admitting his inability to sort out his misery on his own. He asks for help. His fragile image of bravado and self-sufficiency had not been enough to protect him from the reality "Alles endet," and the narrator appears here, scared of the yet-to-come and hoping for redemption in his finite time. Looking back over his experience through the cycle, the narrator's doubts

about the certainty of his existence and relevance to others (signified by the unstable second inversion sonority) were well-founded. A second volta occurs with the second half of the sestet. There is a sort of hemiola in the sestet: the three couplet-sentences grate against the two groupings by rhyme scheme. Once again, as in the first poem, the narrator speaks of some past time marked by an experience of a loved one. In "Wohl denk ich oft," the time frame in the narrative occurred before the loved one. Here, the time that is addressed, is that time since he first sees the beloved. In the final two lines, we have the first real (empirical, experienced) interaction with the loved one in the entire cycle. It is here that the narrator returns to the mindset of the first song, when external objects are blamed for his state of discontent.

The song is framed by yet another piano prelude and postlude. The upward trajectory of the bass line resembles an inversion of the morose descending vocal line of the second song; the right-hand figuration in m. 4 seems to recall the oscillating opening of the cycle and is a diminution of the pattern found in mm. 1-3. A series of cambiata-like figures create motivic unity with the other songs: witness the top note of the left hand in mm. 5-8, or the piano's right hand counterpoint to the voice in mm. 7 and 8.

## Example 7: “Fühlt meine Seele,” mm. 1-9.1

1

Fühlt mei-ne See-le das er-

6

sehen - te Licht von Gott, der sie er - schuf? Ist es der Strahl von and - rer Schön-heit aus dem Jam - mer - tal.

*ppp*

*poco cresc.*

*f*

*p*

The “weakness” or “childishness” motif appears here, too, this time in the piano. It pervades most of the song. The voice is curiously independent: unlike in the first song, the vocal line’s phrasing is worked out independent of the poetic form, following instead the grammatical structure of the sentences. The song is roughly in ABA’B’ form, as marked first and foremost by the key signatures. The motive that unifies the song is first presented in the voice in m. 5. The voice is allowed this motive only in the E minor-dominated sections of the song; it later reappears in m. 30. The piano is allowed a slightly altered form of that motive (an alteration that gives the motive — and thus the piano — the external, a forward momentum, a generative ability that is not possessed by the narrator) in mm. 12, 13, 19, 20, 23, 36-38, and 42. Measures 12-13, upon the switch to the major mode, is a textbook instance (literally – Sams uses this song as one of his examples) of the first “love” motif in Wolf’s arsenal, characterised by the two converging musical lines in the right hand.

**Example 8: “Fühlt meine Seele,” mm. 11.4-13.1. Sams’ “love” motif can be seen between the two voices in the RH piano.**

ist es ein Klang, ein Traum - ge-sicht,

The moment of rupture comes in m. 40: for all of the chromatic alterations of the beginning of this song, and with those of the first two songs, a new sense of time arrives here and we hear the first moment of harmonic clarity in a classical sense. In E major, Wolf presents us with  $I_4^6 - VI - IV - II^7 - V^7 - I$ .

**Example 9: “Fühlt meine Seele,” mm. 40-42.1, with Roman numeral analysis underlay.**

Her - rin, dein - ne Au - gen Schuld

$I_4^6$  VI IV  $II^7$   $V^7$  I

The clarity is again undermined by other motivic connections and the text: the voice’s “turns” with the recurring motive are to the texts “is my soul yearning

for the longed-for light [of God]” and “[what I long for] shows me only the benevolence of another.” The notions of longing and absence are thus encapsulated in this motive. Immediately after the poet has his moment of clarity, the piano repeats this new – and specific to this song – “unfulfilled” motive four times in the coda. The lower part of the right hand traverses both up and down in counterpoint against the principal motive of the piece, bringing the lovers together and pulling them apart. It is the descending counterpoint that gets the last word, and the narrator’s love appears to be unrequited. The more telling tale about late style in this song is that, in contrast to the German Romantics’ ideal of *Bildung*, the narrator’s journey has not resulted in his knowing himself any more thoroughly. The pervasion of “Fühlt meine Seele’s” “unfulfilled” motive indicates the narrator’s yet-remaining lack of self knowledge.

To use Biblical imagery, meeting his love was a Damascus moment for the narrator... but this conversion, unlike Paul’s, is incomplete. Before his love for the “dich” of the first poem exists, he turned in a chaotic fashion, wasting each day. Afterward, rather than “turning with” his world, as the word “conversion” denotes, he continues to oscillate as a stagnation – there is change in him without development, that is, a continual change of place without any change of state.

The lateness *in* the cycle comes in its timelessness – a contrast to Said’s timeliness. The change without development, so against the requirements of *Bildung* required of the Romantic protagonist, occurs in some amorphous relative time. There is a single discrete

moment in the cycle – the meeting of the beloved, and we do not know when that was. The concepts of past and future are mutable, and neither we nor the narrator have any real sense of where or when the present is. The poet is caught in a constant state of “in-betweenness” but without a place of his own. He is between “Ja und Nein”, “Süss und Herbe,” between major and minor, between C# and E. Most terrifyingly for the narrator, he is somewhere between his *Entstehung* and his *Endung*, but without direction – he is stuck in “rings vergehende,” even in “life.” The truest and bleakest expression from the poet comes in “Alles endet:” the sway of C# and E is rendered absolutely powerless at the text “Und nun sind wir leblos hier,” set to an almost atonal melody that indicates that wherever “hier” is, it is not of this place – it is totally foreign and horrifying.

In appropriating the Romantic song cycle for such a bleak statement, Wolf is placing himself very much within and yet apart from that tradition. Subject matter aside, the fact that Wolf turns to translations for his last songs places him apart from his models. The Lied was very much bound to German language (a requirement of culture (*das Volk*) for Schlegel and of *Heimat* for Heidegger) and folk poetry. For the *Michelangelo-Lieder*, Wolf turns to a Renaissance Italian source. The poetry speaks from the distant past, and across space, having originated in a radically different *Weltanschauung*. Rather than folk verse, Wolf has set classical, strict forms, and fragmented two of those texts. It is a deeply personal statement that Wolf has fashioned, difficult to grasp because of its bizarre language and complex weaving of musical symbols.

The cycle has turned the poems into a sort of distilled novel, and one that cannot be paraphrased at all. It packs a great deal of philosophy and experience into a short space, giving it immense weight. Music is an event that is strangely “late”: it is experienced in the present, ceases to exist the moment the sound stops, and is always understood retrospectively. Through the narrator’s bleak experience, one that we experience *with* him as we listen to the cycle, we get the sense of catastrophe that is inherent, for Adorno, to late works of art.



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## Abstract

The *Michelangelo-Lieder* are Hugo Wolf's only songs that the composer himself considered as a song cycle. The relative lack of popular and critical attention paid these works is undue: they are challenging to listeners, and music is first an aural art. The concept of "late work" as explored by Theodor Adorno, and by Edward Said after him, is a useful one that allows us to better contextualize these late songs. The present analysis offers a way of listening to these works within a more familiar aural framework: identifying elements of unity within the cycle and situating the *Michelangelo-Lieder* within Wolf's substantial oeuvre creates familiarity and thereby breeds appreciation and personal understanding. Following a brief analysis of musical characteristics of late style as Said identifies them in his book, *On Late Style*, the essay turns to the genesis of the *Michelangelo-Lieder*. Each of the three songs is addressed in turn, with an aim to address the text, the music, and their intersections. Although considered outdated in some circles, the catalogue of musical motives throughout Wolf's vocal oeuvre is employed judiciously to help to reintegrate the *Michelangelo-Lieder* within the composer's total output. Elements of textual and musical unity are highlighted, and drawn together at the end, retrospectively. In addition to textual and musical ties among the three songs, "lateness" is shown to provide unity to the set and to give modern analytical weight to Wolf's assertion that the *Michelangelo-Lieder* be considered a cycle.



## Virtuosity in Clara Schumann's Piano Compositions

*Jacob Sagrans*

Listen, Robert, would you compose something brilliant, [and] easy to understand...? I would like so much to have something of yours to play at concerts that is suited to a general audience. It's humiliating for a genius, of course, but expedience demands it. Once you provide an audience with something they can understand, you can show them something more difficult—but first you have to win the audience over.<sup>1</sup>

Clara Wieck<sup>2</sup> wrote these oft-quoted words in a letter to Robert Schumann during her second concert tour to Paris in 1839. Although they refer to her perform-

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I am immensely grateful to Dr. Roe-Min Kok for her help in shaping and refining my topic for this paper; Twila Bakker, Alisabeth Concord, Iain Gillis, and the other members of the editorial board of *Musicological Explorations* for reading, proof-reading, and suggesting improvements to my paper; and to Daniel Cooperman for his help with German translations.

<sup>1</sup> Weissweiler, Eva, ed., *The Complete Correspondence of Clara and Robert Schumann*, vol. 2, trans. Hildegard Fritsch and Ronald L. Crawford (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 138.

<sup>2</sup> This paper uses the name “Clara Wieck” to refer to her prior to her 1840 marriage to Robert Schumann, and “Clara Schumann” for after the marriage. Because this paper discusses Clara Schumann in conjunction with Robert Schumann and Friedrich Wieck, she is always referred to either by her given and surnames combined, or simply “Clara.” Since “Wieck” and “Schumann” are occasionally used to refer to Friedrich Wieck and Robert Schumann, Clara is never referred to as simply “Wieck” or “Schumann.”

ance repertoire, they also reflect the direction that her compositional output would take, which around this time gradually began to change from crowd-pleasing virtuosic showpieces, or what David Ferris has termed “performer’s music,” to more complex and less openly showy pieces, or “composer’s music.”<sup>3</sup> Even the most cursory glance into her major piano compositions reveals this general aesthetic shift. While works such as the *Romance variée* (op. 3, 1831-3) and *Variations de concert* (op. 8, 1837)<sup>4</sup> firmly exemplify a virtuosic style in line with the fashionable Parisian salon music of such composers as Theodor Döhler, Frédéric Kalkbrenner, and Sigismond Thalberg, a much less virtuosic style predominates post-1840. While Nancy Reich has noted this trend in her biography of Clara Schumann,<sup>5</sup> as have other biographers such as Joan Chissell,<sup>6</sup> there is little discussion

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<sup>3</sup> David Ferris, “Public Performance and Private Understanding: Clara Wieck’s Concerts in Berlin,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 56, no. 2 (2003): 354.

<sup>4</sup> All dates and titles for Clara Schumann’s compositions are taken from Nancy B. Reich, “Schumann, Clara,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/> (accessed 7 March 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and The Woman*, rev. ed. (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2001), 211-48.

<sup>6</sup> Chissell focuses primarily on the shift in virtuosity in Clara Schumann’s performance repertoire, although implies that the shift applied to her compositions as well by saying, “she was fully prepared to renounce all youthful dross to play her own part in the magazine’s [*Die neue Zeitschrift für Musik*] avowed aims of awakening interest in the forgotten past and of ‘hastening the dawn of a new poetic age.’” See Joan Chissell, *Clara Schumann: A Dedicated Spirit* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1983), xii.

on how this aesthetic shift may have been affected by the two major shifts in Clara Schumann's life in 1840: her marriage to the decidedly anti-virtuoso<sup>7</sup> music critic and composer Robert Schumann, and her emancipation from her overbearing father and impresario, Friedrich Wieck. Given Robert Schumann's disparaging views on virtuosity, as well as the extremely strained relationship between the Schumanns and Friedrich Wieck resulting from Clara and Robert's courtship, it may be tempting to infer that the change in Clara Schumann's compositions is a direct result of her marriage. But is such a conclusion tenable when examined in the context of the copious writings on virtuosity Robert Schumann and his circle of critics published in *Die Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, as well as the occasional reviews published on the works and performances of Clara Schumann? This essay examines this question, drawing on primary sources such as the *Neue Zeitschrift*, as well as recent writings on musical virtuosity in the nineteenth century, most notably those of Liszt scholar Dana Gooley in his book *The Virtuoso Liszt*.<sup>8</sup> After positing possible rea-

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<sup>7</sup> See especially Schumann's account of the 1834 founding of the *Die Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, which he regularly contributed to and edited from 1835-44, as a reaction to the prominence of virtuosos in the European musical scene of the 1830s in Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, eds., *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1984), 358. Original German in Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, ed. Heinrich Simon (Leipzig: Reclam, 1888), vol. I, iii-v.

<sup>8</sup> Dana Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004).

sons for this change in virtuosity in Clara Schumann's compositions this essay discusses the broader implications of a shift away from virtuosity in light of the opposition emerging in the nineteenth century between "popular" and "high" musical styles. This analysis relies heavily on the pioneering work of Peter Burke in *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*.<sup>9</sup> I do not, however, intend to argue that this shift in Clara Schumann's music owes its sole responsibility to Robert Schumann's anti-virtuosic stance, or that she lacked compositional confidence outside the guard of her husband and father. Rather, I argue that one can gain new insights into Clara Schumann's works when one examines Robert Schumann's anti-virtuosic critiques.

This paper focuses on the piano works of Clara Schumann (primarily those for solo piano, but also including her Piano Concerto and Trio) and examines how they may or may not be seen as virtuosic. I limit the discussion to piano works since most of Robert Schumann's critiques of virtuosity revolve around the piano virtuoso salon,<sup>10</sup> and also because Clara Schumann was an accomplished piano virtuosa herself who made her living primarily as a performer, and it is therefore easier to quantify how the conventions of early nineteenth-century virtuosity seeped into her piano compositions than into her other works. In addition, Clara wrote fifteen of her twenty-one published

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<sup>9</sup> Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: New York UP, 1978).

<sup>10</sup> See Leon Plantinga, *Schumann as Critic* (New York: Da Capo, 1976), 191-217 for an overview of these critiques.



opuses for solo piano, so an examination of her writing for piano can be seen as representative of her compositional style at large.<sup>11</sup>

Choosing piano works also makes sense in light of the general virtuoso scene of early Romantic Europe, which centred on the piano virtuosity of the Parisian salon, where performers such as Liszt and Thalberg frequently played. The rise in popularity of *grand opéra* in post-*Querelle des Bouffons* Paris led French audiences to favour singable instrumental styles that invoked an operatic sensibility.<sup>12</sup> This valuing of singability becomes apparent when looking at the well-known 1837 Liszt-Thalberg piano duel, where, although the competition had no clear “winner,” Dana Gooley has shown that there is significant primary source evidence to suggest that “Thalberg’s aesthetic of singing on the piano” resonated far more with Parisian audiences than Liszt’s characteristic mapping of the orchestra onto the piano.<sup>13</sup> One can then conclude that in this setting virtuosity pleased the crowd if it was not overly dense, complex, or convoluted, but appealed to the singability of opera arias while also adding in touches of impressive idiomatic piano techniques. The Liszt-Thalberg duel also exemplifies what

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<sup>11</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the opuses of Clara Schumann, see Reich, *Clara Schumann*, rev. ed., 211-48.

<sup>12</sup> Gooley, *Virtuoso Liszt*, 35.

<sup>13</sup> In particular, Gooley refers to the Parisian music journal *Le Ménestrel*, which tended to favour Thalberg over Liszt, as evidenced by disparaging articles on Liszt in vol. 3, no. 15 (March 13, 1836), vol. 4 no. 22 (April 30, 1837), and vol. 9, no. 19 (April 17, 1842).

Jim Samson has called the “performance culture” of early nineteenth-century pianistic traditions, where the performance and performer outweighed the text of the performance, the musical score.<sup>14</sup> Both the operatic inspiration of this school of piano virtuosity and the unbalanced relationship between the composer and performer in this “performance culture” played a large role in Robert Schumann’s critiques of virtuosity.

This is not to say that Robert Schumann’s critiques of virtuosity rested solely on the Parisian salon style. In fact, his views on the virtuosity of the salon scene are surprisingly difficult to pinpoint, both because, as Plantinga has noted, his critiques often presumed a familiarity among his readers regarding the more specific conventions he was criticising and therefore did not necessarily spell these conventions out, and because Schumann’s views were rooted in a complex shift in the performer-composer dynamic that was occurring in post-Enlightenment and early Romantic Europe.<sup>15</sup> The complexity of the context from which Robert Schumann’s anti-virtuoso views emerged requires a deeper examination before one can apply his views to an analysis of Clara’s works. Particularly, Schumann’s views on virtuosity can be seen as coming from the new Romantic privileging of the composer, the artistic genius who creates music, above the performer, a mere executor of the composer’s inten-

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<sup>14</sup> Jim Samson, “The Practice of Early-Nineteenth-Century Pianism,” in *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?*, ed. Michael Talbot, 110-27 (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2000), 112.

<sup>15</sup> Plantinga, *Schumann as Critic*, 198.

tions.<sup>16</sup> Yet at the same time, as Mary Hunter has noted, late Enlightenment aesthetic thought, particularly in Germany among such artists as poet Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart and composer Johann Abraham Peter Schulz, saw the ideal musical performance as requiring the complete merging of the performer and the composer to serve the ultimate meaning or goals of the music.<sup>17</sup> One could conclude, then, that the composer-performer dynamic required what Hunter calls the “merging of two souls” to serve the aims of the music, and also that given the rise of the post-1800 work concept of music as text, the aims of the music became more and more synonymous with the intentions of the composer.<sup>18</sup> In other words, the composer and performer became one, but that one was increasingly weighted towards the composer.

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<sup>16</sup> See Lydia Goehr, “After 1800: The Beethoven Paradigm,” in *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music*, rev. ed., 205-42 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007) for a detailed analysis of the predominant post-1800 “work concept” where performers are expected to remain faithful to the musical text.

<sup>17</sup> Mary Hunter, “‘To Play as if from the Soul of the Composer’: The Idea of the Performer in Early Romantic Aesthetics,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 58, no. 2 (2005): 362; Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst* (Vienna: Degen, 1806), facsimile edition, ed. Fritz and Margrit Kaiser (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1990), 295; Johann Abraham Peter Schulz, “Vortrag,” in *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste in einzeln, nach alphabetischer Ordnung der Kunstwörter auf einander folgenden, Artikeln abgehandelt*, vol. 4, ed. Johann Georg Sulzer (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1792), facsimile edition (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1967), 691-2.

<sup>18</sup> Hunter, “Play from Soul of Composer,” 364; Goehr, “Beethoven Paradigm.”

In such a milieu of aesthetic thought, musical virtuosity simultaneously became an extreme end of the Romantic cult of the individual artistic genius, but also represented a threat to the genius or the intentions of the composer. This conflicted viewpoint is perhaps most concretely exemplified by Johann Georg Krünitz's influential late-eighteenth century *Oekonomische Encyklopädie oder allgemeines System der Staats- Stadt- Haus- u. Landwirthschaft, in alphabetischer Ordnung* (Economic encyclopaedia, or general system of state, city, domestic, and agricultural economy, in alphabetical order) entry on virtuosity (Virtuos), which both praises virtuosos by saying, "one preferably calls the most skilled musicians virtuosos," but then goes on to distinguish "true virtuosity" from an emptier variety that:

Too often... has remained entirely superficial, focused only on the shimmer and splendour on the music's brilliant surface; naturally one loses interest very quickly and what remains is nothing more than charlatanry that dazzles the eyes but leaves the heart empty.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Oekonomische Encyklopädie, oder allgemeines System der Staats- Stadt- Haus- u. Landwirthschaft, in alphabetischer Ordnung*, s.v. "Virtuos" (Berlin: Pauli, 1773-1858), online edition at <http://www.kruenitz1.uni-trier.de/> (accessed 28 November 2009), author's translation from: "Vorzugsweise nennt man die geschicktesten Tonkünstler Virtuosen," and "aber zu oft ist die Bildung ganz auf der Oberfläche geblieben und hat sich mit dem Prunk und Schimmer einer brillanten Außenseite begnügt; dann verflüchtigt sich natürlich sehr bald das Interesse, und es bleibt nicht viel mehr übrig als Charlatenerie, die die Augen blendet, aber das Herz leer läßt."

In this context, where virtuosity became a way of potentially imbalancing the ideal composer-performer dynamic, it makes sense that a composer like Robert Schumann would have had relatively negative views towards virtuosity. Indeed, Schumann's critiques regularly criticised performers for not exemplifying "true virtuosity," which he described as "giv[ing] us something more than mere flexibility and execution."<sup>20</sup> A non-true variety of virtuosity was also often compounded for Schumann by a lack of critical engagement among the audience, who did not attend "to judge, but only to enjoy."<sup>21</sup> In essence, Schumann seemed to view ideal virtuosity as serving a purpose higher than just entertainment. One can also glean from his comments an attempt to distance himself from the tastes of the masses, which did not serve to advance the "true virtuosity" he idealised.

Schumann's views on the conventions of the Parisian salon, however, may be difficult for us to grasp from a modern perspective, for as Leon Plantinga has

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<sup>20</sup> Plantinga, *Schumann as Critic*, 197-218; This particular quote comes from a review of an 1841 Thalberg concert. See Robert Schumann, "S Thalberg: Concert für den Pensionsfond der Musiker am 8ten Februar," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, vol. 14, no. 14 (February 15, 1841), facsimile in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Band 14, 1841.II (Scarsdale, NY: Annemarie Schnase, 1963), 58. English translation in Schumann, *Music and Musicians: Essays and Criticisms*, ed. and trans. Fanny Raymond Ritter., vol. 1 (London: William Reeves, [n.d.]), 170-72.

<sup>21</sup> Schumann, *Music and Musicians*, vol. 1, 171, original German in Schumann, "S Thalberg."

noted, the musical clichés of the salon were so familiar to audiences and readers of the day that Schumann and other critics writing in the *Neue Zeitschrift* rarely saw a need to spell out the specific stylistic elements to which they objected.<sup>22</sup> Plantinga, extrapolating from reviews in the *Neue Zeitschrift*, has created a list of the virtuosic compositional elements of the Parisian piano salon that Schumann and other critics for the *Neue Zeitschrift* found problematic.<sup>23</sup> These include: introductions which change rapidly between fast and slow sections, quickly alternating between the right and left hand to play chords in the same register, composing a melody in a middle voice with sweeping arpeggios surrounding it, scales played in octaves, frequent tremolos, arpeggios, repeated notes, and a heavy reliance on sixth chords.<sup>24</sup> As will be examined in more detail later in this paper through specific musical examples, many of these elements are present in the works Clara Wieck composed prior to her marriage to Schumann.

It is arguable, though, that Clara's incorporation of this Parisian virtuoso style was the result of artistic necessity rather than an aesthetic valuation of this style. As Gooley has argued, one practically had to perform in the Parisian salons if he or she were to have any hope of getting recognised as a professional pianist in the early nineteenth century.<sup>25</sup> This could

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<sup>22</sup> Plantinga, *Schumann as Critic*, 198.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 199-203.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Gooley, *Virtuoso Liszt*, 59.

explain why Friedrich Wieck was clearly eager to introduce Clara into the salon scene at a very young age. Specifically, after the success of Clara's first solo concert at the Leipzig Gewandhaus in November 1830, Wieck decided Clara was ready to set out in September 1831 on an extended tour to Paris. Spending February through April 1832 there, Clara had plenty of opportunity to become exposed to Parisian musical values. In addition to playing in the salon of two wealthy German émigré music connoisseurs, Madame Leo and Madame Valentin, Clara met a laundry list of the influential composers in Paris at the time, including Meyerbeer, Mendelssohn, Kalkbrenner, Pixis, Herz, and Paganini. The works Clara performed while in Paris firmly exemplified the showiness of the virtuoso salon, consisting primarily of transcriptions of opera arias.<sup>26</sup> However, it is likely that Friedrich Wieck programmed these pieces in order to help establish Clara's reputation with works her audiences would appreciate, and not risk hurting her reception by programming overly "serious" music like Bach or Beethoven.<sup>27</sup> In fact, Reich has suggested that both Friedrich and Clara found the Parisian salon tradition to be "frivolous and superficial," and, therefore, only engaged in it out of necessity.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Pamela Susskind Pettler, "Clara Schumann's Recitals, 1832-50," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 4, no. 1 (1980): 72.

<sup>27</sup> Reich, *Clara Schumann*, rev. ed., 253.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid; See also Friedrich Wieck's letter from February 16, 1832 written from Paris to his wife, where he berates a whole host of attributes of the Parisian salon, including how "everything is evaluated on its outward appearance" (author's translation from:

To some extent, however, when looking at Clara's early compositions, it becomes questionable whether she truly found the French salon scene merely "frivolous and superficial," as there are many similarities between her early compositions and those of such piano virtuosi as Thalberg.<sup>29</sup> In fact, her early piano compositions are replete with musical clichés. A work like her *Variations de concert* (op. 8, 1837) presents a prime case in point. In this composition, Clara presents a theme and variations based on the cavatina "Ah non fia sempre" from Bellini's 1827 opera *Il pirata*. Ironically, Clara wrote this composition at a time when Robert Schumann began launching diatribes against virtuosi writing "mediocre" and "vulgar" variations on Italian opera themes.<sup>30</sup> Throughout the piece, the melody is presented with an increasing amount of virtuosic filler surrounding it. More specific virtuosic techniques include frequent running arpeggios, octaves, frequent diminished seventh chords, and a forte and presto *tour de force* finale (see example 1). Gaspare Spontini, the chief conductor of the Berlin Hofoper praised opus 8 as "the grandest and most beautiful piece of bravura music in recent times," indicating at

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"alles ist hier auf das Äußerste berechnet"), and how Clara was expected to dress all in white and in a different dress at every appearance. See Friedrich Wieck, *Briefe aus den Jahren 1830-1838*, ed. Käthe Walch-Schumann (Cologne: Arno Volk-Verlag, 1968), 43-46.

<sup>29</sup> Reich, *Clara Schumann*, rev. ed. 253.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 229, original German in Robert Schumann, "Variationen für Pianoforte: Erster Gang," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, vol. 5, no. 16 (August 23, 1836), facsimile in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Band 5, 1841.II (Scarsdale, NY: Annemarie Schnase, 1963), 63.



least a perception that the composition was specifically intended to appeal to a virtuosic sensibility.<sup>31</sup>

**Example 1: *Variations de concert* (op. 8, 1837). Excerpt from finale, starting 16 measures before the end. Note the parallel chords and running arpeggios.**



Another typical early piano work of Clara Wieck's is her *Romance variée* (op. 3, 1831-3), her first composition dedicated to Robert Schumann. This work, like the *Variations de concert*, is firmly in a virtuosic style in line with the Parisian piano salon. Reich has claimed this piece is “replete with musical clichés of the day, and... is precisely the kind of shallow work Robert Schumann was to hold up to ridicule in his *Neue Zeitschrift*.”<sup>32</sup> Presented as a theme followed by a set of highly ornamented variations, the composition appeals to the aesthetics of *grand opéra* and singability, with the added clichés of extended cadenzas full of impressive sounding yet overly repetitive ornamental figures, simple arpeggiation, parallel rolled chords (see

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Reich, *Clara Schumann*, rev. ed., 51.

<sup>32</sup> Reich, *Clara Schumann*, rev. ed., 223; Plantinga, *Schumann as Critic*, 196-217.

example 2, the end of the theme moving into the first cadenza), frequent playing of the melody in octaves, and a *tour de force* presto finale.

**Example 2: *Romance variée* (op. 3, 1831-3).** Excerpt from the end of the theme and beginning of the first cadenza, taken from Clara Schumann, *Romantic Piano Music*, ed. Franzpeter Goebels (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1976), vol. 2, 2-3. Copyright 1976 by Bärenreiter, Kassel. Printed by permission.



A somewhat exceptional work from Clara Wieck's pre-1840 output that merits mention is her Piano Concerto (op. 7, 1833-6), as it is the only orchestral work she published, was extremely impressive as a large-scale work coming from an adolescent, and represents a break from her previous compositions, which had all been smaller piano works. Given Clara's career as a pianist and the character of her previous compositions, one might expect that her concerto would engage the piano in a similarly virtuosic style. Yet the concerto as a whole stands out as a less virtuosic exception among her pre-1840 compositions. Specifically, Clara employed conventions more typical of the refined and serious Romantic concerto that was emerging at the time, as epitomised in works such

as Felix Mendelssohn's first Piano Concerto (op. 25, 1831), where there are no breaks between the movements for audience applause, and cadenzas are either lacking, or more firmly related to the orchestral parts.<sup>33</sup> It is possible that the relative lack of virtuosity in this composition is the result of her choice of genre (specifically, it would be challenging to effectively execute an orchestral composition with the same level of virtuosity as, say, a Liszt étude, due to issues of coordination between the soloist and orchestra), yet such a view is too simplistic in the case of Clara's concerto given that she turned to Robert Schumann for advice when writing in this genre that was new for her. Specifically, she initially wrote the concerto's third movement as an unorchestrated single movement *Concertsatz* that she then asked Schumann to orchestrate for her. After Schumann completed his orchestration, Clara went back and wrote the remaining two movements and orchestrated them herself in a similar style. While Clara's writings discuss only the more mechanical details of who orchestrated what<sup>34</sup> it seems reasonable to suggest that Schumann's opinions on how a concerto should be written seeped into Clara's composition in light of her young age when she wrote it, and the ambitiousness of her endeavour given the makeup of her previous output.

It is important to note, though, that while Schumann helped Clara in writing the third movement of her Piano Concerto, he did not necessarily view the con-

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<sup>33</sup> Reich, *Clara Schumann*, rev. ed., 227.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

certo as a high art antidote to the Parisian virtuoso salon. His views on concerti were in fact much more conflicted. For example, in an article entitled “Das Clavier-Concert” (The piano concerto) in the *Neue Zeitschrift*, he simultaneously lamented a lack of piano concerti in the 1830s and also complained that the recent piano concerti the *Zeitschrift* had reviewed exhibited a “severing of the bond with the orchestra,” where “modern pianistic art wants to challenge the symphony, and rule supreme through its own resources.”<sup>35</sup> Schumann longed for a concerto where “the orchestra, more than a mere onlooker, [adds] with its many expressive capabilities... to the artistic whole.”<sup>36</sup> In Schumann’s view, the more conventional piano concerti of the 1830s, by not fully engaging the orchestra, effectively became little different from virtuoso salon music.

Interestingly, Schumann’s critiques of the piano concerto apply to some aspects of Clara’s concerto. This may seem surprising given the role he played in the composition of the third movement, although it would make sense if she wrote parts of her concerto as a virtuosic display for the piano with minimal orchestral intervention given both my thesis and Nancy Reich’s general observations on virtuosity in Clara’s

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<sup>35</sup> Plantinga (trans.), *Schumann as Critic*, 204, original German in Robert Schumann, “Das Clavier-Concert,” *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, vol. 10, no. 2 (January 4, 1839), facsimile in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Band 10. 1839.I (Scarsdale, NY: Annemarie Schnase, 1963), 5.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

compositions.<sup>37</sup> In fact, the first movement involves little interplay between the orchestra and piano, and the second movement is written as a romance for solo piano with minimal orchestral intervention (see example 3, which shows a passage from the opening of the second movement). As a result, Schumann's complaint regarding the "severing of the bond" between the orchestra and piano in more conventional concerti could arguably be applied to these movements.<sup>38</sup> However, the third movement, which is by far the longest, does exhibit a high level of interplay between the piano and orchestra (see example 4, which shows the alternation between the piano and orchestra nearly every eight note during the closing bars of the movement).<sup>39</sup> Although Robert Schumann played a

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<sup>37</sup> Reich, *Clara Schumann*, rev. ed., 211-48; Reich, "Schumann, Clara," *New Grove*.

<sup>38</sup> Plantinga (trans.), *Schumann as Critic*, 204, original German in Schumann, "Clavier-Concert," 5.

<sup>39</sup> An interesting examination beyond the scope of this paper would be to compare and contrast the piano-orchestra dynamic in Clara Wieck's concerto to Robert Schumann's only complete piano concerto (op. 54), which he finished in 1845, ten years after Clara completed hers, and is not only in the same key (a minor), but employs an intermezzo with a prominent solo cello part, much like the second movement of Clara's concerto, which Reich has suggested could be seen as a influence from Clara in Robert's composition (*Clara Schumann*, rev. ed., 228). My sense is, both from listening to and from reading Michael Steinberg's programme notes to Robert Schumann's opus 54 (see Steinberg, *The Concerto: A Listener's Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 413-19) that one could argue Robert's work employs tighter interactions between the orchestra and the piano and uses the piano in a less overtly showy manner, although such

large role in the orchestration of this movement, Reich notes that Clara, while adopting many of Schumann's orchestrational choices, also made many alterations to his orchestration.<sup>40</sup> Thus, it is possible to assert that Clara herself adopted both a similar treatment of the piano to that of the virtuoso salon (in the first and second movements) as well as a high level of orchestra-piano interaction (in the third movement) in her Piano Concerto. In light of this combination, I would suggest that Clara's Piano Concerto represents an in-between state, or a foreshadowing of what would come compositionally when she would become independent from her father as Schumann's wife.<sup>41</sup>

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a claim would have to be backed up by much more detailed score analyses.

<sup>40</sup> Reich, *Clara Schumann*, rev. ed., 227.

<sup>41</sup> Further supporting this idea of her concerto as in between a "high" and more popular virtuosic style is the prevalent idea of the piano concerto as a fundamentally in-between genre, as exemplified by Carl Ferdinand Becker's review of Clara's concerto, where he claims that "a concerto should entertain and give pleasure to the layman, satisfy and interest the connoisseur, and finally give the virtuoso sufficient opportunity to present his mastery in the fullest sense of the word" (author's translation from: "ein Concert soll dem Laien Genuß gewähren und ihn unterhalten; den Kenner befriedigen und interessiren und endlich dem Virtuosen hinlänglich Gelegenheit geben, seine Meisterschaft im vollsten Sinne des Wortes darzulegen"). See Carl Ferdinand Becker, "Concerte für das Pianoforte," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, vol. 6, no. 14 (February 17, 1837), facsimile in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Band 6, 1837.I (Scarsdale, NY: Annemarie Schnase, 1963), 56.

Example 3: Piano Concerto (op. 7, 1833-6), passage from the opening to the second movement. Excerpt taken from Clara Schumann, *Konzert für Klavier und Orchester, a-moll* (op. 7), ed. Janina Klassen (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1990), 41.

The image displays a musical score for Clara Schumann's Piano Concerto, Op. 7, measures 31 through 41. The score is written for Piano (Klav.) and Violoncello Solo (Vc. Solo). The key signature is A minor (three flats). The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 31-33) features the piano playing a melodic line with a trill in measure 31, marked *pp con grazia* and *f*. The second system (measures 34-36) shows the piano playing a trill in measure 34, marked *stretto*, and the cello playing a trill in measure 35, marked *tenuto*. The third system (measures 37-41) shows the piano playing a trill in measure 37, marked *calando*, and the cello playing a trill in measure 38, marked *p legato*. The score includes various musical notations such as trills, slurs, and dynamic markings.

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Example 4: Piano Concerto (op. 7, 1833-6), ending of the final movement. Excerpt taken from Clara Schumann, *Konzert für Klavier und Orchester, a-moll* (op. 7), ed. Janina Klassen (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1990), 121.

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The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format. The woodwinds (Flute II, Oboe II, Clarinets I and II, Bassoons I and II) and brass (Horns I and II, Trumpets I and II, Trombone, Piano) parts are in the upper staves. The piano part is in the lower staves. The score includes various dynamics such as *ff* (fortissimo) and *a2* (second octave). The piece concludes with a *Fine* marking.

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If Schumann's involvement in Clara's Piano Concerto represents an early foreshadowing of the direction her compositions would take, a more concrete precursor



can be found in her performance repertoire. Over the course of the 1830s, Clara's concerts progressed from programmes almost entirely built on compositions by virtuoso pianist-composers to programmes with an increasing number of works by Schumann, Mendelssohn, Beethoven, and Chopin.<sup>42</sup> Although this shift was more or less gradual, it does seem to have reached a focal point in her concert tour to Berlin in 1839. This tour happened against an increasingly hostile background, as Clara, Schumann, and Wieck engaged in a drawn-out legal battle over her impending marriage. On this tour, Clara took a bold move in her programming, playing Schumann's *Piano Sonata in G Minor* (op. 22, 1833-8) in its entirety and in a public setting (as opposed to a salon). Such a performance of a serious piano sonata by a living composer in its entirety was almost unheard of in public concert venues, where performers had to appeal to the *Li-ebhaber* masses rather than to the elite *Kenner*.<sup>43</sup> Ferris has suggested that Clara's decision to play the sonata is reflective of her changing relationships with both Schumann and her father.<sup>44</sup> Friedrich Wieck was attempting to sabotage the tour through a nasty letter writing campaign, presumably, as Schumann himself suggested, out of disgrace for Clara's desire to perform and earn money without her father's help, despite the investments he had made in his daughter's

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<sup>42</sup> See Pettler, "Clara Schumann's Recitals," 70-76 for a more detailed discussion on how Clara's performance repertoire shifted over the course of the 1830s.

<sup>43</sup> Ferris, "Public Performance," 389-90, 398.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 364-5.

musical upbringing.<sup>45</sup> It makes sense, then, that in such a hostile climate, Clara would turn away from performing the works her father had ordered her to perform, and would now likely raise antagonistic sentiments, toward the works of Schumann, in whom she increasingly found her emotional support. In fact, Ferris has noted that during the Berlin tour, Clara's letters suggest she had extreme performance anxiety for her concerts of more typical virtuoso works but little anxiety when she played Schumann.<sup>46</sup>

There is also evidence suggesting that Schumann had a direct influence in the programming of his composition during the Berlin tour. In October of 1839 he wrote to Clara, saying:

It crossed my mind that it would really be good for me if you played something of mine at your concert... [for] it will create an opportunity for people to talk about my compositions, and that would help us *right now* [Schumann's emphasis] since people are talking about us so much anyway; in a word, it will influence public opinion and perhaps the judges in our case, too.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 368, 370; See especially the letter Robert wrote to Clara on April 10, 1840 in Eva Weissweiler, ed., *The Complete Correspondence of Clara and Robert Schumann*, vol. 3, trans. Hildegard Fritsch, Ronald L. Crawford, and Harold P. Fry (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 20-23.

<sup>46</sup> Ferris, "Public Performance," 365, 372. See especially Clara Wieck to Robert Schumann (October 26, 1839) in Weissweiler, *Complete Correspondence*, vol. 2, 446-7.

<sup>47</sup> Weissweiler, *Complete Correspondence*, vol. 2, 425.

This quote suggests that Schumann not only wished to convince Clara to programme his music in hopes of advancing his reputation, but that he also cast his persuasion as a necessity for their legal battle with Friedrich Wieck and thus for their marriage. Regardless of how legally necessary it actually was to programme Schumann's music,<sup>48</sup> Clara listened to his suggestions, and performed his music almost unquestioningly. Such persuasive letters at a highly vulnerable time in Clara's life must have imparted on her a sense of importance as she entered her partnership with Schumann in moving away from her previously virtuosity-inclined performance repertoire in favour of more "serious" music.

Clara's sensitivity to Schumann's views also evidences itself in letters between the two regarding her compositions. In these letters, one can sense Clara held a general trepidation over showing her works to Schumann. Particularly, in a letter from 1839 she mentions that she has "a strange fear of showing you [Schumann] a composition of mine; I am always ashamed."

<sup>49</sup> Perhaps this trepidation was justified given the way Schumann responded to this particular composition (a precursor to her *Trois romances* (op. 11, 1838-9))

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<sup>48</sup> It is possible Schumann's reputation had little effect on the legal battle, for although Saxon courts at the time required parental permission to marry, regardless of age, this law was more a formality, and appealing to the court to override a lack of consent was customary. See Reich, *Clara Schumann*, rev. ed., 69.

<sup>49</sup> Clara Wieck to Robert Schumann (April 23, 1839) in Weissweiler, *Complete Correspondence*, vol. 2, 171-3.

with dissatisfaction in a letter a few weeks later.<sup>50</sup> Reich, in an analysis of Clara's writings on her own works, has suggested that she "evidently felt safe in derogating her own work but resented any criticism from others."<sup>51</sup> But in the case of *Trois romances*, the letters between Clara and Schumann discussing the composition following Schumann's initial critique show that Clara, although perhaps initially offended, followed through and revised the piece according to his suggestions.<sup>52</sup> Thus, we have evidence not only of Robert Schumann's increasing influence over Clara as a performer from her 1839 Berlin tour, but also of his increasing influence over her compositions from the letters regarding *Trois romances*.

In the context of both Schumann's increasing influence over Clara and his firmly anti-virtuoso views, it seems all but inevitable that the virtuosity in her piano works would change significantly. Establishing a clear-cut trend is difficult, though, especially since Clara not only wrote less after her marriage due perhaps to her new duties as a wife and mother, but also shifted genres, focusing more on songs than solo piano compositions. The fact that the genres she composed in also changed after her marriage warrants a discussion here as well, for the changes both reflect her shift away from virtuosity and could indicate an

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<sup>50</sup> See Robert Schumann to Clara Wieck (May 19, 1839) in Weissweiler, *Complete Correspondence*, vol. 2, 198-203.

<sup>51</sup> Reich, *Clara Schumann*, rev. ed., 216.

<sup>52</sup> See Weissweiler, *Complete Correspondence*, vol. 2, 210, 231, 237, 252, 266, 274, 277, 294-5, 299, 307, 312, 323, 333.

increasing influence of Schumann on her compositional aesthetic. While Clara's pre-marriage compositions consisted almost entirely of solo piano music (of twelve published works, ten were for solo piano, see figure 1), her post-marriage compositions consisted primarily of songs (among her published works, there are sixteen songs, seven piano works, and four other types of compositions written in 1840 or later, see figure 1). Furthermore, all of her eighteen pre-1840 solo piano compositions (including lost works and those not published in her lifetime) are in what Jeffrey Kallberg, in his discussions of Chopin's compositions, has called "small forms," meaning forms such as the mazurka, polonaise, prelude, or impromptu which Romantic critics generally deemed inferior and even "feminine" due to their smallness.<sup>53</sup> The critic August Kahlert, for instance, characterised these forms as "the lowest and most popular music genre[s]" which often took "recourse to the most expensive finery in order to corrupt the meaning."<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Jeffrey Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 144-5. For the purposes of this paper, I am defining small forms as the solo piano styles (excluding the sonata) which Clara Schumann and Chopin held in common, including polonaises, études/ studies, preludes (not paired with a fugue), romances, waltzes, rondos, nocturnes, variations, impromptus, mazurkas, and scherzos. I am also including caprices, which Clara Schumann wrote, but not Chopin, as they are in line with the characteristics of small forms that Kallberg lays out (135-58).

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. (trans.), 144, original German in August Kahlert, "Die Genrebilder in der modernen Musik," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* vol. 2, no. 47 (June 12, 1835), facsimile in *Neue Zeitschrift für*

Kahlert seemed to dislike these small forms for both their status as “popular” music and, reading somewhat into the words “expensive finery,” for the ways in which they utilise virtuosity.

**Figure 1: Generic breakdown of Clara Schumann’s compositions published in her lifetime, arranged by date of composition. All data about her compositions is drawn from Nancy B. Reich, “Catalogue of Works,” in *Clara Schumann: The Artist and Woman*, rev. ed., 289-337 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001). All works are either single opus numbers or multi-movement works (for published works without opus number), except in the case of songs, which are tallied individually.**

Genre	Number of compositions		
	Composed up to and including 1839	Composed 1840 and later	Unknown date of composition
Solo piano music			
Small forms*	18	8	1
Fugues	0	3	0
Sonatas	0	1	0
Songs (solo voice and piano)	6†	23	0
Chamber music	2	2	0

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*Musik*, Band 2, 1835.I (Scarsdale, NY: Annemarie Schnase, 1963), 190.

Concerti	1	1 (incomplete)	0
Cadenzas on existing concerti	0	2	1
Choral songs	1	3	0
Orchestral works	1	0	0

\*See footnote 53 for a discussion of what small forms are and which specific forms are included under this description for the purposes of this paper.

Robert Schumann did not discuss small forms directly, but in a critique of Chopin he claims to “fear that he [Chopin] will not rise any higher than he has so far risen.... He limits his sphere to the narrow one of pianoforte-music, when, with his powers, he might climb to so great an elevation, and from thence exercise an immense influence on the general progress of our art.”<sup>55</sup> Implicit in this critique is the idea that if Chopin were truly to become a “high” artist, he would have to shift away from small forms and from piano music in general. If Chopin did not heed Schumann’s critiques, perhaps Clara did. Although she wrote eight piano compositions in small forms after her marriage, the genres of her compositions branched out substantially and include twenty-three solo songs, three choral songs, two chamber works,

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<sup>55</sup> Schumann, *Music and Musicians*, vol. 1, 201-2, original German in Robert Schumann, “Kürzere Stücke für Pianoforte,” *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* vol. 15, no. 36 (November 2, 1841), facsimile in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Band 15, 1841.II (Scarsdale, NY: Annemarie Schnase, 1963), 141.

two cadenzas on existing concerti, and one incomplete concerto (see figure 2). And, as will be analysed in more detail below, the virtuosity in even the small forms became more subdued after the marriage.

**Figure 2: Generic breakdown of Clara Schumann's compositions (including all published, with or without opus number, unpublished and lost works) arranged by date of composition. All data about her compositions is drawn from Nancy B. Reich, "Catalogue of Works," in *Clara Schumann: The Artist and Woman*, rev. ed., 289-337 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001). All works are either single opus numbers or multi-movement works (for published works without opus numbers, or unpublished or lost works), except in the case of songs and choral songs, which are tallied individually.**

Genre	Number of compositions		
	Composed up to and including 1839	Composed 1840 and later	Unknown date of composition
Solo piano music			
Small forms*	18	8	1
Fugues	0	3	0
Sonatas	0	1	0
Songs (solo voice and piano)	6†	23	0
Chamber music	2	2	0
Concerti	1	1 (incomplete)	0
Cadenzas on existing concerti	0	2	1
Choral songs	1	3	0
Orchestral works	1	0	0



\*See footnote 53 for a discussion of what small forms are and which specific forms are included under this description for the purposes of this paper.

†These include two songs of uncertain authorship, but that Reich thinks were likely written by Clara. See Reich, *Clara Schumann*, rev. ed., 335.

In looking at specific post-1840 compositions, such as the *Drei Präludien und Fugen* (op. 16, 1845) and her Piano Trio (op. 17, 1846), it becomes striking how far removed they seem from the virtuosity of Clara's younger years. The *Drei Präludien und Fugen*, which Clara wrote as she and Robert immersed themselves in counterpoint studies, are at times almost indistinguishable from Bach (see the strictly contrapuntal writing in the opening to the first fugue in example 5). The strict three-voiced fugal writing makes virtuosic writing in a Parisian salon sense nearly impossible. One, quite justifiably, could see the complex intertwining of contrapuntal lines as virtuosic, although this virtuosity is then created by the fundamental structure of the composition, and is therefore uncharacteristic of the more surface virtuosity Schumann lamented in the Parisian salon, as the virtuosity here serves the advancement of the composition, rather than just pleasing the audience.

**Example 5: *Drei Präludien und Fugen* (op. 16, 1845), opening of the first fugue.**



The *Drei Präludien und Fugen* also offer a case in point in Schumann's increasing influence over Clara. In her diary, Clara discusses her fugue studies primarily in terms of Robert's interests, suggesting that she felt a need to study counterpoint given that her husband was "in the midst of a fugue passion."<sup>56</sup> It is also apparent from various letters by Schumann that he worked hard to get Clara's *Drei Präludien und Fugen* published in hopes of advancing her image as a serious composer who could triumph in what he called the "difficult genre" of contrapuntal writing.<sup>57</sup> In other words, it is clear that Schumann not only influenced the composition of Clara's opus 16, but also hoped to use the piece to project Clara as a serious composer, perhaps to break with her image as a virtuoso-composer. And the composition was indeed

<sup>56</sup> Quoted by Reich, *Clara Schumann*, rev. ed., 230.

<sup>57</sup> Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and Woman* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985), 244, original German in Robert Schumann to C.F. Peters, facsimile in *Erst- und Frühdrucke von Robert Schumann in der Musikbibliothek Leipzig*, ed. Ferdinand Hirsch and Ellen Roser (Leipzig: Bibliographische Veröffentlichungen der Musikbibliothek der Stadt Leipzig, 1960), 47.

successful, earning glowing reviews in both the *Neue Zeitschrift* and the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*.<sup>58</sup>

Shortly after publishing *Drei Präludien und Fugen*, Clara began to write one of her most ambitious and widely respected compositions, her Piano Trio. The trio comes across as a higher, more artful composition, due mainly to its layout in strict four-movement sonata form (her only published work with such a layout), its fugato in the final movement, and also for its equality between parts. It is difficult to say how much of a role Schumann had in Clara's designs for the trio; however, shortly after their marriage the Schumanns studied the chamber music of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven together, which could have presented Robert with another vehicle for influencing Clara's compositional tastes. In addition, Clara had also programmed into her repertoire a trio of Beethoven's in 1834, suggesting that she valued more refined chamber music, but did not have the opportunity or encouragement she needed to write a trio until she left her father for Schumann.

Not all of Clara Schumann's post-1840 piano works, however, completely eschew "empty" virtuosity. Most notably, she still wrote sets of variations in the highly

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<sup>58</sup> See "Für Pianoforte: Clara Schumann, Drei Präludien und Fugen," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, vol. 24, no. 27 (April 2, 1846), facsimile in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Band 24, 1846.I (Scarsdale, NY: Schnase, 1963), 105 and "Clara Schumann, geb. Wieck: Drei Präludien und Fugen für das Pianoforte," *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, no. 5 (February 4, 1846), facsimile in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung: Acht und vierzigster Jahrgang* (Amsterdam: Israel & Knuf, 1966), 75.

singable style we saw in her *Variations de concert*. An example of such a set of variations would be her *Variationen über ein Thema von Robert Schumann* (op. 20, 1853). This composition is quite virtuosic, especially in the fourth variation which presents the melody from the theme (taken from Schumann's *Bunte Blätter*, op. 99, 1838-49) almost unaltered in alto range and surrounded with running chromatic sixteenth note triplets first in the soprano range and later in the bass range, a technique that closely corresponds to Plantinga's list of elements of the virtuosic style of the Parisian salon that Schumann would have found clichéd (see example 6, the opening of the fourth variation).<sup>59</sup> However, the composition does include some more "serious" techniques, like a very imitative sixth variation (see example 7, the opening of the sixth variation). It is also possible that since Clara chose to write this variation on what Schumann would certainly have called a "good boring German theme," that the virtuosity of the fourth variation, regardless of whether or not it is "empty" or "true" virtuosity becomes less problematic, solely for nationalistic reasons.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Plantinga, *Schumann as Critic*, 202.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. (trans.), 197. Original German in Schumann, "Variationen für Pianoforte," 63.

Example 6: *Variationen über ein Thema von Robert Schumann* (op. 20, 1853), opening to the fourth variation. Excerpt taken from Clara Wieck Schumann, *Ausgewählte Klavierwerke* (Munich: G. Henle, 1987), 66. Copyright 1987 by G. Henle Verlag, München. Printed by permission.



Example 7: *Variationen über ein Thema von Robert Schumann* (op. 20, 1853), opening to the sixth variation. Excerpt taken from Clara Wieck Schumann, *Ausgewählte Klavierwerke* (Munich: G. Henle, 1987), 69. Copyright 1987 by G. Henle Verlag, München. Printed by permission.



This potential nationalistic interpretation for the continued presence of virtuosity in Clara Schumann's post-1840 piano compositions requires significantly more analysis of Robert Schumann's and the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*'s views on virtuosity, and I will only be able to make a few preliminary points in the space allotted for this essay. A nationalistic interpretation of Schumann's anti-virtuoso stance clearly makes sense in light of many of the views he expressed in

the aphorisms in his “*musikalische Haus- und Lebensregeln*” (Rules for musical home and lives), which take on a sense of distancing himself from the way the general public valued virtuosity in order to laud his music and those of his contemporaries as “high” art, and often justify this distancing on nationalistic terms. For example, in discussing his views on melody, Schumann wrote:

“Melody” is the amateur’s war-cry, and certainly music without melody is no music. Therefore you must understand what amateurs fancy the word means; anything easily, rhythmically pleasing. But there are melodies of a very different stamp, and every time you open Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, [etc.]..., they will smile out at you in a thousand different ways; you will soon weary, if you know these, of the faded monotony of modern Italian opera melodies.<sup>61</sup>

In addition, when critiquing themes and variations on opera melodies common in the Parisian virtuoso salon scene, Schumann lamented how “one has to swallow the most hackneyed Italian tunes in five or six successive states of watery decomposition.”<sup>62</sup> Given these statements, one might begin to suspect that Schumann’s stance against the virtuosity of the French salon was motivated, in part, by political factors. Such a motivation could also explain the timing

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<sup>61</sup> Schumann, *Music and Musicians*, vol. 1, 416. Original German in Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, 173.

<sup>62</sup> Plantinga (trans.), *Schumann as Critic*, 197. Original German in Schumann, “*Variationen für Pianoforte*,” 63.

of the shift in Clara Schumann's compositions in the 1840s as tensions built up in *Vormärz* Germany.

The validity of a political motivation for Schumann's anti-virtuosic stance is debatable, since his political leanings are far from clear. He did not participate in the revolutions when they culminated in the Dresden Uprisings in May 1849, where he was living at the time, although in light of the worsening state of his mental condition it is possible he was in no position to participate even if he had wanted to. Yet even if Schumann was pro-republic, a political motivation for his views of virtuosity would still make sense, for if Germany were to become a republic, even one modelled exactly after France, a sense of unified national identity would certainly be a prerequisite, and a unique national music style could contribute to this sense of identity.<sup>63</sup> Thus, Schumann's critiques of "good boring German tunes" as superior to "hackneyed Italian tunes," not to mention his bolstering of the music of earlier and up and coming Germanic composers (especially Schubert and Brahms), project

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<sup>63</sup> In fact, such an attempt at creating a sense of a unified German identity through music becomes evident in the popularity of setting Nikolaus Becker's overtly nationalistic poem "Rheinlied" after the 1840 Rhine Crisis, a poem which Robert Schumann himself set in 1840 as "Der deutsche Rhein" (WoO 1). For more information on *Rheinlieder* as well as the use of Rhine imagery for nationalistic purposes in the songs of Schumann and other composers, please refer to Cecelia Hopkins Porter, "The 'Rheinlieder' Critics: A Case of Musical Nationals," *Musical Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (1977): 74-98.

a sense of setting Germany apart musically.<sup>64</sup> For this reason, regardless of his stance on the Dresden Uprisings, Schumann's critiques of the virtuosity could be seen as having nationalistic influences.

If a nationalistic rationale behind Robert Schumann's views on virtuosity and the decrease in virtuosity in Clara Schumann's piano compositions seems speculative, perhaps a rationale related to the opposition between popular musical culture and a more "serious" musical culture is more grounded. Robert Schumann's anti-virtuoso views seem a prime model of Peter Burke's theorisation of the fundamental changes in the popular-elite dynamic that occurred around the time of the Enlightenment and French Revolution.<sup>65</sup> Specifically, Burke has put forth a "withdrawal thesis," in which the upper classes, having seen the threat of French Revolution-inspired republicanism and egalitarianism, withdrew from the popular traditions with which they had previously engaged in the hope of projecting a privileged status onto their own culture and traditions and thus upholding their relatively arbitrary and precarious power over the masses.<sup>66</sup> This thesis closely fits Schumann's critiques, as many of his compositions *are* extremely virtuosic (e.g., *Fantasiestücke* (op. 12, 1837), especially No. 2, "Aufschwung"), and thus, distancing his virtuosity

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<sup>64</sup> Plantinga (trans.), *Schumann as Critic*, 197. Original German in Schumann, "Variationen für Pianoforte," 63.

<sup>65</sup> Burke, "Popular Culture and Social Change," in *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 244-86.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 270-81.



from that of the more popular Parisian piano salon becomes a convenient way of upholding the superiority of his compositions. It should be noted, however, that Burke's theory does not work perfectly in the case of Schumann, as the virtuosity he critiqued combined elements of both popular and high culture. Specifically, virtuosi, especially in the context of the Parisian piano salon, did aim first and foremost to entertain the audience, yet this audience was often an exclusive one of wealthy dilettantes in a private setting. This ambiguity of the cultural positioning of virtuosity suggests that factors outside of the popular-elite dichotomy would have had a greater influence on Schumann's critiques. His writings, as a whole, suggest these other factors would be aesthetic considerations, quite possibly nationalism, and perhaps even resentment over the hand injury that ended his hopes of a career as a pianist.

Janina Klassen has suggested that the conflicted view of the virtuoso as belonging both to popular and high culture also manifested itself in the way Clara Schumann's performances and compositions moved away from virtuosity in the years after her marriage.<sup>67</sup> Specifically, Klassen argues that Clara's marriage to Schumann freed her of the monetary necessity of appealing to mass audiences, and therefore she could

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<sup>67</sup> Janina Klassen, "Virtuosität und Verantwortung. Zur Kunstauffassung Clara Wieck-Schumanns," in *Clara Schumann: Komponistin, Interpretin, Unternehmerin, Ikone*, ed. Peter Ackermann and Herbert Schneider, 139-49 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1999), 145.

move to a “‘more ideal’ artistic production.”<sup>68</sup> Yet Klassen’s view is incomplete, in that it ascribes the shift in Clara Schumann’s compositions to simplistic monetary circumstances without discussing the myriad of ways in which the break with her father and marriage with Schumann influenced her on a more fundamental psychological level. The shift had to involve much more than just simple changes in Clara’s life circumstances, as evidenced by pieces exemplifying what Schumann would have called “true virtuosity” before her marriage (see the discussion of her Piano Concerto above) and works characteristic of a virtuosity more inclined towards mass appeal after her marriage (see the discussion of *Variationen über ein Thema von Robert Schumann* above).

Perhaps in the end, as the shortcomings of Klassen’s views suggest, it is too simplistic to discuss the change in virtuosity in Clara Schumann’s compositional output on the terms of the influence of Friedrich Wieck, Robert Schumann, the dichotomy between popular and elite culture, and nationalism alone. Clara Schumann was a prodigious composer and performer, and likely took a big part in shaping this shift for herself out of the increasing knowledge and skill she was gaining as a composer and performer entering adulthood. But unfortunately, given the documents we have today, it is extremely difficult to talk about Clara Schumann’s thoughts on musical aesthetics or virtuosity solely on her own terms, especially when comparing pre- and post-1840 compositions, given both

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., author’s translation from: “‘idealistischeren’ Kunstproduktion.”

how little she wrote of a critical nature in comparison to Robert Schumann, as well as the well-documented fact that many of her pre-1840 diary entries were actually written by her father and are therefore unreliable.<sup>69</sup> Yet as my musical examples have shown, a change in the virtuosity in Clara Schumann's compositions evidences itself around the time of her marriage, so a discussion of Robert Schumann's aesthetics of virtuosity can help illuminate the backdrop in which the shift in Clara Schumann's compositions occurred. Perhaps as more scholars become interested in the works and life of Clara Schumann, a clearer conception of her aesthetics of virtuosity and rationale behind the shift on terms more independent of Robert Schumann will emerge.

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<sup>69</sup> Reich, *Clara Schumann*, rev. ed., 18. Reich and Gerd Nauhaus are currently working on a critical edition of Clara's diaries written between 1827 and 1840 that will be published in German within the next year and in an English translation within the next year and a half by Olms Verlag. When published, the diaries may make projects analysing Clara's compositions outside of the influence of Robert Schumann and Friedrich Wieck more feasible. Special thanks goes to Dr. Reich for providing me with this information on her and Nauhaus's forthcoming edition.

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**Abstract**

In the late 1830s, Clara Schumann's piano compositions began to shift from crowd-pleasing virtuosic showpieces to more complex and less openly showy works. While Nancy Reich has noted this tendency in her biography of Clara Schumann, there is little discussion on how this aesthetic shift may have been affected by the two major changes in Clara's life in 1840: her marriage to the decidedly anti-virtuoso music critic and composer Robert Schumann, and her emancipation from her overbearing father and impresario, Friedrich Wieck. This paper examines how Robert Schumann's disparaging views on virtuosity and the strained relationship between the Schumanns and Friedrich Wieck may have affected the shift in virtuosity in Clara Schumann's piano compositions, drawing on primary sources such as the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, as well as recent writings on musical virtuosity in the nineteenth century, most notably those of Liszt scholar Dana Gooley. After positing possible reasons for this change in Clara Schumann's compositions, this paper discusses the broader implications of a shift away from virtuosity in light of the opposition emerging in the nineteenth century between "popular" and "high" musical styles. While the shift in virtuosity in Clara Schumann's piano compositions likely had multiple complex causes, this paper argues that one can gain new insights into Clara Schumann's works particularly when one examines Robert Schumann's anti-virtuosic critiques.



**Honour Thy German Masters: Wagner's  
Depiction of "Meistergesang" in *Die  
Meistersinger von Nürnberg***

*Annalise Smith*

The operas of Richard Wagner (1813-1883) exist in a world of fantasy, populated by mythic knights, gods and goddesses, and depictions of heaven and hell. The exception is *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (1867). Foregoing the world of myth, Wagner transports the audience back to sixteenth-century Nürnberg, where the city is led by the *Meistersingers* and, in particular, Hans Sachs. Though still writing in a nineteenth-century style, Wagner went to great lengths to integrate the actual practices and compositional rules of the *Meistersingers* into his opera. This attempt at historical accuracy allows for an exploration of the musical correspondences between historical *Meistergesang* and Wagner's own depiction of the genre. By comparing *Silberweise* and *Morgenweise*, two pieces written by the historical Hans Sachs, to the *Meistergesang* within Wagner's opera, it becomes clear that Wagner's most accurate representations of *Meistergesang* are sung by Beckmesser, the antagonistic marker. Why then, if the opera purportedly promotes rules and the maintenance of tradition, are Sachs and Walther the heroes? Though this contradiction may seem a hypocrisy, this essay will show that the depiction of *Meistergesang* in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, while incorporating nineteenth-century compositional methods, expresses Wagner's belief that musical innovation must be based on tradition.

As charming and believable as *Die Meistersinger* may be, it too, in its own way, is a fantasy. Wagner's Nürnberg is not a historically accurate depiction of the town and its populace, but an "idealized monument to a peculiarly German kind of city at the very moment of its historical disappearance."<sup>1</sup> This idealization was part of nineteenth-century German Romanticism, which longed for a strong, unified Germany. This longing was "inevitably projected to a vaguely medieval past when Germany had seemed powerful and united."<sup>2</sup> The glorification of medieval Nürnberg inevitably led to a misrepresentation of the *Meistersingers*. In his opera, Wagner portrays the *Meistersingers* as both cultural and civic leaders. They are the burghers who run the city, and their festivals are shared by all the people. However, as Peter Hohendahl points out

[Nuremberg] was anything but a harmonious community in which its citizens enjoyed work and art....The Meistersingers clearly did not play the significant role that Wagner assigns them. Their poetic practices were much more confined to their own social group.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Timothy McFarland, "Wagner's Nuremberg," *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg: ENO/ROH Opera Guide* 19, ed. Nicholas John (London, 1983): 33, quoted in Stewart Spencer, "Wagner's Nuremberg," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 4, no. 1 (1992): 32.

<sup>2</sup> Stewart Spencer, "Wagner's Nuremberg," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 4, no.1 (1992): 24.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Uwe Hohendahl, "Reworking History: Wagner's German Myth of Nuremberg," in *Re-Reading Wagner*, ed. Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 49.

Wagner was not the first to take creative liberties with the cultural and political role of the *Meistersingers*. The study of *Meistersingers* was popular at the beginning of the century, resulting in several studies and narratives through which Wagner became acquainted with the medieval tradition.<sup>4</sup> Wagner's first introduction to Hans Sachs and the *Meistersingers* came from Georgg Gottfried Gervinus' *History of German Literature* (1835), a reading that sparked the idea for *Die Meistersinger*.<sup>5</sup> Wagner was also familiar with Jakob Grimm's essay *Über den Altdeutschen Meistergesang* (1811) and the works of E.T.A. Hoffmann, particularly his story *Meister Martin der Kufner und seine Gesellen* (1819). Both of these authors contributed to an idealized picture of the *Meistersingers*, in which "artists and artisans, hand in hand, march happily together towards a common goal."<sup>6</sup> The *Meistersingers* were even the inspiration for an opera before Wagner, Albert Lortzing's *Hans Sachs*, which premiered in 1840. The plot similarities between the two operas indicate the Wagner was surely aware of Lortzing's opera when writing the libretto for *Die Meistersinger*.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Archer Taylor, *The Literary History of Meistergesang* (New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1937), 3.

<sup>5</sup> John Warrack, "The sources and genesis of the text," in *Richard Wagner, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, ed. John Warrack (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 1-2.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Bassett, "Albert Lortzing's Hans Sachs: An Inspiration for Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*," *Leitmotive: The Journal of the Wagner Society of Northern California* 23, no. 1 (2008): 20.

Though inspired by romanticized tales of the *Meistersingers*, Wagner strove to lend his opera a sense of realism that went beyond mere allusion to historical characters. To achieve this, Wagner turned to Johann Christoph Wagenseil's Nuremberg Chronicle. Compiled in 1697 from a variety of different sources, Wagenseil's text included the compositional rules of the *Meistersingers*, the customs and history of the guild, and several examples of *Meistergesang*.<sup>8</sup> This material provided Wagner with concrete information on the guild's culture, much of which was incorporated directly into the opera. For example, the singing school in the first act is based directly on Wagenseil's treatise. As recorded in the treatise, singing schools were held in the church either on Sundays or holidays. The singing candidate was required to sit in a chair while they were presenting their song. If the marker, hidden in a curtained box, counted more than seven errors, the candidate failed the test. The list of *Meistertöne* David sings to Walther comes from Wagenseil, as does the idea that a new song had to be baptized.<sup>9</sup> Though Wagner made some changes to the historical practices, such as reducing the number of markers down from four to only one or changing the location of the church, the factual details he did maintain give *Die Meistersinger* a distinct air of authenticity. As John Warrack states:

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<sup>8</sup> Taylor, *The Literary History of Meistergesang*, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Anna Maude Bowen, "The Sources and Text of Richard Wagner's Opera *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*," (Ph.D diss., Cornell University, 1987): 21-26.

[Wagenseil's treatise] provides factual circumstance, with an intricacy of reference in a setting that rings vividly true even for audiences with no knowledge of the Meistersinger's authentic practices. There is an atmosphere of sustaining tradition that is at the same time humorously restrictive...It is by these means that Wagner ensures that it has taken sufficiently deep root in our minds for Sachs' final defense of Mastersong to have authority over Walther's rejection.<sup>10</sup>

In order to depict the music of the *Meistersingers* within his opera, Wagner turned to the many compositional rules listed in Wagenseil's text.<sup>11</sup> Like the singing school, the rules have a prominent role in the first act. Walther is taught the rules by both David and Kothner before his song trial. While detailing issues such as word placement and meaning, the most important rules for Wagner were those that detailed the bar form of the piece, the rhyme scheme, and the musical content of the *Stollen* and *Abgesang*.<sup>12</sup> These rules served as a compositional guide for Wagner and directly connected the pieces in *Die Meistersinger* with their historical precedents. Historical *Meistergesang* employed bar form, represented as AAB, in which two identical *Stollen* were followed by a related yet

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<sup>10</sup> Warrack, "Sachs, Beckmesser, and Mastersong," 65.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 63. Wagner did incorporate one real *Meistergesang* in his opera, which can be found in the opening motive of the overture in measure 41.

<sup>12</sup> What Wagner defines as bar form is actually incorrect. While Sachs refers to a single stanza of Walther's song as a bar, the historical use of this term referred to the entire composition.



musically different *Abgesang*. For the *Meistersingers*, melody and poetry were two distinct entities. The melody, or *Ton*, of a *Meistergesang* was written without specific words or rhythm. A separate text would then be applied to the melody, dictating its rhythm.<sup>13</sup> While new *Töne* were written, there was a greater focus on the composition of new poems. Sachs, for example, wrote approximately 2575 poems during his lifetime, but only thirteen different *Töne*.<sup>14</sup> *Meistergesang* were additionally sung without instrumental accompaniment.<sup>15</sup> Given these characteristics, the analysis of *Morgenweise* and *Silberweise* presented here will focus only on those characteristics of *Meistergesang* inherent in the melody. These melodic traits are not discussed by Wagenseil, and thus offer a new vein for exploring Wagner's depiction of *Meistergesang*.

It is readily apparent that both *Morgenweise* (Figure 1) and *Silberweise* (Figure 2) follow the bar form set down by Wagenseil's treatise. The second *Stollen* is not even written out, but indicated by a repeat sign. Overall, both *Silberweise* and *Morgenweise* are characterized by simple, somewhat declamatory melodic lines. Melodic

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<sup>13</sup> Horst Brunner, "Meistergesang," in *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online,  
<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/subscriber/article/grove/music/18291>> (accessed 25 October 2008).

<sup>14</sup> Mary Beare, ed., *Hans Sachs Selections* (Kendal: Titus Wilson and Son, 1983), xiv. In addition to *Meistergesang* texts, Sachs also wrote another eighteen volumes of *Sprüche*, which included tragedies, fables, and Carnival plays, among others.

<sup>15</sup> Taylor, *The Literary History of Meistergesang*, 75.

motion is primarily by step without frequent changes in direction, and repeated notes occur frequently. Leaps do occur, but they are never larger than a fifth and the range of the piece stays within the octave. Chromatically altered notes are nearly non-existent—the only example is the A# in line 18 of *Morgenweise*. These two pieces are not necessarily tonal—*Morgenweise* strongly hints at G Mixolydian—but they do have a sense of tonal stability.

Two characteristics regarding phrase structure can be gleaned from these pieces. Both *Meistergesang* include short passages of melisma, most often decorating the end of the melodic line (indicated with slurs on the score). This is far more prominent in *Morgenweise* than in *Silberweise*, but the use of melisma observed in *Morgenweise* was the norm for sixteenth-century *Meistergesang*.<sup>16</sup> Concurrent pieces, in fact, indicate that these melismas could be much more extensive, as demonstrated by Example 1.

**Example 1: *Abgesang* of *Spruch weis*, by Hans Sachs<sup>17</sup>**



<sup>16</sup> Brunner, “Meistergesang.”

<sup>17</sup> Münzer, *Das Singebuche*, 81.

Figure 1: *Morgenweise*<sup>18</sup>



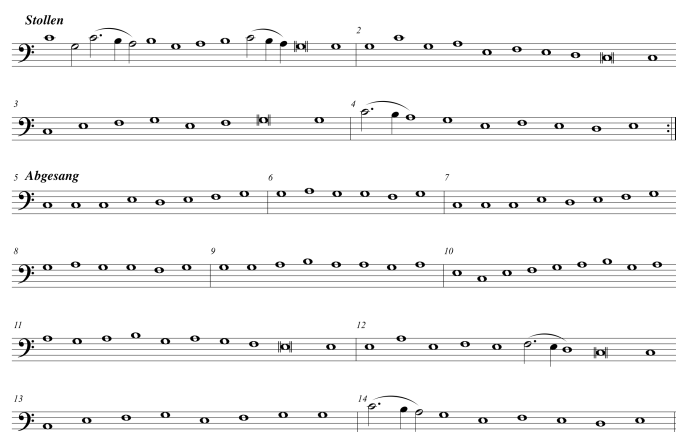
Both of these *Meistergesang* also exhibit a clear articulation of phrase endings, aiding a clear declamation of the text. While made apparent through the fermatas found at the end of each phrase, this is also inherent in the shape of the melodic line.

One prominent feature of *Meistergesang* not mentioned by Wagenseil is the use of repetition as a unifying device. In both pieces, the most notable example of this is the repetition of the end of the *Stollen* at the end of the *Abgesang*. This repetition effectively creates a sense of structural unity between the two halves of the piece. Repetition also creates unity within the *Abgesang*, which is substantially longer than the *Stollen* in both pieces. For example, lines 9, 13, 18, and 21 in

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 75. Transcription by author.

*Morgenweise* all open with the same melodic figure. Repetition of phrases also generates melodic content. In *Silberweise* this can be seen in the immediate repetition of lines 5 and 6 in lines 7 and 8. Similarly in *Morgenweise*, line 7 is a repetition of line 6, with both phrases further repeated in lines 10 and 11. The extent of the repetition in these pieces clearly indicates that it was both an organizational and compositional tool in the *Meistergesang* of Hans Sachs. While serving as a unifying device, and undoubtedly an aid to memorization, it seems likely that the high degree of repetition also reflects the improvisatory nature of *Töne* composition.<sup>19</sup>

Figure 2: *Silberweise*<sup>20</sup>



<sup>19</sup> Taylor, *The Literary History of Meistergesang*, 73.

<sup>20</sup> Münzer, 81. Transcription by author.

Based on these observations, we can identify four characteristics of *Meistergesang* style on which the comparison with Wagner's drama will be based.

- 1) *Meistergesang* employs bar form, with identical *Stollen* and a stable tonal centre.
- 2) The melody is simple, dominated by stepwise motion, repeated notes, and a small range. Chromatic notes occur infrequently.
- 3) The ends of phrases are clearly articulated and ornamented with melisma.
- 4) Repetition occurs throughout the piece, unifying the *Stollen* and *Abgesang*.

Four characters are directly associated with *Meistergesang* throughout Wagner's opera: Hans Sachs, Walther von Stolzing, Sixtus Beckmesser, and David. While it would be most logical to begin with Wagner's depiction of Sachs, this character sings no *Meistergesang* throughout the opera. We will thus begin with Walther. Not yet a member of the guild, Walther sings four different *Meistergesang* over the course of the opera, more than any other character. These include "Am stillen Herd," "Fanget An!," "Die Selige Morgentraum Deutweise," and Walther's Prize Song (the transformation of "Die Selige Morgentraum Deutweise"). It is Walther's pieces that are presented by Wagner as the ideal *Meistergesang* throughout the course of the opera, Walther winning the song contest, Eva, and the respect of Sachs.

Even without discussing melodic characteristics, Walther's pieces clearly deviate from the expected norms of *Meistergesang*. All of Walther's songs except "Am stillen Herd" show significant alterations to the

second *Stollen* of the bar form, not only altering the melodic line but also modulating into a different key. While one could reconcile the two small changes in “Am stillen Herd” to historical bar form the alterations made in Walther’s other three pieces directly contradict both Wagenseil’s treatise and the historical examples of Sachs. Nevertheless, Walther’s *Meistergesang* remain close enough to bar form to be recognizable to the audience. Where Walther’s pieces truly differ from historical precedents is in their treatment of melody, phrasing, and the repetition of musical phrases.

Walther’s pieces, while beautiful, do not observe the simple melodic style of historical *Meistergesang*. The melodies of his pieces are very active, full of leaps that frequently change melodic direction. In particular, the leaps in “Fanget An!” give the melody a frenzied quality. The wide range of the piece, often highlighting the top of the range, emphasizes this quality. Stepwise motion and repeated notes are both relatively rare (though it is interesting to note that of all Walther’s songs, these features are most common in “Fanget An!”). The melodic leaps employed in Walther’s songs generally stay inside the confines of a fifth with several notable exceptions, including both a minor and major seventh and the unprecedented augmented fourth. Consecutive leaps can also

**Example 2: Use of major seventh, minor seventh, and augmented fourth in "Fanget An!"<sup>21</sup>**

**2a: measures 58 to 60**



**2b: measures 17 to 18**



**2c: measures 115 to 177**



be found in each of Walther's *Meistergesang*. It is not the size of the leaps that divorces Walther's music from *Meisterlied*, however, but their frequency, which contrasts the simpler, almost static nature of historical *Meistergesang*. The extensive use of chromatically altered notes within Walther's pieces also sets them apart from their historical models. This can be an indication of key change, as seen in the Prize Song (Figure 4, measures 32 to 38). However, all of Walther's pieces employ chromatic non-chord tones as ornaments, a feature not seen in traditional *Meistergesang*. On the other hand, melisma, an ornament found in historical *Meisterlied*, is absent from Walther's songs.

<sup>21</sup> All measure numbers in "Fanget An!" and "Am stillen Herd" are based on a transcription of the song that disregards interjections from other characters.

**Example 3: Ornamental use of non chord tones in “Am Stillen Herd,” measures 5 to 7**



**Example 4: Ornamental use of non-chord tones in “Fanget An!” measures 18 to 21**



The general ambiguity of phrase structure in Walther's pieces again demonstrates their divergence from historical *Meistergesang*. Looking at the melodies of Walther's songs, it is often difficult to tell where the ends of phrases should fall, an impression enhanced by the infrequency of rests within the melodic lines. In “Die Selige Morgentraum Deutweise,” for example, there are no rests within the melodic line until measure 30. Walther's melodies generally give the impression of continuous motion. This ambiguity is not resolved if one turns to the text, again exemplified by “Die Selige Morgentraum Deutweise.” While it is already difficult to determine where the ends of musical phrases are, Wagner causes further confusion by not consistently correlating the end of a musical phrase with the end of the textual phrase in each of the three verses. For example, while the first and third verses end their first textual phrase on the dotted



Figure 3: "Die Selige Morgentraum Deutweise"

C Major: *Stollen 1*

Mor gen - lich leuch - tend ih - ro - si - gen Schein, von Bluth und Duft ge - schwellt die Luft, voll al - ler  
 A - bend - lich glü - hend in - himm - li - sche Gluth ver - scheid der Tag, wie dort ich lag: aus ih - ren  
 Weil - ten die Ster - ne - im lieb - li - chen Tanz? So licht und klar im Lock - en haar, vor al - len

7 *Stollen 2*

Won - nen, nie - er - son - nen, ein Gar - ten lud mich ein, Gast ihm zu sein. Won - nig ent - ra - gend dem  
 Au - gen Won - ne sau - gen, Ver - lan - gen einz' - ger Macht in mir nur wacht! Näch - lich um - däm - mert der  
 Frau - en hehr zu schau - en, lag - ihr mit zar - ten Glanz ein Ster - nen kranz. Wun - der ob Wun - der, nun

14

se - li - gen Raum, bot Gold - ner Frucht heil - saf - ge Wucht mit hold - em Pran - gen dem Ver - lan - gen an  
 Blick mir sich bricht: wie weit so nah be - schei - nen da zwei lich - te Ster - ne aus der Fer - ne durch  
 bie - tersich dar: zwie - fach - en Tag ich grüß - sen mag; denn gleich wein Son - nen rein - ster Won - nen, der

20 *Abgesang*

duft' - ger Zwei - ge Saum herr - lich ein Baum. Sei euch ver - traut, welch heh - res Wun - der mir ge -  
 schaln - ker Zwei - ge Licht hehr mein Ge - sicht. Lie - blich - ein Quell auf - still - er Höhe dort mir  
 hehe - sten Au - gen Paar nahm' ich da wahr. Huld - reich - stes Bild, dem ich su - na - hen mich er -

26

scheint: an mein - er Sei - te stand ein Weib, so hold und schon ich nie ge - sehn: gleich ei - ner Braut um -  
 rauscht: jetzt schwellt er an sein hold Ge - tön', so stark und süß ich's nie er - lauscht: leucht - end und hell, wie  
 kühl! Den Kranz, von zwei - er Son - nen Strahl zug - leich ge - bli - chen und er grünt, min - nig und mild sie

33

fass - te sie, sanft - mein - en Leib; mit Au - gen wink - end, die Hand wies blink - end, was  
 strahl - ten die Ster - ne da - schön! Zu Tanz und Rei - gen in Laub und Zwei - gen der  
 flocht ihn um dass Haupt - dem Ge - mahl: dort Huld - ge bo - ren, nun Ruhm er - ko - ren, giesst

40

ich ver - lan, gend be - gehrt, die Frucht so - hold und werth vom Le - bens - baum.  
 gold' nen sam - meln sich mehr, statt Frucht ein Stern - en heer im Lor - beer - baum.  
 pa - ra - die - sis - che Lust sie in des Dich - ter's Brust im Lie - bes - traum!

quarter note in measure 4, the second verse continues the phrase into measure 5. As indicated on the score, there are only four moments in the entire piece where Wagner ends the textual phrase at the same moment in each of the three verses. This directly contrasts the norms of sixteenth-century *Meistergesang*, in which the text was written specifically to fit the established musical phrase.

It is clear that Walther's *Meistergesang* are quite different from their historical precedents. This divergence, however, must be understood in the context of Wagner's compositional practices. For composers of the nineteenth-century, the prevailing aesthetic concern was the originality of the musical idea. The challenge for composers was to create a unified piece based on a relatively short thematic idea without resorting to repetitions of previous melodic material or "musical padding." Whereas musical form in the Classical era had been characterized by the idea of balanced musical sections, the importance placed on originality in the nineteenth-century led to the conception of form as "a discourse in sound in which motives develop out of earlier motives like ideas, each of which is a consequence of its predecessors."<sup>22</sup> Wagner's compositional technique of *endliche Melodie* is clearly a derivative of this conception, especially when one considers its true definition, which "is not that the parts of a work flow into each other without caesuras but that every note has meaning, that the melody is language and not empty sound."<sup>23</sup> While *unendliche Melodie* is not as prominent within *Die Meistersinger* due to the prevalence of individual musical numbers, Wagner's concept of music as a meaningful language plays a prominent role within this opera.

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<sup>22</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980), 50.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 56.

Keeping this in mind, it is understandable that Walther's pieces, while maintaining bar form, do not employ the direct melodic repetitions that characterize historical *Meistersong*. Instead, Wagner's *unendliche Melodie* manifests as a constant

Figure 4: Prize Song

*Stollen 1*

C Major: I ii<sup>°</sup> V<sup>9</sup> ii I ii vii V/vi vi I

8 V<sup>°</sup> V/vi IV<sup>9</sup> I V<sup>°</sup> I IV I

15 ii I ii vii V V/V V<sup>°</sup> IV V/vi VI V/V V vi V<sup>°</sup>

*Stollen 2*

23 I I ii V<sup>9</sup> ii I ii vii (IV) I V/V

31 V vii V V/V B<sup>°</sup> I V<sup>°</sup> I IV I Gvii/V

38 V IV vii V vii<sup>°</sup> V<sup>°</sup> I IV V/vi V/V V<sup>°</sup> vii V<sup>°</sup>

*Abgesang*

46 I C I vii V V<sup>°</sup> I ii V<sup>°</sup> V/IV IV iii<sup>°</sup> IV

54 ii ii<sup>°</sup> vii V V/iii iii vi IV ii V<sup>°</sup> ii I vii V I vii V

63 V<sup>°</sup> I V/V V<sup>°</sup> I V/V V<sup>°</sup> I V/vi V/V/ii V/ii ii Vii<sup>°</sup> I V/vi IV ii

71 V<sup>°</sup> I V<sup>°</sup> I IV III IV I vii V V<sup>°</sup> ()

⊗ Indicates the point at which the section departs from *Die Selige Morgentraum Deutweise*

development of the thematic idea within a single piece. Present to some extent in all of Walther's songs, this is best exemplified by "Die Selige Morgentraum Deutweise" and the Prize Song. Consider the first *Stollen* of "Die Selige Morgentraum Deutweise." Already characterized by a long, unbroken, and somewhat ambiguous phrase, the treatment of thematic material in measures 4 to 6 and 7 to 10 clearly demonstrates how Wagner used sequential variation to construct his melody. The theme is further developed in the second *Stollen* when Walther (and Wagner) breaks with tradition by changing the melody and ending in a different key. Similar thematic development is seen in the *Abgesang*. For example, the opening gesture is an expansion of the *Stollen*, and the sequential pattern from measures 7 to 10 is again found in measures 26 to 28. Even the most characteristic gesture in the *Abgesang*, the descending chromatic passage seen for the first time in measures 36 and 37, is a development of the five-note descending pattern first seen in measure 2. Though the three repetitions of "Die Selige Morgentraum Deutweise," a concession to the dramatic scenario, do contradict the idea of thematic originality, Wagner's *unendliche Melodie* is undoubtedly present within this song.

As a further development of "Die Selige Morgentraum Deutweise," Walther's Prize Song stands as the epitome of Wagner's developmental techniques. Though the songs are linked, there are distinctions between the two. In both the *Stollen* and *Abgesang* of the Prize Song, Walther breaks off from

the pattern established in "Die Selige Morgentraum Deutweise" and further develops the melodic material. For example, the descending chromatic line that first appeared in the *Abgesang* of the *Deutweise* is incorporated into the Prize Song's *Stollen* (Figure 4, measure 16). Wagner also expands the harmonic language in the Prize Song, most notably through the modulation to B major in measure 33. However, the relationship between the two pieces is maintained, as the various sections of the Prize Song both begin and end in the same tonal area as its model. While the Prize Song deviates from both "Die Selige Morgentraum Deutweise" and the expectations of *Meistergesang*, these changes are the product of Wagner's compositional methods and the nineteenth-century aesthetic of originality. One can hardly imagine Wagner letting such an important song within the opera be a mere repetition of earlier melodic material.

In contrast to Walther's pieces, influenced by Wagner's compositional technique and only loosely invoking the traditions of sixteenth-century *Meistergesang*, Beckmesser's songs reveal many similarities with their historical models. Connected to *Meistergesang* through his membership in the guild and his role as marker, Beckmesser sings two *Meisterlied* throughout the opera: "Den Tag," his serenade to Eva in Act two, and "Morgen Ich Leuchte" his act three competition song. On a superficial level, a connection between Beckmesser and traditional *Meistergesang* is implied by the fermatas that mark the ends of Beckmesser's phrases. The lute accompaniment used in his songs, while still not conforming to the historical practice of a cappella

singing, is also much more evocative of the historical practice than the full orchestral accompaniment of Walther's pieces. However, Beckmesser's songs more consistently conform to the structural and melodic characteristics of historical *Meistergesang*. For starters, both of Beckmesser's *Meistergesang* exhibit proper bar form with two identical *Stollen*. "Den Tag" (Figure 5), like its historical prototypes, has a small vocal range. In addition, it is tonally stable, with only one chromatically altered note. Though "Morgen Ich Leuchte" (Figure 7) does modulate to another key, it is a modal modulation to the relative major rather than a tonal one as seen in Walther's songs. This again serves to emphasize the historical quality of Beckmesser's compositions.

Figure 5: "Den Tag"



There are some divergences from traditional *Meisterlied* in Beckmesser's two songs. Both feature an

active melody characterized by a large amount of coloratura, a feature that, while having historical precedents, does not seem appropriate to these songs. There have been several explanations offered for Beckmesser's excessive ornamentation, including the idea that Wagner was imitating Italian opera.<sup>24</sup> It is also possible, however, to see Beckmesser's excessive coloratura as an expression of his anxiety over courting a young girl who clearly prefers another. Perhaps the florid ornamentation was a misguided attempt to impress Eva—recall that in the first act, Beckmesser expressed his concerns to Pogner that Eva would not appreciate his skills as a Master and thought it unwise to give her the deciding vote. Love is also an unfamiliar subject for Beckmesser, being a topic forbidden in *Meistergesang*: perhaps he thought such floridity was appropriate for such a frivolous theme. The motivation is somewhat beside the point, for underneath Beckmesser's ornamentation, the basic melodic shapes of his two songs are quite simple and reminiscent of the style seen in *Meistergesang* (See Figure 6). Leaps that occur are most

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<sup>24</sup> Thomas S. Grey, "Masters and their Critics: Wagner, Hanslick, Beckmesser, and *Die Meistersinger*," in *Wagner's Meistersinger: Performance, History, Representation*, ed. Nicholas Vazsonyi (Rochester, University of Rochester Press, 2002), 185. In an anti-semitic reading of Beckmesser, this ornamentation is seen to be representative of the "cantorial singing" of the Jewish faith. Grey lists several other characteristics of Beckmesser that point to his Jewish identity. For further a more complete discussion of the topic, see Has Rudolf Vaeg, "'Du warst mein Feind von je': The Beckmesser Controversy Revisited," in *Wagner's Meistersinger: Performance, History, Representation*, ed. Nicholas Vazsonyi (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002): 191-208.

often part of the coloratura phrases. There are only two intervals greater than a fifth in “Den Tag,” both of which are diatonic and given the same treatment in each of their repetitions (Figure 5, measures 5 and 23). Beckmesser’s songs also hearken back to traditional *Meisterlied* through the presence of clearly defined phrases, created both by the use of rests and melodic contour.

Figure 6: Stollen 1 of “Den Tag” reduction



Repetition also forms an important component of Beckmesser’s songs, if not to the same density of Sachs’ *Meistergesang*. Repetition found in “Den Tag” is reminiscent of that found in the *Stollen* and *Abgesang* of *Silberweise*. Unlike traditional *Meistergesang*, there is no direct repetition between the *Stollen* and *Abgesang* that serves a unifying function in Beckmesser’s songs. However, the repetitive nature of the coloratura, which is always based on the descending fourth, connects the two halves of the piece into a unified whole.



Figure 7: "Morgen Ich Leuchte"

Beckmesser's *Meistergesang* are quite similar in style and form to sixteenth-century traditions. However, the parody made of his songs minimizes the effect of his historical accuracy. This parody is achieved mostly through Beckmesser's text, which is notoriously bad. William Marvin comments that "Beckmesser violates every rule of word/music relationship while observing all of the rules of form; his song is a perfect example of form without content."<sup>25</sup> Taking the poor word choices seen in "Den Tag" to the extreme, "Morgen Ich Leuchte" combines the relatively lucid melody with a completely nonsensical text, though one that still employs the required end rhyme.

<sup>25</sup> William Marvin, "The Function of 'Rules' in 'Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg,'" *The Journal of Musicology* 20, no. 3 (2003): 46.

Wagner also parodies the compositional practices of *Meistergesang*. Beckmesser seems to compose by rearranging a small repertoire of stock musical figures, the complete opposite of Walther's developmental style. Beckmesser's two songs are so similar that the pieces are almost variations of one another, though they are built on different texts. "Morgen Ich Leuchte" uses the melodic patterns, rhythms, and coloratura passages of "Den Tag," and even copies the *Abgesang* note for note. The near farcical treatment of Beckmesser's music undermines the historical validity of his *Meistergesang*, allowing Walther's pieces to be seen as more accurate and authentic in comparison.

David, playing a relatively small role within the opera, cannot be ignored as a representative of *Meistergesang*. David first tries to teach Walther the rules of the guild, and while he does not become a *Meistersinger* like Walther, he is made a journeyman after singing his "Johannessprüchlein." This indicates that David has gained at least a basic mastery of the *Meistersinger* rules. David is situated between Walther and Beckmesser in his relation to traditional *Meistergesang*. Like Walther, his second *Stollen* is not identical to the first, but suggests a move to the dominant. However, his short *Meistergesang* also has clearly defined phrases, a relatively singable melodic line, and repetition that unites the *Stollen* and the *Abgesang*, all features more prominent in the music of Beckmesser.

Figure 8: "Johannessprüchlein"



It is clear from this analysis that Beckmesser is closer to the traditions of historical *Meistergesang* than Walther. His music eschews the chromatic, developmental nature of Walther's pieces and mimics the clear phrases, melodic simplicity, and repetitive nature of *Morgenweise* and *Silberweise*. This is not to say that Beckmesser's songs are more artistically valid than Walther's. *Meistergesang*, though glorified by Wagner and other artists of the nineteenth-century, was recognized as a tradition in which "obedience to the rules" led to a "paucity of good Meisterlieder."<sup>26</sup> Wagner seems to support this negative view of *Meistergesang*. After all, Sachs and Walther are presented as the heroes of the opera, not Beckmesser and his more historically accurate songs. Combined with Beckmesser's satiric presentation, Wagner appears to deride *Meistergesang* throughout the opera by making it the symbol of a pedantic antagonist.

<sup>26</sup> Susan Gattuso, "16<sup>th</sup> Century Nuremberg," in *The Renaissance: From the 1470s to the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century*, ed. Iain Fenlon (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1989), 299.

Such an interpretation is contradicted, however, by the emphasis the opera places on rules and traditions. The drama of *Die Meistersinger* centers on Walther's ability to satisfy the rules of the *Meistersingers*. Though presented as a freethinker, Sachs also emphasizes the need for rules in the creative process. Defending the *Meistersingers* as men of honour, Sachs explains to Walther that it is necessary to have rules so that inspiration may be preserved later in life. He is far more forceful when Walther rejects the *Meistersingers* at the end of the opera, saying to the young knight:

Scorn not the Masters, I bid you, and honour their art! What speaks high in their praise speaks richly to your favour... So think back to this with gratitude: How can the art be unworthy which embraces such prizes that our Masters have cared it rightly in their own way, cherished it truly as they thought best, that has kept it genuine.<sup>27</sup>

We are presented here with a paradox, for as we know, Beckmesser is, at least in a historic sense, the best representative of the *Meistersinger's* rules. Wagner appears to be simultaneously criticizing and praising the traditional art of the *Meistersingers*. In order to reconcile these two contradictory interpretations of *Die Meistersinger*, we must turn to Wagner's depiction of Sachs.

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<sup>27</sup> Richard Wagner, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, translated by Peter Branscombe, Choir and Orchestra of the German Opera, Berlin, Eugen Jochum, with Dietrich Fisher-Dieskau, Roland Hermann, Plácido Domingo, and Catarina Ligenzda, Deutsche Grammophone 415 278-2, 1976, 4 compact discs.

There is never any doubt, though he gives no evidence during the opera, that Sachs is capable of singing *Meistergesang*. Most obviously, Sachs's historical reality as a *Meistersinger* lends his operatic persona an immediate sense of authority. This is mirrored on stage by his membership in the *Meistersingers* guild. Sachs is also able to teach the rules of *Meistergesang* to others, not only a musical genius like Walther, but also a more average musician such as David. Eva and Beckmesser each recognize Sachs' superiority as a *Meistersinger*, both implying that he could win the song competition if he wanted to: Eva by counting on Sachs to triumph over Beckmesser if she cannot marry Walther, and Beckmesser by accusing Sachs of writing "Die Selige Morgentraum Deutweise" for his own use in the competition. The spontaneous acclamation of the people at the end of the opera only serves to reinforce the portrait of Sachs as a highly skilled and respected *Meistersinger*, even though Sachs never produces *Meistergesang* in the course of the opera.

Sachs, however, is not silent. The character has two monologues, his final address to Walther, his vocal contribution to the Act three quintet, and his Cobbling Song.<sup>28</sup> The hymn "Wach Auf!" that the chorus sings in act three can also be attributed to Sachs. The text of "Wach Auf!" is based on the poem *Die Wittenburgisch Nachtigall*, written by the historical Hans Sachs—a version of which was set to

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<sup>28</sup> While recognizing *Jerum* as part of Sachs output, it has not been a significant element in this analysis.

*Morgenweise*.<sup>29</sup> Though presented here as a chorus and not as a *Meistergesang*, the implication in the opera is that this chorus is by Sachs. Like the chorale, Sachs' two monologues are not in bar form, yet all three pieces are logical and well ordered. The fact that Sachs writes music other than traditional *Meistergesang* indicates that his music "is more modern than that of the other *Meistersingers*."<sup>30</sup>

The audience cannot help but notice that Sachs stands slightly apart from his fellow guild members, being less dogmatic and set in his ways than the other *Meisters*. Sachs "appreciates, cherishes, and shares [the *Meistersingers*'] values, [but] recognizes there may be times when too great a permanence may stifle creativity."<sup>31</sup> Consider how he challenges the *Meistersingers* to forget their own rules and seek out new rules to fit the music when they cannot understand Walther's Trial Song. It is this progressive attitude, not only the absence of proper *Meistergesang*, that sets Sachs apart from the other *Meisters*. Taking into account the musical beliefs Sachs proffers on stage and the circumstantial evidence for his proficiency in *Meistergesang*, we must reach the following conclusion: having mastered the rules and traditions of *Meistergesang*, Sachs developed his own

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<sup>29</sup> Arthur Groos, "Constructing Nuremberg: Typological and Proleptic Communities in "Die Meistersinger"," *19<sup>th</sup> Century Music* 16, no. 1 (1992): 31.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>31</sup> Alan Alberbach, "Hans Sachs: Wagner's Thinking Man and the Embodiment of the German Spirit," *Leitmotive: The Journal of the Wagner Society of Northern California* 16, no. 4 (2002-03): 2.

musical style and language (a language which is also based on Wagner's technique of thematic development). However, his new music is firmly based on the rules and traditions of the *Meistersingers*.

Comparing Sachs with Walther and Beckmesser confirms this interpretation, and exemplifies the need for both tradition and innovation in an artistic creation. Walther is clearly a genius in his own right. When answering the questions of the *Meistersingers* in "Am stillen Herd," he is able to produce a perfectly acceptable *Meistergesang*, one which likely would have gained him entry into the guild. However, when Walther tries to follow the rules in "Fanget An!" having just learned them from David, the musical form breaks down, resulting in "a string of gorgeous lyric outbursts that relate imperfectly to one another."<sup>32</sup> Walther's unfamiliarity with the rules leads to confusion within the form and topic of his song. The far-reaching harmonies, a "mild, affectionate parody of the advanced Wagnerian language in *Tristan und Isolde*," and the bi-partite construction of the *Stollen*—motivated by anger towards Beckmesser than any real artistic innovation—confuse the Masters, causing them to reject Walther as a candidate for the guild.<sup>33</sup> There is, as Sachs notes, a great deal of musical worth within Walther's music. However, Walther has gone too far outside the rules to be understood by the *Meisters*.

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<sup>32</sup> William E. McDonald, "Words, Music, and Dramatic Development in "Die Meistersinger"," *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* 1, no.3 (1978): 6.

<sup>33</sup> Grey, "Master's and their Critics," 174.

It is up to Sachs to teach Walther that “there are rules in art, rules that the artists must learn to master and that can be gleaned only from the great masters of the past, but without getting stuck in one’s ways.”<sup>34</sup> Walther must learn to compromise. In his ignorance, Walther obscures the form of “Fanget An!” to the point that it is unrecognizable as a *Meistergesang* to the guild. It was thus inevitable that the *Meisters* would reject Walther, genius though he is. This is the crux of Walther’s need for tradition: innovation can only be understood if it can be put in relation to what is known, i.e. tradition. As Nietzsche states:

The progress from one level to the next must be so slow that not only the artists, but also the listeners and spectators participate in it and know exactly what is taking place. Otherwise, a great gap suddenly appears between the artist...and the public.<sup>35</sup>

Once he learns the rules from Sachs, Walther is able to reconcile his own musical ingenuity with the traditions of *Meistergesang*. Wagner does not make a strong musical concession on this point, as Walther’s

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<sup>34</sup> Harry Kupfer, “‘We Must Finally Stop Apologizing for *Die Meistersinger*!’: A Conversation with Harry Kupfer,” in *Wagner’s Meistersinger: Performance, History, Representation*, ed. Nicholas Vazsonyi (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002), 40.

<sup>35</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, trans. M. Faber (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 168, quoted in Lydia Goehr, “The Dangers of Satisfaction: On Songs, Rehearsals, and Repetition in *Die Meistersinger*” in *Wagner’s Meistersinger: Performance, History, Representation*, ed. Nicholas Vazsonyi (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002), 66.



Prize Song is extremely experimental, displaying many of the harmonic explorations that earned the *Meister's* disdain in "Fanget An!" Nevertheless, the Prize Song is recognizable to the *Meistersingers*. The guild can thus accept Walther and his music, for while the "rules are altered to fit the new material, ...the notion of rules is preserved. Evolution has replaced revolution."<sup>36</sup> Given that Walther's songs are built on Wagner's compositional style, it is clear that Wagner is presenting himself as the next step in the evolution of operatic music.

Beckmesser, on the other hand, demonstrates the dangers of blindly following tradition, of getting 'stuck in one's ways', of lacking originality. It is tempting to view Beckmesser only as an outcast and antagonist within the opera, but that is an oversimplification of his character. Like Sachs, Beckmesser is both a *Meistersinger* and a member of the business community. As Harry Kupfer describes him:

[Beckmesser] is an intellectual, and is certainly a genuine authority when it comes to the rules of the Mastersinger-Tabulatur. But he is not creative and has no imagination....He is petit bourgeois intellectual, pedantic, narrow-minded, precise, but not stupid.<sup>37</sup>

Not unlearned, Beckmesser is certainly uninspired and conservative, either unwilling, unable, or afraid to

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<sup>36</sup> McDonald, "Words, music, and dramatic development," 14.

<sup>37</sup> Kupfer, "We Must Finally Stop Apologizing for *Die Meistersinger!*," 42.

add new elements into his music. He believes that a strict adherence to the rules is the only requirement, and perhaps the only characteristic, of good *Meistergesang*. Yet Beckmesser's failure to win either Eva's affection or the acclaim of the people with his traditional songs strongly indicates that the rules of *Meistergesang* and a repertoire of stock musical figures are not enough. Walther, through his studies with Sachs, has been able to reconcile his genius to the traditions of *Meistergesang*. Beckmesser, on the other hand, will not allow innovation to alter the rules of his art. Thus, "Walther comes off better than Beckmesser not simply because he has a richer imagination, but because he can learn where the merker cannot."<sup>38</sup> It is this dogmatic insistence on tradition and rules that Wagner criticizes in this opera, rather than *Meistergesang* itself.

Given Wagner's revolutionary status within operatic history, it may seem unusual to consider this opera an argument for the importance of rules and tradition within art. The necessity of building from the past, however, can be seen in Wagner's own work. *Tristan und Isolde* may have broken new ground in opera, but Wagner's early works, such as *Rienzi* and *Die Feen*, were clearly based on traditions such as *grand opera* and *opera comique*.<sup>39</sup> Wagner also emphasized the importance of musical traditions in his writings. In *Oper und Drama*, Wagner sketched a direct connection

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<sup>38</sup> McDonald, "Words, music, and Dramatic Development," 248.

<sup>39</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, "Wagner's Place in the History of Music," in *Wagner Handbook*, ed. Elrich Müller and Peter Wapnewski (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1992), 103.

between his own operatic works and the symphonic style of Beethoven, commenting that "the characteristic, decisive course of [my] whole art-evolution shows out with Beethoven by far more genuinely that with our Opera-composers."<sup>40</sup> It was, in fact, in the music of Beethoven that Wagner saw the origins of his technique of thematic development.<sup>41</sup> Wagner later stated that he viewed Bach as "the wondrous individuality, [and] strength and meaning of the German spirit in one incomparably speaking image."<sup>42</sup> Just as he demonstrated in Sachs and Walther, Wagner's knowledge of the rules and regulations of his own musical culture was necessary for his development as a composer, not because they provided a set of strict guidelines, but because they allowed him to organize and present his ideas in a manner understandable to the public.

Though in many ways a product of Wagner's own imagination, it may be, as Peter Hyönig suggests, that had Wagner not written *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, "this wonderful tradition of truly popular...art from and for the people would still be forgotten or

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<sup>40</sup> Richard Wagner, *Opera and Drama*, in *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, vol. 2, trans. William Ashton Ellis, (The Wagner Library), <http://users.skynet.be/johndeere/wlpdf/wlpr0063.pdf>, 66.

<sup>41</sup> Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism*, 41.

<sup>42</sup> Richard Wagner, "What is German?" in *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, vol. 4, trans. William Ashton Ellis, (The Wagner Library), 10, <http://users.skynet.be/johndeere/wlpdf/wlpr0122.pdf>.

unknown.”<sup>43</sup> The most historical of his operas, Wagner depended directly on the traditions of *Meistergesang* to communicate his ideas about innovation and tradition. As embodied in the character of Sachs, and emerging in Walther, great art requires a delicate balance between maintaining the established traditions in music while still incorporating new musical ideas. How appropriate that Wagner should combine the traditions of the *Meistersingers* with his own new music to communicate this idea to the audience.

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<sup>43</sup> Peter Höyng, “<http://worldwidewagner.richard.de>: An Interview with the Composer Concerning History, Nation, and Die Meistersinger,” in *Wagner’s Meistersinger: Performance, History, Representation*, ed. Nicholas Vazsonyi (Rochester: University of Rochester, 2002), 129.

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### Abstract

The music and culture of the sixteenth century *Meistersinger* is the central topic of Richard Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, his only operatic comedy. Wagner turned to Johann Christoph Wagenseil's *Von der Meister-Singer Holdseligen Kunst* for information on the customs of the *Meistersinger*, and many scenarios within the opera are based on information from this treatise. The inclusion of the famous historical *Meistersinger* Hans Sachs as a central character further strengthened the drama's connection with the historical guild. The use of distinct set pieces, a seeming departure from the *endliche Melodie* of earlier operas, also helped Wagner create an air of authenticity within the music of *Die Meistersinger*.

As much as *Die Meistersinger* invokes the sixteenth century, Wagner does not present an accurate musical depiction of *Meistergesang* in this work. Though Hans Sachs and his role as a *Meistersinger* is an important element in his drama, Wagner only superficially observed the form and style of historical *Meistergesang*. None of Walther's songs, including *Fanget an!*, *Am stillen Herd*, or his Prize song, which wins him the admiration of both the masters and the people, completely satisfies the rules set down by Wagenseil. The character of Sachs, in fact, sings no *Meisterlied* at all. A comparison of Sachs' *Morgenweise* and *Silberweise* with Wagner's drama reveals that it is actually in the music of Beckmesser, the pedantic, rule-bound antagonist, that Wagner comes closest to the musical traditions of the sixteenth century. Given the historical setting of the opera and the emphasis the libretto places on rules and traditions, this paper sets out to examine how

these three characters are musically portrayed, the degree to which they deviate from traditional *Meistergesang*, and what this reveals about Wagner's ideas on artistic genius and musical composition.

# Biographies

**Iain Gillis** Iain Gillis is a doctoral student at the University of Victoria examining Korngold's opera *Die tote Stadt* and its reception in post-Hapsburg Vienna, through the lens of cultural geography. He recently completed his MA at the University of Alberta with research on Hanns Eisler's *Hollywooder Liederbuch* within the context of the literary elegy. He is also active as a tenor and burgeoning composer.

**Jacob Sagrans** is a Ph.D. candidate in musicology at the Schulich School of Music at McGill University in Montréal, QC. His research centres on seventeenth-century opera, early twentieth-century British music, and music in relation to sexuality and gender. He is also a singer, pianist, and conductor.

**Annalise Smith** is currently completing her Master's degree in musicology at the University of Victoria. Her graduate thesis, "Gluck's *Armide* and the Creation of Supranational Opera," was supported by SSHRC funding which allowed Annalise to study Gluck's manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in the summer of 2009. Her other interests include the music and culture of the fin de siècle, mid-nineteenth-century opera, and German lied. Annalise has served as Managing Editor of *Musical Explorations*, volume ten, and presented papers at the Pacific Northwest Music Graduate Student Conference in both 2008 and 2009. Annalise graduated with Distinction from the University of Calgary, Alberta in 2008 with a Bachelor of Music in History and Literature. She additionally holds a Diploma in Vocal Performance and remains an active musician in the community.

## Reviews

Trio Fibonacci. *5 x 3*. Centrediscs 2010 CMC CD 15710.

Quebec's Trio Fibonacci - Julie-Anne Derome, Gabriel Prynne, and Anna D'Errico - offer their first attempt at recording contemporary Canadian compositions with their record *5 x 3*. Of the numerous pieces available for piano trio, Trio Fibonacci selected five works composed for them in a showcase of Canadian talent.<sup>1</sup> Works included are Ana Sokolovic's *Portrait parle*, Paul Frehner's *Quarks Tropes*, Jean Lesage's *Le projet Mozart, où l'auteur s'interroge sur la complexité du style et le métissage des genres*, Analia Llugdar's *Tricycle*, and Chris Paul Harman's Piano Trio. Included with the CD are extensive bilingual (French and English) liner notes on both the composers and compositions.

*5 x 3* offers the listener an eclectic array of new Canadian compositions as performed with stunning precision by the Fibonacci Trio. Throughout the disc's five works the collaborative nature of the trio is ever present. Trio Fibonacci's musical decisions complement and support one another for an overall electrifying performance.

The album opens with Sokolovic's *Portrait parle* composed 2005-2007. Ana Sokolovic is a Canadian composer originally from Belgrade, Yugoslavia. *Portrait parle* was written for Trio Fibonacci and

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<sup>1</sup> Trio Fibonacci, *5 x 3*, Centrediscs 2010 CMC CD 15710.

according to Sokolovic is poetically based upon a table of physiological traits used by French police circa 1900. The Fibonacci Trio's performance of *Portrait parle* is particularly captivating. The cascading tones of the instruments blur into an agitated shimmering wash of sound that seems much larger than these three instrumentalists are capable of producing.

Following *Portrait parle* is a trope of *Finnegans Quarks Revival* by Paul Frehner in the form of *Quarks Tropes*. Montréal composer Frehner reuses his own work by adding a cello and violin line to a previously composed piano part. The violin and cello moving in rhythmic unison for large sections of *Quarks Tropes* complement the piano, adding a supplementary layer of sound to impart the initial sorrowfulness of the tune before it emerges from the wreckage in a series of sprightly fragments.

Quebec composer Jean Lesage, influenced by Umberto Eco's self-reflexive view of style, composed *Le projet Mozart, où l'auteur s'interroge sur la complexité du style et le métissage des genres* for Trio Fibonacci in 2006. Lesage's critical views of music history become juxtaposed in this pantomime. Each of the instrumentalists takes on several musical characters, sometimes working in concert and sometimes as individuals, and presents them over the course of the thirteen-minute-long work. The Fibonacci Trio's portrayal of *Le projet Mozart* is full of delightful caricatures and references that draw the listener's ear toward a re-evaluation of conventional music history.

*Tricycle* by Argentinean-born, Canadian-based Analia Llugdar is organized around the concept of attack-

resonance. Written in 2004, *Tricycle* transforms the image of resonance from sonic residue into the focal point of the music. In *Tricycle* this metamorphosis of sound material takes place through Llugdar's ceaseless application of mutation, distortion, and contortion to her sound material. Derome and Prynn's string lines blend particularly well on this track, while D'Errico's piano line maintains its individual integrity.

The final inclusion on *5 x 3* is Chris Paul Harman's *Piano Trio* composed between 2004 and 2005 under a commission from the Fibonacci Trio. The Piano Trio draws its source material from J. S. Bach's Partita in E major BWV 1006; however, this is not a literal allusion like Frehner's *Quarks Tropes*. Rather, Harman extends the compositional techniques employed by Bach, in his writing for a solo instrument, into composing for a trio. The partita's sections are reordered and the original seven movements are reduced to six, although they are tracked as five on the disc. The neo-classical nature of the work is realized by the Trio Fibonacci with a definite organic growth of the musical line. All three instrumentalists contribute to the musical whole in a true collaboration. This sometimes takes the form of musical imitation, but no instrument could ever be considered subordinate to another.

*5 x 3* provides the listener with an exciting collection of five Canadian composers' works for piano trio. The collaborative efforts of Derome, Prynn and D'Errico breathe life into these inventive compositions and paint sonic portraits in a kaleidoscope of emotions. *5 x 3* is an excellent

demonstration of the talents of Canadian composers and performers.

Twila Bakker  
University of Victoria

Frederick P. Miller, Agnes F. Vandome, and John McBrewster, eds. *Music of Canada*. U. S. A; Germany; U. K.: Alphascript Publishing, 2009. 208 pp. ISBN-10: 6130228023 ISBN-13: 978-6130228026

What first drew me to this book was the promise of its title. *Music of Canada* could have encompassed the answer to the long debated question, what is Canadian music? The subject material listed in the table of contents was also intriguing. My interest was particularly piqued by the section on “Aboriginal Peoples in Canada.” Could this beguiling book contain a full treatment of the music of First Nations people in Canada?

Unfortunately, all of my hopes were dashed upon turning over the cover. Perhaps I should have given more credence to the stamp on the front which read, “High quality content by Wikipedia articles!” I thought it must be a joke; after all, who would possibly sell a compilation of Wikipedia articles? And the book did have three respectable-sounding editors, so wouldn’t they ensure that the content of anything published under their names would be quality? Apparently not.

A number of the articles in this “book” contain little or no reference to music. The title comes from the



first article, “Music of Canada,” which is a sweeping generalization of Canadian music history. The four entries that follow contain respectively a shabby discussion of First Nations culture, a biography of the French explorer Samuel de Champlain, a description of the “Culture of the United States” (with one tiny paragraph about music), and some random information about Port Royal, Nova Scotia. Although the remainder of the articles do address some aspect of music – “Musical Ensemble,” “Chamber Music,” “Lists of Composers,” et cetera – the information is too brief and general to be of much use.

Further research revealed some very interesting things. The publisher, Alphascript Publishing, prides themselves on printing “academic work” at no cost to the authors.<sup>2</sup> All titles are edited by Frederic P. Miller, Agnes F. Vandome, and John McBrewster.<sup>3</sup> *The Wikipedia Signpost*, Wikipedia’s version of a newspaper, ran a story on August 17, 2009 claiming that Alphascript Publishing was running a “scam.”<sup>4</sup> The author states, when discussing Alphascripts’ three editors, that there is “no sign that these three people

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<sup>2</sup> “Welcome to Alphascript Publishing,”

<http://www.alphascript-publishing.com/index.php?&act=nav&nav=10039> (accessed 1 May 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> PrimeHunter, “Three Million Articles, Chen, Walsh and Klein Win Board Election, and More....,”  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Wikipedia\\_Signpost/2009-08-17/News\\_and\\_notes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Wikipedia_Signpost/2009-08-17/News_and_notes) (accessed 1 May 2010).

contributed” to the almost two thousand books that bear their names.<sup>5</sup> This accusation is born out in *Music of Canada*. In lieu of a preface, the reader is provided with a page describing the ways in which the book adheres to copyright law. On this page, it explicitly says that the editors “have not modified or extended the original texts.”<sup>6</sup> It would seem that the most these editors could have done was to select the entries included in the book - hardly an act of editing.

*The Wikipedia Signpost* article also highlights the “poorly printed” nature of the majority of the books published by Alphascript.<sup>7</sup> This is particularly true of *Music of Canada*, which features a number of misspelled words, arrows where weblinks used to be, and bad punctuation and capitalization. Where were the editors during the process of conversion from webpage to printed book? One major failing found in other Alphascript publications mentioned by the author of *The Wikipedia Signpost* article is the lack of correlation between the photos and subject matter. For example, an article about the country of Georgia featured a picture of Atlanta, Georgia!<sup>8</sup> At least *Music of Canada* appears to be innocent of *this* charge.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Frederic P. Miller, Agnes F. Vandome, and John McBrewster (eds.), *Music of Canada* (U.S.A.; Germany; U.K.: Alphascript Publishing, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> PrimeHunter, “Three Million Articles,”  
<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Wikipedia\\_Signpost/2009-08-17/News\\_and\\_notes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Wikipedia_Signpost/2009-08-17/News_and_notes)>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

Although it may seem a bit ironic to review a Wikipedia publication using Wikipedia's newspaper, it is all too appropriate. Let this review be a warning to anyone considering the purchase of an Alphascript publication. The description of these books on Amazon.com is misleading and will give no indication of the source of the articles. The high price of each volume may also confuse a potential buyer. After all, who would charge \$89 for a bunch of Wikipedia articles? Take my advice: if you are one of the millions of people who use Wikipedia as a starting place for research, access the free version online.

However, I highly recommend this book to any first-year undergraduate who wishes to use Wikipedia as a source for class essays. Here at last is a way to go under your professor's radar and include Wikipedia in your bibliography! Teachers beware, Wikipedia is in print!

Alisabeth Concord  
University of Victoria

Penderecki String Quartet, Gryphon Trio, Erica Goodman, Shalom Bard, Christopher Dawes, and Nora Shulman. *Marjan Mozetich: Lament in the Trampled Garden*. Centrediscs, 2009 CMC CD 14009

Marjan Mozetich is one of Canada's most accessible composers. For proof of this, one needs to look no further than his considerable award collection. The most telling of these accolades is his 2002 Jan V. Matejcek Concert Music Award (SOCAN) granted to

the Canadian composer with the highest number of performances as well as a 2010 Juno Award for his composition *Lament in the Trampled Garden* for string quartet (he was nominated for two works in this category). This CD release exemplifies the self-proclaimed simplicity and directness of his compositional style which has no doubt led to Mozetich's audience appeal and subsequent commercial success.

Containing four multi-movement works, *Lament in the Trampled Garden* is dedicated to Mozetich's substantial forays in chamber music genres over a career spanning more than twenty years. While many neo-classical composers' transparent use of styles from the past can lead to predictability, Mozetich dangerously (yet successfully) navigates Romantic cliché. The other Juno-nominated work on this CD, *Angels in Flight* (1987) for harp, flute, clarinet, and string quartet, exemplifies this neo-classical style in its adherence to traditional forms. At the same time, this work foreshadows the composer's minimalistic tendencies that are apparent in later works such as the final selection on this release, *Scales of Joy and Sorrow* (2007) for piano trio. Mozetich's growing discontent with the avant-garde is clear in the aforementioned *Lament* (1992). Although he studied with prominent figures such as Luciano Berio and John Weinzweig at the onset of his career, this work's tonal harmonic design recalls a Tchaikovskian aesthetic (a common comparison) which is interrupted by a tango-like middle section reminiscent of Piazzolla. However, it is his *Hymn of Ascension* (1998) for string quartet and harmonium in which the composer's voice shines brightest. The slow culmination of harmonies and the

meditative mood of this work give Mozetich room to eschew comparisons with the past, allowing the music to speak for itself.

The performances by the Penderecki String Quartet, Gryphon Trio, and many guest instrumentalists showcase the excellence that has been come to be expected from these artists. The clarity of Mozetich's gestures is expertly revealed by the rhythmic drive and musical commitment of each performer. In addition, as is the case with most Centrediscs releases, the sound quality is rich and brilliant. The CD packaging and presentation is generally attractive and clean which compliments the simplicity of Mozetich's works. Detracting from this effect, however, are the overindulgent liner notes of musicologist Alexander Colpa. Although the fanciful descriptions are no-doubt interesting, the notion of 'too much information' being detrimental to a work is very much relevant here. Often telegraphing compositional surprises that should be left for the listener to experience, Colpa is far too explicit. For example, in the description of *Scales of Joy and Sorrow*, Colpa deems it necessary to reveal that the work's 'sweetest moment' occurs exactly at 4'33" seconds into the work as "the piano and cello take the theme from the A flat to F as if to savor the material from a new perspective." Some listeners may find this kind of interpretational spoon-feeding unnecessary, if not off-putting. The inclusion of personal gesticulating (from someone other than the composer) is particularly inappropriate considering that more background information would have been a welcome use of space. However, as the two Juno nominations suggest, Mozetich's attractive style and the masterful

performances featured on this CD far outweigh the gratuitous nature of the liner notes.

What makes a composer ‘accessible’? Certainly, musical works can be accessible as a result of transparency and predictability. In the century that witnessed the invention of elevator-music, it was not uncommon for ‘audience-friendly’ music to be condemned as artistically suspect. Without proper consideration, the compositional style as exhibited on *Lament in the Trampled Garden* could easily be dismissed as pandering to a common denominator when compared to more avant-garde voices of his generation. However, this latest release proves that with clarity of intention and courageous simplicity, Marjan Mozetich’s music is both accessible and stimulating.

Michael Dias  
University of Victoria

Paul Helmer. *Growing with Canada: The Émigré Tradition in Canadian Music*. Montreal, QC and Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009. xii, 388 pp. ISBN 978-0-7735-3581-7

European exile studies have grown and advanced significantly on both sides of the Atlantic in the past decades. The tale that so many European artists took flight from Nazi Germany to start anew in the United States has been told many times. The story of the musicians whose impact on the American music scene (Korngold in the film industry; Schoenberg taking on political and religious works on the west coast; Hindemith at Yale) has been told and refined:

scholarship on these composers and their impact is well-developed by now, and continues to grow.

The story has been waiting to be told in Canada, and Paul Helmer's contribution to McGill's "Arts Insights" series admirably lays the foundation for that to take place. I keep returning to the notion of story, for Helmer's approach is essentially a multi-narrative one. The book comprises two parts, of two and five chapters, respectively, plus an introduction and epilogue.

The introduction serves as a critique of current exile studies. Helmer rightly points out the overwhelming favour that has been given those émigrés who left Europe in the prewar period, and also reminds us that people were leaving from more places than Germany, although Germany has taken centre stage in the scholarship. He does not, of course, exclude Germany from his study, but his scope extends to those who fled from Communist regimes in addition to those whose motivation for leaving was National Socialism. To paint a fuller picture than one normally sees, the cut-off exit dates for his study are 1933 and 1948. The introduction also provides a concise summary of "Canadian Immigration Policy and Practice" – an effective section-heading style that Helmer employs throughout the book.

The first chapter describes the spread and reach of totalitarianism in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s. Germany, Austria, the Baltic states, and Czechoslovakia and Hungary are attended in turn, along with their associated sooner-or-later-to-be Canadians. The cultural scene that these musicians had known and grew up in is described as rich but

troubled, and where they had established themselves, the musicians' careers are related summarily. The paths to Canada were as diverse as the people traveling them: many musicians spent time in other parts of Europe, the Far East, and the United States before arriving in Canada.

Chapter two tells the story of eleven "Camp Boys" – enemy aliens who were interred *en masse* in England in 1940 – whose Canadian careers began "behind barbed wire in the backwood of New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario." It presents a cultural-intellectual scene in a prison camp that, on its artistic merit alone, might well be the envy of many universities and cities today. The rich confluence and activity in trying circumstances of talented minds reminds one of Terezin (Theresienstadt), although the story of the "Camp Boys" ends much less graphically.

The third chapter establishes Canadian musical life in the 1920s through 1940s, including music education, performance, and academia. It is a stark contrast to Europe's richness, and is indicative of the youth of our country. The differences between Europe and Canada, and the small scale of the latter, both made it difficult for émigré musicians to adjust to their new environment and presented them great opportunity.

The fourth chapter primarily tells the story of two men, Arnold Walter and Helmut Blume, and their vast influence at the University of Toronto and McGill, respectively. In addition to being valuable for illuminating these men's remarkable talents as administrators and diplomats, this chapter is also of great worth for its overview of the post-secondary music tradition in Canada. Walter and Blume, Helmer



shows, are largely responsible for the hybrid system we now enjoy in Canada, whereby performance, composition, and musicology-theory are given equal footing and their practitioners rub shoulders.

Chapters five and six deal with the establishment of opera programs and the spread of influence with new hirings across the country. Given Helmer's roughly chronological approach, those who might be inclined to criticise his reinforcement of the Eastern Canadian tale of hegemony might charm their tongues. The story begins in the major centres of Montreal and Toronto, and as the influence of Walter, Blume, and others spreads, so does Helmer's scope. The final chapter examines the myriad influences these émigré musicians had outside of the academy, in positions as conductors, instrumentalists, adjudicators, promoters, and teachers.

A very personal colour comes through in the epilogue, which recaps some of the achievements of the émigré musicians in the study (twenty-one have been inducted into the Order of Canada) and relates the complex experiences of those who returned to Europe after the threat had lifted.

Helmer writes in an accessible, personal style (perhaps influenced by the many interviews he conducted), and his research is extremely thorough. The book is valuable as a humanist work in its own right, but is also of great worth to those in Canadian studies and exile studies in any field. The first appendix, a bibliography spanning a full forty pages, is invaluable as a reference and starting point for further research. The cover of the book presents us with the artistically grainy, cropped image of a conductor's hands amid a

void. It now lies in the hands of other scholars to paint the rest of the picture.

Iain Gillis  
University of Victoria

Christina Petrowska Quilico: *3 Concerti. Concerto for piano and orchestra* by Alexina Louie, *Concerto No. 1 for piano and orchestra* by Violet Archer, and *Piano Concerto* by Larysa Kuzmenko. Centrediscs, 2010. CMC CD 15610.

This new release under the Centrediscs label is quite unique: it consists of three piano concerti by contemporary Canadian women composers, performed by a prominent female Canadian artist who is known for premiering and promoting new music alongside the more traditional Classical and Romantic canon. According to the liner notes, this project of women's piano concerti was the result of teaching graduate classes in gender and performance at York University, where Christina Petrowska Quilico wanted her students "to hear the brilliance of Canadian women composers, especially in live performance." These recordings of concerti by Alexina Louie, Violet Archer, and Larysa Kuzmenko seem so amazingly flawless that it is difficult to believe that they are, in fact, live performances.

As is typical of Louie's style, *Concerto for piano and orchestra* is a blend of eastern and western influences and is highly dramatic. Her piano music is particularly notable for its contrast of aggressively rhythmic chordal sections with incredibly fast

passagework, and this work is no exception. At the same time, I appreciate that the piano isn't always featured as a solo instrument; it is fascinating to hear how it shifts between foreground, middleground, and background, sometimes merely adding texture and colour to the orchestra. Unsurprisingly, Petrowska Quilico interprets her varying roles as a pianist well.

Louie's concerto is very technically demanding and requires much stamina on the part of the pianist. The first and last movements in particular run the risk of sapping a performer's strength and energy, and absolute precision is necessary for the fast running lines, glissandi, and quickly-leaping chords. Although the middle movement is more impressionistic, textural, and lyrical, it requires a perfect balance of controlled dexterity and expressive freedom of movement to produce the delicate, shimmering textures that dominate the piano part. Despite the work's inherent challenges, Petrowska Quilico by no means disappoints: as has come to be expected of this internationally-acclaimed performer, her playing is sparkling, energetic, and powerful.

After listening to the brilliant performance of Louie's piece, I am a little disappointed by the quality of the audio in the recording of Violet Archer's concerto. While I have few complaints about Petrowska Quilico's interpretation and performance of the work, it is particularly noticeable in the solo melodic passages of the second movement that pitches in the upper register of the piano have a slightly odd quality to them; they lack a certain richness and don't seem to sing out as they should. Despite the audio quality, Petrowska Quilico delivers another satisfying

performance, although at a couple points in the first movement I found myself wishing that the fast running passages in the piano were a touch crisper and brighter with less pedal.

Archer's concerto can be identified as neo-classical in style, and I particularly enjoyed the playful, folk-like opening theme of the first movement. The second movement is more lyrical, while the third movement is particularly energetic and exciting, again showing off the pianist's exceptional virtuosic abilities.

Kuzmenko's concerto, on the other hand, is more heavily influenced by the epic works of the Romantics such as Rachmaninov. There is a delightful crispness to Petrowska Quilico's articulation in the first movement which is impeccably mirrored by the orchestra in the sections featuring woodwinds and plucked strings. The contrasting sections of lyrical melodies, lush harmonies, and atmospheric textures with driving, intense rhythms recall Kuzmenko's dramatic solo piano work *In Memoriam to the Victims of Chernobyl*. However, it is the second movement that I find particularly compelling: in the first variation of this theme and variations, Petrowska Quilico achieves a wonderfully sparkling, crystalline quality in the upper register of the piano that is further highlighted in the orchestra with the use of vibraphone, glockenspiel, wind chimes, and high string harmonics.

The pianist's exceptional precision and dexterity is evident in the minutiae of the performance: for example, the very fast repetition of a single pitch, which initially draws the listener's attention due to its exposure in terms of registration, orchestration, and duration, is played perfectly clearly and evenly,

maintaining intensity throughout. Like Archer, Kuzmenko reserves the most energetic and virtuosic elements for the final movement, and Petrowska Quilico neatly navigates the difficult angular and rhythmic themes that travel between registers.

Although already a highly musical and sensitive interpreter of new music, not to mention extremely technically proficient and dynamic, Petrowska Quilico was fortunate to be able to consult with each of the three composers prior to the performances, which is the unique benefit of performing works by living composers. In fact, Kuzmenko's concerto was specifically written for Petrowska Quilico, and this disc captures the world premiere performance. *3 Concerti* would be an excellent addition to the audio library of anyone interested in exciting new Canadian music or superior piano performance.

Heather Olaveson  
University of Victoria



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British Columbia's first School of Music offers a professional education to those who wish to make careers in music. Success of the School's programs is demonstrated by a recent survey which shows that over 80 percent of its graduates have gone on to careers in the music industry. In addition, numerous alumni have received prestigious awards to pursue advanced studies in North America and Europe.

The faculty includes performers of international reputation, along with composers, musicologists, and theorists who are actively engaged in the scholarly and creative concerns of their disciplines. Enrollment is limited to approximately 200 undergraduate and 35 graduate students, in order to ensure close contact with the faculty. The emphasis is on professional studies in all areas of specialization.

