A Study of Robert Schumann and his Impact on the German Song Cycle

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A STUDY OF ROBERT SCHUMANN AND HIS IMPACT ON THE GERMAN SONG CYCLE

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A Study of Robert Schumann and His Impact on the German Song Cycle

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Melissa A. Mills
The purpose of this research was to gain information about Robert Schuman and his impact on the German song cycle. The specific problems of the study were as follows: 1.) To trace the origins and development of the song cycle; 2.) To identify the significance of Robert Schumann to the German song cycle; and 3.) To analyze Frauenliebe und-Leben ('A Woman’s Life and Love'), a song cycle composed by Schumann in 1840, in terms of form, style, and vocal technique. This research investigates the return of Robert Schumann from instrumental music back to vocal music and how he helped develop the German song cycle genre.
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INTRODUCTION

According to Youens (1998), Robert Schumann (1810-1856), composer, critic, pianist, and co-founder of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* journal (1834), was born in Zwichau, Germany. A driving force in the development of Romantic music, Schumann had a passion for both poetry and music. Bonds (2006) states that after the death of his father, August Schumann (1773-1826), and against the advice of his mother, Johanna Schumann (n.d.), young Robert ventured to study music in Leipzig, Germany under Fredrich Wieck (1785-1873). Solnimsy (1992) cites Schumann composed in one genre at a time beginning with solo piano compositions, the first being *Abegg Variations, Op. 1* (n.d.). *Psalm 150* (1822), Schumann's first vocal composition, was an overture for chorus. After twelve years of writing instrumental music (1828-1840), he returned to vocal compositions known as the 'year of song'. According to Youens (1998), it was during this year that Schumann composed one hundred and sixty-eight songs.

Youens (1998) asserts that the return of Schumann to composing vocal music greatly impacted the history of the song cycle. According to *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, the genre of the song cycle had been previously established by such composers as John Danyel (1564-1626) and Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827). Robert Schumann established the model that subsequent composers would follow. The musical focus shifted from conveying poetry through a solo or ensemble to expression through harmony and chordal structure. Daverio (1997) states that although many composers wrote music in this genre, Schumann left the greatest impression.
PURPOSE

With the intent of improving music pedagogy and performance, the purpose of this research is to gain information about Robert Schumann and his significance to the German song cycle.

PROBLEMS

The specific problems of the study are as follows:

1. To trace the origins and development of the song cycle through the Romantic era;

2. To identify the contributions of Robert Schumann to the German song cycle;

3. To analyze Frauenliebe und-Leben, a song cycle composed by Schumann in 1840, in terms of form, style, and vocal technique.
THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SONG CYCLE

According to Youens (1998), the style of the song cycle began to arise during the nineteenth century, the era of Romanticism. Emerging as a collection of songs, this type of composition transitioned to a song cycle. Youens defines a collection of songs as having no uniting theme or common characteristic, and classifies a song cycle as a series of songs that are connected by a common theme or idea, either musical or textual. Youens (1998) also concurs that these works were composed for both ensemble and solo, with and without accompaniment. The length varies depending on the composer of the song cycle; it may be from two to thirty songs in length. Moss (2006) states that song cycles are often associated with turn of the nineteenth century though the works existed long before the genre was established. Originating in Germany and England, song cycles were common during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries though the term ‘song cycle’ was not introduced until Arrey von Dommer (1828-1905) used it in the Koch’s edition of *Musikaliches Lexikon*, a musical dictionary, which was published in 1865. Some of these early works include: John Danyel’s (1564-1625) *Mrs. M.E. Her Funeral: Tears for the Death of her Husband* (1606), Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach’s (1732-1795) *Die Amerikanerin* (1776), and James Hook’s (1746-1827) *The Aviary* (1783).

Solnimsky (1992) stresses that at the turn of the nineteenth century, there was a boost in the number of songs being composed and published. Due to living in divided country, the German-speaking people insisted that the music have coherence and variety. This demand led to the creation of the *liederspiel*. Youens (1998) cites that this term represented the earlier song cycles; narrative poetic song cycles did not become prominent until 1815. Daverio (1997) establishes that *liederspiel*, the equivalent to a
ballad opera, was pioneered by Johann Friedrich Reichardt (1752-1814) in the 1800s by his work *Lieb und Treue* (1800). It was unique that the earlier compositions from this genre contained choral settings, which was demonstrated by Reichardt’s work *Musikalischer Almanach* (1796). Another style of an earlier liederspiel was exhibited by Christian Gottlob Neefe’s (1748-1798) work *Bilder und Traume* (1798), which was a collection of folksongs. The type of song used, the German folksong, which was a song of the common people that was passed down orally, was the connecting factor in this work.

According to Moss (2006), eventually there was a transition from liederspiel to the commonly known song cycle, which was embodied in the work *Die schöne Müllerin* (1823) composed by Franz Schubert (1797-1828). According to Youens (1998), Schubert was the father of the German lieder, the first great Romantic of the era, and was known for integrating poetry and music, a trait which Schumann later adapted. *Die schöne Müllerin* (1823), ‘The Maid of the Mill’, was classified as a song-play and was created by members of a salon in Berlin at the house of the state councillor Friedrich von Stagemann (1763-1840). These men collaborated on the poetic text and later requested Classical composer Ludwig Berger (1777-1838) to compose the music. The result was *Gesänge aus einem gesellschaftlichen Liederspiel ‘Die schöne Müllerin’ Op. 11* (1823).

Within this work, the text was the unifying factor that connected all the songs. Jensen (2001) states that as the song cycle became more common, it was referred to as a “spoked wheel” (p. 25). The spokes represented the independent songs within the cycle and the hub or center of the wheel symbolized the common factor that connected the
songs. An example of this symbolism was first expressed by Friedrich Schneider's (1786-1853) *Die Jahreszeiten* (1820).

Sohnimsky maintains that the song cycle was classified into one of three categories: 1.) an internal plot, 2.) text or music that was pulled from a larger work, or 3.) a storyline that is multisectional. *Die schöne Müllerin*, classified as having an internal plot, is cohesive but not in the typical form that previous song cycles were written in. An example of a song cycle that had text or music excerpted from a larger work is *Sieben Gesänge* (1825), which was composed by Schubert. This work was extracted from Scott’s *The Lady of the Lake*, which was published post-humously. The last classification is represented by Robert Schumann’s song cycle *Frauenliebe und leben* (1840), which tells a story and has many sections.

Sosland (2004) states that the first significant song cycle was composed by Beethoven, *An die ferne Geliebte* (1815). This work explores the psychological and emotional components of music, which are characteristics of the Romantic era. Youens (1998) explains that Beethoven composed so that the piano accompaniment part was equally prominent as the vocal solo, which conveyed the poetic text. Though this was the first song cycle, it was not the model that would be used by later composers. Jensen (2001) emphasizes that it was Schumann returned to song composition in 1840, an act that greatly impacted the history of the song cycle. Robert Schumann shifted the focus from conveying poetry though the vocal solo or ensemble to composing in expressive harmonies and unique chordal structures to create an emotional response from the audience. It was this new style that set the precedent and created the model that future composers would follow.
Youens (1998) establishes that song cycles continued to become more prominent in France near the end of the century. The French became intrigued by the lyrical expression of the song cycles, and eventually the French began to compose in this genre with their own style. Youens (1998) also writes that in 1894, *La bonne chanson*, text by poet Paul Verlaine (1844-1896) and composed by Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924), initiated the French song cycle genre. Song cycles continued to be composed throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.
BIOGRAPHY OF ROBERT SCHUMANN

According to Youens (1998), Robert Schumann (1810-1856) expressed the deepest romantic spirit, and was an important factor in the evolution of Romantic music. According to Slonimsky, his family life while he was growing up was very rough. His father died of a nervous disease at the age of fifty-three, and, later in his childhood, his sister committed suicide at the age of nineteen; however, this did not discourage him from pursuing his ambitions. Having passion for poetry and music, he ventured to study music in Leipzig, Germany in 1828.

Moss (2006) affirms that while studying piano under Fredrich Wieck (1785-1873), Robert fell in love with his daughter, Clara (1819-1896), whom he later married and wrote piano compositions for. Unique to his compositional style, Schumann composed in one genre at a time beginning with solo piano compositions, the first being Abegg Variations, Op. 1 (n.d.). Schumann's first vocal composition, Psalm 150, which was not written until 1822, was an overture for chorus. Daverio (1997) writes that during the twelve years of writing instrumental music (1828-1840), Schumann began to have progressive thoughts of suicide. In 1834, Schumann along with Julius Knorr (1826-1881), Ludwig Schunke (1810-1834), and Friedrich Weick founded Neue Zeitschrift für Musik, a journal that contained musical critiques and articles. Youens (1998) asserts that around the age of twenty-two, he developed an ailment in his middle and index fingers of his right hand which prohibited him from training for the revolution, the March Revolution (1848-1849), with the military. Scholars disagree as to the origin of Schumann's finger ailment. Sosland (2004) and Daverio (1997) attribute this ailment to the tertiary syphilis that Schumann contracted while Moss (2006), Slonimsky (1992), and
Youens (1998) claim that the ailment came from a device that Schumann used to strengthen his fingers. Bonds (2006) establishes that compulsive fearfulness of insanity caused more mental and physical illnesses to develop. As a result, he focused on both composition and music critiques and analyses. Unlike his current mental and physical state, his compositions were not thought of as melancholy or somber as the works of Ludwig van Beethoven were. Slonimsky (1992) writes, “Schumann’s compositions used nocturnal moods, nature scenes, and fantasies,” (p. 271). He returned to vocal compositions in the year 1840, which became known as the ‘year of song’. Youens (1998) states that during the ‘year of song’, Schumann composed one hundred and sixty-eight songs. Slonimsky (1992) notes that Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) invited Schumann in 1843 to teach piano, composition, and score reading at the Conservatory in Leipzig, Germany.

Bonds (2006) writes that in 1852, Schumann’s physical motor movement became limited and his speech hesitant. Slonimsky (1992) states that before the illnesses Schumann had feared began to make an impact on his lifestyle, he composed a violin concerto (1853). Due to Schumann’s prestige, he claimed the work was unworthy of his genius. He proceeded to give the work to Joachim (n.d.), a dear friend, who was instructed to hold on to the work and not allow it to be performed until the centennial of his death. The first performance of this work was on November 26, 1937 in Berlin, Germany.

Moss (2006) cites that Schumann developed auditory hallucinations, which led to insomnia and the following year (1854) he attempted suicide in the Rhine River. Schumann was then admitted to an asylum, where he spent his remaining two years.
Schumann died on July 29, 1856 in Bonn at age forty-six. Psychiatrist Dr. Franz Richarz (n.d.) established that many of Schumann’s mental and physical illnesses were due to tertiary syphilis, which is the final stage of the disease that causes deterioration of the body, affecting the brain, spinal cord, heart, skin, bones, and joints in combination with general paresis, muscular weakness, as a result of sclerosis, or hardening, of the brain and muscle tissue. Other doctors disputed that it was dementia praecox, commonly known today as schizophrenia.
IMPACT OF SCHUMANN TO THE GERMAN SONG CYCLE

Youens (1998) writes that the return of Robert Schumann to song composition in 1840 greatly impacted the history of the song cycle. The first recognized song cycle by Beethoven, *An die ferne Geliebte* (1816), was centered on the piano accompaniment. It also focused on the emotional and psychological stimulation of the audience. Schumann, however, modified the approach to the song cycle and established the model that later composers would use as an example.

Slonimsky (1992) states that Schumann shifted the emphasis from conveying poetry through solo voice to the chordal and harmonic structure. By manipulating the tonality and harmonies, he was able to evoke intensified emotions from the audience. This style of composition was demonstrated by Schumann's work *Dichterliebe* (1840). Known as the best song cycle that Schumann composed, the text to this work was written by German Romantic poet Heinrich Heine (1797-1856), which made this composition a poetic cycle. Daverio (1997) asserts that another characteristic of Schumann's compositional style is that he was known to reorder the poetic material to create more unification by using recapitulation of earlier passages and unique harmonies as Schumann would restructure the text to accompany the music.

According to Slonimsky (1992), it was Robert Schumann's structural approach to the music that made it endure longer than the song cycle of Beethoven. The significance of having an emphasis on the text versus a focus on the musical components greatly impacted the response of the audience to the music. Additionally, it made a lasting impression on the development and focus of music.
ANALYSIS

A. History

According to Youens (1998), this song cycle was written in 1840, after a period of writing instrumental music, and is based upon courtship. The title, Frauenliebe und Leben, translates as ‘A Woman’s Life and Love’. The cycle’s text begins with a young woman who falls in love, gets married, experiences pregnancy, and endures the death of her husband. These circumstances are exhibited not only through the text of the song cycle but also through the tonality and tempo in which each song was composed. Moss confirms that the text of this song cycle was written by Adelbert Chamisso (1781-1838), a French-born poet who resided in Germany.

According to Youens (1998), a German song, known as a lied, is the equivalent to an Italian aria. A song cycle is a series of lieder sung sequentially having a connecting theme or story. The first song cycle, An die feme Geliebte (1816), was composed by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827). Sosland cites that Robert Schumann’s best known cycles, of the six he composed, are Frauenliebe und leben and Dichterliebe, which were both written in the ‘year of song’. Prior to Schumann’s song cycle Frauenliebe und leben, poet Adelbert Chamisso allowed the text to be used by composer Carl Loewe (1796-1869). Loewe sought to portray the text in an emotional context whereas Schumann applied the text to a character to tell a story.

B. Style

This work highlighted and showcased the piano abilities of Clara Schumann. The last song of this cycle, Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan, repeats the initial
theme which was stated at the beginning of the cycle demonstrating recapitulation. Standing in opposition to Schubert's lieder, Schumann's piano accompaniment is independent of the vocal line and is of equal importance. However, as in most works by Schumann, the piano accompaniment is rhythmically contrasting to the vocal line.

1. *Seit ich ihn gesehen (Since I saw him)*

The melody to this lied is relatively easy. Composed with stepwise contour, the melody is in a comfortable range for the soprano soloist. The song is sung in a legato manner with sporadic use of the staccato technique inserted to allow the text to be clearly enunciated and understood. The soloist must be sensitive to the chromatic intervals inserted into the melody. The tonality of B♭ major and time signature of 3/4 remain constant.

Sung as a silent confession, the female character, whom this song cycle is about, sees a man whom she falls in love with. She proclaims that she is now blind to the world around her, focusing solely on him.

Table 1. *Seit ich ihn gesehen (Since I saw him)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Large Form</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Internal Form</th>
<th>Key</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>B♭ major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2-7</td>
<td>a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7-11</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>Interlude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A(^1)</td>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>a(^1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24-28</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28-32</td>
<td>c(^1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32-37</td>
<td>Coda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TRANSLATION  

Seit ich ihn gesehen  
Seit ich ihn gesehen,  
Glaub ich blind zu sein;  
Wo ich hin nur blikke,  
Seh ich ihn allein;  
Wie im wachen Traume  
Schwebt sein Bild mir vor,  
Taucht aus tiefstem Dunkel,  
Heller nur empor.  

Sonst ist licht- und farblos  
Alles um mich her,  
Nach der Schwestern Spiele  
Nicht begehre ich mehr,  
Möchte lieber weinen,  
Still im Kämmerlein;  
Seit ich ihn gesehen,  
Glaub ich blind zu sein.  

Since I saw him  
Since I saw him  
I believe myself to be blind,  
where I but cast my gaze,  
I see him alone.  
as in waking dreams  
his image floats before me,  
dipped from deepest darkness,  
brighter in ascent.  

2. *Er, der Herrlichste von allen* (*He, most glorious of all*)  
Upbeat and happy, the female character praises the man that she has seen.  
Willing to give her whole heart to this man, she is in bliss. In contrast to the first lied,  
the mood becomes somber as she contemplates what will happen if he breaks her heart.  
Since the female character is in state of bliss, this lied is to be sung with joy and  
much energy. As the sections contrast and modulate, a legato technique is most  
apparent. A bright tone at the beginning of the lied should be used and changed to a  
darker tone as the mood progresses towards doubt. The opening theme returns at the  
end to bring closure to the lied.
Table 2. *Er, der Herrlichste von allen (He, the most glorious of all)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Large Form</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Internal Form</th>
<th>Key</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>E♭ major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10-13</td>
<td>a¹</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13-17</td>
<td>b¹</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17-20</td>
<td>Interlude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>C minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24-28</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>E♭ major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A¹</strong></td>
<td>29-32</td>
<td>a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32-38</td>
<td>b²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td>38-46</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>D♭ minor</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46-54</td>
<td>e¹</td>
<td>B♭ major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54-56</td>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>E♭ major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A²</strong></td>
<td>57-60</td>
<td>a²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60-66</td>
<td>b³</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66-71</td>
<td>Coda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Er, der Herrlichste von allen
Wie so milde, wie so gut!
Holde Lippen, klares Auge,
Heller Sinn und fester Mut.

So wie dort in blauer Tiefe,
Hell und herrlich, jener Stern,
Also er an meinem Himmel,
Hell und herrlich, [hehr]\(^1\) und fern.

Wandle, wandle deine Bahnen,
Nur betrachte deinen Schein,
Nur in Demut ihn betrachten,
Selig nur und traurig sein!

Höre nicht mein stilles Beten,
Deinem Glücke nur geweiht;
Darfst mich niedre Magd nicht kennen,
Hoher Stern der Herrlichkeit!

Nur die Würdigste von allen
Darf glücksen deine Wahl,
Und ich will die Hohe segnen,
Segnen viele tausendmal.

Will mich freuen dann und weinen,
Selig, selig bin ich dann;
Sollte mir das Herz auch brechen,
Brich, o Herz, was liegt daran?

3. *Ich kann’s nicht fassen (I can’t grasp it)*

Panic! The female character cannot believe this man has chosen to be with her; as a result, she convinces herself she must be dreaming. The work opens in a state of panic and confusion, expressed through the key of C minor which modulates to the key of E\(^b\) major portraying the dream. The lied closes with the return of the initial theme ending on a Picardy Third.
Written in the key of C minor, the initial confusion experienced by the female character is exhibited through the use of the marcato technique. The soloist is presented with two challenges: the lower register of the singer and the declamation of the text. The second section of this lied is sung in a legato manner to convey the dream-like state that the character is experiencing. A brighter sonority is used in the third section, and the positive change in mood is accompanied by a modulation to E♭ major. When the first theme returns, the soloist uses the same darker tone as used in the beginning of the lied.

Table 3. *Ich kann's nicht fassen (I can't grasp it)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Large Form</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Internal Form</th>
<th>Key</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>C minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7-14</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>15-23</td>
<td>c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23-24</td>
<td>c'</td>
<td>E♭ major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>34-42</td>
<td>d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42-49</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>C minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A¹</td>
<td>50-58</td>
<td>a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>58-65</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66-74</td>
<td>Interlude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>74-82</td>
<td>a'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>83-94</td>
<td>Coda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TRANSLATION

Ich kann's nicht fassen
I can't grasp it
Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben,
I can't grasp it, nor believe it,
Es hat ein Traum mich berückt;
a dream has bewitched me,
Wie hätt er doch unter allen,
how should he, among all the others,
Mich Arme erhöht und beglückt?
lift up and make happy poor me?

Mir war's, er habe gesprochen:
It seemed to me, as if he spoke,
"Ich bin auf ewig dein,"
"I am thine eternally",
Mir war's - ich träume noch immer,
It seemed - I dream on and on,
Es kann ja nimmer so sein.
It could never be so.

O laß im Traume mich sterben,
O let me die in this dream,
Gewieget an seiner Brust,
cradled on his breast,
Den [seligsten] Tod mich schlürfen
let the most blessed death drink me up
In Tränen unendlicher Lust.
in tears of infinite bliss.

4. Du Ring an meinem Finger (Thou ring on my finger)
The mood of this lied is joyful and blissful. It is to be sung in a legato manner, 
emphasizing the phrasing. The melody is repeated, shifting the emphasis from melody to 
the text. During the contrasting section, the tension is built as the female character 
declares her service and loyalty to her husband, and diminishes as the main theme returns 
again to bring closure. Stepwise in contour, the vocal line is in a lower range and is not 
to be sung forcefully.

The female character professes loyalty to her betrothed. Admiring her ring, she 
realizes he has opened her eyes and for that she will serve him. Though no modulation is 
present, Schumann uses borrowed chords in an effort to convey the strong feelings of the 
female character. For example, in measure twenty-five, Schumann borrows the tonic 
chord of the parallel major, C major. On beat three of the same measure, the chordal 
progression goes to the subdominant of C minor again, which then progresses in the next 
measure to the dominant of sixth scale degree of C minor.
On beat three of measure twenty-six there is a tonic chord of G minor, the dominant of C minor.

![Figure 1](image)

![Figure 2](image)

Table 4. *Du Ring an meinem Finger (Thou ring on my finger)*

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
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<td>4-8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8-12</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12-16</td>
<td>c</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>a₂</td>
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<td>24-28</td>
<td>d</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>a₄</td>
<td>E♭ major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>a₅</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-44</td>
<td>Coda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TRANSLATION

Du Ring an meinem Finger
Du Ring an meinem Finger,
Mein goldenes Ringelein,
Ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen,
Dich fromm an das Herze mein.

Ich hatt ihn ausgeträumet,
Der Kindheit friedlich schönen Traum,
Ich fand allein mich, verloren
Im öden, unendlichen Raum.

Du Ring an meinem Finger
Da hast du mich erst belehrt,
Hast meinem Blick erschlossen
Des Lebens unendlichen, tiefen Wert.

Ich will ihm dienen, ihm leben,
Ihm angehören ganz,
Hin selber mich geben und finden
Verklärt mich in seinem Glanz.

Du Ring an meinem Finger,
Mein goldenes Ringelein,
Ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen
Dich fromm an das Herze mein.

Thou ring on my finger
Thou ring on my finger,
my little golden ring,
I press thee piously upon my lips
piously upon my heart.

I had dreamt it,
the tranquil, lovely dream of childhood,
I found myself along and lost
in barren, infinite space.

Thou ring on my finger,
thou hast taught me for the first time,
hast opened my gaze unto
the endless, deep value of life.

I want to serve him, live for him,
belong to him entire,
Give myself and find myself
transfigured in his radiance.

Thou ring on my finger,
my little golden ring,
I press thee piously upon lips,
piously upon my heart.

5. Helft mir, ihr Schwestern (Help me, ye sisters)
The female character pleads for help from her sisters. As the wedding approaches, her anxiety begins to overcome her. She seeks comfort in her sisters and realizes she will no longer be with them. The upbeat tempo of this lied compliments the anxiety and fear that she experiences. The lied ends with chromaticism to exhibit her fear as she tells her sisters to go prepare her husband for the ceremony.

The tempo, mm=112, compliments the confusion, anxiety, and fear the female character experiences. The tempo should not be too fast so that all the words are clearly
understood. A bright tone is used to demonstrate the joy and passion that the female character is experiencing; however, during the chromatic section, a darker sound should be used to convey the melancholy mood that she refers to.

5. *Helft mir, ihr Schwestern (Help me, ye sisters)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>2-5</td>
<td>a</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6-9</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10-13</td>
<td>b</td>
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<td>14-17</td>
<td>b\textsuperscript{1}</td>
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<td></td>
<td>18-21</td>
<td>a</td>
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<td>22-25</td>
<td>a\textsuperscript{2}</td>
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<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td>26-29</td>
<td>c</td>
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<tr>
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<td>30-35</td>
<td>c\textsuperscript{1}</td>
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<td><strong>A\textsuperscript{1}</strong></td>
<td>36-39</td>
<td>a</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40-45</td>
<td>d</td>
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<td></td>
<td>46-51</td>
<td>Coda</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
TRANSLATION

_Helft mir, ihr Schwestern_

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern
Freundlich mich schmücken,
Dient der Glücklichen heute mir,
Windet geschäftig
Mir um die Stirne
Noch der blühenden Myrte Zier.

Als ich befriedigt,
Freudigen Herzens,
Sonst dem Geliebten im Arme lag,
Immer noch rief er,
Sehnsucht im Herzen,
Ungeduldig den heutigen Tag.

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,
Helft mir verscheuchen
Eine törichte Bangigkeit,
Daß ich mit klarem
Aug ihn empfange,
Ihn, die Quelle der Freudigkeit.

Bist, mein Geliebter,
Du mir erschienen,
Giebst du mir, Sonne, deinen Schein?
Laß mich in Andacht,
Laß mich in Demut,
Laß mich verneigen dem Herren mein.

Streuet ihm, Schwestern,
Streuet ihm Blumen,
Bringet ihm knospende Rosen dar,
Aber euch, Schwestern,
Grüß ich mit Wehmut
Freudig scheidend aus eurer Schar.

6. _Süßer Freund, du blickest_ (Sweet Friend, thou gazest)

Longing to share her joy with her husband, the female character announces to him that she is with child. Even though the song has a saddened feeling to it, it is conveying a happy and positive message. A mixture of minor and major tonality occurs throughout
the piece representing confusion and joy. The lied ends in the key of G major, which reasserts their happiness and joy about the arriving child.

This lied is one of the more difficult songs to sing from the song cycle. The soloist must sing in a well-supported manner due to the dynamic contrast and a slow tempo (mm=56). The mixture of minor and major keys, specifically E minor, C major, and B minor, portrays the mood and message.

Table 6. *Susser freund, du blickest* (*Sweet Friend, thou gazest*)

<table>
<thead>
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<td>G major</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>a'</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7-9</td>
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<td>c</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>a</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>a'</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17-19</td>
<td>b</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-21</td>
<td>d</td>
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<td>22-24</td>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>C major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>25-28</td>
<td>e</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29-32</td>
<td>f</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>35-38</td>
<td>g</td>
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<td>38-42</td>
<td>h</td>
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<td>42-44</td>
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<td>48-50</td>
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<td>50-52</td>
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<td>52-54</td>
<td>i</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54-58</td>
<td>Coda w/ phrase extension</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
TRANSLATION

Süßer Freund, du blickest
Sweet friend, thou gazest
Mich verwundert an,
upon me in wonderment,
Kannst es nicht begreifen,
thou cannot not grasp it,
Wie ich weinen kann;
why I can weep;
Laß der feuchten Perlen
Let the moist pearls'
Ungewohnte Zier
unaccustomed adornment
[Freudig hell erzittern
tremble, joyful-bright,
In dem Auge mir.]
in my eyes.

Wie so bang mein Busen,
How anxious my bosom,
Wie so wonnevoll!
how rapturous!
Wüßt ich nur mit Worten,
If I only knew, with words,
Wie ich's sagen soll;
how I should say it;
Komm und birg dein Antlitz
come and bury thy visage
Hier an meiner Brust,
here in my breast,
Will ins Ohr dir flüstern
I want to whisper in thy ear
Alle meine Lust.
all my happiness.

Weißt du nun die Tränen,
Knowest thou the tears,
Die ich weinen kann?
that I can weep?
Sollst du nicht sie sehen,
Shouldst thou not see them,
Du geliebter Mann?
thou beloved man?
Bleib an meinem Herzen,
Stay by my heart,
Fühle dessen Schlag,
feel its beat,
Daß ich fest und fester
that I may, fast and faster,
Nur dich drücken mag.
hold thee.

Hier an meinem Bette
Here, at my bed,
Hat die Wiege Raum,
the cradle shall have room,
Wo sie still verberge
where it silently conceals
Meinen holden Traum;
my lovely dream;
Kommen wird der Morgen,
the morning will come
Wo der Traum erwacht,
where the dream awakes,
Und daraus dein Bildnis
and from there thy image
Mir entgegen lacht.
shall smile at me.

7. An meinem Herzen (At my heart)
The female character professes the joy and love that she is feeling as a new
mother. The mood is very exuberant, and the key of D major remains constant
throughout the lied as well as the tempo mm=96. The crisp pronunciation of the words
and time signature of 6/8 compliment the tone. As a result, the vocalist, using a bright
tone, accents the downbeat of each measure.

The complicated accompaniment of this lied makes it one of the more difficult
pieces in the song cycle, because the singer and accompaniment having contrasting
rhythmic patterns. An accented downbeat portrays a dance-like feeling. The goal of this
lied is to convey the text as well as the emotions of being a new mother.

Table 7. An meinem Herzen (At my heart)

<table>
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<td>D major</td>
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<tr>
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<td>a</td>
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<td>9-13</td>
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<td>14-17</td>
<td>d</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18-21</td>
<td>a(^2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>32-34</td>
<td>a(^4)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34-41</td>
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</table>
TRANSLATION

An meinem Herzen
An meinen Herzen, an meiner Brust,
Du meine Wonne, du meine Lust!
Das Glück ist die Liebe, die Lieb ist das Glück,
Ich hab's gesagt und nehm's nicht zurück.

Hab überglücklich mich geschätzt
Bin überglücklich aber jetzt.
Nur die da säugt, nur die da liebt
Das Kind, dem sie die Nahrung giebt;
Nur eine Mutter weiß allein
Was lieben heißt und glücklich sein.

O, wie bedaur' ich doch den Mann,
Der Mutterglück nicht fühlen kann!
Du lieber, lieber Engel, du
Du schauest mich an und lächelst dazu!

At my heart
At my heart, at my breast,
thou my rapture, my happiness!
The joy is the love, the love is the joy,
I have said it, and won't take it back.

I've thought myself rapturous,
but now I'm happy beyond that.
Only she that suckles, only she that loves
the child, to whom she gives
nourishment;
Only a mother knows alone
what it is to love and be happy.

O how I pity then the man
who cannot feel a mother's joy!
Thou dear, dear angel thou,
thou lookst at me and smiles!

8. Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan (Now thou hast given me, for the first time, pain)
The closing lied to the song cycle was composed in a very slow tempo, exhibiting the sorrow that the female character experiences. Grieving over the death of her husband and the road that she must face without him, she reveals that since he is dead, she is dead as well. The lied is sung with a dark tone to convey grief. The emotions of the female character are mixed and the mood of the song shifts between sorrow and anger.

This lied is sung with a dark tone depicting both anger and sorrow. This melody, in the lower register, is not to be sung forcefully. The text is clearly articulated and the dynamics of the lied diminuendo as the song cycle comes to a close. The dynamic of pianissimo conveys sorrow and grief as well as the death of the composer.
Table 8. *Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan* (Now thou hast given me, for the first time, pain)

<table>
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<td>Piano</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>accompaniment</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**TRANSLATION**

*Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan*

Now thou hast given me, for the first time, pain,
Now thou hast given me, for the first time, pain,
How it struck me.
Thou sleepst, thou hard, merciless man,
The sleep of death.

The abandoned one gazes straight ahead,
The world is void.
I have loved and lived, I am
No longer living.

I withdraw silently into myself,
The veil falls,
There I have thee and my lost happiness,
O thou my world!
CONCLUSION

The development of music over the years has drastically changed the genre of the song cycle. Evolving from a collection of songs to an innovative method to tell a story, the song cycle is a great manipulator of emotional response. At the beginning of the movement, the collections of songs were a great way to group a series of songs together. Eventually, Ludwig van Beethoven composed the first recognized song cycle that had an emphasis on the text. The effect of the emotional response was based upon the words that were being sung. As music matured, Robert Schumann was able to use that song cycle as his model and write song cycles that were intensified and more emotional. The manipulation of musical characteristics made a more significant impression than the words do on an audience. This is Schumann’s greatest contribution to the song cycle, the manipulation of chordal harmonies and structures, which flirted with emotional extremes of his listeners.

While acquiring material for this project, the research found limited materials on the subject. The researcher learned about the origin of the song cycle genre and its evolution into the composition that it is presently recognized as. It was also intriguing to discover the changes in musicality as the genre matured in terms of tonal quality and style. This project allowed the researcher to better understand the music, why is it was written, and the emotions of both the composer and the character in the song cycle.

For future research, it would be interesting to discover the physiological components the piano accompaniment part of this work. Schumann composed the accompaniment so that it represents different emotions and reactions that the music evokes. One might also probe the theme and ideas that are woven through each of Robert
Schumann's song cycles. The common ideas bring continuity within the work itself and the other compositions he wrote within the genre.
DISCOGRAPHY

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➢ Anne Sophie von Otter
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➢ Kathleen Ferrier
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➢ Jessye Norman
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➢ Elly Ameling
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  o Pentatone Records
  o B0002EBFSK
**Appendix**

**SONG CYCLES FROM 1800-1899**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Work</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ludwig van Beethoven</td>
<td><em>An Die Ferne Geliebte</em></td>
<td>1816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Die Schöne Müllerin</em></td>
<td>1823</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Winterreise</em></td>
<td>1827</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Schwanengesang</em></td>
<td>1828</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franz Schubert</td>
<td><em>Liederkreis, Op. 24</em></td>
<td>1840</td>
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<td><em>Liederkreis Op. 39</em></td>
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<td><em>Frauenliebe und-Leben</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Dichterliebe</em></td>
<td>1840</td>
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<td>Robert Schumann</td>
<td><em>Wesendonck Lieder</em></td>
<td>1857</td>
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<td>Richard Wagner</td>
<td><em>Die Schöne Magelone</em></td>
<td>1863</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johannes Brahms</td>
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<td>Hugo Wolf</td>
<td><em>Mörike Lieder</em></td>
<td>1889</td>
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Bibliography


