Schumann, Heine, and Romantic Irony: Music and Poems in the First Five Songs of *Dichterliebe*

Lauri Suurpää

Heine's *Lyrisches Intermezzo* and Schumann's *Dichterliebe*[1]

Schumann composed *Dichterliebe* op. 48—probably the best known of his song cycles—in one week at the end of May 1840.[2] The year 1840 has been called Schumann's year of songs. Besides *Dichterliebe*, he composed the song cycles *Myrthen* op. 25, *Liederkreis* op. 39, and *Frauenliebe und -leben* op. 42. The vast and sudden production of songs is notable, as before 1840 Schumann had composed songs only as a very young man during the years 1827–28.[3]

Vocal music occupied an ambiguous position in the early part of the nineteenth century. The *bourgeoisie* of the time showed great interest in vocal music: people sang *lieder* and were active in choral societies. However, the writers of the early Romantic period considered instrumental music superior to vocal music. They claimed that instrumental music could approach the infinite—highly important for early romantic aesthetics—more

[1]I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to Professors Edward Laufer and Carl Schachter for their valuable comments during the preparation of this article.

[2]For a discussion on the compositional history of *Dichterliebe*, see Rufus E. Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann's* Dichterliebe*: A Source Book* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1976).

[3]Reasons for this sudden interest in songs have been sought in an idea, growing in Schumann's mind, that instrumental music would no longer be progressing (see Leon P. Plantinga, *Schumann as Critic* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967], 179–183), and from Schumann's eagerness to raise his social status that he might marry Clara Wieck (see Barbara Turchin, "Schumann's Conversion to Vocal Music: A Reconsideration," *The Musical Quarterly* [July 1981]: 392–404).

easily than vocal music.[4] Before the year 1840 Schumann thought as many writers did, preferring instrumental music. As late as the summer of 1839—only a year before composing *Dichterliebe*—he wrote, in a letter to Hermann Hirschbach: "Are you still composing more for the voice? Or are you perhaps like me who, all my life, have considered vocal composition inferior to instrumental music and never regarded it as great art? But tell no one about it!"[5] However, only half a year later Schumann himself began to compose songs in large quantities.

Recent scholarship has convincingly argued that Schumann's song cycles are coherent entities consisting of interrelated songs. Principles that organize the whole in the song cycles, and hence create the unity, have been sought either from musical factors alone—e.g., from key scheme, thematic cross-references, and motivic repetitions[6]—or from the interaction of music and poetry.[7] In the present study I shall discuss the first five songs of *Dichterliebe*, concentrating on the interaction of poetry and music. I shall first analyze the narrative arch created by the text and then examine how the narrative tensions of the poetry are reflected in the music.

In 1823 Heinrich Heine published *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, a collection of sixty-six short lyric poems from which the words of *Dichterliebe* are taken. In later editions of these poems Heine made numerous alterations including the addition of *Im*

[4]For a discussion on the relation of vocal music and instrumental music in the early nineteenth century, see Carl Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, translated by Roger Lustig (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989).

[5]Quoted in Turchin, "Schumann's Conversion to Vocal Music," p. 401.

[6]See Arthur Komar, "The Music of *Dichterliebe*: The Whole and its Parts," in Arthur Komar (ed.), *Schumann:* Dichterliebe (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), 63–94. It has been suggested that musical factors similar to those found in the song cycles create, also, the unity of Schumann's early piano cycles. See Peter Kaminsky, "Principles of Formal Structure in Schumann's Early Piano Cycles," *Music Theory Spectrum* 11/2 (1989): 207–225.

[7]See Christopher Lewis, "Text, Time, and Tonic: Aspects of Patterning in the Romantic Cycle," *Intégral* 2 (1988): 37–73; Patrick McCreless, "Song Order in the Song Cycle: Schumann's Liederkreis, op. 39," *Music Analysis* 5/1 (1986): 5–28; and David Neumeyer, "Organic Structure and the Song Cycle: Another Look at Schumann's *Dichterliebe*," *Music Theory Spectrum* 4 (1982): 92–105.

wunderschönen Monat Mai, the first poem and opening song of *Dichterliebe*. There is no single continuous narrative throughout the poems in *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, but a certain continuity is created by the awakening and flourishing of love at the beginning, the loss of love and remembrance of past joy in the middle, and the burial of love at the end.

There is, however, a clear narrative throughout the first five poems of *Dichterliebe*.[8] At the beginning, love awakens. In the continuation, it can develop either into happiness or sorrow. After a moment of joy, misfortune—the loss of love—triumphs. The texts and translations of the five poems are given here:

1. Im wunderschönen Monat Mai[9]

Im wunderschönen Monat Mai,	In the lovely month of May,
Als alle Knospen sprangen,	when all the buds were bursting,
Da ist in meinem Herzen	then within my heart
Die Liebe aufgegangen.	love broke forth.
Im wunderschönen Monat Mai,	In the lovely month of May,
Als alle Vögel sangen	when all the birds were singing,
Da hab' ich ihr gestanden	then I confessed to her
Mein Sehnen und Verlangen.	my longing and desire.

2. Aus meinen Tränen spriessen

Aus meinen Tränen spriessen	From my tears spring up
Viel blühende Blumen hervor,	many blooming flowers,
Und meine Seufzer werden	and my sighs become
Ein Nachtigallenchor.	a chorus of nightingales.
Und wenn du mich lieb hast Kindchen,	And if you love me, child,
Schenk' ich dir die Blumen all',	I give you all the flowers,

[8]The poems of *Dichterliebe* follow each other in the same order as the poems in *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, but Schumann has left out many of the poems in Heine's collection. The first five poems of the *Dichterliebe* are numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 in the *Lyrisches Intermezzo*. Originally Schumann set also poems 5 and 6 of *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, but later left them out of the published version of *Dichterliebe*; see Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann's* Dichterliebe, p. 125.

[9]The English translations are by Philip L. Miller and have been taken from Arthur Komar (ed.), *Schumann*: Dichterliebe, pp. 14–23.

Und vor deinem Fenster soll klingen
Das Lied der Nachtigall.

and before your window shall sound
the song of the nightingale.

3. Die Rose, die Lilie

Die Rose, die Lilie,
die Taube, die Sonne,
Die liebt' ich einst alle
in Liebeswonne,

The rose, the lily,
the dove, the sun—
I once loved them all
with ecstatic love.

Ich lieb' sie nicht mehr, ich liebe alleine
Die Kleine, die Feine,
die Reine, die Eine;

I love them no more, I love only
the little one, the dainty one,
the pure one, the One.

Sie selber, aller Liebe Bronne,[10]
Ist Rose und Lilie und Taube und Sonne.

She alone, the well-spring of all love,
is rose and lily and dove and sun.

4. Wenn ich in deine Augen seh'

Wenn ich in deine Augen seh',
So schwindet all' mein Leid und Weh;
Doch wenn ich küsse deinen Mund,
So werd ich ganz und gar gesund.

When I look into your eyes
all my sorrow and pain disappear;
but when I kiss your mouth,
then I become wholly well.

Wenn ich mich lehn' an deine Brust,
Kommt's über mich wie Himmelslust;
Doch wenn du sprichst: ich liebe dich,
So muss ich weinen bitterlich.

When I lie upon your breast
a heavenly happiness comes over me;
but when you say: I love you!
then I must weep bitterly.

5. Ich will meine Seele tauchen

Ich will meine Seele tauchen
In den Kelch der Lilie hinein,
Die Lilie soll klingend hauchen
Ein Lied von der Liebsten mein.

I will dip my soul
into the chalice of the lily;
the lily shall breathe
a song about my beloved.

Das Lied soll schauern und beben
Wie der Kuss von ihrem Mund',
Den sie mir einst gegeben
In wunderbar süsser Stund'!

The song shall quiver and palpitate
like the kiss of her mouth
that once she gave me
in a wonderfully sweet moment.

[10]Heine and Schumann's manuscripts have the word *Bronne* ("spring") but the published version of the *Dichterliebe* has *Wonne* ("joy").

The first poem begins from an emptiness; in it love and nature awaken. The love has a longed-for object, "*Da hab' ich ihr gestanden / Mein Sehnen und Verlangen.*" In the second poem, the longing and uncertainty give way to happiness—the tears become blooming flowers and the sighs become a chorus of nightingales. At the end of the poem, the flowers and the chorus of nightingales are promised to the beloved, if she gives love in return. That love would change the longing of the first poem into joy. The third poem is full of joy; here the love seems to be mutual. The first three poems show this shift: at first love and nature awakened side by side, but by the third poem love is on the surface. Nature—the rose, the lily, the dove, and the sun—must give way to it. The beloved also replaces nature, "*Sie selber, aller Liebe Bronne / Ist Rose und Lilie und Taube und Sonne.*"

The fourth poem begins in the bliss of love. The beloved has come closer than in the previous poems. In the first two poems, she was only mentioned, and was spoken to in request for love. In the third poem, love was mutual; happiness, however, was declared not to the beloved herself, but to the world outside the two lovers. In the fourth poem, the beloved is present as a physical person; her mouth is kissed, and the lover lies upon her breast. But the fourth poem brings also the first shadows, the first doubts of the durability of the love. At the end of the poem the tears of the second poem return, "*Doch wenn du sprichst: Ich liebe dich, / So muss ich weinen bitterlich.*" It is interesting to note that after the happiness of love, bitter tears are brought forth by the confession of love. I shall return to this contradiction later in this discussion.

In the fifth poem, love has been lost. This poem closes the whole narrative traced by the first five poems. It looks back in many ways to the earlier poems. In the third poem, nature—which had awakened together with love in the first poem—was abandoned. In the fifth poem, nature is again desired. This longing for nature is emphasized by a word-repetition; the lily abandoned in the third poem is now wished for so that the lover can dip his sorrowful soul in it. A second word-repetition in this poem addresses the kiss: the kiss of the fourth poem—there in the

present tense—has become a remembrance of the kiss lost, "*Den sie mir einst gegeben / In wunderbar süsser Stund!*" The past tense and remembrance that appear at the end of the fifth poem emphasize the unity created by the first five poems.

Both music and poetry support the interpretation of the first five songs as one entity. The songs are knit closely together: the ending of one anticipates the beginning of the next song. The identification of the first five songs as a unit is further emphasized by a change in musical texture at the sixth song. In the poems, the conflict between love's sorrow and happiness, prevailing at the beginning of *Dichterliebe*, reaches its resolution in the fifth song. Other scholars have debated this point: Arthur Komar regards the first five songs of *Dichterliebe* as one unit; Rufus E. Hallmark and Christopher Lewis disagree with this view, regarding the first four songs as one unit.[11] Hallmark and Lewis both argue that since the fifth poem is the first one in which love has been lost, it also begins a new unit in *Dichterliebe*. They both propose that musical factors, too, support this interpretation: Hallmark argues that "songs 1–4 are all major and related by V–I motion. Songs 5–11 are predominantly minor, and their relationships are more complex."[12] Lewis argues that the tonic chords of the keys of songs 2–4 form a harmonic succession II–V–I in G major, and therefore the attainment of the G major of the fourth song closes a musical unit. I concede that the fifth poem is the first one in which love has been lost, and that it, therefore, begins a new unit in the poems. I believe, however, that the fifth poem is to be understood, at the same time, as the goal toward which the first four poems aim. I shall illustrate later how musical factors also support this interpretation.

• • •

[11]Komar, "The Music of *Dichterliebe*," pp. 66–77; Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann's* Dichterliebe, pp. 135–142; and Lewis, "Text, Time, and Tonic," pp. 48–51.

[12]Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann's* Dichterliebe, p. 142.

The content of Heine's poems is clearly reflected in the music itself in *Dichterliebe*. Pitch-classes B and D are extremely important in the first five songs. They appear at all structural levels—in the foreground as embellishing notes, in the middleground as structurally important chords and notes, and in the background as keys of individual songs. In my view, these two pitch classes are of utmost importance for the narrative of the first five songs: they represent the sorrow and happiness of love which are struggling in the poems. B denotes sorrow and D denotes joy. This discussion will address ways in which B and D appear in the first five songs of *Dichterliebe*, how these pitch classes relate to the narrative of the poetry, and how the varying emphasis given to the two pitch classes reflects the various stages in the struggle between sorrow and joy. When B is being emphasized in the music, sorrow is on the surface in the poems, and when D is being stressed, joy prevails.[13]

In his article on *Dichterliebe*, Arthur Komar presents some ideas similar to those in this article; most notably, he regards the first five songs as a closed group and he sees the increasing emphasis on pitch-class B as a major factor in these songs.[14] Despite these similarities, my argument differs greatly from

[13]Several scholars have shown that in vocal music a single pitch class or a number of pitch classes may reflect the poetic images or dramatic tensions of the text. Edward Laufer has shown that in Brahms's "*Wie Melodien zieht es mir*," op. 105, no. 1, D mirrors the poetic content of the text of the song (Edward Laufer, "Brahms, Song op. 105, no. 1: A Schenkerian Approach," in Maury Yeston [ed.], *Readings in Schenkerian Analysis and Other Approaches* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977]: 254–272). Carl Schachter has discussed the motivic importance that the pitch-class F×/G has in Schubert's song "*Nacht und Träume*" and how the occurrences of this pitch class reflect the central image of the text, the image of dream (Carl Schachter, "Motive and Text in Four Schubert Songs," in David Beach [ed.], *Aspects of Schenkerian Theory* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993], 61–76). Elsewhere Carl Schachter has noted the importance that pitch-classes F♯ and G have in the dramatic unfolding of the music of Donna Anna's first-act recitative and aria in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (Carl Schachter, "The Adventures of an F♯: Tonal Narration and Exhortation in Donna Anna's First-Act Recitative and Aria," *Theory and Practice* 16 [1991]: 5–17).

[14]See Arthur Komar, "The Music of *Dichterliebe*," pp. 66–67.

Komar's. The most important difference is the fact that Komar deals exclusively with the music, while I address the relations of music and text. Our articles differ from each other from a purely analytical view, as we read the voice leading differently in each of the songs. Furthermore, although Komar also notes the importance of pitch-class D, he does not seem to share my idea of pitch-classes B and D being juxtaposed at all structural levels. For Komar, D is important as a part of "the arpeggiation B–D in linear association with C♯."[15] Komar reads these thirds only as a foreground phenomenon whereas I give pitch-class D emphasis also in the middleground and background.

The poem of the first song begins from emptiness; love and nature awake in it. Schumann's music, too, begins as if from nowhere. The opening suspension obscures the tonal center; the music does not seem to be rooted anywhere. The key, A major, emerges only in mm. 5–6, after the vocal part has begun.

Example 1 shows the voice leading for the first song, "*Im wunderschönen Monat Mai.*" As seen at the foreground level in Example 1, the first song has three clear sections: first, the piano ritornello that begins and ends the song and separates the two verses (mm. 1–4, 12–15, and 23–26); second, the measures in which nature awakens—"*Als alle Knospen sprangen*" and "*Als alle Vögel sangen*" (mm. 5–8 and 16–19); and third, the measures in which love and longing awaken—"*Da ist in meinem Herzen / Die Liebe aufgegangen*" and "*Da hab' ich ihr gestanden / Mein Sehnen und Verlangen*" (mm. 9–12 and 21–23). The two pitch classes are not prominent in the first eight measures but gradually receive more emphasis as the song proceeds. They appear mainly in the foreground as embellishing notes (see the staff above Example 1c). It is worth noticing, however, that the first consonance of the song (and thus of *Dichterliebe*) is the major sixth D–B, appearing measure 1 beat 2 after the suspended C♯ has descended to B. It is as if the music foresees at the very beginning the forthcoming conflict of love's sorrow and happiness. B also creates to a great extent the rich sonority and tension of the piano ritornello.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

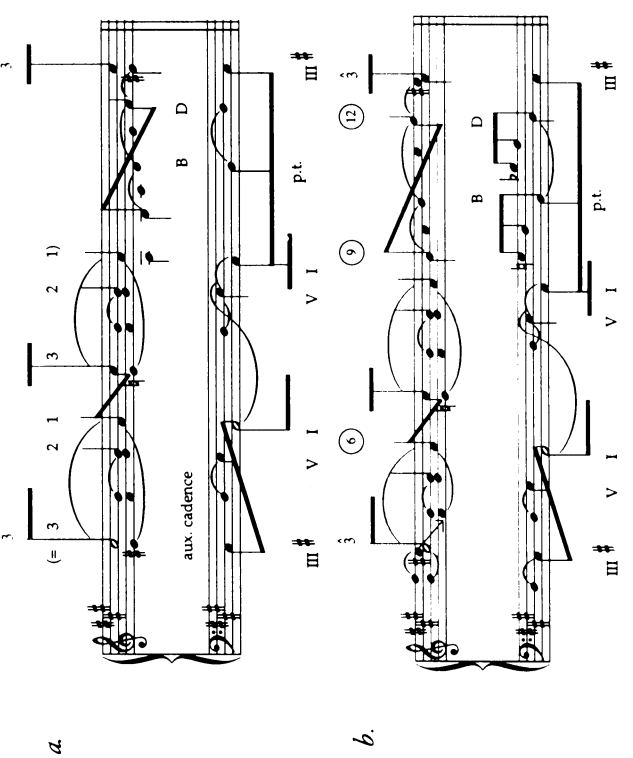
It is logical that Schumann only hints towards B and D in the first eight measures: because B and D point towards the sorrow and happiness of love, they cannot be emphasized before love awakens. When it does, in mm. 9–12, pitch-classes B and D are prominent.

Measures 9–12 consist of a sequence in which the same gesture—auxiliary cadence IV^6–V–I supporting an ascending third in the top voice—appears twice, first in B minor (mm. 9–10) and then in D major (mm. 11–12) (see Example 1c). Example 1a shows how B and D are related to the voice leading of the deep middleground. B functions as a passing tone between A (m. 8) and C♯ (m. 13) in the bass, and D is an upper third of B. The sixteenth note B appearing at the very end of m. 12 emphasizes this passing motion in the foreground. Although B and D are introduced here side by side, B—the sorrow of love—appears at a deeper structural level than D even at this early point in the piece.[16]

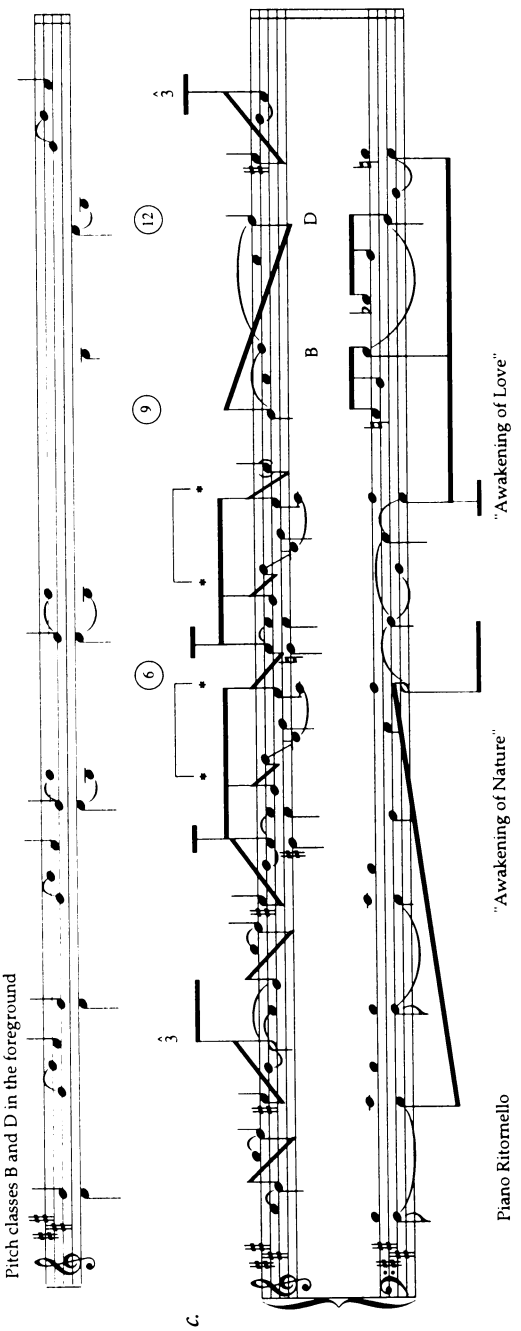
The above-mentioned three sections of the first song—the piano ritornello, the awakening of nature, and the awakening of love—differ greatly from each other in stability. The piano ritornello is the most unstable of the three. Taken alone, it does not define any key: it hints toward F♯ minor, but never reaches a tonic in this key. The section in which nature awakens is the most harmonically stable in the song. There is a harmonic movement V-I and the top voice descends a third C♯–B–A; the music bursts from the unsteadiness of the piano ritornello in the same way as the flower buds burst in the poem. This descent of a third is not, however, the fundamental line of the song. C♯ hovers at the top voice of the background throughout the piece. This is made clear

[16]Komar regards D as more important: "The D major sequence in mm. 11–12 is structurally superior to the B minor prolongation in mm. 9–10, due to the lower register of D (in the bass) and the similarity of the piano figuration of m. 12 to the A major figuration in mm. 6 and 8" (Komar, p. 76; see also his Example 6 on p. 68). I concede the emphasis given to D in the foreground by the lower register, but I think all the same that B is, as a passing tone, structurally more important.

Example 1. Voice leading sketch of "Im wunderschönen Monat Maï."



Example 1 (continued).



in the foreground by the unfolding thirds B–D and A–C♯ (marked by asterisks in Example 1c). The section in which love awakens introduces B and D emphatically. The juxtaposition of these pitch classes creates a certain tension and instability in these measures.[17]

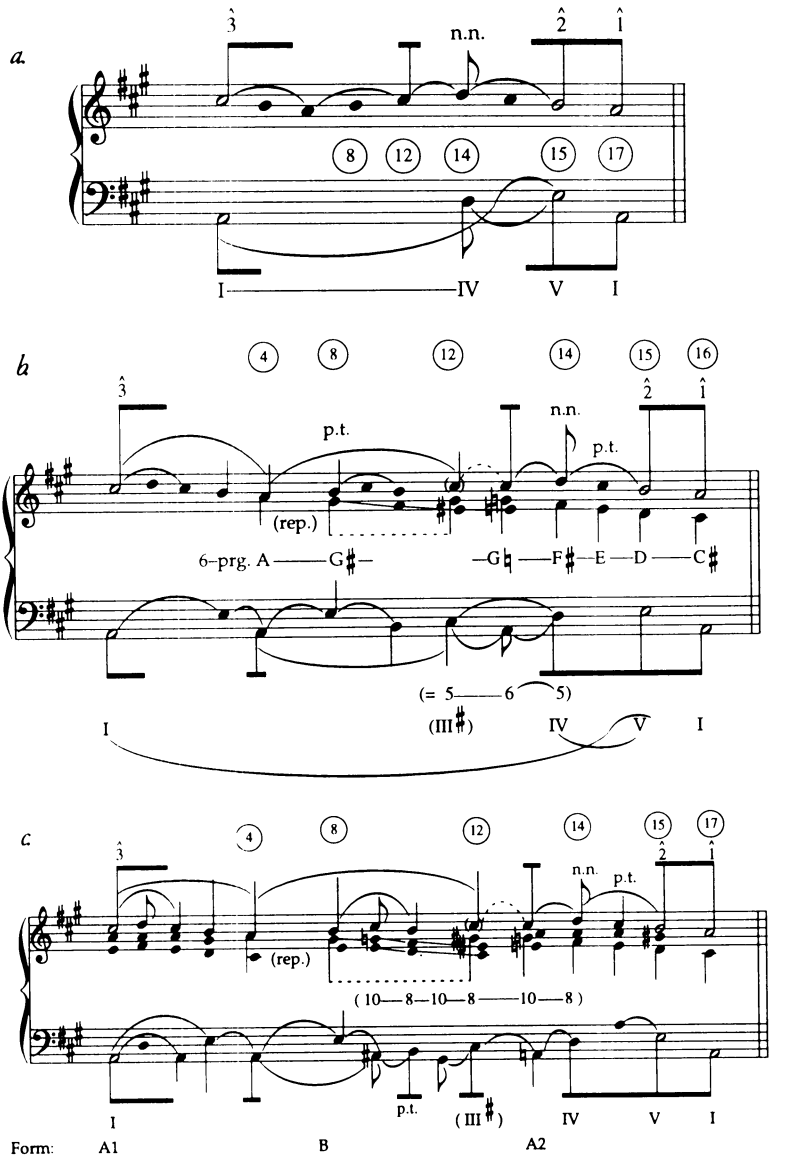
The second song, like the first one, is in A major. Here the key is unequivocally stabilized whereas the piano ritornello questioned its role in the first song. Example 2 shows the voice leading of the second song.

The beginning of the second song is in many ways related to the ending of the first. Schumann returns to the C♯, which hovered in the top voice throughout the first song.[18] The first

[17]Whether A major or F♯ minor should be understood as the main key of the first song has been addressed by several scholars. Arthur Komar reads A major as the main key of the song (Komar, "The Music of *Dichterliebe*," pp. 66–70). Judging from Schenker's voice-leading sketch of mm. 1–8, this would seem to be also his interpretation (Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition*, trans. and ed. Ernst Oster [New York: Longman, 1979], Fig. 110c2). This reading—which is also my interpretation—is supported by the fact that only A major is confirmed in the song by a cadence. David Neumeyer suggests that the first two songs form a pair whose key is A major. He continues, however, that if the first song is taken by itself he somewhat favors F♯ minor, but that he interprets the song as actually in both F♯ minor and A major (Neumeyer, "Organic Structure and the Song Cycle," pp. 103–104). Charles Rosen has argued that the entire question of the main key of the song is misguided, writing: "It should be obvious that the contrast of F♯ minor and A major is only a surface opposition... Schumann treats the relative minor here and elsewhere as a variant form of the tonic, using it rather for a change of mode and not of tonality" (Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* [Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995], p. 47). In my view it is problematic to interpret a tonic complex that contains two centers, since the very concept of a tonic key denotes only one center. Furthermore, it is difficult to interpret F♯ minor as a center, since the "key" of F♯ minor is represented in the song only by its dominant. For an illuminating discussion on apparent tonal centers, see Carl Schachter, "Analysis by Key: Another Look at Modulation," *Music Analysis* 6/3 (1987): 289–318, especially 294–298.

[18]Komar reads the C♯ as a passing tone between B of the last measure of the first song and D in m. 2 of the second (Komar, "The Music of *Dichterliebe*," p. 72). I do not share this idea, as I believe C♯ is retained from the first song.

Example 2. Voice leading sketch of "Aus meinen Tränen spriessen."



song ended with a dominant-seventh chord built on C♯, which the listener expects to be resolved. The second song begins with an A major chord that lacks the fifth, E. At the beginning of the second song, the bass descends A–G♯–F♯. For a very brief moment, one can hear the F♯-minor chord in the middle of the first measure as a resolution of the seventh chord of the previous song. F♯ minor is not, however, emphasized in any way. The chord's role is merely to create harmonic instability in the first measure.[19] The key of A major is stabilized in m. 2 by the strong D major chord and, finally, in mm. 3–4, by the harmonic V–I movement that supports the top voice descent B–A (see Example 2c). Measures 5–8 are a repetition of the first four measures.

The musical events in the first eight measures of the second song are strongly tied to the content of the poem. In the first verse of the poem, the tears change into flowers and the sighs into a chorus of nightingales. In measures 1 and 5, where the text points to sorrow (tears and sighs), the harmonic situation is unstable (measure 5 is not unstable, but the repetition of the previous material is reminding the listener, so to speak, of the harmonic uncertainty of the first measure). The flowers (mm. 3–4) and nightingales (mm. 7–8) that point towards the happiness have a solid harmonic support, V–I movement. The actual change from sorrow to joy takes place in mm. 2 and 6. Pitch-class D, which represents happiness, is now active. The verbs ("*spriessen*" and "*werden*") that bring about the change in the text appear in the music during the strong neighboring Ds. Thus D is the factor in the music which transforms sorrow into joy.

In the B section (mm. 9–12), the lover addresses his speech to the beloved, and asks for her love, "*Und wenn du mich lieb hast Kindchen*." He would give all the flowers and nightingales that came from his tears and sighs if she loved him. Here two factors create the atmosphere of uncertainty of the beloved's love: first,

[19]David Neumeyer gives more emphasis to the F♯-minor chord heard in the middle of m. 1 than I do. In his view the entire first song prolongs a seventh chord on C♯ that is resolved at the beginning of the second song to an F♯-minor chord, VI of the primary key A major. See Neumeyer, "Organic Structure and the Song Cycle," p. 104.

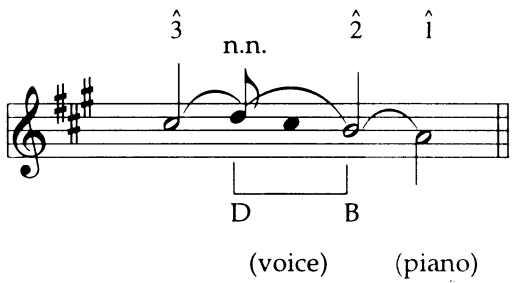
the emphasized B-minor chord in m. 11, and second, the ending of the B section with a C♯-major chord, almost the same chord which ended the unstable first song.

In the A^2 section (mm. 13–17), love and happiness would seem to be victorious: "*Und vor deinem Fenster soll klingen / Das Lied der Nachtigall.*" If the harmonic situation was unstable in measure 1, it is now clear in measure 13. The chord is not, however, a pure A-major chord but rather A7, the dominant seventh of the D-major chord in measure 14. The applied dominant, the melodic triplet in m. 13, and the register of the bass in m. 14 all emphasize D. Love seems to have triumphed; the doubts of the middle section and the first song seem to be gone. The D-major chord also anticipates the key of the third song, the happiest of the first five. This stress on D can also be seen at a deep middleground level (see Example 2a). The upper voice D is a neighbor note to C♯ prolonged from the beginning of the song, and the bass voice D supports a structurally emphatic IV.[20]

Although it seems that love has prevailed, the final conflict of love's sorrow and happiness—pitch-classes B and D—is still to be resolved. The fundamental line of the second song descends to A, but the A is reached only in the piano part in m. 17. The vocal line ends on a strong B in m. 16. Because of this B and the emphasis given to neighboring note D in m. 14, the endpoints of the vocal line are B and D (see Example 3).

[20]For an alternate reading of the voice-leading structure of the second song, see Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition*, trans. and ed. Ernst Oster (New York: Longman, 1979), Fig. 22 b. The main difference between my reading and that of Schenker is that Schenker reads an interruption in the song whereas I do not. Schenker therefore, gives structural emphasis to the E-major chord of m. 9—the dividing dominant of his interpretation—and the A7 chord of m. 13—the return of the structural tonic in his interpretation—whereas I read the E-major chord of m. 9 as an upper fifth of A giving consonant support to a passing-tone B and the A7 chord of m. 13 as resulting from a 5–6 progression above the C♯ attained in m. 12. For a detailed discussion on Schenker's interpretation of the song, see Allen Forte, "Schenker's Conception of Musical Structure," in Maury Yeston (ed.), *Readings in Schenkerian Analysis and Other Approaches* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 3–37.

Example 3. Vocal line emphasis on D and B at end of second song.



The beginning of the third song is, again, closely related to the end of the previous song. The A major end of the second song functions as dominant in the D major of the third, and this D major has been anticipated in the second song by the strong D major chord in m. 14. The vocal line also ties the two songs together. The B in the vocal line of the second song is, in a way, left hanging in m. 16. This B is—in a poetic, not a voice-leading, sense—resolved by the upbeat of the third song.

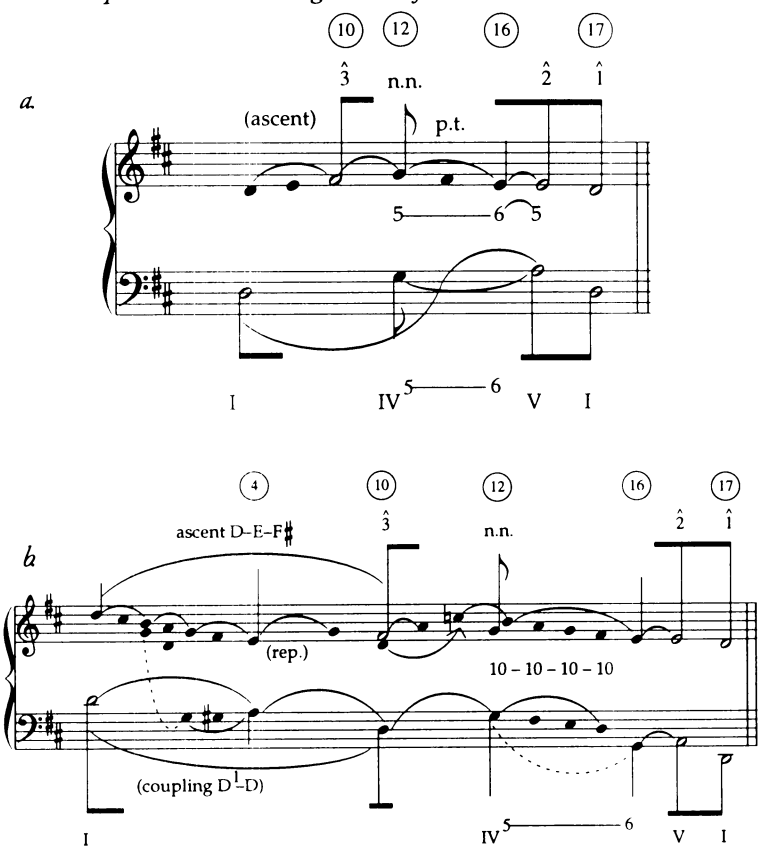
As previously discussed in relation to the text, the third song is the happiest of the first five. Here love displaces nature, which awakened by its side in the first song. The beloved also replaces nature, "*Sie selber, aller Liebe Bronne / Ist Rose und Lilie und Taube und Sonne.*" Example 4 shows the voice-leading of the third song.

D is now emphasized more than in any of the other songs: here it is tonic. B also appears quite frequently, but, in spite of the emphasis given to it, functions only in the foreground. It serves as a constant reminder of the still unresolved tension between happiness and sorrow. As a foreground phenomenon, it has no influence on the basic voice leading; it does not break the illusion of the joy of love prevailing both in the poem and the music.

The juxtaposition of D and B can be heard at the very beginning of the song. In the first three measures, the third D–B is repeated three times. Example 4b shows that in spite of this repetition, B appears only in the foreground. D dominates these measures: it is a part of the initial ascent D–E–F♯ (see Example

4b). As a foreground event, B is also strongly emphasized in m. 12. But here, too, it has no influence on the voice-leading of the deeper levels. It is an upper third of a middleground neighboring note G, and thus basically an inner voice shifted to the top voice.[21]

Example 4. Voice leading sketch of "Die Rose, die Lilie."



[21]In Komar's view, "B is prominent in the middleground throughout most of the song" (Komar, p. 73). In his reading B is tied from m. 3 to m. 12 and further to m. 16. I do not share this view, as I believe it would contradict the initial ascent of mm. 1–10 and the descent of the fundamental line in mm. 10–17.

At the background level, the third song ends with a stable descent to D in the fundamental line, concluding in m. 17. There are, however, some foreground features that interfere with this stability. In m. 16, for instance, there is a musical sigh, pitches B to A, setting the word "*Eine.*" This descending second over the structurally significant pitch E obscures the descent of the fundamental line. This figure also emphasizes B. In the piano postlude, Schumann returns immediately to the third D–B which began the song. This third is repeated and in mm. 19–20 the passing tone C♯ disappears. The end also features rather unstable elements. The harmonic content of the two last chords (V–I) is conclusive, but the top voice moves from E to F♯. The appearance of $\hat{3}$, the chordal third, in the top voice of the last chord creates a sense of incompleteness.

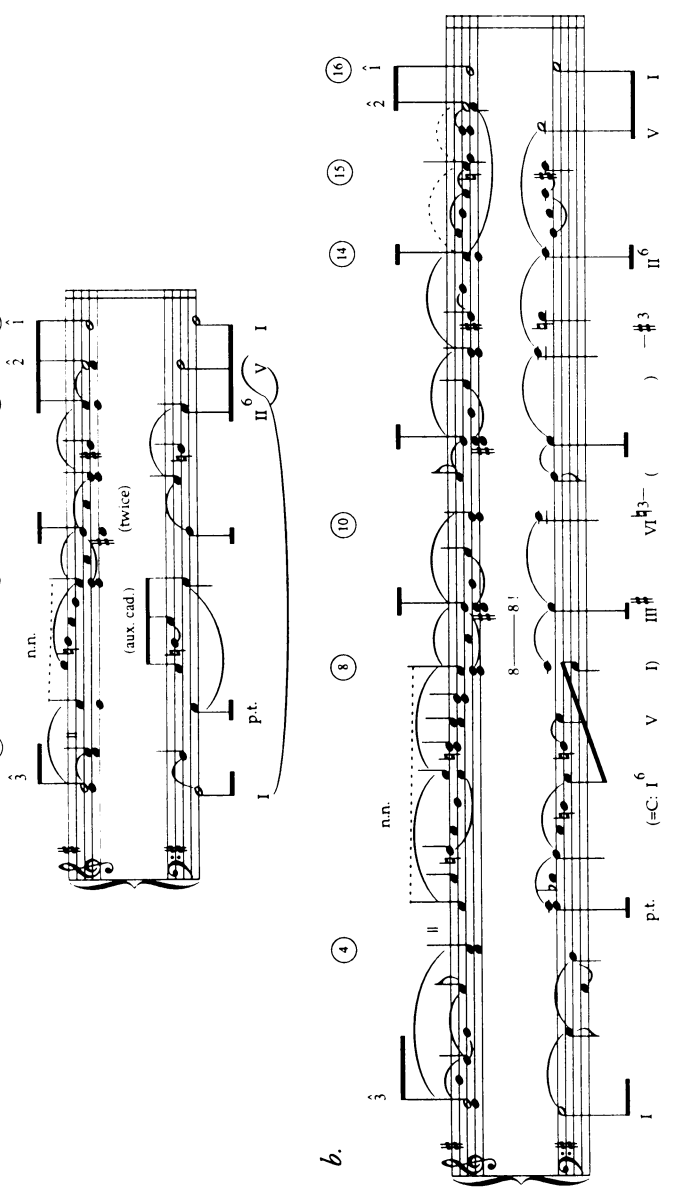
The fourth poem performs a crucial role in the narrative of the first five poems: it brings the first shadows to the joy of the third poem. These shadows also appear in Schumann's music. B now receives much more stress than earlier in *Dichterliebe*.

The beginning of the fourth song is again closely related to the end of the third. The D-major key of the third song is a dominant of the G-major key of the fourth. This dominant-tonic relation is made even clearer by the F♯ appearing in the top voice of the last measure of the third song. Schumann also returns immediately at the beginning of the fourth song to the third D–B which was repeated at the beginning and end of the third song.

Example 5 shows the voice-leading of the fourth song.[22] The anticipation of the text's sorrow of the fourth song is supported in the music by an increased emphasis on B. For the first time, B is now a part of the tonic harmony, and also the primary melodic tone. Although B and D are juxtaposed in mm. 1–2—as a reminder of the third D–B at the end of the third song, where D had predominance over B—the dominance of B is now clear, as can be seen from Example 5b.

[22]My analysis of the middleground voice-leading of this song is based on Schenker's, see *Free Composition*, Fig. 152. My reading differs from Schenker's in a few minor details.

Example 5. Voice leading sketch of "Wenn ich in deine Augen seh."



The second verse of the poem is important, as it brings a foreshadowing apprehension of sorrow. This apprehension is brilliantly expressed in the music. In the middleground, the primary melodic tone receives an upper neighboring note C, which is supported in the bass first by A (m. 5) and then by C, the upper third of A (m. 8) (see Example 5a). C descends in the top voice to B in m. 9. Parallel to this movement, the bass descends from C to B, creating parallel octaves and placing a very strong emphasis on B (see Example 5b). Schumann has, in his writings, drawn a link between the sorrow of life and parallel octaves and fifths. This sorrow should not, however, be expressed in music. "I concede that music should not repeat the hapless consecutive octaves and fifths of life, but rather cover them over."[23] At this point in *Dichterliebe*, the change from the happiness of the past to the sorrow of the future is so strong that Schumann has not concealed these hapless parallel octaves.

The parallel octaves do not appear at all structural levels. On the surface of the music, they are eliminated by the third G–A–B ascending from an inner voice. In the deep middleground, C in the bass (m. 8) is structurally an upper third of A (m. 4) (see Example 5a). Thus the B of the bass in m. 9 is approached from A below, rather than C above, and thus the middleground voice leading is 10–8, not 8–8. According to Schenker, parallel octaves and fifths can appear in the foreground, if the voice-leading of the middleground and background is correct. "Voices at the foreground level, even the outer ones, can form octave or fifth successions with impunity...[if] beneath the outward appearance, in background and middleground there lies a faultless voice-leading based on other intervals. Composer and listener meet in the understanding of the true situation, which is concealed in the middleground."[24]

After the descent of the fundamental line to G (m. 16), B is, in the piano postlude, again brought to the surface of the music. In

[23]Robert Schumann, *Schumann on Music: A Selection from the Writings*, trans. and ed. Henry Pleasants (New York: Dover Publications, 1988 [first published in 1965]), p. 70.

[24]Schenker, *Free Composition*, p. 56.

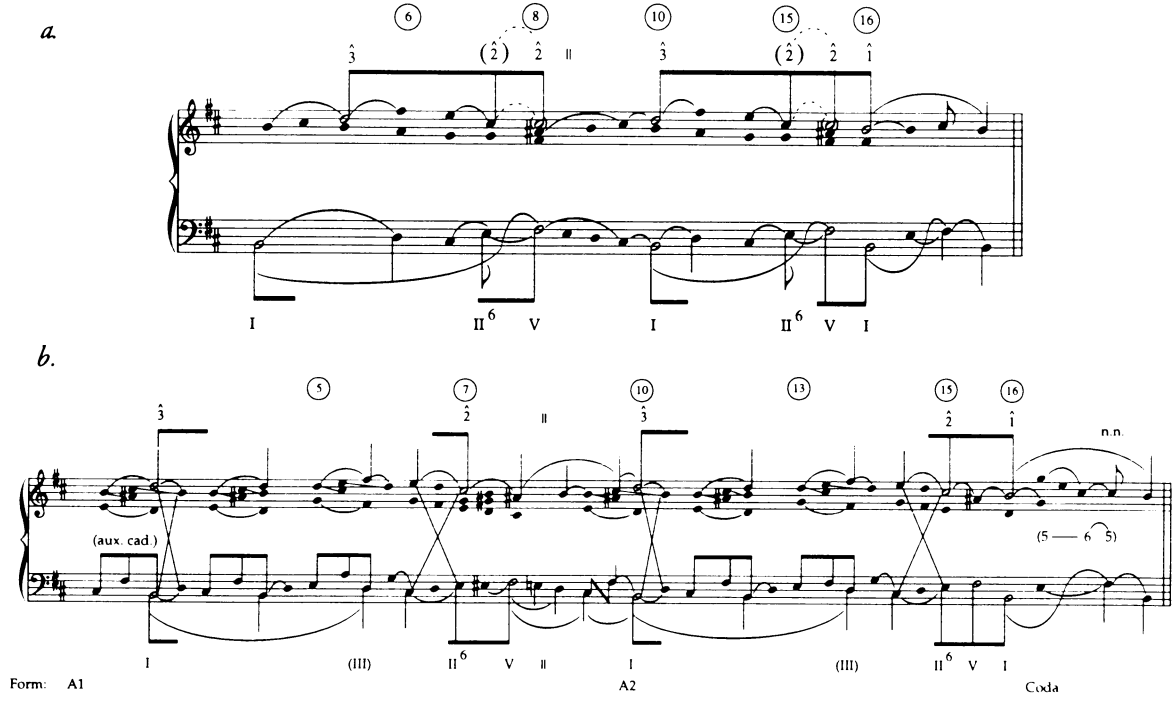
mm. 16–18 there is, in the top voice, a third D–C–B which is repeated in an inner voice in mm. 18–20. In the piano postlude, B is emphasized so strongly that it is heard to be dominating the top voice in the last measures of the fourth song. This B also anticipates the upbeat of the next song.[25]

The poem of the fifth song looks backward in many ways. In it, there are two word repetitions, past tense, and the conflict between love's sorrow and happiness is resolved into a victory of sorrow. The music, too, looks backwards: it includes—as does the poem—a repetition of earlier material. It also resolves the conflict between B and D—the key of the song is B minor.

Example 6 shows the voice-leading of the fifth song. The beginning of the song (mm. 1–6) is very close to measures 9–12 of the first song, in which love awakened and B and D were introduced (cf. Examples 1c and 6b). Both sections consist of a sequence in which the top voice, moving from B to F♯, is supported by an auxiliary cadence (IV^6–V–I in the first song and II^7–V–I in the fifth), first in B minor and then in D major. A small detail of the similarity between the beginning of the fifth song and mm. 9–12 of the first is note B♭, which appears in m. 11 of the first song and in m. 5 of the fifth, both times as a part of the predominant harmony of D major. The roles of B and D differ greatly, however, in these two sections. Whereas B and D had an approximately equal emphasis in mm. 9–12 of the first song, B is now clearly dominating in the fifth. As the key of the song, B is already more emphatic than D. Furthermore, the auxiliary cadence leading to B minor is repeated, and the B-minor chord which is reached is strengthened by a voice exchange (see Example 6b). The auxiliary cadence leading to D major is not repeated, and the D-major chord reached in m. 5 is not strengthened with a voice exchange. Furthermore, the D-major chord of m. 6 is not a

[25]Komar shares my view that B dominates the top voice of the coda, as well as the idea of a structurally important neighbor note C. In spite of these similarities, we read the voice-leading of the song differently. In Komar's reading, there is "a background top-part skip, C–G [mm. 8–16]. The coda then resolves the hanging C" (Komar, p. 74).

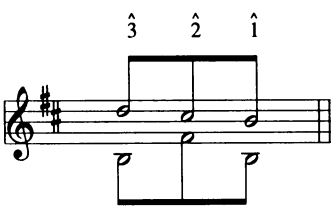
Example 6. Voice leading sketch of "Ich will meine Seele tauchen."



pure major chord; the seventh C♯ in an inner voice shows that the chord is not, at a deeper level, an important point of arrival. At the middleground the D is an upper third of B (see Example 6a).

The conflict between B and D is resolved also in the background of the fifth song. Example 7 shows the fundamental structure of the song.

Example 7. Background voice leading of
"Ich will meine Seele tauchen."



The endpoints of the fundamental line are the important pitch-classes B and D. D strives towards B, because—as Schenker writes—"the fundamental line signifies motion, striving toward a goal, and ultimately the completion of this course."[26] The counterpoint of the fundamental structure, too, emphasizes the position of B over D. The D of the fundamental line forms, with its bass, a tenth, which is an unstable interval according to strict counterpoint, and thus requires continuation. The octave B–B, which ends the fundamental structure, is a stable interval; it requires no continuation and the movement of the music stops.

The foreground also supports the final resolution of a conflict between pitch-classes B and D in music, and between the sorrow and happiness of love in the poems. The fifth song is the only one of the first five which ends stably both in the foreground and the background: the first song ended in a dissonant chord; at the end of the second song, the B of the vocal line was resolved only in the piano part; in the piano postludes of the third and fourth songs, the third of the tonic chord was brought to the top voice. The piano postlude of the fifth song emphasizes the tonic

[26]Schenker, *Free Composition*, p. 4.

reached in m. 16: it consists of a cadence (see Example 6b) which supports the finality of the resolution of the conflicts of both text and music.

Romantic Irony

In the final section of this study I shall examine the relationship between music and text suggested in the analysis above and its ties to ideas encountered in the Romantic literary theory. Some theoretical concepts of Friedrich Schlegel and Jean Paul Richter, particularly the concept of romantic irony, provide a basis for considering some ideas expressed by Schumann in his writings.[27] Finally I will illustrate how ideas of romantic irony and Schumann's writings support the kind of analytic interpretation of the first five songs of *Dichterliebe* suggested in this study.

The application of literary theories to music of the early nineteenth century is well justified. The parallel between poetry and painting—*ut pictura poesis*—that had existed in aesthetic thought from the Renaissance to the late eighteenth century gave way at the beginning of the nineteenth century to the parallel between poetry and music. As Monroe C. Beardsley wrote: "Music was increasingly felt to be the true sister of poetry, because music

[27]John Daverio has provided insight into some theoretical concepts of Schlegel and Jean Paul Richter, the importance of these concepts to Schumann, and the ways in which these concepts may be interpreted as having affected Schumann's music; see "Schumann's 'Im Legendenton' and Friedrich Schlegel's *Arabeske*," *19th-Century Music* 11/2 (1987): 150–163; and "Reading Schumann By Way of Jean Paul and His Contemporaries," *College Music Symposium* 30/2 (1990): 28–45. For other studies that deal with the music of Schumann from the viewpoint of romantic irony, see Heinz J. Dill, "Romantic Irony in the Works of Robert Schumann," *Musical Quarterly* 73/2 (1989): 172–195; and Jon W. Finson, "The Intentional Tourist: Romantic Irony in the Eichendorff Liederkreis of Robert Schumann," in R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Schumann and his World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 156–170.

because music is most fully, purely, pre-eminently the expression of feeling—especially longing—which poetry aims to be."[28]

The use of literary theories is particularly well justified when addressing the music of Schumann. Literature was important to Schumann throughout his life. By the age of seventeen he had already written, "The most beautiful of all the arts, poetry and music, stand there before us glorious and resplendent in their most beautiful blossom."[29] Schumann often wrote about literature—above all Jean Paul Richter—and how the music of certain composers resembles the works of certain writers. On the relation of Schubert and Richter, for instance, Schumann wrote in a letter in 1829: "When I play Schubert I feel as if I were reading a composed novel of Jean Paul."[30] Later, in his review of Schubert's Symphony in C major in 1840, "And the heavenly length of the symphony, like that of a thick novel in four volumes, perhaps by Jean Paul."[31] Furthermore, Schumann wrote that "the aesthetic principle is the same in every art; only the material differs."[32] Schumann addresses this common aesthetic writing about the work of Richter:

> The highest criticism is that which leaves an impression identical with the one called forth by the thing criticized. In this sense Jean Paul Richter, with a poetic companion-piece, can perhaps contribute more to the understanding of a symphony or phantasy by Beethoven than a dozen of those little critics of the

[28]Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present* (Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, seventh printing 1988 [first published in 1966]), p. 250.

[29]Linda Siegel (trans. and ed.), *Music in German Romantic Literature: A Collection of Essays, Reviews, and Stories* (Novato, California: Elra Publications, 1983), p. 264.

[30]Quoted in Anthony Newcomb, "Schumann and Late Eighteenth-Century Narrative Strategies," *19th-Century Music* (Fall 1987), p. 168 (translated by Suurpää).

[31]Robert Schumann, *On Music and Musicians*, ed. Konrad Wolff, trans. Paul Rosenfeld (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983 [first published in 1946]), p. 110.

[32]*Ibid.*, p. 44.

arts who lean their ladders against the Colossus and take its exact measurements.[33]

• • •

Irony was an important concept in German romantic literary theory of the nineteenth century. For Friedrich Schlegel, one of the major literary theorists of the early nineteenth century, irony meant that the artist places himself outside his work. René Wellek writes that according to Schlegel's concept of irony, "the writer must feel ambivalent towards his work: he stands above and apart from it and manipulates it almost playfully."[34] Schlegel wrote that a poet must place distance between himself and his work: "In order to write well about something, one shouldn't be interested in it any longer...What appears to be unlimited free will, and consequently seems and should seem to be irrational or supra-rational, nonetheless must still at bottom be simply necessary and rational."[35] According to the interpretation of M. C. Abrams, Schlegel "was to give a new application to the Renaissance metaphor of the poet as creator, with its implicit analogy between God's creation of the world and the artist's making of a poem."[36]

Jean Paul Richter, Schumann's favorite author, writes in his work *Vorschule über Aesthetik* (1804, revised 1813 and 1825) about humor, by which he means much the same as Schlegel intends with his concept of irony. Richter considers that the artist

[33]Quoted in Oliver Strunk (ed.), *Source Readings in Music History: Vol. 5, The Romantic Era* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1981 [first published in 1950]), p. 3.

[34]René Wellek, *History of Modern Criticism: 1750–1950; Vol. II: The Romantic Age* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1958), p. 14.

[35]Friedrich Schlegel, *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Peter Firchow (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991 [first printed in Friedrich Schlegel, *Lucinde and the Fragments*, 1971), Fragment number 37, pp. 4–5.

[36]M. C. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition.* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1958 [first printed in 1953]), p. 239.

should place himself above his work: "When man looks down, as ancient theology did, from the supernal world to the earthly world, it seems small and vain in the distance; when he measures out the small world, as humor does, against the infinite world and sees them together, a kind of laughter results which contains pain and greatness."[37] Richter does not, however, expect the artist to place himself totally outside his work. It is important for the artist to have "an equilibrium between inner and outer worlds. In the animal the external world swallows up the inner, in the man moved by passion, often the inner swallows up the external world."[38]

Richter believes that with the help of humor one can come closer to the infinite. "Humor as the inverted sublime annihilates not the individual but the finite through its contrast with the idea. It recognizes no individual foolishness, no fools, but only folly and a mad world."[39] The infinite and the totality are important, because for a genius "the first and last distinguishing mark is contemplation of the universe."[40]

The totality and the infinite can be approached with the imagination. Richter makes a distinction between two levels of imagination, the lower *Einbildungskraft* and the higher *Phantasie* or *Bildungskraft*. *Phantasie* is a faculty that makes parts into a coherent whole. With it, one can come nearer to the infinite, as "it totalizes everything, even the infinite universe."[41] *Phantasie* and its capacity to create a whole of the parts is important not only to the artist, but also to the one receiving art. "There can be no simple reception without production or

[37]Jean Paul Richter, *The Horn of Oberon: Jean Paul Richter's School for Aesthetics*, trans. Margaret R. Hale (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973). I have used as my source a selection from *The Horn of Oberon* in David Simpson (ed.), *The Origins of Modern Critical Thought: German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism from Lessing to Hegel* (Cambridge, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 293–316. This quotation is on pages 305–306.

[38]*Ibid.*, p. 299.

[39]*Ibid.*, p. 304.

[40]*Ibid.*, p. 296.

[41]*Ibid.*, p. 293.

creation, since every man receives poetic beauty only in parts, like chemical elements which he must compose organically into a whole, in order to contemplate it."[42]

The conscious making of a work of art—required by the concept of irony—was characteristic of both Schumann and Heine. For Heine irony was—according to Wimsatt and Brooks—"the very principle by which art triumphs over nature, spirit over matter."[43] Of the poems of the first five songs of *Dichterliebe*, irony appears most clearly in the fourth song. There, typical of Heine, the illusion created by the beginning of the poem is destroyed at the end: *"So muss ich weinen bitterlich."*[44] Contradictions like this one were characteristic of the concept of irony according to both Schlegel and Richter. Schlegel writes that "irony is the form of paradox," and Richter writes that "humor often delights even in contradictions and impossibilities."[45]

Schumann, too, contemplated the conscious attitude of the artist towards his work. When explaining why the music of his contemporaries did not please him, he wrote:

> The highest level reached in this type of music does not come up to the point from which my kind of music starts. The former may be a flower. The latter is a poem; that is, belongs to the world of the spirit. The former comes from an impulse of crude nature; the latter stems from *the consciousness of the poetic mind*.[46]

The conscious attitude of the artist towards his work—the intellectual control of emotional events—supports my interpretation of pitch-classes B and D as representatives of the

[42]*Ibid.*, p. 294.

[43]William K. Wimsatt Jr. and Cleanth Brooks, *Literary Criticism: A Short History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959), p. 380.

[44]Heine's irony and breaking of illusions was not universally accepted during the Romantic Era. Writer Ludwig Tieck accused Heine of vulgar irony, and writer Joseph von Eichendorff of frivolous poetry contrary to Romanticism.

[45]Schlegel, *Philosophical Fragments*, p. 6; Simpson (ed.), *The Origins of Modern Critical Thought*, p. 307.

[46]Quoted in Dill, "Romantic Irony in the Works of Robert Schumann," pp. 174–175 (emphasis added).

sorrow and happiness of love in the first five songs of *Dichterliebe*. B and D do not directly depict the emotions; rather, they act as symbols of feelings, with which the artist plays after placing himself outside his work as required by Schlegel's irony and Richter's humor. The role of these two pitch classes in the whole is made clearer by Richter's concept *Phantasie*—the whole being made up of small parts—and by *Witz*, a concept used by both Schlegel and Richter to denote the intellectual capacity to perceive connections between elements that are seemingly independent.[47]

This conscious and controlled manipulation of B and D can clearly be seen at the endings of the third song (in D major, the key representing happiness) and the fifth song (in B minor, the key representing sorrow). Both songs have a stable ending at the background structural level. The foreground structures, however, differ greatly in the two songs. At the end of the third song, many surface features interfere with the background's stability. The fifth song's foreground events match the stability of the background structure and emphasize this harmonic conclusion with the long piano postlude. Schumann's compositional approach here is consistent with the ideas of romantic irony. At the end of the third song, he already knows that love is not going to last and conveys this knowledge through foreground events. It is a subtle hint by the artist—placed above his work—that one has no reason to be overjoyed.

It is quite reasonable to expect B and D to have extramusical meaning in the first five songs of *Dichterliebe,* as we know that Schumann's use of individual pitch classes as symbols or representatives of meaning appears in other works. Schumann subtitled his piano-cycle *Carnaval* op. 9 *Scènes mignonnes sur*

[47]The idea of a conscious attitude of an artist towards his work is not, of course, limited to the ideas of romantic irony. Well-known, for example, is Bach's use of a sharp sign to symbolize a cross. However, in the first five songs of *Dichterliebe*, the conscious attitude is, in my opinion, exceptionally strong. Schumann does not only use one symbol—say one pitch class or a sharp sign—in one piece, but two symbols in five separate though closely related songs. This consciousness is also emphasized by the changing stress on pitch-classes B and D which results from the narrative of the poems.

quatre notes ("Small Scenes on Four Notes"). These four notes, A, S (= E♭), C and H (=B) form the name Asch, a name of a small town where, in Schumann's youth, his beloved, Ernestine von Fricken, was sent after their relationship was discovered. These letters also appear in Schumann's name, linking his signature with a reference to his beloved.[48]

The way in which B and D were introduced in the first song is in harmony with Schumann's writings. In the first song, nature and love—in Richter's terminology, the outer and the inner world—awakened side by side. B and D first appear in the passage in which love awakened, addressing the inner world. It was precisely this handling of the inner world instead of the outer which, in Schumann's own opinion, made the difference between his music—"the poem"—and the music of his contemporaries—"the flower."

Depicting the content of music in too straightforward a manner was foreign to Schumann. Regarding Beethoven's Symphony no. 6, the *Pastoral Symphony*—and also the tone-painting and programmatic elements of instrumental music in a more general sense—Schumann writes that "Beethoven sensed the hazards to which he exposed himself in writing the Pastoral Symphony. In those few words, 'more an expression of sensations than painting,' which he placed at the head of the score, lies a whole aesthetic for composers."[49] The same attitude was, in Schumann's opinion, valid for vocal music. He thought that *lied* had to depict the deeper truth that the new romantic poetry strove to attain. Friedrich Schlegel's fragment number 116 in *Athenäums Fragmente* (1798) gives an idea of what the Romantics meant by Romantic poetry:

> Romantic poetry is a progressive, universal poetry. Its aim isn't merely to reunite all the separate species of poetry and put poetry in touch with philosophy and rhetoric. It tries to and should mix and fuse poetry and prose, inspiration and criticism, the poetry of art and the poetry of nature...Romantic poetry is in the

[48]There is also a three-note form of the motive: As (=A♭), C, and H (=B).
[49]Schumann, *Schumann on Music*, p. 52.

arts what wit is in philosophy, and what society and sociability, friendship and love are in life.[50]

In Schumann's opinion, it was precisely this new Romantic poetry that had caused the changes in the *lied*.

What hastened the development was the evolution of the new German school of poetry. Eichendorff and Rückert, though they had begun writing before this time, now became familiar to musicians; Uhland and Heine were very frequently set to music. Thus arose that more artistic and profound style of song of which the earlier composers could of course know nothing, for it was due to the new spirit of poetry reflected in music.[51]

Schumann's attitude towards romantic poetry and its influence on the *lied* would, hence, seem to support my interpretation of the role of pitch-classes B and D in the first five songs of *Dichterliebe*.

[50]Schlegel, *Philosophical Fragments*, pp. 31–32.
[51]Schumann, *On Music and Musicians*, pp. 241–242.