

**The Nineteenth-Century Reflection of Gender in Selected Songs  
from *Frauenliebe und Leben* and *Dichterliebe* by Robert Schumann**

A RESEARCH PAPER

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF MUSIC

BY

JEREMY D. FLOCK

DR. KATHLEEN MAURER - ADVISOR

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

MUNCIE, IN

NOVEMBER 2009

## **The Nineteenth-Century Reflection of Gender in Selected Songs from *Frauenliebe und Leben* and *Dichterliebe* by Robert Schumann**

Robert Schumann's career is well known among scholars of the Romantic Era. His life and works are discussed in a plethora of articles, books, and dissertations. Schumann is known for his musical compositions and also for his writings. As the son of a book store owner he had a multitude of opportunities to access many of Germany's classical literature books. It was this influence that inspired him to write stories and poetry. After the death of his father, young Schumann attended Leipzig University in order to obtain his inheritance, as per his father's will. Schumann was accepted into law school in Leipzig (1828-1829), but did not stay for long. His roommate, Emil Flechsig, is quoted as saying that Schumann never set foot into a lecture hall.<sup>1</sup>

While at school, Schumann became fascinated by the writings of Jean Paul; he even modeled many of his diary entries after Jean Paul's personified writing style, giving his close friends character names. Musically Schumann began his studies in piano with Friedrich Wieck. During these piano studies, he made early connections with the musically elite and also was introduced to Clara, Wieck's daughter, who at nine years old was on her way to becoming a concert pianist. It was during this period that the music of Franz Schubert and the writings of Jean Paul became major influences in Schumann's life.<sup>2</sup>

During this period in Leipzig, Schumann was introduced to another literary figure who played a large role in his musical life – it was that of Heinrich Heine. Schumann obtained a copy

---

<sup>1</sup> John Daverio and Eric Sams, "Schumann, Robert," in *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> (accessed March 28, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

of Heine's *Buch der Leiden* (Book of Songs) and immediately was fascinated with the poetry. It was in this stage of his life that he took a small trip to Munich to meet Heine. He traveled with a friend, Gisbert Rosen, first to visit the grave of Jean Paul and next to go to Munich. Once in Munich they saw Heine at a hotel restaurant from a distance, but the two maintained their distance awaiting a personal meeting. A day later they met with Heine at his apartment. Schuman's diary entries show that the two were filled with nervous energy, not knowing what to anticipate of the great writer. Schumann wrote of Heine being in a pleasant mood and receptive to the young admirers. After this personal visit Schumann began his journey of setting more Heine lieder than any other composer; Heine was unaware of what was to come from Schumann.<sup>3</sup>

In 1829, Schumann decided to leave Leipzig to attend Heidelberg University where he continued his law studies and piano compositions. Again, Schumann's roommate Eduard Röller claimed that he never stepped foot into a lecture hall, but he received private lessons in French, Italian, English, and Spanish. He also worked on some four-handed piano works with Anton Töpken. The two began to use the chiroplast, a device to strengthen the fingers. Schumann had written an entry into his diary assessing himself to be "excellent in music and poetry – but not a musical genius; [my] talents as musician and poet are at the same level." After this reflection on his current position he wrote to his mother and to Wieck asking to return to Leipzig and continue his piano and musical studies; both parties agreed to let him return.

In September 1830 he moved into Wieck's home and devoted himself to studying piano. The number of hours he practiced did not leave much time for composing or writing in his

---

<sup>3</sup> Friedrich Schnapp and Theodore Baker, "Robert Schumann and Heinrich Heine," *The Musical Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (October 1925): 599-616.

diaries, and there are virtually no entries or compositions from late 1830 to early 1831. Soon after arriving, Schumann began to look for additional instruction, as Wieck was occupied promoting his daughter. At this time he also became interested in the writing of E.T.A. Hoffman and the piano works of Fryderyk Chopin. Due to his hand injury from Heidelberg (he continued to use the chiroplast even though Wieck advised against it), Schumann began to see himself more as a composer-critic instead of the composer-pianist he had originally envisioned.

Schumann continued to compose through the early 1830s, even working on his G minor Symphony, which took up most of his time. In the summer of 1833 Schumann contracted a malarial fever and also suffered emotionally from the death of his brother and sister-in-law. He did not compose during these months, and was haunted by deep depression, thoughts of suicide, and the possibility of mental illness. It was not until November of 1833 that he slowly recovered from this state and began to function as he had before, a “return to life” as he wrote to his mother.<sup>4</sup> As he returned to society, he began to write more and in 1834 he received a contract for the *Neue Leipziger Zeitschrift für Musik*. This journal was published twice weekly and was to contain articles on “theory, belletristic pieces, reviews of contemporary compositions and reports from foreign correspondents,” according to the prospectus in the first issue. Although Schumann saw writing as being something that took time away from composing, it played a very important role in his musical compositions. The journal articles and the discussion of music proved that he was excellent at both, and soon his compositions began to focus on the merging of text and music.

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

As Schumann continued to write and compose, he found himself in a heated battle to gain the hand of Clara Wieck, the daughter of his former piano teacher. Wieck, the father, would not grant them permission to marry; therefore Schumann took legal actions that eventually were successful. They married in 1840. During this time he wrote to Clara that he had composed the beginnings of fifty pieces, but only a few full works came from this period. Still proving himself to Wieck, he obtained a doctoral diploma from Jena in February 1840. This marked the beginning of Schumann's *Liederjahr*, as he called it, during which he composed about 125 lieder. This was followed by a short period during which he did not compose much – instead he formed a relationship with Franz Liszt and accompanied him from Leipzig to Dresden. After touring he suffered from depression and went with Clara to Berlin. Once in Berlin his compositional dry spell ended with three song cycles: *Liederkreis*, *Frauenliebe und Leben*, and *Dichterliebe* (originally titled *20 Lieder und Gesänge*).<sup>5</sup>

Schumann's melding of text and music was further refined throughout his career, but for the purposes of this discussion I will stop at the creation of the above-mentioned song cycles. The following discussion will focus on selected songs from two of the cycles, *Frauenliebe und Leben* (A woman's love and life) and *Dichterliebe* (A poet's love). These two cycles have been chosen because their texts represent the feminine and the masculine points of view on love. The discussion will focus on the texts and the compositional techniques that Schumann has employed to create the different moods of and gender reflections in the works. I have selected several publications that support my own analysis of these two works. The published works will be

---

<sup>5</sup> John Daverio and Eric Sams, "Schumann, Robert," in *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> (accessed March 28, 2009).

discussed first, followed by my analysis of gender reflection through the text and music Schumann has created.

Schumann composed the two cycles shortly after one another. *Frauenliebe und Leben* was composed in 1840 and *Dichterliebe* in 1844. *Frauenliebe und Leben*, composed to texts by Adelbert von Chamisso (1781-1838), was described by Gerhard Kaiser in his book *Geschichte der deutschen Lyrik von Goethe bis Heine* (1988):

Here daughters of the citizenry could find their womanly role in life sketched out for them, from first love, through wedding, motherhood, and widowhood, to old age and death. Like Gretchen's song at the spinning wheel, these poems too involve role-playing. They portray a man's wishful image of woman, prescribing to the point of embarrassment her path to exemplary status through subjugation to man. She finds fulfillment in self-sacrificing service to him and in glorifying him.<sup>6</sup>

Chamisso, French by birth, immigrated to Germany with his parents at an early age, settling in Berlin. His family returned to France, but Chamisso stayed to continue his military career. He was not formally educated, but became somewhat self-educated by reading during his military posts.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Kristina Muxfeldt, "Frauenliebe und Leben Now and Then," *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* 25, no. 1 (Summer, 2001): 28.

<sup>7</sup> Karl Lentzner, *Chamisso: A Sketch of his life and work* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1893).

A few performance points concerning Schumann's setting of Chamisso's text are addressed in an article by Ruth Solie. She summarizes the text of each of the eight movements as follows:

1. She has seen him for the first time, and now he is the only thing she can see.
2. She describes his many perfections and her own lowliness.
3. He has chosen her, and she cannot believe it.
4. She sings to his ring, which she now wears, and promises to belong to him totally.
5. She asks her sisters to help her prepare for the wedding; at the end she takes leave of them.
6. She confides to him the reason for her happy tears, and shows him where she will put the cradle.
7. She rocks and plays with the baby.
8. His death, she says, is the first wrong he has ever done her, and she can no longer live.<sup>8</sup>

Solie's discussion provides reasons why this work should continue to be performed today in light of the way in which it was originally intended. She says that we could view it as being "simply inappropriate to hold 1840s society to 1990s social standards" or we could "focus on the music itself and to insist that it, on its own, carries no meaning."<sup>9</sup> Most musicians even into the twenty-first century would probably not see this as an inappropriate composition to perform because the text is out of date. Solie states that the text should be viewed as typical music of the time and a reflection of how that society viewed women. Solie further explains that this work would have been performed in the company of close friends and relatives in a private home, not in the concert hall as we hear it today. With that understanding, amateur women would have sung these songs,

---

<sup>8</sup> Ruth A. Solie, "Whose life? The gendered self in Schumann's *Frauenliebe* songs," in *Music and text: critical inquiries*, Edited by Steven Paul Scher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 220.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

possibly to impress a suitor who may have been invited to hear her perform them.<sup>10</sup>

Schumann composed this work around the time that he was making arrangements to marry Clara; he may have given it to her as a gift, a custom they often kept later in their marriage.

The second work to be presented here, *Dichterliebe*, was composed shortly after *Frauenliebe und Leben* and was completed in 1844. According to Schumann's sketches, the original twenty songs that were included to be published were scored nine days prior to being sent to the first publisher.

Research concerning Schumann's lieder has been ongoing since his death. Clara had begun to publish and arrange some of his works that he had not completed. Max Friedländer compiled one of the largest manuscript collections of Schumann songs, called *Liederbücher*, which is currently located in the Berlin *Staatsbibliothek* (Berlin State Library). Based on *Liederbücher*, Viktor Ernst Wolff wrote his dissertation on the various sources, *Robert Schumanns Lieder in ersten und späteren Fassungen* (Leipzig, 1914). More recent research by Rufus Hallmark reveals some new sources that were not at Wolff's disposal. Hallmark discovered autographed sources that were held privately until after World War II and then anonymously donated to the Robert-Schumann-Museum in Zwickau.

Hallmark's article discusses the composer's sketches of *Dichterliebe* in great detail, providing some insight into Schumann's compositional process. Earlier thoughts

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



were that Schumann would sit down and write the entire score at once; while this may have been true for instrumental works, his lieder were composed through various stages. In the original autographed sketch book he has written out the melody lines with the text to most of the songs that are currently printed in *Dichterliebe*. The autograph shows the following were included (songs not appearing in the final publication are in boldface type and the commentary that followed each of the songs has been simplified from the original article data):<sup>11</sup>

1. Im wunderschönen Monat Mai
2. Aus meinen Tränen spriessen
3. Die Rose, die Lilie
4. Wenn ich in deine Augen seh'
- 5. Dein Angesicht – Incomplete melody and text (op. 127/2)**
- 6. Lehn' deine Wang (Op 142/2)**
- 6. [continued]**
7. Ich will meine Seele tauchen
8. Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome – **Incomplete melody and text**
9. Ich grolle nicht – **Title only**
10. Und wüssten's die Blumen – **Title only**
11. Das ist ein Flöten und Geigen – **Partial melody and text and right hand of piano part (Unnumbered)**  
**Mein Wagen Rollet langsam – incipit of piano part, no text (Op.142/4)**

Schumann commented on his compositional process in a letter written to Clara, “ I mostly compose [songs] standing or walking around, not at the piano...it is an entirely different kind of music, which does not come first through my fingers but much more directly and melodiously.”<sup>12</sup>

Thus we are left with text and melodies from Schumann's hand prior to the complete scoring.

Hallmark observes that the sketches do not change much from the original to the published

---

<sup>11</sup> Rufus Hallmark, “The Sketches for *Dichterliebe*,” *19<sup>th</sup> Century Music* 1, no. 2 (November 1977): 111.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

version, just that they are refined. Originally there were twenty songs that Schumann sent to the publishers under the title of *20 Lieder und Gesänge*. The first publisher, Bote & Bock, claimed that their firm was too small to take on such a big project and instead suggested the publishing of a piano work. Schumann, determined to have this work published, sent it to Breitkopf and Härtel, and then to Böhme; both rejected the work. It was finally published by Peters. While under contract with Peters, Schumann decided to remove four of the songs from publication with the collection and changed the title of the work to *Dichterliebe*.

The text to *Dichterliebe* illustrates the protagonist's love for a specific woman, and also a masculine perspective in contrast to *Frauenliebe und Leben*. *Dichterliebe* was inspired by Heinrich Heine's *Lyrishes Intermezzo*, a poetic cycle that was one of four contained in *Buch der Lieder*, published in 1827. Heine and his contemporaries show distinct writing styles of the time. Beate Julia Perrey's book, *Schumann's Dichterliebe and Early Romantic Poetics*, discusses three aspects of early romantic poetry: Romantic Fragment, Romantic Irony, and Reflections. The first technique, Romantic Fragment, refers to poetry that has been formed from incoherent thoughts that seemingly contradict one another. Romantic Irony, the second device, is a technique that allows the writer to avoid the inevitable end, providing confusion and a non-conclusive ending to the reader. And the third poetic device consists of reflections of language and music. Here the author contrasts the 'plastic and visual arts' with music and literature.<sup>13</sup> Perrey's discussion of how writing becomes more than the words, that there is some other higher meaning, concurs with an article written by Andre Coeuroy and Fred Rothwell, "The Musical Theory of the German Romantic Writers." In this article they discuss the writing styles of

---

<sup>13</sup> Beate Julia Perrey, *Schumann's Dichterliebe and Early Romantic Poetics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 13-46.

Romantic period writers such as E.T.A. Hoffman, Ludwig Tieck, and their contemporaries. Coeuroy and Rothwell's discussion supports Perrey's point by stating that writers of the time used a style that is more musical and abstract than concrete. The authors further discuss how poetry is music; they quote Friedrich von Schlegel, who writes, "Poetry is music for the interior ear and painting for the interior eye: muffled music, stumped painting."<sup>14</sup> Here we see Schlegel's use of fragmentation and irony, letting the reader of this statement draw his own conclusions, which is similar to Heine's writing style.

In order to form an opinion of how Schumann looked at the poetry of the time it is important to understand how poets of the Romantic era wrote. Heinrich Heine's poetry quickly became a favorite for composers of German Lied. The background of his life reveals that Heine was not very successful in other career paths that he had chosen, and he quickly realized writing was to be his vocation.

In Perrey's analysis of Heine's work, *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, she writes of "signatures" in his writing and the modernity of his works. Perrey describes *Stimmungsbruch* (breaking of tone and mood), which is a compositional technique that Heine used throughout his writings. She states that Heine's use of "worn-out phrases," concealed quotations, and trivialized Romantic formulas make his writing easily recognizable to literary scholars. Perrey's discussion continues by turning toward Heine's image of a woman, which Perrey refers to as *imago*. This includes a comparison of the texts of *Lyrisches Intermezzo* and the *Song of Songs*. Heine, born of Jewish descent, was aware of the Christian faith and eventually converted. According to Perrey, his library included a Lutheran Bible, from which I speculate Heine had read the *Song of Songs* that

---

<sup>14</sup> Andre Coeuroy and Fred Rothwell, "The Musical Theory of the German Romantic Writers" *The Musical Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (1927): 108-129.

provided some inspiration for his *Lyrisches Intermezzo*. Perrey concludes this part of her book with a brief discussion of the *Buch der Lieder* which was not very popular at first, but with time gained popularity through university students. The book, first published in 1827, was republished and revised a number of times until 1844. Heine first gained recognition by having his works published in newspapers and journals. It was about 1828 that Schumann became acquainted with Heine's *Buch der Lieder* while studying at the university in Leipzig.<sup>15</sup>

Schumann's use of Heine's text is further described in a later section of Perrey's book, in a discussion of Schumann's introduction to the *Buch der Lieder*, and continues with her 'musico-poetic' analysis. This includes an in-depth look at Heine's text and the specifics of Schumann's text-setting, taking the reader through *Dichterliebe* and pointing out its highlights and questionable areas.<sup>16</sup> Perrey's research suggests a further look at this cycle from an analytical point of view.

In Susan Youens' book *Heinrich Heine and the Lied*, she writes of Heine's reputation at the time, stating that his popularity was because of his publications, including his self-published poetry in periodicals. This led Schumann along with many others, such as Schubert, to incorporate Heine's texts into their compositions. Among his contemporaries and critics Heine was liked by some and disliked by others, as many writers are. Schubert was one who liked Heine's Lied poetry and began setting them. Schubert felt that this was new material on which to write new compositions. As for Schumann, Youens further compares the compositions that Schumann had written for *Dichterliebe* to those of his contemporaries, such as Franz Lachner's

---

<sup>15</sup> Beate Julia Perrey, *Schumann's Dichterliebe and Early Romantic Poetics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 71-107.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 111-221.

settings of the poems, illustrating the influence of texts to various composers. She notes that both compositions of “Ein Jüngling liebt ein Mädchen,” remain diatonic, but Schumann’s has set the scene, differently from Lachner’s, by placing the introduction in a German courtyard with an accordion and crowd about to hear a story being told.<sup>17</sup>

In an article by Victor Kofi Agawu this discussion of nineteenth-century poetics and the use of music continues. Agawu writes about four models of song analysis: assimilation, music and words coexisting, pyramid structure, and “overlapping system.” The assimilation model, which is the concept of Suzanne Langer, states that music surrounds and encompasses the text, making the music more important, and the words become music. The second model is where words and music coexist, which Agawu likens to a balanced equation. The third model he says “may be visualized as a pyramid structure with music at the base and words at the top.”<sup>18</sup> The last model he mentions is one in which the song is an “overlapping system,” where music and words come together and form one.<sup>19</sup> Schumann’s works seem to follow the second model and form a dialogue with each other. There is not one important part in his lieder – they are all important.

In Agawu’s article “Structural ‘Highpoints’ in Schumann’s *Dichterliebe*,” he specifically analyzes several movements from *Dichterliebe*. His article reflects on Heine’s use of “reversal” as a poetic element and how Schumann develops that into a “highpoint” or climax in the pieces.

---

<sup>17</sup> Susan Youens, *Heinrich Heine and the Lied* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>18</sup> Kofi Agawu, “Theory and Practice in the Analysis of the Nineteenth-Century ‘Lied,’” *Music Analysis* 11, no. 1 (March 1992): 6.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-36.

Agawu first discusses three of the songs: “Wenn ich in deine Augen seh’,” “Ich grolle nicht,” and “Ich hab’ im Traum geweinet.” These movements are not part of my selected discussion but provide insight to Schumann’s compositional technique. The use of “reversal” is a disruption to the logical progression in the narrative and creates a dramatic effect for the reader. Agawu then discusses “Ein Jungling liebt ein Mädchen” from *Dichterliebe* as an example, creating the story of a love triangle in which the “initiator’s heart is broken in two.” This shows a definite physical action that jars the listener from the original story. Schumann’s creativity in composing those moments into the “highpoint” of the movement is clearly illustrated; he uses the highest notes in the piece to create the “climax” of the movement at the end of the work. The last vocal line is in a constant upward motion with chromaticism, creating tension for the listener. Agawu chose to use the term “highpoint” over “climax” to avoid ambiguity, because he feels that climax only refers to a particular point and “highpoint” can be interpreted to include the moments leading to and coming from the pinnacle point of the phrase.<sup>20</sup> In the last movement of the cycle, “Die alten, bösen Lieder,” Schumann very clearly illustrates the highpoint of the work at the very end. The subject of the song is described entirely and compared to different concrete objects, but the listener has to wait until the end to find out to what the poet is referring. Once the subject is revealed, that being his love and pain, Schumann provides the listener with the reversal in the piano postlude. The sad ending of the cycle has been turned around to give hope and light, similar to the last movement of the *Frauenleibe und Leben* cycle.

Further analytical commentary is found in the article “Organic Structure and the Song Cycle: Another Look at Schumann’s *Dichterliebe*” by David Neumeyer. His article compares the

---

<sup>20</sup> V. Kofi Agawu, “Structural ‘Highpoints’ in Schumann’s *Dichterliebe*” *Music Analysis* 3, no. 2 (1984): 159-180.

structure of *Dichterliebe* to the structure of an opera that begins and ends in the same key, with transitions throughout the work creating an organic unity. He also states that “the harmonic-contrapuntal fundamental structure overrides any other structuring forces.”<sup>21</sup> Schumann’s cycle at first glance does not show promise of beginning and ending in the same key, but it is linked by text. Neumeyer states that *Dichterliebe* is alone in this regard, since most of Schumann’s other works are tonally centered, such as *Frauenliebe und Leben*. He lists the key structure for all movements, revealing that most of the relationships follow the conventions of the time. The key relationships are mostly in thirds, fourths, and fifths, but some exceptions do apply. The first movement seems to be ambiguous, but Neumeyer has identified the key as F-sharp minor, or potentially A major. The movement does end in A major that leads directly into the second movement. Neumeyer also notes that there are no parallel key shifts between movements. In his analysis the first three movements are grouped together. He states that the first song is a prologue to the cycle, making the key of the second song the true defining key of the work. He speculates that Schumann may have set out to write a cycle that provided a male commentary of love; Neumeyer further says that Schumann may have stopped writing in the order of the poetry when Heine changed his tone of writing, thus Schumann had to pick and choose which texts he would use to create the desired effect. Neumeyer’s article concludes that Schumann’s cycle, while it does not have complete key unity, does have unity through text and expression.<sup>22</sup>

*Dichterliebe* has been analyzed by many scholars; to add to the discussion Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau provides commentary on the performance practice of *Dichterliebe* and

---

<sup>21</sup> David Neumeyer, “Organic Structure and the Song Cycle: Another Look at Schumann’s *Dichterliebe*,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 4 (1982): 92-105.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

Schumann's life and short-lived use of Heine's poetry. In his book, *Robert Schumann Words and Music*, Fischer-Dieskau devotes one chapter in his book to the analysis of *Dichterliebe*, where he discusses all movements, including the few movements that had been removed from the final publication. His brief discussion is based on the moods that the songs evoke to the performer and audience.<sup>23</sup>

The following discussion will center on the individual movements chosen from both song cycles. The movements are paired, first discussing the *Dichterliebe* movement and followed by a movement from *Frauenliebe und Leben*. The movements are paired with like movements from both cycles, starting with an introductory movement (or movements for *Dichterliebe*), followed by the middle movements, and finally the closing movement of each cycle.

The first three songs of Schumann's *Dichterliebe* can be performed without a large pause between them. They are: "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai," "Aus meinen Tränen spriessen," and "Die Rose, die Lilie, die Taube, die Sonne." In the first song, "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai" (In the wonderful beautiful month of May), the text is reminiscent of earlier days in May, and the protagonist declares his love for a particular woman. This has been described as being a prologue or introduction to the entire work. Schumann's ambiguous key structure lends the listener to feel that the piece never settles, a fact that is substantiated at the end of the song with a half cadence that propels the singer into the next movement, "Aus meinen Tränen spriessen" (From my tears spring). In this movement the poet continues to profess his love and shows a little frustration in the phrase "und meine Seufzer werden ein Nachtigallenchor," stating that his sighs should turn into a choir of nightingales. Schumann's tonality begins to stabilize during this movement,

---

<sup>23</sup> Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, *Robert Schumann Words and Music: The Vocal Compositions*, Translated by Reinhard G. Pauly (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1981).



provided by a simple chordal accompaniment allowing the vocal line to show and express the feelings of the text. The text in movement three, “Die Rose, die Lilie, die Taube, die Sonne,” relates the woman figure to beautiful images in nature such as the rose, the lily, the dove, and the sun, and finally professes that she is “the one.” This song is accompanied by quick figures that remain in the key with some deviation. Thus the first three movements of this cycle set the initial tone and illustrate the protagonist’s love for this woman.

Schumann’s opening movement of *Dichterliebe* is declamatory with syllabic text; the highest note is toward the end of the phrase – this musical declamation of love can be construed as being masculine in nature. In contrast the accompaniment is constantly moving with little rest, setting the scene as a warm breeze ushering in spring and love. This gentle accompaniment illustrates the feminine perspective, giving the movement an ambiguous feel as the protagonist confesses his love. Here it was evident that Schumann was able to mix the masculine and feminine traits simultaneously. “Aus meinen Tränen spriessen” and “Die Rose, die Lilie, die Taube” both have syllabic text, giving declamation to the protagonist’s words. The accompaniments also are more angular, creating an overall feel of masculinity.

In the introductory song of *Frauenliebe und Leben*, “Seit ich ihn gesehen” (Since I Saw Him), the woman speaks of seeing her beloved for the first time. This movement is set at a slow tempo with a focused tonality on B<sup>b</sup>. The one-measure introduction does not set the tone as well as the lengthier introduction to “Im wunderschönen Monat Mai” of *Dichterliebe*. The woman singing this first movement appears to be stunned and motionless in her speech. The piece has little forward motion, mostly triadic accompaniment, and ends with a five-measure postlude recalling the opening bar of music, as Schumann does in many of his lieder. The second movement, “Er, der Herrlichste von allen” (He, the most glorious of all), is majestic in nature

and very declamatory. The vocal line exhibits turns and flourishes, showing excitement for her new-found love. The piano has a constant eighth-note figuration in the right hand and a somewhat more melodic bass line. The bass line provides a countermelody to the vocal line. After each verse, there is piano commentary preparing the singer for the next stanza. Schumann ends this song with a piano postlude that continues the declamation of the vocalist. This movement is very light, giving it an overall feminine quality. Movement three, “Ich kann’s nicht fassen, nicht glauben” (I can’t grasp it, nor believe it), shows that the man from movements one and two has chosen her, and she cannot believe it. Schumann does an excellent job in his writing to show the element of surprise. Although the vocal line is very angular, a somewhat masculine trait, the piano has light interjections, keeping the overall nature of this song feminine. There are a few large leaps, usually upward, that are ornamented with grace notes. These opening three movements provide the listener with an overall picture of femininity that is light, bouncy, and attractive. This supports the text, which provides us with the woman’s view of love.

In movement eleven of *Dichterliebe*, “Ein Jüngling liebt ein Mädchen” (A young man loves a girl), there is a lightness in the accompaniment, but a sadness in the text. This song tells the story of a lad who loves a girl, but she has chosen another. The other loves another, and it is this one that he has married. Out of anger this girl accepts the first good man who comes along, and the lad ends up heartbroken. Other composers of the time have set this same text, but Schumann’s has remained in the repertoire over the years. This is due to his setting, as if the narrator who tells the story has gathered a crowd in the town square. Here the town band has decided to provide commentary to the story. The um-pa accompaniment provides a light dance-like feel to the old story that ends in a somewhat sad way. This is Schumann’s way of providing commentary to Heine’s poetry and using Romantic Fragmentation as described by Perrey. The

accompaniment of this work is tonally centered with the vocalist having syllabic text. Schumann demonstrates the masculine perspective in this movement with a heavier tone in the vocal line over the light-hearted accompaniment.

In movement five of *Frauenliebe und Leben*, “Helft mir, ihr Schwestern” (Help me sisters), there is a lightness similar in style to “Ein Jüngling liebt ein Mädchen.” The text describes the bride-to-be addressing her sisters on her wedding day. She is filled with nervous excitement throughout this movement, and Schumann’s accompaniment reflects this, with quickly-moving eighth notes that are followed by a dotted rhythm. This could be interpreted as showing the bride’s excitement as she is getting ready for the wedding. She sings three stanzas to her sisters and in the last two she describes her departure from her kin and the beginning of her new life with her husband. For this moment Schumann creates a new mood – the vocal line is more syllabic, and the accompaniment becomes a constant ever-changing eighth-note pattern, in which the harmonies also change rapidly. In the last stanza, Schumann briefly refers to music from the beginning of this movement, but then quickly changes to a new tonality, ending with a short postlude, a bridal march, as the bride departs. This movement, which displays mostly feminine musical characteristics, contains a brief moment of masculinity when the bride describes her new life with her husband, as evidenced by the change to a chordal accompaniment.

The last piece from *Dichterliebe* to be discussed is “Die alten bösen Lieder” (The old angry songs). This movement, the last of cycle, proclaims the everlasting endurance of the poet’s love. With a majestic opening the work begins on the anacrusis to the word “old” on beat one. The declamation of this song provides the singer with strong pulses on the important words of the poetry. The song has six stanzas and provides a great description of the coffin he needs. The

coffin should be bigger than the Heidelberg Cask, longer than the bridge in Mainz, he will need twelve giants to carry it, and it will be mightier than St. Christopher in the Cathedral of Cologne. The poet then speaks of a grave big enough to hold such a coffin, which would be the sea. In the very last stanza the poet talks about why he should need something so large – to hold all his love and his pain. Until this point Schumann has created dark colors and tension in the vocal and piano line, using a full range of both the piano and vocalist to create these colors. Heine's poetry ends with the sinking of his love and pain into the ocean. These last lines are accompanied by syncopation in the piano, creating more tension for the audience. After the soloist's last notes there is the simple ringing out of a chord that leads to the postlude. The purpose of the postlude is to slowly release some of the tension Schumann has created and is reminiscent of an earlier movement, leading to a hopeful ending to the entire work. This again illustrates Schumann's knowledge of Romantic poetry – Heine's work, *Buch der Lieder*, had finished with a question, and so did Schumann's musical setting. Schumann's use of masculine traits such as strong chords, syncopated rhythms, and declamatory text throughout this movement are softened by the ending postlude while still retaining its masculinity.

In movement eight of *Frauenliebe und Leben*, "Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan" (Now thou hast given me for the first time, pain), the woman mourns the loss of her husband. This song is set at a slow tempo with a lamenting bass line, and resembles the opening of the last movement of *Dichterliebe*. This short work, only three stanzas, contains a great deal of emotion in two pages of music. Schumann illustrates both genders with a masculine chordal accompaniment and feminine text painting. The underlying chord structure creates tension while the voice almost appears to be recitative-like. Similar to "Die alten, bösen Lieder," Schumann ends *Frauenliebe und Leben* with a piano postlude, winding his way from the minor mode and

ending it in major, again demonstrating Schumann's command of Romantic language and poetics by quoting an earlier movement in the song cycle.

The musical portrayal of gender in these two works is much easier to see in *Frauenliebe und Leben* than in *Dichterliebe*. Prior research suggests that both cycles are expressions of love and show the perspective of man and woman, and both song cycles demonstrate masculine and feminine traits throughout. *Frauenliebe und Leben* shows Schumann's compassion for the woman figure and demonstrates a more feminine feel, but without specific gender assignments in the music. Some parts are heavier and could be interpreted as a more masculine sound, while other parts soften this effect, giving a more feminine feel. In these two song cycles gender is displayed through the overall mood as created by text and music. If the text was taken away from the work and the melody played on another instrument, there might be a different outcome of the program. But it was the text that inspired Schumann to create these works and the text that gives it the character and emotions that are attached. In the lieder of Romantic composers, the common method is to reflect the story of the text in the songs. Not all composers would interpret texts in the same way; some ambiguous poetic writings could be either masculine or feminine. In other words, other composer's interpretations of the same poem from this period may result in extremely different compositions.

Schumann has used his music to effectively set poetry and his interweaving lines between the vocalist and the piano to form a partnership that sets the tone and the mood of the work, whether it is masculine or feminine. It is this dialogue that paints the pictures that we eventually see as masculine and feminine. Overall *Dichterliebe* is set with a generally heavier tone, which could be interpreted as a masculine characteristic, and *Frauenliebe und Leben* has a much lighter feel to the overall work, a "feminine" feel.

## Bibliography

- Agawu, V. Kofi. "Structural 'Highpoints' in Schumann's *Dichterliebe*." *Music Analysis* 3, no. 2 (1984): 159-180.
- Agawu, Victor Kofi. "Theory and practice in the analysis of the nineteenth-century lied." *Music Analysis* 11, no. 1 (1992): 3-36.
- Brown, Julie Hedges. Review: "Schumann's *Dichterliebe* and Early Romantic Poetics: Fragmentation of Desire," by Beate Julia Perrey. *19<sup>th</sup> Century Music* 28 (2005): 276-295.
- Coeuroy, Andre and Fred Rothwell. "The Musical Theory of the German Romantic Writers." *The Musical Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (1927): 108-129.
- Daverio, John and Eric Sams. "Schumann, Robert," In Oxford Music Online. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> (Accessed March 28, 2009).
- Fischer-Dieskau, Dietrich. *Robert Schumann Words and Music: The Vocal Compositions*. Translated by Reinhard G. Pauly. Portland: Amadeus Press, 1981.
- Hallmark, Rufus. "The Sketches for *Dichterliebe*" *19<sup>th</sup> Century Music* 1, no. 2 (1977): 110-136.
- Hoeckner, Berthold. "Paths Through *Dichterliebe*." *19<sup>th</sup> Century Music* 30, no. 1 (2006): 65-80.
- Lentzner, Karl. *Chamisso: A Sketch of his life and work*. London: Williams & Norgate, 1893.
- Muxfeldt, Kristina. "Frauenliebe und Leben now and then." *19<sup>th</sup> Century Music* 25, no. 1 (2001): 27-48.
- Neumeyer David. "Organic Structure and the Song Cycle: Another Look at Schumann's *Dichterliebe*." *Music Theory Spectrum* 4, (1982): 92-105.
- Perrey Beate Julia. *Schumann's Dichterliebe and Early Romantic Poetics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Schnapp, Friedrich and Theodore Baker. "Robert Schumann and Heinrich Heine." *The Musical Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (October 1925): 599-616.
- Solie, Ruth A. "Whose life? The gendered self in Schumann's *Frauenliebe* songs." In *Music and text: critical inquiries*. Edited by Steven Paul Scher. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992: 219-240.
- Youens, Susan. *Heinrich Heine and the Lied*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2007.