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Alban Berg's Sieben frühe Lieder: An Analysis of Musical Structures and Selected Performances

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Lisa Anne Lynch, DMA

University of Connecticut, 2014

ABSTRACT

Alban Berg's *Sieben frühe Lieder*, composed between 1905-08, lie on the border between late 19th-century Romanticism and early atonality, resulting in their particularly lyrical and yet distinctly modern character. This dissertation looks in detail at the songs with an emphasis on the relevance of a musical analysis to performers. Part I provides an overview of the historical context surrounding the *Sieben frühe Lieder*, including Berg's studies with Schoenberg, stylistic features, biographical details, and analytic approaches to Berg's work. The primary focus of the dissertation, Part II, is a study of each individual song. Each analysis begins with an overview of the formal design of the piece, taking into consideration the structure and content of the poetry, and includes a chart of the song's form. A detailed study of the harmonic structure and motivic development within the song follows. The analysis also addresses the nuances of text setting. Following each analysis of musical structure, specific aspects of performance are discussed, including comparisons of recordings and the expressive effects of different performers' choices. Although this document focuses primarily on the voice and piano version of the *Sieben frühe Lieder*, several orchestral recordings are included in the performance comparisons, elucidating further performance elements to consider. Both the musical analysis and the recording comparisons reveal compelling features of the *Sieben frühe Lieder*, and both work together to deepen performers' understanding of the music.

Alban Berg's *Sieben frühe Lieder*: An Analysis of Musical Structures and Selected Performances

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A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

at the

University of Connecticut

2014

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2014

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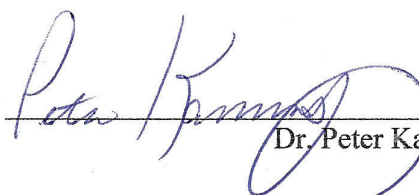
Doctor of Musical Arts Dissertation

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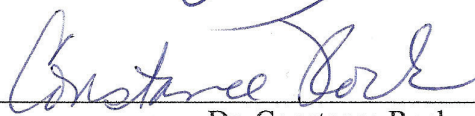
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PART I: Introduction

Stylistic-historical context

In the dim light of “Schilflied” there is already a glimmer of the light that glows like an eternal solar eclipse in the field and streets of *Wozzeck*.²

Theodor Adorno’s poetic description of “Schilflied,” one of Alban Berg’s *Sieben frühe Lieder*, suggests that these songs reveal something special about the nature of Berg’s music. Berg composed the *Sieben frühe Lieder* between 1905 and 1908, during his early composition studies with Arnold Schoenberg, a time that was a major turning point in Berg’s musical life. Though he composed the songs just prior to his Op. 1 *Piano Sonata* of 1908, he did not publish them until 1928, when he also created a version for voice and orchestra. Berg’s decision to publish and orchestrate the songs twenty years later indicates that they held significance for him, as does his reaction to Schoenberg’s enthusiasm for a 1929 performance of the *Sieben frühe Lieder*:

Your telegram made me incredibly happy—as well as the fact that you went to the concert at all. Because the songs are so closely bound up with my studies with you, they mean more to me than they are really worth. And the fact that I succeeded in orchestrating these piano songs so that you think they sound good, brings that past even closer! For that I thank you a thousand times!³

Despite Berg’s comment that the songs mean more to him “than they are really worth,” they reveal the beginnings of his unique musical voice. As Dave Headlam observes, they are nostalgic and forward-looking at the same time, somewhat akin to the work of Gustav Mahler.⁴ All of the songs remain rooted in tonality, but Schoenberg’s influence on Berg can already be

² Theodor W. Adorno, *Alban Berg: master of the smallest link* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 49-50.

³ Arnold Schoenberg and Alban Berg, *The Berg-Schoenberg Correspondence*, ed. Juliane Brand, Christopher Hailey, and Donald Harris (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987), 387.

⁴ Dave Headlam, e-mail message to author, November 29, 2011.

heard; some of the songs stretch tonality to its limits, and clearly are moving towards an atonal language.

Performers recognize in Berg's *Sieben frühe Lieder* an intensely expressive quality: the songs have been performed and recorded numerous times. Despite their popularity, while many scholars have provided brief commentary and analysis on one or more of the songs, no published book or essay has been devoted solely to the *Sieben frühe Lieder*.⁵ Their late-Romantic tonal language contrasts with Berg's other published pieces, and theorists and historians have tended to focus more on Berg's later works, in which his fully-developed atonal style and fascinating mathematical systems provide rich material for study. Nicholas Chadwick, in his dissertation on Berg's early song output, provides brief analyses of the *Sieben frühe Lieder*, primarily with the aim of placing them in historical context with Berg's earlier *Jugendlieder*.⁶ My goal, on the other hand, is to create a practical resource for performers, considering the potential influence of a musical analysis on the interpretation and performance of the songs. I will focus primarily on the version for voice and piano, since it is more readily accessible to performers, and a full analysis of Berg's inventive and complex orchestration would constitute another study in itself.⁷

Berg and Anton Webern both began their studies with Schoenberg in 1904, and the evidence of Schoenberg's ideas is apparent in their compositions from this time period. Berg's *Sieben frühe Lieder* already reveal hints of what is to come in his later music. Schoenberg's

⁵ Theodor Adorno devotes a chapter of *Sound Figures* to "The Orchestration of Berg's Early Songs," focusing on the coloristic aspects of the instrumentation as well as philosophical ideas about the Romantic vs. modern features of the music. He does not offer a structural analysis of the songs.

⁶ Two master's theses also examine the songs in detail: Alan Belkin uses the orchestration of the *Sieben frühe Lieder* as a basis for his own orchestration of Berg's Op. 1 *Piano Sonata*, while Lori Belkin takes a purely theoretical approach, looking at Berg's tonal language in relationship to the principles of Heinrich Schenker and others.

⁷ I will discuss some aspects of the orchestration in Part II, in conjunction with performance considerations.

influence is heard in Webern's music from this time as well; Paul Griffiths notes that Webern's *String Quartet* of 1905⁸ shows a "striking advance" from his earlier compositions.⁹ Schoenberg himself was only 30 years old at this time, and was still in the process of developing his own compositional language; he had not yet composed any purely atonal music. As George Perle observes, "Berg and Webern, whose lessons with Schoenberg started at about the same time, were thus to share with their master the creative experiences that led him through a series of radical stylistic changes..."¹⁰ The *Sieben frühe Lieder*, then, reflect a transformative time in the music of not only Berg, but Schoenberg and Webern as well. In fact, Schoenberg's early tonal songs, such as the Op. 2 *Vier Lieder*, have much in common with Berg's early songs. During the years of Berg's and Webern's lessons, Schoenberg's music became more and more experimental, and Berg and Webern soon adapted his techniques to their own expressive purposes—Berg's Op. 1 *Piano Sonata* of 1908 departs significantly from tonality. In 1908-1909, Schoenberg published *Das Buch der Hängende Garten*, his first completely atonal songs.

While all three composers eventually incorporated atonality and 12-tone serialism into their works, their roots are firmly in the tonal tradition. Even the title "Second Viennese School" (a term which the composers themselves used) draws a connection to the "first" Viennese School of Haydn, Beethoven, and Mozart. Their more immediate predecessors, including Brahms, Wagner, Strauss, and Mahler, also exerted tremendous influence over their musical language and ideas. Glenn Watkins points to Mahler and Strauss in particular as playing an important role; while some historians have considered the works of Mahler and Strauss as "remnants of the

⁸ The 1905 *String Quartet* was composed during Webern's student years and published later, in 1965. The piece precedes Webern's Op. 5 *Movements for String Quartet* of 1909.

⁹ Oliver Neighbour, Paul Griffiths, and George Perle, *The New Grove Second Viennese School* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1983), 93.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 138.

past,” more closely aligned with late Romanticism, Watkins asserts that their music equally led towards the future developments of the Second Viennese School, and that “Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern would have been the first to insist upon the debt.”¹¹

Mahler was particularly influential on all three composers. One of the earliest proponents of Schoenberg’s work, Mahler was an enthusiastic supporter of Schoenberg throughout his career, and was equally important to Berg and Webern. Among his most influential works was *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, settings of German “folk-poetry” that appealed to many other composers, including Brahms and Richard Strauss.¹² These texts in particular made a strong impression on Schoenberg and his students. The themes addressed, including a sense of alienation and the irony, uncertainty, and brevity of life, came to be central to *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. Schoenberg and Berg both incorporated the themes of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* in their own work—Schoenberg in “The Lost Brigade” (“Die Verlorene Haufen,” from *Two Ballades* for voice and piano, Op. 12), and Berg in his opera *Wozzeck* (1915-21)¹³—while Webern set some of the *Wunderhorn* poetry in his Op. 12 songs.

Along with the works of Mahler, the music of Richard Strauss and Wagner, which stretched tonality to its limits with the extreme chromaticism of its harmonic language, was significant in leading towards atonality. Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern all saw themselves as part of the lineage of the German musical tradition, and expressed admiration for these composers of the preceding generation. In *Style and Idea*, Schoenberg describes the evolution from tonality to atonality that had been prepared by composers of the previous generation:

¹¹ Glenn Watkins, *Soundings: Music in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988), 3.

¹² *Ibid.*, 5.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 5.

The idea that one basic tone, the root, dominated the construction of chords and regulated their succession—the concept of tonality—had to develop first into the concept of extended tonality. Very soon it became doubtful whether such a root still remained the centre to which every harmony and harmonic succession must be referred. Furthermore, it became doubtful whether a tonic at the beginning, at the end, or at any other point really had a constructive meaning.¹⁴

Berg's *Sieben frühe Lieder* draw upon the "extended tonality" Schoenberg describes, and in certain songs, particularly "Nacht," "Traumgekrönt," and "Sommertage," the tonal center and harmonic direction are often ambiguous.

Berg's compositional voice

Berg's music certainly has much in common with Schoenberg's German Expressionist aesthetic; in a letter to Schoenberg, Berg enthusiastically remarks upon the dark and enigmatic music of Schoenberg's *Das Buch der Hängende Gärten*:

I liked the George songs more than ever; I always thought them the most wonderful things and had fancied I understood them, but I now realize I still have a long way to go for a deeper understanding of these enchantingly beautiful pieces...Our understanding and our hearts are almost too limited for the grandeur of such art!¹⁵

While Schoenberg's work was tremendously important to him, Berg also was influenced significantly by French culture, much more so than Schoenberg or Webern. In the realm of visual arts, he allied himself with the art nouveau-based *Jugendstil* of Klimt, and by extension, Berg was aware of contemporary French musical values, especially the music of Ravel.¹⁶ Another quality that distinguishes Berg's music from that of his colleagues is its ability to communicate in a more traditional way with listeners; "the use of forcefully recognizable ingredients of a more directly appealing language is the common denominator that joins Klimt,

¹⁴ Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. Leonard Stein, trans. Leo Black (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), 216.

¹⁵ Schoenberg and Berg, *The Berg-Schoenberg Correspondence*, 98.

¹⁶ Watkins, *Soundings*, 51.

Mahler, and Berg.”¹⁷ Perhaps it is this “more directly appealing language” that makes Berg’s vocal music particularly gratifying for the performer; no matter how far Berg stretches his atonal language, he never abandons the idea of expressive, lyrical vocal line in his songs and operas.

Before studying with Schoenberg, Berg composed numerous songs for voice and piano—about 70 of his *Jugendlieder* were published posthumously.¹⁸ In fact, when Berg first began studying with Schoenberg, Schoenberg was concerned that although Berg was gifted, he could apparently compose nothing but *Lieder*, declaring “he was absolutely incapable of writing an instrumental movement or inventing an instrumental theme.”¹⁹ Berg tended towards larger forms as his career progressed; his later vocal writing focused on the operas *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, as well as orchestrated songs. His published songs for voice and piano consist primarily of the *Sieben frühe Lieder* (which he later orchestrated) and the *Vier Lieder* of Op. 2 (1909-10), as well as the song “Am Leukon” (1908) and two settings of “Schliesse mir die Augen beide” (1907 and 1925). As DeVoto notes, by 1930, “Berg’s worldwide reputation had been consolidated with orchestral and chamber works and the opera *Wozzeck*. By contrast, and for different reasons, his dimension as a composer of songs does not seem to be very large, and yet it is fundamental to his personality nevertheless.”²⁰

¹⁷ Watkins, *Soundings*, 51.

¹⁸ For a detailed catalogue of the *Jugendlieder* see Chadwick, “A survey of the early songs of Alban Berg.”

¹⁹ Arnold Schoenberg, *Arnold Schoenberg Letters*, selected and ed. Erwin Stein, trans. Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 23.

²⁰ Mark DeVoto, “Berg the Composer of Songs,” in *The Berg Companion*, ed. Douglas Jarman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1989), 37.

Sieben frühe Lieder

The *Sieben frühe Lieder* (composed from 1905-1908) reveal many essential qualities of Berg's music—a romantic lyrical expression and extended tonal language combined, to varying degrees, with more modern compositional techniques. George Perle suggests that because the original version for voice and piano was not published until 1928 (concurrently with the orchestration), Berg probably revised the songs to some extent later in his life:

Nor should one be misled by the date of 1907 that appears on the title page of what some writers have taken to be the original version for voice and piano of the *Sieben frühe Lieder*, published in 1928, which is probably in fact essentially a reduction of the orchestral setting that received its first performance in that year. In this later version, a remarkable evocation of the musical language of late German romanticism reminiscent of Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*, the original songs must have been revised to some extent, as well as orchestrated.²¹

Whether or not Berg later revised the songs, they certainly retain their “early” character, and they may have been seen as somewhat old-fashioned in 1928, in the context of atonal and 12-tone compositional techniques. Berg, however, much more than Schoenberg or Webern, incorporated elements of traditional tonal music even in his later works; his music is characterized by a synthesis of styles rather than an exclusively atonal language.

Sources vary on the exact dates of composition of the individual songs. Though the date on the published score is 1907, Berg did not finish composing all of the songs until 1908. Probable dates of composition are as follows, based on Berg's manuscripts²²:

Im Zimmer: summer 1905
Die Nachtigall: winter 1905-06
Liebesode: autumn 1906
Traumgekrönt: August 14, 1907
Nacht: spring 1908
Schilflied: spring 1908
Sommertage: summer 1908

²¹ George Perle, *The Operas of Alban Berg: Volume 1* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 3.

²² Nicholas Chadwick, “A survey of the early songs of Alban Berg” (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 1972) 48-49.

These dates are consistent with the style of the songs, moving progressively from traditional tonality to more extended tonality, but the validity of the dates is uncertain. More relevant to performers is the order in which Berg arranged the pieces for performance. A manuscript from the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek documents Berg's process of determining the placement of the songs in the cycle. It contains notes on keys and key relationships, vocal range, and several possible orderings of the pieces.²³ He clearly considered the musical progression from beginning to end, and must have also taken into account the dramatic arc of the entire cycle. Additionally, it appears that Berg intended a stylistic symmetry in the order:

Nacht: extended tonality
Schilflied: moderately extended tonality
Die Nachtigall: traditional
Traumgekrönt: extended tonality
Im Zimmer: traditional
Liebesode: moderately extended tonality
Sommertage: extended tonality

“Die Nachtigall,” “Liebesode,” and “Traumgekrönt” were first performed at a concert of music by students of Schoenberg on Nov. 7, 1907. Elsa Pazeller was the singer and Karl Horwitz the pianist.²⁴ This occasion happened to be the first public performance of Berg's music.²⁵ The premiere of the orchestral version was in 1928 in Vienna, with soloist Claire Born and conductor Robert Heger, organized by the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*.²⁶ In the summer

²³ See Faksimile 1, “Disposition der Sieben frühe Lieder als Zyklus,” in Alban Berg, *Sämtliche Werke*, Band 6, Orchestergesänge, ed. Rudolf Stephan (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1997), IX.

²⁴ Chadwick, “A survey of the early songs of Alban Berg,” 49.

²⁵ Hans F. Redlich, *Alban Berg: the Man and his Music* (London: John Calder, 1957), 229.

²⁶ Chadwick, “A survey of the early songs of Alban Berg,” 48.

of the same year, Berg also performed the songs on the radio, accompanying the singer, as he mentions in a letter to his wife Helene.²⁷

Berg dedicated the *Sieben frühe Lieder* to Helene. He met her in 1906, and began his ardent correspondence with her in 1907.²⁸ Berg refers to the *Sieben frühe Lieder* in several of his letters to Helene, including quoting Rilke's poetry from the text of "Traumgekrönt": "The day was almost frightening in its splendour,/The day of the chrysanthemums white..." He goes on to say, "I have found the splendour of yesterday's joy almost frightening. I have kissed you!"²⁹ While it is known that Berg had love affairs with other women later in his life, most notably Hanna Fuchs-Robettin, his early letters to Helene appear to have been written with great sincerity. Despite later complications in their relationship due to illnesses, financial strains, and infidelity, "the spiritual connection between the two Bergs continued until his death."³⁰ Because Berg decided to publish and orchestrate these songs of his youth twenty years later, they seem to express nostalgia for a simpler time. Certainly they are reminiscent of his early studies with Schoenberg; additionally, they were composed before World War I and published after the war, which undoubtedly deeply affected Berg. Although his relationship with Hanna Fuchs-Robettin had begun long before 1928, the songs also may have represented Berg's nostalgia for the youthful passion of his early years with Helene.

²⁷ Alban Berg, *Alban Berg: Letters to his Wife*, ed. and trans. Bernard Grun (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), 365.

²⁸ See Berg, *Letters to his Wife*.

²⁹ Berg, *Letters to his Wife*, 30.

³⁰ Joan Allen Smith, "Berg's Character Remembered" in *The Berg Companion*, ed. Douglas Jarman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1989), 27.

Comparison of piano (1907) and orchestral (1928) versions

Berg orchestrated the *Sieben frühe Lieder* in 1928, three years after he completed *Wozzeck* and the *Chamber Concerto*, and in the same year that he began composing *Lulu*: his orchestration technique was by this time fully developed. As Mosco Carner observes in his commentary on the *Sieben frühe Lieder*, “except for a few counter-motives, doublings of the voice part and pointillistic additions, the orchestral version is identical with the piano version.”³¹ It is the variety of orchestral timbres that stands out as the primary difference between the two versions, which otherwise have essentially the same musical content. Carner goes on to say, “this is not a mere transcription for orchestra, not a mere clothing of the music from outside, but a realisation of the immanent symphonic nature of these songs.”³² By extension, the inherent operatic qualities of the music are more evident in the grander scale of the orchestral version, and accordingly, the orchestral version demands a greater dynamic range and fuller tone from the singer.

The mood and expression of each song is further evoked by its instrumentation. As Douglas Jarman observes, “Berg imposed a symmetrical shape on the group by scoring the third song for strings and the fifth for winds alone, the second and sixth songs for reduced orchestra and the first and seventh songs for full orchestra so that the whole set pivots around the central fourth song.”³³ The orchestration highlights the stylistic symmetry in the order of the songs, using the fullest instrumentation for the most complex songs—“Nacht” and “Sommertage”—and a more transparent texture for the more traditional songs, “Die Nachtigall” and “Im Zimmer.”

³¹ Mosco Carner, *Alban Berg: the man and the work* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1977), 83.

³² *Ibid.*, 83.

³³ Douglas Jarman, *The Music of Alban Berg* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 240.

Whether performing the orchestrated or piano version, a study of the orchestral score is useful in preparing the songs. The myriad of instrumental timbres provides ideas for coloristic and mood shifts, and the motives gain further clarity when heard in individual instrumental lines. As Adorno describes it, “The orchestration adheres to even the smallest compositional details of the songs, so as to make them clear and transparent.”³⁴

Analytical methodology and organization

Because the *Sieben frühe Lieder* lie on the border between tonality and atonality, different methods of analysis can illuminate different aspects of these pieces. Traditional tonal descriptions apply to many, but not all, of the harmonies. Berg sometimes substitutes extended harmonies in otherwise traditional tonal progressions; at other times, he uses harmonically ambiguous chords (diminished seventh chords, augmented triads, etc.) to pivot to another key area, or to obscure the sense of tonality. Schoenberg’s *Theory of Harmony* offers some insight into how Berg probably was thinking about tonality at this time; although published in 1911, it elaborates on ideas that Schoenberg must have conveyed to his students in the preceding years. The text deals entirely with tonality, both traditional and extended, as well as with Schoenberg’s philosophical ideas on music composition. It seems therefore appropriate to refer to this text in the analysis of the *Sieben frühe Lieder*.

In particular, Schoenberg’s discussion of the relationship of chords through common tone, or “harmonic link,” is relevant to the way in which Berg achieves connections between seemingly remote harmonies in these songs. Schoenberg introduces the study of harmonic progression in his text by showing a table of all diatonic chords that are related by common

³⁴ Adorno, *Alban Berg: master of the smallest link*, 51.

tone.³⁵ Even in the early student assignments, Schoenberg allows any connection by common tone, sometimes resulting in unusual progressions for a beginning harmony exercise.³⁶ Later in the text, Schoenberg extends his basic principles to what he refers to as “vagrant chords,” which include the diminished seventh chord, augmented triad, and augmented sixth chords.³⁷ Here, too, Schoenberg emphasizes the importance of voice leading:

Thus, in general, the best connections of simple chords with vagrants or of vagrants with one another will be those in which the second chord contains, as far as possible, only tones that appeared in the first or are recognizable as chromatic raising or lowering of the tones of the first.³⁸

Schoenberg explains that for such vagrant chords, “close attention to the root progressions often does not assure control over the quality of a progression.” In other words, designing a progression based on the root motion from one chord to the next is less relevant when one is composing in an extended tonal style, as Berg certainly did in these songs.

Present-day theorists offer additional insight into Berg’s early compositional style. Mark DeVoto discusses Berg’s use of chromaticism in several early works, including “Nacht” and “Schilflied,”³⁹ and his ideas can be applied further to other songs in the cycle. He describes the “creeping chromaticism” by which Berg moves in much of his music, including symmetrical chromatic motion, or “wedge motion.” This “creeping” quality grows out of the idea of motion by common tone; the smallest possible shifts in voice leading create the path for harmonic progression, without losing the “harmonic link” to the previous chord, as Schoenberg suggests.

³⁵ Arnold Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, trans. Roy E. Carter (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 39.

³⁶ See examples from Schoenberg’s *Theory of Harmony* on p. 74, such as Ex. 26b: I-iii⁶-V-ii⁶-vii⁶-iii-I.

³⁷ Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, 238.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 259.

³⁹ Mark DeVoto, “Alban Berg and Creeping Chromaticism,” in *Alban Berg: Historical and Analytical Perspectives*, ed. David Gable and Robert P. Morgan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 63-66.

DeVoto also observes, “Wedge motion is a special and symmetrical aspect of creeping, and one that Berg especially loved, one that suggests his later fondness for mirror symmetries in melodic inversions.”⁴⁰ Headlam and others have pointed out several other hallmarks of Berg’s later style which appear in these songs, including interval cycles⁴¹ (“Nacht”), the juxtaposition and superimposition of rhythmic ostinato (“Schilflied”), and motivic saturation contributing to the density of the music (“Traumgekrönt” and “Sommertage”).⁴²

This motivic saturation is often associated with Schoenberg’s ideas of *Grundgestalt* and “developing variation.” In her work on Berg’s Op. 1 *Piano Sonata*, composed just after the *Sieben frühe Lieder* in 1908, Janet Schmalfeldt uses Schoenberg’s concept of “developing variation” as the basis for her analysis.⁴³ Similarly, a motivic approach to the analysis of the *Sieben frühe Lieder* reveals another layer of structure and complexity in these songs.

Schoenberg used the terms *Grundgestalt* (literally “basic shape”) and “developing variation” to describe the compositional process:

The presentation of ideas is based on the laws of musical coherence. According to these, everything within a closed composition can be accounted for as originating, derived, and developed from a basic motive or at least from a *grundgestalt*.⁴⁴

Erwin Stein explains *Grundgestalt* as the central component that holds a piece together, which appears early in the work and is the source of all subsequent musical material: the *Grundgestalt*

⁴⁰ DeVoto, “Alban Berg and Creeping Chromaticism,” 63.

⁴¹ Dave Headlam discusses the cyclical patterns in Berg’s music which repeat patterns based on pitch intervals and pitch-class intervals. For further reading on interval cycles, see Dave Headlam, *The Music of Alban Berg* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 14-15.

⁴² Headlam, *The Music of Alban Berg*, 18-21, 31.

⁴³ Janet Schmalfeldt, “Berg’s Path to Atonality: The Piano Sonata, Op. 1,” in *Alban Berg: Historical and Analytical Perspectives*, ed. David Gable and Robert P. Morgan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 79.

⁴⁴ Arnold Schoenberg, *The Musical Idea and the Logic, Technique, and Art of its Presentation*, ed. and trans. Patricia Carpenter and Severine Neff (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 27.

may be a melodic motive, harmony, rhythm, or combination of these elements. Although Schoenberg later used this idea to describe his twelve-tone pieces, he also applied it to his conception of tonal music.⁴⁵ As Epstein points out, Schoenberg's music had its roots in the music of composers such as Bach and Brahms, and the idea of *Grundgestalt* helps to demonstrate the way in which Schoenberg's music grew out of this tradition.⁴⁶ While Schoenberg did not put these ideas into writing until somewhat later,⁴⁷ the concepts are relevant to Berg's early works, as Schmalfeldt demonstrates in her analysis, and as Headlam observes in his commentary on the early songs.⁴⁸ Melodic motives feature prominently as a structural component in many of the *Sieben frühe Lieder*, while in "Schilflied," rhythmic ostinato plays a stronger and more autonomous role.

The ideas of *Grundgestalt* and developing variation are often referred to in conjunction with one another. Auerbach defines *Grundgestalt* as an analysis of the exact repetition of a central, concrete musical figure, while developing variation is the study of modified repetition in music.⁴⁹ In other words, *Grundgestalt* can be understood as the basic shape itself, and can be seen to contain the seed for the piece, whereas developing variation describes how that basic shape is transformed. In any case, these concepts work together to form an organic model for music.

⁴⁵ Erwin Stein, *Orpheus in New Guises* (London: Rockliff, 1953), 57-77.

⁴⁶ David Epstein, *Beyond Orpheus: Studies in Musical Structure* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1979), 17.

⁴⁷ Schoenberg wrote about developing variation in *Coherence, Counterpoint, Instrumentation, Instruction in Form*, begun in 1917. For further reading on Schoenberg's conception of *Grundgestalt*, see Schoenberg, *The Musical Idea and the Logic, Technique, and Art of its Presentation*. Schoenberg wrote this book in the 1930s, and the preface and commentary written by Patricia Carpenter, one of Schoenberg's students, help to clarify much of what Schoenberg wrote.

⁴⁸ Headlam, *The Music of Alban Berg*, 31.

⁴⁹ Brent Auerbach, "The Analytical Grundgestalt: A New Model and Methodology Based on the Music of Johannes Brahms," (PhD diss., University of Rochester, Eastman School of Music, 2005, in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, accessed Oct. 12, 2009), 24.

In his discussion of *Grundgestalt*, David Epstein quotes Thomas Mann: “The artist always carries a work of art as a whole within himself.”⁵⁰ This notion of the work of art existing as a complete and inevitable whole implies an underlying expressive force behind the *Grundgestalt*, an idea that comes to fruition through the musical shape of the piece. Auerbach also presents *Grundgestalt* as the concrete representation of a more abstract “Musical Idea.”⁵¹ Certainly this principle is relevant to Berg as well, whose music is always highly expressive: in the *Sieben frühe Lieder*, motivic development constantly reflects the dramatic unfolding of the text through the music.

By examining the distinctive and more “modern” features of Berg’s music within the context of late-Romantic tonality, it is possible to come to a deeper understanding of the *Sieben frühe Lieder*. My goal is to expand and build upon the ideas outlined above by undertaking an in-depth analysis of each song, with the purpose of illuminating aspects of the music that may enhance performances of these pieces. The analysis will incorporate performance issues including decisions about phrasing, tone color, timing, and dynamics, as well as the dramatic arc of the cycle as a whole.

In his *Theory of Harmony*, Arnold Schoenberg states that “art propagates itself through works of art and not through aesthetic laws.”⁵² While Schoenberg’s statement may not necessarily be taken completely at face value in light of his own aesthetic views and their musical impact, it nevertheless points to a strong emphasis on artistic expression over adherence to strict rules. Accordingly, my intent is to provide an analysis that will be of practical use for

⁵⁰ Epstein, *Beyond Orpheus*, 20-21.

⁵¹ Auerbach, “The Analytical Grundgestalt,” 5.

⁵² Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, 8-9.

performers and musicians, while recognizing that the *Sieben frühe Lieder* are not confined to a single theory or style. Their place on the border of Berg's musical development is what gives them their particularly lyrical and yet distinctly modern character.

Each analysis in Part II begins with an overview of the formal design of the piece, taking into consideration the structure and content of the poetry, and includes a chart of the song's form. A detailed study of the harmonic structure and motivic development within the song follows. The analysis also addresses ways in which the music directly reflects the meaning of the poetry. At the end of each analysis, specific aspects of performance are discussed, including comparisons of recordings and the expressive effects of different performers' choices. Although my analysis focuses primarily on the voice and piano version of the *Sieben frühe Lieder*, several orchestral recordings are included in the performance comparisons, elucidating further performance elements to consider.

PART II: Analyses

Chapter 1: “Nacht”

Although it opens the cycle, “Nacht” was one of the final songs of the *Sieben frühe Lieder* to be composed, completed in 1908,⁵³ and the early stages of Berg’s atonal compositional style are evident. Many scholars have noted the influence of Debussy in “Nacht”; René Leibowitz describes the song as “post-Wagnerian” and “even impressionistic.”⁵⁴ The song moves between whole-tone and triadic harmonies, and the shifting between these two sound worlds defines both the musical and expressive characteristics of the piece. Debussy’s style also is evident in the harmonic coloration of the tonal chords, most of which contain added notes (primarily fourths, sixths, or ninths added to triads and seventh chords). Additionally, motivic development and transformation is a central compositional technique, a hallmark of Berg’s later style which is found to varying degrees throughout these early songs.

The text for “Nacht” is by Carl Hauptmann:

Nacht (Carl Hauptmann)

Dämmern Wolken über Nacht und Tal,
Nebel schweben, Wasser rauschen sacht.
Nun entschleiert sich’s mit einemmal:
O gib acht! Gib acht!

Weites Wunderland ist aufgetan.
Silbern ragen Berge, traumhaft groß,
stille Pfade silberlicht talan
aus verborg’nem Schoß;

und die hehre Welt so traumhaft rein.
Stummer Buchenbaum am Wege steht
schattenschwarz, ein hauch vom fernen Hain
einsam leise weht.

*Night*⁵⁵

The clouds grow dark over night and valley,
Mists hover, waters rush softly.
Now it unveils itself suddenly:
O beware! beware!

A vast wonderland is opened.
Silver soar mountains, dream-large,
silent paths, silver-light, toward the valley,
from the hidden lap;

and the majestic world so dream-pure.
A silent beech tree stands by the path
shadow-black; from the distant grove
a lonely breath softly blows.

⁵³ René Leibowitz, *Schoenberg and His School* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1949), 138.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁵⁵ All song text translations are from George Bird and Richard Stokes, *The Fischer-Dieskau Book of Lieder* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1995) reprinted by permission of the authors.

Und aus tiefen Grundes D sterheit
blinken Lichter auf in stummer Nacht.
Trinke Seele! Trinke Einsamkeit!
O gib acht! Gib acht!

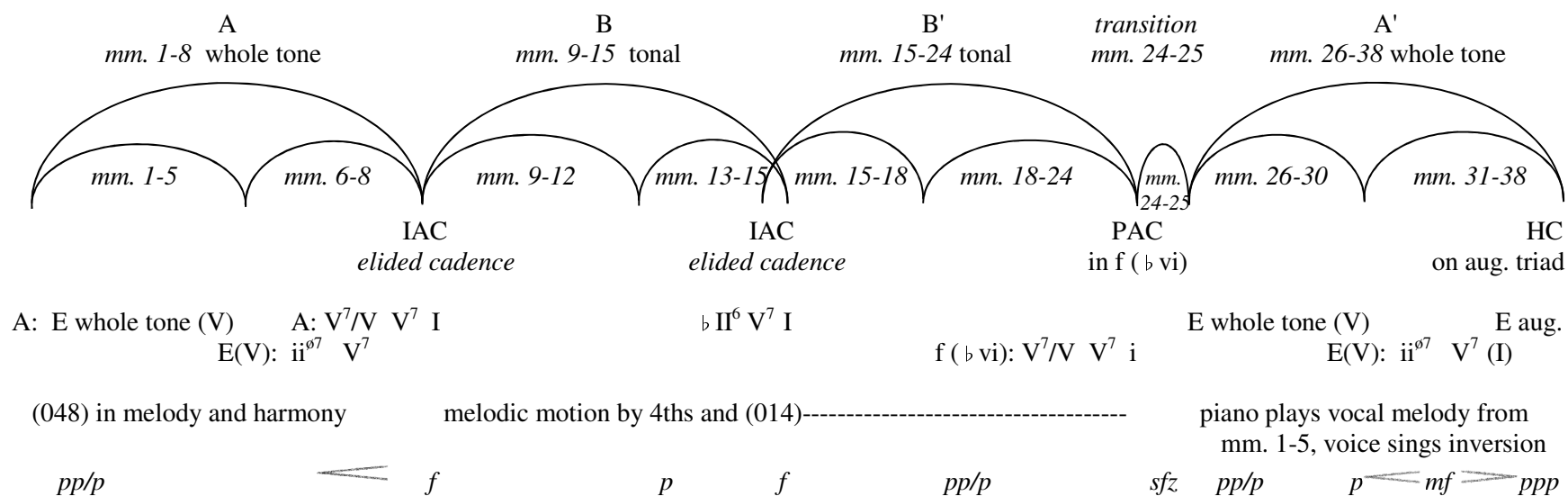
And from the deep valley's gloom
lights twinkle in the silent night.
Drink, soul! Drink, solitude!
O, beware! beware!

The Romantic imagery of the poem alludes to the work of Eichendorff in its characterization of nature. At the same time, its sense of foreboding hints at the Expressionist aesthetic which was beginning to emerge in German painting, literature, and music around the turn of the century.

Watkins' description of Expressionism is fitting for the text and music of "Nacht": "it is not only the tendency toward abstraction that identifies the new aesthetic, but also an attendant emotionalism that is nocturnal, by turns visionary or hallucinatory..."⁵⁶

In all of the *Sieben fr he Lieder*, the form of the songs is linked closely to both the content and the metrical structure of the poetry. The formal structure of "Nacht" can be heard as A-B-B'-A' (see Figure 1.1), with both A sections characterized by whole-tone sonorities and both B sections defined by a tonal framework. Hauptmann's poem consists of four four-line stanzas, each of which corresponds to a musical section. Each stanza finishes with the end of a sentence, except for the second stanza, where the sentence continues into the third section of poetry, across the metrical structure. The music echoes this pattern: m. 15 marks the end of section B, but also leads directly into B' without the sense of a large musical shift. Measure 16 clearly marks the beginning of the next section, but its melody and harmony, parallel to the opening material of section B (m. 9), are a continuation of the previous music. The elided V-I cadence in mm. 15-16 reinforces this connection. The shift in mood begins in m. 18, when a new sentence in the poetry begins ("Stummer Buchenbaum..."): in mm. 18-24, the *p-pp* dynamics and the increased emphasis on minor triads suggest the silent beech tree and lonely soft wind described at this point in the poem.

⁵⁶ Watkins, *Soundings*, 171.



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Dämmern Wolken über Nacht und Tal,
Nebel schweben, Wasser rauschen sacht.
Nun entschleiert sich's mit einemmal:
O gib acht! Gib acht!

Weites Wunderland ist aufgetan.
Silbern ragen Berge, traumhaft groß,
stille Pfade silberlicht talan
aus verborg'nem Schoß;

und die hehre Welt so traumhaft rein.
Stummer Buchenbaum am Wege steht
schattenschwarz, ein hauch vom fernen Hain
einsam leise weht.

Und aus tiefen Grundes Dürsterheit
blinken Lichter auf in stummer Nacht.
Trinke Seele! Trinke Einsamkeit!
O gib acht! Gib acht!

Figure 1.1. Form chart of "Nacht"

A close examination of the formal and harmonic structure of “Nacht” reveals many ways in which the music not only reflects the metrical structure of the poetry, but also evokes the content of the poem itself. The first stanza describes darkness and mists, which are reflected in the murkiness of the whole-tone harmony of the A section (mm. 1-8). Along with this whole-tone sound, the *pp* oscillating eighth-note chords in the piano (in mm. 2, 4, and 5) create a sense of hovering. Measures 1-3 utilize a whole-tone even scale, m. 4 a whole-tone odd scale, and m. 5 returns to whole-tone even for the first two beats, followed by whole-tone odd on the second half of the measure. The motivic sequence in the vocal line also signals this shifting between the two whole-tone scales: in m. 3, the voice sings E-F \sharp -E, followed by F-G-F in m. 4, and F \sharp -G \sharp -F \sharp in m. 5. Berg marks a *crescendo-decrescendo* over the vocal line in each of these measures, which further highlights the motive as it moves up by half step.

The first shift away from whole-tone sonorities comes in m. 6 with an F \sharp ^{o7} chord on the word “entschleiert” (unveils); indicative of the text, a different harmonic color begins to emerge from the ambiguous sound-world of the opening. The B⁷ chord that follows is the first explicit and clearly functional dominant seventh chord we hear, which at first suggests E as a possible tonic in this piece; however, the B⁷ is then revealed as an applied dominant to the following E⁷ chord which leads into the B section, where we finally hear the resolution to the A-major harmony (with an added sixth) indicated by the key signature (m. 9).

The B (mm. 9-15) and B' (mm. 15-25) sections correspond to the middle two stanzas of the poem, which describe a “wonderland” of colorful images: mountains and paths in a silver light, suggested by the grand A-major sonority in m. 9 and the brighter tonal harmonies. In contrast to the opening of the song, the harmonies of the B and B' sections, while colored with whole-tone sonorities and other added notes, essentially move through standard tonal

A musical score for the song 'The Rose Tree'. It features a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature. The bass staff has a key signature of two sharps (F#, C#) and a common time signature. The melody is written in the treble staff, and the accompaniment is written in the bass staff. The score consists of seven measures.

$$\text{A: } \flat \text{ II}^6 \text{ (P) } V_2^4 / \flat \text{ II } \flat \text{ II}^6 \text{ } V^7$$

The B' section also closes with a strong cadence in mm. 23-24, V⁷/V-V-i in F minor. The approach to F minor is set up with an increased emphasis on minor triads beginning in m. 19, on the line “Stummer Buchenbaum am Wege steht/schattenschwarz, ein hauch vom fernen Hain/einsam leise weht” (A silent beech tree stands by the path/shadow-black; from the distant grove/a lonely breath softly blows). The image of the solitary tree and the lonely breath of the wind are reflected in the shift to a minor tonality, and the *p* and *pp* markings in both voice and piano indicate to the performers a significant change in color through this phrase, which ends the section and leads back into the darker sound of the A' music.

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suggests the foreboding quality of the end of the poem. In m. 26, the A' section emerges from the accented E. This final section, which returns to the predominantly whole-tone harmony of the opening, refers to the “deep ground’s gloom,” but the “twinkle of lights up into the night” also is heard in the upper range of the piano in mm. 31-32, echoing the vocal line.

The alternation of harmonic colors in “Nacht” is one of its most striking features. The A sections, which are whole-tone on the surface, also contain some elements of tonal harmony. For example, the emphasis on E at the opening of the song, although heard in a whole-tone context, may be seen as structurally significant as the dominant of the key of A major. Additionally, the cadential passage in mm. 6-8 reveals a progression towards A major. In the A' section at the end of the song, the bass motion in the piano at m. 35, B to E, suggests an applied dominant to E. Again, given the key signature, the final E augmented chord might be considered a “half cadence,” though its augmented quality leaves the ending all the more unresolved. Nevertheless, some degree of tonal harmonic structure is present in both A sections. Similarly, the B sections, characterized by tonal clarity, also contain elements of whole-tone harmony, such as the soprano line in m. 11, which ascends through a whole-tone scale over a triadic accompaniment, and the tenor line in the piano in mm. 21-22, F-G-A-B-C \sharp -D \sharp . While the tenor moves up in whole steps, the bass is moving in contrary motion down by half steps, creating a semi-symmetrical quality. Both tonal and whole-tone harmonies are present throughout the song; in the A sections, the whole-tone harmony is in the foreground with tonality in the background, while in the B sections, tonality is in the foreground and whole-tone in the background. This shifting harmonic emphasis aptly reflects the poetry and its description of shifting moods and colors at night.

In addition to the harmonic structure, several melodic motives are central to the composition of “Nacht.” The opening vocal line outlines two augmented triads (048): E-B \sharp -G \sharp

and B \flat -F \sharp -D, derived from the whole-tone scale (see Example 1.2). This opening soprano melody (motive *a*) reappears in the following measures:

- m. 5: in the piano line, transposed up a fourth in sixteenth notes. The piano line then continues to echo the contour of that melody, though not the exact pitches.
- m. 8: in the tenor line of the piano
- m. 27: at the return to A', the melody is in the piano treble clef at its original pitch-class level, while the soprano sings an inversion of the melody through m. 28.
- m. 36: in the piano part



Example 1.2. Motive *a*, mm. 2-3

The B section begins with a melody that emphasizes fourths—F \sharp -C \sharp , C-G-D, F-B \flat —fitting for the tonal implications of the harmony in this section (see Example 1.3, motive *b*). The melody is repeated in mm. 16-17, shared between the voice and piano lines.



Example 1.3. Motive *b*, mm. 9-10

Although motive *b* is most prominent in the B sections, it recurs towards the end of the song in mm. 33-34, somewhat hidden within the texture (see Example 1.4). The motive is transposed up a major third from its original pitch level. The piano and vocal lines notably come together into

octaves/unisons to complete the last three notes of motive *b*, D-F-C \sharp , and the voice inverts the final interval, moving up from F to C \sharp . These octaves produce a bell-like clarity not heard elsewhere in this song. The echoes of the soprano line that occur in the upper register of the piano in mm. 31-32 lead into these octaves in m. 34, and the octaves in the piano in the final measures of the piece also grow out of mm. 34-35. The octaves in m. 34 (D-F-C \sharp) are echoed in m. 35 a half step lower (C \sharp -E-C). These three-note melodies can each be described in pitch-class terminology as set-class (014). In looking at the song closely, (014) does in fact appear in the soprano melody in the B sections four times, always at the ends of lines of poetry:

- m. 10: B \flat -C \sharp -A “aufgetan”
- m. 12: C \sharp -D-F “traumhaft groß”
- m. 17: B \flat -C \sharp -A “traumhaft rein”
- mm. 19-20: F \sharp -G-B \flat “Wege steht”

In measures 10 and 17, the (014) is simply a completion of motive *b*, while in m. 12 and mm. 19-20, this three-note segment occurs on its own. It appears that Berg intentionally created this melodic relationship; in any case, this (014) sonority, which is already in our ears from these earlier instances, is featured in a striking way at the end of the piece. The (014) unisons/octaves in the voice and piano in mm. 34-35 emphasize the text, “O gib acht!” (“Beware!”), the mysterious warning that ends the poem.

Zeit lassen _ _ _ Wieder abnehmend _ _ _

33

mf *mp* *p* *pp*

poco f *l.H.* *r.H.* *Echo* *übernimmt* *poco*

O gib acht! Gib acht!

motive *b*:

mp *poco f*

O gib acht!

Example 1.4. Motive *b* within piano texture, mm. 33-35

Dave Headlam goes further in describing the relationship between the two primary melodies in “Nacht.” As already noted, motive *a* is composed of augmented triads, while motive *b* is constructed from fourths. Headlam considers the structure of these melodies as a precursor to Berg’s later use of interval cycles; the first melody is based on a whole-tone cycle, and the

melody in the B section is based on a 5-cycle (i.e., interval class 5): “The transformation of motives from whole-tone to 5-cycle-based collections, found here in a tonal context, is characteristic of Berg’s atonal music and assumes a more structural role in the absence of tonality.”⁵⁷ In other words, Headlam considers motive *b* to be a transformation of motive *a*, since both motives cycle through one specific interval.

However one chooses to describe the musical relationships throughout the song, it is clear that specific musical details, including the alternating colors of whole-tone harmony and tonality, closely reflect central images in the poem. “Nacht” is an early example of Berg’s ability to synthesize seemingly diverse ideas—lyrical lines, elements of tonality and atonality, and detailed motivic imitation and development—to create highly expressive music.

Performance Considerations

“Nacht” is one of the most complex songs of the *Sieben frühe Lieder*, and presents several technical challenges for performers. In the vocal line, the intonation of the atonal melodies requires careful attention; however, the part can be more easily executed by noting the relationship of the vocal line to the underlying harmonies outlined in the above analysis. In addition, the long vocal phrases and broad dynamic range require significant breath control. The piano part is also quite elaborate, but again, the harmonic analysis and placement of cadences are helpful in shaping the piano phrases, as is an awareness of the motivic lines within the piano texture. Despite its complexities, the song’s lyrical lines and gestures allow performers to use an intuitive sense of expression and phrasing. The communicative aspect of the harmonic language is perhaps the most immediately apparent feature of “Nacht”; from the opening measures, the *pp* whole-tone harmony creates a distinct mood, and performers can create contrasting timbres for

⁵⁷ Headlam, *The Music of Alban Berg*, 18-19.

the whole-tone versus the tonal sections of the music. From the preceding analysis, it is evident that the formal structure, harmonic and motivic development, and dynamic and articulation markings in “Nacht” reflect the meaning of the text. Many of the expressive details already mentioned can help guide performers in bringing out important moments in the music.

Two recordings of “Nacht,” those of soprano Jessye Norman with the London Symphony Orchestra (conducted by Pierre Boulez)⁵⁸ and mezzo-soprano Susan Graham with pianist Malcolm Martineau⁵⁹, reveal two very different and yet equally effective interpretations of the music. Both Norman’s and Graham’s performances are evocative of the text, and clearly take into account the contrasting harmonic colors of the atonal and tonal sections of the song, as well as the score’s numerous expressive markings.

Norman is known for her interpretations of Berg’s operatic music as well as his *Lieder*, and her sound is well suited to the orchestrated version of these songs. Her full, *legato* singing and generous use of *portamento* throughout this performance of “Nacht” highlight the operatic nature of Berg’s vocal writing. However, Norman uses a distinctly different color for the atonal sections of “Nacht”: she sings with a dark tone at the beginning, and elongates the “ch” of “Nacht,” the “sch” of “schweben,” the “ss” of “Wasser,” and the “ch” of “sacht,” creating a somewhat less sustained line than she uses in the tonal sections of the song. The overall effect is a mysterious and slightly breathy quality, reflective of the whole-tone harmonies and poetic imagery of the opening. She and the orchestra begin building in intensity at the *poco a poco cresc.* in m. 6, and by the cadence in m. 9, Norman sings with a full *legato* operatic tone for the B sections, a sound which is appropriate for its more traditional Romantic harmonic language.

⁵⁸ *Jessye Norman: Alban Berg*, Pierre Boulez and London Symphony Orchestra, Sony Classical (CD), 1995.

⁵⁹ *At Carnegie Hall [Live]*, Susan Graham and Malcolm Martineau, Erato (CD), 2003.

She also uses a brighter tone quality here, matching the brighter harmonies in the orchestral accompaniment.

In addition to Norman's wide range of vocal colors, her choice of phrasing in this song is distinctive. Her phrases are generally quite long; for example, she chooses to sing through the end of m. 8 into m. 9 without a breath, even though a new musical section begins at m. 9. This interpretive choice demands a great deal of breath control, and most singers breathe after m. 8; however, Norman's phrasing emphasizes the elided cadence into m. 9, and allows her to build dramatically into the *forte* at m. 9 with a sustained *crescendo*. Similarly, she connects the end of m. 12 through m. 15 in one breath; again, most singers breathe after the word "talan" in the middle of m. 14. These long phrases contribute to the overall sense of large sweeping gestures that Norman accomplishes in her performance.

Several details of the orchestral performance are useful for both pianists and singers in preparing the piano version of "Nacht." In the A section, beginning in m. 1, Berg marks a *crescendo-decrescendo* over single chords in the piano part; this effect is more apparent in the orchestral accompaniment, where these chords are played by horns, flutes, and oboe. These swells in the orchestra create a sense of foreboding that ultimately leads to the dramatic accents in m. 25. Hearing the orchestra perform these chords can help the pianist to determine how to execute them on the piano, perhaps with a subtle accent. The vocal line also is affected by orchestral colors. On the line "Stummer Buchenbaum am Wege" (a silent beech tree on the path), the vocal line is doubled by a solo violin line, played with mute, an octave above the voice. This melody is the only solo violin line in the song, and Norman's tone color here suggests the sound of the solitary violin. A singer performing with piano can incorporate a similar tone quality into this line. At the end of the same phrase, on the word "Schattenschwarz"

(shadow-black), another orchestral timbre enters, a *pp* roll on the bass drum, further adding to the effect of the *p* vocal melody.

Susan Graham and Malcolm Martineau also employ a variety of tone colors in their performance; like Norman, Graham sings with a darker quality in the opening and a brighter, fuller sound for the tonal B sections. Graham, however, uses a more *legato* tone in the opening than Norman, emphasizing the lyrical quality of the atonal melody. One major difference in their performances is the use of *portamento*; Graham uses almost none—an effective choice given the complex harmonic language of the song. The precision of the motivic imitation is perhaps more apparent with a cleaner execution of the pitches, and Graham does not sacrifice her *legato* tone to achieve this clear intonation.

Graham's choices in phrasing also differ from Norman's—Graham tends to take more time between phrases. For example, at m. 7, she sets off “O gib acht!” (Beware!) with extra time before this text, and she takes a breath before m. 9, where the new musical material begins. Like Norman, she sings with a brighter tone in this section, and Martineau plays the sixteenth-note triplets with a surging forward motion. Graham and Martineau use a generous amount of *rubato* in mm. 18-19, on the text “Stummer Buchenbaum” (silent beech tree), and in the piano version, the *pp* in m. 21 can be sung even more delicately, as Graham does skillfully. Martineau's pacing of the return to the A section differs from that of the London Symphony Orchestra; in the last eighth note of m. 25, Martineau adds quite a bit of time to the accented E, allowing the sound of the accent to die away slightly so that the the A' material is heard clearly at the *pp* in m. 26. Boulez, on the other hand, conducts the orchestra relatively in tempo through this transition (the accents are played by timpani in the orchestral version), with the *pp* emerging out of the

preceding *sforzando*. Both choices are effective and highlight this significant moment in the song.

These two recordings illuminate many of the interpretive possibilities available to performers of “Nacht.” Norman’s performance with the London Symphony Orchestra is full of nuanced colors. Naturally, the orchestrated version of “Nacht” has a wider variety of instrumental timbres than a piano alone can produce, but Norman’s wide range of vocal timbres also heightens the coloristic element of the instrumentation and harmony. She creates a more distinct contrast between the A and B sections than Graham does, and Norman’s clear change in vocal color and use of *legato* enhances the tension between two dramatic scenes: the dark, murky, mysterious realm of the atonal music, and the rich, bright, dreamlike images of the tonal music. From this performance, we sense the overall dramatic arc that Berg creates with the formal structure, as well as the changes in mood for each stanza of poetry. Also notable is the relative steadiness of tempo in this performance compared to that of Graham and Martineau; there is less possibility for *rubato* with an entire orchestra than with a voice and piano performance. In particular, the steady tempo creates a more angular sound in the atonal sections, giving it a more “modern” character, and suggesting a distant, foreign quality in the foreboding night.

While Norman’s performance is more theatrical, Graham’s is more fluid and improvisatory. More liberties with timing and *rubato* are possible with the piano version than with a large orchestra, and Graham and Martineau take full advantage of this fact; as noted, they bring out harmonic and formal changes by pushing and stretching the tempo. At the end of the song, the root motion by fifth from the B augmented chord at the end of m. 34 to the E⁹ chord on the downbeat of m. 35 gives the impression of a jazz progression, not only because of the quality

of the chords, but because of the improvisatory quality of the performance. Although Graham and Martineau do create contrasting colors for the A and B sections, Graham sings with a consistently *legato* tone throughout, and as a result, her version of the song comes across as more purely Romantic, highlighting the lyricism of Berg's music. At the same time, Graham's clear intonation draws our attention to the motivic lines, and Martineau plays the motivic echo of the vocal line clearly and delicately in mm. 27-30; both performers successfully bring out the smallest details of the music. The flowing quality of their performance emphasizes the smooth unfolding of the musical structure; although the song is clearly organized into formal sections, the elided cadences between the sections create a sense of continuity, as the whole-tone and tonal harmonies fluctuate between the foreground and background. The hallucinatory images of the poetry seem to flow naturally from one to the next, and Graham and Martineau, in a different way than Norman and the London Symphony Orchestra, also evoke the atmosphere of the poem.

Chapter 2: “Schilflied”

The evocative harmonies of “Nacht” lead naturally into “Schilflied,” whose text also describes an otherworldly nighttime scene. While more tonal in its overall language, “Schilflied” nevertheless maintains a certain harmonic ambiguity; the harmonies shift quickly, moving by common tone or half step,⁶⁰ and again incorporate whole-tone sonorities (though not as extensively as in “Nacht”). This tonal ambiguity helps convey Nikolas Lenau’s poetry—the strange sounds and images of the evening, hidden from clear view. Of equal importance in this song is rhythm. Dave Headlam has noted the development of rhythmic motives in “Schilflied,” a feature which connects to Berg’s later works.⁶¹ The opening rhythmic motive is used as an ostinato throughout the song, and becomes transformed and heightened in intensity as the piece progresses.

The form chart in Figure 2.1 outlines the overall structure of “Schilflied,” which is delineated by cadences and tempo changes. The progression of rhythmic material in each section also contributes to the sense of formal division. Each stanza of the poem constitutes a separate musical section, and each phrase consists of two lines of text. The rhyme scheme of each stanza, *abab*, lends itself to this division into two-line phrases.

⁶⁰ See preceding discussion of Schoenberg’s *Theory of Harmony* in Part I: Introduction, *Analytical methodology and organization*.

⁶¹ Headlam, *The Music of Alban Berg*, 19-21.

Schilflied (Nikolas Lenau)

a Auf geheimem Waldespfade

b Schleich' ich gern im Abendschein

a An das öde Schilfgestade,

b Mädchen, und gedenke dein!

Wenn sich dann der Busch verdüstert,
Rauscht das Rohr geheimnisvoll,
Und es klaget und es flüstert,
Daß ich weinen, weinen soll.

Und ich mein', ich höre wehen
Leise deiner Stimme Klang,
Und im Weiher untergehen
Deinen lieblichen Gesang.

Song of the Reeds

By a secret forest path

I love to steal in evening light,
to the desolate reedy shore
and think, maiden, of you.

Then when the wood grows dark,
the reeds rustle mysteriously,
lamenting and whispering
that I should weep, weep.

And I think I hear wafting
softly the sound of your voice,
and, drowning in the pond,
your sweet singing.

The harmonic language of “Schilflied” immediately draws us into the world of Lenau’s poem. Often the sense of tonal direction is suspended; the harmonic reduction of mm. 1-9 shown in Example 2.1 demonstrates the elusiveness of the progression.

f: i (whole-tone) V^7 $ct^{\sigma 7}$ V_5^6/V iv^7 $ct^{\sigma 7}$

$D(\sharp VI): ct^{\sigma 7}$ V^7

$(D:)$ vi^6 $ct^{\sigma 7}$ $A\flat(III): I$ iv V_3^6/V^7 V^7 I

$B\flat(IV): ct^{\sigma 7}$ V_2^4 I^6 $\flat VII$

Example 2.1. Harmonic reduction of mm. 1-9.

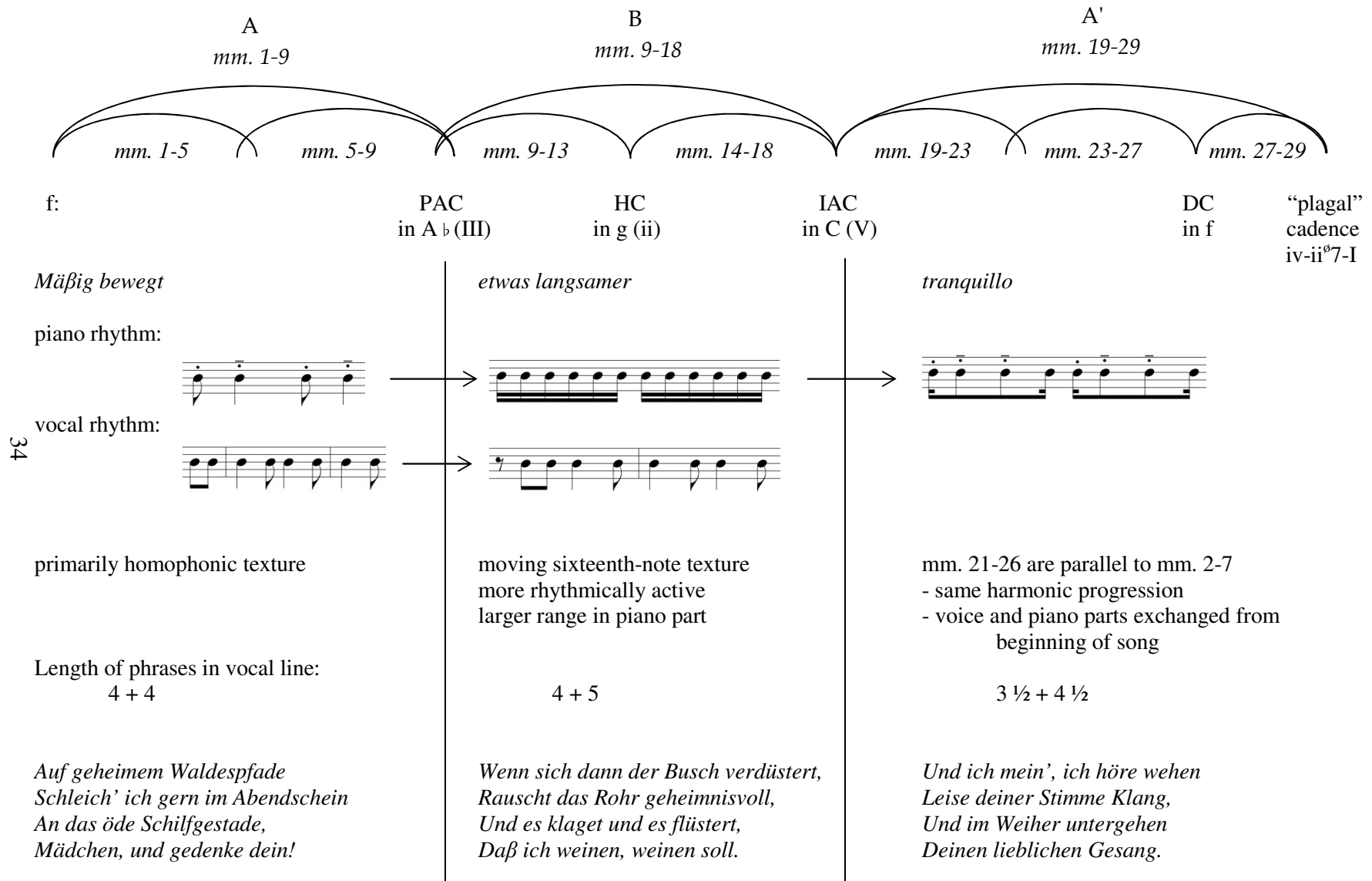


Figure 2.1. Form chart of “Schilflied”

The song begins on a single pitch, F, and proceeds by passing whole-tone sonorities to a V^7 chord in m. 3. However, this V^7 does not resolve; rather, it moves by chromatic passing tones to a diminished seventh chord. This diminished chord is followed by another dominant harmony (a G^6_3 chord) which again does not resolve. The reduction shows how the music progresses to the cadence in $A \flat$ (III) at m. 9, primarily by common tones and half steps. Often, Berg utilizes a fully- or half-diminished seventh chord, approached and left by common tone, to arrive at a dominant harmony in a new key: in m. 3 the ct^{o7} leads to V^6_3 of C, in m. 4, the ct^{o7} leads to V^7 of D, and in mm. 5-6, the ct^{o7} leads to V^4_2 of $B \flat$. These diminished chords function as paths to momentary key areas, until the clear progression and cadence in $A \flat$ major in mm. 7-9.

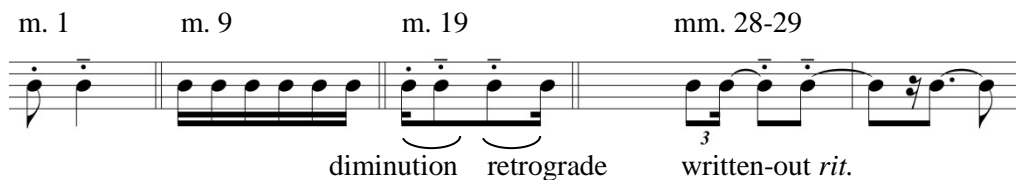
Berg's method of harmonic writing during this time was most likely influenced by his studies with Schoenberg, whose *Theory of Harmony* emphasizes the principle of harmonic motion by common tones.⁶² In "Schilflied" and other songs in the *Sieben frühe Lieder*, this common-tone technique allows Berg to maintain a sense of intuitive harmonic progression in the absence of clear goal-directed tonality; the common tones create a smooth motion from one chord to the next, though the progressions often take unexpected turns. In the same vein, DeVoto describes the "creeping chromaticism" found in much of Berg's music. He uses "Schilflied" as an example, noting that while the sense of tonal progression in the song is relatively weak, there is a "strong melodic-contrapuntal unity" that arises from symmetrical chromatic motion, or "wedge motion." For example, in mm. 9-12, he shows the ascending chromatic line in the bass and the simultaneous descending chromatic line in the vocal part.⁶³

⁶² See Part I: Introduction, *Analytical methodology and organization*.

⁶³ DeVoto, "Alban Berg and Creeping Chromaticism," 63.

These harmonic progressions that creep by half step or common tone suggest the evasive sounds and images of the forest at night described in “Schilflied.”

In a discussion of Berg’s early songs, Dave Headlam notes that “Berg’s mature compositions are characterized by rhythmic motives that exist independent of pitch realizations, and the origins of these motives are evident in the [early] songs.”⁶⁴ “Schilflied” is among the examples that he cites, and the development of rhythm in “Schilflied” is worthy of further analysis here. There are two primary rhythmic motives in this song (Examples 2.2 and 2.3). The first is a simple two-note ostinato which the piano plays almost continuously throughout the A



Example 2.2. Rhythmic motive in piano

section, an eighth note followed by a quarter note. The rhythmic changes in the piano part correspond to changes in the musical form; at m. 9, the beginning of the B section is marked by a shift to constant sixteenth-note motion in the piano part. The original eighth-quarter motive still occasionally appears within this sixteenth-note texture in the bass line. Beginning on the second beat of m. 19, in the bass, the sixteenth notes of the B section move seamlessly into the rhythm of the A' section: sixteenth-eighth-eighth-sixteenth. The steady sixteenth notes serve as a transition into this new rhythm, which, as Headlam also observes, is a transformation of the original motive. The eighth-quarter pattern is now rhythmically diminished into sixteenth-

⁶⁴ Headlam, *The Music of Alban Berg*, 19.

eighth, and then followed by a retrograde version of that same motive, eighth-sixteenth. Over the course of the song, the motivic gesture builds in rhythmic intensity, from the slower pace of the original motive, to the flowing quality of steady sixteenths in the B section, and then finally to the urgency of the syncopated motive in the A' section, mirroring the growing intensity in the text. Headlam also points out the written-out *rit.* at the end of the piece, another feature distinctive to Berg: the unusual rhythm that begins on the second beat of m. 28 and continues into m. 29 is a rhythmically stretched-out version of the syncopated sixteenth-eighth-eighth-sixteenth motive. The constancy of these rhythmic motives in the piano creates a hypnotic effect, evoking the dream-like atmosphere of the song.

On top of the piano's rhythmic pattern, the vocal line has its own rhythmic motive. It can be derived from a retrograde of the eighth-quarter motive, since its primary rhythm is the quarter-eighth motion (see Example 2.3), but it consists of a longer 2-bar phrase.



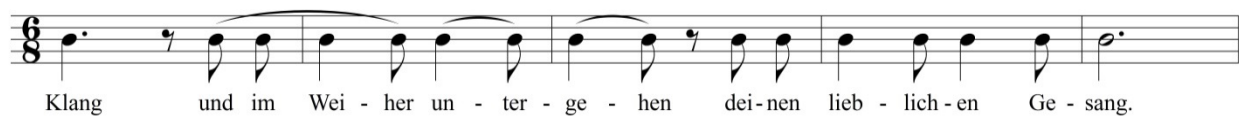
Example 2.3. Rhythmic motive in voice

While the rhythm of the vocal line remains similar throughout the song, the phrase lengths are varied by elongating and highlighting certain words. For example, rather than simply repeating the rhythmic motive of mm. 1-2, Berg elongates the word “Abendschein” (evening light) in mm. 4-5 by adding a dotted quarter note to its length. Similarly, “Mädchen” (maiden) in mm. 7-8 is extended by one eighth note (coinciding with the indicated *rit.*), and then followed by a breath mark to set the word apart. In the B section, the word “weinen” (weep) is both lengthened and

repeated to create a 5-bar phrase in the vocal part in mm. 14-18, bringing out the expressive impact of this word. These variations from the regularity of the main motive give the vocal line a dramatic impulse, and help the performers to shape each phrase differently.

The beat on which the vocal rhythm begins also varies. For example, in the A section, the rhythm begins with an anacrusis of two eighth notes, while in the B section, it is displaced by a half measure, beginning after the eighth-note rest on the downbeat (see Example 2.3). Later in the song, in the A' section, Berg uses this technique to create an unexpected phrasing in mm. 23-27. Examples 2.4a and b show how Berg begins the text “und im Weiher untergehen” (and drowning in the pond) earlier than one might expect, based on the rhythmic pattern that has been established in the poetry and the music.

m. 23



Example 2.4a. If Berg had continued the established rhythmic pattern, he might have composed this rhythm.

m. 23



Example 2.4b. Berg's rhythm

As a result, the music gives the impression of rushing into the phrase beginning at “und im Weiher untergehen,” and then stretching out at the significant word “lieblichen” (lovely). The second vocal phrase of this section is therefore a half measure longer than the first phrase. This

forward momentum in the vocal line at m. 23 is heightened by the denser texture in the piano part, and the elongated phrase finishes on a deceptive cadence in m. 27, a harmonic turn which adds to the expanded arc of this final phrase. Performers can use these rhythmic nuances to bring out the expressiveness of the phrasing.

As in several of the *Sieben frühe Lieder*, there is never a V-i cadence to the tonic (F minor) in “Schilflied,” even in this final phrase. The deceptive cadence in m. 27 is followed by a cadential passage which is plagal in quality: iv-ii^{ø7}-I, with the bass arpeggiation of D_b-B_b-G leading down to the final I chord. Berg uses this same progression at the end of “Die Nachtigall” and “Traumgekrönt.” Though tonal, the progression is used in place of the more traditional authentic cadence, de-emphasizing the importance of tonal direction in these songs.

Nikolas Lenau’s poem comes from a set of five poems entitled *Schilflieder*, or *Songs of the Reeds*. Since Berg was certainly familiar with and influenced by the music of Debussy, it seems possible that the image of reeds appealed to him, at least in part, because of their association with the story of Pan. While there is no indication that Lenau had this story in mind (he lived from 1802-1850, before Mallarmé’s 1865 poem that eventually inspired Debussy’s *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune*), Berg must have been familiar with the story through Debussy’s works, and perhaps he was drawn to this “Reed Song” partly because of that association. The story of Pan, a god who was half goat, half man, and was in love with the nymph Syrinx, also inspired Debussy in his piece for flute, *Syrinx*:

[Pan] so pestered her with his lustful attentions that she found escape only when she was changed into a bunch of reeds in the river...Pan made a flute from the reeds she had turned into and Syrinx is, in fact, Pan’s song to the nymph, which begins by calling for her, then wheedling and coaxing when she doesn’t appear, goes on to express the erotic intensity of his desire, declaims the passion in his heart, the ache of his loneliness, and ends utterly forlorn.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ James Galway, *Flute: Yehudi Menuhin music guides, no. 2* (London: Kahn and Averill, 1990), 166-67.

Whether or not Berg considered this association, Lenau's poem contains echoes of this story, with the lamenting lover hearing only the sound of the maiden's voice drowning in the pond, amid the rustling of the reeds. Musically, the influence of Debussy certainly is evident in the whole-tone harmonies which occur throughout the song.

"Schilflied" also hints at Wagner's famous *Tristan* progression (see Examples 2.5a-d). The progression in m. 4 from $B\flat^{\circ 7}$ to A^7 (which is repeated in m. 23) strongly resembles Wagner's progression from $F^{\circ 7}$ to E^7 , especially because Berg voices the first chord in the same way, and arrives at the same voicing by the end of the measure in the second chord (see Examples 2.5a-b).

$F^{\circ 7}$ E^7

Example 2.5a. Wagner, Prelude to *Tristan und Isolde* (1857-59), mm. 1-3.

$B\flat^{\circ 7}$ A^7

Example 2.5b. Berg, "Schilflied," m. 4



Example 2.5c. Wagner, Prelude to *Tristan und Isolde*, mm. 10-11.



Example 2.5d. Berg, “Schilflied,” m. 3

Examples 2.5c and 2.5d show how the chromatic motion in m. 3 of “Schilflied” is related to the progression in the second Wagner excerpt. These two examples are not exactly the same, but they have a similar quality of what DeVoto refers to as “creeping chromaticism.”⁶⁶ Again, Berg was influenced by Wagner, and whether or not he intended to quote him directly, these examples suggest his awareness of Wagner’s harmonies in composing this song. The story of Pan and Wagner’s *Tristan*, both references to tragic love, are reflected in the mood of the text and music of “Schilflied.”

⁶⁶ DeVoto, “Alban Berg and Creeping Chromaticism,” 63.

Performance Considerations

Performers can of course draw upon these references to Wagner and Pan in their dramatic interpretation of “Schilflied.” The song is full of expressive details that performers may wish to bring out. For example, the word “Mädchen” (maiden) in mm. 7-8 is emphasized on multiple levels. As noted above, the elongated rhythm and breath mark highlight the word. Additionally, on the second syllable of “Mädchen,” the voice sings a C over a D \flat -minor chord which changes to a B \flat ⁶/₅ chord on the following beat. It is important to sustain this C across the barline in order to hear the dissonance it creates with both chords, before resolving to the B \flat on “und.” This dissonance imparts tension to the word “Mädchen,” alluding to the protagonist’s despair. In addition to the phrasing and harmony, the *decrescendo* to *p* creates a negative accent, and the *rit.* allows the singer to linger on the word. Another instance of text-painting is the sudden appearance of 32nd- and 64th-notes in the piano part at mm. 11-12 on the text “rauscht das Rohr geheimnisvoll” (the reeds rustle mysteriously).

One of the most expressive moments in the piece is the return to the A' section. Measures 21-26 are parallel to mm. 2-7, with the same fundamental harmonic progression. However, in mm. 21-26, the voice and piano parts are exchanged from the beginning of the song.⁶⁷ The text here is “Und ich mein’, ich höre wehen/Leise deiner Stimme Klang” (and I think I hear floating/softly the sound of your voice), and one has the impression that the piano melody is the sound of the voice which then gets drowned in the thick texture of mm. 23-25. Combined with the rhythmic urgency of the syncopated piano motive and the accents and tremolos in mm. 20-21, this exchange of parts between voice and piano creates a striking dramatic effect.

⁶⁷ “Traumgekrönt” uses a similar reprise technique in mm. 14-18. In the A' section of “Nacht,” the piano also echoes the opening vocal melody, while in this case the voice sings an inversion of the melody.

From a practical standpoint, although “Schilflied” is certainly within the realm of tonality, its dense chromaticism presents certain challenges to performers. At times, the vocal melody traverses unusual intervals, such as the augmented fifth from A \flat to E in m. 4; in this case, it is important to hear the harmonic color change to the A 7 chord in advance so that the interval will be tuned correctly. Similarly, there are several chromatic vocal lines requiring careful attention to intonation, e.g., the descending chromatic line in m. 10, and the quick shift from F to F \sharp in m. 14 (supported by an F $_2^4$ moving to a D 7 chord). The chromatic vocal melody in mm. 21-23 also is difficult; it is helpful to match the B \flat with the piano B \flat on the first beat of mm. 22 (as the seventh in the C 7 chord) and then to listen for the D fitting into the G major harmony on the second beat of the same measure. As a general rule, it is useful to determine whether the vocal melody notes belong to the harmony or are non-harmonic tones suspended over the harmony.

As the preceding analysis suggests, the element of rhythm is central to the performance of “Schilflied.” Two recordings, those of mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter with pianist Bengt Forsberg⁶⁸ and soprano Diana Damrau with pianist Stephan Matthias Lademann,⁶⁹ offer two very different interpretations of the song, both in terms of tempo and rhythmic character, as well as phrasing and articulation. The differences in their expressive results further illuminate many of Berg’s compositional choices.

Perhaps the most immediately apparent difference in these two recordings is tempo. Otter and Forsberg perform the song quite slowly: their tempo certainly varies according to the indicated tempo changes and their use of *rubato*, but their overall rate is approximately eighth

⁶⁸ *Berg, Korngold, Strauss: Lieder*, Anne Sofie von Otter and Bengt Forsberg, Deutsche Grammophon (CD), 1994.

⁶⁹ *Liederabend*, Diana Damrau and Stephan Matthias Lademann, Orfeo (CD), 2006.

note=88, considerably slower than Berg's metronome marking of eighth note=ca 108. Although their slow pace conveys the dreamlike quality of the music and text, their performance lacks momentum, particularly at m. 9, where Berg marks "A tempo (II) aber etwas langsamer" (*a tempo* (II), but somewhat slower). Additionally, the *ritardandi* are generally not as discernable at a slower tempo. However, Otter creates a noticeable and expressive color change, as well as taking extra time, on the special word "Mädchen" in mm. 7-8.

Otter and Forsberg apparently intend a seamless quality in their performance, which they do successfully accomplish. Their smoothly executed transitions mirror Berg's compositional technique of subtly changing the rhythmic motives as the song progresses. Particularly effective is the transition in mm. 19-20 to the "tranquillo," where Forsberg plays a *legato decrescendo* through the ascending whole-tone scale in m. 19, leading almost imperceptibly into the final section of the song. Otter also sings with a uniformly *legato* tone throughout the song, using some subtle *portamento*, and her overall sound contributes to the slow, steady, smooth effect. In mm. 20-21, Forsberg plays the tremolos with a muted *pianissimo* sound, leading into the exchange of melody between voice and piano beginning in m. 21. He plays the melody at a soft dynamic but extremely clearly, suggesting the distant voice of the lover which is described in the poetry here.

Another feature of this performance that stands out is the articulation of the staccato markings in the piano in m. 26; Forsberg plays these with a light and distinctly detached sound, a significant contrast with the sustained legato of the rest of the song. These are the only staccato markings in the song, placed under the line "deine lieblichen Gesang" (your lovely song), specifically on the word "lieblichen"; the contrast in articulation suggests a youthful joy in the lover's song, perhaps reminiscent of a happier time.

Damrau and Lademann take a much quicker tempo, about eighth note=116, fairly close to Berg's ca. 108 marking. Again, their pace varies based on tempo changes and *rubato*, but their overall tempo is noticeably faster. As a result, their performance has more forward momentum, and the rhythmic impulse of the piece is more apparent. Berg's development of rhythmic motives and variations in rhythmic phrasing, outlined in the above analysis, are more evident in this performance, not simply because their tempo is faster, but because they perform with more rhythmic impetus. For example, Damrau's initial eighth notes in m. 1 are subtly faster, leading into the downbeat with more forward motion. At this tempo, relaxing slightly into the "etwas langsamer" at m. 9 feels more natural, and the *rit.* on "Mädchen" also stands out more. Longer vocal phrases are also possible at a quicker tempo, and Damrau connects the last two eighth notes of m. 3 through the beginning of m. 7 in one breath, creating an arc across the phrase mark in m. 5. Although a new slur begins in the vocal line in m. 5, on the B natural, there is no cadence here, and the piano slur connects across this beat; Damrau's phrasing allows the momentum of the music to continue to build as the word "Abendschein" (evening light) is lengthened and carries into the next line of poetry.

In addition to their quicker tempo, Damrau and Lademann also use more varied articulation than Otter and Forsberg. While Otter sings with a *legato* sound throughout, Damrau creates more contrast by bringing out certain consonants quite energetically. Particularly effective are the emphases on the "kl" of "klaget" (lament), expressing the longing of the lament (m. 14), and the "fl" and "st" of "flüstert" (whisper), evoking the airy sound of a whisper with the unvoiced consonants (m. 15). Damrau also sings a long "r" on "rauscht" (rustles) in m. 12, which, combined with the 32nd- and 64th-notes in the piano, gives the impression of rustling

reeds. Sometimes her strong consonants come across as accents, but Damrau still uses a legato sound for most of the song, especially on longer phrases such as mm. 4-7.

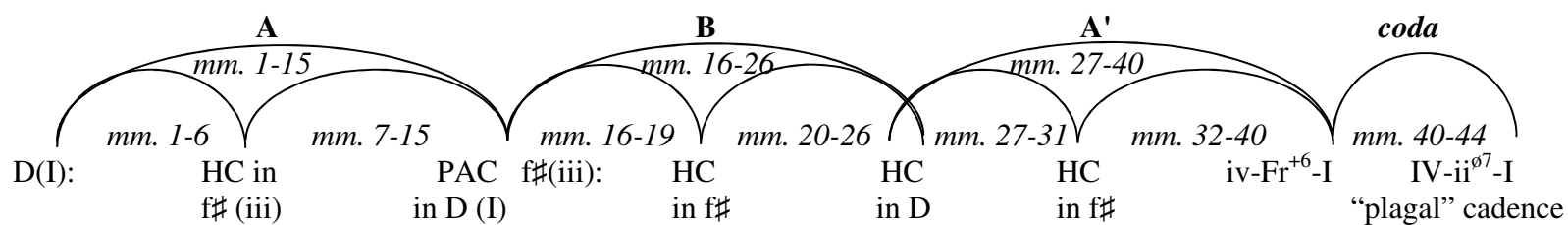
Lademann also plays with more nuanced articulation than Forsberg; he accents the tremolos in mm. 20-21 to support the accented Gs marked in the vocal line and the upper line of the piano. These accents create a heightened energy which leads up to the climactic moment in m. 23, where the rhythmic phrase rushes forward as noted in the above analysis. Damrau and Lademann continue this forward motion to the end of the song, which then feels like an inevitable conclusion. Both performances do take a slight amount of time for a breath after the first eighth note of m. 23; this breath is necessary for the singer, but Damrau skillfully breathes without losing the momentum at this dramatic moment. In m. 26, in contrast to the detached staccato of Forsberg's playing, Lademann plays the staccato more subtly and with more length, imbuing the "lieblichen Gesang" with a more muted, distant quality. This expressive moment stands out in the differing interpretations of both pianists.

The rhythmic impetus of Damrau and Lademann's performance creates an arc from beginning to end, with tempo changes that seem to arise naturally out of the drama of the song. As a result, their performance effectively conveys the longing and desire evoked by the Wagnerian harmonies and Lenau's poetry. Nevertheless, Otter and Forsberg also highlight significant features of the song; their sustained *legato* sound suggests the dreamy and mysterious scene of the poem, and the chromatic harmonic shifts and rhythmic transitions become seamlessly connected. Otter and Forsberg create a more atmospheric, impressionistic sound, while Damrau and Lademann create more drama and intensity. Both performances bring out various subtleties and expressive moments in the music of "Schilflied."

Chapter 3: “Die Nachtigall”

The nightingale is a recurring image throughout song literature: Brahms, Schubert, Schumann, Fauré, and Debussy are just a few of the composers who have set texts inspired by the nightingale. Both in its poetic subject and its musical language, Berg’s “Die Nachtigall” references the past—it is one of the most traditional-sounding songs of the *Sieben frühe Lieder*, clearly influenced by the *Lieder* of Brahms and Schumann. It is firmly rooted in tonality, has a clear A-B-A' structure, and features a lyricism characteristic of late 19th-century art song. Nevertheless, the seeds of Berg’s distinctive style are also present in “Die Nachtigall.” Motivic development, rhythmic development, and harmonic progressions moving by half step or common tone are techniques consistent with those employed in the less traditional songs, such as “Schilflied,” “Traumgekrönt,” and “Sommertage,” and also hint at Berg’s later works, which more fully explore the range of these techniques.

The form of the song is ABA', and each stanza constitutes a musical section, as seen in Figure 3.1. The structure of the song is organized with standard elements: cadences, key areas, texture, and rhythm. The A sections also share the same text, with a contrasting text in the B section. The phrase lengths, however, are asymmetrical, to fit the poem’s 5-line stanzas: the phrases correspond to two lines of text plus three lines. As a result, in each section a shorter musical phrase is followed by a longer phrase, as indicated in the form chart.



Zart bewegt

contrapuntal texture

wide vocal range, large leaps

Etwas langsamer

more chordal texture

middle vocal range,
smaller intervals

Tempo I

contrapuntal texture

wide vocal range, large leaps

Stanzas are grouped in 2 lines + 3 lines; vocal phrases have a similar pattern of shorter phrase followed by longer phrase:

48

6+9

4+6

6+9

mm. 1-6:

*Das macht, es hat die Nachtigall
Die ganze Nacht gesungen;*

mm. 7-15:

*Da sind von ihrem süßen Schall,
Da sind in Hall und Widerhall
Die Rosen aufgesprungen.*

mm. 16-19

*Sie war doch sonst ein wildes Blut,
Nun geht sie tief in Sinnen,*

mm. 20-26:

*Trägt in der Hand den Sommerhut
Und duldet still der Sonne Glut
Und weiß nicht, was beginnen.*

mm. 27-31

*Das macht, es hat die Nachtigall
Die ganze Nacht gesungen;*

mm. 32-40:

*Da sind von ihrem süßen Schall,
Da sind in Hall und Widerhall
Die Rosen aufgesprungen.*

Figure 3.1. Form chart of "Die Nachtigall"

Das macht, es hat die Nachtigall
Die ganze Nacht gesungen;
Da sind von ihrem süßen Schall,
Da sind in Hall und Widerhall
Die Rosen aufgesprungen.

Sie war doch sonst ein wildes Blut,
Nun geht sie tief in Sinnen,
Trägt in der Hand den Sommerhut
Und duldet still der Sonne Glut
Und weiß nicht, was beginnen.

Das macht, es hat die Nachtigall
Die ganze Nacht gesungen;
Da sind von ihrem süßen Schall,
Da sind in Hall und Widerhall
Die Rosen aufgesprungen.

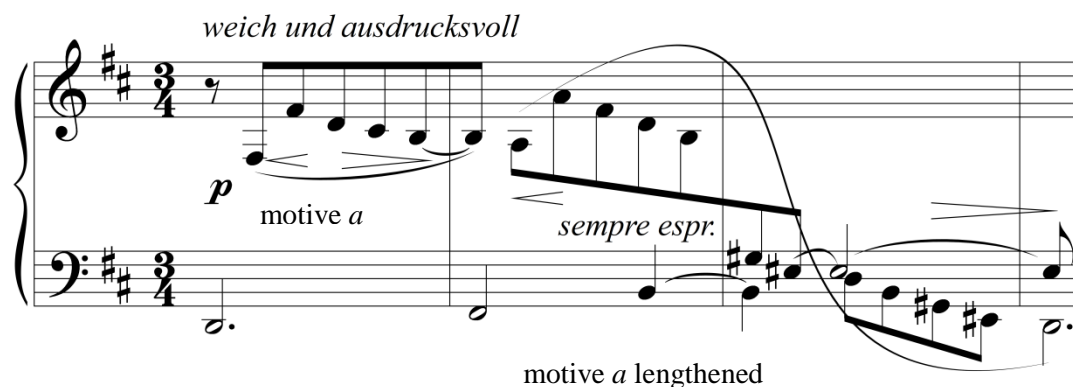
The Nightingale

It is because the nightingale
sang all through the night;
There from its sweet sound,
in echo and re-echo,
the roses sprang up.

She was once wild-blooded,
now she goes deep in thought,
carries in her hand her summer hat
and endures silently the sun's heat
and knows not what to do.

It is because the nightingale
sang all through the night;
There from its sweet sound,
in echo and re-echo,
the roses sprang up.

Though “Die Nachtigall” does not have the dense and complex texture of “Traumgekrönt” or “Sommertage,” motivic gestures feature prominently in the song. The opening eighth-note piano motive, shown in Example 3.1 (motive *a*), recurs throughout the A and A' sections of the song. As DeVoto remarks, “That the motive is mostly triadic in structure does not prevent its being ingeniously bent, echoed, and overlapped in a continuously moving texture that effectively complements the expressive vocal line.”⁷⁰



Example 3.1. Motive a , mm. 1-4

⁷⁰ DeVoto, "Berg the Composer of Songs," 39.

A slur marks each motivic entrance. Motive *a* always begins on an offbeat, and maintains a distinct contour; though the exact intervals are varied, the motive begins with a leap up of an octave or more, and then descends through an arpeggiation with embellishments. The length of the motive also is varied, as well as the beat on which it begins. As shown in Example 3.1, the first five notes of the right hand piano part (F \sharp -F \sharp -D-C \sharp -B) form the first instance of motive *a*, and in the following two measures, the length of the motive is extended as the line continues into the bass range. In mm. 1-7, motive *a* begins on the second half of beat one. In m. 7, however, the piano begins motive *a* on the second half of beat two (see Example 3.2). A breath mark in the piano draws attention to this rhythmic shift, indicating that the pianist should articulate a new phrase here. In this same measure, the voice sings a similar motive (motive *a'*) beginning on the second half of beat one, so that the parts echo each other, with the piano starting one beat later. The voice and piano continue to overlap rhythmically through m. 10, as shown in Ex. 3.2. In m. 9, a breath mark is indicated in the vocal line, probably to accentuate the interplay between

The image shows a musical score for a voice and piano duet. The top staff is the vocal line, and the bottom two staves are the piano accompaniment. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line has a blue slur labeled 'motive a'' spanning measures 7, 8, and 9. The piano part has a 'p' (piano) dynamic marking in measure 7, a breath mark in measure 8, and 'mp' (mezzo-piano) and 'mf' (mezzo-forte) dynamic markings in measures 9 and 10 respectively. The lyrics are: 'da sind von ih-rem sü - ßen Schall, da sind in Hall und Wi - der - hall die'.

Example 3.2. Voice and piano motives overlap rhythmically, mm. 7-11

motivic entrances, since the singer's breaths are not marked elsewhere in the song. In mm. 12-14, the overlapping of motives occurs within the piano part (slurs again indicate each entrance) while the voice sails above, suspended over the moving eighths. This constant counterpoint, both between the voice and piano and within the piano part, suggests the "echo and re-echo" of the poem.

In the A sections, the contour of the vocal line also reflects the poetry: the voice sings large leaps over a wide vocal range, suggestive of the longing and passion of the nightingale's song, described in the first and last stanzas. At the same time, these highly expressive gestures are an integral part of the song's structure. Each sub-phrase in the voice leaps up to a higher note, usually sustained for two beats, beginning in m. 3 with D, C# in m. 5 (a step lower), then to E (m. 9), G (m. 10), and finally A (m. 12). As shown in Example 3.2, motive *a'* begins in the vocal line in m. 7. This melody is related to motive *a* in the piano, beginning with a series of eighth notes on the second half of beat one, and the initial large upward leap. Motive *a'* then takes on a more operatic character by incorporating leaps up to sustained high notes, beginning with the leap of a minor seventh from F# to E in mm. 8-9. The voice repeats motive *a'* in a sequential passage; in m. 9 the vocal line contains almost the same intervallic contour, and the text itself forms an echo by repeating the words "da sind." In m. 11, the piano takes over the beginning of motive *a'* with the A-E-C-B-D# (all marked with *tenuto* in the score) as the voice sustains the half note E. The dramatic momentum culminates as voice and piano come together for the first time on the high A, in an expressive gesture which continues to the cadence in m. 15.

The nightingale's song is known for its "mournful character,"⁷¹ and "Die Nachtigall" follows in this tradition. In Verlaine's poem "En Sourdine," a text set by both Fauré and

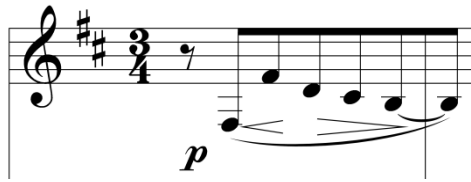
⁷¹ Orlando A. Mansfield, "The Cuckoo and Nightingale in Music," *The Musical Quarterly* 7, no. 2 (1921): 271-272.

Debussy, the nightingale's song is described as "voix de notre désespoir" (voice of our despair). The melodic gestures in the A sections of "Die Nachtigall" similarly evoke the despair of the nightingale's song, with their large dramatic intervals and the increasing intensity of the motivic imitation. The continuity of motive *a* in the piano also suggests the nightingale singing "all through the night": the motive flows across the bar lines at varying lengths, and the overlapping of motivic entrances suggests the perpetual quality of the nightingale's song. The irregular phrase lengths (noted in the form chart) also contribute to the overall sense of long, unpredictable melodies which wander over the regular pulse of the bass notes. In the piano part, the chromatic non-harmonic tones in motive *a*—such as the A# leading to B in m. 5—further emphasize the longing expressed in the poetry.

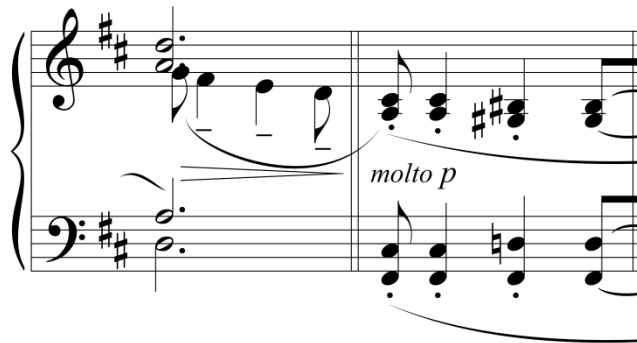
The B section is distinct from the A sections both in its key (F# minor, iii of D major), its more chordal texture, its regular rhythmic pattern in the accompaniment, and the more speech-like rhythms of the vocal line, in contrast to the longer, more sustained lines in the A sections. The vocal range also changes; while the A section contains large leaps across the low and high registers of the voice, the B section is primarily in the middle voice, reflecting the more somber tone of the poetry, "Nun geht sie tief in Sinnen" (now she goes deep in thought).

One feature linking the A and B sections is the tendency toward rhythmic impetus on the offbeats. Example 3.3 illustrates the prominent rhythms in each section, and the transition in m. 15 between the A and B sections also emphasizes this rhythmic relationship. The motion on the off-beats almost becomes its own motive, particularly in the B section; here, the rhythmic repetition in the piano recalls the rhythmic impulse in "Schilflied" and creates a sense of anxiety.

motive *a*, m. 1



transition to B section, m. 15 chordal rhythm in B section, m. 16



Example 3.3. Rhythmic relationships

The chordal accompaniment in the B section, in addition to its rhythmic impulse, also contains the “chromatic creeping” seen in “Schilflied” and other pieces by Berg. The chords proceed by semitone voice leading, resulting in quick harmonic shifts, such as the change in quality from major to minor in m. 20 (F# major to F# minor) and mm. 21-22 (A major to A minor). These harmonic shifts work together with the insistent rhythm to suggest the shifting and uncertain emotions in the poetry: “Sie war doch sonst ein wildes Blut,/Nun geht sie tief in Sinnen,/...Und weiß nicht, was beginnen” (“She was once wild-blooded,/now she goes deep in thought,/...and knows not what to do”). In mm. 25-27, this “creeping” harmonic motion carries the music back to the A' section, with the bass line alternating between A and B \flat before moving stepwise down to G and then F# in m. 27 (supporting the V $_2^4$ -I 6 cadence).

Also of significance in the B section are the miniature motives that Berg has placed in the piano, on top of the chordal texture. Berg indicates that the pianist should bring out these melodies with the instruction “*zart betont*” (delicately/softly accented), and “*ebenso*” (in exactly the same way) for subsequent entrances. These melodies share the same basic shape: two leaps up of thirds or fourths, followed by descending half steps. The first instance of this motive in m. 17 also echoes the vocal line on the text “*wildes Blut*” (wild-blooded): the voice sings a descending F#-minor arpeggio, followed immediately by the ascending F#-minor arpeggio that begins the piano motive. Because the piano enters just as the voice finishes, overlapping on beat two, we hear the piano line clearly as an inversion of the vocal line (see Example 3.4).

The image shows a musical score for Example 3.4. It consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line with a single melodic line. The middle and bottom staves are piano accompaniment, showing a chordal texture with arpeggiated figures. The vocal line has the lyrics "wil-des Blut; nun" written below it. The piano accompaniment has the instruction "zart betont" written below it. The vocal line features a descending arpeggio followed by an ascending arpeggio. The piano accompaniment features a descending arpeggio followed by an ascending arpeggio, which is an inversion of the vocal line.

Example 3.4. Vocal line arpeggio echoed in inversion by piano motive, m. 17

The A' section contains a few variations from the opening. The return to the A' music is heard in relation to the drama and musical color that develop in the B section, and the transitional music in mm. 25-26 also creates a different rhythmic and harmonic context out of which the A'

section material reappears. Motive *a* is used to transition back to the A' section, but the $\frac{4}{4}$ bar in m. 26 gives the sense of time being suspended over the oscillating harmonies until the resolution to D major in m. 27. The section proceeds otherwise in almost exactly the same manner, until the cadential passage beginning in m. 38.

Unlike the conventional progression concluding section A in mm. 13-15, the end of the A' section leads to more remote harmonies: beginning on beat 3 of m. 38, the progression differs from the parallel passage in the A section. In mm. 13-15 we hear ii^7-V^7-I ; in mm. 38-40, the harmonies are $ii^7-Ger^{+6}-vi_4^6-iv-Fr^{+6}-I$ (see Example 3.5). These chords move by common tone, as in “Schilflied,” and the French augmented sixth chord substitutes as a dominant harmony here.

ii^7 Ger^{+6} vi_4^6 iv Fr^{+6} I

Example 3.5. Approach to cadence, mm. 38-40

The V^7 chord in m. 14 contains B_b as a non-harmonic tone, but in m. 39 the B_b becomes a chord tone in the Fr^{+6} chord. For performers, the change in harmonic color through this passage

motivates a different interpretation of the repetition of text and music; the drama of the song leads to this more harmonically complex ending, creating a greater intensity here than at the end of the A section.

In the coda in mm. 40-42, several successive entrances of motive *a* overlap in the piano part, which gives the impression of an unraveling. The 4-3 suspension in m. 43 also echoes the 4-3 suspension on the word “Rosen” in the vocal line in mm. 12-13 and mm. 37-38, leaving a final suggestion of the “echo and re-echo” of the poem.

In “Die Nachtigall,” we clearly see Berg’s roots in a tonal musical language and lyricism which he never completely leaves behind, even in his last works. At the same time, the songs composed a couple of years later, such as “Traumgekrönt” and “Sommertage,” can inform our interpretation and understanding of the earlier songs, bringing the interplay of melodic and rhythmic motives to the foreground, as well as distinctive features of Berg’s harmonic language. “Die Nachtigall,” with its directly expressive quality, probably will continue to be one of Berg’s most frequently performed songs.

Performance Considerations

Recordings by soprano Barbara Bonney with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (conducted by Riccardo Chailly)⁷² and soprano Mitsuko Shirai with pianist Hartmut Holl⁷³ reveal some of the possibilities for *rubato*, phrasing, dynamics, tempo, and overall expression in “Die Nachtigall.” Both performances have an operatic character: the drama is built into the

⁷² *Mahler 4/Berg: Seven Early Songs*, Barbara Bonney and Riccardo Chailly, with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Decca Import (CD), 1999.

⁷³ *Alban Berg: Lieder, 1900-1925*, Mitsuko Shirai and Hartmut Holl, Capriccio (CD), 1994.

lyricism and extensive range of the vocal line, as well as the expressive, wandering melodies of the accompaniment.

Barbara Bonney sings with a bright and resonant tone, using *portamento* for expressive purposes at several points. Bonney's performance is full of nuanced details which highlight the subtleties within Berg's music. At the beginning of the song, Bonney's tempo is fairly steady, though not without a slight amount of *rubato*. She and the orchestra significantly increase the *rubato* in mm. 4-6, where Berg marks "etwas zögernd" (somewhat hesitantly) on the text "die ganze Nacht gesungen" (sang all through the night); they slow down and linger on this phrase before pushing forward at the *a tempo* in m. 7. Bonney handles the upwards intervals in mm. 7-12 gracefully; she uses a slight crescendo on the high G of "Widerhall" in m. 10, and similarly allows her sound to bloom over the course of the sustained high A in m. 12, so that these high pitches, while dramatic, are not the goals of the phrase; we hear the progressive intensity of the melodic line (and motivic imitation) leading towards the cadence in m. 15.

In the B section, Bonney brings out several features of the text. In m. 17, she sings "wildes Blut" (wild-blooded) with a *portamento* over the top F#, and takes a slight amount of extra time over this interval as well, suggesting a wild and free character. For the following contrasting image, "nun geht sie tief in Sinnen" (now she goes deep in thought), she uses a darker tone and steadier tempo; the vocal melody, which descends to a low C#, enhances this change in timbre. Bonney also elongates the "mm" in "Sommerhut" (m. 21) and the "nn" in "Sonne" (m. 23), accentuating the echo created in the poetry with these similar-sounding words; the melodic sequence here further draws our attention to the parallel sound in the text, with a similar rhythm and melodic gesture for "trägt in der Hand den Sommerhut" (carries in her hand her summer hat) and "und duldet still der Sonne Glut" (and endures silently the sun's heat).

One of the challenges in any A-B-A(') form is to vary the return to the A material. Bonney uses phrasing and dynamics to convey a new character in the A' section. At the beginning of the song, she breathes after the word “Nachtigall” in m. 3, while in the A' section, she connects through “Nachtigall” (m. 29) into the “etwas zögernd,” and then breathes after “Nacht” in m. 30. Bonney also sings this line (“die ganze Nacht gesungen”) more softly than she does in the A section, creating a more introspective mood. Additionally, she approaches the final cadence differently than the cadence in m. 15. While she connects “die Rosen aufgesprungen” (mm. 11-15) in one breath in the A section, she breathes after “Rosen” (m. 38) in the A' section. Taking a breath here enables her to sing more fully to the very end of the final note, and also allows for more time to approach the dramatic final cadence, with its denser, more chromatic harmonic progression. Bonney sings the high A of “Rosen” (m. 37) with more immediate intensity than earlier in the song; in the A section, she allows the sound to grow more gradually on the high A, and sings smoothly through “aufgesprungen,” which flows smoothly into the B section.

In the orchestrated version of the *Sieben frühe Lieder*, “Die Nachtigall” is scored for strings only, and this timbre may influence both the singer’s and pianist’s choices of tone color in the piano version as well. In this recording with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the strings seem to mellifluously follow and echo the melody of the singer. The strings create a smooth sound over the large intervals of the melodic lines in the accompaniment, and by distributing single piano lines among several different instruments, Berg accentuates the song’s motivic texture. Though the piano naturally sounds somewhat less *legato* and more percussive than strings, pianists can nevertheless use the tone color of the interwoven string lines as a model for their overall sound “Die Nachtigall.”

Mitsuko Shirai also performs “Die Nachtigall” with an operatic sense of drama and a full, lyrical sound. Her tone is notably much darker in quality than Bonney’s, but aside from vocal timbre, the most distinct difference in her performance is the extent to which she and pianist Hartmut Holl use *rubato*. Their performance immediately has a sense of rhythmic freedom, as Holl sustains the first bass note slightly before moving to the eighth-note motive in m. 1. They push through the first phrase and then quite noticeably take time at the “etwas zögernd.” In general, they alternately move forward and then stretch the tempo in their performance, perhaps inspired by the instruction of “weich und ausdrucksvoll” (softly and expressively).

Shirai, like Bonney, uses *portamento* throughout the song, in a manner appropriate to its operatic and Romantic style. Shirai sings with a more immediately full tone on the upward leaps in mm. 7-12 than Bonney does, approaching each successive leap with a steadily increasing intensity. She and Holl stretch the time on the word “die” before the high A on “Rosen,” which helps to prepare the high point of the phrase both dramatically and musically.

In the B section, Shirai and Holl begin with a steadier, slower tempo, which contrasts with the freely moving phrases of the A sections. Beginning in m. 20, they gradually gain in momentum to the end of the section, and take a much more significant *accelerando* in mm. 25-26 (as marked in the score) than Bonney and Chailly do, back to the A' music. Holl also plays the coda with the “schwungvoll” (sweeping) quality specified in the music, rushing towards the end. Overall, the rhythmic unsteadiness of their performance reflects the angst of the poetry, as well as the call of the nightingale wandering unpredictably through the night. Holl plays the melodies in the piano line expressively, with a free, improvised quality.

Shirai varies the A' section primarily by taking slightly more *rubato* at the “etwas zögernd,” and a somewhat softer dynamic. Her phrasing of the final section is overall similar to

that of the A section; like Bonney, however, she breathes before “aufgesprungen” in m. 38, but not in m. 13. Again, this breath in m. 38 works well to set up the final cadence. The word “aufgesprungen” is also set differently at the end of the song; it ends on A in mm. 14-15, propelling the music forward, but makes a more final resolution to the tonic D in m. 40.

Each of these performances captures the drama inherent in “Die Nachtigall.” Shirai and Holl place more emphasis on the push and pull of the tempo, using *rubato* to reflect the longing and unfulfilled desires suggested by the poetry. The instability of their tempo also highlights the song’s irregular and unpredictable phrase lengths. Bonney and Chailly, on the other hand, create more of the drama with large-scale contrast between sections, differences in phrasing, and use of *rubato* in specific places rather than throughout the entire song. Bonney’s singing also reflects more of the nuances of the text and music; she uses tone color, dynamics, *portamento*, and diction to bring the sound and meaning of the words to the forefront. Through the details of Bonney’s performance with the Royal Conertgebouw Orchestra, Berg’s own attention to detail and form becomes more evident; we hear a clear progression of the expressive motivic gestures which gain in momentum to the final chord, and the building intensity of the poetry which is communicated through this lyrical music.

Chapter 4: “Traumgekrönt”

“Traumgekrönt,” along with “Nacht” and “Sommertage,” is one of the more forward-looking songs of the *Sieben frühe Lieder*. Although the key signature indicates G minor, the piece wanders through various harmonic areas without a strong sense of cadence in tonic, and chromaticism and whole-tone sonorities color many of the chords; this harmonic ambiguity echoes modernist poet Rilke’s dream-like text. While harmonic progressions certainly contribute to the structure of the song, motivic development is equally important. The dense texture arising from the motivic structure gives “Traumgekrönt” a sound that foreshadows Berg’s later works. Schoenberg’s idea of a motivically-based compositional style, which he described as *Grundgestalt* or developing variation, probably influenced Berg in this song, as well as in “Sommertage.”⁷⁴

As outlined in the following form chart (Figure 4.1), “Traumgekrönt” has two parallel sections (A and A'), and two subdivisions within each of the larger sections (a and b, a' and b'). This formal design aligns with the structure of the text; the first stanza is set in the A section, and the second in A'. The subsections a and a' correspond to the first half of each stanza, and b and b' the second half, as indicated below. The formal divisions are demarcated by harmonic and textural shifts, as well as cadences. Tempo markings also reinforce the structure, with a *rit.* at the end of each section and *a tempo* as each new section begins.

⁷⁴ See discussion of *Grundgestalt* and developing variation in Part I: Introduction, *Analytical methodology and organization*.

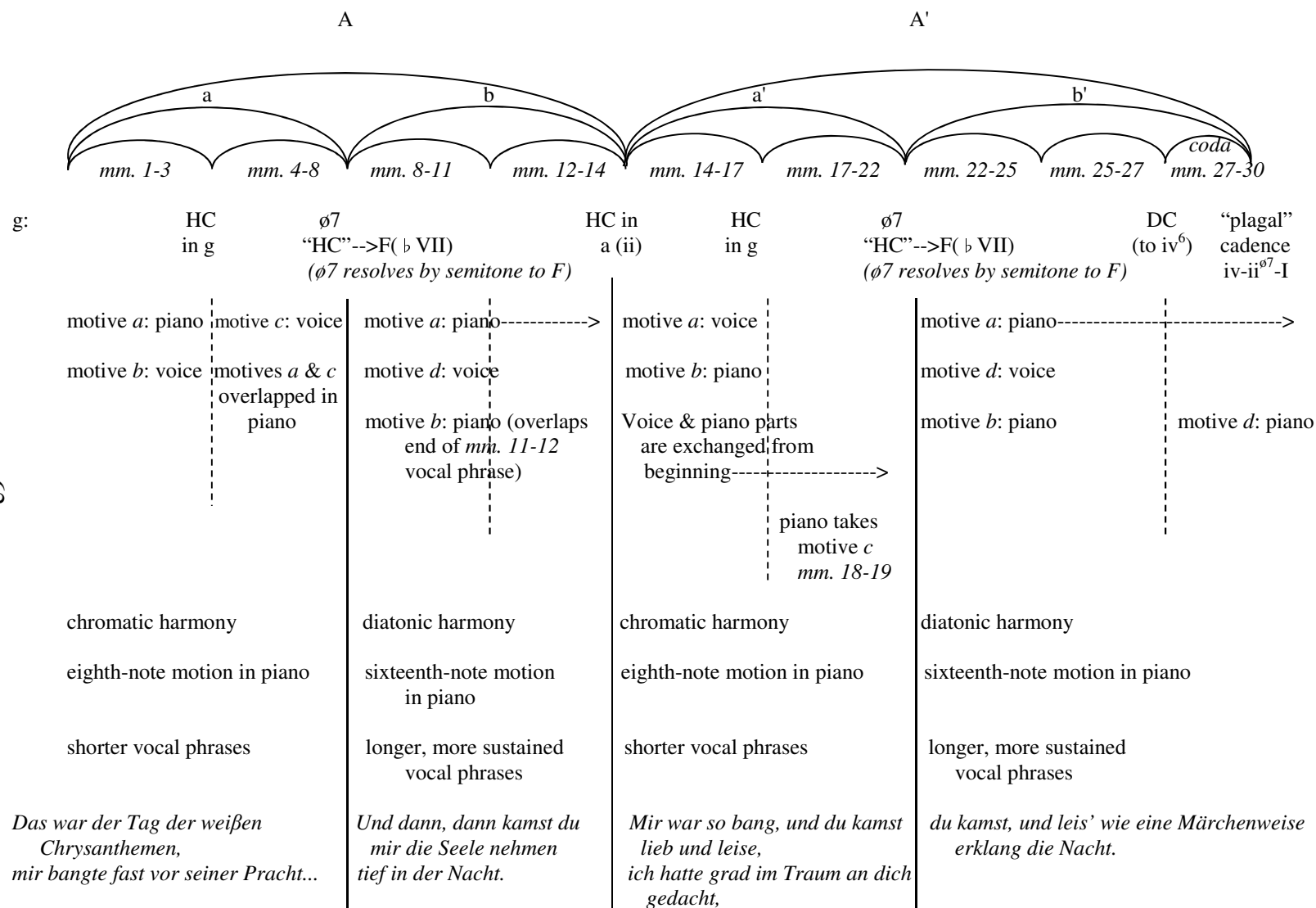


Figure 4.1. Form chart of "Traumgekrönt"

Traumgekrönt (Rainer Maria Rilke)

A a Das war der Tag der weißen Chrysanthemen,
mir bangte fast vor seiner Pracht...
b Und dann, dann kamst du mir die Seele nehmen
tief in der Nacht.

A' a' Mir war so bang, und du kamst lieb und leise,
ich hatte grad im Traum an dich gedacht,
b' du kamst, und leis' wie eine Märchenweise
erklang die Nacht.

Dream-crowned

That was the day of white chrysanthemums,
its splendor made me feel almost afraid...
And then you came to take my soul from me
at dead of night.

I was so afraid, yet you came sweetly, softly,
I had been thinking of you in my dreams,
you came, and soft as a fairy tune
the night sounded.

The primary motives in “Traumgekrönt,” shown in Examples 4.1-4.4, are transposed, transformed, and combined to create a dense texture within a somewhat tonal framework. The opening measures introduce most of the motivic material that is developed throughout the song. The initial harmony and melody do not indicate any clear tonality; no triadic harmony occurs until the E \flat major chord in m. 2. Instead, the song opens with the melodic motive F \flat -E \flat -B \flat -A in the piano, which immediately draws us into the sound world of the song. This melody (motive *a*, Example 4.1) is the most prevalent motive in “Traumgekrönt.” The symmetrical structure of the motive points to Berg’s use of symmetry in his later works—motive *a* spans a fifth between E \flat and B \flat , with F \flat a half step above E \flat , and A a half step below B \flat . The interval of a half step helps obscure tonality in these opening measures, and throughout the song. The ambiguity of this initial melody, combined with the indicated *crescendo-decrescendo* and *poco espr.*, suggests a mysterious and ineffable quality, which, as further analysis will reveal, is subsequently defined by the voice in m. 15.

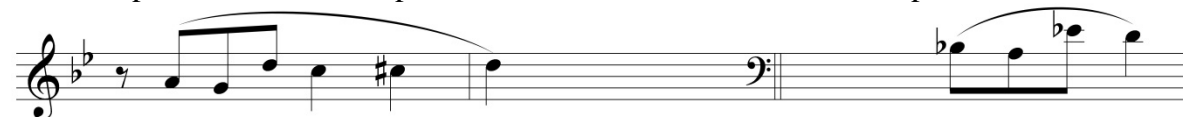
The opening vocal line (mm. 1-5) is also central to the song. In the development of motivic material, it is segmented into two shorter melodies: mm. 1-3 (motive *b*, Example 4.2) and mm. 3-5 (motive *c*, Example 4.3). Motive *d* (Example 4.4) is introduced slightly later, at the beginning of the *b* section, in the vocal line (mm. 8-11). Also emphasized throughout the song (and related to the half steps in motive *a*) is bass motion by half step, beginning in mm. 2-7 with

the chromatic line descending from E \flat to B \flat . In m. 7, the entrance of motive *a* on B \flat simultaneously creates a continuation of this chromatic descent down to the A \flat on beat 3.

motive *a*, mm. 0-1

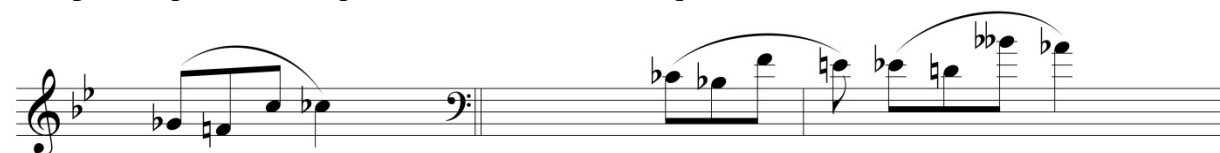


whole steps instead of half steps, mm. 2-3

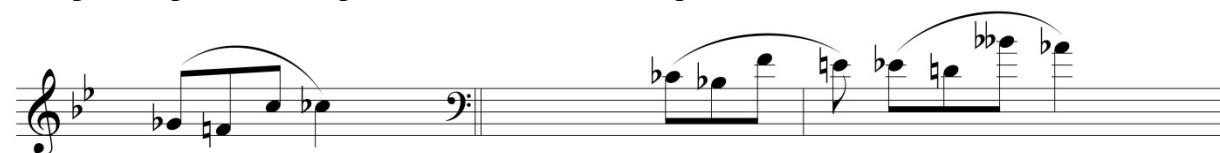


spans a tritone, m. 3

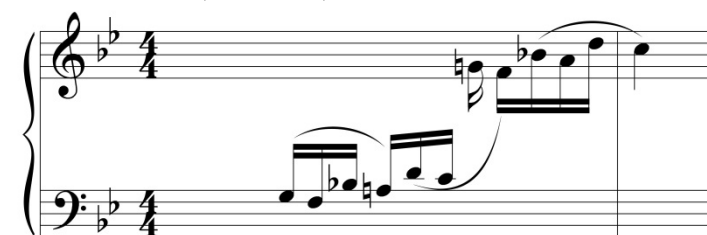
transposed up a whole step, m. 4



in quicker succession, mm. 5-6



sixteenth notes, diatonic, m. 8



motive *a* transformed to descending half-step gesture, m. 13



the only occurrence of voice singing motive *a*, echoing mm. 1-3 in piano, mm. 15-17



Example 4.1. Motive *a* and transformations

motive *b*, mm. 1-3



second half of motive *b*, mm. 3-4



intervals altered, same rhythm and contour, mm. 8-11



rhythmic echo, m. 28



Example 4.2. Motive *b* and transformations

motive *c*, mm. 3-5

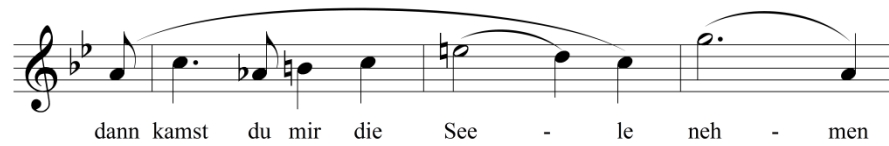


intervals altered, mm. 5-7



Example 4.3. Motive *c* and transformations

motive *d*, mm. 8-11



ending altered, mm. 22-24



piano, mm. 27-29, ends on highest note



Example 4.4. Motive *d* and transformations

All of these motives recur frequently throughout the song, with slight variations: transposition, alteration of intervals, changes of register, fragmentation, and diminution. Each motivic occurrence is marked with a slur, suggesting that a performance should reflect the shape of the motivic gestures, as well as the ways in which they interact. Examples 4.1-4.4 show some transformations of each motive as the song progresses. In addition to being modified, the motives also overlap with one another vertically, creating the dense contrapuntal texture of the song (see mm. 5-11, Example 4.5). For example, in mm. 5-8, motives *a* and *c* are overlapped in the piano part. In mm. 8-11, motive *b* in the piano right hand occurs simultaneously with motive *d* in the vocal line, while the bass piano line plays a diatonic transformation of motive *a* in sixteenth notes. In mm. 11-12, motive *b* appears in the bass of the piano underneath the sixteenth-note texture of motive *a*, overlapping with the end of the vocal phrase in m. 11 (indicated by a breath mark).

poco accel. _ _ _ _ _ rit. _ _ _ (molto) _ a tempo

sei - ner Pracht... **motive c** *meno p*

molto espr. *l.H.* *mf* **motive a** *espr.*

motive d *cresc.*

p Und dann, dann kamst du mir die

motive b *espr.* *pp* **motive a** **motive a**

poco accel. _ _ _

See - - - le neh - - - - men

pp **motive b (continues into m. 12)** *p* *espr.*

Example 4.5. Motivic overlap and texture, mm. 5-11

Rilke's poetry is psychologically layered and complex, and the overlapping and transformation of motives evoke this aspect of the poetry. The reappearance of motives in different registers and harmonic contexts, particularly when they are more hidden within the texture, gives the impression of ideas or emotions experienced on a subconscious level. Particularly striking is the exchange of voice and piano lines in m. 15; the parts are reversed from the parallel music in mm. 1-8, creating a haunting echo of the beginning of the song (similar to the reprise in "Schilflied"). This return to the *a'* material in m. 15 is the only instance of the voice singing motive *a*, despite the prevalence of this motive throughout the piano part. The motive is sung to the text "Mir war so bang" (I was so afraid), and it seems that the singer is now expressing the anxiety suggested by the piano part in the opening measures. In mm. 15 and 16 of the piano part, the overlapping entrances of motive *b* recall the vocal line from the beginning of the song, and add another layer of contrapuntal texture (see Example 4.6).

The image shows a musical score for measures 15-16. The top staff is the voice part, and the bottom two staves are the piano part. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The voice part starts with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, and a half note D4. This is labeled 'motive a' with a dynamic of *p*. In measure 16, the voice part starts with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, and a half note D4. This is also labeled 'motive a' with a dynamic of *mp*. The piano part starts with a half note G3, followed by a quarter note F#3, a quarter note E3, and a half note D3. This is labeled 'motive b' with a dynamic of *pp*. In measure 16, the piano part starts with a half note G3, followed by a quarter note F#3, a quarter note E3, and a half note D3. This is also labeled 'motive b' with a dynamic of *p*. The text 'Mir war so bang, und du kamst lieb und' is written below the voice staff. The tempo is marked 'a tempo' and the expression is marked 'poco espr.'.

Example 4.6. Voice and piano parts exchanged, mm. 15-16

The most frequently used motive in “Traumgekrönt” is motive *a*, which in its initial form is F \flat -E \flat -B \flat -A, a symmetrical motive that moves down a minor second, up a perfect fifth, and back down a minor second. Throughout the song, this motive appears in its original form and pitch level, and also is transposed, intervallically altered, and rhythmically diminished. Its basic contour remains the same, but generally, motive *a* is more chromatic in the a subsections, and more diatonic in the b subsections. As seen in Example 4.1, it is also compressed into sixteenth notes in the b sections. This change in character of the primary motive reflects the transformation of emotions expressed in the poetry. The first half of each stanza conveys fear: “mir bangte fast vor seiner Pracht” (I was almost afraid of its splendour) and “mir war so bang” (I was so afraid). The darker, more chromatic color in the a subsections evokes this anxiety, accentuated by the *poco accelerando* on “mir bangte fast vor seiner Pracht.” The second half of each stanza expresses a lighter, more ethereal quality, though still enigmatic: “dann kamst du mir die Seele nehmen” (you came to take my soul) and “du kamst, und leis’ wie eine Märchenweise/erklang die Nacht” (you came, and soft as a fairy tune sounded the night). The music is transformed with brighter, more triadic harmonies, shimmering *pp* sixteenth notes in the piano, and a more lyrical vocal line.

While motivic development is central to this song, harmonic structure also plays a significant role in “Traumgekrönt.” At the outset, the tonality is masked by the opening piano melody (motive *a*), which, because of its symmetrical structure and half-step motion, does not suggest any triadic harmony. The sonorities following in m. 1 belong to a whole-tone collection, further extending the tonal uncertainty. More specifically, the pitches in m. 1 form a French augmented sixth chord, which resolves to the E \flat chord in m. 2, the first triadic harmony we hear. By the end of the measure, the E \flat chord takes on its own augmented sixth, leading to a

half cadence in G minor in m. 3. While this cadence momentarily implies the key of G minor, the song then proceeds to more remote harmonies; in fact, the sonorities in mm. 4-8 arise more from the counterpoint between overlapping motives than from a clear harmonic progression. The descending chromatic line in mm. 2-7 of the bass piano part further contributes to the sense of disorientation; it begins on E \flat and continues to descend until there is no harmonic center, finally arriving at the whole-tone chord on the downbeat of m. 8, which immediately shifts to a half-diminished seventh chord (B \flat -D \flat -E-G \sharp). This sonority is the culmination of the chaos which precedes it; at the same time, its placement at the end of the section and the slight pause marked after it give it the quality of a half cadence about to resolve. Once we hear the F major that follows, the chord in m. 8 can be heard as functioning as a dominant harmony.⁷⁵

This F-major chord marks the beginning of the b subsection (mm. 8-14). The motives are altered to become more diatonic, and the treble piano part plays triadic harmonies. Despite the shift to a more tonal language, the tonic key of G minor is not any more clearly indicated here than it was in the a section; the b section ends with a half cadence in A minor (ii). This E major chord shifts by semitone voice leading to the French augmented sixth sonority that begins the a' section in m. 15. Underneath this transition, the bass piano again plays a chromatic line, overlapping with part of motive *b*, beginning with the B at the end of m. 11, and ascending to the F in m. 15. Beginning on beat three of m. 12, the vocal line also descends by half step, creating a symmetrical motion inwards to the E and G \sharp of the E major half cadence in m. 13, an example of the “wedge shape” seen frequently in Berg's work.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ This chord occurs in other post-Romantic music, including Richard Strauss's tone poem, *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*, in mm. 47-48 (at the same pitch level as in “Traumgekrönt”). For further discussion of similar half-diminished chords, see Richard Bass's article “Half-Diminished Functions and Transformations in Late Romantic Music” (*Music Theory Spectrum* 23, no. 1, Spring 2001), particularly Example 2 on p. 44.

⁷⁶ DeVoto, “Alban Berg and Creeping Chromaticism,” 63.

The harmony in the second half of the song (beginning with m. 15) is parallel to the first half, with the only significant difference occurring in the closing phrase, mm. 26-30. At the end of m. 26 (in contrast to the parallel m. 12), a V chord is outlined in the left-hand piano part—this A-F \sharp -D arpeggiation is also part of motive *b*. However, rather than resolving to i, the V chord proceeds to a first-inversion iv chord in a deceptive cadence. The vocal line here moves up a seventh, from A at the end of m. 26 up to G in m. 27, rather than simply descending in stepwise motion. This large leap implies reaching for an otherworldly realm rather than coming to rest, and the unresolved harmony underneath creates a sense of being suspended in time and space. The high G in m. 27 also recalls m. 11; for the singer, there is an echo here of the earlier phrase, which ascends to the same high G on the word “nehmen” (take), from the phrase “kamst du mir die Seele nehmen” (you came to take my soul). This text too alludes to the otherworldly. The vocal line G-A-B \flat in mm. 11-12 is also retrograded in mm. 26-27 as B \flat -A-G (with all three notes in the same register both times). Knowing Berg’s inclination towards symmetry, it appears that he intended this retrograde aspect of the vocal phrases; in any case, this melodic relationship certainly strengthens the connection between these two moments for the performer.

The final harmonic progression, in mm. 27-30—iv⁶--ii⁶₅--I— is supported by a bass arpeggiation E \flat -C-G, giving the final cadence a plagal quality. (Berg uses this same plagal progression at the end of “Schilflied” and “Die Nachtigall.”) The G-major chord which finally arrives in mm. 29-30 is the only G triad in the song; with motive *d* in the right hand (Example 4.4), the G major chord is approached with a sweeping upward melodic motion similar to that of the final vocal line, and the upper register suggests transcending the bounds of earth. Below this upper melodic line, the successive entrances of motive *a* in sixteenth notes flow into m. 29, where the motive slows down first to a triplet, and then to eighth notes: the eighth notes

echo the pace of the initial statement of motive *a*, heard now in the diatonic context of G major, a resolution of the uncertainty and apprehension expressed in the opening.

While the harmonic direction in “Traumgekrönt” at times dissolves, the use of motives as a structural component unifies the musical language of the song, and the development and layering of these motives adds a dimension of contrapuntal complexity. Berg’s musical decisions were never without an expressive purpose, and the music of “Traumgekrönt” perfectly mirrors the searching nature of Rilke’s poetry.

Performance Considerations

Rilke (1875-1926), who ultimately became one of Germany’s most influential poets, wrote “Traumgekrönt” early in his career, publishing it in 1896.⁷⁷ The poem comes from Rilke’s third collection of poetry, in which his lyrical talent was already evident, although he had yet to develop the experimental and innovative style of his later works.⁷⁸ Rilke’s early poetry, which was influenced by German Romanticism but at the same time points forward to his search for a new type of expression, is particularly fitting for Berg’s own early style. “Traumgekrönt” captures the lyrical yet evocatively mysterious character of Rilke’s poem in part by combining tonal harmonic structure with a more modern and motivically-centered musical language. The sense of hovering between these two styles is one of the issues that performers must address: while a song such as “Die Nachtigall” can be sung and played in the style of *Lieder* by composers such as Schumann and Brahms, with a flowing Romantic lyricism, “Traumgekrönt”

⁷⁷ Merriam Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature, s.v. “Rilke, Rainer Maria,” <http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.uconn.edu/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CRN1480007893&v=2.1&u=22516&it=r&p=LitRC&sw=w> (accessed Aug. 10, 2012).

⁷⁸ Poetry Foundation, “Rainer Maria Rilke,” <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/rainer-maria-rilke> (accessed March 13, 2014). By 1907-1908, Rilke had published “Neue Gedichte”, his first experimental poems.

suggests a somewhat different approach, with more varied tone colors and the shaping of motives within a denser contrapuntal texture. Mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter (with pianist Bengt Forsberg)⁷⁹ and soprano Sine Bundgaard (with the Danish Radio Sinfonietta, conducted by Matthias Pintscher)⁸⁰ offer performances which are sensitive to both the modern and Romantic elements of the song.

Otter's performance brings out details of the style, text, and formal structure of "Traumgekrönt." Otter generally sings with a lyrical sound characteristic of Romantic *Lieder*, with occasional *portamento*; for example, in mm. 2-3, she uses *portamento* on the words "weißen Chrysanthemen" (white chrysanthemums), drawing special attention to the image of the flowers. However, she also varies her timbre with use of *non vibrato*, a technique more characteristic of modern performance practice than of Romantic music. The choice to use *non vibrato* for expressive purposes at a few key moments is fitting for the song's more modern musical language. Otter applies this *non vibrato* sound to the two high Gs noted in the above analysis (m. 11 and m. 27). She approaches the first high G on the word "nehmen" (take) in m.11 with a *portamento* from the preceding syllable, and then begins the high G with minimal vibrato, allowing the sound to *crescendo* and increasing the vibrato as she sings through the tone. The intensification of the vibrato and dynamic heightens the expressivity of the line "dann kamst du mir die Seele nehmen/tief in der Nacht" (then you came to take my soul/deep in the night). At the final high G on "Nacht," Otter uses a similar sound. In this instance, she begins the anacrusis to m. 27 (on the word "die") with a completely straight tone, which she carries into the upper register (using even less vibrato here than on the G in m. 11). She again allows the tone to

⁷⁹ Berg, Korngold, Strauss: *Lieder*, Anne Sofie von Otter and Bengt Forsberg, Deutsche Grammophon (CD), 1994.

⁸⁰ Berg: *Seven Early Songs*, Sine Bundgaard and Danish Radio Sinfonietta, conducted by Matthias Pintscher, EMI Records Ltd (CD), 2007.

grow in dynamic and vibrato before a *decrescendo* to the end of the note. The unique timbre she achieves with these variations in vibrato on the two high Gs allows us to hear the musical and structural connection between the two moments (outlined in the above analysis), and unifies them in their expression of an unearthly realm.

Otter also brings out the melody in m. 15 (motive *a*) as a significant expressive moment, reflecting its importance in the formal structure of “Traumgekrönt.” Pianist Forsberg prepares the drama of this melody in the opening notes of the song, playing expressively and with *rubato* to highlight the melodic gesture. In m. 15, Otter again uses minimal vibrato on these four notes, articulating each syllable on “mir war so bang” (I was so afraid) with a slight *tenuto*, so that we distinctly hear the echo of the opening piano line here. She follows this with a softer and more legato sound on “und du kamst lieb und leise” (and you came lovingly and softly), emphasizing the contrast between the expectant anxiety of the line “mir war so bang” (reflected in the ambiguous tonality and the *crescendo-decrescendo*) and the comforting appearance of the person described in the poem. Underneath in the piano part, Forsberg highlights the exchange of parts from the opening (mm. 1-5), using the *crescendo-decrescendo* markings indicated to bring out the shape of the melodic lines, playing softly but clearly articulating the motivic gestures.

Otter and Forsberg also use Berg’s tempo markings to emphasize expressive details and to delineate the larger formal sections of the song. Their *accel.* in m. 5 on “seiner Pracht” (its splendor) accentuates the apprehension in this line. The *rit.*- (*molto*) before each b section helps create a dramatic shift that leads to the separation (v) marked before the musical shift occurring on the second beat of m. 8 (and m. 22). Otter brings out the contrast in the vocal writing between sections: she sings with a more *legato* and somewhat brighter tone for the longer, more

sustained lines of the b sections, emphasizing the more traditionally Romantic quality in these lines.

Sine Bundgaard, in contrast to Otter, sings with a more uniform timbre throughout “Traumgekrönt,” utilizing a flowing legato sound and a consistent vibrato. Rather than distinguishing the atonal from the tonal music with a different vocal color, Bundgaard highlights the expressive, lyrical quality of the vocal line throughout the song with her smooth tone; her sound evokes the dreamlike atmosphere of the poetry. She also sings with a bright timbre, matching the shimmering brightness of the orchestration, particularly the violin melodies in the upper register in the b sections (mm. 8-11 and mm. 22-25).

While Bundgaard’s timbre creates an overall ethereal impression, she uses phrasing, diction, and dynamics to bring out individual details and to shape the motivic gestures of the music. In contrast to Otter, she tends to connect longer phrases in a single breath, allowing us to hear the slurs indicated in the music. While both performers sing the first phrase in one breath (mm. 1-3, motive *b*), Bundgaard also sings from the last eighth note of m. 8 through the end of m. 11 in one breath, connecting the melodic gesture (motive *d*) as indicated by the phrase marking. (Otter instead breathes after the third beat of m. 9.) Bundgaard also connects the final phrase, “erklang die Nacht” (sounded the night) in a single breath (mm. 25-28). Both of these choices in phrasing require significant breath control, but if possible for the singer, effectively create a sweeping arc across these long lines.

Bundgaard uses dynamics to shape each of the high Gs in the vocal melody. She sings with a light sound on “nehmen” in m. 11, and then crescendos slightly to the lower interval. She begins the final high G on “Nacht” with a full sound, and then decrescendos to dissolve into the orchestral sound, her timbre enveloped by the strings. In contrast to Otter, Bundgaard uses a

steady vibrato on each note, which allows the vocal line to flow more evenly and naturally through the large leaps. On “mir war so bang” in m. 14, Bundgaard similarly allows her sound to dissipate on the word “bang,” which is implied by the *decrescendo* and the slur that carries into the eighth rest on the downbeat of the following measure; Bundgaard’s performance gives the impression that at this moment, the fear is dissipating as the drama of the scene moves forward.

Bundgaard also uses diction and articulation to highlight certain details of the text. She lengthens the “l”s in “lieb und leise” (lovingly and softly) in mm. 16-17 to emphasize the mellifluous quality of these words. On the word “dich” (you) in m. 20, she brings out the *tenuto* marking with a slight accent on the consonant “d”. In each instance, the subtle emphasis on text remains within the context of an overall *legato* sound.

While the orchestrated version of “Traumgekrönt” is almost identical to the piano version, one noticeable difference is the transition from the a to the b section in m. 8, and the parallel place in m. 22. In the piano score, Berg indicates a separation (v) before the F major chord, but this marking is not included in the orchestral score. In the orchestrated accompaniment, the sections therefore feel more continuous: the half-diminished chord in the winds resolves to F major in the strings without a break in the sound. The change in timbre articulates the new section, but the music flows forward effortlessly, unifying the piece into a continuous whole.

One particularly expressive moment in the instrumentation is the final statement of motive *a* in mm. 29-30 (A-G-E-D); as noted in the above analysis, this diatonic resolution reflects the transformation of emotions expressed in the poetry. The motive is played by the celeste, imbuing it with a brilliant and slightly mystical quality, and in this recording the sound

seems to come from far off in the distance. In the piano version, Berg indicates staccato marks within the slur over these four notes, and the sound of the celeste can help pianists to interpret the staccato on this melody, which seems to resolve the fear and uncertainty felt earlier in the song.

Each of these performances calls attention to different aspects of “Traumgekrönt.” Otter’s dark vocal timbre evokes the somber, more enigmatic quality of the poetry, as well as the murkier sound of the atonal harmonies, and her varied use of vibrato helps convey a strange, otherworldly atmosphere. Otter and Forsberg both draw attention to the motivic gestures of the song, creating dramatic shape with the interplay of motives. In contrast, Bundgaard’s brighter, more lyrical sound blends seamlessly with the orchestral accompaniment, in which the bright timbres of violins and wind instruments in the upper register create a smooth, shimmering quality. Bundgaard and the Danish Radio Sinfonietta, with their delicate and flowing performance, place more emphasis on the final lines of poetry: “du kamst, und leis’ wie eine Märchenweise/erklang die Nacht” (you came, and soft as a fairy tune/the night sounded).

Chapter 5: “Im Zimmer”

Of all the *Sieben frühe Lieder*, “Im Zimmer” has the lightest sound and mood. Placed between the dramatic “Traumgekrönt” and “Liebesode,” it provides a contrast in terms of character, style, and texture. According to the dates established by Redlich, “Im Zimmer” is one of the earliest songs to be composed, probably in 1905;⁸¹ accordingly it has a traditional sound, with a clearly tonal harmonic language. Nevertheless, certain features link it to the other songs in this set: motives are a significant component of the form, and the music contains elements of harmonic and structural ambiguity. Additionally, although it is the shortest song of the group (taking less than a minute to perform), “Im Zimmer” is meticulously filled with the detailed expressive, tempo, and dynamic markings characteristic of Berg’s style.

Im Zimmer (Johannes Schlaf)

a Herbstsonnenschein.
a Der liebe Abend blickt so still herein.
b Ein Feuerlein rot
b knistert im Ofenloch und loht.
c So, mein Kopf auf deinen Knie’n,
d so ist mir gut,
d wenn mein Auge so in deinem ruht,
c wie leise die Minuten zieh’n.

In the Room

Autumn sunshine.
Fair evening looks silent in.
Red fire
blazing, crackling in the stove.
Thus, with my head on your knees,
thus I am content,
my gaze reposed in yours,
as the minutes gently pass.

The chart in Figure 5.1 outlines the formal organization of “Im Zimmer” (capital letters designate phrases), which is evident from tempo and expressive markings, as well as cadences and phrasing. As in all of the songs, the structure of the poetry provides a basis for the musical structure. The line lengths of the poem are noticeably more varied than in the other songs; however, the rhythm of the vocal line compensates for these differences, creating relatively similar phrase lengths.

⁸¹ Redlich, *Alban Berg*, 38.

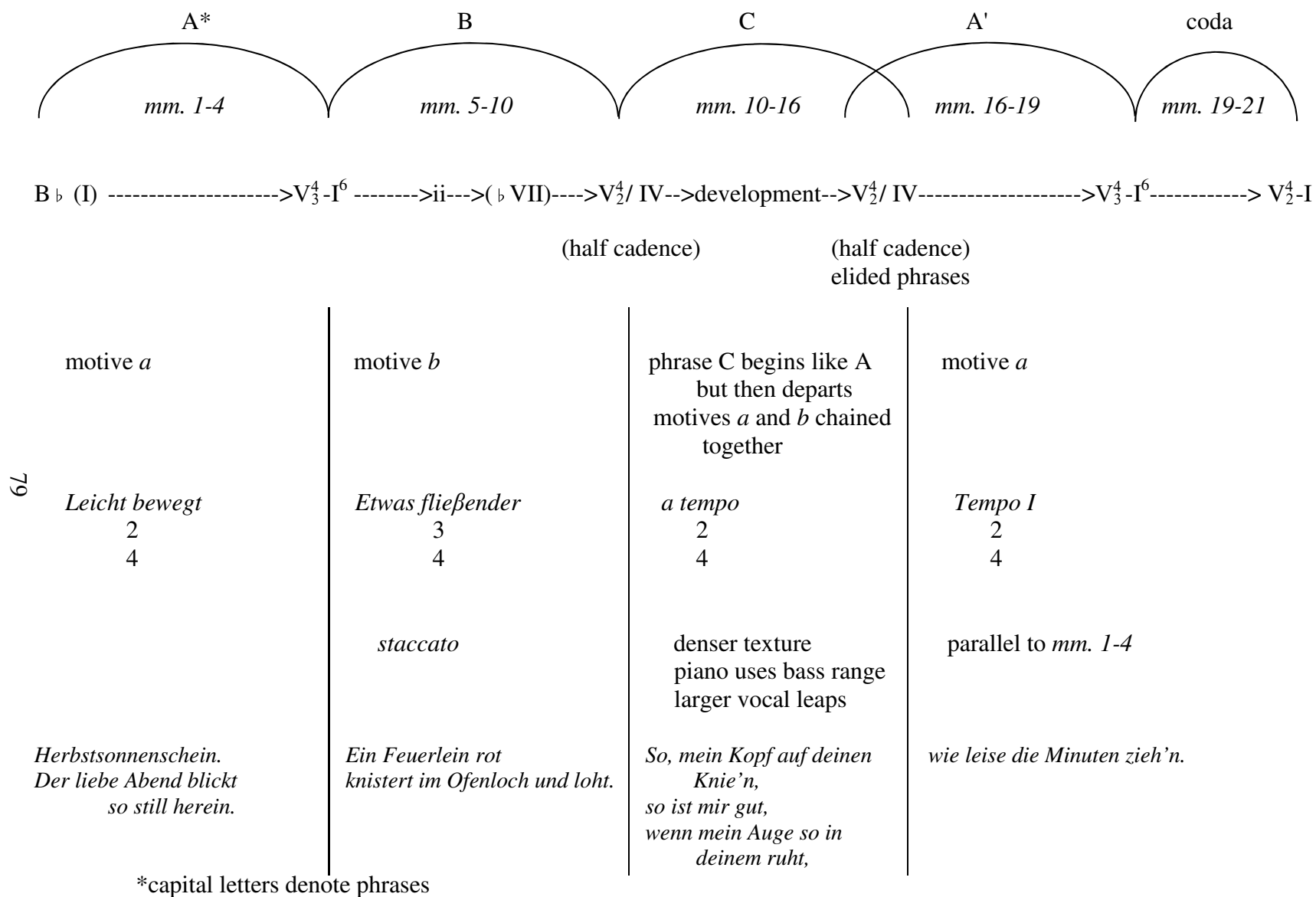


Figure 5.1. Form chart of "Im Zimmer"

The rhyme scheme of the poem, as indicated above, is *aabbcdcc*. The first two lines (*aa*) constitute the A phrase, and the second two lines (*bb*) the B phrase. Phrases A and B are clearly delineated: the first phrase ends with a V-I cadence in the tonic of B \flat major, and the second phrase has a marked change in character with the shift to $\frac{2}{4}$ and staccato texture. The end of phrase B is articulated in mm. 9-10 by the dotted rhythm, dynamic emphasis, dramatic progression of diminished to half-diminished chords, and the return to $\frac{3}{4}$ meter. The last four lines of the poem, in contrast, are grouped together to form a longer rhyme pattern, *cddc*, and the final two phrases of the song are elided to reflect this connection in the text, with the music moving seamlessly back into Tempo I: the end of the vocal phrase in mm. 14-17 overlaps with the piano's return to the A' material in m. 16. The punctuation of the poem also is reflected in the phrase structure—the groups of two lines (*aa* and *bb*) each end with a period, while the last four lines of the poem (*cddc*) form one longer sentence. Phrase C consists of three lines of text (*cdd*), while A' contains only one line of text (*c*), creating further continuity between these last two phrases.

Harmony provides much of the musical structure in this song. The tonality of B \flat major is established clearly in the opening measures. Phrase B modulates to C minor, followed by a passing tonicization of A \flat major. This section, from mm. 5-8, has the imitative quality of a sequence without strictly repeating the harmonic and melodic pattern, and contributes to the traditional sound of the song. At the same time, “Im Zimmer” employs diminished and half-diminished seventh chords, a feature typical of Berg's style; the transitions at the ends of phrases B and C make use of these chords, masking the conventional half cadences which underpin each phrase ending (see mm. 9-10 and m. 16). Though progressions such as these are fairly typical of the Romantic period, it is evident from the other *Sieben frühe Lieder* that Berg later extends his

use of diminished and half-diminished seventh chords, together with semitone voice leading, for more chromatic harmonic progressions as well.

“Im Zimmer” contains several parallel harmonic progressions which contribute to the formal organization of the song. Phrase A' echoes phrase A both melodically and harmonically—mm. 2-5 and mm. 16-19 consist of essentially the same material. Measures 10-11 are also parallel to mm. 1-2 and mm. 16-17. Example 5.1 compares the harmonic progressions in these passages. In C and A', a $D^{\flat 4}_3$ chord shifts to a $B^{\flat 4}_2$ chord (the C in the

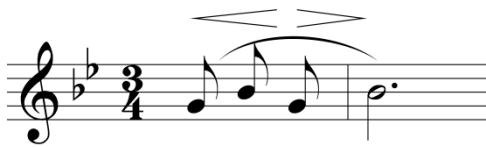
Phrase	mm.				
A	1	2	3	4	
	$B^{\flat 4}_2$	$E^{\flat 6}_5 - C^{\flat 4}_3$	$B^{\flat 6}_4 - F^6_4$	$B^{\flat 6}$	
	V^4_2 of IV	$IV^6_5 - ii^{\flat 4}_3$	$V^6_4 - \frac{5}{3}$	I^6	
C	10	11	12	13	
	$D^{\flat 4}_3 - B^{\flat 4}_2$	$E^{\flat 6}_5$	$D^6_5 - B^{\flat 7}$	Cm^6	
	V^4_2 of IV	IV^6_5	$Cm(ii):[V^6_5$ of V- $vii^{\flat 7}$	$i^6]$	
A'	16	17	18	19	
	$D^{\flat 4}_3 - B^{\flat 4}_2$	$E^{\flat 6}_5 - C^{\flat 4}_3$	$B^{\flat 6}_4 - F^6_4$	$B^{\flat 6}$	
	V^4_2 of IV	$IV^6_5 - ii^{\flat 4}_3$	$V^6_4 - \frac{5}{3}$	I^6	

Example 5.1. Comparison of parallel harmonic progressions.

diminished chord acts as a suspension over the B^{\flat} dominant harmony). While A' proceeds to the final cadential passage, phrase C proceeds to a more development-like section. The dominant seventh chords $B^{\flat 7}$ and $E^{\flat 7}$ are followed by shifting tonicizations: the applied

dominant D_5^6 chord in m. 12 leads to a B^{o7} (B is spelled as C_\flat , but substitutes for the expected G^7), and then to C minor in m. 13, followed by a tonicization of F in mm. 14-15. Both of these harmonic arrival points (C minor in m. 13 and F major in m. 15) also support the two operatic leaps up to high G in the vocal line. These tonal underpinnings, which are relatively transparent in “Im Zimmer,” also appear in the more complex songs, such as in the middle sections of “Nacht” (mm. 9-25), whose conventional tonal progressions are more thoroughly obscured by whole-tone sonorities and chromaticism.

As in all of the songs, Schoenberg’s concept of a small motivic gesture as the seed for a piece is evident here; “Im Zimmer” is a miniaturized representation of that idea. Given the brief length of the song, the motivic development is not extensive, but motives are a distinct unifying feature. Two primary motives appear throughout the song, motives *a* and *b* (see Examples 5.2 and 5.3). Motive *a* is introduced in both voice and piano at the beginning of the song, and consists of three eighth notes which move up a third and then back down, followed by a sustained note in the voice, and a dotted quarter note chord in the piano. The initial interval is varied from a third to fourths or fifths elsewhere in the song (Example 5.2b).



Example 5.2a. Motive *a*, mm. 0-1, voice

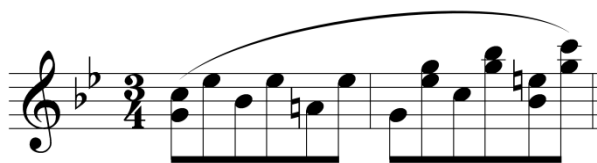


Example 5.2b. Motive *a*, intervals varied, mm. 1-2, piano

The second prominent motive (motive *b*) corresponds to the beginning of phrase B, a series of eighth notes with a back and forth pattern in the piano part (Example 5.3a). Motives *a* and *b* share a similar oscillating motion. Multiple echoes of both of these motives occur throughout the song. For example, in mm. 13-14, the phrase length of motive *b* is extended, and the phrase is legato rather than staccato (Example 5.3b). Motive *a* takes on an important structural role by articulating each new phrase: it opens the piece, and mm. 1-2 are then repeated in the same key at the beginning of phrase C (mm. 9-10, an octave lower) and A' (mm. 16-17, same pitch level). Phrase B is also preceded by a shortened variation on motive *a* in m. 4, which serves as a transition into the new phrase (D-F-C eighth notes in the upper line of the piano, and F-A \flat -E \flat eighth notes in the lower line).



Example 5.3a. Motive *b*, m. 5, piano



Example 5.3b. Motive *b* extended with *legato* phrasing, m. 13, piano

Additional, smaller motivic gestures appear in “Im Zimmer.” One occurs in m. 15: the G-F-C in the piano right hand imitates the C-B \flat -F from m. 4 (which is also repeated in m. 19). Another is a rhythmic motive: the dotted eighth-sixteenth followed by a quarter note in mm. 9-10 is echoed by the voice in m. 16 and marked with a similar articulation, as shown in Example 5.4. The bass piano rhythm in mm. 14-15 might also be considered to be derived from this gesture.



m. 9, piano



dei - nem ruht

m. 16, voice

Example 5.4. Rhythmic motive

These miniaturized motivic echoes suit the song’s delicate sound. The opening is marked *molto p*, and most of the song remains within this *p* dynamic range, with the piano in the upper register. The B phrase, demarcated by a shift to $\frac{2}{4}$ and a quicker tempo, has a staccato

articulation which further contributes to the lighter quality of the piece, and conveys the text, “ein Feuerlein rot/knistert” (a red fire/crackling). Following phrase B, the music shifts from its delicate character to become somewhat more dramatic and complex. In m. 10, the meter change to $\frac{3}{4}$ and the legato articulation create a more drawn-out, expressive quality. The piano expands its range into the bass clef at mm. 11-14, and the dynamic range also increases. The voice, which has made use of primarily the middle range and small leaps, moves into the higher register for two high Gs and traverses a leap of an octave. This section corresponds to the text, “So, mein Kopf auf deinen Knie’n,/so ist mir gut” (Thus, my head on your knee, I am content), and the more expansive music suggests the pleasure of this experience.

“Im Zimmer” is the only song of the *Sieben frühe Lieder* that conveys serene contentment. The song’s brief length, however, suggests that the moments of happiness described in the poem are fleeting. Additionally, the last phrase consists of only one line of text, creating the impression that the song ends sooner than anticipated. The final lines of poetry, “wie leise die Minuten ziehn” (how quietly the minutes pass), evoke a peaceful moment, suspended in time.

Performance Considerations

The traditional tonality and more straightforward melodies of “Im Zimmer” make it one of the easier songs to perform. Perhaps the greatest challenge for performers is to develop the drama of the piece in such a short span of time. Despite the brevity of the phrases, each one has a distinct expressive purpose, as suggested by the preceding discussion of musical structure. The score’s meticulous markings guide performers in creating a musical and dramatic progression. The first phrase (mm. 1-4), with its lyrical simplicity, sets the autumn scene. This phrase is

followed immediately by a more playful staccato phrase (mm. 5-10) and change in texture to constant eighth notes, imitating the crackling fire. The indicated tempo changes help performers to achieve the pacing of these expressive shifts; for example, the *Etwas fließender* begins precisely on the last eighth note of m. 4 so that the singer begins the next phrase of text with an instantly different character. While the following phrase (phrase C, mm. 10-16) begins as though it may be a reprise of the initial music, with a repetition of the opening motive and a sustained B \flat in the vocal line similar to m. 1, phrase C takes a different direction to more dramatic music. The music therefore signals performers to approach phrase C with a new intention: the *crescendo* in mm. 9-10 in both the vocal and piano lines, supported by the dotted eighth-sixteenth note gestures in the piano, grows into the intensity of this section. The *poco rit.* --- *molto rit.* in mm. 9-10 allows additional time for this *crescendo* and articulation of the piano rhythm. The return to $\frac{3}{4}$ meter in m. 10 also creates a sense of expansion in the pacing of this transition. In phrase C, the drama is heightened as the music becomes more complex and the text more sensual, and this part of the song can be sung and played in a more operatic style. In m. 15, immediately following the leap up to the high G, a *decrescendo* in both voice and piano relaxes the energy slightly to prepare for the return to A', suggesting a natural and inevitable transition to this peaceful final phrase. At the return to the A' material in m. 16, the word “deinem” (your) is marked with an accent and *staccato/marcato*; as noted in the preceding analysis, the rhythm here is a motivic echo, and it also imparts dramatic significance to the word “deinem.” The emphasis on the word also allows the singer to rhythmically articulate the transition back to Tempo I.

In addition to Berg's detailed expressive markings, performers' choices in tempo and pacing impact the character of the song. Two recordings of “Im Zimmer,” those of soprano

Margaret Marshall with pianist Geoffrey Parsons⁸² and mezzo-soprano Susan Graham with pianist Malcolm Martineau⁸³, demonstrate quite different possibilities. Marshall's overall tempo is slightly slower, and she uses a fair amount of *rubato* throughout, which gives the entire song a lush and romantic quality, but without a lot of variation between sections. She sings with a more articulated sound on the second staccato phrase (mm. 5-10), communicating a different mood while still maintaining the sense of *rubato*. Marshall's tone also is fairly even on every syllable, with an operatic *legato* line, and she uses *portamento* frequently throughout the song.

Graham's performance, on the other hand, is lighter, and her quicker tempo gives the song more forward momentum. While Graham also sings with a *legato* sound, she inflects the text with its natural word stresses, creating a more speech-like, spontaneous effect. She uses *portamento* sparingly, and sings with a brighter tone quality than Marshall, both of which contribute to the more animated character of her performance. Graham reserves most of the *rubato* for the second half of the song, corresponding to the increasing drama of the music, and in this way her performance more effectively highlights the contrasts between each phrase of the song. Both singers anticipate the *Zeit lassen* in m. 14 by taking time in m. 13 on the text "so ist mir"; a slight *rubato* is necessary in order to articulate this text in the upper range. Graham and Marshall both take time through the expressive octave leap up to G in m. 15, but with different approaches; Marshall uses *portamento* while Graham sings a clear interval up to the G.

Additionally, both Graham and pianist Martineau perform the initial motive of "Im Zimmer" (motive *a*) with a sense of slightly rushing forward, contributing to the lighter, more flexible quality of their interpretation. Even at the end of the song, in the midst of a slight

⁸² *Berg: Seven Early Songs/Der Wein*, Margaret Marshall and Geoffrey Parsons, Polygram Records (CD), 1993.

⁸³ *At Carnegie Hall [Live]*, Susan Graham and Malcolm Martineau, Erato (CD), 2003.

ritardando taken by the performers (though not marked in the score), Martineau plays the motivic gesture with forward motion and a hint of an *accelerando* into the downbeat of m. 20. As outlined in the above analysis, motive *a* is significant to the song's formal structure, marking the transitions from one phrase to the next. Graham and Martineau shape this melodic gesture with a distinct and lively character that signals its importance, and reflects the expressive intent of the piece. Performers can use the pacing of these smaller musical motives, as well as overall choices in tempo and tone quality, to shape the drama as it unfolds within "Im Zimmer."

Chapter 6: “*Liebesode*”

Following the delicate sounds of “Im Zimmer,” the dark sonorities and surging gestures of “*Liebesode*” draw a striking contrast. Though different in tone, “*Liebesode*,” like “Im Zimmer,” is a short but dramatic piece, condensing an intensity of expression into a brief 24 measures. From the opening chord, its harmonic language is distinctly Berg’s: although the song is in the key of F# minor, whole-tone sounds and chromatic inflections color the tonal progressions. While “*Liebesode*” shares similarities with the other *Sieben frühe Lieder*, including harmonic ambiguity, motivic development, and elements of symmetry, perhaps its most distinctive feature is its formal design, which is somewhat more complex than that of the other songs. In part, the song’s structure is articulated by varied repetition of the opening passage in mm. 1-4, but this repetition is subtle, with each occurrence somewhat disguised.

Liebesode (Otto Erich Hartleben)

Im Arm der Liebe schliefen wir selig ein,
Am offenen Fenster lauschte der Sommerwind,
Und unsrer Atemzüge Frieden trug er hinaus
in die helle Mondnacht.
Und aus dem Garten tastete zagend sich ein
Rosenduft an unserer Liebe Bett
Und gab uns wundervolle Träume,
Träume des Rausches, so reich an Sehnsucht.

Love Ode

Blissful in love’s arms we fell asleep,
the summer wind watched at the open window,
and bore out the peace of our every breath
to the moon-bright night.
And from the garden, feeling its timid way,
a scent of roses to our love bed came
and gave us wondrous dreams,
ecstatic dreams, so rich in longing.

The form and poetry are closely intertwined. The text, written by Otto Erich Hartleben, is the only one in the *Sieben frühe Lieder* with neither a regular rhyme scheme nor metric pattern, and the musical form reflects this freer poetic structure. Most of the other *Sieben frühe Lieder* contain substantial sections of repeated material and clear delineations based on texture and harmonic content. (As seen in the preceding analyses, “Nacht” is based on an ABB'A' form, “Schilflied” and “Die Nachtigall” ABA', etc.) “*Liebesode*,” on the other hand, has a more

ambiguous structure, outlined in Figure 6.1. When the opening “theme” of mm. 1-4 recurs, it is not immediately obvious and does not constitute a new section; as the following analysis will further describe, the recurrence in mm. 9-11 is embedded within a longer phrase, and in mm. 21-24 it is elided with the end of the previous phrase. Also shown in the chart are the formal divisions which are notated with breath marks in the score after m. 4 and m. 12; these correspond to the sentence structure of the poetry. While the breath marks, as well as smaller phrases, do create formal demarcations, the constancy of the piano texture and harmonic and melodic content creates one broad gesture from measure 5 to the end.

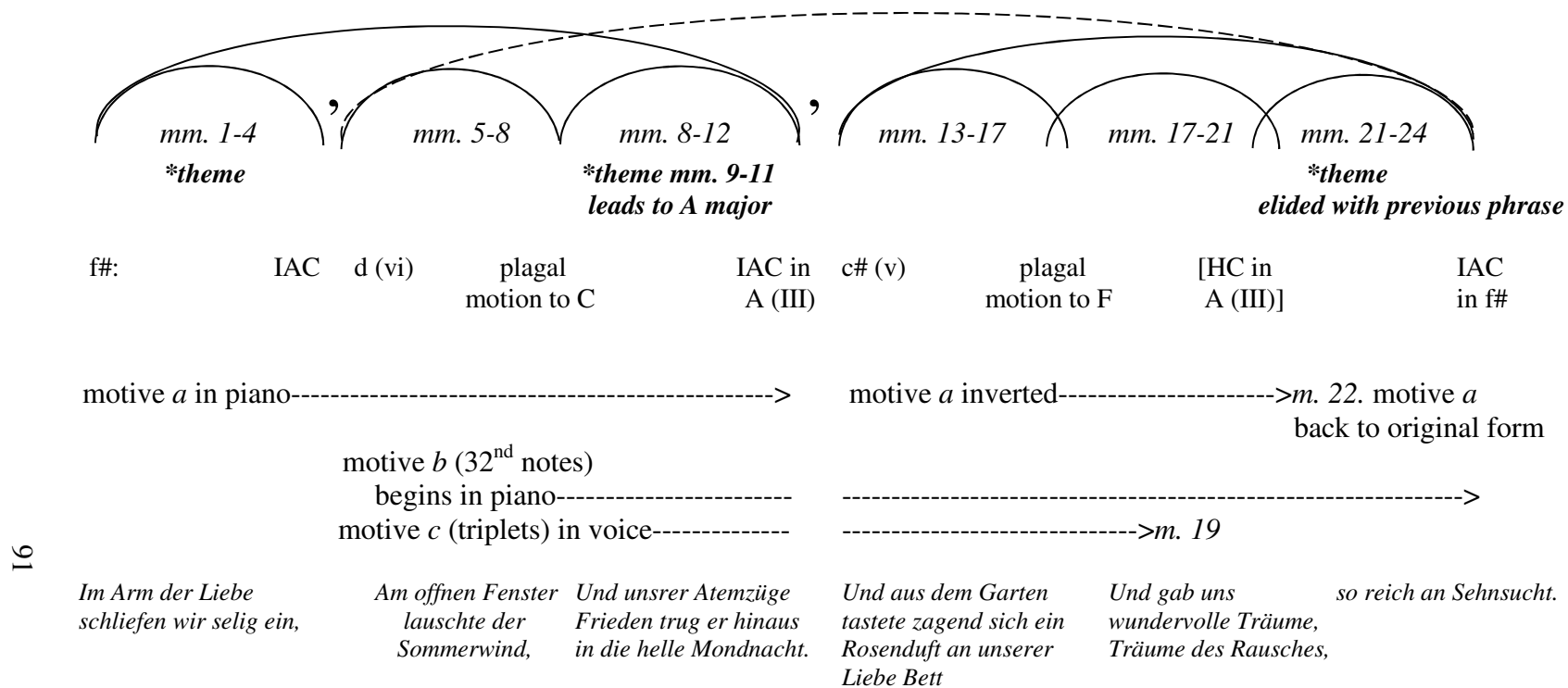


Figure 6.1. Form chart of “Liebesode”

Despite the ambiguity of the opening chord (D-G \sharp -C, which belongs to a whole-tone collection), measures 1-4 clearly establish F \sharp minor as the tonal center of “Liebesode.” The first harmony can be interpreted as a French augmented sixth chord which resolves to the V chord in m. 2; a cadence in the tonic follows in m. 3, reiterated by the bass motion from C \sharp to F \sharp in mm. 3-4. This slow, sustained phrase reflects the first line of the poem: “Im Arm der Liebe schliefen wir selig ein” (In the arms of love we fell blissfully asleep). The F \sharp minor cadence and the breath mark that follows set this phrase off from the rest of the song, and suggest the moment of falling asleep. The remainder of the poem describes the scene as the lovers sleep, and the musical shift at m. 5 corresponds to the description of the lovers’ dreams and the surrounding atmosphere. Two significant changes occur in m. 5: the accompaniment begins the 32nd-note texture that continues for the rest of the song, and the harmony becomes more remote from F \sharp minor. The common tone of A links the F \sharp minor chord in m. 4 to the striking D minor chord in m. 5, a chromatic mediant relationship which creates a dramatic change of color.

Despite this harmonic shift in m. 5, the music proceeds to a reprise of mm. 1-4, at the same pitch level, in mm. 9-11. However, the return of the opening vocal melody is somewhat hidden within the phrase: it begins mid-word in m. 9 (on the second syllable of “Atemzüge”), and ends on the C \sharp in m. 11, while the vocal phrase then continues into m. 12. This melodic echo of the opening is marked with a slur which would otherwise seem to contradict the phrasing of the vocal line. The harmony as well as the vocal melody is repeated in mm. 9-11; in this case however, the music only fleetingly passes through an F \sharp minor triad on the first half of beat three in m. 11. The anticipated cadence on F \sharp is evaded: the passing tones in the voice, along with the G \sharp in the bass of the piano, move instead to a cadence in A major in m. 12. A breath mark is indicated at the end of m. 12 in both voice and piano, suggesting this point as an important

structural shift. Nevertheless, the cadence is relatively weak—there is nothing to establish A major other than the G \sharp leading tone in the bass. Because this phrase ends without a strong harmonic resolution, and because the piano texture and vocal line continue in a similar manner after the breath mark, the music (like the poetry) moves fluidly rather than in clearly defined sections.

An analysis of the motivic ideas in “Liebesode” further illuminates the song’s structure. One of the most prominent motives is a 3-note gesture introduced in the right hand piano part in mm. 1-3 (labeled motive *a* in Example 6.1): G \sharp -E-E \sharp , F \sharp -D-C \sharp , D-B \flat -A are the first three instances. The motive always begins with a descending interval, usually a major third (though sometimes a descending tritone and in m. 12, a doubly diminished fifth); this descending interval is then followed by a half step up or down. Motive *a* continues in the piano treble from mm. 1-12. Beginning at m. 13, this motive is inverted in the right-hand piano part: the first interval is always ascending rather than descending, again most often by the interval of a major third (see Example 6.2). The half or whole step that follows the ascending third is also always an ascending interval, accentuating the sense of upward motion and increasing intensity throughout this section. This motivic inversion corresponds to the breath mark at the end of m. 12, and provides further insight into the structure of the song. Although the music does not come to a strong resting point at the breath mark, the inversion of motive *a* is a subtle shift that delineates the formal division. Two elements of symmetry are created here: the motive mirrors itself with its change in direction, and the end of m. 12 is exactly halfway through the 24 measures of the song (and halfway through the poem).



Example 6.1. Motive *a*, m. 1



Example 6.2. Motive *a* inverted, m. 13

The music builds in intensity from m. 13 to the end with the upward motion of the motives and a gradual *crescendo* to the dramatic final line, “Träume des Rausches, so reich an Sehnsucht” (ecstatic dreams, so rich in longing). In the closing phrase (mm. 21-24), the theme from mm. 1-4 returns once again. As in mm. 9-11, the recurrence of the theme is somewhat obscured. The vocal line is repeated, but without the initial E, beginning with the half note C in m. 21; the piano also begins the reprise of the harmony and motives in m. 21. However, the theme is elided with the end of the preceding phrase: the voice is singing the word “Rausches,” completing the previous line of text, “Träume des Rausches,” and the E dominant seventh harmony in the accompaniment might momentarily be heard as a half cadence in A minor. In each occurrence of the theme (mm. 1-4, mm. 9-11, and mm. 21-24), the right-hand piano motives are identical in pitch: G#-E-E#, F#-D-C#, D-B \flat -A. However, in m. 21, Berg inverts the G#-E from a descending major third to an ascending minor sixth, continuing the upward motion established with the inversion of motive *a*. This ascending interval propels the piano further into

the upper register, before returning to the descending gesture of motive *a* in mm. 22-23 with F#-D-C# and D-B \flat -A. While the theme emerges subtly in m. 21, the song finishes with a clear echo of the F# minor cadence heard in mm. 3-4. The final phrase builds to *ff*, followed by a *pp* F#-minor chord, similar to the ending of “Sommertage.”

In addition to the large-scale use of motive *a* in the accompaniment, the vocal line also contains disguised versions of motive *a*. In m. 1, the first three notes, E-C-B, are essentially the same motive, with the E-C inverted to an ascending minor sixth. In mm. 2-3, the F#-E#-D-C# in the voice is an embellished version of the F#-D-C# in the piano, and the two melodies overlap such that the voice is echoing the piano.

Several other motives feature prominently in “Liebesode.” The bass line of the piano from mm. 5-23 repeats a 32nd-note arpeggio followed by two quarter notes moving by half step (motive *b*, Example 6.3). This motive is constant throughout the remainder of the song, and contributes to the continuity of the formal structure. The exact harmony and intervals are varied, but the rhythm and overall contour remain the same.



Example 6.3. Motive *b*, m. 5

The voice sings another recurring melody, illustrated in Example 6.4, a descending triplet followed by an ascending major sixth (motive *c*). As motive *b* continues in the piano, motive *c* is

woven into the vocal line. It appears in different tonal contexts in mm. 6-7, mm. 11-12, and mm. 16-17; the melody also recurs in mm. 18-19, where the triplet is slowed down to eighth notes.

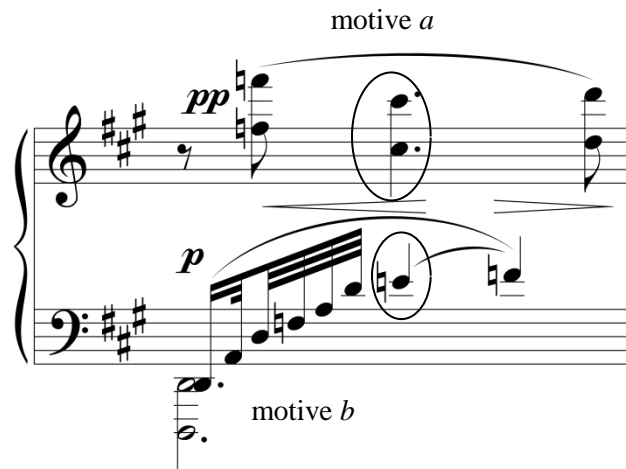


Example 6.4. Motive *c*, m. 6

Motives *b* and *c*, which begin in measure 5 and continue throughout, create musical coherence as the sense of tonality fluctuates. Though the harmony departs from F# minor, there is a plagal pattern underlying much of the harmonic motion in the song. In mm. 6-7, the harmony progresses from F major to C major, underneath motive *c* in the voice. In mm. 14-19, this root motion by descending fourths is extended: F#⁶⁷-C#m, B⁷-F, Dm⁷-Am. Again the progression is linked with motive *c*, which appears in the vocal line in mm. 16-17 and mm. 18-19.

The sound of “Liebesode” is also characterized by accented chromatic embellishments, which often overlap with a chord tone a half step away. These sharp dissonances convey the longing and desire expressed in the poetry. They generally occur as the middle note of motive *a* in the treble piano and motive *b* in the bass piano, resolving up or down by half step. These simultaneous dissonances resolve at slightly different times, with the bass resolving on beat three and the treble resolving on the second half of beat three (see Example 6.5). In mm. 18-19, two of these dissonant notes are highlighted with accent marks: the G^b in m. 18 and the F# in m. 19. Though the notes are enharmonically equivalent, they are heard in two different harmonic contexts (D minor in m. 18 and A minor in m. 19); this subtle shift in color coincides with the

text “wundervolle Träume” (wondrous dreams), suggesting the elusive and ephemeral quality of the dream.



Example 6.5. Overlapping dissonances in motives *a* and *b*, m. 5

Another recurring element of chromaticism arises from the voice leading in m. 3 (and in the parallel measures 11 and 23). The G# and B \flat in the piano part simultaneously resolve inward to A in symmetrical motion. The D in the vocal line sounds together with the G# and B \flat , creating a whole-tone sonority which delays the resolution to F# minor (the D resolves to C# in the vocal line). In m. 23, this dissonance is prolonged with a fermata, corresponding to the word “Sehnsucht” (longing). While the poem begins with the line, “Im Arm der Liebe schliefen wir selig ein” (Blissful in love's arms we fell asleep), the dark harmony of F# minor and the sustained dissonance in m. 23 seem to emphasize the “longing” more than the “blissful” aspect of the poetry.

“Liebesode” contains several other instances of text-painting; many specific images are reflected in the music. The shimmering 32nd notes of motive *b* suggest the “Mondnacht” (moon-night), as does the bright sound of the octaves in the upper register of the piano, accenting and

then resolving the chromatic dissonances. (In the orchestration of the song, the harp plays motive *b*, and its timbre further accentuates the atmospheric quality of the accompaniment.) In m. 8, the piano part imitates the swelling motion of the “Sommerwind” (summer wind) with a *crescendo-decrescendo*, and also with the succession of eighth notes followed first by triplets and then sixteenth notes, a written-out *accelerando*. The triplet on “tastete” (hesitatingly) conveys hesitancy both in its rhythm and the descending chromatic melody in the voice.

Berg is known to have incorporated musical associations with significant people into his music, and he associated the key of D minor with his wife Helene.⁸⁴ While “Liebesode” is in F# minor, D minor features prominently in the song: it articulates the important musical and textual shift at m. 5, as the music enters the realm of the “dreamworld” of the lovers. D is also emphasized as a dissonant note in the vocal line in m. 3, which in the new context of m. 5 becomes the tonal center. D minor reappears in mm. 18 and 20, on the text “wundervollen Träume” (wondrous dreams), just before the final cadential passage. Whether or not Berg had this key association in mind in this particular song, the *Sieben frühe Lieder* are dedicated to Helene, and Berg specifically mentions “Liebesode” in his correspondence with her. In a letter dated August 1909, Berg describes a beautiful day spent with Helene, and quotes “Liebesode,” saying “We should ‘blissfully fall asleep in the arms of love.’” He goes on to say, “Such a day would be worth the most miserable, tormented life; worth death itself.”⁸⁵ Berg’s passionate words give some indication of the intensity of emotion expressed in all of the *Sieben frühe Lieder*, and especially in “Liebesode.”

⁸⁴ Robert Gauldin, “Reference and Association in the Vier Lieder, Op. 2, of Alban Berg,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 21, no. 1 (1999): 37. Although autobiographical references have been more fully discussed in Berg’s later works, especially in reference to Hanna Fuchs-Robertin, Gauldin’s article makes the case for references to Helene in the Op. 2 songs of 1909-10.

⁸⁵ Berg, *Letters to His Wife*, 79.

Performance Considerations

The sensual text, dramatic vocal line, and ornate, sweeping accompaniment of “Liebesode” all suggest a Romantic performance style. Soprano Diana Damrau with pianist Stephan Matthias Lademann⁸⁶ and mezzo-soprano Susan Graham with pianist Malcolm Martineau⁸⁷ give nuanced performances of the song, offering two different but equally effective interpretations. Both are successful in their choice of tempo, which is not too slow. Although Berg marks quarter note=ca 46, the pace can increase slightly at the *a tempo* in m. 5, so that the song gains the necessary momentum and intensity.

Through pacing, phrasing, dynamics, and diction, each of these performances conveys a distinct mood. Damrau and Lademann perform the first phrase (mm. 1-4) freely, with a great deal of *rubato*, capturing the sense of falling asleep. As a result, the opening seems to be suspended in time. Damrau also adds a slight accent on the first syllable of “Liebe” (love) in m. 1, emphasizing the “l” to accentuate the word’s significance. Their *rubato* in this opening phrase gives the impression of a recitative, setting up the scene : “In Arm der Liebe schliefen wir selig ein” (Blissful in love’s arms we fell asleep). The “aria” then begins at m. 5. Also of note in the opening vocal line is the tuning of the augmented second between E \sharp and D natural in mm. 2-3. Damrau and Graham both sing this line with excellent intonation, while in many other recordings the pitch on the D is too low. The tuning of this pitch is further complicated by the G \sharp and B \flat in the piano. The D needs to be high enough that we hear the tension of its dissonance as it leads towards its resolution to C \sharp . Damrau sings the D with minimal vibrato, which helps the clarity of the dissonance.

⁸⁶ *Liederabend*, Diana Damrau and Stephan Matthias Lademann, Orfeo (CD), 2006.

⁸⁷ *At Carnegie Hall [Live]*, Susan Graham and Malcolm Martineau, Erato (CD), 2003.

After lingering on the opening phrase, they take a steadier pace at the *a tempo* in m. 5. Lademann adds a slight *tenuto* on the first beat of the D minor harmony in m. 5, giving the listener time to register the remarkable change in color from F# minor to D minor. While they incorporate *rubato* throughout their performance, the rest of the song has a forward motion that contrasts with the sustained opening passage. Their overall tempo is close to quarter note=52. Damrau uses variations in vocal color to accentuate certain words; for example, the *portamento* in m. 9 from D down to E on the word “Atemzüge” (breath, or more literally: the act of taking a breath) evokes the drawing of breath through the air. In m. 12, Damrau sings with a relatively straight tone on “Mondnacht” (moon-night), creating a distinctive and brighter color on this word as the harmony unexpectedly shifts to A major.

Damrau and Lademann slow down substantially at the *poco rit.* in m. 12. However, Lademann plays with only a slight hint of space between measures 12 and 13, where the breath mark is indicated. The way in which he connects the phrases here emphasizes the continuity of the musical texture, and the larger arc of the song. They perform with increasing momentum and intensity beginning on the text “ein Rosenduft an unserer Liebe Bett” (a scent of roses to our love bed came) in mm. 15-17. Damrau sings this text in one breath, and accelerates the tempo through “an unserer Liebebett,” using the triplet figure in the vocal line to propel the line forward. She darkens her timbre with the use of chest voice on “Liebe Bett,” which descends to a low C, and her tone draws attention to the sensual imagery of the poem.

In general, Damrau enunciates the text quite clearly, lengthening and emphasizing the consonants throughout. In addition to bringing out the expressivity of the language, her diction helps her voice to project across the full texture of the piano accompaniment. For example, she sings a strong “Tr” in “Träume” (m. 20); the word begins on an F, relatively low in the soprano

vocal range, and the “Tr” allows her voice to carry over the sound of the piano, which is relatively dense and growing towards the *ff* dynamic of the following phrase.

Damrau and Lademann convey an intense drama in the final phrase of “Liebesode.” In mm. 22-24, Damrau sings the final vocal line, “so reich an Sehnsucht” (so rich in longing), in one breath. Many singers, including Graham, breathe after “reich,” but Damrau’s phrasing allows the energy to build continually through this final phrase. She sings with a full tone, and although she observes the *decrescendo* on the final note, she continues the intensity of her sound to the last moment, finishing with a percussive “t” at the end of the word “Sehnsucht.” On the last eighth note of m. 23, Lademann accents the staccato bass C# octave. These sharp articulations in both voice and piano add a bitterness to the final emotion, which also is suggested by the stark sound of F# minor.

Susan Graham and Malcolm Martineau interpret the song with an equally passionate but somewhat warmer quality. In contrast to Damrau’s brighter soprano timbre, Graham’s mezzo-soprano voice has a round, opulent tone which contributes to the overall character of her performance. In addition, she and Martineau create a different mood through specific musical details. They move through the opening four measures with a slightly quicker tempo and more straightforward rhythm than Damrau and Lademann. After m. 4, on the other hand, they pause for a longer breath, allowing the impression of the first phrase to settle for a moment before launching into the next section. In m. 2, Graham ascends to the high F# on “schlafen” (fell asleep) with a lighter tone, coloring this word to reflect its meaning.

Beginning in m. 5, Graham and Martineau take a faster tempo than Damrau and Lademann, approximately quarter note=63, substantially quicker than Berg’s marking of 46. Their sweeping tempo reflects the passionate energy of the poetry, and gives their performance a

livelier quality. In contrast to Lademann, Martineau moves rather quickly through the D minor harmony at the beginning of m. 5, almost without enough time to hear the unexpected harmonic shift. In general, however, their tempo is quite effective, and like Damrau and Lademann, they incorporate a great deal of *rubato* throughout the piece.

Graham highlights many details in the text. In m. 6, she elongates the “sch” of “lauschte” in the phrase “lauschte der Sommerwind” (the summer wind watched), with the airiness of the “sch” evoking the sound of the wind. Like Damrau, she uses *portamento* in mm. 8-9 on the phrase “und unsrer Atemzüge” (and our breath), again creating the impression of the moving breath. The larger intervals (the seventh from D down to E, in this case) also naturally suggest *portamento* in this expressive, Romantic vocal line.

Martineau interprets the breath mark after m. 12 somewhat differently than Lademann: Martineau observes the *poco rit.* in m. 12, but does not create an actual break in the piano sound. He apparently infers from Berg’s marking not a literal breath or pause, but rather a place where the music “breathes” slightly in terms of timing. In addition to the *poco rit.*, Martineau also carefully observes the *pp* marking at m. 13, with the piano moving almost imperceptibly into the *a tempo*, and creating the mood of the moonlit night. Both performances reinforce the idea that the music does not come to a distinct resting point at this breath mark, but continues forward in a larger gesture.

Graham and Martineau begin to slow down significantly beginning in m. 20, on “Träume des Rausches” (ecstatic dreams). In contrast to Damrau, Graham breathes after the word “reich” in m. 22; the breath allows her to take more time through the final phrase, and she accomplishes an expressive *decrescendo* through the last note. In this phrase, their pacing, softer dynamic, and smoother articulation (Martineau plays the staccato C# in m. 23 much more gently than

Lademann) all contribute to the performance's final impression, which comes across as an ardent longing rather than the darker, more bitter quality suggested by Damrau's interpretation. While these two performances of "Liebesode" convey distinctly different moods, both capture the intense passion of the poetry and music.

Chapter 7: “Sommertage”

In his discussion of the *Sieben frühe Lieder*, Redlich asserts that “the most progressive song of the whole group is undoubtedly ‘Nacht,’”⁸⁸ and many scholars have noted the extensive use of whole-tone sonorities, interval cycles, and extended tonality in this song. Nevertheless, “Sommertage,” the final song of the set, can be considered equally forward-looking. It has the densest texture of all the songs; as Headlam observes, “Sommertage” is an early example of the highly motivically-based compositional style—based on Schoenberg’s *Grundgestalt* model—that recurs throughout Berg’s later works.⁸⁹ As in “Traumgekrönt,” tonality is still a unifying principle, but motivic development is equally important, and many of the vertical sonorities arise as a result of the counterpoint between motives. The contrapuntal texture is more intricate than in “Traumgekrönt,” and almost every melody can be traced back to a few basic motives. “Sommertage” also foreshadows the large-scale operatic sound of *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*; its expansive, dramatic quality is elucidated further in Berg’s orchestration of the song. In addition to its more modern elements, the mood of “Sommertage” stands out among the *Sieben frühe Lieder*: the quicker tempo, more syllabic vocal lines, and constant motion in the piano accompaniment contrast with the primarily lyrical and slower music of the rest of the cycle. The energetic character reflects Paul Hohenberg’s text; descriptions of summer days and the wandering poet evoke a brighter, more animated tone, while all of the other songs are filled with images of evening and nighttime.

Though the song is complex, its formal structure is relatively clear: tempo markings, changes in harmony and texture, and cadences delineate each section (see Figure 7.1). Each cadence forms an elision with the following phrase.

⁸⁸ Redlich, *Alban Berg*, 38.

⁸⁹ Headlam, *The Music of Alban Berg*, 31.

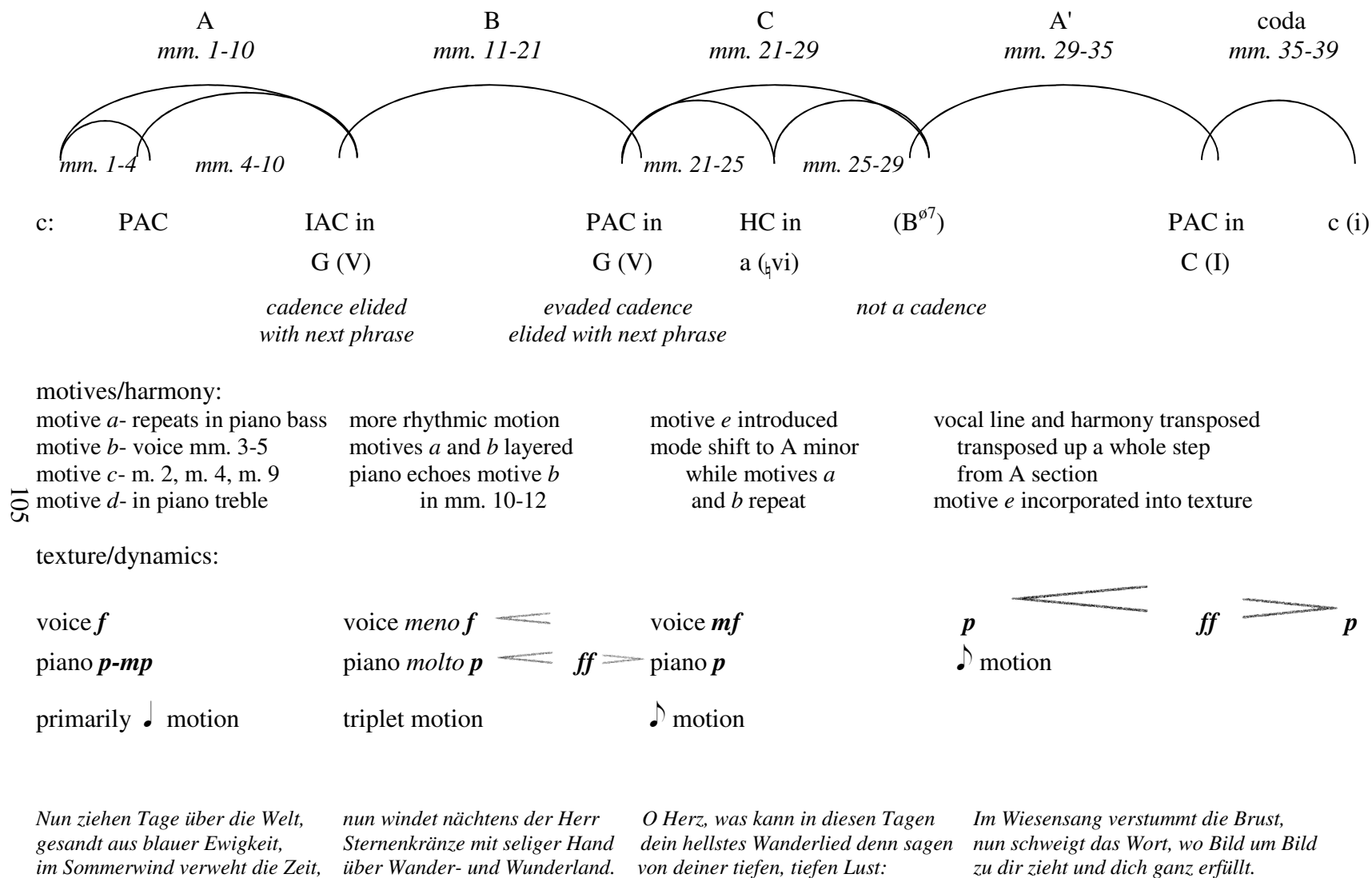


Figure 7.1. Form chart of "Sommertage"

The form of the song is closely related to the structure and rhyme scheme of the poetry. Although the poem is not arranged in stanzas, the first half can be organized into three-line groupings, each with an *abb* rhyme pattern. Each group of three lines constitutes a separate musical section, as illustrated in the form chart. In the second half of the poem, the rhyme scheme changes: the last six lines are grouped together in an *aabbcc* pattern. Berg continues to set three lines as sections in the second half of the song; as a result, the rhyme scheme overlaps the transition from the C section back to A'. The weaker harmonic motion at the end of C (mm. 28-29 allude to the earlier cadences but use a half-diminished seventh chord in place of a dominant harmony) and the slur in m. 29 that connects the bass line of the piano between the two sections create a musical elision that reflects the poetic structure.

Sommertage (Paul Hohenberg)

a Nun ziehen Tage über die Welt,
b gesandt aus blauer Ewigkeit,
b im Sommerwind verweht die Zeit,
a nun windet nächtens der Herr
b Sternenkranze mit seliger Hand
b über Wander- und Wunderland.
a O Herz, was kann in diesen Tagen
a dein hellstes Wanderlied denn sagen
b von deiner tiefen, tiefen Lust:
b Im Wiesensang verstummt die Brust,
c nun schweigt das Wort, wo Bild um Bild
c zu dir zieht und dich ganz erfüllt.

Summer Days

Now days move over the world,
sent from blue eternity,
in the summer wind drifts away,
now at night the Lord twines
star-garlands with blessed hand
over wander- and wonderland.
O heart, what in these days
can your clearest wanderer's song then say
of your deep, deep pleasure:
in the meadow's song the heart is silent,
words cease, where image upon image
comes to you and fills you completely.

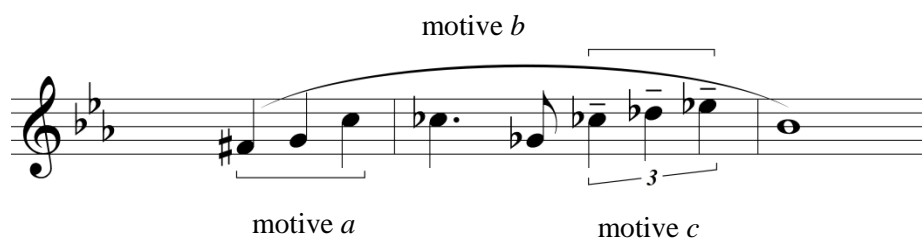
Throughout “Sommertage,” small motives are repeated, transposed, inverted, varied, and layered on top of one another; the voice and piano parts continually imitate and interweave with each other. Examples 7.1-7.6 outline the central motives of the song and show a few examples of how they are developed; almost any melodic fragment in the song can be linked to one of these motives.



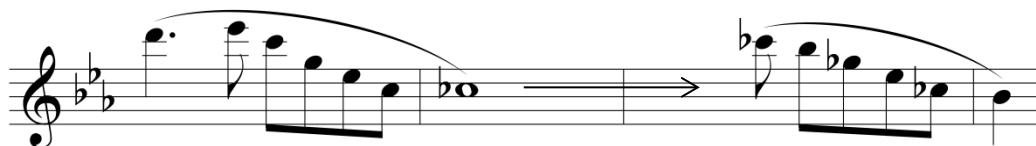
Example 7.1. Motive *a*, m. 1



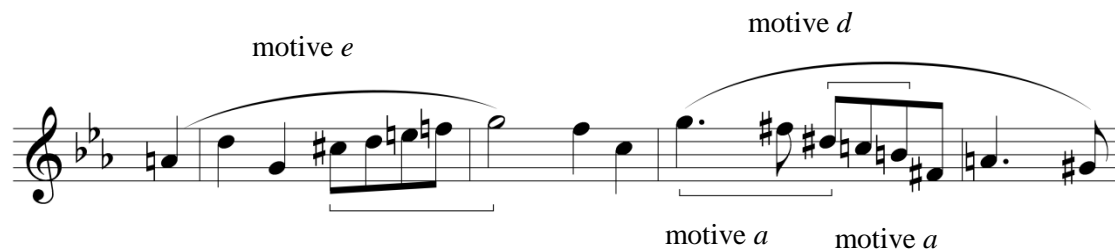
Example 7.2. Motive *a* diminished to half step, minor third (see m. 12)



Example 7.3. Motive *b*, mm. 4-6, which contains two smaller fragments, motives *a* & *c*



Example 7.4. Motive *d*, mm. 4-5, piano. Similar contour, mm. 6-7.



Example 7.5. Motive *e*, mm. 21-23; motives *a* and *d* combined, mm. 24-25



Example 7.6. Ascending eighth notes from motive *e*, m. 22 piano

The motivic texture is evident in the opening measures of “Sommertage.” The first notes in the piano, F#-G-C, form one of the primary motives in the song (Example 7.1, motive *a*). This melodic motion—up a half step and then up a fourth—is echoed immediately in the right hand with C-D \flat -G \flat ; the G \flat then overlaps to form another entrance of the motive on G \flat -G-C. The descending chromatic bass line in mm. 2-3 simultaneously introduces the semitone voice leading that Berg uses throughout the song. The vocal line begins in m. 4 with motive *a* and then adds onto it, forming a longer melodic line (Example 7.3, motive *b*). Within this vocal line, the quarter-note triplet (motive *c*) is another smaller fragment used frequently throughout the piece; this triplet figure first appears in m. 3 of the piano part, leading to the cadence in m. 4.

In mm. 4-5, the descending arpeggiated figure in the treble of the piano part constitutes another recurring motive in the song, motive *d*. This motive appears frequently, but not always with the exact same intervals. For example, in mm. 6-7, the rhythm and contour of the motive are imitated, although the initial dotted quarter note is omitted, and the intervals are slightly altered (Example 7.4). A further transformation of motive *d* occurs later in the song; in m. 24, the intervals are more significantly modified from the original, but the rhythm and shape of the melody can still be traced back to the original motive in mm. 4-5 (see Example 7.5). These primary melodic and rhythmic motives, which are introduced in the opening six measures, recur continually throughout the piece.

An additional melody, motive *e*, is introduced in the second half of the song, in mm. 21-23 (Example 7.5). Different fragments of this motive are repeated, sometimes including the initial quarter notes (heard in the vocal line in mm. 21-22) and sometimes only the eighth notes (as in mm. 24-25 in the piano part). The ascending eighth notes are emphasized with tenuto/staccato marks in m. 22 (Example 7.6), and again with tenuto marks in mm. 24-25 and mm. 29-end. Motive *e* is used in sections C and A', and creates further continuity between these final two sections, which are also connected by the poetic and formal structure. The first beat of m. 29 is simultaneously the end of section C and the first note of A', and the motive in the bass line (A-D-G \sharp -A-B-C \sharp etc.) echoes mm. 22-25 in the voice part. The eighth notes of motive *e* also create a sense of forward momentum and drama that builds to the end of section C on the words “tiefen Lust” (deep pleasure) in mm. 26-28, and also to the final cadence of the song in m. 35.

In the midst of this dense motivic texture, tonality still provides a framework for this piece, though the harmonic progression is at times elusive. The song is in C minor, and cadences mark the end of each musical section (except for section C), as outlined in the form chart in Figure 7.1. Additionally, parallel harmonic progressions appear at several points in the song. Beginning in m. 3, a V chord leads to a i chord (C minor) in m. 4. In m. 5, a C \flat -major chord is then layered on top of C minor, creating a diminished sound, followed by a iii chord (E \flat minor). The same harmonic progression occurs at the beginning of the B section (mm. 10-13), transposed to G major, and a similar progression takes place at the return to the A' section in mm. 28-31 in D. These parallel progressions create a consistent harmonic language and sense of formal design.

Nevertheless, several elements create a high degree of tonal ambiguity. As mentioned earlier, the cadences always overlap with the following phrases. In m. 22, the cadence is both elided with the next phrase (which begins in the vocal line on the anacrusis to m. 22), and also evaded, by using a G dominant ninth chord in place of a G-major triad. At the end of section C, in mm. 28-29, we expect a cadence similar to the preceding ones, but instead we hear a B half-diminished seventh chord, which leads to a D-centered harmony in m. 29, but with no third. This “cadential” passage alludes to the other cadences but is less harmonically stable; however, a similar elision of phrases occurs here. Even the strong final cadence in m. 35 elides with the melodic material of the *coda*, which begins on the downbeat of m. 35 in the right-hand piano part.

The motivic counterpoint of the song also creates unexpected harmonic shifts. For example, in m. 22, the G dominant ninth chord—the evaded resolution of the preceding V chord—leads to more remote harmonies. Following this chord, the piano treble line G-A \flat -D \flat (motive *a*), the melody in the vocal line, and the descending chromatic line in the bass combine to form a less predictable harmonic progression (containing several non-harmonic tones) beginning on beat three of m. 22: B \flat ⁷-A⁷-fm. Throughout “Sommertage,” the music tends to shift quickly away from major and minor triads. Another example is in the opening of the song; mm. 3-4 clearly establish C minor, but in m. 5, a C \flat -major chord sounds over the C-minor chord in the bass; the addition of G \flat creates a diminished-sounding chord and veils the sense of a stable tonal center.

Chromatic voice leading and harmonic motion by common tone further contribute to the song’s tonal ambiguity. The wedge shape in the bass in m. 2, as well as the chords in mm. 2-3, move primarily by half step; these chords embellish the dominant harmony underlying the

passage. Measure 10 has a similar series of parallel chords moving chromatically. Relatively remote harmonic connections are also made smooth through common-tone voice leading: for example, in m. 24, the E \flat chord in the right hand of the piano shifts to a B 7 sonority through the common tone of E \flat /D \sharp . Above this complex progression, in the vocal line, motive *a* has been both melodically inverted and intervallically diminished from its original form to a half step plus a minor third (G-F \sharp -D \sharp), while the larger gesture imitates the contour of motive *d* (see Example 7.5).

Motives, harmony, and rhythm combine to create a constant forward motion in “Sommertage,” which reflects lines such as “im Sommerwind verweht die Zeit” (in the summer wind time drifts away) and the image of the wandering poet. The harmonies never settle, but shift incessantly from consonant triads to more dissonant sonorities, as the motives overlap and interweave; the elided and evaded cadences further contribute to this effect. An insistent rhythmic motion helps to perpetuate these ever-shifting harmonies. Example 7.7 (mm. 11-16) illustrates this intricate texture. The eighth-note triplets which begin in the piano part in m. 11 contain many occurrences of motive *a*, sometimes inverted and retrograded, while the piano plays motive *b* in the sustained treble line above the triplets. At the same time, the voice sings a countermelody, and the music wonderfully reflects the text “nun windet nächstens der Herr/Sternenkränze mit seliger Hand/über Wander- und Wunderland” (now at night the Lord twines/star-garlands with blessed hand/over wander- and wonderland) as the melodic lines are woven together, with the piano and voice echoing each other.

a tempo
meno f

Nun win - det nāch - tens der

poco espr:
motive b

molto p
retrograde inversion of motive a

motive a
diminished

motive a diminished, retrograde inversion

Viel Ped.

Herr Ster - nen - krān - ze mit

motive a

echo of voice m. 12

pp
motive a

motive c

poco a poco accel.
cresc.

se - li - ger Hand ü - ber

cresc.

Example 7.7. Motivic texture, mm. 11-16

For performers, one of the most immediately apparent features of “Sommertage” is the change of text, tempo, musical phrasing, and general mood that contrasts with the other songs in the set. Nevertheless, there is a tension between this brighter expressive quality and some of the song’s darker and more dissonant harmonies. In mm. 21-28, on the text “O Herz, was kann in diesen Tagen/dein hellstes Wanderlied denn sagen/von deiner tiefen, tiefen Lust” (O heart, what in these days/can your clearest wanderer’s song then say/of your deep, deep pleasure), the phrase leads to an A-minor chord and then to a B half-diminished seventh chord on the words “tiefen Lust” (deep pleasure). Although “Lust” is translated as joy or pleasure, throughout the *Sieben frühe Lieder*, joy is colored by a sense of longing and even sorrow. Setting the word “Lust” with a minor chord followed by a half-diminished seventh chord conveys an ambiguity in this feeling of happiness.

The final section of “Sommertage” (mm. 29-end) references the opening A section, but the music is changed in light of the dramatic unfolding of the song. First of all, the vocal line at *Tempo I* (m. 29) begins with the same melody as the opening phrase in m. 4, transposed up a whole step, and as noted earlier, the underlying harmonic progression is similar. The character at m. 29 is different, however, because of the preceding “cadence” on a B half-diminished seventh chord and the sparse texture in the piano part, both of which result in a less stable, wandering quality. Another reference to the opening is the relationship between the introductory cadence and the final cadence, comparing mm. 1-5 with mm. 32 (beat 4)-36. These two passages are parallel to one another, with an identical bass line and similar harmonic motion. The difference lies in the drama of how these phrases proceed. The cadence in m. 4 arrives at a fleeting C minor harmony, and quickly progresses into other harmonic realms as the song begins. Meanwhile, the cadence in m. 35 resolves to a strong C-major chord which propels forward into the *coda*.

Through this emphatic cadence in C major, the surrounding harmonic and motivic density sustains the sense of tension that has been building throughout the song. As the *coda* proceeds, we hear another reference to the opening vocal melody (see m. 5) in the right-hand piano part in mm. 36-37: C \flat -G \flat -C \flat -D \flat -E \flat -C. This time, however, the music remains in the key of C, and finally ends with a sense of inevitability on the C-minor tonality that was alluded to from the start. Following the *ff* cadence in C major in m. 35, the final *p* C-minor chord is eerie and unsettling, and suggests the dichotomy in all of the *Sieben frühe Lieder* between light and darkness, joy and sorrow.

In his analysis of Berg's Op. 1 *Piano Sonata*, Redlich considers the impact of the final cadence in B minor, which concludes this complex and predominantly atonal work. He notes, "Berg's predilection for tonal cadences, even towards the end of compositions with considerably diminished tonal implications, became in time an unmistakable feature of his personal idiom."⁹⁰ While not as experimental as the 1908 *Piano Sonata*, "Sommertage," composed in the same year, does stretch tonality to its limits, and like the sonata, it ends with a strong V-I cadence. While the cadence roots the piece firmly in tonality, the harmonies in this passage are quite dense: mm. 33-34 contain a diminished chord, a whole-tone chord, and numerous chromatic neighbor notes, such that the harmonies are completely saturated with colors. The text here is "wo Bild um Bild/zu dir zieht und dich ganz erfüllt" (where image upon image comes to you and fills you wholly), and the "fullness" of these harmonies conveys this idea. In fact, the musical density throughout the song evokes this image from the poetry. On a larger scale, because of its placement at the end of the entire *Sieben frühe Lieder*, the idea of "image upon image" suggests not only this song, but all that has taken place in the preceding songs as well.

⁹⁰ Redlich, *Alban Berg*, 49.

Performance Considerations

Of the *Sieben frühe Lieder*, “Sommertage” is one of the most challenging songs to perform, both technically and musically. Even “Nacht” and “Traumgekrönt,” which are both quite complex, feel more traditionally lyrical in their expression. In “Sommertage,” the harmonies change more quickly and the dense motivic texture often obscures tonality; as a result, performers must rely more on the shaping of phrases, pacing, and overall dramatic arc rather than on traditional tonal cues and intuitive melodic gestures. The dramatic interpretation is also complicated: while the song is livelier than the others and the poetry expresses joy, as discussed above, the harmonies simultaneously convey uncertainty and tension. Soprano Magda Laszlo with pianist Lotthar Broddack⁹¹ and Barbara Bonney with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (conducted by Riccardo Chailly)⁹² illustrate a range of interpretive choices in their recordings of “Sommertage.”

Laszlo and Broddack use *rubato*, articulation, and dynamics quite expressively throughout their performance of “Sommertage,” highlighting the contrasts between sections, and the dramatic progression of the song. Broddack plays the piano introduction with an *accelerando*, emphasizing the accumulation of motivic entrances, and then takes a slight *ritardando* before the cadence in m. 4. Their overall tempo reflects Berg’s marking of “Schwungvoll” (energetically, sweeping), with a forward momentum.

⁹¹ *Second Viennese School Project*, Magda Laszlo and Lotthar Broddack, Audite (CD), 1949-1965, remastered 2012. This recording, a 4-CD set which includes multiple works by Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern, is of historical interest. The following description is printed in the CD booklet:

“These recordings of central works of the Viennese School, made between 1949 and 1965, are unique musical and historic documents. The first-rate interpreters predominantly come from the immediate circle around the composers, either as pupils of Schoenberg’s or as acquaintances of the composers. With this degree of authenticity and thanks to manifold interpretational approaches, this anthology offers comprehensive first-hand insights into the Second Viennese School.”

⁹² *Mahler 4/Berg: Seven Early Songs*, Barbara Bonney and Riccardo Chailly, with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Decca Import (CD), 1999.

They highlight the contrasting texture and mood of the B section (mm. 11-21) by using a more *legato* tone in both the piano and vocal lines. Their sound conveys the peaceful quality of the text: “nun windet nächtens der Herr/Sternenkränze mit seliger Hand” (now at night the Lord twines/star-garlands with blessed hand). Also in this section, Broddack brings out the echoes of the vocal line in the right hand, evoking the “twining” of the garlands.

At the *poco pesante* in m. 20, Broddack slows down the tempo significantly; his pacing here allows time for a slight *tenuto* on the *ff* chord on beat one, and a *tenuto* on the accented bass E \flat on beat two. His performance highlights the fact that this measure is an important moment in the drama of the song: it is a culmination of the previous phrase, which builds in intensity towards “Wunderland” (wonderland), but it also is a turning point towards the following section (mm. 21-29), in which the text shifts from a description of the beauty of nature (the “blue eternity” of the summer days and the “star-garlands” of night) to the expression of the inner feelings of the poet, addressing his heart: “O Herz, was kann in diesen Tagen/dein hellstes Wanderlied denn sagen/von deiner tiefen, tiefen Lust” (O heart, what in these days/can your clearest wanderer’s song then say/of your deep, deep pleasure). Broddack leads into this section with the indicated *dimin.* to *p* in mm. 20-22, the softer dynamic reflecting this more inward text. The vocal line is marked *mf*, also softer than the previous phrase. Laszlo sings mm. 21-25 with a clear and somewhat brighter tone; undoubtedly she was familiar with the orchestration of the song, and perhaps had in mind the sound of the violin, which doubles the voice on this line. In any case, she sings with a more delicate tone, responding to Broddack’s *diminuendo*. As the phrase builds towards the “cadence” in m. 28, Laszlo sings a slight *portamento* on “tiefen” (deep) to accentuate the repetition of this word and its increasing intensity.

After growing to the *ff* final cadence, Laszlo and Broddack finish the song with a somewhat more subdued character. Laszlo sings a *decrescendo* on the final note in m. 35, which is not marked in the vocal line, although there is a *decrescendo* indicated in the treble piano part. This dynamic change is an unusual choice (in most recordings, the singer finishes with a full *forte* tone through the last note), but it has a distinct and expressive effect. Laszlo's *decrescendo* changes the mood of the performance in this moment, and anticipates the tone of the final *p* C-minor chord. Broddack plays the *subito mf* in m. 37 quite effectively, with a sudden dynamic shift. Laszlo's final phrase, combined with the progressively softer dynamics of the coda, conveys a sense of loneliness or longing, emphasizing the ambiguity of the song's "tiefen Lust" (deep pleasure).

Barbara Bonney's performance of "Sommertage" has a brighter, more dramatic character. Her initial tempo is slightly slower than Laszlo's, and she uses a more *marcato* tone in the opening section, using energetic text and a lively sound. Bonney frequently brings out the nuances of the text: she sings with a more legato sound on "im Sommerwind verweht die Zeit" (in the summer wind time drifts away), depicting the smooth flowing of time.

Following the B section, the orchestra accelerates at the *poco pesante* in m. 20, in contrast to Broddack's slowing of the tempo. The music then moves energetically forward at this striking moment in the music. Bonney and Chailly use *rubato* throughout, especially in mm. 25-28 on the text "von deiner tiefen Lust" (of your deep pleasure), where Bonney significantly lengthens the last three eighth notes of m. 25. The score indicates *a tempo, ma molto rubato* in mm. 26-28, and they use this *rubato* to build up the tension of this section, which leads to A minor and then the B half-diminished seventh chord.

Bonney and Chailly bring the song to a powerful conclusion. Bonney sings the text “nun schweigt das Wort, wo Bild um Bild/zu dir zieht” (words cease, where image upon image/comes to you and fills you completely) all in one breath (mm. 31-33), creating an expansive arc over this line that builds towards the final cadence. She also breathes before the final word “erfüllt” (fills), which allows her to intensify the final note and sustain it with a strong dynamic.

Bonney’s ending phrase contrasts with Laszlo’s *decrescendo*, and each approach has a different expressive result. Overall, Bonney’s performance comes across as livelier, in the momentum of her tempo and *rubato*, and her energetic singing. It should be noted that Laszlo’s interpretation, while possible with the piano version, is probably not practical for the orchestrated version; with the full orchestration at this point in the song, the singer will likely need to remain *forte* on the final note in order to be heard.

The orchestration of “Sommertage” adds a great deal of color to the song, and enhances its operatic characteristics. In particular, the percussion highlights several significant moments. The triangle in m. 11 on the G-major cadence signals the change of mood and texture in the B section (mm. 11-21), and its high, ringing pitch evokes the stars described in the poetry. At the *poco pesante* in m. 20, the tam tam plays on beat two together with the low accented E \flat , adding further depth to this theatrical moment. In the following phrase, the vocal line in mm. 21-25 is doubled an octave higher with a solo violin. Bonney sings this phrase with a bright, clear tone that imitates the violin sound. The final cadence is accentuated with a cymbal crash in m. 35. All of these percussive sounds create an atmospheric effect, bringing to life the drama of the song. The final chord of the orchestra is also striking: the winds and brass begin the *p* C minor chord on beat three of m. 38, while the strings are still sustaining a *forte*, *senza diminuendo*. The strings cut off abruptly after the first beat of m. 39, dramatically revealing the winds and brass on

the final *p* chord. The change in dynamic is reinforced by the immediate change in instrumental timbre. Broddack successfully evokes this quality on the piano with his use of *subito* dynamics.

Bonney and Chailly take full advantage of the atmosphere evoked by the orchestration of “Sommertage.” Their performance reflects the inherent drama of the song, and leaves an impression of intense longing. Laszlo and Broddack, with a somewhat more subdued performance, also bring out the nuances of the song as well as its larger expressive arc, interpreting the final phrase with a more inward quality. In both cases, the meaning of the poetry is conveyed through the complex yet lyrical style of the song.

The *Sieben frühe Lieder* evolve from beginning to end in a striking dramatic arc. Along with the text and musical expression of each individual piece, the stylistic progression and symmetry of the whole is equally compelling. The cycle begins with the evocative whole-tone and atonal sounds of “Nacht,” and ends with the intricate motivic texture and complex drama of “Sommertage.” The more traditional pieces are framed within these two outer songs, with the ethereal “Traumgekrönt” marking the midpoint. One common thread through all of the songs is the expression of an unfulfilled desire for something unattainable or unknown, an idea which culminates in the intense final phrases of “Sommertage.”

Musical analysis combined with a study of recordings reveals a great deal of nuance in these pieces. An analysis can guide performers in making informed interpretive decisions: an understanding of the form, motives, changes in color and texture, and details of text-setting provides performers with a wide range of interpretive possibilities. Equally valuable is listening

to performances, which reveal more about the music than analysis alone can: different performances accentuate different aspects of the music, and bring to the forefront details that might otherwise go unnoticed. Performers inevitably use their intuitive sense of phrasing, timing, and expression to highlight significant moments in the music, and bring the theatrical quality of these songs to life.

In comparing multiple recordings, it is clear that the interpretation of a piece plays a significant role in what it communicates. Choices about individual details of the music combine to create an overall impression and tone. Since Berg's music is inherently dramatic and full of expressive details, it makes all the more sense to consider performance as essential to an analysis of the *Sieben frühe Lieder*.

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