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Uncanny Conversations: Depictions of the Supernatural in Dialogue Lieder of the Nineteenth Century

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UNCANNY CONVERSATIONS:
DEPICTIONS OF THE SUPERNATURAL IN DIALOGUE LIEDER
OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

by

Delane J. Boyd

A THESIS

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UNCANNY CONVERSATIONS:
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University of Nebraska, 2016

Advisor: Pamela Starr

This thesis seeks to communicate the ways in which supernatural beings were musically depicted in dialogue Lieder of the Romantic era. Through analyses of a selection of nineteenth-century German art songs featuring both human and non-human participants within the textual conversations, this study endeavors to identify musical techniques composers used to distinguish between supernatural and mortal speech in songs presented as dialogues while composed for a solo singer. The document is organized into three sections. The first establishes a historical framework for the supernatural dialogue Lied through discussion of the context of German Romanticism, the roots of the prevalence of supernatural themes and subjects in nineteenth-century poetry and music, and the elements of the dialogue text format. The second section examines three songs by Franz Schubert that each include a personification of death as the non-human participant in the dialogues. The third section considers three songs by the later Lied composers Robert Schumann, Hugo Wolf, and Gustav Mahler, each of which features a character whose supernatural nature is revealed through the dialogue's progression. The closing statement provides a summary of the musical techniques used to portray non-human characters and discusses the historical and artistic significance of the small yet intriguing subgenre of nineteenth-century supernatural dialogue Lieder.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF MULTIMEDIA OBJECTS	v
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: HISTORICAL AND POETIC CONTEXT	4
Forerunners to German Romanticism	5
The Role of the Supernatural in Romantic Ideology	9
Dialogue Songs: The Poetic Strategies	13
CHAPTER 2: DIALOGUES WITH DEATH: THREE SONGS BY FRANZ SCHUBERT	23
“Der Erlkönig” (D 328)	25
“Der Tod und das Mädchen” (D 531)	33
“Der Jüngling und der Tod” (D 545)	40
CHAPTER 3: DISCOVERIES AND DISCLOSURES: ROBERT SCHUMANN, GUSTAV MAHLER, AND HUGO WOLF	50
Robert Schumann: “Waldesgespräch”	50
Gustav Mahler: “Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen”	56
Hugo Wolf: “Lied vom Winde”	66
CONCLUSION	75
APPENDIX A: TEXT TRANSLATIONS	78
BIBLIOGRAPHY	83

LIST OF MULTIMEDIA OBJECTS

Figure 2.1	Schubert, "Der Erlkönig" (D 328), mm. 1-8	27
Figure 2.2	Schubert, "Der Erlkönig" (D 328), mm. 34-47	29
Figure 2.3	Schubert, "Der Erlkönig" (D 328), mm. 58-66	30
Figure 2.4	Schubert, "Der Erlkönig" (D 328), mm. 112-122	32
Figure 2.5	Schubert, "Der Tod und das Mädchen" (D 531), mm. 1-6	36
Figure 2.6	Schubert, "Der Tod und das Mädchen" (D 531), mm. 16-19	37
Figure 2.7	Schubert, "Der Tod und das Mädchen" (D 531), mm. 22-43	39
Figure 2.8	Schubert, "Der Jüngling und der Tod" (D 545), mm. 9-14	44
Figure 2.9	Schubert, "Der Jüngling und der Tod" (D 545), mm. 15-18	45
Figure 2.10	Schubert, "Der Jüngling und der Tod" (D 545), mm. 21-23	46
Figure 2.11	Schubert, "Der Jüngling und der Tod" (D 545), mm. 24-27	46
Figure 3.1	Schumann, "Waldesgespräch," mm. 1-4	53
Figure 3.2	Schumann, "Waldesgespräch," mm. 15-22	54
Figure 3.3	Schumann, "Waldesgespräch," mm. 41-43	55
Figure 3.4	Mahler, "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen," mm. 1-22	61
Figure 3.5	Mahler, "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen," mm. 37-51	63
Figure 3.6	Mahler, "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen," mm. 88-95	63
Figure 3.7	Mahler, "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen," mm. 177-192	65
Figure 3.8	Wolf, "Lied vom Winde," mm. 1-5	70
Figure 3.9	Wolf, "Lied vom Winde," mm. 15-24	71
Figure 3.10	Wolf, "Lied vom Winde," mm. 58-61	72
Figure 3.11	Wolf, "Lied vom Winde," mm. 74-77	72

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2015, I had the opportunity to take a survey course on the music of the Romantic era taught by Dr. Pamela Starr. Throughout the semester my classmates and I studied the long nineteenth century's composers, from Ludwig van Beethoven to Gustav Mahler, as well as their myriad musical works, from symphonies to songs. Around the middle of the semester we began exploring the works of Robert Schumann, including a Lied I was not familiar with titled "Waldesgespräch," which translates to "Forest Conversation." True to its title, the song was presented as a verbal exchange between two individuals who came upon each other in a forest, one a noble knight, the other an evil witch disguised as a lovely young woman.¹ Schumann's musical setting of this dialogue text struck me. Although the song was written for performance by a solo singer, it was always apparent which character the singer was portraying in any given verse as a result of the compositional techniques Schumann employed. The music itself was able to distinguish between the words of the knight and the witch's speech without any need for the singer to change vocal quality.

My interest for dialogue songs thus sparked, I began seeking out other examples amongst collections of nineteenth-century German Lieder. Several songs I came across that fit the criteria were familiar to me: "Der Erlkönig" and "Der Tod und das Mädchen," both by Franz Schubert, are two well-known examples. However, I was surprised by the sheer number of dialogue songs within the oeuvres of prominent Romantic era Lied composers. As my collection of songs grew, a common thread emerged amongst a number of the texts: one of the conversing characters was a non-human entity.

¹ See Chapter 3 for an analysis of "Waldesgespräch."

Schumann's "Waldesgespräch" was not an isolated phenomenon. Indeed, texts in which supernatural beings conversed with humans cropped up time and again in nineteenth-century dialogue songs. I found myself drawn to these texts in particular rather than those featuring dialogues between two or more humans (of which there are many) primarily because I was curious how, exactly, Romantic composers had approached the issue of musically portraying an uncanny being. That question became the driving force behind this study.

This thesis seeks to communicate the ways in which supernatural beings were musically depicted in dialogue Lieder of the Romantic era. Through analyses of a selection of nineteenth-century German art songs featuring both human and non-human characters within the textual conversations, this study endeavors to bring attention to the specific musical techniques certain composers of the Romantic period utilized to distinguish between supernatural and mortal speech in songs written for a solo singer. Additionally, this study seeks to trace the roots of the prevalence of supernatural themes used in Romantic era art, and thus explain the historical and artistic significance of supernatural dialogue Lieder.²

This document is presented in three main sections. The first section establishes a historical framework for the supernatural dialogue Lied through discussion of the context of German Romanticism, the roots of the prevalence of supernatural themes and subjects in nineteenth-century poetry and music, and the elements of the dialogue text format. It concludes with brief artistic profiles of the poets whose texts were set to music in the Lieder analyzed in the subsequent chapters. Following this establishment of historical

² "Supernatural dialogue Lieder" is my own term for these songs. It will be used frequently throughout this study.

context is a chapter centered on three songs by Franz Schubert, each of which features the personification of death as the non-human dialogue participant. In addition to exploring Schubert's use of compositional devices in portraying death, the second chapter traces the shifting attitude toward death that characterized the Romantic era; the differing depictions of death in the songs' texts and, by extension, Schubert's musical settings, represent key stages of this development. The third and final section considers three songs by the later Lied composers Robert Schumann, Hugo Wolf, and Gustav Mahler. Each song features a character whose supernatural nature is initially hidden, but is eventually disclosed through the dialogue's progression. This "conceal and reveal" poetic device prompted particularly inventive musical approaches to the depiction of uncanny beings and helped bring the supernatural dialogue Lied to its full artistic realization. A closing statement provides a summary of the musical techniques used to portray non-human characters and discusses the historical and artistic significance of supernatural dialogue Lieder.

The six songs analyzed in this study do not constitute an exhaustive catalogue of Romantic era supernatural dialogue Lieder. Rather, they are presented as a representative sampling with which to survey some of the most salient compositional approaches to musical settings of dialogue texts featuring a supernatural being. The presence of these songs amidst the works of some of the most significant Romantic Lied composers shows them to be worthy of academic attention and analysis. It is hoped that this study will prompt further exploration into the small yet intriguing subgenre of nineteenth-century supernatural dialogue Lieder.

CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL AND POETIC CONTEXT

The term “Romanticism” as a descriptor for the artistic and intellectual trends of nineteenth-century Europe is fraught with ambiguity. It has notoriously resisted a single, unified meaning, thwarting scholars who seek to condense the many and varied historical influences, cultural paradigms, and aesthetic shifts inherent to the century into a straightforward definition. The reason for the difficulty in assigning a clear, succinct definition to the term is plain to see: the 1800s saw a huge amount of separate developments and innovations that occurred across a wide, culturally diverse geography. Even so, it is precisely the Romantic era’s historical density that inspires academic examination. Numerous scholars have noted the equivocal nature of “Romanticism” as an all-encompassing moniker for the features of the century’s literature, arts, and general culture and have even added their own views on its definition.³ In this study, however, I shall narrow the focus to a specific subject within the realm of Romanticism. Such a study, it is hoped, will permit a detailed consideration of an intriguing facet of one of the nineteenth century’s great artistic contributions: the German Lied.

In this chapter I will first explore the roots of German Romanticism, with special attention to how the concepts of irrationality, individuality, and nationalism came to prominence within nineteenth-century German culture and how each contributed to the development of the Lied. I will then consider the role the supernatural played in nineteenth-century artistic expression and how the psychology of Romanticism supported

³ See especially Edward F. Kravitt, “Romanticism Today,” *The Musical Quarterly* 76, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 93-109 and John Daverio, “Romantic Ideas and Romantic Music,” in *Nineteenth-Century Music and the German Romantic Ideology* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1993), 1-17.

its propagation in poetry and, by extension, in *Lieder*. The chapter will conclude with an examination of the dialogue form of poetry inherent to the six *Lieder* presented for analysis in this study, as well as brief artistic profiles of the poets whose writings were set in those *Lieder*. My intention is to use these historical and cultural contributors as a lens to focus the specific features of poetry and music that came together to form the supernatural dialogue *Lieder* of German Romanticism.

Forerunners to German Romanticism

Common to the structure and study of music history is the view of each stylistic period as a reaction to the one immediately preceding it. The music of the Romantic era is no exception. Historical events and cultural norms of the 1700s gave rise to the distinctive elements unique to nineteenth-century music. German Romanticism emerged in the wake of two particularly influential eighteenth-century events that reshaped the very essence of artistic expression: the Enlightenment era and the French Revolution. The revolt against Enlightenment ideals placed a new emphasis on intense emotion and striking individuality while the antagonism of the Germanic states toward the French Revolution created a sense of nationalism and renewed interest in German folk culture. These ideological shifts proved highly significant to the development of German Romantic *Lieder*.

The intellectual forces behind the Enlightenment, commonly referred to as the Age of Reason, showed a distinct favor for rationality and order as governing principles of culture and the arts. This philosophical movement grew out of the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century, which advocated empiricism and a rational view of the natural world. As a result, Enlightenment thinkers promoted the somewhat vague –

though undoubtedly noble – virtues of truth, reason, and humanity over subjectivity and emotional expression.⁴ As the 1700s progressed, however, artists began to chafe against the restraints imposed upon them by these orderly and methodical ideals. The result was the movement known as *Sturm und Drang* (typically translated as “Storm and Stress”), which served as a transition from the highly structured aesthetic of Classical music to the Romantic period’s impassioned and comparatively chaotic output. Distinguished by its marked intensity and dramatic emotionalism, the *Sturm und Drang* movement evolved seamlessly into nineteenth-century German Romanticism, in which the observable and reasoned gave way to the unknowable and irrational.⁵ Musicians and poets gave their emotions free creative reign, resulting in an increased emphasis on individuality.

Following what might be perceived as the restrictive atmosphere of the Enlightenment, artists of all types sought to cultivate expressive identities by relating their own experiences and artistic ideals within their creations. German Romanticism in particular was “first and foremost a period of intense emotionalism, introspection, and self-absorption.”⁶ Poets of the day celebrated the concept of the individual within their verses as well as the vast array of human emotions and the infinite ways in which those emotions were expressed. Inner contemplation and psychological turmoil characterized much of the work of German Romantic poets, reflecting feelings of unrest and dissatisfaction as well as a longing for personal freedom and peace.⁷ This emotionally saturated poetry appealed to German composers who likewise sought to express their

⁴ Linda Mitchell, “The Enlightenment, c. 1750,” in *Events That Changed the World in the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Frank W. Thackeray and John E. Findling (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 77-96.

⁵ Deborah Stein and Robert Spillman, *Poetry into Song: Performance and Analysis of Lieder* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

feelings through artistic means. While poetry related the sentiments of the poet alone, the marriage of music and text afforded by the Lied allowed for the expression of the thoughts, ideas, and, above all, emotions of the composer as well, highlighting the artists' individual reactions to the world around them.

In addition to rebellion against Enlightenment ideals, German antagonism extended to political movements influenced by Enlightenment thought. The effects of one such movement, the French Revolution, were far-reaching, igniting political and social upheaval across Europe. The French citizens' attempts to uproot the absolute monarchy and instate a government based on "liberty, equality, and fraternity" during the last decade of the eighteenth century was at first met with approval by the German populace in light of its liberal and democratic ideals; however, support turned quickly to antipathy upon the French occupation of German land and, later, the defeat of the German states during the Napoleonic wars. Fragmented though they were, the states' concerted efforts to restore their independence brought about a widespread feeling of nationality among the German-speaking people.⁸ The most tangible manifestation of this newfound patriotism was the emergence of Romantic nationalism, which William A. Wilson defines as

a movement not so much to protect the individual against the injustices of an authoritarian state, but rather an attempt to redraw political boundaries to fit the contours of ethnic bodies...romantic nationalism emphasized passion and instinct instead of reason, national differences instead of common aspirations, and, above all, the building of nations on the traditions and myths of the past – that is, on folklore – instead of on the political realities of the present.⁹

⁸ Leon Plantinga, *Romantic Music: A History of Musical Style in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984), 2-5, 220.

⁹ William A. Wilson, "Herder, Folklore and Romantic Nationalism," *Journal of Popular Culture* 6, no. 4 (Spring 1973): 820.

The spearhead of this nationalistic revival was the German scholar Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803). Herder's belief in the need for the people to develop a defined Germanic spirit through pride in their historic origins was the driving force behind the rebuilding of "a national culture on native foundations."¹⁰ To this end, folk elements took hold throughout the Germanic states, allowing the language, stories, and songs of the people to permeate the arts.

The emphasis on values of the past rather than a focus on grand ideas for the future is a key concept of Romantic nationalism, and, by extension, German Romanticism and the Lied's place within it. Through the cultivation of a distinct national identity, a profound significance was placed on the creations of German artists, which allowed the Lied to move from relative obscurity into a position of importance within the newfound national character. German poetry – both folk and contemporary – set to music by German composers for the enjoyment of and performance by the German people fell squarely into the desired nationalistic inclination of the time.

It was not due to any single cultural shift that the Lied as we know it was developed; rather, it was through the timely synthesis of each element discussed above. The emphasis on emotion and irrationality in response to the Enlightenment era, the emergent national identity and resurgence of folk culture in the wake of the French Revolution, and the flowering of German music and literature in response to these historical events and ideologies coalesced into the artful union of music and poetry that is the German Romantic Lied. The subjects the Lieder texts covered varied greatly, though many were directly influenced by the same historical occurrences and subsequent cultural

¹⁰ Ibid., 820-21.

adjustments. One particular theme that permeated the poetry of the Lied as a result of the emphases on folk stories, emotionalism, and irrationality was the supernatural.

The Role of the Supernatural in Romantic Ideology

Supernatural literary themes enjoyed a vogue during the nineteenth century, particularly in the realm of German Romanticism. Anyone familiar with the fairy stories of the German folk tale collectors Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm has encountered descriptions of supernatural entities. The brothers' stories are rife with benevolent fairies, evil witches, and ghostly apparitions. The success of their publication of collected folk tales in the early nineteenth century can be viewed as an extension of nationalism: the interest in Germanic folklore provided a prime environment for such stories to flourish across the unincorporated states seeking to establish a unified cultural identity.¹¹ Comparably, the Romantic emphasis on the mysterious and irrational in response to the Age of Enlightenment's objectivity and empiricism bolstered the popularity of tales about uncanny subjects. The Industrial Revolution also contributed to fascination with otherworldly forces. The huge technological advancements made in the last half of the 1700s continued into the nineteenth century, affecting virtually every aspect of European life.¹² This progress was met with hostility in certain artistic and intellectual circles. In the Germanic states the perceived over-mechanization of life prompted nostalgia for the simple wisdom of the *Volk*, or folk, specifically their seemingly uncomplicated and unspoiled relationship with the natural world.¹³

¹¹ Stein and Spillman, *Poetry into Song*, 16.

¹² David Mitch, "The Industrial Revolution, c. 1775," in *Events That Changed the World in the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Frank W. Thackeray and John E. Findling (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 135-52.

¹³ Plantinga, *Romantic Music*, 107.

Romantic poets in particular revered nature as an almost mystical force, daunting in its vastness yet comforting in its patterns. Encompassing everything from picturesque spring landscapes to roaring ocean tempests, the natural world provided poets with an abundance of evocative images with which to craft their verses. While the supernatural by definition may seem far removed from the natural world, this was not the case in the ideology of German Romanticism. Stein and Spillman assert, “The poet’s was a small voice within an immense, at times overpowering, natural presence that provoked both awe and dread and that included...the supernatural.”¹⁴ Romantic poets respected nature’s unknowable aspects and thus revolted against the scientific rationalization of the natural world that accompanied both the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution by extolling its mysteries. Natural settings such as dark and lonely forests – a common image in Romantic poetry – were beyond the human mind’s complete comprehension and therefore could be home to any number of uncanny beings, or so poets seemed to argue with the inclusion of such subjects in their works.¹⁵ However, this Romantic fascination with the enigmatic and unknowable was only in part a response to observable historical events. A more abstract shift toward the supernatural took place in the Romantic era as artistic expression turned inward to the realm of the human psyche.

In his article “Romanticism Today,” Edward F. Kravitt presents the term ‘expressive aesthetics’ as a descriptor for the inwardly directed artistic environment of the Romantic era. He contends that

the shift of focus to an expressive aesthetic, centered on the artist as creator, is the essence of romanticism.... Romantic art is introversive, generated by a consciousness of self, stimulated by and embodying the artist’s own perceptions, thoughts, and feelings.... [This] theory of

¹⁴ Stein and Spillman, *Poetry into Song*, 8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

romanticism centers on the artist's estrangement from society and consequent reaction: to turn within. This theory regards nature, mysticism, and other such subjects as avenues of escape.¹⁶

Kravitt goes on to explain how the cultural shifts inherent to the rise of the Romantic era caused a gap to form between artists and society at large: art was increasingly created as a means of self-expression rather than at the demand of a patron or public consumer.¹⁷ In response to this newfound artistic freedom, exploration of the psychological domain flourished. Dreams and the subconscious held great appeal for Romantic artists.¹⁸ In these inner realms, anything that could be imagined was within the artist's ability to create; in other words, the internal could become external.¹⁹ Thus, through the combined influence of folk tales, attention to the mysteries of the natural world, and the human psyche's unbounded possibilities, fantastic worlds populated with supernatural entities became a part of Romantic expressive aesthetics, appearing in such diverse mediums as visual art, literature, and music. However, as Kravitt maintains, this artistic autonomy brought with it a darker development in the psychology of Romantic artists: a widespread feeling of estrangement and isolation from mankind's societal structures. Artists sought peace from this alienation through their art, where they were free to create fantastical depictions of their own inner beings. This escape was only temporary, however, and upon realizing their art could at best provide a mere illusion of the happiness they sought, Romanticists embraced "negation of the world and [the] path that ultimately leads out of it."²⁰

It is not surprising that Romantic artists developed a preoccupation with the concept of death: the era itself emerged from a time of war and revolution, in which death

¹⁶ Kravitt, "Romanticism Today," 93.

¹⁷ Ibid., 99-100.

¹⁸ Stein and Spillman, *Poetry into Song*, 7.

¹⁹ Kravitt, "Romanticism Today," 98.

²⁰ Ibid., 100-104.

was a byproduct of political upheaval. The theme of death permeates much of German Romantic literature; however, certain aspects of this morbid fascination merit particular mention when considering the prevalence of the supernatural in German Romantic poetry and, by extension, *Lieder*. First, in addition to a deep reverence for the natural world and its mysteries, the Romantic awe – and simultaneous fear of – the unknown often manifested itself in religious fervor that “included mystical and supernatural elements, and the concept of a divine presence [that] included an ‘other world’ beyond that known on earth.”²¹ As a result, many Romanticists believed in a spiritual salvation only achievable through death that would grant them peace from their tormented search for unattainable happiness in life. Second, Romanticists adopted the representation of death as a gentle, compassionate force that offered a soothing release from life’s struggles. Compared with the recent classical view of death as a sinister entity to be feared and evaded, Romantic art is characterized by a longing for death and its accompanying peace.²² Third, and most significant to this study, artistic renderings of the era often depicted death as a sentient being capable of independent thought. In certain literary works, death even took on a spectral or human-like form that had the ability to converse with characters who confronted it.²³ The morbid allure of the macabre and its various uncanny portrayals in nineteenth-century works granted the personification of death a significant position among Romantic supernatural beings.

Depictions of the supernatural in Romantic art pointed to the cultural and psychological states that characterized the era. Romantic literary works “show[ed] sympathy and fascination with the abnormal and the pathological, put the terrifying

²¹ Stein and Spillman, *Poetry into Song*, 11.

²² *Ibid.*, 12-13.

²³ See Chapter 2 for poetic examples of the personification of death in the *Lied*.

powers of our unconscious impulses on display, and explore[d] the conditions under which inspiration can turn to madness and enthusiasm into disaster.”²⁴ Poetic images of these uncanny entities and inclinations provided the basis upon which numerous nineteenth-century German composers penned some of the most intriguing and nuanced Lieder of the Romantic era. With this in mind, we turn now to an examination of the poetic devices used to portray human encounters with the supernatural and the poets who brought these beings to life.

Dialogue Songs: The Poetic Strategies

The Lieder presented for analysis in the following chapters utilize a specific poetic format: that of a dialogue, or a conversation between two or more characters. While this format is by no means considered typical of the era’s poetry, its use was common enough that instances of it crop up in the Lieder of many prominent nineteenth-century composers. For example, a cursory glance through the poetic texts set by Johannes Brahms in his *Deutsche Volkslieder*, WoO 33 reveals no less than eleven dialogue songs.²⁵ Brahms’s songs, however, feature without exception conversations between two human characters. The dialogues between mortals and supernatural beings specifically considered in this study are less common, though undoubtedly present throughout the century. Detailed discussion devoted to the rich musical depictions of these supernatural dialogues in the Romantic era will follow; first, however, we must consider the features and terminology specific to dialogue poetry, as well as the contributions of the poets whose works were set in the Lieder considered in this study. As

²⁴ Jürgen Barkhoff, “Romantic science and psychology,” in *The Cambridge Companion to German Romanticism*, ed. Nicholas Saul (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 219.

²⁵ Many thanks to Prof. Susan Youens for alerting me to these wonderful examples of dialogue Lieder.

the essence of Romantic German art song lies in the seamless marriage of text and music, an understanding of the poetry will enable deeper insight into the music that sets it.

The Romantic Lied's nature as a work for a solo singer lends the art form to poetry that displays a singular point of view. In her study on Franz Schubert's dramatic monologue and dialogue songs, Marjorie Wing Hirsch asserts, "Lied texts are ordinarily presented from the perspective of a lyrical, anonymous 'Ich.'"²⁶ These poems are typically comprised of the outward expression of the speaker's inner thoughts; they issue from a single poetic identity to impart the unnamed speaker's frame of mind. Dialogue texts, by comparison, feature two or more characters, often with contrasting identities, who openly interact and converse with one another. Two poetic elements are therefore crucial to the dialogue form: poetic persona and mode of address.²⁷ Persona simply refers to a speaker in a poem. Dialogue texts make use of two or more personae, or characters, whose unique voices relate their individual qualities, often including gender, age, or social standing. Mode of address, on the other hand, indicates to whom a character speaks. It allows the dialogue to move forward, as individuals address one another and react to the answers they receive. These terms are critical to the understanding of dialogue texts and their structure.

Also fundamental to the concept of dialogue poetry is its generic classification as dramatic. According to Hirsch, "In dramatic scenes, the words are spoken by one or more usually identifiable personae who act out a particular episode. Action occurs. The [text] thus implies the dramatic progression of time, not its lyrical suspension."²⁸ The temporal

²⁶ Marjorie Wing Hirsch, *Schubert's Dramatic Lieder* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 38.

²⁷ Stein and Spillman, *Poetry into Song*, 29-33.

²⁸ Hirsch, *Schubert's Dramatic Lieder*, 17.

element in particular is key to the distinction between presentations of the thoughts and ideas of the unnamed “Ich” typically set in Romantic Lieder and the interaction between distinct identities within the dialogue form. As a conversation between two or more personas progresses, the poem’s inherent drama is registered through alternating address and response. The dramatic classification of dialogue poetry extends to the Lieder that utilized the poems’ texts as well. Rufus Hallmark presents three general categories with which to catalogue the Lied repertoire: lyrical, dramatic, and narrative. Hallmark goes on to define dramatic Lieder as those in which the singer adopts one or more roles and essentially becomes the character or characters presented in the text’s scenario.²⁹ Lieder with dialogue texts fall squarely into this classification.

While the term “dialogue” indicates a certain expected formula of verbal interchange, dialogue texts collectively do not conform to any specific poetic structure. Their dramatic use of varying personas and modes of address can depict conversations of any length between varying numbers of diverse characters, while the poetic formatting itself can feature any number of verses in rhyme or prose. As such, the format appealed to a wide variety of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century poets for whom it was an accessible mode of expression. Seven of these poets, ranging from literary giants of the era to figures of relative obscurity, though all with distinctly Romantic poetic tendencies, contributed the supernatural dialogue poems set in the Lieder selected for examination in this paper. Brief profiles of their lives and works follow.³⁰

Achim von Arnim (1781-1831) and Clemens Brentano (1778-1842)

²⁹ Rufus Hallmark, “Robert Schumann: The Poet Sings,” in *German Lieder in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Rufus Hallmark (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), 80.

³⁰ Poets are presented in alphabetical order.

Although poets and novelists individually, it was the collaboration of Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano on a collection of folk poetry that made their literary reputations. Born in Berlin, Arnim came from an aristocratic Prussian family. His studies took him to Göttingen at the turn of the nineteenth century. It was here he met and befriended Frankfurt-born Brentano. Their shared enthusiasm for German legends and folk culture led the two to collect hundreds of folk poems and songs.³¹ They eventually published the collection, entitled *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (The Boy's Magic Horn), in Heidelberg in 1805, and again in an expanded edition in 1808.

It is important to note that while the collection came to be recognized as a German literary treasure, many of the poems did not retain their original forms. In numerous cases, Arnim and Brentano edited the poetry by removing certain lines, changing select vocabulary, even adding in or substituting new stanzas or entire poems. The collaborators' intent in their modifications was to conform the poetry to fit within the Romantic "folk style" ideal of the time and, by extension, to stoke the fires of the long dormant German spirit in response to the Napoleonic invasions.³² In this the poets were successful: *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* was championed by such influential German literary figures as Joseph von Eichendorff and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The poems received settings by several notable Lied composers, but their most celebrated settings remain those in the twelve-song Lieder collection "Songs from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*" by the late Romanticist Gustav Mahler.³³ His Lied "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen" ("Where the Fair Trumpets Sound") from this collection, featuring a

³¹ Egon Gartenberg, *Mahler: The Man and His Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1978), 259.

³² Paul Hamburger, "Mahler and *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*," in *The Mahler Companion*, eds. Donald Mitchell and Andrew Nicholson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 63-64.

³³ Gartenberg, *Mahler: The Man and His Music*, 259-60.

dialogue between a young maiden and the ghost of her dead soldier sweetheart, will be treated in this study.

Matthias Claudius (1740-1815)

Minor poet and journalist Matthias Claudius was born in the small village of Reinfeld where he received his early secular and spiritual education from his father, a Protestant pastor. Tragedy marked his early life; four of his ten siblings died during his youth, and these losses had a great impact on his spirituality and writings.³⁴ Claudius's first literary venture to earn him recognition was the editorship of a newspaper in Wandsbeck in which he published many poems and essays. It was during this enterprise that he created Asmus, his pseudonym, under which his collected works are published. Claudius's clear and straightforward German appealed to the public as well as major German literary figures, including such towering names as Goethe, Herder, and Klopstock.³⁵ Claudius spent his later life primarily in Wandsbeck. He continued to study literature and write until his death in 1815.³⁶

Perhaps because of his numerous early losses, many of Claudius's writings deal with the theme of death. Book I of his collected works features an illustration of the Grim Reaper, to whom Claudius dedicates the collection. Claudius's works tended to portray death as the "fulfillment of a meaningful life and reunion with God...[and] an end to the anguish accepted as an unavoidable companion along the way to the goal."³⁷ This holds true in his poem "Der Töd und das Mädchen" ("Death and the Maiden"). The text, to be discussed in the following chapter, features a dialogue between a fearful young woman

³⁴ Herbert Rowland, *Matthias Claudius* (Boston: Twayne, 1983), 1-3.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 12-14.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 31-32.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

and the compassionate figure of death. Franz Schubert set the poem to music in one of his most celebrated Lied.

Joseph von Eichendorff (1788-1857)

Joseph von Eichendorff was one of the key literary figures of German Romanticism. Born in Prussia, Eichendorff studied law at Halle University and later at the University of Heidelberg. Heidelberg was an important center of Romanticism and it was there he met many leading Romantic figures, including the poets Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano, whose folk poetry had a great influence on his poetic style. Eichendorff worked variously as an enlisted military member in the fight against Napoleon, a civil servant, and at the Berlin Ministry of Culture before his retirement in 1844. He devoted the remainder of his life to writing.

Eichendorff is considered by some to be the greatest of all German Romantic lyricists. His poetry, while deceptively simple in its vocabulary, contains a musical quality that appealed to many prominent Lieder composers, including Johannes Brahms, Robert Schumann, and Hugo Wolf.³⁸ The characteristically Romantic dark and mysterious natural landscape figured in many of Eichendorff's poems; Schumann set several of these in his Eichendorff *Liederkreis*, Op. 39.³⁹ "Waldesgespräch" ("Forest Conversation") is the third piece of the 12-song cycle, featuring a dramatic dialogue between a knight and Lorelei, the mythical Germanic witch.

³⁸ Peter Branscombe, "Eichendorff, Joseph, Freiherr von," *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed January 22, 2016, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.library.unl.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/08635>.

³⁹ Jürgen Thym, "Schumann: reconfiguring the Lied," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*, ed. James Parsons (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 134.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe is widely considered the German literary tradition's greatest figure. The poet and novelist was also a prominent scientist, philosopher, and diplomat, though he remains best known for his writings, particularly in musical circles. The young Goethe studied law in both Leipzig and Strasbourg before taking up a post as a newspaper critic in Frankfurt. In 1771 he became a court official in Weimar. Apart from two excursions to Italy in 1786-8 and 1790, he spent the remainder of his life in Weimar, where he continued writing until his death in 1832.⁴⁰

Goethe's relationship to Romantic era music was somewhat tenuous during his life. While he strongly promoted the revival of the German national spirit through German poetry and folksongs – he had himself collected folk tales under the tutelage of Johann Gottfried Herder while in Strasbourg⁴¹ – he took issue with certain Romantic aesthetic aspirations. This is unsurprising, as Goethe lived and worked mainly in the more reserved tradition of German literary classicism, which overlapped with musical Romanticism by several decades. However, as stated by Charlie Louth in his essay on Romantic poetry, “Even if one wants to see Goethe as outside Romanticism proper he feeds into it as an important source of imagery and as a poetic figure in his own right.”⁴² His inspired lyricism attracted virtually every major Romantic Lieder composer, most notably Franz Schubert. Schubert's 1815 setting of Goethe's famous poem “Der Erlkönig” (“The Erlking”), which depicts the death of a child tormented by a phantom

⁴⁰ Philip Weller, “Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von,” *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed January 22, 2016, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.library.unl.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/11358>.

⁴¹ Harry Seelig, “The Literary Context: Goethe as Source and Catalyst,” in *German Lieder in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Rufus Hallmark (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), 2.

⁴² Charlie Louth, “The Romantic lyric,” in *The Cambridge Companion to German Romanticism*, ed. Nicholas Saul (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 67-68.

presence, is the quintessential supernatural dialogue Lied and as such holds an important place within this study.

Eduard Mörike (1804-1875)

Born in Ludwigsburg, Eduard Mörike's young life was characterized by tragedy, including the deaths of his father and brother and a disastrous love affair that affected much of his literary output. Mörike received a monastic education in preparation for the Lutheran ministry and was ordained in 1826, but was not well suited to a theological position. His various hypochondriacal and genuine illnesses worsened over the years until he was finally forced to retire from the church in 1843. He then took up a post as a literature teacher until 1866. Though several of Mörike's literary works were published in his lifetime, the poet's writings were only beginning to gain appreciation upon his death.⁴³

Mörike embraced musical settings of his poetry during his life; indeed, such prominent composers as Robert Schumann, Robert Franz, and Johannes Brahms set his works to music. However, it was not until late in the century that his poetry was thoroughly explored. Hugo Wolf's 1888 collection of songs on texts by Mörike brought the poet considerable posthumous fame. The sophisticated language of the composer's mature musical style was well suited to the vivid imagery and complex, shifting rhythms of Mörike's poems.⁴⁴ The text by Mörike presented in this study relates a dialogue between an unnamed female speaker and an uncanny personification of the wind. It was

⁴³ Susan Youens, *Hugo Wolf and his Mörike Songs* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), ix-x.

⁴⁴ Susan Youens, "Mörike, Eduard (Friedrich)," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed January 22, 2016, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.library.unl.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/19137>.

set in Wolf's "Lied vom Winde" ("Song of the Wind"), no. 38 in the 53-song *Mörike-Lieder* series.

Joseph von Spaun (1788-1865)

Joseph von Spaun was a very minor figure within German Romanticism, best known today for his association with Franz Schubert. Born in Linz, Spaun's connection to the Lied came through his mother, an amateur singer. When Spaun left to study law in Vienna he was placed in charge of the school orchestra at the Stadtkonvikt (Imperial Seminary). It was through this post that he became acquainted with Schubert, who became a student there in 1808. Spaun's position as a civil servant allowed him to provide financial support to Schubert: he supplied the young composer with manuscript paper with which to compose, took him to the opera, and introduced him to prominent poets and composers of the day. Spaun also hosted several Schubertiads, informal gatherings in private homes where Schubert's music was performed for the enjoyment of his friends and patrons. Following Schubert's death in 1828, Spaun penned several recollections of his interactions with the composer that have provided valuable information to historians. Spaun was raised to the Austrian nobility in 1859, continued to work in governmental positions until his retirement in 1861, and died in Linz in November of 1865.⁴⁵ A tribute to the friendship between Schubert and Spaun remains in the Lied "Der Jüngling und der Tod" ("The Youth and Death"), Schubert's setting of Spaun's dialogue text of the same title featuring a conversation between a young man and the personification of death.

⁴⁵ H. P. Clive, *Schubert and His World: A Biographical Dictionary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 221-24.

* * *

The poetic and musical aesthetics of German Romanticism affected the output of every Lied composer working in the nineteenth century. The psychological and philosophical reactions to the era's historical events and cultural modifications continuously shaped Romanticists' artistic aspirations. Although a small proportion of the Lied repertoire, the century's supernatural dialogue Lied clearly reflect these historical shifts in their form and subject matter while simultaneously displaying the inextricable link between poetry and music that is the essence of the Lied. With this context in mind, we now turn to the question of musical techniques used within these pieces. Dialogue formats presented a unique challenge for composers, as dialogue poetry portrayed several poetic identities while the Romantic Lied was most often written for a solo singer. How, then, were the multiple conversing characters musically conveyed? Furthermore, in the case of supernatural dialogues, how did the music distinguish between mortal characters and those of otherworldly origin? The following chapters discuss how the nuanced musical techniques utilized by the four great Lied composers whose works are presented in this study provided answers to these questions.

CHAPTER 2

DIALOGUES WITH DEATH: THREE SONGS BY FRANZ SCHUBERT

As discussed in the previous chapter, the subject of death found a home in many artistic works of the Romantic era. Poems centered on death were prevalent through the late 1700s and into the nineteenth century. While some poets focused solely on the concept of death in their works, others featured death as a sentient being capable of independent thought and action, transforming a somewhat abstract notion into a concrete individual. The personification of death was not a new idea by any means. Figures such as Thanatos,⁴⁶ the Greek god of death often depicted as a handsome youth holding an inverted torch, and the hooded and scythe-wielding skeleton known today as the Grim Reaper can be found in legends and mythologies of diverse cultures throughout history.⁴⁷ Several poets in the burgeoning Romantic era carried on this tradition of supernatural personification, providing death with not only a body, but also the freedom to converse with his mortal victims in dialogue texts. The aforementioned shifting view of death from a malevolent force to a merciful and compassionate figure during the Romantic era added depth and subtext to the dialogue poems that included supernatural encounters with death written during this period, as each poet portrayed death with different attributes and aims. Yet another layer of complexity was added when these poems were set to music. Composers were faced with the challenge of conveying death's unearthly nature, the poet's chosen character for the uncanny personification, and the characters with which death conversed. One such composer was well up to the task.

⁴⁶ Also known by his Latin name, Mors.

⁴⁷ Rowland, *Matthias Claudius*, 40.

During his short life, Franz Schubert (1797-1828) composed hundreds of Lieder and transformed German song from “being based on the collectively generated, formally quite limited, resources of folk-song to being a highly developed, individualized genre which can involve complex changes of mood and musical material, and very varying dimensions.”⁴⁸ Some of the main characteristics and innovations of Schubert’s Lieder include elevation of the musical difficulty for both singer and pianist to the point that many of his songs were outside the realm of amateur performance; a prevalent use of text-painting; unusual harmonic relationships and frequent modulations; piano preludes that contain important thematic material; and exquisitely crafted melodic lines.⁴⁹ These traits are exemplified in the Lieder presented for analysis in this chapter.

The three selected songs were composed during the earliest stage of Schubert’s career: “Der Erlkönig,” arguably Schubert’s most famous Lied, was written in 1815,⁵⁰ while “Der Tod und das Mädchen,” and “Der Jüngling und der Tod” were composed in February and March of 1817, respectively.⁵¹ Each song presents settings of dialogue texts in which one of the conversing characters is the supernatural personification of death. Considered chronologically by date of composition, these Lieder and the musical techniques utilized therein present distinct views of death, from sinister and feared to kindly and desired.⁵²

⁴⁸ Andrew Bowie, “Romanticism and music,” in *The Cambridge Companion to German Romanticism*, ed. Nicholas Saul (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 253.

⁴⁹ Susan Youens, “Franz Schubert: The Prince of Song,” in *German Lieder in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Rufus Hallmark (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), 36-45.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 57. Youens refers to 1815, the year in which Schubert composed approximately 150 Lieder (including many of his best-loved songs) as Schubert’s “Miracle Year.”

⁵¹ Christoph Wolff, “Schubert’s ‘Der Tod und das Mädchen’: analytical and explanatory notes on the song D 531 and the quartet D 810,” in *Schubert Studies: Problems of Style and Chronology*, ed. Eva Badura-Skoda and Peter Branscombe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 153.

⁵² My aim is not to suggest Schubert himself viewed death in any particular way, but rather that he used his prodigious compositional talent to convey differing poetic views of death to great effect.

“Der Erlkönig” (D 328)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s famous late eighteenth-century poem “Der Erlkönig” is the quintessential supernatural dialogue text.⁵³ In eight four-line stanzas Goethe weaves a dark tale of sinister seduction, terror, and death. This dramatic scene features four characters: a narrator, a father, his son, and the uncanny figure of the Erlking. The narrator sets the stormy, nocturnal scene in which a father on horseback rides for home with his young son in his arms in the first stanza. The six middle stanzas then relate the central story: the Erlking attempts to lure the sick child away from his father with entrancing words and pretty promises. The son grows increasingly more frantic as he tries in vain to communicate to his father that the Erlking wishes to abduct him, but the concerned father, unable to see or hear the Erlking, dismisses the boy’s concerns as tricks of light and shadow acting upon the son’s fevered mind. Thus, a layered dialogue emerges: the Erlking can speak to the son, and the son can communicate with his father, but as the Erlking exists purely within the child’s frenzied imagination, the father can only interact with his son and not with the phantom presence that torments his child. This disconnect between hallucination and reality creates a heightened sense of tension and urgency for the reader, who holds a privileged insight into the characters’ psyches and various conversations. The child’s terror is palpable as the Erlking attempts to lure him away, but the father can do nothing beyond offering soothing words and urging their horse swiftly onward. In the penultimate stanza, the Erlking grows impatient: his sweet words disappear and his sinister nature is revealed as he informs the child he will “use force” to take him away. The son cries out a final time to his father that the

⁵³ For texts and translations of this and all subsequently discussed poems, please see Appendix A.

Erlking has seized him, and then speaks no more. The narrator completes the tragic tale with the father finally reaching home only to find the boy “dead in his arms.”

While “Erlkönig” literally translates to “Alder king” or “Elf king,”⁵⁴ the poem’s outcome makes it clear that this evil being so intent on snatching away the sick child is actually an appealingly disguised personification of death. Goethe, rooted as he was in the classical German literary tradition, did not subscribe to the burgeoning Romantic view of death as a welcome and peaceful release from life’s suffering. This most famous of German poets instead maintained a “withering judgment of Romanticism as wholly morbid.”⁵⁵ The depiction of the death figure as deceitful and malevolent rather than kind and compassionate did not deter Romantic Lied composers, however. Goethe’s captivating language and darkly intense dramaticism prompted musical settings by around one hundred separate composers. Schubert’s preeminent setting of this celebrated text provides a striking musical interpretation of the Erlking as well as the dialogues surrounding the supernatural figure’s quest to lure the child to his death.⁵⁶

Although Schubert composed this famous Lied when he was just eighteen years old, it features some of the composer’s most sophisticated musical treatments of dramatic structuring and characterization. The song is best described as through-composed. Although several melodic motives recur throughout the piece, the key structure⁵⁷ is highly fluid. The melodic, accompanimental, and harmonic shifts throughout the Lied

⁵⁴ Plantinga, *Romantic Music*, 119.

⁵⁵ Nicholas Saul, “Morbid? Suicide, Freedom, Human Dignity and the German Romantic Yearning for Death,” *Historical Reflections* 32, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 581.

⁵⁶ Other notable settings include those by Johann Friedrich Reichardt, Carl Friedrich Zelter, Carl Loewe, and Ludwig Spohr. The popularity of Loewe’s “Erlkönig” is only outdone by Schubert’s foremost setting. Christopher H. Gibbs, “‘Komm, geh mit mir’: Schubert’s Uncanny *Erlkönig*,” *19th Century Music* 19 no. 2 (Fall 1995): 115.

⁵⁷ All Lieder considered in this study are presented in the original keys in which they were written.

The dialogue between the father and son begins in the second stanza, starting at m. 36. The characters are immediately distinguishable through their registers: the father sings in a low tessitura to reflect his greater age while the son responds in a higher range to show his youth (Figure 2.2). The respective vocal lines also communicate the two characters' individual states of mind. As the father questions the son as to why he is frightened and responds with words of comfort, the low, conjunct melody suggests his concern and soothing demeanor. The son's statements that the Erlking is attempting to lure him away, on the other hand, are set to high-pitched, disjunct melodies that show the boy's fearful agitation. These melodic strategies color the interchanges between the father and son in the fourth and sixth stanzas as well. The son's vocal line climbs higher in pitch each time he speaks, clearly conveying his growing terror and desperation as the Erlking advances. The relationship between these two characters is further communicated through shifts in tonality. Each time the son cries out to his father, his melody is presented in a minor key that inevitably dissolves through increased chromaticism into harmonic ambiguity, alluding to the fevered child's panicked hallucinatory state. The father's soothing responses come in the form of melodic reassurances that lead the harmonic structure back to stable major modes, effectively resolving the tonal ambiguities. Schubert's communication of the father's and son's relationship and individual states of mind through musical material establishes their very natures. The child's frantic, disjunct line and the father's low, regular tones point to the characters' humanity: they are susceptible to such human concerns such as illness and emotion. The Erlking's music, on the other hand, reveals his otherworldly essence and deathly intent.

34
Mein Sohn, was birgst du so

39
bang dein Ge - sicht?— Siehst, Va - - - ter,

43
du den Erl - kö - nig nicht? den Er - len -

Figure 2.2. Schubert, “Der Erlkönig” (D 328), mm. 34-47

Schubert utilizes metrical and tonal regularity to shift the musical environment away from the reality of the dramatic interchange between the father and son on their frenzied ride and to the seductive allures of the supernatural realm. In the Erlking’s first passage, which is presented entirely in the relative major, the steady rhythmic pattern and dance-like rising and falling melodic line create an entrancing, almost hypnotic atmosphere, as the Erlking attempts to entice the son away from his father with sweet promises only the child can hear (Figure 2.3). Even more descriptive of the shift from reality to the uncanny is the change in the piano accompaniment as the Erlking sings.

58
lie - - - bes Kind, komm, geh mit

61
mir! Gar schö - - - ne Spie - - - le

64
spiel - - - ich mit dir; manch bun - - - - te

Figure 2.3. Schubert, “Der Erlkönig” (D 328), mm. 58-66

While the triplet rhythms remain, the driving galloping motive disappears, replaced by a softer chordal figuration and a reduced dynamic level. It is as if the father, the horse, and even the storm through which they ride vanish entirely, leaving the child alone with the Erlking. Schubert uses similar techniques for the Erlking’s second speech, which begins on the last beat of m. 86. The verse is presented in another major key, this time C major, and the melody retains its gently arching phrasing and lilting quality. The vocal line’s rhythmic values, however, change from the relatively long, sustained figures of the

Erlking's first verse to comparatively much shorter values. The accompaniment follows suit: instead of the repeated chordal patterns that supported the first verse, the chords break apart into rolling arpeggiations. Here the first-time listener may begin to feel a sense of foreboding as the effect of these rhythmic shifts speaks to the Erlking's character; since his first attempt to lure the child away did not yield results, he switches his approach for the second attack, singing at a much quicker rate and consequently injecting the music with a sense of urgent impatience. The threat of the Erlking's presence begins to reveal itself in this second song of enticement, but it is the third time the uncanny being sings that the danger is fully realized.

As the Lied reaches its climax, the Erlking's benign disguise falls away to reveal his true form as the sinister figure of death. The galloping accompanimental motive remains in place in the Erlking's third verse rather than shifting to a new figuration as it did in his first two verses, showing that the dialogue's natural and supernatural elements are beginning to merge in a dangerous fashion (Figure 2.4). The first half of the Erlking's final words, an assertion of his love for the beautiful child, is colored by the characteristic high, lyrical melodic line that has defined the Erlking's speech up until this point in the Lied. This lilting, non-threatening vocal line suddenly ceases, however, as the Erlking sings the fateful phrase, "If you don't come willingly, I'll use force." Here the melody shifts to sustained, forceful rhythms in an ominously low register as the Erlking's fair façade falls away once and for all. The harmonic structure supports this deadly change: the opening E-flat major tonality is abruptly replaced with the foreboding key of D minor. This is the first and only time the Erlking sings in a minor key, and the stark effect of the tonal shift coupled with the intensely charged accompaniment is chilling. The son

cries out to his father that the Erlking has overtaken him, returning the music to the home key of G minor, then falls silent. As the narrator relates the dark dialogue's conclusion, the declamatory melodic line and continuously driving accompaniment are colored with ascending chromaticism to suggest the burst of speed from the galloping horse as the terrified father and ill child reach their home at last. Here the perpetually moving octave triplets finally cease. Schubert briefly tonicizes the remote Neapolitan key of A-flat major for the narrator's hushed final words, declaring the child dead. A resoundingly final authentic cadence in the home key of G minor brings the song to a definitive close, emphasizing the deadly consequences of the fateful nocturnal ride.

Figure 2.4. Schubert, “Der Erlkönig” (D 328), mm. 112-122

Schubert's musical depiction of the Erlking falls squarely within the classical portrayal of death as a malevolent supernatural being. The terrifying allure of Goethe's disguised death figure creates a kind of dissonance in the opposing poetic images of the Erlking as an enticing fairy-like creature and a deceitful, sinister apparition that Schubert

musically crafted to chilling effect. A review of the Lied by Anton Prokesch, an acquaintance of Schubert, accurately summarizes this dual nature of Erlking's musical identity: "The cradle-spell that speaks from the melody, and yet at the same time the uncanny quality...which repels while the former entices, dramatize the poet's picture."⁵⁸ Christopher Gibbs further clarifies this point: "The Erlking's voice is uncanny because it is frightening in its sweetness, deadly in its beauty – the voice confounds tidy oppositions even as it evokes them." Gibbs goes on to compare the Erlking's melodic line to that of a siren song, seductive yet fateful in its pleasing cadence.⁵⁹ It is precisely this seductive quality that evokes the sinister nature of the Erlking, and therefore of death. The musical depiction of an uncanny male creature attempting to lure a young boy away through seduction is disturbing, and yet it is upheld by the text. Just before the Erlking's pronouncement that he will take the child by force, he tells the boy, "I love you, your fair form allures me." This unsettling seduction and the myriad musical devices Schubert used to portray it in this famous dialogue text provides a powerful illustration of the evil intent that characterized the classical view of death. With this in mind, we now turn to the musical portrayals of the Romantic conception of death in Schubert's dialogue Lieder.

"Der Tod und das Mädchen" (D 531)

Matthias Claudius's poem "Der Tod und das Mädchen" is presented as a brief imaginary dialogue between two sharply contrasting characters identified by the names 'Das Mädchen' ('The Maiden') and 'Der Tod' ('Death'). These starkly disparate

⁵⁸ As quoted in Gibbs, "Schubert's Uncanny *Erlkönig*," 117.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 130. It is also important to note that critics and musicologists have increasingly begun to apply the knowledge of Schubert's homosexuality to analysis of his works, "Der Erlkönig" among them. While it is beyond the scope of this study to give full consideration to this topic, it is possible that the homoeroticism inherent to the Erlking's desire for the young boy was a factor in Schubert's setting. Gibbs considers this angle more fully in his cited article, particularly on p. 133.

identities offer an artistic juxtaposition immediately apparent to the reader: the former conjures up images of beauty, youth, and vitality, while the latter carries a sense of darkness, fear, and irrevocability. Perhaps to capitalize on this polarity of poetic identities, the poem is simply cast in two four-line stanzas, one for each speaker. The dramatic scene begins without preamble; the reader is not told why Death has come for the young woman, it is simply made known that he has arrived. Far from the youthful and vibrant nature the reader expects from a young woman, the Maiden is instantly terrified and frantic to escape the eerie skeletal figure's clutches, her panic palpable as she begs him to "pass by." Death, however, is soothing. He calms the Maiden with kind words and assures her he has come with friendly intentions to ease her gently into a soft slumber. The Maiden does not respond. The outcome of the interchange, while not explicitly stated, is inevitable: Death departs with the Maiden, whom the reader can assume has been lulled into his comforting embrace. Hirsch succinctly communicates the central poem's central message: "The symbolic encounter of these two characters reveals death to be not an abduction, but rather an invitation to eternal rest."⁶⁰

Claudius's poetic representation of Death as that of a *Knochenmann* – a man of bones – is significant. While the language of Death's speech clearly conveys the poet's preference for the Romantic view of death as a gentle and compassionate force over the evil and sinister presence of Goethe's Erlking, the skeleton figure dates back to the medieval conception of death as a repulsive bringer of punishment. Claudius's comforting presentation of death shows clear influence from the prominent eighteenth-century literary figures Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Johann Gottfried von Herder: Lessing and Herder each penned essays on ancient representations of death, and both

⁶⁰ Hirsch, *Schubert's Dramatic Lieder*, 38.

“distinguished sharply between the understanding of ‘death as punishment’, which they saw as typical of ‘misunderstood religion’...[and] the concept of death as ‘gentle and consoling’...which they deemed more worthy of the ‘Christianity of reason’ in an enlightened age.”⁶¹ Claudius’s obvious agreement with the writers in their kindly characterization of death seems at odds with his preference for the frightful skeletal figure used in his poem. However, as previously noted, the first volume of Claudius’s collected works features an engraving of a skeleton holding a scythe with the telling caption ‘*Freund Hain.*’⁶² This designation of death as a friend clearly communicates Claudius’s modern view of the death figure despite his use of the traditional skeletal image. Indeed, Claudius reveals his views on the medieval skeleton in the preface to his collected works: “This way, I believe, he is quite beautiful, and if only one gazes at him long enough, he’ll finally look entirely friendly.”⁶³ The poet takes pains to show that while Death’s frightening physical form alarms the Maiden, the eldritch man of bones brings peace rather than harm, a message that remains intact in Schubert’s sensitive musical realization of the text.

Schubert’s presentation of the poetic encounter seamlessly merges text and music to depict the two characters’ contrasting natures. The Lied is set in a quasi-ternary structure of prelude, first stanza, and second stanza. The opening eight-bar piano prelude features a repeating rhythmic figure reminiscent of the stately processional pavane (Figure 2.5). Though upon a first hearing the listener may not recognize its significance, Schubert’s use of this dance rhythm permeated many of his works as a musical symbol

⁶¹ Wolff, “Schubert’s ‘Der Tod und das Mädchen,’” 145.

⁶² Rowland, *Matthias Claudius*, 40.

⁶³ As quoted in Wolff, “Schubert’s ‘Der Tod und das Mädchen,’” 145.

for death.⁶⁴ The repeating rhythm in the key of D minor thus points to the approaching figure of Death as he comes upon The Maiden. In addition to expressing Death's identity, the figure's repetition relates something of Death's otherworldly character. The dispassionate rhythmic progress reflects the unchanging inevitability of the man of bones; unlike mortal beings, he will not be swayed or deterred from his mission. Additionally, the march-like pattern conjures up images of funeral processions, solidifying its association with the figure of Death. This effective communication of tone and characterization in a few short bars prior to the introduction of text speaks to Schubert's elevation of the piano's role to equal status with that of the singer in his songs. The prelude makes clear what is merely suggested in the poetry: action occurs prior to the first stanza. Through this musical technique, Death's uncanny presence colors the encounter before he or the Maiden begin to speak.



Example 2.5. Schubert, “Der Tod und das Mädchen” (D 531), mm. 1-6

Following a brief rest in which the listener can assume the Maiden realizes Death has come for her, the music's character shifts to the expression of the dialogue. The tempo increases as the Maiden launches into a series of clipped, fragmented phrases accompanied by syncopated rhythmic pulses in the piano. The disjunct melodic line ascends wildly, demonstrating the Maiden's desperation and panic at the sight of the eerie

⁶⁴ Hirsch, *Schubert's Dramatic Lieder*, 38.

skeletal figure as well as her starkly contrasting character from that of Death.

Chromaticism in the melodic line and harmonic progressions as well as the irregularity of the phrasing convey the Maiden's human frailty in sharp opposition to the calm, measured figures of Death's approach. However, her distinctly human exclamations undergo a subtle change in mm. 16-19 (Figure 2.6); as the tempo slows, the Maiden's melodic line descends, bringing the melody to its lowest note yet. Her repetition of the stanza's final line, a pathetic request that Death not touch her, is significant: Hirsch suggests "the actual touch of death seems to coincide with [the] phrase."⁶⁵ Thus, the descending repetition of the Maiden's plea indicates the young woman's reluctant realization that Death's touch cannot be reversed. Even more telling, the driving syncopated piano figures cease and the accompaniment instead takes the form of chords played in the opening pavane rhythmic pattern. The message in this musical shift is clear: the Maiden's resistance is weakening, and she has begun to submit to Death. She falls silent as the accompaniment sets up the final stanza, culminating in an inconclusive cadence followed by a sustained silence that heightens the dramatic anticipation of Death's response.

The image displays a musical score for Schubert's "Der Tod und das Mädchen" (D 531), specifically measures 16-19. The score is written for voice and piano. The vocal line is in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are "rüh- re mich nicht an, und rüh- re mich nicht an." The piano accompaniment is in two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one flat. In measures 16-19, the piano accompaniment shifts from syncopated figures to chords, marked with "pp" (pianissimo) and "dim." (diminuendo). The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Figure 2.6. Schubert, "Der Tod und das Mädchen" (D 531), mm. 16-19

⁶⁵ Ibid., 41.

In the final 22 measures of this very short song, Schubert once more utilizes the slow tempo and pavane rhythm from the piano prelude (Figure 2.7). This return of the opening musical material for Death's speech solidifies its association with his irrevocable character while the addition of the entirely un-melodic vocal line conveys his soothing, compassionate qualities. When contrasted with the Maiden's vocal line's frenzied arches, the solemn monotone of Death's voice further highlights the characters' polarity. The tessituras of the melodies also differ sharply, further adding to the characters' disparity: the Maiden's vocal line is sung primarily in the upper half of the treble clef, only falling to a lower range upon her final piteous request for Death not to touch her, while Death's line, sits solidly beneath the staff for all but a few notes. Harmonically, Schubert leads the final stanza through several key areas: the opening key of D minor gives way to F major, B-flat major, and finally, with the last syllable of Death's song, to D major. Thus, a single chord alters both the listener's and, we can assume, the Maiden's view of Death from a terrifying eldritch being to a bringer of peaceful rest. While the minor key gives the repeated accompanimental figure a meditative, processional character, the shift to major harmonies transforms the rhythmic pattern into the gentle swaying motion of a lullaby. As the hushed postlude (mm. 37-43) brings the Lied to a close, it is easy to imagine the Maiden sleeping softly in Death's comforting embrace.

Schubert's musical portrayal of "Der Tod und das Mädchen" creates additional levels of meaning in this brief yet intensely dramatic poetic scene. Where Claudius's language clearly conveys who the speakers are and what their individual identities imply, Schubert's music takes the text a step further by communicating the striking dichotomy of the conversing characters' very essences. The Maiden, beside herself with panic and

22 *Das erste Zeitmaß*
(Der Tod)

Gib dei- ne Hand, du schön und zart Ge- bild! Bin Freund und

27 kom- me nicht zu stra- fen. Sei gu- tes Muts! ich

32 bin nicht wild, sollst sanft in mei- nen Ar- men schla-

37 fen!

Example 2.7. Schubert, “Der Tod und das Mädchen” (D 531), mm. 22-43

fear, is revealed as distinctly mortal through her frantic and uneven musical material, while Death’s contrasting supernatural status is made evident by his calm, measured

passages. Though a single singer is tasked with the portrayal of both roles,⁶⁶ the juxtaposed identities of Death and the Maiden shine through in Schubert's expert musical handling of the poem.

“Der Jüngling und der Tod” (D 545)

Joseph von Spaun's poem “Der Jüngling und der Tod” shares two poetic devices with Claudius's “Der Tod und das Mädchen”: first, the poem presents two characters, ‘Der Jüngling’ (‘The Young Man’) and ‘Der Tod’ (‘Death’), and second, the interaction is divided into two sections, one for each speaker. Spaun's poem, however, differs slightly from Claudius's in its structure: “Der Jüngling und der Tod” is lengthened to three stanzas. The first two, each four lines long, belong to the Young Man. The dialogue does not begin right away. Instead, the Young Man reflects on his inner thoughts in the manner of a more traditional Lied. He expresses his longing to depart with the sun at day's end so as to escape his “nameless torments” and travel on to “fairer worlds.” His second stanza shifts from reflection to direct address: the Young Man calls upon Death to come lead him “gently to the land of dreams.” In the third and final stanza, the Young Man receives his answer in two brief lines. Death heeds the call, replying that he will take pity on the youth and grant him rest. The poem ends in the same manner as “Der Tod und das Mädchen”: the Young Man does not speak again, leaving the reader to imagine his willing departure with the compassionate personification of Death.

⁶⁶ Interestingly, Schubert's first version of “Der Tod und das Mädchen” designated the Lied as a duet, with one singer taking on the role of the Maiden and the other portraying Death. I agree with Christoph Wolff in his opinion that “Schubert's decision to neglect the original distribution of roles... must not be interpreted as an anti-dramatic one but rather as good judgment.... he utilized inner musical rather than external means in order to make the dramatic dialogue work.” Wolff, “Schubert's ‘Der Tod und das Mädchen’,” 156.

The similarities between Claudius's and Spaun's poems are not a coincidence. Schubert's setting of Claudius's poem had a profound effect on the composer's friends (including Spaun) when he played it for them upon its completion in February 1817, and Spaun was inspired to pen his own dialogue poem between a mortal and the figure of death. Schubert then set Spaun's poem to music mere weeks later in March 1817.⁶⁷ However, while the similarities between these poems are striking, it is Spaun's dialogue that fully expresses the culmination of the Romantic ideological shift toward death as an escape from life's turmoil into peaceful rest. Although the depiction of Death as a *Knochenmann* remains intact in Spaun's poem, the Young Man shows no fear of the uncanny skeletal figure: indeed, the youth smiles upon the man of bone. Death no longer needs to announce himself as a friend; it is understood that his appearance will bring a welcome end to human suffering. Schubert's setting of Spaun's poem reflects this change in the subtle musical gestures that communicate the Young Man's longing for the otherworldly yet benevolent presence of Death. Furthermore, the distinctly Romantic treatment of Death in "Der Jüngling und der Tod" is magnified when compared to the composition that inspired it.

At a mere 34 measures long, "Der Jüngling und der Tod" presents a shorter dramatic scene than "Der Tod und das Mädchen" despite containing an additional stanza. The Lied is through-composed, though each of the three stanzas carries its own distinct musical character that clearly relates which poetic character is speaking. This formal structure stands in contrast to that of "Der Tod und das Mädchen," whose quasi-ternary form features repeated musical material at the beginning and end of the work. A similar

⁶⁷ Ibid., 153.

comparison can be gleaned from the harmonic structures of each Lied: while “Der Jüngling und der Tod” begins and ends in the distantly related keys of C-sharp minor and F major, passing through a myriad of keys on its tonal journey from one to the other, the harmonies of “Der Tod und das Mädchen” stay within the closely related keys of D minor, F major, and D major. These contrasting approaches to the two songs’ overarching formal elements convey the disparity of the presentations despite their similar subject matter and dialogue formatting. Although “Der Jüngling und der Tod” was written as a response to “Der Tod und das Mädchen,” its lack of repeated material and its convoluted key structure clearly communicate that this dramatic scene presents a more emotionally complicated encounter with the supernatural figure of Death than that of its immediate predecessor.

As in the two previously discussed Lieder by Schubert, “Der Jüngling und der Tod” opens with a piano prelude that depicts the dramatic scene to come even before the characters begin to speak. The four-bar prelude features a measured, repeating rhythmic figure primarily played in block chords that gradually descend in pitch. This brief piano introduction utilizes several similar musical devices as the prelude in “Der Tod und das Mädchen.” The minor key and stately, repeated rhythmic pattern consisting of alternating short and long note values are strongly reminiscent of the earlier Lied’s opening measures. However, the prelude of “Der Jüngling und der Tod” is a departure from its inspiration in its depiction of the dramatic scene. As the Young Man begins to sing, reflecting on the setting sun at day’s end and his wish that he too could depart from the world, the meaning behind the prelude is made clear: the descending figure mimics the sun’s sinking and the coming darkness, setting the scene for the Young Man’s

forthcoming monologue. We are able to glean from the Young Man's opening lines that the introductory piano figure does not indicate Death's appearance as it did in the dialogue with the Maiden. The two preludes, though similar in musical presentation, serve very different dramatic purposes.

The Young Man's melodic line as he contemplates the sun's disappearing beams is smooth and lyrical, reflecting the peace and beauty of the natural world surrounding him. A change occurs, however, after the fermata on the last beat of m. 9 and continues through m.13 (Figure 2.8): as the Young Man's speech shifts to contemplation of his inner torments and his fervent desire to escape them, his vocal line abandons its lyricism, transforming from melodious to chromatic and agitated. The piano part reflects this shift as well, its flowing counterpoint giving way to sparse, clipped chordal accompaniment. This sudden musical change is similar to that of the shift between the prelude and the entrance of the Maiden's vocal line in "Der Tod und das Mädchen." However, while the Maiden's frantic and agitated melody is born from her fear of the figure of Death, the alteration of character in the Young Man's musical material clearly relates his longing for Death to appear and bring an end to his temporal suffering. The Young Man does not dwell long on the tortures of earthly existence. Unlike the Maiden, his agitation ceases and the lyrical line returns once more in m. 14 with the first stanza's last phrase, in which he speaks of yearning to travel on to a more beautiful world. Thus Schubert reveals the Young Man's nature through contrasting musical devices: the unsettled chromaticism through which the youth considers life's torments is set against the easy melodicism employed when he speaks of natural beauty and a world beyond earthly woes. The

Young Man's shifting musical moods reveals his mortality, a crucial aspect of his character that is further developed in the second stanza.



Figure 2.8. Schubert, “Der Jüngling und der Tod” (D 545), mm. 9-14

The dialogue between the Young Man and Death begins in the pickup to m. 16 with the youth's impassioned plea for Death to come and free him from his earthly bonds (Figure 2.9). The large intervallic leaps, rhythmic imbalance, and abrupt rising and falling contour of this stanza's first line vividly illustrates the Young Man's desperation for the kindly figure of Death to appear. This musical depiction of the youth's anguish once more alludes to the similar approach Schubert took in conveying the Maiden's distress: the two characters' disjunct melodic lines accurately relate their intense emotions despite the striking polarity of the reasons behind the emotions.

As the Young Man continues to call out to Death through the second and third lines of this stanza, his melody retains a lyrical shape with harmonic support in a major tonality to underscore his friendly, familiar mode of address. However, the use of smaller



Figure 2.9. Schubert, “Der Jüngling und der Tod” (D 545), mm. 15-18

rhythmic values and the return of the broken chordal accompaniment reveals the barely concealed urgency the Young Man exhibits in his wait for Death. This impatience is especially apparent in the fragmented repetition of the Young Man’s final line (Figure 2.10). The request for Death to come and touch the Young Man is stated twice, followed by two further statements of the words “O come!” The music, however, does not repeat. The line descends before settling on an oscillating pattern that prepares a cadence, but never actually reaches one, as Death appears before the melody can reach its natural conclusion. This line in particular stands as a sharp reminder of the influence of “Der Tod und das Mädchen.” Where the Maiden begs of Death, “Do not touch me,” the Young Man vehemently requests, “O come and touch me!” Schubert underscores the importance of this striking relationship with similar rhythmic figures and descending melodic shaping as well as repetitions of the phrases in both Lieder.

Death’s response, though brief, effectively conveys the kindly nature of the conversing characters’ relationship. A short piano interlude featuring a repeated processional rhythmic figure announces Death’s arrival (Figure 2.11). The dynamic continually rises as does the pitch level through mm. 24-26, reflecting the skeletal figure’s steady approach. The similarity between this interlude and the prelude of “Der



Figure 2.10. Schubert, “Der Jüngling und der Tod” (D 545), mm. 21-23

Figure 2.11. Schubert, “Der Jüngling und der Tod” (D 545), mm. 24-27

Tod und das Mädchen” is exceedingly clear: both convey Death’s approach through dactylic rhythmic figures, simple chordal textures, and static harmonies. Following this interlude, Death’s response to the Young Man begins with the same note on which the Young Man’s line ended, essentially picking up the dialogue where the youth left off and demonstrating the understanding relationship between the two vastly differing characters. Though Death’s vocal line is decidedly more declamatory than the Young Man’s, something of the youth’s lyricism is retained in the supernatural figure’s speech. This tunefulness is especially apparent in Death’s last line in which he promises to take pity on the tormented Young Man; the melody’s gentle rise and fall illustrates the merciful benevolence Death brings. Additionally, the tessitura of Death’s response is similar to

that of the Young Man's stanzas.⁶⁸ The close musical relationship inherent to the characters' dialogue shows the equal footing they possess despite their disparate natures, a stark contrast to the polarized musical characters of the Maiden and Death in the earlier Lied. A final homage to "Der Tod und das Mädchen" is clearly heard in the piano postlude that brings "Der Jüngling und der Tod" to a close. The final three measures feature the same repeated rhythmic pattern that announced Death's approach, but the quiet dynamic, melodic stasis, and major tonality of this concluding figure convey the departure of Death with the Young Man sleeping safely in his arms.

Although Schubert's setting of Claudius's "Der Tod und das Mädchen" acted as the catalyst for Spaun's poem-turned-song "Der Jüngling und der Tod," the two Lieder present very different takes on the depiction of a human encounter with the supernatural figure of Death. Furthermore, it is "Der Jüngling und der Tod" that represents the fullest realization of the Romantic attitude toward death. As Christoph Wolff notes, "The most significant difference between Spaun and Claudius...lies in the fact that the Youth approaches Death with the express desire to die."⁶⁹ Indeed, the Young Man shows apparent disdain for his own corporeality through the flowing lyricism of his purposeful invocation of the man of bones. Death's response to the youth, however, remains strikingly similar to that of his response to the Maiden, as the Romantic characterization of Death as consoling and friendly had already been realized in the earlier Lied. Wolff asserts that "the general declamatory and expressive style of the Death stanza [in "Der

⁶⁸ It is important to note that, much like Schubert's "Der Tod und das Mädchen," his setting of "Der Jüngling und der Tod" was originally conceived of as a duet, and Death's stanza was therefore written in a much lower range than the Young Man's. My analysis deals with the second version in which Schubert revised the key structure to comfortably fit within the range of one singer's voice. Ibid., 154.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 153.

Jüngling und der Tod”] are clearly indebted to the Claudius song.”⁷⁰ Although Death’s response to the Maiden is less melodic than that of his response to the Young Man, Wolff’s statement holds true: the slow tempos, sustained notes, and processional rhythms remain intact in the Death stanzas of both songs. Where the two Lieder differ the most in musical material, however, is in the devices used to display Death’s supernatural character. In “Der Tod und das Mädchen” Death’s otherworldly origin is made apparent through the unrelenting monotony of his vocal line. The setting of Spaun’s poem, on the other hand, depicts Death’s uncanny nature through the song’s tonal journey. “Der Jüngling und der Tod” begins and ends in the distantly related keys of C-sharp minor and F major. This technique, known as progressive tonality, “produces an impression of change.”⁷¹ The “change” in this song is that of the shift from life to death, and the multiple key areas the song passes through on its journey between these two distant keys illustrates Death gradually and obligingly leading the youth away from his physical form into spiritual realms. Schubert’s setting of Spaun’s “Der Jüngling und der Tod” reveals a thoroughly Romantic view of a human encounter with the supernatural figure of Death through both its small-scale musical details as well as its large-scale structural elements.

* * *

The Romantic era’s transforming attitude toward death is eloquently suggested in these three masterful examples of Schubertian song. The portrayal of the uncanny personification of death travels from seductively sinister in “Der Erlkönig” to frightening yet gentle in “Der Tod und das Mädchen” and finally to appealing and kindly in “Der Jüngling und der Tod.” Even the titles of the three Lieder communicate this shift in view:

⁷⁰ Ibid., 154.

⁷¹ Hirsch, *Schubert’s Dramatic Lieder*, 55.

the Erlking, an enticingly masked depiction of death, overpowers the other characters in the dialogue and demands the central focus. The inevitably approaching and ultimately overpowering figure of Death takes titular precedence over the yielding Maiden. And finally, the Young Man comes forward to explicitly invoke Death to the point that Death no longer needs to demand attention with prominent placement.

Schubert used every illustrative musical device at his disposal to convey these vastly differing representations of Death's character and otherworldly nature, including harmonic structures, rhythmic figures, accompanimental patterns, melodic phrasing, and register shifts. The composer's innovative musical approaches to the interpretation of the spectral poetic identities within these striking examples of dialogue Lieder provide an important foundation with which later composers would tackle the depiction of supernatural beings in the setting of dialogue texts. Established early on in the Romantic Lieder tradition, Schubert's compositional strategies were adopted, adapted, and built upon by song composers throughout the remainder of the century.

CHAPTER 3

DISCOVERIES AND DISCLOSURES:

ROBERT SCHUMANN, GUSTAV MAHLER, AND HUGO WOLF

As the Romantic era progressed, so too did German art song. Thanks in large part to Schubert's elevation of Lieder to an artistically respected genre, song enjoyed a prominent place in the musical output of German Romantic composers throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. Many middle and late century Lied composers were characterized by a preference for setting high-quality poetry by German literary giants, or else from collections of well-loved folk poems.⁷² These sources provided exceptional supernatural dialogue texts aptly suited for musical settings. A number of these poems featuring conversations between human and non-human entities included an intriguing poetic element: the supernatural character's otherworldly origin was hidden at the outset of the poem, only to be disclosed through the course of the dialogue. This "conceal and reveal" approach prompted mid to late century composers to develop musical techniques that subtly hinted at the presence of the other before overtly divulging it. This chapter explores these compositional devices in three songs by the great Lied composers Robert Schumann, Gustav Mahler, and Hugo Wolf.

Robert Schumann: "Waldesgespräch"

Robert Schumann (1810-1856) turned to song composition relatively late in his career. Aside from a very few attempts at writing Lieder as a young man, the first dozen or so years of Schumann's musical output were devoted almost exclusively to piano and

⁷² James Deaville, "A multitude of voices: the Lied at mid century," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*, ed. James Parsons (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 144.

other instrumental works. This compositional specialization experienced a complete change in direction, however, during the twelve-month period beginning in January of 1840. The short span of time yielded approximately 130 songs, prompting Schumann to call the year his *Liederjahr*, or “year of song.”⁷³ Schumann’s early compositional endeavors proved beneficial to his newfound focus on Lied writing: the composer gave the piano a more significant role in his Lied than had previously been accorded, greatly adding to the atmosphere of his songs. A lifelong lover of literature, Schumann tended toward the works of the greatest German poets for his Lied texts. One such poet, Joseph von Eichendorff, provided the poetry for Schumann’s “mysterious and mystical settings”⁷⁴ in his twelve-song *Liederkreis*, Op. 39. The combination of Eichendorff’s inclination towards dark and otherworldly poetic ideas and Schumann’s “intensified and flexible accompaniment[s] and...enriched harmonic language”⁷⁵ provided a prime musical environment for the depiction of supernatural entities. The third song of the Eichendorff *Liederkreis*, “Waldesgespräch,” exemplifies this careful marriage of text and music in service of Eichendorff’s supernatural imagery.

Joseph von Eichendorff’s poem “Waldesgespräch” presents a dramatic scene in which two characters, a gallant man and a beautiful young woman, meet in the highly Romantic setting of a dark and mysterious forest. The poem’s four stanzas alternate between these characters: verses one and three are the man’s, and verses two and four are the woman’s. Upon entering the forest, the man comes upon the woman riding alone

⁷³ Hallmark, “Robert Schumann: The Poet Sings,” 75-77. Probably not coincidentally, this outpouring of song occurred during Robert Schumann’s first year of his long-anticipated marriage to the pianist Clara Wieck. For a full account of the biographical circumstances surrounding Schumann’s *Liederjahr*, see also pp. 78-79.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 79.

⁷⁵ Plantinga, “Romantic Music,” 242.

through the woods and offers to escort her home. She answers cryptically, stating that the “deceit and cunning” of men has broken her heart, and warns the man to flee from her, for he does not realize who she is. The man takes a closer look at the woman, only to discover she is none other than the mythic Lorelei, the beautiful witch usually found on a high rock above the Rhine river where she lures men to their deaths. Her uncanny identity revealed, the witch declares the man trapped for eternity within the dark forest.

Schumann’s thoughtful musical characterization reinforces the dialogue’s poetic structure. The Lied is set in four sections that match the poem’s four stanzas. One melody distinguishes the man’s verses while another characterizes the woman’s, clearly depicting the conflicting natures of the conversing poetic characters. The harmonic structure follows suit, coloring the characters’ alternating verses with shifts in tonality. Much like the Schubertian model of Lied, Schumann’s song begins with a distinctive piano prelude that sets the seemingly idyllic natural scene (Figure 3.1). Set in E major, the strong, regular rhythmic figures, focus on tonic and dominant harmonies, and prominent open fifths reminiscent of the call of hunting horns introduce the man, painting his character as noble and masculine. The hunting horn accompanimental figure continues through the first line of the man’s opening stanza, “It is already late, it is already cold,” but quickly gives way to repeated chords as the man speaks of the forest’s potential dangers. The harmonies that accompany this melody wander through the circle of fifths, providing a sense of reassurance in the expected direction of the music toward an authentic cadence. Indeed, the listener is made to believe closure is coming: as the man offers to escort the “pretty bride” home, the harmony seemingly makes its way back toward the home key of E major. A sudden shift to the distant key of C major, however, occurs on his final word,

“home,” exactly where the expected authentic cadence should land. The irony of this harmonic shift is palpable: the man’s attempt to control the situation by leading the woman home is reflected in the musical direction towards the home key of E major, but the new key – the woman’s key – derails his intentions entirely by moving far away from the song’s tonal home. As the woman begins to sing in the striking new tonality, it is clear she is the one in charge of the dialogue’s outcome.



Figure 3.1. Schumann, “Waldesgespräch,” mm. 1-4

In contrast to the man’s rhythmically bold accompaniment, the woman’s is characterized by soft, sweeping arpeggiations (Figure 3.2). Her melody further emphasizes the textural change; the line is lyrical and seductive, using conjunct motion, sustained rhythmic values, and ornamental turns to emphasize her feminine charm.⁷⁶ It is only the unexpected distance of the key in which she sings from the song’s overarching tonality that alerts the listener to the concealment of something unnatural – and perhaps unfriendly. Similar to the man’s first stanza, the woman’s accompaniment changes to repeated chords at m. 25, passing through several keys as she speaks of the “wandering

⁷⁶ The witch’s melodic line exhibits many of the same characteristics as the Erlking’s melodies in Schubert’s “Der Erlkönig.” It is possible Schumann was influenced by this quintessential supernatural dialogue Lied.

hunting horn” which sounds through the woods. Her warning to the man takes the form of a descending line that leads the harmony back to the home key of E major. His tonality firmly established, the man takes up the conversation once more to the now familiar sound of the hunting horn accompaniment. He admires the woman’s beauty and rich attire with the straightforward melodic and rhythmic line of his first stanza. This musical confidence, however, does not last.

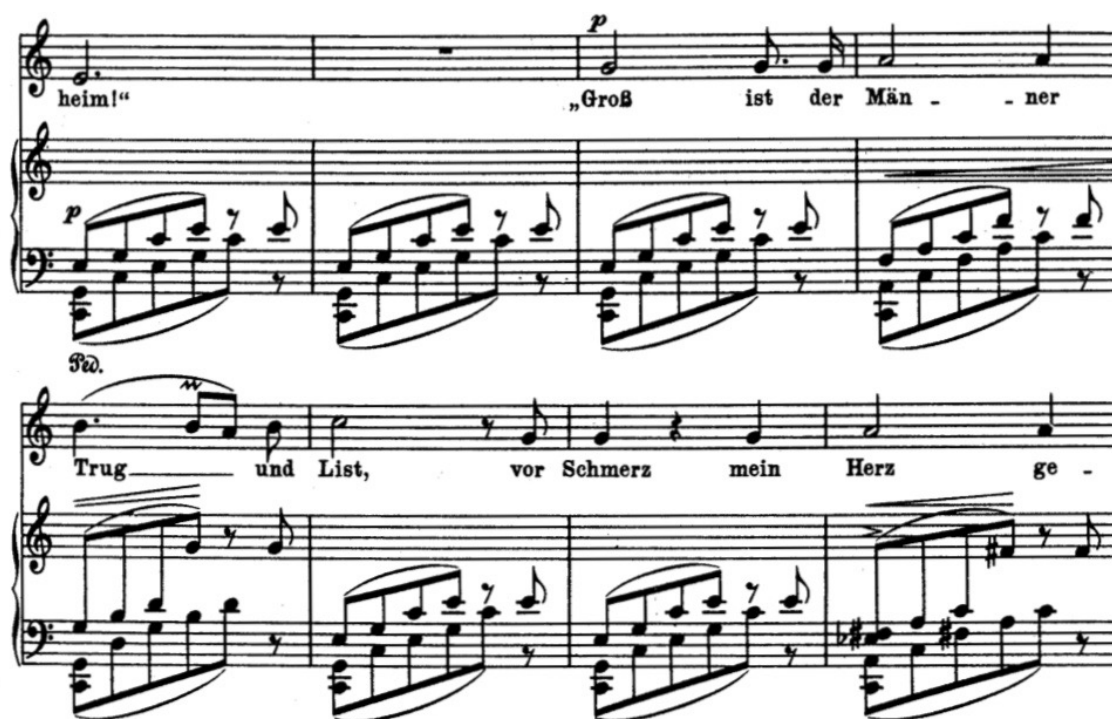


Figure 3.2. Schumann, “Waldesgespräch,” mm. 15-22

The man’s moment of recognition is marked by a complete shift in musical character: the verse’s initial slight relaxation of tempo snaps suddenly back to a sharp, regular beat; the melodic line drops its lilting quality and adopts a declamatory presentation; and the accompaniment ceases its horn call in favor of sparse chords that do little more than provide brief harmonic support to the agitated vocal line (Figure 3.3). Thus revealed, the Lorelei sings her siren-song once again in the original



Figure 3.3. Schumann, “Waldesgespräch,” mm. 41-43

key of E major. The arpeggiated piano figure returns as she sweetly confirms the man’s suspicions of her supernatural identity. The nefarious nature that hides beneath the witch’s beautiful exterior makes itself apparent in the final two lines of the song. As the accompaniment switches a final time to intensely repeated chords, the Lorelei speaks the same words with which the man began the dialogue: “It is already late, it is already cold” (mm. 55-58). This time, however, the words carry a malevolent undertone, the jagged and chromatic melodic line soaring higher than it has yet been set in a musical simulation of an eldritch screech. The witch pronounces her curse of imprisonment on the man and repeats it with two further statements of the frighteningly permanent word “nevermore,” the accompaniment emphasizing the spell with a chordal doubling of the Lorelei’s melodic line.

The Lied comes to an end with a repetition of the horn call figure that opened the song. Following the declaration of a man’s doom by an uncanny being, this bucolic musical frame is slightly unsettling. Plantinga suggests Schumann’s intention in closing the Lied in this manner was to “put this miniature tragedy at a safe distance and allow us to see it for what it is: woodland lore, not human drama.”⁷⁷ However, the hunting horn

⁷⁷ Plantinga, *Romantic Music*, 242.

motif embedded within the line betrays something deeper and more sinister than a mere reminder of the poem's imaginary scenario; indeed, it implies a reversal of the conflicting characters' fundamental roles. The hunting theme initially paints the man as the hunter, and his flattery of the young woman makes it clear he desires her and intends to make her the object of his "hunt." Yet by the Lied's end, the man has been hunted by the witch. The closing horn motive signifies his successful capture, adding further to the musical disclosure of the woman's unearthly character.

Schumann's masterful handling of this folk-like dialogue between a beautiful witch and her would-be suitor speaks to his individual musical approach to Lied. Striking variations in harmonic language, piano figuration, rhythmic passages, and melodic characterization all add to the concealment and subsequent unmasking of the Lorelei and her true otherworldly nature in a distinctly Romantic fashion. However, this sudden revelation of a supernatural being and accompanying deliberate shift in musical character is only one example of a compositional approach to disclosing a concealed uncanny entity; other composers utilized subtler means of discovery.

Gustav Mahler: "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen"

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) produced forty-six Lied throughout his career,⁷⁸ a relatively small number when compared to the many hundreds of songs by composers like Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, and Johannes Brahms. This comparatively modest output was the result of several factors. First, Mahler enjoyed a successful conducting career to which he devoted much of his time and energy. Second, what time he did have to compose was often channeled toward the completion of one of his nine

⁷⁸ Christopher Lewis, "Gustav Mahler: Romantic Culmination," in *German Lied in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Rufus Hallmark (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), 221-22.

enormous symphonies. Third, and most important to this discussion, Mahler spent his mature compositional years attempting to “reconcile the extrovert developmental drama of the symphony with the intimate lyricism of the song.”⁷⁹ Several innovations in Lied composition resulted from the composer’s desire to merge these two vastly differing genres, most notably his tendency to score songs not only for voice and piano but also for voice and full orchestra, and his use of far more expansive forms than those employed in the generally succinct songs of the earlier century.⁸⁰ Many of the texts that formed the basis of his most inventive songs were drawn from the folk poem anthology *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*.

As discussed in the first chapter, the poets Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano collected hundreds of German folk poems during the late eighteenth century which they then compiled – after substantial editing – into an anthology entitled *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*.⁸¹ The collection was hugely popular in German-speaking lands throughout the nineteenth century. Such notable Lied composers as Robert Schumann, Felix Mendelssohn, and Johannes Brahms set *Wunderhorn* texts during their careers, but Mahler remains the composer with whom the poems are most closely identified.⁸² Mahler discovered the anthology in the mid-1880s and thereafter spent the next dozen or so years setting and orchestrating a selection of its texts. Paul Hamburger explores the unique affinity Mahler had for the collection:

⁷⁹ Ibid., 218.

⁸⁰ Christopher H. Gibbs, “Beyond song: instrumental transformations and adaptations of the Lied,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*, ed. James Parsons (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 238.

⁸¹ This title, which translates as ‘The Boy’s Magic Horn,’ “refers to the frontispiece of the [anthology’s] first volume, which shows a boy on a horse holding a hunting-horn over his head.” Hamburger, “Mahler and *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*,” 62.

⁸² Ibid., 62-3.

What, then, was the attraction of the *Wunderhorn* poems for Mahler? It was their mixture of realism and fantasy, the commonplace and the extraordinary, the tragic and the humorous, the coy and the glum.... He was charmed by the book's naive insistence on stereotypes, its humor, in turn sensitive, pawky, sarcastic, and eerie, its saga-like inconsequentiality in matters of plot, cause, and effect, and even choice of grammatical tenses and unannounced shifts in the speaking voice. Add to this the many stories describing a soldier's life with cruel realism and again with compassion, the portraits of youngsters insecure or insolent in their first love, the birds that can talk, the fishes that listen, the rings that float in water, the bugles that blare out of graves, and you have a book of fairy tales to be set to music by a child of genius.⁸³

Indeed, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* provided Mahler with perfect texts with which to develop his unique approach to Lied composition. The many and varied moods, characters, and modes of address within the poems allowed him to explore different combinations of orchestral timbres while the otherworldly subject matter inherent to many of the texts prompted development of his distinct late Romantic musical idiom. Mahler began work on his twelve-song collection known simply as "Songs from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*" in 1892. Written in 1898, "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen," was one of the last songs composed for the collection.⁸⁴ The Lied's text exhibits many of the qualities that drew Mahler to the *Wunderhorn* anthology and its music displays some of the composer's most sophisticated compositional techniques.

The text of "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen" presents a dialogue between a young maiden and her soldier sweetheart. A narrator provides a few brief descriptive lines between the young lovers' interchanges. The poem opens with the maiden awakening to a knock at her door and wondering aloud who it could be. The soldier, announcing himself as the girl's "dearest love," calls out to her to let him in. The maiden

⁸³ Ibid., 64.

⁸⁴ These twelve songs each exist in both piano-vocal and orchestra-vocal settings, all written by Mahler. James L. Zychowicz, "The Lieder of Mahler and Richard Strauss," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*, ed. James Parsons (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 249-50.

welcomes him inside with words of love. She soon begins to weep, however, and the soldier comforts her with promises of a life together when he returns from war, assuring her, “Within a year though shalt be mine...like no one else on earth can be!” As the poem draws to a close, he speaks of the “green heath” where he must travel: “Where the fair trumpets sound, there is my home, beneath green grass.” With these final lines, the poetic illusion of young lovers engaging in a bittersweet farewell shatters. In reality, the soldier has already gone to war and remains buried at the scene of his last battle; it is merely his ghost that returns. With this revelation comes another: the soldier’s assertion that the maiden shall be with him “within a year” implies that she, too, is doomed to suffer a similar fate and join her sweetheart in untimely death.

When considering this Lied’s text, it is important to note that the character of the ghost was not, in fact, present in the poem published in the *Wunderhorn* collection. Originally titled “Unbeschreibliche Freude” (“Indescribable Joy”), the poem that forms the basis of “Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen” was initially a shorter dialogue between two (very human) young lovers longing to begin their lives together. Mahler himself followed Arnim’s and Brentano’s lead and assumed the role of co-author through heavy editing of the poem. The composer removed certain lines and stanzas and added others he had penned himself to create a text that presented a very different story than it had in its unaltered form – or at least the form it possessed upon publication.⁸⁵ Thus Mahler transformed the besotted young lovers into a ghostly soldier and his living sweetheart, introducing a supernatural element to the dialogue. Furthermore, by concealing the cruel reality of the lovers’ situation until the text’s final line, Mahler engaged in a nineteenth-

⁸⁵ Gartenberg, *Mahler: The Man and His Music*, 261-2. For a stanza-by-stanza breakdown of Mahler’s alterations to the original poem, see p. 262.

century poetic practice Edward Kravitt calls “Romantic irony,” defined as “the intentional destruction of an illusion....The poet creates a delicate image or mood in the body of a poem only to shatter it with one final line.”⁸⁶ With these powerful poetic alterations Mahler created a haunting example of a supernatural dialogue text featuring a hidden otherworldly entity.

As mentioned above, two key aspects of Mahler’s innovative approach to German art song were his use of orchestral scoring and his expansive treatment of the genre. Both features are present in “Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen.” The song’s accompaniment is scored for flutes, oboes, clarinets, horns, trumpets, and strings,⁸⁷ and at 192 measures it is by far the longest Lied presented in this study. The song is perhaps best described as through-composed, though this term does not altogether adequately convey Mahler’s complex dramatic structuring. Each of the six stanzas do not necessarily present the speech of a single character; certain stanzas encompass an exchange between the soldier and his sweetheart, or else feature both the narrator and one of the dialogue’s participants. Mahler’s musical setting of the text, however, divides the song into seven distinct sections according to which character is speaking. The sections each exhibit their own characteristic musical material⁸⁸ and are separated from each other with instrumental interludes of varying length. This arrangement creates a musical environment that not only encompasses the dialogue’s dramatic scope, but also allows for the inclusion of subtle musical hints as to the soldier’s ghostly nature prior to the devastating final line.

⁸⁶ Kravitt, “Romanticism Today,” 101-102.

⁸⁷ While my discussion of “Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen” includes references to the song’s orchestral instrumentation, for sake of space and ease of study the provided examples are drawn from the piano-vocal score.

⁸⁸ Certain motives are repeated across these sections, but I believe they exhibit enough variation to classify the song as through-composed.

“Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen” opens with a fairly extensive twenty-measure prelude. Marked *Verträumt, leise* (Dreamily, quiet) the passage features muted horns playing hollow open fifths as well as a brief trumpet fanfare heard just before the singer’s entrance (Figure 3.4). This prelude serves to establish a militaristic soundscape that will return several times throughout the Lied. The D minor tonality and hushed, distant quality of the brass, however, sit at odds with the triumphant sounds that typically accompany soldiers into battle; this melancholy march is the first clue that the song’s story will include an unexpected element. The march figure continues, this time in the woodwinds, as the maiden begins the dialogue. Her vocal line is soft, rhythmically

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system shows the piano introduction with the tempo marking *Verträumt. Leise.* The piano part features hollow open fifths in the muted horns and a brief trumpet fanfare. The second system continues the piano introduction with a *f* (forte) dynamic marking. The third system shows the vocal line entering with the lyrics "Wer ist denn drau-ssen und" and a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic marking, followed by the tempo marking *Etwas zurückhaltend.*

Figure 3.4. Mahler, “Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen,” mm. 1-22

repetitive, and questioning: the continuously ascending melody ends on a high note harmonized with an inconclusive chord, suggesting the cadence of a spoken query. A brief interlude in the brass and winds brings the girl's section to a close, and the next section begins as the soldier calls out his answer. Here the musical character completely transforms: the key shifts from D minor to D major, the march-like duple meter changes to a dance-like triple meter, the brass instrumentation falls away in favor of lush string arpeggiations, and the punctuated militaristic rhythms give way to sweeping legato lines (Figure 3.5). The soldier's words of love are set to an expansive, gently arching lyrical line that contrasts with the maiden's declamatory questions. This striking juxtaposition, however, hints at the hidden subtext: "Although we are not yet told that the speaker is the ghost of a fallen soldier, the sweetness and ardor of this passage, including a disembodied *pianissimo subito* towards the end, hints at the presence of the supernatural."⁸⁹

The third section, beginning at m. 72, shifts to the musical environment similar to that of the prelude: the mournful fanfare motive returns, as does the duple meter, D minor tonality, and declamatory vocal line with which the narrator briefly relates the girl's movement to the door to welcome her sweetheart. The fourth section takes on yet another musical atmosphere: a "wide-stepping yet searingly beautiful"⁹⁰ modulation to the distant key of G-flat major sets the tone for the maiden's words of welcome accompanied by gentle arpeggio figures in the strings (Figure 3.6). This romantic passage is cut short, however, as the fifth section takes over, moving once more into a minor tonality. The narrator's description of the girl offering her hand to her sweetheart and beginning to cry is presented in a rhythmically even melodic line that culminates in a heart-rending

⁸⁹ Hamburger, "Mahler and *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*," 81.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Das ist der Herz - al - ler - lieb - ste dein, steh' auf und lass mich zu dir ein! Was soll ich hier nun län - ger steh'n? Ich

pp
sempre pp
con Ped.

Oberstimme der rechten Hand über die Gesangstimme hervortretend.

Figure 3.5. Mahler, “Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen,” mm. 37-51

Sehr gehalten.

Will - kom - men, lie - ber Kna - be mein! So

espress.
pp

Figure 3.6. Mahler, “Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen,” mm. 88-95

melisma on the word “weep,” mimicking the girl’s sobs. Although the reason for the maiden’s tears is as yet unclear to the listener, the return of the muted martial motives in the brass and winds suggests her dawning realization of the truth, and perhaps of her own inevitable fate.

The sixth and seventh sections coincide with the poem's final two stanzas in which the soldier attempts to comfort the maiden before finally revealing his supernatural identity, as well as his prophetic knowledge of the girl's fate. The luxurious legato music first heard in the second section makes an appearance once more as the sixth section begins (m. 130): the dance rhythms, sweeping string textures, and flowing vocal line all return as the soldier attempts to comfort the weeping maiden, assuring her they will be together soon. One notable melodic line makes an almost identical reappearance: the melody that set the words, "By my dearest love [I long to be]" in the second section now returns to accompany the phrase "O love of earth so green." The repetition seems to connect these two phrases, suggesting that the soldier's longing for his sweetheart will only end when she joins him beneath the green earth. Finally, the seventh section once more recreates the sounds of battle. Unmuted for the first time, the brass fanfares carry a powerful, present quality that echoes the soldier's confident and declamatory line as he speaks of his military duties. The prevalent staccato articulations, pizzicato strings, and march-like duple meter additionally contribute to the martial musical language that characterizes the soldier's closing verse. It is only with his final line, "Where the fair trumpets sound, there is my home, beneath green grass," that his otherworldly nature is overtly revealed: at m. 183, the proud major tonality shifts suddenly to opening key of D minor (Figure 3.7). The strings and woodwinds each die away, leaving only sparse brass lines as the soldier's vocal line concludes over an irresolute cadence. The relentless march motive transforms from a battle hymn into a funeral march, and the Lied ends with the brass instruments playing a single unison D which slowly fades away into nothingness.

All - wo dort die schö - nen Trom - pe - - - ten bla - sen, da ist__ mein Haus mein
 Haus von grü - nem Ra - sen!

Figure 3.7. Mahler, “Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen,” mm. 177-192

“Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen” exemplifies Mahler’s subtle and complex approach to the musical depiction of a concealed supernatural being. Throughout the song’s substantial length, the composer creates several contrasting musical worlds that delicately suggest the polarity of the physical and spiritual realms the young lovers inhabit. Just as the soldier and the maiden can never again reside in the same place in the physical world, they never once inhabit the same musical environment: the keys in which they sing, their melodic and rhythmic content, and their respective instrumental accompaniments change even as they speak directly to one another. This musical disconnection, reinforced by subtle musical foreshadowing, dramatic structuring, and expert handling of orchestral forces, provides clues to the conversing characters’ physical – and metaphorical – separation long before the final, tragic disclosure of the soldier’s ghostly nature. With Mahler’s unique approach to the musical depiction of a concealed

otherworldly entity in mind, we turn now to a discussion of one final supernatural dialogue song and the composer who brought the genre to its highest achievement.

Hugo Wolf: “Lied vom Winde”

Although treating “Lied vom Winde” last in this study breaks the thus far chronological consideration of the selected Lieder – the song was composed in February of 1888,⁹¹ a full decade before Mahler’s “Wo die schönen Trompeten Blasen” – I believe its placement at the end is warranted. Highly influenced by the declamatory style and chromatic idiom of Richard Wagner’s music dramas,⁹² Hugo Wolf emerged in the last decades of the nineteenth century as one of the greatest and most influential Lied writers of the Romantic era. His songs exhibit a deeply original musical aesthetic, profound sensitivity to subtle changes in poetic mood, and intense correlation between text and music. Superbly exemplifying these compositional qualities, “Lied vom Winde” represents the culmination of supernatural dialogue Lieder, just as its composer’s career marks the culmination of the German Romantic Lieder tradition.

Hugo Wolf (1860-1903) focused almost exclusively on Lied composition throughout his career, and he remains “the only standard composer whose reputation rests entirely on his songs.”⁹³ Wolf spent his mature years working as a freelance composer in Vienna. He did not compose at a steady rate; rather, Wolf enjoyed several frenzied periods of prolific creative activity. During these compositional outbursts, it was not

⁹¹ Susan Youens, “Tradition and innovation: the Lieder of Hugo Wolf,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*, ed. James Parsons (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 208.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 205.

⁹³ Lawrence Kramer, “Hugo Wolf: Subjectivity in the Fin-de-Siècle Lied,” in *German Lieder in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Rufus Hallmark (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), 186.

uncommon for him to produce dozens of songs in a matter of months.⁹⁴ Wolf's reverence for poets and their poetry was immense: he chose his texts with the utmost care, preferring the works of German literary masters who produced the highest quality poetry, and tended to avoid setting poems he felt had already achieved their fullest musical expression in the Lieder of other composers.⁹⁵ Wolf particularly admired the poetry of Eduard Mörike; in early 1888, Wolf produced over fifty songs on Mörike's texts in just a few short months.⁹⁶ Such was Wolf's regard for Mörike and his works that the published song collection's title-page read, at Wolf's own insistence, 'Poems by Eduard Mörike, for voice and piano, set to music by Hugo Wolf.'⁹⁷ It is clear from the placement of the poet's name before his own that Wolf considered his music to be in service of his selected texts rather than other way around. "Lied vom Winde," the thirty-eighth piece of the fifty-three song collection *Mörike-Lieder*, exemplifies Wolf's approach to songwriting in its highly sophisticated union of text and music.

"Lied vom Winde" takes the form of a dialogue between a young female speaker and the wind. The young woman initiates the conversation, asking the wind to tell her the location of its homeland. The wind replies – referring to itself as "we," possibly in reference to the four directional winds – that it does not know where its homeland lies, and that it has been traveling in search of the answer to that very question for many years. It then attempts to continue on its way, but the girl implores it to stay and answer one further question: "Where is the homeland of love, its beginning, its end?" The wind, this

⁹⁴ Youens, "Tradition and innovation," 205-6.

⁹⁵ Kramer, "Hugo Wolf," 186-7.

⁹⁶ Youens, "Tradition and innovation," 206-7. Youens counts Wolf's Lied output in 1888 among the three "miracle years" of German song composition, in addition to Schubert's creative burst in 1815 and Schumann's 1840 *Liederjahr*.

⁹⁷ Frank Walker, *Hugo Wolf: A Biography* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1968), 238.

time referring to itself as “I,” responds that it does not know the answer to this question either. It tells the young woman that love is similar to the wind: it is lively, restless, and “eternal, but not always constant.” Assuring the young woman it will greet her sweetheart if it happens upon him, the wind soars away.

Unlike the witch in Schumann’s “Waldesgespräch” and the ghostly soldier in Mahler’s “Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen,” the wind’s supernatural identity is not overtly hidden at the outset of the poem and disclosed as the dialogue progresses; rather, its uncanny character is simultaneously concealed and revealed. The wind’s very essence as a natural phenomenon indicates earthly origins, while its sentience and power of speech suggests a distinctly fantastical character. This ambiguity is further complicated through consideration of the text’s background. Mörike originally wrote the poem for a scene in his novel, *Maler Nolten*. In Ophelia-like fashion, the novel’s heroine, Agnes, sings three mad songs as she descends into insanity; “Lied vom Winde” is the first.⁹⁸ Eric Sams provides a translated portion of the scene:

[Agnes] has climbed to the top of a ‘small bare conical hill that rose above the little forest. “The wind is blowing there! I must sing the wind song” she cried, hurrying on ahead. There she stood on high, and she sang, in a free style, the following verses, changing her voice very cleverly each time to render the question and answer and at the same time gesticulating spiritedly.’

While it is generally assumed Wolf drew the texts of his *Mörike-Lieder* from an anthology of Mörike’s poems, it is possible – even probable, given Wolf’s great regard for the author – that the composer had read *Maler Nolten* and therefore knew the poem’s context.⁹⁹ If this is the case, the madness of the young woman may have informed Wolf’s

⁹⁸ Agnes’s other mad songs, “Seufzer” and “Wo find’ ich Trost?” appear in Wolf’s *Mörike-Lieder* as No. 22 and No. 31, respectively. Susan Youens, *Hugo Wolf and his Mörike Songs*, 61.

⁹⁹ Eric Sams, *The Songs of Hugo Wolf* (London: Faber and Faber, 2008), 121.

setting. His melodic lines certainly seem to reflect the clever vocal shifts described in the novel, and the song's chromatic harmonic idiom might suggest the human speaker's mental derangement that forms the basis of her dialogue with a non-human entity. In any case, Wolf's highly Romantic musical language effectively illustrates the restless urgency inherent to the young woman's questions and the ambiguity of the wind's simultaneously natural and preternatural character.

Wolf utilizes a through-composed structure for this uncanny interaction between a young woman and the wind. The Lied opens with a four-measure piano prelude featuring a virtuosic rush of chromaticism that insinuates the whirling motion of the wind as it comes gusting onto the scene (Figure 3.8). The song's overarching key of F-sharp minor is only firmly established upon the entrance of the young woman's vocal line: her initial call of greeting is punctuated with two stable tonic chords that suggest her human solidity, followed by a brief chromatic passage as the wind dances around her. The young woman's melody, however, is anything but stable. Wide, angular leaps and rapid shifts in register characterize her vocal line. This disjunct phrasing colors her question with volatile urgency, and perhaps communicates her unbalanced state of mind. The accompanimental pattern of alternating chords and chromatics remains throughout the girl's short first verse, eventually winding down in a brief two-measure interlude (mm. 13-14) that implies the gale's descent upon the girl in preparation for its reply.

Quietly thrumming piano tremolos accompany the wind's response, creating a conflicting concurrence of motion and stasis; the wind seems to temporarily suspend its hurried progress in order to answer the young woman, though by its very nature it cannot



Figure 3.8. Wolf, “Lied vom Winde,” mm. 1-5

become entirely still (Figure 3.9). The declamatory melodic line, initially hushed and static, quickly ascends in both pitch and dynamic level in an intimation of the element’s riotous effervescence. Harmonic instability characterizes the evasive nature of the wind’s reply. However, sporadic instances of tonal clarity shine through: when the wind speaks of questioning the “resounding hosts of Heaven” as to the location of its homeland in m. 27, for example, a shift to the key of F-sharp major provides a brief moment of resolution before plunging back into illustrative harmonic uncertainty for three statements of the phrase “They never know.” Having provided the young woman with a response (though not an answer), the uncanny wind attempts to rush off once more in a breathless swirl of chromatic scales.

With a high-pitched cry, the young woman beseeches the wind to stay long enough to tell her where she might find the homeland of love. The harmonically

pp flüsternd

„Kind-lein, wir fah-ren seit viel vie-len Jah-ren durch die weit wei-te
 “Child mine, for e-ver, we haste, cea-sing ne-ver, through the great great wide

ppp

Welt, und möch-ten's er-fra-gen, die Ant-wort er-ja-gen,
 world, but where we do come from, that can we ne'er fath-om,

cresc.

mf

Figure 3.9. Wolf, “Lied vom Winde,” mm. 15-24

grounded chords that accompanied the girl’s first request for information do not return here; indeed, her accompaniment now more closely resembles the wind’s musical material with ascending tremolos in the right hand and dissonant clusters in the left (Figure 3.10). The melody soars erratically through the singer’s upper range, conveying her desperate desire for answers. The wind’s response to the girl’s second question begins in much the same way as its first reply: the hushed dynamics, shuddering tremolos, and chromatically ambiguous harmonies foster a turbulent musical atmosphere. As the wind lists the ways in which love is like the wind, a steadily ascending chromatic scale spanning two complete octaves in the accompaniment crescendos to an ecstatic forte



Figure 3.10. Wolf, “Lied vom Winde,” mm. 58-61

declamation of the phrase “It [love] is eternal.” All tonal obscurity is abruptly cleared away, revealing a crystalline C major tonality (Figure 3.11). Then the wind, changeful as ever, returns once more to its swirling scalar passages and speech-like melodic line. It calls goodbye three times to the young woman in the key of C-sharp major rather than the expected home key of F-sharp minor before the piano postlude illustrates its final flight up and away into thin air.



Figure 3.11. Wolf, “Lied vom Winde,” mm. 74-77

The character of the wind in “Lied vom Winde” constitutes a problematic entity: both natural and something other, its uncanny quality is simultaneously covert and overt. When considered within the context of Mörike’s *Maler Nolten*, Wolf’s musical

characterization presents this ambiguity quite effectively: “The eerie power of the mad scene...readily explain[s] the Wagnerian analogues and overtones – chromatics and tremolandi as in the winds of the *Flying Dutchman*, arpeggio melodies as in the *Ride of the Valkyries*.”¹⁰⁰ In other words, both the natural motion and mythical sentience of the wind as an extension of Agnes’s insanity are discernible in Wolf’s late Romantic style. However, even without the subtext of madness it can be argued that Wolf’s profoundly expressive musical devices successfully convey the wind’s uncanny nature. The personified gale, though mystical, is not omniscient: it rushes high and low, searching in every chromatic corner for answers to the very questions the young woman asks. The nearly constant harmonic and tonal ambiguity illustrate the tenuous balance between reality and illusion. Finally, the Lied’s progressive tonality creates a sense of transience and changeability that denies the listener complete tonal closure. Wolf’s subtle, complex response to Mörike’s dialogue poem and its hidden supernatural entity aptly demonstrates the composer’s achievements in musical sensitivity to the understanding of his texts. This nuanced and sophisticated approach to songwriting brought the genre of the Romantic Lied – and the subgenre of the supernatural dialogue Lied – to a final climax.

* * *

Supernatural dialogue Lieder enjoyed a place within the compositional output of notable song composers such as Schumann, Mahler, and Wolf right until the end of the Romantic era. These composers displayed great musical sensitivity and sophistication in the merging of poetry with music, and texts with unique elements such as a character’s concealed otherworldly nature prompted the use of increasingly inventive compositional

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

devices in virtually every aspect of the Lied. Issues of melody, harmony, meter, rhythm, formal structure, and instrumentation all played a role in the development of these three great composers' distinctly Romantic musical languages and their ability to depict a supernatural "voice" within a sung dialogue, even before the disclosure of the uncanny element's presence within said dialogue. These unique texts and the composers who set them represent an intriguing facet of the continuation and culmination of the supernatural dialogue Lied.

CONCLUSION

The intriguing ways in which Lied composers of the Romantic era musically depicted supernatural beings in dialogue songs is not a topic that has been extensively explored before in the scholarly literature. However, its significance is evidenced by the numerous examples of supernatural dialogue Lieder that can be found among the output of many of the most prominent Romantic composers. My study discussed a small subset of these works, including songs by Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, Gustav Mahler, and Hugo Wolf, and in doing so traced the development of this small yet rich subgenre.

Several factors came together to support the creation of supernatural dialogue Lieder through the nineteenth century: the philosophies and ideals of German Romanticism converged to create a prime cultural and artistic environment for poetry and music concerning supernatural subjects to thrive, the Lied was elevated to a respected art form, and dialogue texts became a popular poetic format for composers to set to music. Franz Schubert established himself as the quintessential Lied composer early in the century with his talents for seamlessly marrying text and music and expertly crafting melodic lines and illustrative piano accompaniments. In his three songs concerning supernatural encounters with death, “Der Erlkönig,” “Der Tod und das Mädchen,” and “Der Jüngling und der Tod,” Schubert effectively conveyed the fundamental polarity between human characters and the personification of death, using musical techniques such as variations in key, rhythm, and melodic contour to distinguish between human and non-human entities that would influence later composers of supernatural dialogue Lieder. The mid-century composer Robert Schumann continued to develop the supernatural dialogue Lied: by giving the piano a more significant role within his songs and using

distant harmonic relationships, Schumann depicted the concealed and revealed supernatural character in “Waldesgespräch” to great effect. Gustav Mahler’s subtle and complex creation of contrasting musical environments as well as his expert handling of orchestral forces in “Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen” beautifully related the tragic tale of a ghostly soldier and his doomed sweetheart. And finally, Hugo Wolf’s use of ambiguous harmonic language and intense correlation of text and music in his portrayal of an otherworldly wind brought the supernatural dialogue Lied to its artistic culmination.

Although Schubert, Schumann, Mahler and Wolf each went about depicting supernatural dialogues with techniques, devices, and processes unique to their own compositional styles and respective time periods, all four composers implemented a total musical approach to relation of the subject matter. In each Lied, virtually every compositional aspect is brought into play, from harmonic progressions, to melodic phrasing, to rhythmic and metrical concerns, to sensitive and emotionally depictive accompaniments. From the relatively straightforward and overtly illustrated figures of death in Schubert’s early Romantic era songs to the post-Wagnerian tonal obscurity and elusive effervescence of Wolf’s uncanny wind, the varied depictions of supernatural beings in dialogue Lieder of the nineteenth century demonstrate the striking synthesis of poetry and music that is the essence of the Lied.

In a project of this scope, I have only been able to begin exploring this fascinating subject. The six songs analyzed in this study constitute a mere fraction of this intriguing subgenre. However, there remains the exciting prospect of further development of the research begun in this thesis. Numerous Romantic composers’ works have yet to be searched for examples of supernatural dialogue songs. How might they compare to the

songs presented here? Additionally, this study utilized historical and analytical approaches to the discussion of supernatural dialogue songs, but other approaches could prove equally beneficial. How might study of this topic inform a performer's approach to these songs, or else a composer seeking to write a contemporary supernatural dialogue song? The possible avenues of study are many and varied, and I look forward to returning to this topic and continuing to explore the rich musical world of the supernatural dialogue Lied.

APPENDIX A: TEXT TRANSLATIONS

This appendix contains German texts and English translations for the six songs discussed in this thesis. English translations were derived from the following sources:

Gartenberg, Egon. *Mahler: The Man and His Music*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1978.

Glass, Beaumont. *Hugo Wolf's Complete Song Texts*. Geneseo, New York: Leyerle, 2000.

Plantinga, Leon. *Romantic Music: A History of Musical Style in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1984.

Wigmore, Richard, trans. *Schubert: The Complete Song Texts*. London: Gollancz, 1988.

Texts and translations are presented in alphabetical order by title.

“Der Erlkönig” (Goethe)

Wer reitet so spät durch Nacht und
Wind?
Es ist der Vater mit seinem Kind;
Er hat den Knaben wohl in dem Arm,
Er faßt ihn sicher, er hält ihn warm.

“Mein Sohn, was birgst du so bang dein
Gesicht?”
“Siehst, Vater, du den Erlkönig nicht?
Den Erlenkönig mit Kron und Schweif?”
“Mein Sohn, es ist ein Nebelstreif.”

“Du liebes Kind, komm, geh mit mir!
Gar schöne Spiele spiel' ich mit dir;
Manch' bunte Blumen sind an dem
Strand,
Meine Mutter hat manch gülden
Gewand.”

“Mein Vater, mein Vater, und hörest du
nicht,
Was Erlenkönig mir leise verspricht?”
“Sei ruhig, bleibe ruhig, mein Kind:
In dürren Blättern säuselt der Wind.”

“The Erlking”

Who rides so late through night and
wind?
It is the father with his child.
He has the boy in his arms,
He holds him safe, he keeps him warm.

“My son, why do you hide your face in
fear?”
“Father, can you not see the Erlking?
The Erlking with his crown and tail?”
“My son, it is a streak of mist.”

“Sweet child, come with me,
I'll play wonderful games with you;
Many a pretty flower grows on the
shore,
My mother has many a golden
robe.”

“Father, Father, do you not
hear
What the Erlking softly promises me?”
“Calm, be calm my child:
The wind is rustling in the leaves.”

“Willst, feiner Knabe, du mit mir gehn?
 Meine Töchter sollen dich warten schön;
 Meine Töchter führen den nächtlichen
 Reihn,
 Und wiegen und tanzen und singen dich
 ein.”

“Mein Vater, mein Vater, und siehst du
 nicht dort
 Erbkönigs Töchter am düstern Ort?”
 “Mein Sohn, mein Sohn, ich seh' es
 genau:
 Es scheinen die alten Weiden so grau.”

“Ich liebe dich, mich reizt deine schöne
 Gestalt;
 Und bist du nicht willig, so brauch' ich
 Gewalt.”
 “Mein Vater, mein Vater, jetzt faßt er
 mich an!
 Erbkönig hat mir ein Leids getan!”

Dem Vater grauset's, er reitet geschwind,
 Er hält in Armen das ächzende Kind,
 Erreicht den Hof mit Müh' und Not;
 In seinen Armen das Kind war tot.

“Der Jüngling und der Tod” (Spaun)

Der Jüngling:
 Die Sonne sinkt, o könnt ich mit ihr
 schneiden,
 Mit ihrem letzten Strahl entfliehen!
 Ach diese namenlosen Qualen meiden
 Und weit in schön're Welten ziehn!

O komme, Tod, und löse diese Bande!
 Ich läche dir, o Knochenmann,
 Entführe mich leicht in geträumte
 Lande!
 O komm und rühre mich doch an!

Der Tod:
 Es ruht sich kühl und sanft in meinen

“Won't you come with me, my fine lad?
 My daughters shall wait upon you;
 My daughters lead the nightly
 dance,
 And will rock, and dance, and sing you
 to sleep.”

“Father, Father, can you not
 see
 Erlking's daughters in the darkness?”
 “My son, my son, I can see
 clearly:
 It is the old grey willows gleaming.”

“I love you, your fair form allures
 me,
 And if you don't come willingly, I'll
 use force.”
 “Father, father, now he's seizing
 me!
 The Erlking has hurt me!”

The father shudders, he rides swiftly,
 Holding the moaning child in his arms;
 With one last effort he reaches home;
 The child lay dead in his arms.

“The Young Man and Death”

The Young Man:
 The sun is sinking; O that I might
 depart with it,
 Flee with its last ray:
 Escape these nameless torments,
 And journey far away to fairer worlds!

O come, death, and loose these bonds!
 I smile upon you, skeleton;
 Lead me gently to the land of
 dreams!
 O come and touch me, Come!

Death:
 In my arms you will find cool, gentle

Armen,
Du rufst, ich will mich deiner Qual
erbarmen.

rest;
You call. I will take pity on your
suffering.

“Der Tod und das Mädchen” (Claudius)

Das Mädchen:

Vorüber, ach, vorüber!
Geh, wilder Knochenmann!
Ich bin noch jung, geh, Lieber!
Und rühre mich nicht an.

Der Tod:

Gib deine Hand, du schön und zart
Gebild!
Bid Freund und komme nicht zu
strafen.
Sei gutes Muts! Ich bin nicht wild,
Sollst sanft in meinen Armen schlafen!

“Death and the Maiden”

The Maiden:

Pass by, ah, pass by!
Away, cruel skeleton!
I am still young, leave me, dear one,
And do not touch me.

Death:

Give me your hand, you lovely,
tender creature.
I am your friend, and come not to
punish.
Be of good courage. I am not cruel;
You shall sleep softly in my arms.

“Lied vom Winde” (Mörike)

Sausewind, Brausewind!
Dort und hier!
Deine Heimat sage mir!

“Kindlein, wir fahren
Seit viel vielen Jahren
Durch die weit weite Welt,
Und möchten's erfragen,
Die Antwort erjagen,
Bei den Bergen, den Meeren,
Bei des Himmels klingenden Heeren:
Die wissen es nie.
Bist du klüger als sie,
Magst du es sagen.
Fort, wohlauf!
Halt uns nicht auf!
Kommen andre nach, unsre Brüder,
Da frag wieder!”

Halt an! Gemach,

“Song of the Wind”

Rushing wind, roaring wind!
There and here!
Tell me where is your homeland!

“Little child, we have been traveling
For many, many years
Through the wide, wide world
And would like to ascertain that,
To pursue the answer,
Asking the mountains, the seas,
The resounding hosts of heaven;
They never know.
If you know more than they,
You may tell us.
Away we go!
Do not hold us up!
Others come after us; our brothers,
Ask them!”

Stop! Slow down!

Eine kleine Frist!
Sagt, wo der Liebe Heimat
ist,
Ihr Anfang, ihr Ende?

"Wer's nennen könnte!
Schelmisches Kind,
Lieb' ist wie Wind,
Rasch und lebendig,
Ruhet nie,
Ewig ist sie,
Aber nicht immer beständig.
Fort! Wohlauf! auf!
Halt uns nicht auf!
Fort über Stoppel und Wälder und
Wiesen!
Wenn ich dein Schätzchen seh',
Will ich es grüßen.
Kindlein, ade!"

“Waldesgespräch” (Eichendorff)

“Es ist schon spät, es wird schon kalt,
Was reitst du einsam durch den
Wald?
Der Wald ist lang, du bist allein,
Du schöne Braut! Ich führ dich heim!”

“Gross ist der Männer Trug und List,
Vor Schmerz mein Herz gebrochen ist.
Wohl irrt das Waldhorn her und
hin,
O flich! Du weisst nicht, wer ich bin.”

“So reich geschmückt ist Ross und
Weib,
So wunderschön der junge Leib,
Jetzt kenn ich dich – Gott steh mir bei!
Du bist die Hexe Lorelei.”

“Du kennst mich wohl – von hohem
Stein
Schaut still mein Schloss tief in den
Rhein.

Wait a little while!
Tell me, where is the homeland of
love,
Its beginning, its end?

“Who could name it?
Roguish child,
Love is like the wind,
Quick and lively;
It never rests,
It is eternal,
But not always constant.
Away we go!
Do not hold us up!
Away over stubble and forests and
meadows!
If I see your sweetheart,
I will greet him.
Little child, goodbye!”

“Forest Conversation”

“It is already late, it is already cold,
Why are you riding alone through the
wood?
The wood is vast, you are alone,
You pretty bride, I'll lead you home!”

“Great is men's deceit and cunning,
From pain my heart has broken.
The wandering hunting horn sounds
here and there,
Oh flee, you do not know who I am.”

“So richly adorned is horse and
lady,
So enchanting is your young body,
Now I know you – God be with me!
You are the witch Lorelei!”

“You know me indeed, from a high
rock
My castle looks silently deep into the
Rhine.

Es ist schon spät, es wird schon kalt,
Kommst nimmermehr aus diesem
Wald!”

It is already late, it is already cold,
You will nevermore leave this
wood!”

“Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen”
(*Des Knaben Wunderhorn*; Arnim,
Brentano, and Mahler)

“Where the Fair Trumpets Sound”

Wer ist denn draußen und wer klopft
an,
Der mich so leise, so leise wecken kann?
Das ist der Herzallerliebste dein,
Steh auf und laß mich zu dir ein!

Who stands outside and who
knocks,
Who can wake me so gently?
‘Tis your heart’s dearest love,
Rise and let me in.

Was soll ich hier nun länger stehn?
Ich seh die Morgenröt aufgehn,
Die Morgenröt, zwei helle Stern,
Bei meinem Schatz, da wär ich gern,
bei meiner Herzallerliebsten.

Why should I stand here longer?
I see the rosy dawn arise,
The rosy dawn and two bright stars,
By my sweetheart I long to be,
By my dearest love.

Das Mädchen stand auf und ließ ihn ein;
Sie heißt ihn auch willkommen sein.
Willkommen, lieber Knabe mein,
So lang hast du gestanden!

The maiden rose and let him in,
She also bade him welcome.
Welcome, dear lad of mine,
So long you’ve stood out there.

Sie reicht ihm auch die schneeweiße
Hand.
Von ferne sang die Nachtigall
Das Mädchen fing zu weinen an.

She also gave him her snow white
hand.
From far off sang the nightingale;
The maiden began to weep.

Ach weine nicht, du Liebste mein,
Aufs Jahr sollst du mein eigen sein.
Mein Eigen sollst du werden gewiß,
Wie’s keine sonst auf Erden ist.
O Lieb auf grüner Erden.

O do not weep my dearest love,
Within a year thou shalt be mine.
My own thou shalt be for sure,
Like no one else on earth can be!
O love of earth so green.

Ich zieh in Krieg auf grüner Heid,
Die grüne Heide, die ist so weit.
Allwo dort die schönen Trompeten
blasen,
Da ist mein Haus, von grünem
Rasen.

I go to war on the green heath,
The green heath, it is so far,
Where the fair trumpets
sound,
There is my home, beneath green
grass.

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