

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

A

TEXTURE IN ROBERT SCHUMANN'S FIRST-DECADE
PIANO WORKS

by
THOMAS SAUER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts, The City University of New York

1997

UMI Number: 9720137

**Copyright 1997 by
Sauer, Thomas**

All rights reserved.

**UMI Microform 9720137
Copyright 1997, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.**

**This microform edition is protected against unauthorized
copying under Title 17, United States Code.**

UMI
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Copyright 1997

THOMAS SAUER

All Rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Music in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts.

Jan. 21, 1997
Date

Peter Bagneri
Chair of Examining Committee

21 Jan 97
Date

Am - W. H. H. H.
Executive Officer

Professor Carl Schachter

Professor Joel Lester

Professor Rufus Hallmark
Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

TEXTURE IN ROBERT SCHUMANN'S FIRST-DECADE

PIANO WORKS

by

THOMAS SAUER

Adviser: Professor Carl Schachter

This study treats centrally an aspect of music which is normally treated peripherally in the analytic literature: texture. Under discussion are Schumann's piano works from the years 1829-1839. Broadly, the study defines texture as the sum of sounding material, and postulates that textures can be parsed into components according to the quality and function of their sounding material. The notions of textural quality and process are key to the assessment of texture throughout the study; a qualitative assessment determines the characteristics of and relationships among textural components, while the concept of textural process allows that alterations in the constitution of texture affect perceptions of musical shape.

A German-language concept, *Klaviersatz*, is related to that of pianistic texture. Four writers in German have addressed the features of Schumann's *Klaviersatz*; their ideas are summarized prior to an overview, in Chapter Two, of Schumann's first-decade piano music from the standpoint of textural quality. This overview departs from an 1835

review by Schumann in which he identifies three of the piano's particular tonal capabilities as 1) fullness of voicing, 2) use of the pedal, and 3) volubility in passage playing. Schumann's pianistic *oeuvre* is considered in light of these instrumental capabilities. The study finds that his textures are distinguished from those of his contemporaries above all by their abundant polyphony and by the derivation and function of their figuration.

The remaining three chapters of the study are devoted to analyses of portions of Schumann's variation sets, sonata-form movements, and character pieces, respectively. The formal constraints of each genre, and Schumann's responses to those constraints, are made apparent in discussions of textural process.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To the members of my supervisory committee, Professors Schachter, Lester, and Hallmark, my sincere thanks for the advice and support without which this study would not have found its way to completion. In particular, I thank Professor Schachter for his close reading of the text, help in translations from the German, and willingness to advise a dissertation which departs thoroughly from the analytic method of which he is a leading proponent. I am indebted to Professor Lester for many improvements in matters of style, his strong suspicion of overstatement, and much practical advice. Professor Hallmark's questioning of my initial framing of the argument led to a vital clarification of the underlying definitions and analytic approach of the study; I owe much to his skepticism. Professors Basquin, Graziano, and Griffel completed the examining committee, and provided valuable editorial advice during my final stage of work on the study. To my wife Serena, I owe apologies for many evenings marked by a less-than-cheerful outlook on life during my work on this dissertation. Her forbearance was and will remain essential to me.

A NOTE ON THE MUSICAL EXAMPLES

All musical examples are taken from the piano works of Robert Schumann unless otherwise indicated. The eighty-one Schumann examples are reprinted from the Complete Edition of

Robert Schumanns Werke, Serie VII: Für Pianoforte zu zwei Händen (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1879-1887). This edition is in the public domain. An example from the piano études of Franz Liszt is reprinted from *Franz Liszt's Musikalische Werke, Serie II: Pianofortewerke* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1910-1911). A portion of a Song without Words by Mendelssohn is reprinted from *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's Werke, Serie XI: Für Pianoforte allein* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1874-1877). The editions of Liszt and Mendelssohn are in the public domain.

The five remaining examples reprinted in the study appear with the kind permission of the following publishers, each of which is credited in the main body of the text: Theodore Presser Company, Bryn Mawr, Pa.; C. F. Peters Corporation, New York, N.Y.; European American Music Distribution Corporation, Paoli, Pa., acting for Wiener Urtext Edition, Vienna, Austria; G. Henle Verlag, Munich, Germany; and Foreign Music Distributors, Chester, N.Y., acting for Bärenreiter Verlag, Kassel, Germany.

A NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS

All translations from the German are my own.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: Texture as a Musical Parameter

Introduction	1
Purpose and Plan of Study	2
Connotations of Texture	4
Methodology of Study	9

CHAPTER TWO: Schumann's Textural Tendencies

Schumann's <i>Klaviersatz</i> : Four Dissertations	17
Schumann's Sense of Pianistic Possibilities	27
Fullness of Voicing and Harmonic Succession	29
Use of the Pedal	48
Volubility	54

CHAPTER THREE: Texture in the Variation Sets

Schumann and the Variation	61
<i>Variations on the Name Abegg</i> , op. 1	65
<i>Symphonic Etudes</i> , op. 13	79

CHAPTER FOUR: Texture in Sonata-Form Movements

Sonata Form and Texture	99
Schumann's First-Decade Sonata Forms: An Overview	102
Toccata in C major, op. 7	108
Sonata in F# minor, op. 11, First Movement	120
Fantasy in C major, op. 17, First Movement	130
<i>Faschingsschwank aus Wien</i> , op. 26, Fifth Movement	145

CHAPTER FIVE: Texture in the Character Pieces

Schumann and the Character Piece	153
Aesthetic and Formal Tendencies of Schumann's Character Pieces	156
Generalized Textural Types	168
1. Dance Textures	168
2. Étude Textures	182
3. Lyric-Piece Textures	196
Juxtaposition of Textural Types	209

CONCLUSION	216
------------	-----

BIBLIOGRAPHY	220
--------------	-----

CHAPTER ONE: TEXTURE AS A MUSICAL PARAMETER

In the first review he ever published--the much celebrated 1831 review of Chopin's "*Là ci darem la mano*" Variations, op. 2--Robert Schumann made an obvious and seemingly superficial point regarding musical scores and notation:

...it seems to me that, for the eye, each composer has his own ways of shaping notes: Beethoven looks different on paper from Mozart, somewhat as Jean Paul's prose [looks] different from Goethe's.¹

Schumann remarked fancifully on the unusual appearance of Chopin's printed score: "Here it seemed to me that only strange eyes, flower-eyes, Basilisk-eyes, peacock's eyes, maiden-eyes, looked wondrously upon me...."²

Clearly, the look of Chopin's variations excited Schumann's imagination. Why was this so? Chopin's way of writing for the piano was novel in many ways, principally with respect to *texture*. He created new textures for the instrument, in part through his use of widely-spaced broken-chord figures and his unique balancing of registers; these textures differed from those of his predecessors and

¹Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, ed. Martin Kreisig, 5th ed., 2 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1914), vol. I, p. 5. "...scheint mir, hat jeder Komponist seine eigentümlichen Notengestaltungen für das Auge: Beethoven sieht anders auf dem Papier als Mozart, etwa wie Jean Pauls Prosa anders als Goethesche."

²Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, vol. I, p. 5: "Hier aber war mir's, als blickten mich lauter fremde Augen, Blumenaugen, Basiliskenaugen, Pfauenaugen, Mädchenaugen wundersam an...."

contemporaries both aurally and visually. Schumann recognized this, and remarked upon their unfamiliarity with a metaphorical flair of which Jean Paul might have been proud.

Texture is an aspect of music whose qualities are immediately perceptible by ear and eye. Schumann must have sensed at once that some of the textures in Chopin's Op. 2 set it apart from the works of other composers. However, a *prima facie* impression, such as Schumann recorded in his review, cannot acknowledge the total musical effect of a given texture.

It is possible, and indeed worthwhile, to read and hear texture more deeply than a first impression allows. A close analysis of texture reveals many of the general stylistic tendencies of a given composer, and can uncover relationships between texture and the structural and expressive properties of a musical work. These relationships are of significance to both analysts and performers.

Purpose and Plan of Study

The central purpose of this study is to define the ways in which Schumann fashions and manipulates musical texture in the piano-solo works of his first decade of composition, 1829-1839. Schumann's typical approaches to piano texture are described in detail; his "own ways of shaping notes" are

made plain. The study shows that certain of Schumann's tendencies in the configuration of material are distinctly his own, while he shares other tendencies with his fellow Romantic composer-pianists, as well as with earlier composers. The study also examines ways in which textural processes, i.e., the modifications and outright changes to which texture is subject in the course of a work, are coordinated with formal processes in Schumann's first-decade piano music. In this connection, it becomes apparent that at this stage of his development, Schumann's inclinations *vis-à-vis* texture were more readily suited to the genres of variations and character piece than to the sonata. Finally, the study explores the contributions of texture to expressive effect in Schumann's music.

A total of five chapters is organized as follows: the present chapter defines the notion of musical texture and describes the analytic approach used throughout the study. The second chapter explores the concept of *Klaviersatz*--a German-language concept related to that of pianistic texture--as it is treated in four dissertations on Schumann's pianistic style, and then surveys the leading characteristics of Schumann's first-decade textures. Short excerpts drawn from the works of 1829-1839 demonstrate typical textural traits. Following this general qualitative assessment of Schumann's textures, chapters three through five focus on particular genres of Schumann's solo piano

music. Samples of variation sets (Chapter Three), sonata-form movements (Chapter Four), and character pieces (Chapter Five) are examined; individual analyses show links between texture and musical structure, and--particularly in Chapter Five--between texture and expression. It is in these chapters that the idea of textural process becomes the central focus. A brief conclusion summarizes the study's principal findings.

Connotations of Texture

The most comprehensive treatment of musical texture in the scholarly literature is by Wallace Berry, in *Structural Functions in Music*. A lengthy chapter of this book is devoted to defining texture as a parameter worthy of analytic attention, and suggesting ways in which texture--and manipulations thereof--help to articulate musical structure.

Berry considers texture to be created by the total sounding components of a given passage:

Texture is conceived as that element of musical structure shaped (determined, conditioned) by the voice or number of voices and other components projecting the musical materials in the sounding medium, and (when there are two or more components) by the interrelations and interactions between them.³

³Wallace Berry, *Structural Functions in Music* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1976), ch. 2, p. 191.

He writes of texture in both *quantitative* and *qualitative* terms. That is, he assesses a texture by the number of its sounding components, and by the characteristics of--and types of relationships among--those components. Thus, a two-part invention by Bach would display a texture of remarkable *quantitative* consistency, whose two sounding components attain a high degree of *qualitative* independence overall. (This is of course a general assessment, and does not account for those stretches of an invention in which one voice might imply the presence of two, or the parallel leading of voices reduces the independence of the two voices, etc.)

For Berry, texture is a product of the configuration of musical material from moment to moment. Berry hears texture as playing a structural role in music primarily through what he calls textural progression and recession. He considers the processes of progression and recession to be basic tendencies in all musical parameters: progression involves an increase in intensity, and recession a decrease, be it harmonic, melodic, rhythmic, or textural. Textural progression is accomplished by such means as the addition of a new voice to an existing texture, or, more subtly, the increased independence of an already present voice. Greater homogeneity or interdependence among existing voices, and the departure of a voice, are the most common factors in recessive textural procedures.

In his chapter, Berry adduces numerous examples of both progressive and recessive textural procedures, and seeks to measure the resulting alterations in intensity by means of a numerical scheme. To my thinking, the scheme, which expresses in quasi-fractional notation the number and independence or interdependence of a passage's sounding components, fails for two reasons to elucidate fully the musical process. First, it is a symbolic representation of musical phenomena which are, from a symbolic standpoint, no less clear in their original format (i.e., in the score--taking a score as a set of symbols representing potential musical events). Secondly, the scheme is neither subtle nor flexible enough to render accurately the experience of hearing textural modification. In particular, the matter of independence versus interdependence of voices is more intricate than Berry's system suggests, classifying as it does all components as one or the other. It is commonplace in many styles--Schumann's first-decade pianistic style among them--for a voice that predominantly blends into its surroundings to attain momentary prominence. Can one then speak of its independence? The constitution of some textures is simply too fluid to be reduced to discrete columns of numerals. Keyboard textures, with their tendency to alternate between figuration, chordal writing, and quasi-vocal linearity, display the sort of freedom of constitution

which is resistant to facile assessments of the relative independence or interdependence of parts.

Berry raises an issue, however, which is crucial to an understanding of the structural implications of texture. Modifications and outright changes in texture--which may be both occasioned by and coordinated with other aspects of musical composition--are a significant factor in the articulation of musical shape at many levels of a work. Numerous demonstrations of this appear in chapters three through five of the present study. In addition, Berry's notion of qualitative relationships between textural components has been invaluable to the present study. Determining precisely how a texture's constituent parts relate to one another, and how those parts function in the texture overall, is central to the analytic process throughout the paper.

In a more historically and topically limited discussion, Janet M. Levy defines texture as

...an auxiliary variable. Dependent on melody, harmony, and rhythm, and affected by orchestration, register, and so on, it involves the total activity of the component parts in any segment of a composition.⁴

Levy argues that in a piece of late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century music, texture can function as a sign of

⁴Janet M. Levy, "Texture as a Sign in Classic and Early Romantic Music," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 35 (Fall 1982): 482-483.

what the listener may or may not hear next. She writes of contextual as well as conventionalized signs. In her view, texture functions as a contextual sign when, in the course of a single work, an association develops between a particular configuration of material and a specific aspect of musical structure. A readily apparent example (my own) of this is the association which develops in the first movement of the Beethoven Fifth Symphony: we learn to hear non-harmonized statements of the famed four-note motive as points of initiation in the different segments of a sonata-form structure.

A conventionalized textural sign works similarly, only that the texture in question would create certain expectations owing to its broader stylistic application and associations. An example of this offered by Levy involves the conventional Alberti-bass pattern: in the Classical style, the appearance of this formulaic accompanimental figure typically signifies a passage of expository melodic character--if the right hand does not appear simultaneously with the left, it is virtually certain to follow shortly.

Levy makes the further point that composers use these textural associations both to fulfill and frustrate a listener's expectations. Her article is ambitious in its probing of the listening process. The notion of texture communicating to the listener through a conventionalized association has been particularly helpful here; there are

many conventions in the creation of Romantic pianistic texture, some of which Schumann espoused, and some of which he spurned.

The present study borrows from both Berry's and Levy's conceptions of texture. Textures are considered here to be created by all the material sounding at a given moment, and are heard to differ one from the other according to differences in the number and qualities of their respective sounding components. The study also allows that certain ways of organizing musical material are unique to a given piece, while others are typical of a particular style, or, as Levy puts it, conventionalized. The particulars of the present analytic approach are outlined below.

Methodology of Study

The analysis of musical texture is a precarious venture. There is none of the authority that the use of an established, widely agreed-upon analytic method may confer upon the writer concerned with other aspects of music. The present methodology, although formulated explicitly for this study, arose only after many hours were spent at the piano, hearing and organizing texture in the works of many different composers. It is based more on practical musical experience than on any particular theory of musical structure.

The analytic method consists of two stages. The first stage takes as its point of departure the notion of musical texture as made up of identifiable components. This idea is adopted from Berry's study, with a crucial difference. For Berry, a sounding component is the smallest unit of measure. Hence, he considers a six-note chord to have six components, some or all of which may belong to component lines or voices of a longer span.

This study defines textural components differently. Here, *components of a texture are considered to be those portions of a texture whose 1) perceptible continuity, and 2) definable musical function or quality, together foster musical identity.*

In other words, a textural component can be traced both aurally and visually through the texture of which it is a part. A given component may fulfill a melodic, bass-linear, accompanimental, harmonic, contrapuntal, coloristic, or characteristic rhythmic function. (A textural component fulfills a characteristic rhythmic function if it articulates a distinctive rhythm which, through repetition, comes to characterize a particular passage.) Or, a component might consist of compositional material whose essential quality differentiates it from its surroundings, as happens when figural material appears in an otherwise note-against-note context, or when a succession of chords appears in an otherwise singly-linear context.

The parsing of a texture into its various components is not always an automatic procedure. In some cases, the analyst must look closely into the design of a passage in order to designate textural components sensibly. The principal difficulty in so doing is that, very often, musical functions are not performed each by a separate component, i.e., in a mutually exclusive manner. It is common for musical functions to overlap at the surface of a work.

For instance, in the following example, the left hand may seem merely to assume an accompanimental function, the right hand a melodic one.



Example 1-1. Mozart, Piano Sonata
in G major, K. 283, I, mm. 1-4.

(Copyright 1956 Theodore Presser
Company. Used by Permission.)

However, the left hand, which clearly *does* fulfill an accompanimental function, can also be heard to articulate a bass line with the downbeat of each measure. In a sense, then, there are two components within the left-hand figure, and therefore three in the texture as a whole.

It is left to the analyst to decide upon the extent to which a texture can be divided meaningfully into separate components. Much depends, of course, on what the analyst wishes to discuss in a particular passage. If a simple description of the texture in Example 1-1 were sought, 'melody with accompaniment' would do nicely. However, if account were being taken of the different roles played by the left hand, or of the interplay between outer voices throughout the movement, the integration of the bass line into the accompanimental figure would require comment.

The dual function assumed by the left hand in the example above hints at the subtlety and intricacy with which musical functions are performed in a keyboard setting. It is in the parameter of texture--the sum of sounding material--that these functions are most clearly set against one another. The complex play of components that constitutes a musical texture is what lends the study of texture its fascination.

To parse a texture according to the function and quality of its components is to understand the salient features of that texture. This procedure marks the first stage in the analysis of texture in the present study.

The second stage involves the correlation of textural process with musical structure. As indicated above, 'textural process' is used here to signify the modifications and outright changes to which textures are subject in the

course of a work. This study follows Berry in acknowledging textural process as a factor that potentially bears heavily on the perception of large-scale musical shape and structure. Two general classes of textural process are recognized here, as follows:

Textural modification is considered to occur when one or more of the following events takes place: 1) a new component appears; 2) an existing component drops out; 3) the function or quality of an existing component changes. This definition presupposes, in the case of each of the three events, the continued sounding of at least one additional component elsewhere in the texture. Lacking that, the music would effect an outright change in texture: *textural change is considered to occur when an altogether new set of components emerges.*

These definitions of textural modification and change provide for the detailed assessment of a composer's manipulations of texture. Note that these conditions do not necessarily define movement between the different classes of a conventional typology of texture. The conventional typology classifies textures as homophonic, monophonic, polyphonic, heterophonic, monorhythmic, polyrhythmic, etc., and conveys little of the specific nature of a particular texture. The sort of modification in texture caused by, for instance, an alteration in the function of an existing component will not often create a fundamentally different

type of texture. However, it may be of significance with respect to the way it is coordinated with another aspect of the passage in question.

Very often, modifications, and especially substantial changes, in texture occur in conjunction with changes in other musical parameters. To some extent, of course, changes in other parameters *occasion* textural ones. It is certainly true that texture is in general less autonomous than the parameters of melody, harmony, counterpoint, and rhythm, and that changes in texture are at times indistinguishable from--or entirely secondary to--changes in these parameters. However, it is also true that, on the whole, composers integrate the very musical elements that analysts tend to study individually; the potential for over-atomization is present in any analysis that recognizes different constructive musical elements.

The coordinated activity of the parameters of melody, harmony, texture, etc., helps to articulate important formal events in music. In Example 1-2, taken from the seventeenth piece in Schumann's *Davidsbündlertänze*, op. 6, a modification in texture, in conjunction with a melodic and harmonic departure, marks a turning point in the form.

The textural modification occurs at the double bar in m. 17. This double bar was evidently placed in the music to mark a formal division, since no interruption in the musical flow is called for, or indeed possible.



Example 1-2. *Davidsbündlertänze*, op. 6, no. 17, mm. 8-20.

Two events effect this modification in texture: the addition of a linear component (whose course forms a wedge-like contrapuntal shape with the topmost melodic line), and the alteration in function of the syncopated component in the middle of the texture. Initially a mid-texture pedal-point--an agent of rhythmic and tonal continuity--this component acts additionally to reinforce the right-hand melodic activity beginning in m. 17. The resulting modification in texture is coordinated with greatly increased chromaticism and new melodic material relative to the previous section. Together, melody, harmony, and texture define a formal event in the piece, i.e., a departure from its opening measures.

All of the analyses in chapters three through five are based on the aforementioned two-staged procedure. First, a texture is parsed into its essential components. By definition, a textural component has a modicum of continuity as well as a recognizable musical quality or function. Secondly, the extent to which components are modified or superseded is examined. This is done with a view toward hearing textural modification and change in relation to activity in other musical parameters. It emerges repeatedly that textural processes, in conjunction with melodic design as well as harmonic, contrapuntal, and rhythmic factors, help to articulate musical structure in Schumann's piano works of the 1830s.

CHAPTER TWO: SCHUMANN'S TEXTURAL TENDENCIES

The notion of pianistic texture has received little sustained attention in English-language writings on music. However, a related German-language concept, that of *Klaviersatz*, has been explored--both as a central topic and more tangentially--in four dissertations on Schumann. None of the four is readily accessible to the American reader; all attempt an assessment of Schumann's pianistic style. The points made by each that are most relevant to the present study are discussed below.

1. Rosalie Goldenberg, *Der Klaviersatz bei Schumann*, University of Vienna (1930).

Goldenberg defines *Klaviersatz* outright:

The *Klaviersatz* is a manner of composing which consists in the exploitation of the instrument-technical and musical particularities of the piano.¹

Taken literally, this definition allows only for a partial appraisal of a piano score; an assessment of style based on this concept accounts merely for those aspects of a score that are considered specifically pianistic. The long history of adaptations by keyboard instruments of music originally written for other performing forces suggests that, as an analytic precept, Goldenberg's *Klaviersatz* is

¹Rosalie Goldenberg, *Der Klaviersatz bei Schumann*, Inaugural Dissertation, University of Vienna (1930), p. 15: "Der Klaviersatz ist also eine musikalische Setzweise, die in der Ausnutzung der instrumentalten technischen und der musikalischen Eigentümlichkeiten des Klaviers besteht."

obscure. A fast scalar passage exploits the instrument-technical possibilities of the piano, but also of the violin and clarinet. This is not to deny outright the existence of material which is particularly pianistic. However, a principal reason there is such a variety of pianistic styles is that individual composer-pianists hear instrumental possibilities differently. Specific pianistic possibilities are determined both by the individual and by the instrument, and indeed are fixed only in a general--and ambiguous--sense by the instrument itself.

Much of Goldenberg's dissertation is more sensible than her definition would suggest. She catalogues many of the salient features of Schumann's pianistic style, including his extensive use of chords and chord-derived figures, as well as his novel treatment of rhythm (i.e., syncopations, hemiolas, placement of stress on weak portions of a measure, etc.). Goldenberg holds rhythmic effects to be a specifically pianistic feature--i.e., an aspect of the *Klaviersatz*--because the capabilities of the piano are such that a single player can manage polyrhythmic effects. Constrained by her definition, she dilutes it. Goldenberg's conclusion all but contradicts her claim to discuss those aspects of Schumann's music that exploit the "instrument-technical and musical particularities" of the piano. In her final pages, she writes:

This tendency of Schumann's to attain the

greatest fullness of tone as an approximation of orchestral sound winds its way through all of his [piano] compositions like a red thread: partly it manifests itself in the manner of voicing the chords and in the accelerated tempo of their execution, partly in the richness of voicing, heightened through polyrhythm. It manifests itself as well in the way voices are doubled and strengthened through different ways of setting, and not least in the different ways of arpeggiating and breaking chords and in the intensive use of the pedal.²

In other words, Schumann exploits the particularities of the piano in order to approximate the orchestra. This is not convincing.

2. Wolfgang Gertler, *Robert Schumann in seinen frühen Klavierwerken*, Inaugural Dissertation, Albert-Ludwigs University, Freiburg im Breisgau (Berlin, 1931).

Gertler's study is broader in scope than Goldenberg's, taking in Schumann's aesthetics, his historical circumstances, an overview of his pianistic style, and a systematic critique of that style. The critique considers six aspects of style in turn: rhythm and meter, melody, harmony, *Klaviersatz*, form, and expression. Gertler does not define *Klaviersatz*, but apparently takes a more open-

²Rosalie Goldenberg, *Der Klaviersatz bei Schumann*, Inaugural Dissertation, University of Vienna (1930), pp. 110-111: "Diese Tendenz Schumanns, grösste Tonfülle als Annäherung an den Orchesterklang zu erreichen, zieht sich durch alle seine Kompositionen wie ein roter Faden: Bald äussert sie sich in der Satzweise der Akkorde, dem beschleunigten Tempo ihrer Ausführung, bald im Stimmenreichtum durch Polyrhythmik gesteigert, sowie in der Art, Stimmen zu verdoppeln und durch verschiedene Setzweisen zu verstärken; nicht zuletzt in den verschiedenen Akkordzerlegungen sowie in dem intensiven Gebrauch des Pedals."

ended view of the concept than Goldenberg. He is particularly concerned with the disposition of parts: he comments on Schumann's heavy use of the middle register, tendency to avoid gaps between the two hands, and close interweaving of leading and secondary parts.

Like Goldenberg, Gertler hears the orchestra in Schumann's piano writing, but is more circumspect in his discussion of this stylistic feature, and more careful not to contradict himself. In the section on *Klaviersatz*, he writes, "For Schumann--[his] composing at the piano strengthens the assertion--concrete sound is primary. That is characteristic of the time."³ While this would suggest Gertler believes that Schumann composed for the piano *per se*--i.e., with the sound of the instrument as both inspiration and raw material--Gertler later writes, "Despite the suitability of the compositional structure to the piano, conceptions of other instruments occasionally underlie it."⁴ And further, "There are figures and sounds which are as suitable to the piano as they are to the instruments whose

³Wolfgang Gertler, *Robert Schumann in seinen frühen Klavierwerken*, Inaugural Dissertation, Albert-Ludwigs University, Freiburg im Breisgau (Berlin, 1931), p. 100: "Für Schumann ist--das Komponieren am Klavier bekräftigt die Behauptung--der konkrete Klang das Primäre. Das ist Zeiteigenart."

⁴Wolfgang Gertler, *Robert Schumann in seinen frühen Klavierwerken*, p. 101: "Trotz der Klavermässigkeit des Satzes liegen ihm doch zuweilen Vorstellungen anderer Instrumente zugrunde."

presence they evoke."⁵ As an example of a full *Klaviersatz* evocative of the orchestra, Gertler cites the opening of the second movement of the Fantasy, op. 17 (see Example 5-14, p. 195); he cites the passage quoted in Example 2-1, p. 30, as suggestive of woodwinds playing alone. In neither case does Gertler offer evidence in support of his assertions. The second example seems particularly arbitrary to me; the sixteenth piece of *Davidsbündlertänze* (Example 2-1) could as easily suggest *pizzicato* strings as a woodwind choir. Gertler argues that Schumann's piano music arises from a broad base of instrumental-tonal imaginings. I maintain instead that Schumann's imagination with respect to pianistic sonority itself was unusually keen, and that his works of 1829-1839 arise from that imagination coupled with a constant, 'hands on' experimentation at the instrument.

On two different occasions in 1835, Schumann himself addressed the issue of pianistic sonority and capability in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. One such passage, reproduced below (p. 27 of the current chapter), lists the characteristics unique to the piano, as Schumann heard them; another speaks directly to the question of 'orchestrating' the sound of the piano:

...as a composer for the piano, [Schubert]
has somewhat of an advantage over others,

⁵Wolfgang Gertler, *Robert Schumann in seinen frühen Klavierwerken*, p. 102: "Es sind Figuren und Klänge, die dem Klavier ebenso gemäss sind wie den Instrumenten, deren Vorstellung sie wachrufen."

in [certain] particulars even over Beethoven (as splendidly as the latter, in his deafness, heard with his imagination)--namely, in that he knew better how to write pianistically, i.e., so that everything sounds forth thoroughly from the depths of the instrument, while we must borrow, for example with Beethoven, from the tone color of the horn, the oboe, and so forth.⁶

Schumann seems fully aware of the issue of a distinctly pianistic versus a mixed conception of sound, and clearly favors a pianistic style that is not indebted conceptually to other instruments. What are we to make, then, of his *Symphonic Études* (1834)? Does this work contradict--or simply predate--his stated preference for writing for the piano in and of itself? I believe not. Rather than conceiving the individual pieces of this set as though for different instrumental combinations, Schumann sought to replicate the possibilities for fully melodic use of all registers that follow from the presence of single-line instruments 'covering' every register in the orchestra. It seems misguided simply to equate full chordal sonorities with an orchestral conception of sound, as Goldenberg and Gertler have done. Gertler holds Chopin and Mendelssohn to have composed purely with the sound of the piano as

⁶Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, vol. I, p. 125: "...hat er als Komponist für das Klavier vor andern, im einzelnen selbst vor Beethoven, etwas voraus (so bewundernswürdig fein dieser übrigens in seiner Taubheit mit der Phantasie hörte),--darin nämlich, dass er klaviergemässer zu instrumentieren weiss, das heisst, dass alles klingt, so recht vom Grunde, aus der Tiefe des Klaviers heraus, während wir z.B. bei Beethoven zur Farbe des Tones erst vom Horn, der Hoboe usw. borgen müssen."

inspiration;⁷ if the opening of the second movement of Schumann's Fantasy is orchestrally conceived (as Gertler asserts), than surely portions of Chopin's A^b-major Polonaise are as well.

Moreover, there exists a long tradition--begun by Mendelssohn during rehearsals for the première of Schumann's First Symphony in 1842--of criticizing Schumann's handling of the orchestra. Likewise, string players often complain that his writing ill-suits their instruments. The buck must stop somewhere; it is implausible that Schumann composed his piano music with the orchestra in mind, and his chamber and orchestral music with the piano in mind. This is not to deny Schumann a breadth of inspiration--from time to time he must have imagined the sounds of other instruments while composing and improvising at the piano. It is simply to assert that he composed for the piano when he heard piano music, and turned to other combinations when the piano no longer suited his artistic and professional needs.⁸ His piano works are not 'veiled symphonies,' as he was famously to proclaim of Brahms' early piano sonatas.

⁷Wolfgang Gertler, *Robert Schumann in seinen frühen Klavierwerken*, p. 34.

⁸For interesting speculations regarding Schumann's turn to composing for larger instrumental forces, see Anthony Newcomb, "Schumann and the Marketplace: From Butterflies to Hausmusik," in *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*, ed. R. Larry Todd (New York: Schirmer Books, 1990), pp. 258-315.

3. Eugen Leipold, *Die romantische Polyphonie in der Klaviermusik Robert Schumanns*, Inaugural Dissertation, University of Erlangen (1954).

Leipold's argument (and prose style) is the most abstract of the four. He rejects the notion, then commonly held, of Romantic music as largely homophonic, and attempts to locate the rhythm and polyphony of early-nineteenth-century music in Romantic outlooks on life, and in the poetry and prose of Eichendorff and Jean Paul:

The plait-work of a Schumannesque web of voices resembles the multitude of trains of thought, wound around and knotted to one another to [form] a uniform whole, [such] as assails us in Jean Paul's poetic prose.⁹

Leipold's more concrete concerns include voice-leading structures in Schumann--he amply demonstrates the *Freistimmigkeit* of Schumann's pianistic textures--and the composer's near-lifelong involvement with the music of Bach.

4. Helmuth Hopf, *Stilistische Voraussetzungen der Klaviermusik Robert Schumanns*, Inaugural Dissertation, Georg-August University, Göttingen (1957).

Hopf is the most objective of the four in his observations and collections of facts pertaining to Schumann's pianistic style. He argues that most features of Schumann's style appear in the works of composers such as

⁹Eugen Leipold, *Die romantische Polyphonie in der Klaviermusik Robert Schumanns*, Inaugural Dissertation, University of Erlangen (1954), p. 66: "Das Geflecht eines Schumannschen Stimmgewebes gleicht einer Vielzahl zu einem einheitlichen Ganzen ineinandergeschlungener und -geknüpfter Gedankenzüge, wie sie uns in Jean Pauls dichterischer Prosa bestürmen."

Beethoven, Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia (1772-1806), Ludwig Berger (1777-1839),¹⁰ John Field (1782-1837), Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870), Schubert, and Ludwig Schunke (1810-1834).¹¹ Hopf adopts Goldenberg's definition of *Klaviersatz*, and divides his discussion into the areas of 1) chord technique--which he considers, with Goldenberg, the leading characteristic of Schumann's *Klaviersatz*, 2) arpeggiated and broken chords, 3) passagework--noting its scarcity in Schumann, 4) polyphonic compositional structures--one feature for which he finds scant precedent in the early Romantic period--and 5) tonal concerns. This last category is devoted largely to the apportioning of material according to register and the observation that Schumann used the pedal more pervasively than most of his predecessors; it does not address the issue of pianistic versus orchestral conceptions of material.

In a discussion of Schumann's five first-decade sketchbooks, Hopf notes Schumann's tendency to sketch not single lines, but fragments of fully harmonized melody.¹² (Gertler, looking at the same set of sketches, writes,

¹⁰Berger, who gave piano lessons to both Mendelssohn and Adolf Henselt, lived in Berlin after 1815 and composed many short works for solo piano, including sets of character pieces.

¹¹A child prodigy, Schunke was also a composer of promise and an early collaborator with Schumann on the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*.

¹²Helmuth Hopf, *Stilistische Voraussetzungen der Klaviermusik Robert Schumanns*, Inaugural Dissertation, Georg-August University, Göttingen (1957), pp. 226-227.

"Since [Schumann's idea] is invented at the piano, it is not, as with Beethoven, a fragment of a melodic line, but a fragment of a *Klaviersatz*.")¹³ Hopf observes that between a sketch and the final version of one of Schumann's first-decade works, melodic material tends to remain as originally conceived, while the *Klaviersatz* undergoes elaboration. He holds the conscious expansion of *Klaviersätze* to be characteristic of Romantic pianistic practice generally, and concludes--at odds with Goldenberg and Gertler--that

In [his] different additions to the first idea, Schumann shows himself as a pure composer for the piano, who seeks to exhaust the pianistic possibilities of his instrument.¹⁴

In their discussions of Schumann's *Klaviersatz*, Goldenberg, Gertler, and Hopf distinguish between material that is particular to the piano and that which stems from other instruments or the voice. By contrast, the notion of 'pianistic texture' as construed in this study admits all material present in a work to the analytic process, irrespective of its (putative) conceptual origins. I do not accept that distinctions can be drawn as readily and

¹³Wolfgang Gertler, *Robert Schumann in seinen frühen Klavierwerken*, p. 12: "Da er am Klavier erfunden ist, ist er nicht wie bei Beethoven ein Stück einer melodischen Linie, sondern ein Stück Klaviersatz."

¹⁴Helmuth Hopf, *Stilistische Voraussetzungen der Klaviermusik Robert Schumanns*, p. 246: "In den verschiedenen Komplementierungen zu der ersten Idee erweist sich Schumann als ein reiner Klavierkomponist, der die klavieristischen Möglichkeiten seines Instruments erschöpfen will."

decisively as these authors believe. From an analytic standpoint, it seems more instructive to assess a composer's particular instrumental style based on all of the musical material present than to focus exclusively on material deemed most characteristic of that instrument.

The ambiguity of the notion of material as characteristic of an instrument is evident in a generalized comparison of two composers from different eras: Chopin and Bartók. Chopin would probably have found Bartók's way of writing for the piano in his 1926 Sonata most uncharacteristic of--and most unsuited to--the instrument whose capacity for *cantabile* effects he (Chopin) exploited so expertly. The two heard pianistic possibility differently. The question of who composed more idiomatically for the instrument has little relevance to an assessment of either style.

Schumann's Sense of Pianistic Possibilities

The following discussion of Schumann's tendencies in the constitution of pianistic texture is organized around three categories that he himself devised. In reviewing a piano sonata by Carl Loewe for the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in 1835, Schumann wrote

The older I get, the more I see that the piano expresses itself--uniquely and in its essentials--in three particular ways: through fullness of voicing and harmonic succession (as with Beethoven, Franz

Schubert), through the use of the pedal (as with Field), or through volubility (as with Czerny, Herz). In the first class, one meets the *en-gros* players, in the second those given over to fantasy, in the third the pearling players. Well-rounded composer-virtuosos, like Hummel, Moscheles, and lastly Chopin, employ all three means jointly, and are therefore most loved by players....¹⁵

Schumann treats the three categories of 1) fullness of voicing and harmonic succession, 2) use of the pedal, and 3) volubility, as aesthetic rather than technical ones. That is, he refers to aural impressions potentially conveyed by the instrument, rather than specific means of conveying those impressions. This distinction between aesthetic and technical categories is pertinent to the concepts of texture and *Klaviersatz*. In articulating aesthetic categories, Schumann expresses an artistic ideal, which he may realize as he sees fit. 'The piano is capable of fullness of voicing'--yes, and there are many ways of creating that impression in the individual solo-piano work. What Schumann does *not* do is to construct categories that select or deny single musical ideas or patterns based on their conceptual

¹⁵Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, vol. I, pp. 58-59: "Je älter ich werde, je mehr sehe ich, wie das Klavier, namentlich in drei Dingen, wesentlich und eigenthümlich sich ausspricht,--durch Stimmenfülle und Harmoniewechsel (wie bei Beethoven, Franz Schubert), durch Pedalgebrauch (wie bei Field), oder durch Volubilität (wie bei Czerny, Herz). In der ersten Klasse trifft man die *en-gros*-Spieler, in der anderen die Phantastischen, in der dritten die Perlenden. Vielseitig gebildete Komponistenvirtuosos, wie Hummel, Moscheles und zuletzt Chopin, wenden alle drei Mittel vereint an und werden daher von den Spielern am meisten geliebt...."

origins. This is the trap into which Goldenberg, Gertler, and Hopf fall in their discussions of Schumann's pianistic writing, and which forces them--to no advantage--to choose between 'pianistic' and 'orchestral' conceptions of material.

The 1835 review, then, sketches Schumann's poetics of the piano as sounding medium. It reveals his prejudices, i.e., what he wants to hear from the instrument, as any poetics will do. The remainder of the present chapter examines texture in Schumann's piano works of 1829-1839 with respect to this poetics, i.e., the instrumental characteristics of fullness of voicing and harmonic succession--harmoniousness, for short--pedal use, and volubility (glibness or fluency in more common parlance).

Fullness of Voicing and Harmonic Succession

For Schumann, the creation of a harmonious musical effect at the piano is largely a function of voice leading, in the broadest sense of the term. That is, harmonious effects are created by a partnership, so to speak, between the voice-leading structure in its essentials (*Harmoniewechsel*) and the realization of that underlying structure at the keyboard (*Stimmenfülle*). A weakness in either dimension would result, for Schumann, in an emptier impression, and a sparer texture. The voice-leading structure may of course be considered in the abstract, as in

a Schenkerian graph; however, its specific projection by the sounding material is the present concern. On the whole, Schumann's pianistic textures are marked by persistent chordal writing and an abundance of contrapuntal activity, and convey an impression of harmoniousness very strongly.

Both Goldenberg and Hopf count chordal technique as the leading feature of Schumann's pianistic style; Hopf cites Beethoven, Berger, Moscheles, and Schubert as influences.¹⁶ Simultaneous single-line writing in both hands is exceedingly rare in Schumann; his predilection for fully-realized harmonies results in a pervasive use of chords in one or both hands.

A chord succession may at once project, reinforce, and harmonize a melodic line. Example 2-1 shows a texture whose chordal component traces a melodic line.



Example 2-1. *Davidsbündlertänze*, op. 6, no. 16, mm. 1-4.

The effect of the outer-voice polyphony is primary here. The lower two notes of the right-hand chords are an

¹⁶Helmuth Hopf, *Stilistische Voraussetzungen der Klaviermusik Robert Schumanns*, pp. 81, 85-86.

outgrowth of the implied harmonies; the parallel motion of the lowest chord-member reinforces the melodic line on top of the texture. Similar melodic successions of three- and four-note chords are commonplace in Schumann, even in the quickest of tempos.

Example 2-2 shows a chordal component in a typical accompanimental role, i.e., as part of a waltz rhythm.



Example 2-2. *Carnaval*, op. 9, "Valse noble," mm. 1-4.

The pattern of bass note--often doubled at the octave--plus chord is a favorite of Schumann's, whether specifically a waltz accompaniment or not. It is also common for Schumann to divide an accompanimental chord between the hands; one instance of this is found in Example 2-6 (p. 36).

There are many passages in Schumann in which note-against-note chordal writing in both hands results in a homorhythmic texture, one in which the total sounding material is structured as five-or-more-note chords in succession. The opening of the Finale of the F#-minor Sonata, op. 11 (Example 2-3), is one example.



Example 2-3. Sonata in F# minor,
op. 11, IV, mm. 1-8.

The combination of a left-hand octave plus a three- or four-note chord in the right hand is a favorite of Schumann's.

A passage from the "*Eusebius*" movement of *Carnaval* demonstrates a feature of Schumann's chordal practice which creates a different sort of "fullness of voicing" (see Example 2-4).



Example 2-4. *Carnaval*, op. 9, "Eusebius,"
mm. 17-24.

Here, Schumann intensifies the linear connections between chords through chromatic alteration of scale steps. Harmonic succession is enlivened by chromatic inflection; the impression of chords resulting from a convergence of independent lines is strong. Polyphony is near at hand.

In the 1830s and 1840s, Schumann's textures are rivaled only by Chopin's in the richness and variety of their polyphony. Carl Dahlhaus captures an essential quality of Schumann's polyphony when he writes, regarding Schumann's reception of Bach:

...the model...is less the fugue than the
'*freie Satz*,' whose voices are not equal
and uninterruptedly present, but which form a
hierarchy of leading and secondary voices,

and [which often] surface and disappear unexpectedly.¹⁷

Embedded in a harmonic structure, Schumann's polyphony is frequently one of insinuation rather than of clear presentation. Many of his voice-leading structures are like landscapes, the apprehension of whose features is affected by a constant play of light and shade. Linear elements continually emerge from and recede into a harmonic background.

The beloved "*Träumerei*" from *Kinderszenen* illustrates this sort of polyphony.



Example 2-5. *Kinderszenen*, op. 15,
"*Träumerei*," mm. 1-8.

¹⁷Carl Dahlhaus, "Bach und der romantische Kontrapunkt," *Musica* 43, 1989, p. 16: "...das Modell...ist weniger die Fuge als der 'freie Satz,' dessen Stimmen nicht gleichberechtigt und ununterbrochen präsent sind, sondern eine Hierarchie von Haupt- und Nebenstimmen bilden und nicht selten überraschend auftauchen und verschwinden."

The piece opens as though presenting a melody with chordal accompaniment; voices are then differentiated from the chordal background, one by one assuming the characteristics of the melody. A tenor line appears in m. 2; the bass component becomes melodic at the end of m. 3. The second phrase reveals more polyphony still by its third and fourth measures (i.e., mm. 7-8): the previously dormant alto voice freely imitates the top voice in m. 7, and the tenor follows suit. Schumann avails himself of a freely construed four-part structure to color his melody. Linear fragments emerge in the secondary parts, and join in the character of the melody; the voice-leading structure undergoes constant adjustment.

The most consistent source of polyphony in Schumann consists in well-differentiated outer parts; he can be relied upon for polyphonic effects between outer voices. He wrote that the construction of "good basses" was one sign of a good technician, undoubtedly with a view toward the enlivening effects of linear bass motion on outer-voice relationships.¹⁸ The lively outer-voice counterpoint in Example 2-6 is typical.

¹⁸Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, vol. 2, p. 248.

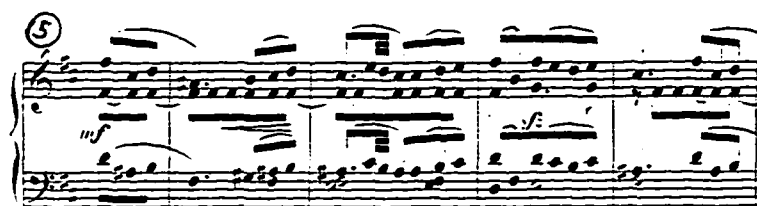


Example 2-6. *Davidsbündlertänze*, op. 6, no. 9, mm. 1-4.

Schumann's bass lines embody the reciprocal demands of contrapuntal and harmonic procedure more clearly than any other component of his textures. In Example 2-6, the bass answers the demands of harmonic progression and chord prolongation (e.g., outlining an incomplete 'G⁷' chord in m. 2) at the same time that its basically linear path forms a two-part structure with the top voice. (Linear motion in the topmost part is of course the norm.)

Polyphony in the form of a melodic duet is also typical of Schumann's textures. On the whole, Schumann partook of the Romantic tendency toward consistently highlighted melody. Two techniques, identified in the analytic literature as double and parallel *cantilena*, create the majority of Schumann's duet-like passages; in each case, polyphony supplements the character of a melody rather than counterbalancing it. Imitative writing is another source of duet-like polyphony in Schumann.

Dahlhaus defines double *cantilena* as the passing of a melodic line into the surrounding polyphony.¹⁹ Mendelssohn's *Song without Words*, op. 67, no. 5 (see Example 2-7), illustrates this technique; a secondary line doubles the melody nearly literally.



Example 2-7. Mendelssohn, *Song without Words*, op. 67, no. 5, mm. 5-9.

The 'tenor' line in the left hand participates fully in the contour, rhythm, articulation, etc., of the right-hand melody. In terms of contrapuntal technique, double *cantilena* is rudimentary. Its attraction for the Romantic composer was not of course its technical simplicity--Mendelssohn certainly had other compositional means at his disposal--but rather its ability to enrich melodic material: so to speak, to set melody into higher relief.

Usually, when a line appears at identical pitch level in two different registers, the aural impression is that a single line is reinforced at the octave. However, this

¹⁹Dahlhaus, "Bach und der romantische Kontrapunkt," p. 11.

voice leading can create a sort of polyphony which Eugen Leipold defines as parallel *cantilena* in his 1954 dissertation.²⁰ According to Leipold, the two lines must be 'colored' differently in order to create the impression of polyphony. They may then assume individual identity through tonal differentiation. Leipold observes that this occurs most often in pianistic textures when the two lines are set one in each hand and, further, that earlier pianos--less uniform in tone color through the different registers--were more likely to foster an impression of duality than modern instruments.²¹ I would add that a parallel-*cantilena* effect often occurs when parallel lines are offset rhythmically (a favorite device of Schumann's), or when two otherwise independent lines momentarily converge.

The *locus classicus* of Schumann's parallel *cantilena* is a passage in the last movement of the Fantasy, op. 17 (see Example 2-8).

²⁰Leipold, *Die romantische Polyphonie in der Klaviermusik Robert Schumanns*, pp. 72-80.

²¹Leipold, *Die romantische Polyphonie in der Klaviermusik Robert Schumanns*, p. 73.



Example 2-8. Fantasy, op. 17, III,
mm. 42-51.

Here the impression of polyphony is dependent upon tonal or coloristic differentiation of the parallel lines. They must not sound as equals: one supports or shadows the other. When played equally, the impression is one of simplistic, banal voice leading.

The pianist does well to favor the upper line in mm. 44-47 of Example 2-8. The melodic line of the previous phrase is situated in this register; the left hand seems to join in support of the right hand in m. 44. However, Schumann cues a change of melodic focus at the end of m. 47. There, the lower of the two parallel lines continues beyond

the final note of the phrase ('a'), descending through 'e' to a point one octave below where it began in m. 44. At this juncture, the ear may attach itself to the lower line, whose bass register provides it with greater resonance than the top line, situated in the treble. When voiced (so to speak) as an upper partial in mm. 48-51, the top line shimmers above its fundamental. The twin lines, differentiated through registral placement and dynamic shading, achieve a polyphony of color.

Schumann often insinuates, rather than plainly realizes, the twin *cantilena* procedures. Insinuation consists in 'sketching' one of the lines, rather than clearly setting it forth. The second section of "*Aufschwung*" (Example 2-9), from the *Fantasiestücke*, op. 12, is saturated with implicit and explicit versions of both the double and parallel *cantilena*.

Example 2-9. *Fantasiestücke*, op. 12,
"Aufschwung," mm. 13-32.

The chord-derived figures in the right hand of Example 2-9 yield an abundance of linear activity. Measures 21-24 exhibit an explicit double *cantilena*; beginning with the upbeat to m. 21, an inner voice joins in parallel tenths with the topmost line. Implicit double *cantilena* occurs in mm. 16-20, as well as in mm. 25-26 and 28-29. In mm. 16-20,

it is the 'tenor' and top lines which effect the doubling, only here the tenor is an imperfect partner: it is identical to the leading voice in neither rhythm nor contour. In mm. 24-26 and 28-30, the bass line leads melodically, and a middle voice--rhythmically displaced and unsustained--doubles it haltingly.

The succeeding measures (i.e., the second half of m. 26 through the first half of m. 28, and the corresponding spot four bars later) display an all-but-explicit parallel *cantilena*, once again between 'tenor' and top line. The implicit parallel *cantilena* is the most tenuous of the four effects in this passage. It inheres in the right-hand figure itself: in mm. 16-20, the rhythmically-displaced thumb shadows the fifth finger at the interval of an octave.

A texture that is nearly uniform in terms of its rhythm, melodic motives, and number of components thus teems with polyphonic activity. The polyphonic events vary in their degrees of definition, but share a common origin in the parallel leading of voices.

Significantly, the polyphonic effects of "*Aufschwung*" arise in a figurational context. Generally speaking, Schumann's figuration plays an active role in the articulation of harmonic and contrapuntal events in his music. What Jim Samson has written about Chopin is equally true of Schumann:

[He] was adept at the construction of

figuration which generates harmonic flow while at the same time permitting linear elements to emerge.²²

Most of Schumann's figuration has the potential to project at least one line or linear fragment. To the extent that it does this, his figuration participates in--i.e., helps to articulate--the voice-leading structure at hand. The figuration of "*Aufschwung*" is characteristic in this respect. It functions both harmonically and contrapuntally; it is at once accompanimental and melodic.

Duet-like melodic effects arise through the technique of imitation as well as through double and parallel *cantilena*. Schumann creates an impression of imitation more often than he literally leads one voice along the intervallic and rhythmic path of another. Measures 7-8 of "*Träumerei*" (see Example 2-5) illustrate this tendency: the tenor entrance at the end of m. 7 is quite free in its modeling of the topmost line, yet imitative in its overall effect.

The entire melodic design of "*Warum?*" (Why?), from the op. 12 *Fantasiestücke* (see Example 2-10), is predicated on this principle.

²²Jim Samson, *The Music of Chopin* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), pp. 73-74.



Example 2-10. *Fantasiestücke*, op. 12,
"Warum?", mm. 1-13.

A texture of four components (two melodic voices, a slow-moving bass line, and accompanying chords displaced at the eighth note) is evident after m. 5. Each melodic phrase in these measures enters with the motive heard in m. 1, then follows its own path. The result is would-be imitation, an imitative context rather than truly imitative writing. This technical ambiguity is maintained throughout the piece.

The works of 1838-1839, notably the *Kinderszenen*, op. 15, *Kreisleriana*, op. 16, *Humoreske*, op. 20, the *Novelletten*, op. 21, and the *Nachtstücke*, op. 23, show a marked increase in imitative effects relative to earlier pieces. Eugen Leipold traces this to Schumann's intensive study of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, *Art of Fugue*, and

chorales in the years 1837-1838.²³ Imitative techniques are realized somewhat more strictly overall in these later works. Occasionally, imitation underlies an entire section of a piece, as in Example 2-11.

Example 2-11. *Nachtstücke*, op. 23, no. 1, mm. 47-72.

Its thoroughgoing use here alters the nature of the imitation: it becomes a more strictly technical feature of the work, a self-sufficient means of generating material.

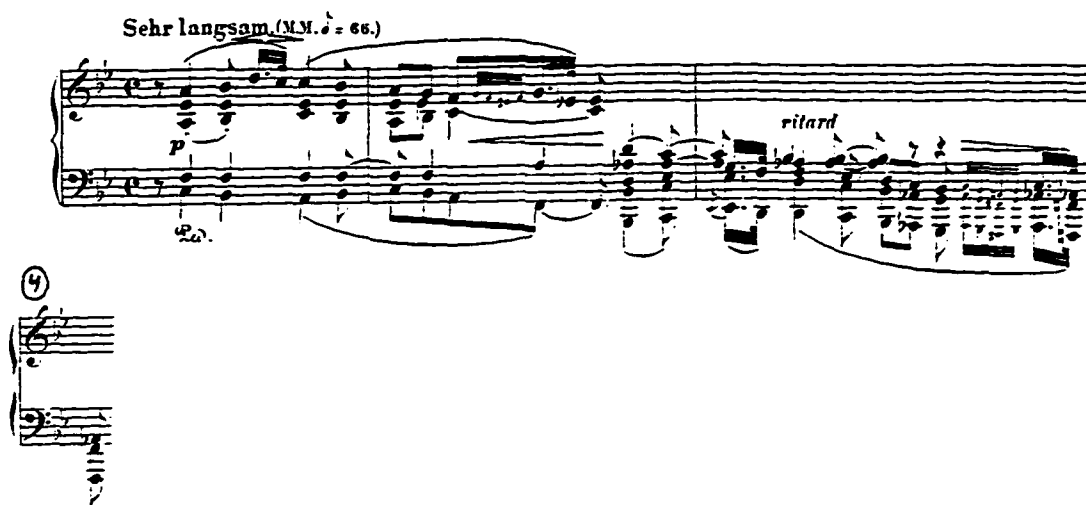
²³Eugen Leopold, *Die romantische Polyphonie in der Klaviermusik Robert Schumanns*, pp. 96-98, 124-135.

This is the exception in Schumann's first-decade style. More typically, imitation is less pervasive, and motivated by the aesthetic objective of *Stimmenfülle*.

One further characteristic of Schumann's textures that promotes a full-voiced quality is their concentration of register. His music unfolds mostly in the middle and lower registers of the instrument; the abundant harmonic and contrapuntal activity takes place within a narrower compass than is typical of his contemporaries' music. A denser effect is the result: a thicket inevitably seems fuller grown than a meadow. In general, Schumann avoided the extreme treble, i.e., the four-line octave, in works written after 1833. (Opp. 1-5, 7-8, and 10 were written during 1830-1833.) Earlier works, notably the *Abegg Variations*, op. 1 and the Allegro in B Minor, op. 8--which bear most strongly the imprint of his admiration for Moscheles and Hummel--employ the high register in a manner typical of the time, i.e., as the enforced upper boundary for brilliant figuration. As he matured, however, Schumann came to prefer a more compact, less brilliant sonority, orienting his right hand toward the middle of the keyboard. The first movement of the Fantasy, op. 17 is a remarkable illustration of this: of the movement's 309 measures, only 33 venture into the three-line octave; one measure (actually, one *note*, a c⁴) ventures into the four-line octave. His choices in the

distribution of material undoubtedly reflect a conscious avoidance of the mechanical virtuosity that he despised.

An obvious corollary to the concentration of activity in the middle and lower registers is a more consistent, close spacing between the pianist's hands than is typical of most Romantic piano writing. In particular, Chopin's textures tend toward greater balance and variety in this respect. Schumann and Chopin apportion material very differently. Chopin frequently begins or leads figures into the upper reaches of the keyboard, and typically sets a smaller proportion of his material in the middle register than Schumann, who packs this register, and is more likely to lead material into the lower than the higher extremes of the keyboard. The opening of the fourth piece in *Kreisleriana* (Example 2-12) attests to Schumann's taste for the dusky, lower regions of the piano.



Example 2-12. *Kreisleriana*, op. 16,
no. 4, mm. 1-4.

The twice-doubled *cantilena* in this register--note the turn in m. 3!--would not occur in a Chopin work.

Use of the Pedal

Schumann considered the damper pedal to be one of the piano's unique resources. In the review excerpted at the beginning of the chapter, he cites Field as a pianist given to use of the pedal, and associates its use in performance with the element of 'fantasy.' His meaning is not immediately obvious. A passage from the writings of Liszt offers a clue to Schumann's linking use of the pedal with the element of fantasy. In the preface to an 1859 edition of six of Field's nocturnes, Liszt wrote of having

...heard Field himself play, or rather dream, his pieces, wrapt in inspiration, not limiting himself to the written notes, but incessantly inventing new groups wherewith to engarland his melodies....²⁴

It is likely that Schumann associated pedal use, a highly sensitive touch, and an improvisatory approach to performance with Field's nocturne style--perhaps conflating raised dampers and dreamy extemporization in the process. The connection of pedal use with a particular style of performance aligns the pedal with the aesthetics of the instrument. Were the pedal not used as an expressive catalyst--for instance, if it were employed to mark the downbeat of every measure of a piece--it would not embody one of the three expressive particularities of the piano in Schumann's view.

Descriptions of Schumann's own playing are few, but all comment on his use of the pedal. Oswald Lorenz, a *Neue Zeitschrift* co-worker, wrote in the latter half of the 1830s that Schumann's

...playing attained a unique tonal character through the almost uninterrupted use of the pedal, which was however so cautiously discreet that there arose no disturbing mixture of heterogeneous harmonies.²⁵

²⁴Franz Liszt, "On John Field's Nocturnes," trans. Theodore Baker, in John Field, *Eighteen Nocturnes for the Piano*, ed. Franz Liszt (New York: G. Schirmer, 1902), no page number given.

²⁵Oswald Lorenz, quoted in Friedrich Gustav Jansen, *Die Davidsbündler* (Leipzig, 1883), p. 72: "...Einen eigentümlichen Klangcharakter erhielt übrigens sein Spiel durch den fast unausgesetzten, dennoch aber so vorsichtig diskreten Gebrauch des Pedals, dass gleichwohl kein

Similarly, Alfred Dörffel--who played for Schumann once every few weeks in the years 1839-1844--described Schumann's tendency "...always to hold the pedal somewhat open, so that the middle voices blended into one another, to an extent...."²⁶ Richard Wagner took a decidedly dim view of Schumann's use of the pedal:

Schumann's peculiar treatment of the pianoforte grates on my ear: there is too much blur; you cannot produce his pieces unless it be *mit obligatem Pedal*.²⁷

(This, ironically, from a man whose treatment of the orchestra--with its near-continuous *legato*--could well be considered analogous to a fully-pedaled pianistic sonority.)

Schumann clearly favored the pedal. In what sense did his pedal use affect the constitution of his textures? At issue are the interrelated questions of how his selection and configuration of material are conditioned by pedal use, and how the pedal acts upon the material chosen.

The musical material available to Schumann whose tonal character is most suitably transformed when pedaled is chord-derived figuration. When an arpeggio or broken-chord figure is pedaled, the increased resonance creates a harmonic effect, i.e., a kind of after-glow in which chord

störendes Durcheinanderklingen heterogener Harmonien entstand."

²⁶ Alfred Dörffel, quoted in Jansen, *Die Davidsbündler*, p. 73: "...stets das Pedal etwas offen zu halten, so dass die Mittelstimmen einigermaßen ineinander verschwommen."

²⁷ George Grove, *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd. ed., s.v. "Wagner, Wilhelm Richard," p. 413.

tones ring together. Schumann's music is full of figuration which, when pedaled, is enhanced in this way. For instance, the three-note right-hand figures in Example 2-13 sound far richer when each is allowed to 'collect' in the pedal:



Example 2-13. Fantasy, op. 17, III,
mm. 4-6.

By contrast, scalar figuration gains little from the pedal; a mixture of scale steps is decidedly less attractive than a mixture of chord tones. When heavy pedal-use is desired for another component of the texture, scales and scale-derived figures are best situated in the treble register to avoid excessive blurring. Schumann is remarkably sparing in his use of fast-moving scalar patterns in any register; all of his well-known contemporaries employ scalar passages with greater frequency.

In addition, the resonance of blocked chords is greatly enhanced by undampened vibration, owing to the natural harmonic sympathies of triadic elements. Schumann's zest for fully-pedaled chord series is evidenced by a performance indication at the opening of the final "*Marche*" in *Carnaval*

(see Example 2-14).



Example 2-14. *Carnaval*, op. 9, "Marche des Davidsbündler contre les Philistins," mm. 1-8.

The direction "*Ped. grande*," or big pedaling, is unique and wonderful.

On instruments of Schumann's time, the pedal enhances resonance and promotes a blend of similarly-nuanced material only when that material is situated in the middle and lower registers. The treble register is much less noticeably affected. (This is of course true of modern instruments as well, only to a different degree.) Undoubtedly, this instrumental/acoustical phenomenon affected Schumann's choices in configuring material; his avoidance of the upper register is linked to the pedal's effective range.

More generally, use of the pedal suspends the immediate mechanical link between key and damper, in effect 'freeing' the sound--momentarily--from the control of the finger. The sense of a partial liberation of sound from the manual

control of the pianist inspired Schumann, as witnessed by the celebrated moments in his music where the pedal, and not the hand, seems to articulate a new sonority. The juncture in *Carnaval* between "*Paganini*" and the reprise of "*Valse allemande*," where a change of pedal seems to 'play' a chord, is often cited; a less-well-known instance of this occurs at the end of the second segment of the *Humoreske* (Example 2-15).



Example 2-15. *Humoreske*, op. 20,
second segment, mm. 255-263.

In m. 261 of Example 2-15, two harmonies are mixed by Schumann's indicated use of the pedal. The first, 'C⁷' chord must be played decidedly stronger (in the context of *piano*) than what joins it in the second half of the measure; the identity of this second element becomes clear only when the pedal is changed at the downbeat of m. 8. The elimination of the 'C⁷' sonority reveals the final dominant, no tone of which is struck at the moment of its emergence.

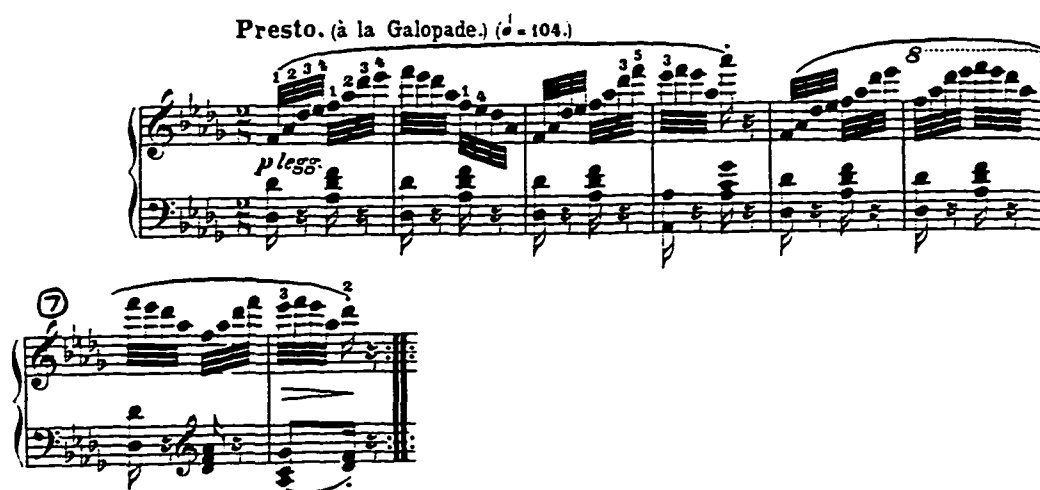
Effects in Schumann's music such as this share the aim of 'playing' notes or chords with the pedal rather than with

the fingers. Of course, the fingers participate, either through holding or releasing keys in conjunction with pedal changes. The effects represent extreme manifestations of Schumann's pedal technique, which seeks not only to color musical material, but to shape and transform it.

Volubility

When Schumann writes of "volubility" and "pearling players," he presumably has in mind the execution of quick, keyboard-traversing figuration so characteristic of Romantic piano music. Even today, piano enthusiasts use metaphors involving pearls to describe a light, uniform, fluid touch in passage-playing; the French call this the *jeu-perlé*.

The opening of a piece by Czerny written to develop this touch is shown in Example 2-16.



Example 2-16. Czerny, *The School of Velocity*, op. 299, no. 39, mm. 1-8.

(Copyright 1949 C. F. Peters Corporation.
Used by Permission of C. F. Peters
Corporation.)

Even the opus number suggests fluency here: this is Czerny's Op. 299, No. 39. Czerny's figuration attains fluency through the technique of octave transposition; a four-note figure moves effortlessly up and down the treble register, outlining a D^b-major triad in three octaves. Both the extension or repetition of a figure by means of octave transposition and the use of the extreme treble register are *stile brillante* tendencies which put keyboard mechanics in the service of fluency and dash.

The op. 1 *Abegg Variations* excepted, Schumann's figuration is never as glib as that of Example 2-16. To a degree remarkable for his time, he avoids the practice of leading instrumental figures up and down the keyboard by means of octave transposition. This is of course connected to his general avoidance of the extreme treble, and to his consistent incorporation of figuration into a voice-leading structure that he locates--by and large--in the middle register.

In addition to the octave transposition of instrumental figures, Schumann shunned a host of technical/figurative devices common to nineteenth-century virtuoso pianism. As noted in the discussion of pedal use, fast scales--common in virtually all concert music of the day--are rare in

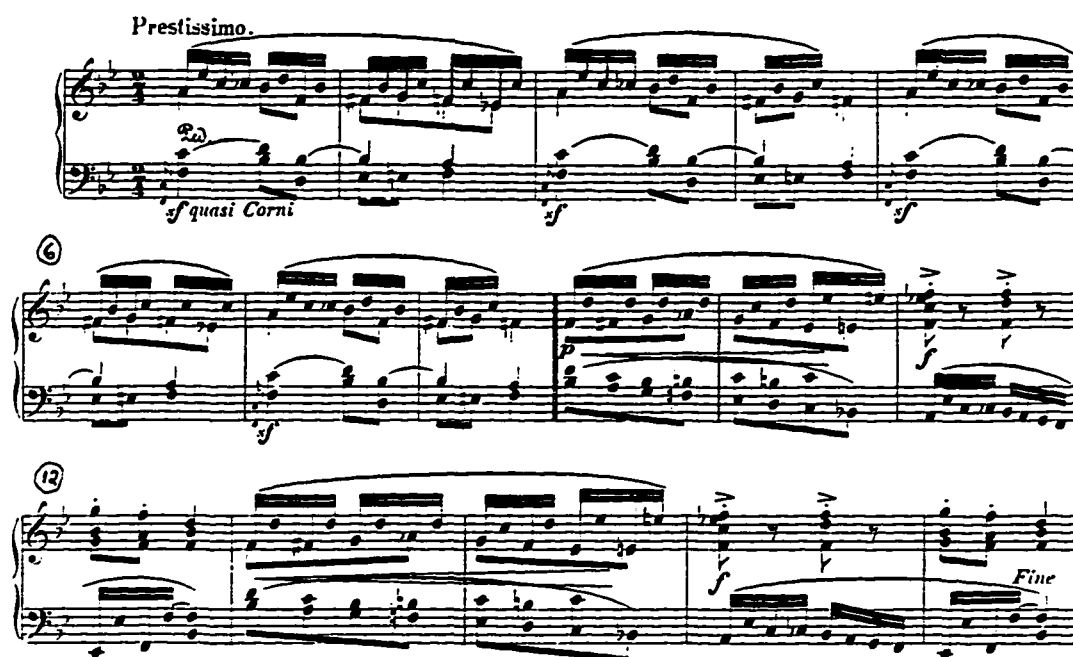
Schumann. Chromatic scales, favored particularly by Liszt as a basis of figuration, almost never appear. Schumann avoided above all a family of technical patterns based on the oscillation of two notes or chords. These include compound trills (i.e., simultaneous trills in two or more voices), tremolos, and martellato effects (i.e., staccato chords or octaves played with the hands in alternation). Trills were by no means solely the province of the purveyors of pyrotechnics: Beethoven had put both simple and compound trills in the service of resonance as well as brilliance. Schumann simply had little use for them.

In contrast to the passagework of the *stile brillante*, Schumann devised his figuration to produce a harmonious effect. It typically comprises a chain of close-position, chord-derived figures, and often yields a slower-moving linear element. As noted on pp. 42-43, the linear presence allows Schumann to integrate figuration into a larger voice-leading structure. Figuration so integrated (see Example 2-9) differs markedly in effect from that in Example 2-17.

Example 2-17. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendante*, no. 9, "Ricordanza," mm. 35-37.

Liszt's right-hand figuration rests 'on top' of the voice-leading structure, as it were. It is calculated to 'color' the texture; a different figure might be substituted without substantial change to the passage. Schumann's textures are rarely as divisible along the lines of melodic/harmonic structure and filigree as the passages shown in Examples 2-16 and 2-17.

Schumann's figuration achieves fluency not through a mechanical ease of repetition, but through its participation in a full and fluid voice-leading structure. "*Papillons*" from *Carnaval* (see Example 2-18) illustrates this.



Example 2-18. *Carnaval*, op. 9,
"Papillons," mm. 1-16.

The right-hand figuration consists largely of two-note patterns, derived from the displacement of the top line of a lively, chromatically inflected four-part structure. Both elements of the two-note right-hand figures participate in this structure; its fluency is their own.

The setting-apart or displacement of one or more chord tones is a common source of the instrumental figures that--when chained together--create much of Schumann's figuration (as in Example 2-18). The displacement of an entire melodic or accompanimental component is one final characteristic of Schumann's pianistic textures identified here. Schumann

often activates a texture rhythmically by syncopating one or more of its principal components. Rhythmic displacement is often connected with a sense of fluency in his music, as well as with the undermining of metric identity. Often the displacement is thoroughgoing, leaving its imprint on an entire section of music. The second section of the Fourth *Novellette* (Example 2-19) is an example of this.



Example 2-19. *Novellette*, op. 21, no.4,
mm. 50-65.

The displaced inner parts foster the indicated character of urgency ("*dringender*"); a performance with all components 'in sync' reveals the extent to which the displacement activates the texture.

As a composer and pianist Schumann concerned himself with musical material not merely in the abstract; its realization at the piano remained fully in his view. His conceptions were bound up with the aesthetic possibilities of the piano as he heard them. These included a capacity for articulating rich voice-leading structures, a provision--in the form of the damper pedal, recently come into its own--for transcending the individual key-stroke, and a capacity for fluent motion.

Schumann's pianistic textures reflect his attention to all three possibilities. His harmonic/contrapuntal structures are some of the fullest ever composed for the piano. His constant use of the pedal informed both his choices and configuration of material. Finally, his textures achieve fluency by means of a figural realization of voice-leading structures which are themselves unusually fluid. To articulate--and not merely to enhance--harmonic and contrapuntal structure through figuration requires figuration more substantial, if less colorful, than that employed by most of Schumann's contemporaries.

CHAPTER THREE: TEXTURE IN THE VARIATION SETS

Four sets of Schumann's variations for solo piano dating from his first decade of composition were published during his lifetime: the *Variationen über den Namen Abegg*, op. 1 (1831), the *Impromptus über ein Thema von Clara Wieck*, op. 5 (1832), the *Études Symphoniques*, op. 13 (1837), and the *Quasi Variazioni* movement of the F-minor Sonata, op. 14 (1836). All dates refer to the year of publication of respective first editions; Opp. 5, 13, and 14 were revised and republished in 1850, 1852, and 1853, respectively.

Schumann worked on at least five additional solo-piano sets during the early 1830s, all of which he left incomplete save the one which has been published in the meantime, the *Etüden in Form freier Variationen über ein Beethovensches Thema* (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 1976). The remaining, unfinished sets include variations on a theme from Paganini's B-minor Violin Concerto (1830), an original theme with variations in G major (1831-1832), variations on Schubert's *Sehnsuchtswalzer*¹ D. 365, no. 2 (1832-1833), and variations on Chopin's Nocturne in G minor, op. 15, no. 3 (1834).²

¹The *Sehnsuchtswalzer* was actually designated *Trauerwalzer* by Schubert; it was erroneously published as *Sehnsuchtswalzer* by Beethoven (!) in 1826. See Otto Erich Deutsch, *Franz Schubert: Thematisches Verzeichnis seiner Werke* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1978), p. 218.

²The *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie, 6th ed., s.v. "Schumann, Robert Alexander," pp. 865-867.

In 1834, the *Hauptmann* (Captain) von Fricken--adoptive father of Schumann's (then) fiancée, Ernestine, and an amateur flutist and composer--sent Schumann a set of variations for flute and orchestra, seeking compositional advice. In a September 1834 reply, Schumann wrote:

In variations, the object should always remain firmly before a person, but the glass through which one views it should be differently-colored--just as there are windowpanes, made of many-colored glasses, through which the landscape now appears rosy as in the evening glow, and now golden as during a sun-filled morning, and the like.³

The "object" of which Schumann writes is of course the theme. For Schumann, a set of variations should recast its theme--lend it a different hue--in each variation.

The majority of Classical-era variation sets for solo piano 'change hue' slowly and progressively. Textures in sets such as Mozart's Variations on "Lison dortmait," K. 264/315d, and Beethoven's "Appassionata" Sonata, op. 57, II, are activated incrementally; the character of the movement evolves gradually. Two of Schumann's published sets conform to this model in their essentials: the Impromptus, op. 5, and the variations movement of the F-minor Sonata, op. 14.

³Robert Schumann, *Jugendbriefe von Robert Schumann*, ed. Clara Schumann, 2nd. ed. (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1886), pp. 251-252. "Bei Variationen soll das Objekt zwar immer fest vor einem liegen, aber das Glas, mit dem man es ansieht, ein verschieden gefärbtes sein, ähnlich wie es aus buntem Glase zusammengesetzte Scheiben gibt, wodurch die Gegend jetzt rosarot wie im Abendglanz, jetzt golden wie an einem Sonnenmorgen erscheint u. dgl."

(Apparently recognizing this, in 1838 Schumann wrote that Op. 5 could not be seen as a new way of composing variations.)⁴

By contrast, Schumann followed the Beethoven of the F-major Variations, op. 34, in composing his *Abegg Variations*, op. 1 and *Symphonic Etudes*, op. 13. These three sets depart from the Classical model--fully endorsed by composer-pianists of the *stile brillante*--of increasingly activated textures from one variation to the next. In the *stile brillante* sets, increasingly activated textures generally brought increasing brilliance and complexity. A music dictionary of 1825 charmingly describes the outlines of this type of set, whose theme was normally taken from a current opera:

First there are simple quavers and triplets, then arpeggios, syncopations and octaves, without forgetting the adagio in the relative mode and the *tempo di polacca*.⁵

By contrast, texture and character change markedly and unpredictably between variations in Schumann's Opp. 1 and 13; his highly variegated refashionings of the two themes locate these sets in the sub-genre of fantasy or character variations, although both sets retain the Classical/*stile*

⁴An excerpt from Schumann's 1838 *Materialen zu einem Lebenslauf*, cited in Eugen Leipold, *Die romantische Polyphonie in der Klaviermusik Robert Schumanns*, p. 160, refers to Op. 5: "...die Impromptus op. 5, die nicht als eine neue Form zu variieren angesehen werden möchten."

⁵F.-H.-J. Castil Blaze, *Dictionnaire de Musique Moderne* (Paris, 1825), quoted in Jim Samson, *The Music of Chopin*, p. 48.

brillante practice of preceding an extended Finale with a slow, *cantabile* variation.

Helmuth Hopf considers Schumann to have been influenced by the variations practice of Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia (1772-1806). Citing Schumann's declared admiration for the amateur composer, Hopf notes that the Prince's variation sets are concerned with fostering different poetic moods rather than with challenging the performer with mounting technical difficulty from variation to variation.⁶

For several reasons, I have chosen to discuss the *Abegg Variations* and the *Symphonic Etudes* in the present chapter, rather than the Impromptus or the variations from the F-minor Sonata. First, Opp. 1 and 13 are more central to the repertoire, i.e., performed more often, than the op. 5 Impromptus. Secondly, the variations from the F-minor Sonata are of a smaller scale than the other three sets; as part of a larger work--i.e., its slow movement--they are not heard on the same terms as Opp. 1, 5, and 13. Thirdly, and most importantly from a qualitative standpoint, the textures of Opp. 1 and 13 demonstrate Schumann's evolution from writing influenced by the *stile brillante* to his own, more densely harmonious pianistic style. Finally, the freedom with which Schumann recasts his theme in Opp. 1 and 13--and the resulting sharp distinctions of character and texture

⁶Helmuth Hopf, *Stilistische Voraussetzungen der Klaviermusik Robert Schumanns*, pp. 15-16.

between variations--allies both sets with his cycles of character pieces, and thus places them in the mainstream of his first-decade output.

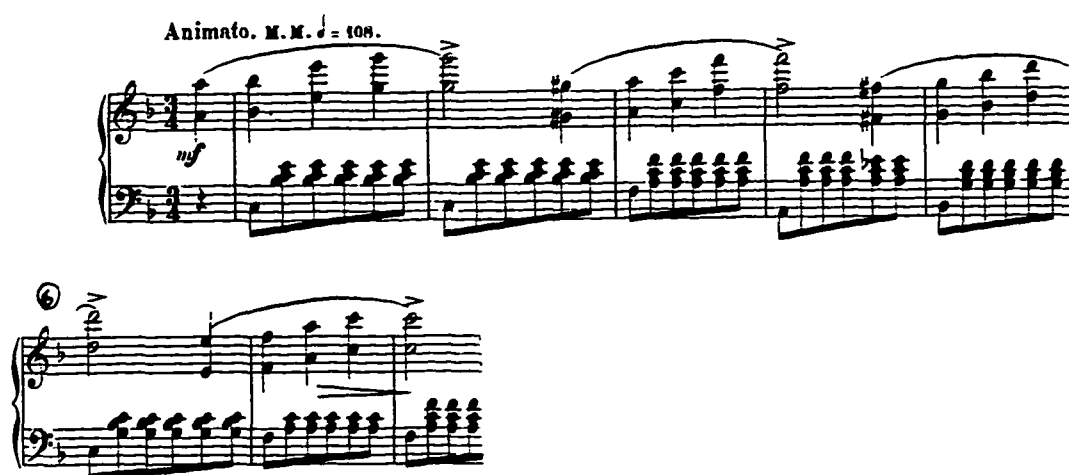
Variations on the Name Abegg, op. 1

Schumann's first published work is one of his least characteristic in terms of textural quality. Written in 1830, the set shows the influence of the *stile brillante* in its many passages of fleet, high-register figuration. Sketches indicate that Schumann originally planned to provide the set with an orchestral introduction and accompaniment, further aligning his conception with the brilliant style of the day.⁷ At the same time, the orderly progression of textures typical of works such as Moscheles' *Grandes Variations sur la Marche favorite de l'Empereur Alexandre I*, op. 32--which Schumann himself played⁸--is entirely dispensed with in the *Abegg* set. Each variation strikes a distinct tone; textures change utterly from one variation to the next. Moreover, Schumann is inconsistent with respect to textural process within single variations. Some echo the theme in its lack of modification, while others are highly volatile.

⁷Wolfgang Boetticher, *Robert Schumanns Klavierwerke: Neue biographische und textkritische Untersuchungen*, Teil I (Wilhelmshaven: Heinrichshofen, 1976), pp. 28-30.

⁸Wolfgang Boetticher, *Robert Schumanns Klavierwerke: Neue biographische und textkritische Untersuchungen*, Teil I, pp. 29-30.

The texture of the *Abegg* theme is simple and uniform: a melody, reinforced at the octave, is accompanied by a rudimentary left-hand pattern of bass note plus repeated chords (see Example 3-1).



Example 3-1. *Abegg Variations*, op. 1, Theme, mm. 1-8.

Textural modification is not a factor in shaping the binary form of the theme, each half of which is repeated in *pianissimo*. Both halves end in the F-major tonic.

The phrase lengths and harmonic structure of the theme are preserved in the first variation (Example 3-2). However, the qualitative textural contrast between the two is huge. Myriad right-hand figures traverse the entire treble range of the keyboard in the first variation. There are four such figures in its first half alone.

(♩ = 104.) *legato*
mf energetic
 ⑤ *>p* *cre - sci - do*
 ⑨ *pp* *cre - sci - do* *dimi - tu*
 ⑭ *pp* *en - do*

Example 3-2. *Abegg Variations*, op. 1,
 Variation I, mm. 1-16.

Each figure is supported differently by the left hand. Together, these changes in figuration and accompaniment segment the sixteen measures into four sub-phrases. The segmentation according to quality of material contrasts with

the textural treatment of the theme, which is not at all segmented in this respect.

The right-hand figure in each of the four segments is atypical from the point of view of Schumann's later style. In mm. 1-4, it is the octave transposition of the first two chords--i.e., the traversal of four octaves by mere repetition of a two-chord pattern--which is atypical; in mm. 5-7, it is the compound right-hand figure of chromatic scale plus repeated note; in mm. 9-12, it is both the octave transpositions and the spread position of the ascending broken chords; and in mm. 13-14, it is again the compound figure of (largely) chromatic scale and a voice in the outer part of the hand. To observe that Schumann avoided such figures in later works is not to cast aspersions upon them--Chopin made highly artistic use of similar patterns. It is merely to point out that widely-spaced arpeggios, chromatic runs, and the successive reiteration of a motive throughout several octaves are figurative means that ill-suited Schumann as he developed a less display-oriented pianistic style.

Traces of the theme are present in the half-step motives a-b^b (into m. 1, right hand), g[#]-a (into m. 3, left hand), f[#]-g (into m. 5, right hand), and of course in the direct restatement (mm. 9-12, left hand--the most striking modifier of texture in these measures). Apart from the restatement--which has the feeling of a quotation, owing to

the extreme textural distance between theme and first variation--the busyness of the writing obscures the theme's melodic structure more than was common in first variations in sets by Schumann's contemporaries. An 1833 review of the *Abegg Variations* alludes to its departure from the norm:

The theme...is well-composed and appealing;
the variations throughout are not of the
usual kind, [are] indeed peculiar.⁹

The more gradually varying procedures of Hummel, Kalkbrenner, and Moscheles were undoubtedly more to the taste of the 1830s listener.

The second variation (Example 3-3) shares a consistency of texture with the theme; textural process is similarly insignificant as a shaping factor. Qualitatively, the texture is far more typical of Schumann's later style than is that of Variation I.

⁹Wolfgang Boetticher, *Robert Schumanns Klavierwerke*, Teil I, p. 25: "Das Thema...ist gut erfunden und ansprechend, die Variationen durchaus nicht nach dem gewöhnlichen Schlage, wirklich eigentümlich." Quoted from an unsigned review in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, Jahrgang XXV, no. 37, September 11, 1833.



Example 3-3. *Abegg Variations*, op. 1,
Variation II, mm. 1-8.

More restricted in register, and therefore denser in sonority, the texture is characterized by the rhythmic displacement of three lines of a four-part chordal structure. The highly interdependent hands project a set of syncopated rhythmic relationships: the bass line is displaced at the eighth note, the accompanying intervals at the sixteenth.¹⁰ The displacement of components creates

¹⁰The indication "*il basso parlando*" calls for emphasis of the syncopated voice in the left hand. Note also the larger syncopation, i.e., the hemiola effect created by the succession of diminished seventh chords followed by (local) resolutions.

fluidity at the surface of the music, and throws the outer-voice counterpoint--a free linear reworking of the theme's harmonic structure--into relief.

The third variation (Example 3-4) represents Schumann at his most glib. Whereas in later works, he often chains together repetitions of a single three- or four-note figure to create continuous motion in one hand or the other (e.g., the second *Novellette*, op. 21), here he inserts scales (mostly chromatic) and broken chords into the theme's harmonic scaffold. The result could be Hummel or Moscheles.

(♩ = 40.)

mf currente *cre-* *scen-* *do*

f *diminuendo*

5 *con accuratezza* *crescendo* *f*

8 *pp* *cre-* *scen-* *do*

p narrato e legato

11

14 *crescendo* *f* *con forza*

Example 3-4. *Abegg Variations*, op. 1,
Variation III, mm. 1-16.

A strong division of function between the hands presents the left hand as harmonic support and time-keeper, while the right hand races above, at times in the highest reaches of the keyboard. The volubility of the whole is remarkable; in keeping with the *stile brillante*, each section ends with a rocket-like ascent through four octaves. Apart from the increased melodic profile of the bass line in mm. 5-10--including an a-b-e-g-g quote in mm. 8-10--the texture undergoes no significant modification.

The same cannot be said of the *Cantabile* (Example 3-5), which amounts to half of a fourth variation and an introduction to the extended *Finale*: an outright change in texture marks the two-part division. The *Cantabile* is tonally open: it begins in A^b major, then moves from an E^b-major cadence (m. 10) on to C-major harmony in m. 13. It is at the move to C major--the beginning of an extended dominant preparation for the *Finale's* return to F major--that the opening texture of right-hand melody plus chordal accompaniment yields to a strictly figural texture.

Cantabile. $\text{♩} = 120.$

non troppo lento

dim.

poco cresc.

riten. quasi

crescendo *accelerando*

molto lento

Example 3-5. *Abegg Variations*, op. 1,
Cantabile (complete).

The change in texture supports the structure: sections of different formal intent and function are differently configured.

Qualitatively, the two segments are again unlike the bulk of Schumann's later writing. The numerous octave transpositions of the figures in mm. 14-19 are atypical, as is much of the melodic writing in mm. 1-12. With the left hand constant in its chordal accompaniment, the right hand dabbles in grand operatic gesture (m. 1-3), Beethovenian *sostenuto* (mm. 4-7, with the trill as sustaining agent), and *fioratura* in the style of Field and Chopin (mm. 8-13). These latter composers modeled this feature of their style after the ornamentation of the Italian *bel canto*; elsewhere, Schumann is rarely so Italianate.

Schumann reformulates the material presented by the theme most extensively in the *Finale alla Fantasia*; all traces of binary form have disappeared. The *Finale* is structured as a series of four episodes. Each episode begins with a phrase derived from the first eight measures of the theme, and continues with chains of figures and passagework. All four of the phrases which initiate episodes unfold over a stationary bass (mm. 1-4, 23-25, 40-43, and 75-78). As seen in Example 3-6, the first of these phrases--a five-part, note-against-note texture including a pedal tone--compresses the eight-measure harmonic structure

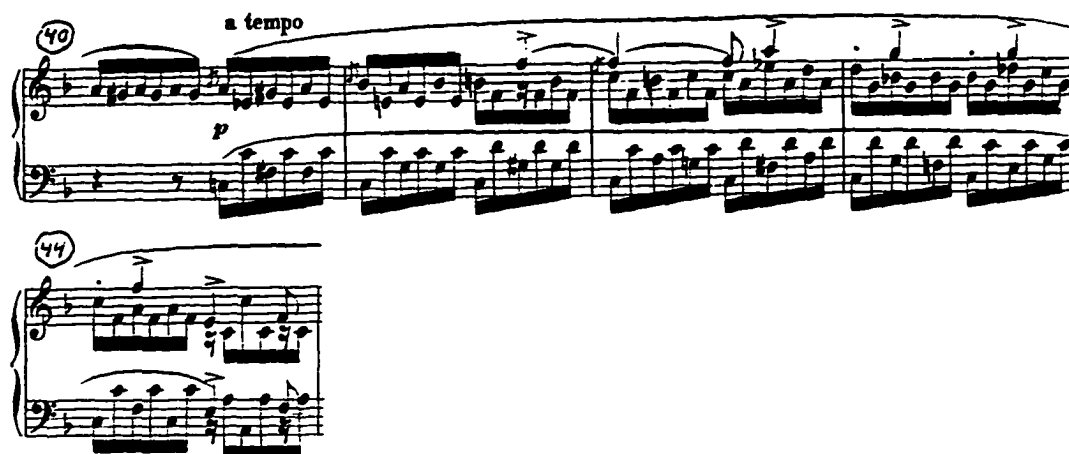
of the first phrase of the theme into a space of four measures.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for piano. The first system is marked 'Vivace. $\text{♩} = 80.$ ' and 'p semplice e tutto crescendo', ending with 'pp'. The second system is marked 'poco cresc.' and the third system is marked 'poco'. The notation includes treble and bass staves with various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 3-6. *Abegg Variations*, op. 1, *Finale alla Fantasia*, mm. 1-8.

Schumann sends the right hand into the extreme treble for the figures which continue the episode (mm. 4ff.).

Not all of the figuration in the *Finale* rides atop a harmonic structure in this way, however. The third episode (Example 3-7) begins with a texture whose figuration activates an underlying chordal structure; compare Examples 3-6 and 3-7.



Example 3-7. *Abegg Variations*, op. 1,
Finale alla Fantasia, mm. 40-44.

Here, two-note rotating figures are chained together in the middle register, creating the sort of texture--densely-packed and full of contrapuntal activity--typical of Schumann's later style. *Stile-brillante* practice prevails fully only in the fourth and final episode, where right-hand figuration glitters *a tempo vivacissimo* above the chordal accompaniment.

While the second and portions of the final variation of the Abegg set show traces of Schumann's later, most characteristic approaches to pianistic texture, the remaining variations are heavily indebted to the virtuosic style of Hummel and Moscheles. In the kaleidoscopic first variation, the nimble third, and the Italianate *Cantabile*, Schumann

moves a catalogue of pianistic figures above a succession of harmonies derived--in the first and third variations--from the theme. The figures do not attain motivic status: no single figure pervades the texture of an entire section, as happens in so many of Schumann's works. Chromatic and diatonic scales, arpeggios, and broken chords abound, but are not used with the consistency typical of Schumann's later style; one has the feeling that, here or there, he could have used an arpeggio instead of a chromatic scale.

Neither does Schumann maintain a consistent approach to textural process in the *Abegg Variations*. The second and third variations follow the theme in its lack of modification; the first is chaotic in this respect. Both the *Cantabile* and *Finale* coordinate textural process with formal design, but neither owes its design to the theme. These contradictory tendencies in the constitution and manipulation of texture are perhaps a sign of Schumann's inexperience. A subsequent variations work, the *Symphonic Etudes*, op. 13--composed in 1834, published in 1837--shows a later stage in Schumann's development. In its textural qualities, Op. 13 is altogether more typical of Schumann's first-decade pianistic style than the *Abegg* set; in its textural processes, it is more consistent and more apparently purposeful.

Symphonic Études, op. 13

Schumann crossbred the genres of variation and étude in Op. 13; the hybridization is clearly evident in the work's second-edition title, *Études en Forme de Variations* (1852). The first-edition title, *XII Études Symphoniques* (1837), superseded an earlier title, announced in May 1836 in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*: *X Etüden im Orchester-charakter für Pianoforte Op. 13 von Florestan und Eusebius*.¹¹ As the one word common to all three titles, 'étude' is obviously an important signifier; 'symphonique' or 'Orchester-charakter' and 'variation' are key to the description of the work as well.

Textural quality and process in Op. 13 are informed by all three concepts. The conventions of the étude bear on texture in that a single instrumental figure--or a single technical formula--is a leading component of most pieces in the set. The textures are symphonic--of an orchestral character--in their richness of sonority, and in their fully melodic use of all registers. Rather than imitate instruments or sections of the orchestra, the pianist must be able to project single lines in all strata of the predominantly chordal textures. (That said, the third étude clearly does imitate a string-playing technique. Its right-hand figure is reminiscent of arpeggios, played across four

¹¹Cited in the notes to the fifth edition of Schumann's *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, vol. II, p. 374.

strings with a ricocheting bow, such as are found in Paganini's first caprice, op. 1. This is of course an imitation of the violin in a solo, rather than an orchestral, setting.) Finally, the conventions of the variation set influence textural process in that a textural feature of the theme--namely a reduction in registral compass during its third phrase (of four), coupled with increased linear independence--echoes through the entire set of pieces.

The following discussion adopts the numbering system of the first edition, in which the theme and successive variations/études are labelled *Thema* and *Etüden I-XII*; none of the separate pieces is termed *Variation*. In the second edition (1852), all but the third and ninth pieces in the sequence are designated 'variation'; numbers 3 and 9 are called 'étude.' Lacking in both 'original' editions are the five variations, written--along with the rest of the set--in 1834, and first published in 1893 by Clara Schumann.¹²

Schumann borrowed the theme of Op. 13 from the set of variations sent to him in 1834 by Captain von Fricken.¹³ Schumann set von Fricken's theme harmoniously; widely spaced right-hand chords are supported by deep octaves in the bass:

¹²Boetticher, *Robert Schumann's Klavierwerke*, Teil I, p. 250.

¹³Boetticher, *Robert Schumann's Klavierwerke*, Teil I, p. 244.

Andante 4/4
(legatissimo)
P Pedale

⑤

⑨
m.d.

⑬
Pedale
ritard.

Example 3-8. *Symphonic Etudes*, op. 13,
Theme (complete).

The sixteen-measure theme is divided by a modulation to III (and a double bar) into two groups of eight measures apiece; these groups are further divided, both melodically

and harmonically (via half cadences), into four plus four measures, as follows.

Phrase 1: mm. 1-4 (I-V)
 Phrase 2: mm. 5-8 (I-III)
 Phrase 3: mm. 9-12 (V)
 Phrase 4: mm. 13-16 (I, ending on V)¹⁴

Schumann sets phrases one, two, and four similarly in textural terms; five- and six-note simultaneities are spread through a range of two-and-a-half to four octaves. He reduces the texture during the third phrase, leading four voices strictly through a range of up to two octaves. The four voices participate on a more equal basis in the third phrase than elsewhere in the theme; the recession in register is thus accompanied by a progressive tendency in the relative independence of voices. This textural modification sets the third phrase apart from the others, and accentuates the 'roundedness' of the rounded binary form of the theme: the return of the opening melodic figure is reinforced by a return to the initial texture.

It is in the treatment of this third phrase throughout the set that the dual nature of the *Symphonic Etudes* is most apparent. In honoring the variation principle, i.e., in reflecting the structural properties of the third phrase of the theme, Schumann modifies the texture of the equivalent

¹⁴To clarify the tonal properties of the theme: the return to C#-minor harmony in mm. 10-11 (i.e., in the third phrase) is not heard as a structural arrival; this takes place in m. 13. Furthermore, an authentic (tonic) cadence is clearly expected in m. 16; the move to V merely opens the theme to the succeeding variation.

spot to some degree in all but Étude 6. These modifications include some alteration of the principal figure in Études 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, and 10; the alterations are at odds with the practice of through-composed figuration typical of études. The compositional principles of variation and étude conflict in the 'third phrases' of Op. 13; Schumann's ingenuity provides for solutions ranging from the invention of an entirely new figure (see the change of texture in Étude 3, mm. 9-12) to the continuation of the previous texture, but in a (contrasting) *piano* dynamic (see Étude 6, mm. 9ff. [Example 3-11]).

From the collection of twelve études/variations, I have selected four to demonstrate the étude-like and symphonic qualities alluded to in the title. The second étude is one of the most orchestral in its placement and reinforcement of melodic components throughout the texture; the sixth is entirely étude-like in its textural formulation. In the ninth étude, Schumann 'scores' material in various registers and with differing degrees of density; its segmentation of registers, unusual for Schumann, would well suit the orchestra. Finally, in the eleventh étude, Schumann employs a thoroughgoing accompanimental figure to support a melodic duet which--in exceeding by far the scope typical of single-hand keyboard writing--aspires to a model of two one-line instruments. In addition, textural processes in all but the

sixth étude serve the variation principle in both reflecting and transforming the textural design presented by the theme.

A pianistic figure consisting of repeated chords is present in every measure of the second étude. A favorite accompanimental figure of Schubert, the repeated chords are shared between the hands in all but the third phrase--where increased contrapuntal activity renders the left hand unable to continue the pattern. Schumann assigns melodic material to both hands throughout as well.

The variation maintains the sixteen-measure structure of the theme (whose initial melodic phrase is quoted in the bass of mm. 1-4 of Étude 2), but all four phrases expand temporally under the weight of the added discant melody and accompanying chords. The phrases follow the harmonic design of the theme in their beginnings and endings, while phrase divisions are enhanced: Schumann reconfigures material at each phrasal juncture.

The first phrase (mm. 1-4 in Example 3-9) is a Schumannesque equivalent to Thalberg's signature three-hand effect. In stratifying a texture into three distinct components, at least one of which was a wide-ranging arpeggio--which accompanied a melody situated in the middle register--Thalberg conveyed the impression of playing with three hands. Schumann writes similarly here.

$\text{♩} = 72.$
*marcato il canto
 espressivo*

*marcato il Thema
 sempre col Pedale*

②

④ *cresc.*

⑤

⑦ *pp* *mf*

Example 3-9. *Symphonic Etudes*, op. 13,
 Étude II, mm. 1-8.

Two of the three components are melodic. In keeping with an orchestral ideal, Schumann places these lines at the outer boundaries of the texture, maximizing the registral and timbral contrast between them. His substitution of chords which hover in the middle-register for Thalberg's sparkling arpeggios turns the sonority inward, so to speak. The chords provide harmonic and tonal support for the melody; Thalberg's arpeggios function primarily to delight the listener.

Phrases two and four of the second étude are 'rhymed' texturally (and melodically). Each balances just two components, the top-line *cantilena* idea from m. 1--reinforced variously at one, two, and three octaves--and the accompanimental chords (see mm. 5-8 of Example 3-9). The different scorings of the melodic line in mm. 5-8 offer the pianist clear opportunities to shape the phrase, each of whose four sub-phrases is differently configured.

As in the theme, the third phrase (see Example 3-10) brings increased polyphonic activity.

Example 3-10. *Symphonic Etudes*, op. 13,
Etude II, mm. 9-13.

A trace of the chordal accompaniment remains in the interior of the right hand; the remaining components are melodic to varying degrees. The astonishing writing of m. 12, in which the polyphonic left-hand part both traces a scalar bass line and breathlessly imitates the two-note figure in the right hand, prepares the return to tonic at the start of the fourth phrase with an intensity unimagined in the presentation of the theme.

The four phrases of the sixth étude are identical from a textural standpoint: figural patterns in each hand brook no modification. A reduction in dynamic scale beginning in m. 9 is the sole nod to third-phrase restructuring (see Example 3-11).

Agitato. = 60.
con gran bravura
Pedale

④

⑦

⑨ diminu.

Example 3-11. *Symphonic Études*, op. 13, Étude VI, mm. 1-11.

Qualitatively, the texture is striking. A skipping left-hand figure--the obvious *étude*-like feature, whose accurate execution does not come easily--fulfills both melodic and bass-linear functions. The top notes of the right-hand chordal figure trace the same line as the thumb. Ordinarily, a right-hand part so constituted would lead the texture melodically; in fact, it is all but overshadowed in performance by the left hand, owing to the latter's extraordinary rhythmic profile and articulation. The left thumb's anticipations of the right-hand line are strengthened by their *marcato* articulation, and by virtue of their lying in a more resonant register of the piano. A rhythmically skewed parallel *cantilena* results.

Another qualitative feature of this texture is more obvious to the player than the listener: it is what Schumann might have called the *Ineinandergreifen*, or overlapping, of the hands. In Example 3-11, the thumbs of each hand share one key per eighth-note span. Eugen Leipold has suggested that similarly close laying-out of parts, which is common in Schumann, can foster in the player a sense of harmonic density or fullness beyond what a neater, less entangled layout would give.¹⁵ Schumann may well have had that intention here. In indicating that the *étude* be played *con gran bravura*, he identifies bravura with a

¹⁵Eugen Leipold, *Die romantische Polyphonie in der Klaviermusik Robert Schumanns*, p. 81.

robust, energetic execution of two-note figures rather than with a dazzling display of passage-playing, with sturdiness rather than brilliance.

No single pianistic figure saturates the texture of the ninth étude, although rapid successions of chords and double notes are clearly its technical basis (see Example 3-12).

Presto possibile. $\text{♩} = 116$.

9

13 17

sempre piano poco a poco

33

39

52

65

Pedale

Pedale

Example 3-12. *Symphonic Études*, op. 13,
Étude IX (complete).

Schumann seems to have cross-bred himself with Mendelssohn and Liszt in composing this piece, which is in turn elfin and thunderous. For the first time in the set, the conclusion of the fourth phrase does not mark the end of the *étude*. The phrase lengths and harmonic plan are as follows.

Phrase 1: mm. 1-8 (I)
 Phrase 2: mm. 9-16 (I-III)
 Phrase 3: mm. 17-32 (V-V of III)
 Phrase 4: mm. 33-40 (III; 2nd time,
 III-(V)-I)
 Coda: mm. 41-79 (I)¹⁶

Aside from the inclusion of a coda, Schumann alters the inherited phrase structure in this variation by doubling the length of the third phrase relative to the others and, further, by leading the third phrase back to III; the fourth phrase thus projects the relative major. The coda prolongs tonic harmony via numerous iterations of an a-g# motive (prominent in mm. 2, 6-7, and 14-15 of the Theme).

The four phrases are segmented by means of register; the observation, often a complaint, that Schumann's music is registrally static does not hold true here. He recasts the descending broken chord in m. 1 of the theme as a (harmonized) descending scale. Scalar (or near-scalar) motion in a leading voice moves each phrase through the space of one octave at least; no phrase ends where it began

¹⁶Both this phrasal/harmonic diagram and Example 3-12 are based on the revised, 1852 edition, although the designation 'Étude IX' is taken from the 1837 edition. Measures 17-40 are played only once in the 1837 edition, with a return to C# minor in mm. 39-40. Schumann added the first ending, i.e., the cadence in E major, in the 1852 revision.

registrally. In accordance with the design of the theme, Schumann reduces the sounding material of the third phrase, but only initially. He slows the rate of harmonic change in mm. 17-32, and adds a sustaining component to the texture, which helps to underscore the chromatic progression in contrary motion throughout these measures. After m. 20, contrary motion in outer parts--as well as their reinforcement at the octave--gradually open the registral span of the texture, in preparation for the climactic fourth phrase. (The deliberate pace of the textural additions in mm. 17-33, coupled with the long [thirteen-measure] crescendo, is reminiscent of Beethoven.) Measures 33-40 parallel the opening eight measures in their top line, but the added bass octaves lend the phrase a 'tutti' character. By contrast, the first phrase is played as though by a single choir of instruments.

Schumann maintains a 'tutti' character well into the coda. Only the final arpeggio, which traverses all of the previously segmented registers in a single gesture, reverts to a thinner texture. In a final, witty touch, Schumann closes the piece with the sonority which opened it.

The eleventh étude (Example 3-13), whose tonic is G# minor, presents one of Schumann's most nocturne-like textures.

Con espressione. $\text{♩} = 66$.

p

②

④

quasi a due

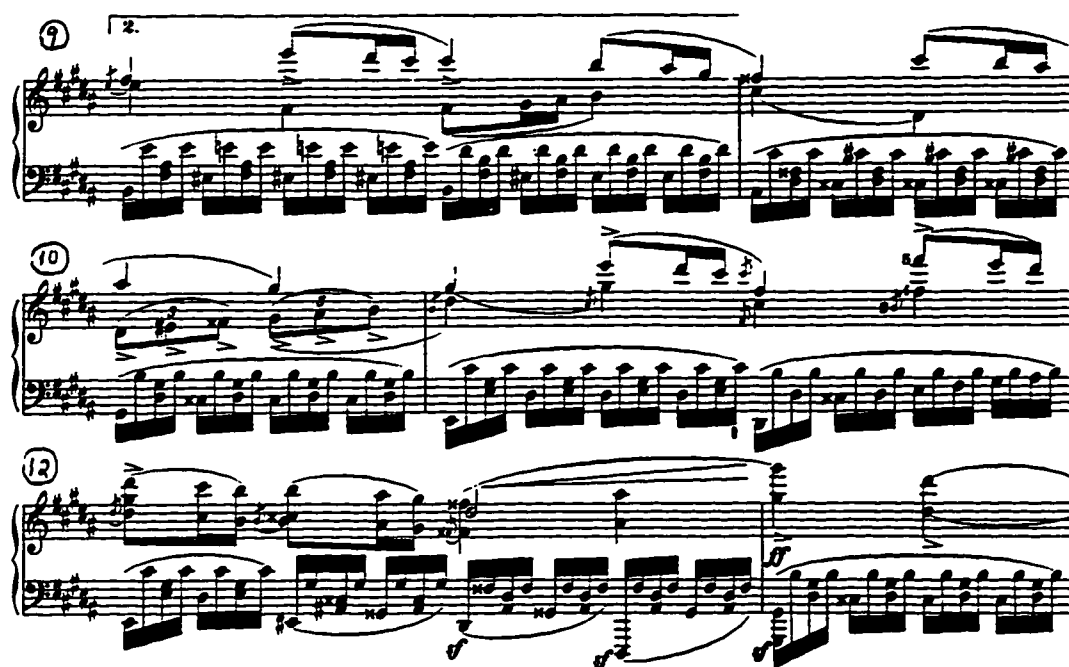
⑤

⑦

sempre piano
sempre col Pedale
sempre pianissimo

⑧

pp



Example 3-13. *Symphonic Études*, op. 13,
Étude 11, mm. 1-13.

The thoroughgoing figure in this étude is an accompanimental one. Densely-packed, it reflects Schumann's sensibility relative to Chopin--who in general prefers more widely spaced accompaniments--and Mendelssohn, who is inclined to more diatonic patterns. The piece is a study in polyphonic playing. In m. 5, a melodic duet begins; to honor its polyphony is no easy task, owing to the wide spacing of the two lines. A single hand cannot perform some of the written simultaneities as such; the spread imposes a rubato, in the sense of a line freed from absolute correspondence with a regularly patterned accompaniment. While the initial

texture and sonority are decidedly pianistic--and indeed quite typical of Romantic pianism--the divergent lines of the duet stretch the boundaries of nocturne-like texture; the area around the binary division suggests an imitation on Schumann's part of the capabilities, though not the specific instrumental characteristics, of the orchestra.

The onset of the duet marks the second phrase of the four-phrase design. An innovation in textural process relative to the theme is that phrases two and three (i.e., mm. 5-8 and 9-12) are not demarcated texturally. Instead, Schumann gradually intensifies the duet, via increased rhythmic activity and intervallic span, in both melodic parts throughout mm. 5-11. (The voice leading in m. 11 is particularly intricate.) Once again, then, the third phrase is the richest of the four in its polyphony. In leading to the climax (the onset of the fourth phrase, m. 13), Schumann forgoes a duet texture in favor of reinforced single-line writing (see m. 12). He undertakes a similar process for the same reason in the first of the *Davidsbündlertänze*; that passage is discussed in Chapter Five, pp. 179-180. The textural modification in both cases is subtle, yet significant: textural detail heeds the demands of large-scale structure in defining a climax.

These four études/variations demonstrate some of the ways in which Schumann configures material while addressing

pianistic problems, making full melodic use of all registers after the fashion of the orchestra, and serving musical structure throughout the *Symphonic Études*. Textural modification helps to articulate a four-phrase structure beginning with the theme; the textural process by which Schumann distinguishes the third phrase from its surroundings echoes throughout the set. The *Abegg* theme, on the other hand, is devoid of significant textural processes. Modifications within the first variation, the *Cantabile*, and the *Finale alla Fantasia* are not derived from the theme; partly for this reason, the variation process in Op. 1 has a desultory air about it. The set is full of charm and sparkling pianistic effects, but individual variations lack the many-layered connection with their theme found in the *Symphonic Études*. In both works, Schumann departed from the Classical-era norm, continued by composers of the *stile brillante*, of ordering variations according to increasing rhythmic activity and technical difficulty. He instead built on conventions established by Beethoven, in which the external characteristics of variations change radically from one to the next. Brahms described the *Symphonic Études* as an example of the "fantasy variation."¹⁷ He might easily have termed them 'character variation'; both Opp. 1 and 13

¹⁷A citation of an 1869 letter in which Brahms termed the *Symphonic Études* "Phantasie Variation" is found in Oliver Neighbour, "Brahms and Schumann: Two Opus Nines and Beyond," *19th Century Music* IV/3 (1981): 266.

resemble Schumann's character-piece cycles in the utter changes of texture and mood between variations.

CHAPTER FOUR: TEXTURE IN SONATA-FORM MOVEMENTS

(N.B.: A printed score of the following Schumann works will clarify the analyses in this chapter: Toccata, op. 7, Sonata in F#-minor, op. 11, Fantasy, op. 17, and *Faschingsschwank aus Wien*, op. 26.)

Many musicians would be surprised to learn the extent to which Schumann occupied himself with sonata composition in the years 1830-1839. His sets of character pieces from these years are better known, and he is commonly assumed to have turned to the older traditions of Viennese Classicism only as his powers of invention waned. The fact that Schumann worked almost continuously during his first decade of composition on multi-movement pieces, at least one of whose movements is cast in sonata form, contradicts the assumption that the sonata was less central to his creative activity than shorter forms.

The present chapter examines Schumann's treatment of texture in a selection of his sonata-form movements. I have not attempted to assess Schumann's sonatas in their entirety. An article by Linda Correll Roesner, entitled "Schumann's 'Parallel' Forms," hints at the limitations of examining single movements of Romantic-era sonatas, given the predilection--commented upon by Schumann himself--of nineteenth-century composers to unify the movements of a sonata by means of thematic and harmonic, as well as programmatic or extra-musical, references.¹ However, a

¹Linda Correll Roesner, "Schumann's 'Parallel' Forms," *19th Century Music* 14/3 (1991): 265-278. Schumann's brief

sonata whose diverse movements are linked thematically and harmonically is perhaps best approached by an analysis which seeks to uncover a narrative--or to reveal another facet of musical meaning--via the thematic and harmonic allusions within the entire work. The present purpose, more prosaic perhaps, is to examine the interaction of texture and form in movements in which Schumann obviously worked with some of the Classical assumptions regarding sonata form in mind.

One of these assumptions involves what I have identified as textural process. Late eighteenth-century sonata style coordinates the presentation of material with formal design especially closely. Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven typically configure material differently in the various phases of a sonata structure. Charles Rosen has this feature of their music in mind when he writes that

He [Beethoven] was...the last great master of heterogeneous textures, so essential to the sonata, in an age when the homogeneous textures of the early eighteenth century were beginning to come back into fashion.²

By "heterogeneous," Rosen evidently means dynamic, changing, (often) contrasting textures as opposed to more continuously uniform ones.

discussion of the trend towards unification of the movements of sonatas, concertos, and symphonies is found in his *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, vol. I, p. 59.

²Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, revised ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988), p. 356.

Haydn's so-called monothematic sonata forms provide the clearest example of this stylistic feature. In monothematic movements, key relationships and textural changes articulate structural outline; melodic design is secondary as a formal marker. In the first movement of his Piano Sonata in C major, H. XVI: 50, Haydn constantly reformulates the texture into which he sets the principal three-note motive, thereby differentiating first from second group, development from exposition, etc. The manipulation of texture shapes dual-thematic movements as well; the onset of a second theme is often defined in part by a new texture. On the whole, development sections tend to display a heightened intricacy and volatility of texture(s). By contrast, the lyric piano piece, the *étude*, and the *Lied*--i.e., the forms gaining currency at the end of Beethoven's life--all tend toward what Rosen would call homogeneity of texture at the level of the section.

The manipulation of texture was one of the chief difficulties faced by Schumann's generation in its attempt to further the sonata tradition. However, the strong allure of the newer trends in solo piano music--such as the thoroughgoing treatment of an initial texture, and the expanded use of figuration in the service of virtuosity--could well have obscured what today seems more evident, namely that these traits are not easily assimilated into a sonata-form movement.

The allure of the sonata itself to this generation stemmed partly from its prestige, which was derived from Beethoven's already legendary mastery of the style. In 1839, Schumann wrote in the *Neue Zeitschrift*:

What stimulates the former [lesser-known], mostly young artists, to write [sonatas] is easy to guess; there is no worthier form through which they could introduce themselves to, and please, higher criticism.³

At the intersection of the early Romantics' desire for the artistic prestige afforded by sonata composition and their interest in newer pianistic means, many poor sonatas were written. It is a secondary but important concern here whether or not Schumann's own were among them.

Schumann's First-Decade Sonata Forms: An Overview

Schumann composed sonata-form movements in three distinct phases during the years 1830-1839. The first phase encompassed the years 1830-1833, and saw the composition of the Toccata, op. 7 (1830-1833), the Allegro in B Minor, op. 8 (1831), the first movement of the Sonata in F# Minor, op. 11 (1832-1833), and the first version of the first movement of the Sonata in G Minor, op. 22 (1833). Note that the dates given refer to the years of composition of each

³Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, vol. I, p. 395: "Was die ersteren, meist junge Künstler, zum Schreiben anregt, ist leicht zu erraten; es gibt keine würdigere Form, durch die sie sich bei der höheren Kritik einführen und gefällig machen könnten."

sonata-form movement, rather than to the completion of an entire sonata or its date of publication. Schumann's piano sonatas invariably took their final shape over a period of several years.

The second phase spanned the years 1835-1836, and found Schumann experimenting more boldly than before with sonata structures. The original finale of the G-minor Sonata and the outer movements of the F-minor Sonata, op. 14, were composed at this time, as was the first movement of the Fantasy, op. 17. Schumann originally planned Op. 17 as a sonata; its famously unorthodox first movement is fascinating in part because it alludes so clearly to the sonata tradition. All of the movements composed in this second phase partake of what Roesner has called "parallel" form, in which an exposition and a short development are replayed, with transpositions, to form a recapitulation and a portion of a coda.⁴

The third phase of Schumann's work with piano sonatas took place in 1838-1839, when he put together the G-minor Sonata for publication (revising for a third and final time its first movement, 1838),⁵ and composed the *Faschingsschwank aus Wien*, op. 26 (1839), whose fifth

⁴Roesner, "Schumann's 'Parallel' Forms," p. 266.

⁵Roesner, who has studied Schumann's sonata manuscripts in depth, believes that the third and final version (1838) of Op. 22, I, closely resembles the first version of the movement (1833). See her article "Schumann's Revisions in the First Movement of the Piano Sonata in G minor, op. 22," *19th Century Music* 1/2 (1977): 97-109.

movement is cast in a concise sonata form. The compact formal pattern of this movement seems removed from the more elaborate designs of the mid-decade works, and in retrospect appears to pave the way for the more succinct forms of the chamber music of 1842.

It is possible to construct a sort of history of Schumann's efforts in piano-sonata composition, and to see a pattern of development in his approach to sonata-allegro form, when his output is considered in terms of textural process. A rough outline of such a history follows.

His first completed sonata form for piano solo was the Allegro in B minor, later published as op. 8. Joel Lester has suggested that Schumann modeled the Allegro on the first movement of Hummel's F#-minor Sonata, op. 81, citing the shared use of a three-note motto as well as the highly varied first-theme groups of both works.⁶ The two are texturally similar as well; both composers saturate their textures with figuration, and change texture constantly. (Charles Rosen's estimation of Beethoven as the last master of heterogeneous textures should not be taken to mean that Beethoven was the last to incorporate a variety of different textures into a single movement, only that he was the last to be able to lead them purposefully forward through a

⁶Joel Lester, "Robert Schumann and Sonata Forms," *19th Century Music* XVIII/3 (1995): 199-200.

movement.) That Schumann never supplied his Allegro with additional movements is perhaps due to his later disavowal of the *stile-brillante* textural tendencies of which the Allegro is full.

Schumann's next completed sonata form was more original by comparison. The Toccata, op. 7, was begun in 1830 as an étude in double-note playing; this first, monothematic version was entitled *Exercice pour le pianoforte*.⁷ Schumann gave the piece a second theme and further sonata-form characteristics only in a second version (1832-1833), at first entitled *Étude fantastique en double sons*. A hybrid of étude and sonata, then, the Toccata shows features of both. Quite unusual for a sonata form (and common for an étude) is its perpetual sixteenth-note motion. The consistency of rhythmic activity limits the possibilities for textural contrast in the piece, though Schumann is resourceful within these confines. The key relationships, as well as the sectional proportions and functions, are typical of the sonata allegro.

Schumann began work on the F#-minor Sonata before completing the Toccata. An early version of the exposition (1832) has nearly the same consistency of rhythm--using a different pattern--as the Toccata, though this stems from its being conceived initially as a dance (a fandango),

⁷Boetticher, *Robert Schumann's Klavierwerke*, vol. II, pp. 10-26.

rather than as an étude.⁸ In the final version of the movement (1833), Schumann moved toward greater variety of texture than in either the Toccata or the Fandango fragment, although the exposition still maintains a single rhythm to a greater extent than is typical of Classical-era sonata expositions.

If we accept Roesner's claim that the 1833 version of the first movement of the G-minor Sonata is similar to the published version of 1838 (see above, footnote 4), then Schumann's final first-phase essay in sonata form is also characterized by a near-constant rhythm. However, in the published version, and presumably in the 1833 version as well, Schumann modifies the function and quality of the ubiquitous sixteenths in a way that suggests a more sophisticated manipulation of texture: at different stages in the formal structure, the sixteenths assume different degrees of prominence.

After devoting considerable effort to the founding of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in 1834, Schumann resumed work on sonata forms in 1835. While the two finales composed in 1835-1836 display a rhythmic consistency similar

⁸See the facsimile reproduction of the exposition, a few (cancelled) bars of a development, and sketches for what would become the introduction to the movement in Harold Bauer's 1945 edition of the F#-minor Sonata (New York: G. Schirmer). Bauer observes that the fandango is traditionally a dance in triple meter (Schumann's fandango is in duple meter); one is reminded of the march in three-four time which concludes the *Carnaval*, op. 9.

to that in the Toccata and the F#-minor Sonata, the first movements of both the F-minor Sonata, op. 14, and the Fantasy, op. 17, show much greater rhythmic and textural variety than Opp. 7 and 11. It is as if the experimentation with parallel formal patterns (identified by Roesner in her 1991 article) allowed Schumann more flexibility in configuring material than he had shown previously. Conversely, it may be that an awareness of the limitations of the sonata movements from 1832-1833, and a desire for greater contrasts in material, led him to experiment with formal patterns, and to loosen the inherited designs. It is worth noting that the revision of the first movement of Op. 22, undertaken sometime after October 1835--and later abandoned--contains an extended bridge passage between the first and second theme-groups employing a number of different textures.⁹ This revision brings the movement closer to the first movements of Opp. 14 and 17 in its textural makeup than it would finally become (in 1838). There is thus a clear motion in the direction of freer, more varied textures in Schumann's sonata forms of the mid-decade.

In addition to the final version of the G-minor Sonata, Schumann's third phase of sonata-form composition (1838-1839) brought what must be considered his best-behaved

⁹See Roesner, "Schumann's Revisions in the First Movement of the Piano Sonata in G Minor, op. 22," especially pp. 99-104, which shows a portion of this revision.

sonata movement for solo piano: the last movement of the *Faschingsschwank aus Wien*, op. 26 (1839). In it he combines formal clarity with a modicum of textural variety.

Ironically, however, the textures themselves are less typical of Schumann in their comparative sparseness than those found in any of the other sonata movements.

Sonorities seem almost Mendelssohnian when set against the earlier Opp. 7, 11, 14, and 17.

It remains now to examine in detail portions of Schumann's sonata movements in order to clarify these observations. Only those works which are particularly original and emblematic of Schumann's three stages of sonata composition are discussed below; these include the Toccata, the first movements of the F#-minor Sonata and the Fantasy, and the last movement of the *Faschingsschwank*.

Toccata in C major, op. 7

The Toccata is striking in its very essence: a single pianistic figure generates the majority of material in this sonata form. The figure appears in m. 3 (see Example 4-1); it is a two-note technical pattern, descended from the trill and tremolo, and was almost certainly conceived 'hands on' the keyboard.

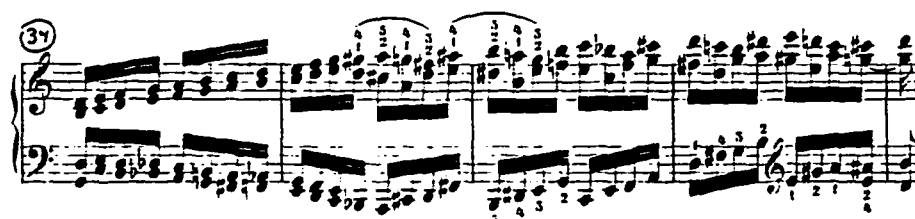


Example 4-1. Toccata, op. 7, mm. 1-4.

Three of the four lines of this texture are given to successive iterations of the two-note figure. The three lines combine to set a figural component against the bass line, which continues the rhythmic pattern of mm. 1-2. Schumann distributes the figure between the two hands to create three-note simultaneities throughout much of the Toccata; half-step neighboring notes pervade the figuration. A more abstract view of the technical pattern encompasses the passages in mm. 25-27, 35-37, and 68-71 (Examples 4-2a, b, and c, respectively), which, in their mechanical formulation, are clearly derived from the basic two-note figure.



Example 4-2a. Toccata, op. 7, mm. 21-27.



Example 4-2b. Toccata, op. 7, mm. 34-37.



Example 4-2c. Toccata, op. 7, mm. 64-71.

In a more generalized way, the passage excerpted in Example 4-3 stems from the two-note patterns of m. 3 as well.



Example 4-3. Toccata, op. 7, mm. 179-183.

At two important junctures in the exposition, the two-note figure yields briefly to more continuous motion in one direction; these modifications in the figuration call attention to those points in the structure. In mm. 21-25, the following music (Example 4-4) announces the tonic closure of the first group.



Example 4-4. Toccata, op. 7, mm. 21-25.

The rising right-hand arpeggio stands out after twenty measures of consistent figuration in two-note groups. The briefest of pauses (on the downbeat of m. 25) enhances this impression.

The arrival of the second theme is likewise prefaced by an alteration of the primary figure (bracketed in Example 4-5).



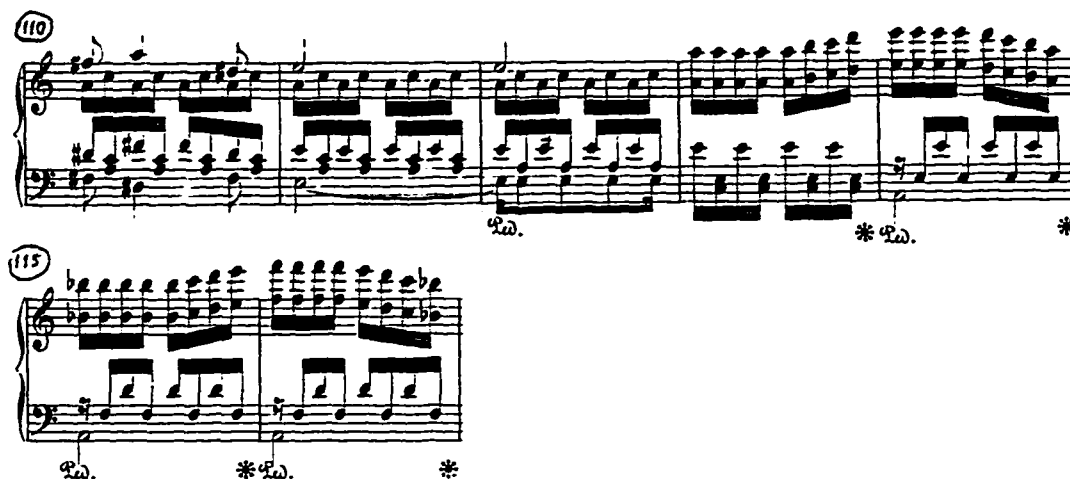
Example 4-5. Toccata, op. 7, mm. 39-47.

It is because of the overwhelming consistency of the two-note figure that these very brief moments of modification in the writing are at all significant. In a piece in which one figure serves as building block for the majority of textures, the absence of that figure, momentary or otherwise, strikes the listener at once. Janet M. Levy has identified similar effects in music of the Classical era as contextual signs.¹⁰ In the Toccata, a departure from the prevailing figuration in most cases signals a new phase in the sonata structure.

Schumann opens the development section (mm. 96-148) with a transposition of the initial material, then modifies the texture by introducing a new component--also a pianistic

¹⁰Janet M. Levy, "Texture as a Sign in Classic and Early Romantic Music," pp. 483-488.

figure, now consisting of repeated octaves--beginning in m. 113 (Example 4-6).



Example 4-6. Toccata, op. 7, mm. 110-116.

The addition of this component, coupled with the turn to A minor, is largely responsible for the contrasting effect of the development; rhythmic motion remains perpetual. As shown in Example 4-7, Schumann later combines the new component with the introductory motive (see mm. 1-2, reprinted in Example 4-1) in a four-part, contrapuntal texture.



Example 4-7. Toccata, op. 7, mm. 129-135.

(The introductory measures serve as the most naked contextual sign in the piece: devoid of sixteenth-note motion, they immediately precede the exposition, its repeat, the development, and, in extended form [see mm. 147-150], the recapitulation.)

The practice of combining two or more previously discrete motives in non-sonata-form contexts was, of course, well established by Schumann's time. He would have been familiar with passages in the double and triple fugues of *The Well-Tempered Clavier* (e.g., the C#-Minor Fugue, Book I), and the fugue from Beethoven's "Hammerklavier" Sonata, where this occurs. In the Romantic era, the combination of motives provided one ready solution to the problem posed by developments whose motivations were no longer as clear as they had been to the Viennese Classicists. (Another

nineteenth-century example is the first-movement development of Chopin's B^b-minor Sonata, op. 35 [1839].)

Schumann was certainly aware of the difficulties posed by the second section of a sonata form; in an 1839 review of the Piano Sonata, op. 1, by Louis Lacombe (1818-1884), he alludes to the "...entrance of the middle section and its continuation, that spot in the sonata or symphony where the student most often comes to grief."¹¹ Schumann avoided that pitfall here with the introduction of a new idea, and its fragmentation and combination with an earlier one. To be sure, the constant sixteenth-note motion helps to drive the section forward; the energy supplied by the performer is not to be overlooked in an analysis of the Toccata's large-scale shape. Nevertheless, the form owes much of its success to Schumann's well-timed manipulations of texture.

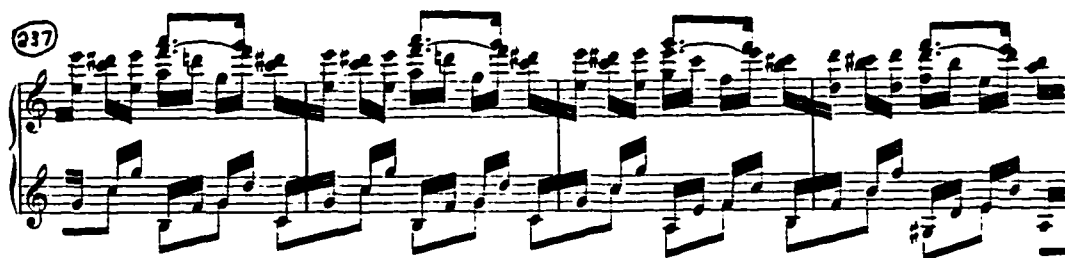
A textural modification in the form of an added, slower-moving component brings the Toccata to its close. Beginning in m. 229 (see Example 4-8), the principal figure is reformulated to begin off the beat.

¹¹Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, vol. I, p. 453: "...Eintritt des Mittelteils und dessen Fortführung, jene Stelle in der Sonate und Sinfonie, wo der Schüler meistens verunglückt."



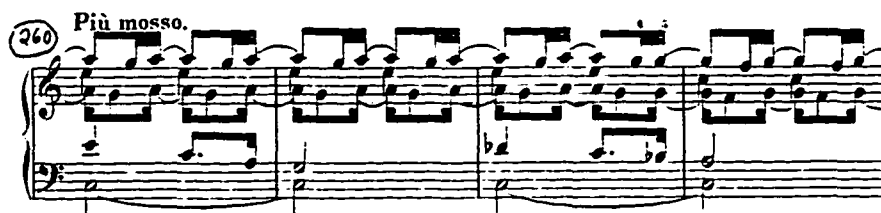
Example 4-8. Toccata, op. 7, mm. 225-232.

(This procedure brings Chopin's Étude in A^b major, op. 10, no. 10, to mind; in that work, Chopin recasts the right-hand figure at phrasal boundaries by changing its articulation and note-grouping.) Beginning in m. 237 of the Toccata (see Example 4-9), Schumann imposes a two-note diatonic figure spanning a quarter (rather than an eighth) upon the reformulated material quoted in Example 4-8.



Example 4-9. Toccata, op. 7, mm. 237-240.

By m. 260, this augmented version of the two-note figure entirely supersedes the (previously dominant) quicker version. The transformation of the figural component opens up the sonority, so to speak; the quickly moving chromatics yield to a broader diatonic motion (see Example 4-10).



Example 4-10. Toccata, op. 7, mm. 260-263.

It would therefore be a mistake to interpret the *Più mosso* at m. 260 as frenzy-inducing. Instead, the quickening of tempo enables the projection of a longer line which is traced by a slower-moving figure. A *sostenuto* has thus been written into the texture by halving the rate of the two-note motive's oscillation. The left hand's allusions to the more

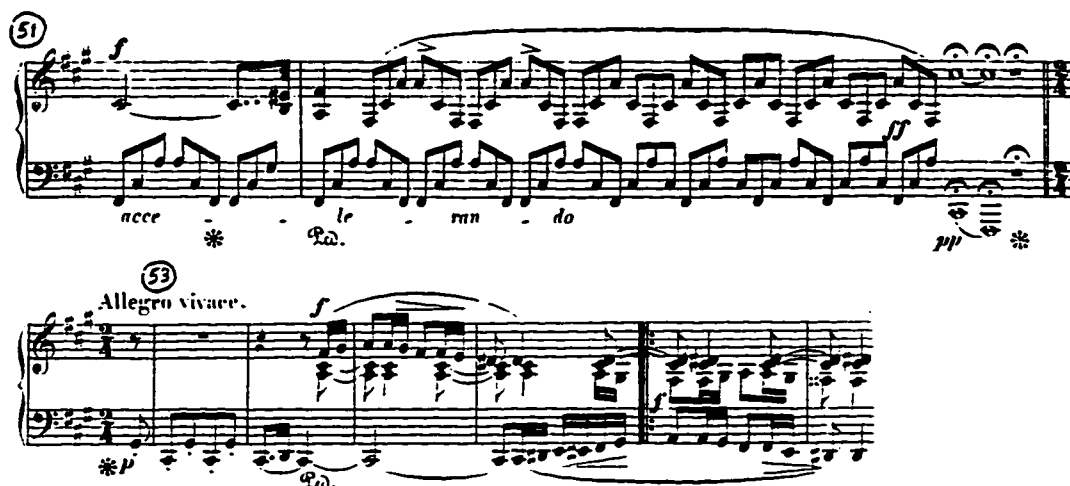
lyrical second theme come as no surprise, then, and the twenty-measure descent in all parts (mm. 260-279) is in effect a *diminuendo*. The quiet, concluding chords of mm. 281-283 are not in any way cute or teasing. They are the final step in a gradual process of easing the virtuosity of some of Schumann's thorniest pianistic writing, and of rounding out one of his most successful sonata-forms.

The Toccata is remarkable in that its near-constant figuration manages to articulate a sonata form with little participation of typically melodic material. Subtle manipulations of the largely figural texture have considerable impact on the formal shape of the work. Perhaps owing to the Toccata's origins as an *étude*, Schumann is more economical in his various transformations of figuration than was Beethoven in the finale of his "Appassionata" Sonata, op. 57, to cite another sonata-form movement characterized by near-perpetual motion. In terms of pure keyboard mechanics, Schumann goes farther than Beethoven. In measuring the degree to which Romantic composer-pianists raised the ceiling of instrumental virtuosity above what Beethoven had sought, one could do worse than to compare these two movements. In this connection, it is safe to assume that the Toccata would be a finale, were it part of an actual sonata.

Sonata in F# minor, op. 11, First Movement

The first movement of the Sonata in F# minor is longer and more varied in its melodic material and key scheme than the Toccata. Lacking the Toccata's origins as *étude*, the writing is less virtuosic. Textures in both works are largely chordal, but the rapid changes of grip in the Toccata create a more dazzling effect than the many prolongations (through repetition) of single chords in the F#-minor Sonata. Schumann manages textural process differently in the two works; to me, he is more successful in the Toccata. There, he creates a sense of dynamic shape within a deliberately narrow range of textural possibilities. The F#-minor Sonata, on the other hand, seems limited by Schumann's failure to realize what might have been a much wider set of textural possibilities, given the greater variety of melodic material.

The introduction departs from the Classical norm of moving from tonic to dominant. It is tonally closed and texturally stable; the texture is nocturne-like. The accompanimental component comes to the fore at the end of the introduction (m. 52 in Example 4-11).



Example 4-11. F#-minor Sonata,
op. 11, I, mm. 51-58.

Schumann's unconventional notation indicates an unusual tonal effect here. He may have intended the low fifth, C#-F#₁, to sound at a remove from the rest of the texture. He seems to split the texture into two levels: an F#-minor chord, arpeggiated in the middle register, is heard as textural foreground, while the falling fifth in the bass appears to come from afar. In giving the low fifth so different a voice, he calls attention to it; the same interval (transposed) then ushers in the succeeding Allegro vivace (mm. 53ff.) with considerable dramatic effect.

In fact, this interval defines one of the two principal motives in the movement (see Example 4-11, mm. 53-54). The fifth motive is altogether absent from the earliest version

of the movement, i.e., the Fandango fragment of 1832. There, the motive of m. 55 (with upbeat)--particularly its rhythm of two sixteenths leading to a strong-beat eighth--is pervasive. In the Fandango, this rhythm lasts, without variance, from the beginning of the fragment until the arrival of the A-major theme (m. 146 in the published version). It is possible that, in reworking the Fandango into a large-scale sonata movement, Schumann added the fifth motive partly to mitigate the obsessiveness of this rhythm.

As a cursory glance through mm. 53-98 of the published version reveals, the fifth motive (or a portion of it, as appears in mm. 75-84) surfaces in many places; Schumann even combines the two in a sort of summary statement of the first group (Example 4-12).



Example 4-12. F#-minor Sonata,
op. 11, I, mm. 93-96.

The unsettled relations between these motives, along with the sequential, modulatory nature of the motive that first appears in m. 55 (Example 4-11), together lend a developmental character to the texture of the first-theme

group. While this is very effective following the tonal and textural solidity of the Introduction, it creates a problem of textural contrast on the large scale with regard to the development section proper.¹²

The transition to the second key of the exposition (E^b minor) begins in m. 99, a phrase whose rhythms and initial ascending thirds are clearly derived from earlier material (see Example 4-13).

¹²In "Robert Schumann and Sonata Forms," p. 201, Joel Lester makes mention of the effective contrast between the "strong tonic" of the Introduction and the "tonally nebulous beginning of the Allegro vivace." His assessment of the movement is more generous than mine, owing in part to his focus on tonal and mine on textural relationships.

Example 4-13. F#-minor Sonata,
op. 11, I, mm. 98-116.

Schumann marks the arrival of E^b minor in mm. 107ff. with a climactic sonority. He opens up the registral space, introduces a new component in the left hand, and reinforces (relative to mm. 101-106) the right-hand figure of two

sixteenths leading to an eighth. (The repetition of the E^b -minor phrase in mm. 114-122 brings the only sustained relief from the rhythm of two sixteenths leading to an eighth prior to the arrival of the A-major theme in m. 146.)

So unlike the remainder of the movement in its avoidance of the galloping rhythm, the A-major theme--recast in the $F\sharp$ -minor tonic at the close of the recapitulation--features a gliding, richly harmonized melodic line (Example 4-14).



Example 4-14. $F\sharp$ -minor Sonata,
op. 11, I, mm. 143-155.

The turmoil of the exposition subsides with the arrival of this theme, which, owing to both tonal and textural factors, communicates a sense of repose. Coming very late in the exposition, it resembles a closing theme in its brevity and tonal stability. Perhaps the most un-Classical

feature of the exposition is this release of tension which accompanies the attainment of its tonal goal. (This is Schumann's only sonata movement for piano solo without a coda. None is needed, so strong is the sense of closure when the smooth, note-against-note texture of this theme is aligned with the tonic key area at the end of the recapitulation.)

The dissipation of tension occurs over the course of twenty-some measures, and runs parallel to the gradual elimination of E^b minor as a key area. Though one could argue, as Charles Rosen does in *Sonata Forms* (p. 369), that for Schumann and others of his generation, A major is too closely related to its relative F# minor to create a relationship of large-scale dissonance with that key, most listeners would agree that E^b minor does create such a sense with both F# minor and A major. The resolution of this dissonance is chiefly responsible for the readily perceptible lessening of tension throughout mm. 107-146.

Textural modifications lend modest support to this effect as well. The narrowing of registral scope and onset of consistent four-part writing at m. 124, and especially the withdrawal of the leading rhythm into a single voice at m. 140, help to reduce the sonority from its highpoint at m. 107 to the low at m. 146. This process of textural recession into the lyrical theme/tonal goal of the

exposition was one that Schumann would experiment with again in the Fantasy, op. 17, to much greater effect.

The chief textural innovation of the development is the mere addition, to many passages, of broken-chord figuration in continuous sixteenth notes. This added component accompanies restatements of all of the first-group material, and even the theme from the Introduction, at different stages of the development. Similarly, the E^b-minor passage of the exposition is recast to incorporate a perpetual-motion figure (mm. 206-213 and 304-319). The A-major theme of the exposition does not appear in the development.

The new figuration first appears in mm. 192ff., quoted in Example 4-15.

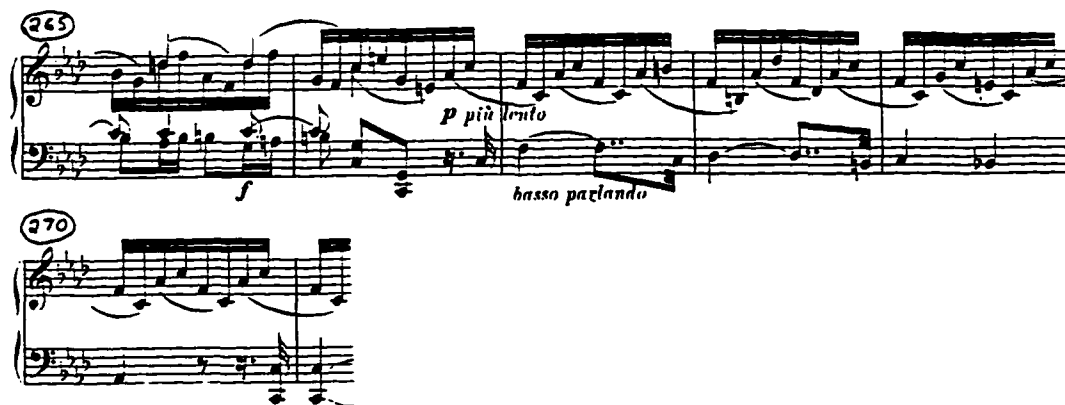


Example 4-15. F#-minor Sonata,
op. 11, I, mm. 188-199.

With the *animato* indication, Schumann urges the performer to move ahead. A similar performance directive (*vivo*) appeared a few measures earlier (m. 179). Schumann relies upon the

addition of a motor rhythm and a quickening of the pulse to propel the development forward. The validity of this assertion is apparent when the movement is played without these incremental accelerations: the material sounds unchanged relative to the exposition; little new light is shed upon it. The textural qualities of exposition and development are too similar to generate the functional contrast required of sonata-form segments.

The pick-ups to m. 248 bring continued sequencing of the primary melodic material; the player is again urged forward (*vivacissimo*). A quotation from the *Introduzione*, marked *più lento* (see Example 4-16), reverses the incremental gains in tempo made by the first half of the development.



Example 4-16. F#-minor Sonata,
op. 11, I, mm. 265-271.

This passage serves as a lowpoint in the development, out of which its final portion--essentially a repetition of the first segment, transposed up a step--rises (cf. mm. 176-221 and 280-323). Through the manipulation of dynamic levels and some recomposing at the end of this final segment, Schumann suggests an accumulation of energy in the closing measures of the development (mm. 310-323). The parallel passage moved in the opposite direction, i.e., its energy dissipated (see mm. 206-221). While the ability to direct identical material toward different goals may be desirable in another context, one wishes here for an intrinsic difference in the keyboard setting of passages whose formal function is so divergent. Schumann might have designed his texture to lend greater structural force to the climactic moment of a movement this large.

The first movement of the F#-Minor Sonata, then, is problematic in its textural/formal relations. The insistence of the fandango rhythm reduces the range of textural possibility in the exposition. The sequential treatment of the first theme in both exposition and development, and the scant modifications in texture from exposition to development, conspire to cloud the formal picture of the movement to no small degree. The recapitulation parallels the exposition very closely, introducing nothing new in the way of texture. In the movement as a whole, large-scale progressions (as in mm. 53-

95 and mm. 310-331) and recessions (as in mm. 107-146) of musical energy are accomplished without significant changes in texture. It may have been dissatisfaction with this movement which caused Schumann to abandon his concurrent work on the G-minor Sonata and, in his next sonata-style efforts, to cast out in a new formal direction.

The new direction is typified by the first movements of the Sonata in F minor, op. 14, and the Fantasy in C major, op. 17. In terming these forms "parallel," Roesner notes Schumann's tendency in Opp. 14 and 17 to replay (with transpositions) the exposition and the beginning of an abbreviated, less-than-clearly-defined development. The replayed material constitutes the recapitulation and the beginnings of a coda. The start of the coda thus 'parallels' the beginning of the development. (The parallel design of exposition and recapitulation is of course a sonata-form norm.)

Fantasy in C major, op. 17, First Movement

I have chosen to discuss the first movement of the Fantasy rather than the F-minor Sonata, in part because of its wide acceptance as one of Schumann's masterpieces--as against the more mixed reception given the F-minor Sonata--and in part because of the striking way in which textural

quality and process help to articulate form and foster expression in the movement.¹³

Begun as a sonata but eventually titled *Fantasy*, Schumann's Op. 17 incorporates characteristics of both genres. Its multi-movement format and certain aspects of its first-movement construction (most notably its dual thematicism, and transposed reprise of the first section) speak to the sonata tradition, while the episodic nature of the first movement--and that movement's numerous rhetorical pauses--are more typical of a fantasy. Schumann probably had himself in mind when, in the same 1839 review of piano sonatas excerpted above, he wrote:

Therefore one should write sonatas or fantasies (what does the name matter!), only one should not forget the music along with it....¹⁴

A central difficulty in viewing the first movement of the *Fantasy* as a sonata form stems from Schumann's unorthodox treatment of its tonic. In short, explicit C-major harmony is absent from the areas of the movement that the analyst might label exposition (mm. 1-81), development

¹³For a full account of the genesis of the *Fantasy*, as well as an overview of the many different analytic perspectives of its structure, see Nicolas Marston, *Schumann: "Fantasie," op. 17* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹⁴Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, vol. I, p. 395: "Also schreibe man Sonaten oder Phantasien (was liegt am Namen!), nur vergesse man dabei die Musik nicht...." This remark occurs in the context of discussing what Schumann considered to be less-than-inspired sonatas.

(mm. 82-224), and recapitulation (mm. 225-273). C major appears unequivocally only in the coda.

The presumption of a C-major tonic at the outset of the movement is linked to the piece's beginning over a 'G' pedal. Prolonged II⁷ harmony leads to clear dominant harmony in mm. 9-12 (see Example 4-17 below); mm. 15-19 sound like a half cadence, particularly in retrospect, when m. 19 reestablishes G⁷ harmony. The presumption of a tonic C major is not, however, strengthened by the remainder of the exposition, which does not move to G major (V) as a key area. In this, the Fantasy may be seen to extend the tonal precepts of another sonata-form movement which avoids the tonic in its exposition, i.e., the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A major, op. 101. There, V is clearly established as a second key area; the impression is that A major is the movement's tonic, but was deliberately avoided in the first group.

A basic tenet of sonata form involves the clear presentation of large-scale tonal relationships. The first movement of the Fantasy lacks an explicit tonic from which to depart; this casts the form of the movement into greater doubt than does its free-standing *Im Legendenton* section, the placement and function of which has puzzled some analysts. Whether one imagines the 'C' tonic to represent the (as yet) unattainable Clara Wieck, and thus hears romantic fulfillment in the long-delayed tonic cadence, or--

more prosaically--one hears the movement as an experiment with inherited traditions of sonata form, Schumann's treatment of tonic harmony remains central to any discussion of the movement's overall shape.

It is not possible here to examine fully the large-scale tonal/thematic relationships of this movement, which, of course, assist in the articulation of its form, and which will always remain open to interpretation. Charles Rosen views the 'exposition' as moving to the subdominant (from C major to F major), resulting in a reduction of tension at odds with Classical sonata practice. Linda Roesner hears an introductory segment (on the eventual dominant) followed by a sonata-exposition in the keys of E^b and F major, answered in the recapitulation by E^b and E^b (both major). This perception is of course possible only in retrospect; the short segment of the exposition in E^b (mm. 29-33) in no way carries the weight of a first theme group. It is the repetition of this material at mm. 225-229 which can trigger a realization that the earlier appearance of E^b major had more than passing significance. In my opinion, neither writer accords sufficient weight to the key of D minor, a key which hosts two (related) melodic motives in the bridge area of the exposition, and the key to which the first section turns as it trails off, and from which it resumes in m. 82.

In presenting a key scheme for the movement, I would say first of all that both the exposition and recapitulation feature an abundance of major/minor mixture. The first group mixes a presumed C major and E^b major (the E^b major is approached via a ii⁷ chord, borrowed from the key of C minor). The second group mixes F major and its relative D minor; this becomes E^b major and C minor in the recapitulation. That the development hovers around an implied C major and an explicit C minor is intelligible owing to the lack of such harmony in the exposition. The *Legendenton* section--a significant portion of the development--is squarely in the key of C minor, creating a large-scale mixture with the C major of the movement as a whole. (Nicholas Marston espouses a similar though not identical view in his *Schumann: Fantasie*.)

The long delay in clearly presenting the tonic 'forms' the movement in an over-arching sense. Key and thematic relationships are decisive formal factors as well. At the level of the section, however, modifications and changes of texture contribute no less to the delineation of musical shape.

The exposition (mm. 1-81) recedes from its opening measures. It begins with music of the most turbulent, ecstatic kind, and closes--almost evaporates--in a moment of introversion. Schumann achieves this effect by regulating the rhythm of the (usually) accompanimental figuration

(moving from sixteenths [mm. 1-48] to triplets [mm. 49-60], and finally to eighths [mm. 61-72]), by a general reduction of the registral compass--i.e., the spacing between hands, and between outer parts--of each succeeding section, and of course through dynamic scaling (*fortissimo* to *pianissimo*). This section of the Fantasy achieves with marvelous fluidity what Schumann had experimented with in the exposition of the F#-minor Sonata: a dissipation of energy over a large expanse of music. There is a slackening in both expositions from a point near the end of the first group through the end of the entire section. Assisted by gradual reductions in the activity at the surface of the music, this process is as un-Classical in its lessening of tension from the first to the second group as it is Romantic in its creation of an atmosphere which permits the unfolding of a truly lyrical theme. (What Classical sonata-movement has a second theme with the lyric spaciousness of those in the Schumann or Chopin sonatas?)

The Fantasy opens with tremendous enthusiasm (Example 4-17).

Durchaus phantastisch und leidenschaftlich vorzutragen. M.M.♩=80.

Pedal.

Example 4-17. Fantasy, op. 17, I,
mm. 1-9.

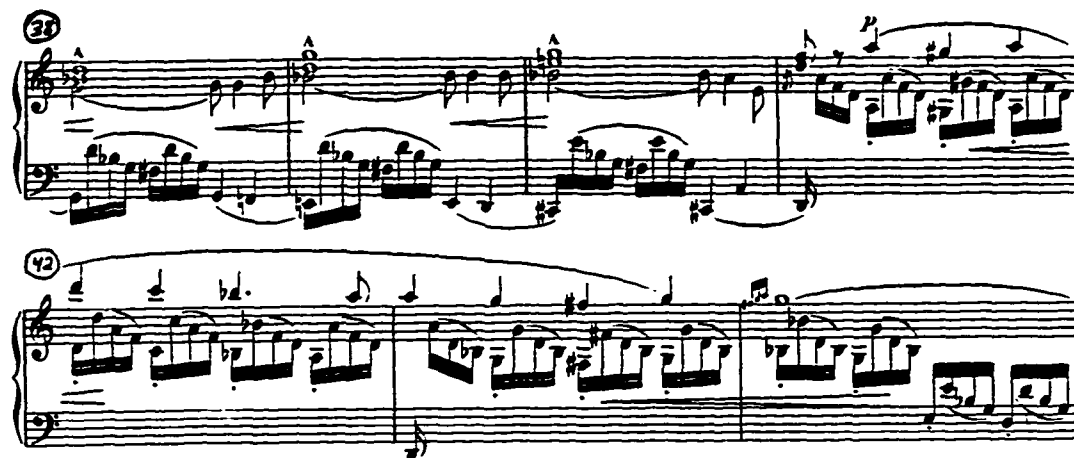
The teeming left-hand accompaniment is, in the words of Charles Rosen, a "shapeless version of the theme above it."¹⁵ The left hand cannot conceal the descending fifth and within its four-note figure (compare with the right-hand line in mm. 3-5), and in mm. 7-9 it follows the right hand in parallel octaves, d-e-f, at the rate of one new tone per measure. This means of relating parts--of constituting a texture--occurs again and again in the first and third movements of Op. 17. The shadowing of a line in one hand by

¹⁵Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style* (New York: Norton, 1972), p. 452.

an implicit or explicit parallel in the other hand is a kind of textural signature of the Fantasy. The most celebrated instance is quoted in Example 2-8 (p. 39). While parallel *cantilena* is characteristic of Schumann's piano writing in general, its superabundant use in the Fantasy is noteworthy, and perhaps connected with the personal: in an 1838 letter to Clara Wieck, Schumann identified the first movement as "a deep lament" for her.¹⁶ Schumann perhaps conceived of a rapturous duet, of two voices joined together in an outpouring of song.

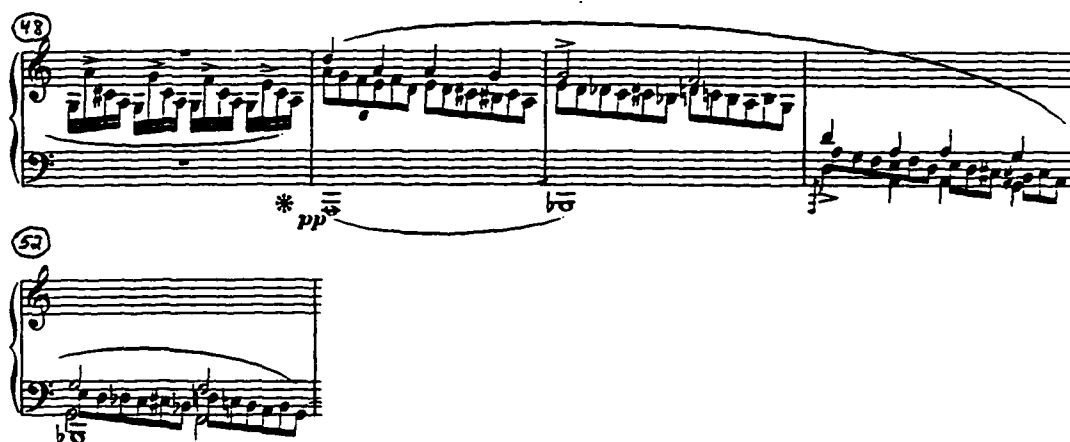
By appearing at important junctures in the melodic and key-schematic design, occurrences of parallel *cantilena* serve a formal function in the first movement as well. In addition to the opening, the motion to D minor at the onset of the second group in m. 41 (see Example 4-18) is accompanied by a parallel-*cantilena* texture.

¹⁶Schumann, Clara und Robert, *Briefwechsel: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Eva Weissweiler, 2 vols. (Frankfurt: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1984 and 1987), vol. 1, p. 126. "Der erste Satz...ist...eine tiefe Klage um Dich...."



Example 4-18. Fantasy, op. 17, I,
mm. 38-44.

A parallel that darkens the color of the melody occurs later in the second group (mm. 51-52), just after the rhythm of the figuration eases from sixteenths into triplets (Example 4-19).



Example 4-19. Fantasy, op. 17, I,
mm. 48-52.

The parallel *cantilena* in mm. 62-63 (Example 4-20) is partly responsible for the supreme sense of intimacy conveyed by the opening measures of the F-major theme. A new set of components emerges at the juncture between motion in triplets and eighth notes.



Example 4-20. Fantasy, op. 17, I,
mm. 60-68.

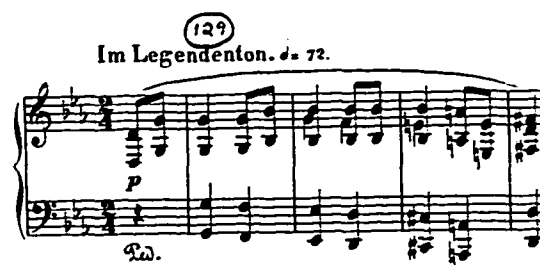
The suggestion of intimacy results both from the freedom of voice leading and the commingling of outer lines in the first few measures of the new key area. The narrow span (initially a minor third) between the voices beginning in m. 61 is widened by degree, becoming an octave in m. 62 (the actual onset of the parallel *cantilena*), just as melodic and accompanimental elements are clearly defined. By m. 64, the lower of the two melodic lines achieves independence; an intimate duet becomes a dialogue of broader scope.

At each of these key moments in the structure, Schumann resorts to the same means of configuring material; he further coordinates these instances of parallel *cantilena* with changes in the rhythm and design of the accompanying figuration. To consider the technique of parallel *cantilena* to be a contextual sign (after Levy) denoting functional change in the Fantasy would be to go too far, however. After all, functional and formal clarity in the sense of strong demarcation of the usual sonata-form segments was decidedly not Schumann's aim here. The parallel voice leading instead enhances the expressive character of the various moments where a new melodic component emerges. Schumann's achievement here is not the creation of a clear, well-signaled sonata design. It is rather that he has managed to give the opening section a single shape. Frankly un-Classical in their overall lessening of tension, the first eighty measures of the Fantasy move seamlessly from music of the most outward to the most inward character.

When the exposition is heard in this way, the *Legendenton* section seems an agent of counterbalance. Its inclusion in the movement speaks to the tradition of fantasy rather than sonata composition: although it borrows material from the exposition, it is tonally closed, and altogether more autonomous than any one section of a traditional sonata-form movement. In its overall textural progression, the *Legendenton* balances the recession of the

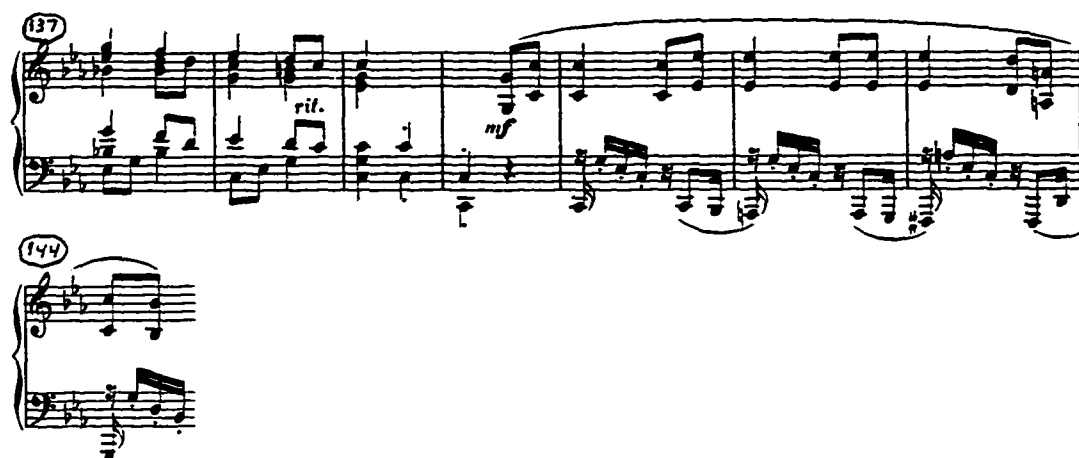
exposition; each succeeding statement of its main theme is texturally richer and more heated emotionally.

An additive textural process evokes what one might call the poetic sense of "*Im Legendenton*" (in the manner or tone of a legend). Just as a legend is shaped by repeated retellings--often successively elaborated--of a particular event or exploit, Schumann enlarges the sonority of the phrase first heard in mm. 129-132 with each successive statement. Thus, what appears (in Example 4-21) initially as



Example 4-21. Fantasy, op. 17, I,
mm. 129-132.

becomes (in Example 4-22)



Example 4-22. Fantasy, op. 17, I,
mm. 137-144.

And, skipping some intermediate stages, it eventually turns
into



Example 4-23. Fantasy, op. 17, I,
mm. 203-212.

The material undergoes a process of layering, of simple addition of sounding components, throughout the section. This is a more elementary way of projecting musical shape via texture than what occurs earlier in the movement, but it is equally effective.

A final point regarding texture and form in this movement pertains to its closing measures. As seen in Example 4-24, Schumann employs an unfigured, chorale-like texture (whose upper voice has considerable melodic independence) at the moment when an unequivocal C major is reached at last.



Example 4-24. Fantasy, op. 17, I,
mm. 295-299.

This is also the moment when a phrase from the final song of Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte* is quoted most explicitly, after being alluded to earlier in the movement. (Needless to say, it is not necessary to be familiar with Beethoven's song to sense that a thematic process is at work whereby a motive heard in different contexts throughout the movement is presented most fully in its final measures.) In its

chordal *cantabile*, the texture here pays an additional homage to Beethoven. Schumann could have lifted the texture directly from the opening of such movements as the *Largo*, *con gran espressione* from Beethoven's Piano Sonata, op. 7, or the *Adagio molto* from his Sonata, op. 10, no. 1. The tremendous effectiveness of this passage is due in part to the way in which its virtually note-against-note writing contrasts with the nearly constant figuration present in earlier textures. Its being coordinated with the tonal goal of the movement, and with the fullest presentation of the thematic reference to Beethoven, likewise contributes to the expressive weight of the passage, and to the effect of its anchoring the movement.

It would be wildly inaccurate to suggest that the formal design of the first movement of the Fantasy is articulated solely by its textural properties. At the same time, this least conventional of Schumann's sonata designs exhibits a more controlled use of texture in shaping large segments of music than any of his previous essays in sonata form. (The occasional commentator who considers this movement to be completely outside the sonata tradition may feel vindicated by this. Others may find it ironic.) The coordination of texture with other musical factors is perhaps best exemplified by the convergence of textural change with the melodic and harmonic events at mm. 296ff., but it can be observed elsewhere as well: in m. 41, the

introduction of a new theme, a new key area (D minor), and a new texture (doubly parallel *cantilena*, without a continuous bass presence) combine in heralding the second group.

***Faschingsschwank aus Wien*, op. 26, Fifth Movement**

Schumann's final first-decade sonata-form movement differs markedly from the sprawling, episodic, and uniquely inspired first movement of the Fantasy. In the *Faschingsschwank* finale, key schemes and sectional functions are thoroughly traditional. Textural modification and change assist in the delineation of a succinct sonata form more clearly in this movement than in any other of Schumann's sonata movements for solo piano.

Each of the exposition's three segments, i.e., first group, bridge passage, and second group, incorporates material of a distinct textural quality. As seen in Example 4-25, the first group is largely figurative; broken-third figures--and later larger intervals--are its principal component. There is no clearly melodic element.



Example 4-25. *Faschingsschwank aus Wien*, op. 26, V, mm. 1-4.

The bridge passage (beginning in m. 25) employs a four-voice, note-against-note texture in its sequential patterns (see Example 4-26); Schumann's quartets of 1842 seem near at hand.

Example 4-26. *Faschingsschwank aus Wien*, op. 26, V, mm. 21-37.

Finally, the long second group is initiated in m. 47 (see Example 4-27) by a song-without-words texture that could have come from Mendelssohn.



Example 4-27. *Faschingsschwank aus Wien*, op. 26, V, mm. 47-54.

The broken chord divided between the hands, the sometime melodic bass, and the top-line *cantilena* together form a texture whose economy of means is reminiscent of such pieces as the following *Lied ohne Worte* by Mendelssohn, op. 38, no. 1 (1837).



Example 4-28. Mendelssohn, *Song without Words*, op. 38, no. 1, mm. 1-4.

Indeed, this movement of the *Faschingsschwank* is scaled down texturally throughout, relative to Schumann's earlier sonata movements. Nowhere is this more evident than later in the second group, where the predominant accompanimental figure is both narrow in compass and free of the figurational dissonances which so often color Schumann's accompaniments (Example 4-29).



Example 4-29. *Faschingsschwank aus Wien*, op. 26, V, mm. 63-74.

Unlike the first movement of the F#-minor Sonata, the development section of the *Faschingsschwank* finale intensifies the textures of the exposition. A transposed first group is reinforced by octave doubling, and a new melodic idea (introduced in mm. 131-135) unfolds in a texture nearly identical to that of the second portion of the second group (Example 4-30).



Example 4-30. *Faschingsschwank aus Wien*, op. 26, V, mm. 130-139.

However, the rate at which the right hand crosses the left is accelerated relative to the earlier music (cf. Example 4-29). Modest though the intensification created by a quickening of registral shift may be, it is precisely the sort of device that helps to distinguish developments from expositions, and just the sort of tool that Schumann learned to use late in his first decade of composition.

Schumann delineates a sonata form here more clearly than might have been either possible for or desirable to him a few years earlier. That subsequent critical opinion by and large has judged Schumann's shorter pieces for piano solo superior to his larger instrumental works should not obscure the advances in compositional technique which this movement represents for Schumann. By the year 1839, he

aspired to the sonata traditions of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven; a June 1839 letter to Clara Wieck reports work on two string quartets that Schumann promised were "as good as Haydn."¹⁷ In its articulation of a readily intelligible sonata form, the finale of *Faschingsschwank* represents an improvement over the sonata movements of mid-decade. If it is short on the flights of fancy that inform so much of Schumann's piano music, this is perhaps best appreciated as necessary to its tighter formal control and to the movement's status as a finale. Brisk and joyous, its single-mindedness is second only to that of the Toccata in the catalogue of Schumann's sonata-form movements for piano solo.

¹⁷Schumann, Clara und Robert, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 2, p. 571. By the year 1841, Schumann's advocacy of the sonata had grown quite pronounced. Whereas in 1839 he had taken the lack of general sonata output with equanimity (cf. *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, vol. I, pp. 394-395), two years later (1841) he wrote that the sonata apparently "has to struggle with three strong enemies--the public, the publishers and composers themselves. The public buys reluctantly, the publishers print reluctantly, and composers of all sorts hold off, perhaps for reasons of their own, from writing such old-fashioned [music]. Nevertheless, those who do should be doubly esteemed." (Emphasis is mine.) *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, vol. II, p. 10: "...hat [diese Gattung] mit drei starken Feinden zu kämpfen--den Publikum, den Verlegern und den Komponisten selbst. Das Publikum kauft schwer, der Verleger druckt schwer, und die Komponisten halten allerhand, vielleicht auch innere Gründe ab, dergleichen Altmodisches zu schreiben. Die es trotzdem tun, sollen uns doppelt wert sein."

Schumann carried the smaller dimensions and more carefully regulated textures found in the last movement of the *Faschingsschwank* into his next period of sonata composition, the years 1841-1842. While he never settled into a formal scheme of the one-size-fits-all variety, it is plain that his sonata structures following Op. 26 owe more to the traditions of Viennese Classicism than those written prior to 1839.

No two of the earlier sonata movements coordinate the parameters of theme, key scheme, sectional design, and textural process in the same way. Opp. 14 and 17, the works from mid-decade, are the most experimental in their blurring of traditional sonata components, their unusual key schemes and highly variable textures. However, each of the remaining movements is novel as well: the Toccata in its dazzling, endless figuration and the first movement of the F#-minor Sonata in the extent to which its driving, monorhythmic first group contrasts with a second theme of great repose. On the whole, there is a tendency toward a broader set of textural possibilities in those movements whose key schemes and/or formal outlines are more innovative (Opp. 8, 11, 14, and especially 17), and toward a narrower set of textural possibilities in those works where the tonal plan and sectional proportions are more traditional (Opp. 7, 22, 26). It was partly through a variety of approaches to textural quality and process that Schumann avoided the

effect--encountered in the sonatas of his lesser contemporaries--of pouring musical ideas into a pre-existing mold.

CHAPTER FIVE: TEXTURE IN THE CHARACTER PIECES

Schumann composed character pieces more prolifically than he did works of any other genre during his first decade of composition. Sixteen opus numbers, all but three of which were published during the years 1830-1839, contain character pieces written by Schumann between 1829 and 1839.¹ The more than one hundred and forty individual pieces in these collections suggest a fluency that Schumann would surpass only in composing songs.

It is hardly coincidental that he was adept at both genres. Indeed, the *Lied* and the character piece are perhaps best understood as belonging to a family of artistic genres very much in vogue during the first few decades of the nineteenth century. The lyric poem, the songs and song cycles which it engendered, and the character piece for solo piano are related in that each is concerned with the concentrated expression of personal feeling and experience. Issues of plot, narrative, and their closest musical equivalents, motivic development and large-scale structure, are secondary.

Schumann was on close terms with all members of this family, as both a man of letters and a fervent admirer of

¹Opp. 32, 99, and 124 were published in 1841, 1852, and 1854, respectively, though all but one of the individual pieces in these collections were composed by the year 1839. Opp. 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, and 28 were published in closer proximity to their time of composition, i.e., in the years 1830-1839.

Schubert. The latter's mastery of the *Lied* and the song cycle was acknowledged in his own lifetime, and some of his solo piano pieces--notably the *Moments Musicaux*, D. 780 (1823-1828)--exhibit the formal scope and expressive focus of the Romantic character piece. In this connection, it is not surprising that some of Schumann's first attempts at composition were *Lieder*; thirteen songs date from 1827-1828.

A modern view of nineteenth-century musical style holds that Schumann's character pieces participated in a music-historical phenomenon one aspect of which was a tendency to forgo the architectural principles and forms of Classicism (i.e., tonal polarization, synthesis, and the sonata allegro), in favor of smaller, schematic forms dominated by throughgoing, individualized "musicopoetic motives," to quote Carl Dahlhaus.² The newer formal tendencies naturally were reflected in the textures of the smaller forms. Typically, the continual presence of a motive meant the continual presence of the texture of which it was a component. This was especially true when the motive constituted a significant portion of the total texture. As a result, texture and its corollary, sonority, became closely allied with character, mood, and expression, or with the 'poetic' in music.

²Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 87.

Composers of course continued to coordinate textural and structural events, as the Viennese Classicists had done. A difference in this respect is that, within any one section of a short piece, the later composers tended to modify a single basic textural type, whereas Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven typically presented ideas in a series of differently-constituted textures. This is a crucial distinction between the two styles.

The present chapter assesses the textural qualities of Schumann's character pieces and addresses the bearing of textural processes on their form and expression. The chapter proposes a taxonomy of Schumann's miniatures according to textural type; the different 'classes' of texture are determined by the quality and configuration of textural components. At first glance, the character pieces seem to encompass a dizzying array of approaches to texture; the chapter shows instead that Schumann treats a few archetypal textures with great flexibility. The taxonomy is presented in detail on pp. 168ff., under the heading "Generalized Textural Types."

An additional, subsidiary aim here is to underline relationships between textural type and expressive effect in Schumann's character pieces. The next segment of the chapter addresses the aesthetic assumptions and formal properties of Schumann's miniatures, and proposes a distinction between two essential expressive attitudes

underlying the pieces. These attitudes are then found, in the segment headed "Generalized Textural Types," to correlate to certain of the textural types.

Aesthetic and Formal Tendencies of Schumann's Character Pieces

In 1835, Schumann wrote in the *Neue Zeitschrift*:

On the whole, when listening to music without text, less cultivated people are inclined to hear only pain or only joy, or melancholy (which lies in between); but [they seem] incapable of finding the finer shades of passion therein, such as in that piece anger, remorse, in this piece ease or pleasure. For this reason, the comprehension of masters such as Beethoven and Franz Schubert, who could translate every life-situation into the language of tone, is also very difficult.³

This passage leaves little doubt that what we typically refer to as the expressive or emotional content of music, and its perception by the listener, were vitally important to Schumann. The capture of an emotional state, or the suggestion of a personal quality or characteristic, is a central concern of his shorter pieces for piano solo. The pieces rarely allude to the physical world by means of tone

³Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, vol. I, p. 112. ("Die weniger gebildeten Menschen sind im ganzen geneigt, aus der Musik ohne Text nur Schmerz oder nur Freude, oder (was mitten inne liegt) Wehmut herauszuhören, die feineren Schattierungen der Leidenschaft aber, als in jenem den Zorn, die Reue, in dieser das Gemächliche, das Wohlbehagen usw. zu finden nicht imstande, daher ihnen auch das Verständnis von Meistern wie Beethoven, Franz Schubert, die jeden Lebenszustand in die Tonsprache übersetzen konnten, so schwer wird.")

painting; they are not primarily descriptive in nature. More abstract, they seem to find musical equivalents or analogies for different emotional states of being.

Two illustrations of this follow; in each case, Schumann provides a verbal clue to the character of the music in the form of an inscription. In Example 5-1, taken from the fourth piece of *Davidsbündlertänze*, the performer is directed to convey a feeling of impatience (*Ungeduldig*).



Example 5-1. *Davidsbündlertänze*, op. 6, no. 4, mm. 1-6.

The pervasive rhythmic displacement of the melodic component and the resultant unease between the hands makes this characterization possible. As the placement of the *sforzandi* in mm. 2, 4, 6ff. indicates, the right hand trails the left hand throughout. The peremptory entrance of the left hand, accomplished before the right hand fully completes its two quarter-note upbeats, forces the right hand to chase its impatient counterpart for the remainder of the piece. The misalignment of textural components is

closely connected to the piece's capacity to suggest impatience.

A different personal quality is suggested by "*Coquette*," from *Carnaval* (Example 5-2). Here, flirtatiousness is translated "into the language of tone" by means of a gesture that, owing to its placement in the texture as a whole, appears initially to be significant. This expectation is frustrated by later, inconsequential repetitions.



Example 5-2. *Carnaval*, op. 9,
"Coquette," mm. 1-11.

Because of its tripling and dynamic emphasis, the two-note motive (g-f, m. 5; c-b^b, m. 9, etc.) leaps out of the regularly patterned texture. Heard in three (and later in four) different registers, the motive fails to justify the prominence accorded it, remaining isolated and unfulfilled. As the piece unfolds, the motive begins to seem impertinent, much as the charms and flattery of a coquettish person ultimately annoy for their lack of both sincerity and progression towards something meaningful.

In each of the above examples, Schumann creates a musical analogue, as it were, to a human characteristic. This is typical of pieces in this genre, whether or not that characteristic is spelled out in a title or performance directive. That Schumann supplied his pieces with titles only after completing them should not imply that his initial ideas were devoid of any reference to emotional or psychological states. It is precisely these states that held tremendous fascination for Schumann during his first decade of composition; to divorce the emotional/psychological from the musical is to misunderstand Schumann at this stage of his career.

The character pieces are typically cast in schematic, sectionalized forms. Ternary or ABA form is the most common, though there are also a great many rounded binary and rondo forms. In most cases, whether the form is binary,

ternary, rondo, or more freely segmented, the reprise(s) of the first ('A') section is a close (if not literal) repetition of the opening--and is virtually always in the same key.

It is therefore paradoxical that these miniatures--which are so often rounded off both tonally and, through the technique of the reprise, thematically--frequently give a sense of being truncated or even incomplete. A few of the character pieces are unresolved harmonically. Among these are "Florestan" from *Carnaval*, which is left sounding a dominant ninth chord, "Aveu" (also from *Carnaval*) and the eleventh piece of *Davidsbündlertänze*, both of which vacillate between a minor key and its relative major, and numbers 4, 5, and 7 of the *Kreisleriana* (in the first version [1838]). It is far more common, however, for a piece simply to end with little preparation, the final tonic arriving only in the last bar of a four-bar phrase. The effect is often one of nominal closure--a loose finality--which leaves open the possibility of continuation through further repetition or the advent of another section. The textures of many of the character pieces contribute to this effect, in that they tend towards consistency at the level of the section; continuous activity is often cut off suddenly.

The simultaneous sense of closure and possible continuation is characteristic of the literary *Fragment* as

pioneered by Friedrich Schlegel. Charles Rosen describes this cornerstone of Romantic letters as "at once complete and torn away from a larger whole," and associates much of Schumann's early music, particularly the cycles of character pieces for piano, with this aesthetic.⁴

It is widely held that the collections which resulted from Schumann's grouping together short, often inconclusively-ended pieces are among his masterworks for the piano. These include the *Davidsbündlertänze*, op. 6, *Carnaval*, op. 9, the *Fantasiestücke*, op. 12, *Kinderszenen*, op. 15, and *Kreisleriana*, op. 16. Membership in a collection afforded the miniature a vastly larger scope of expression, with its opportunities for expressive and motivic interplay between pieces. Juxtapositions of musical idea and character may be more or less extreme; typically, a wide range of character and emotion is suggested by the different pieces in the set.

In general, each section of a character piece adopts one expressive attitude. Single sections normally do not suggest various emotional states, or progress gradually from one state to another.⁵ This tendency is reflected clearly

⁴Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 48-54.

⁵A rare and wonderful exception is the seventeenth, or next-to-last, piece from the *Davidsbündlertänze*, where Schumann effects transitions between passages of different character, key, and texture, all while maintaining constant motion in eighth notes. Along with the preceding and

in the pieces' textural processes: a single type of texture usually prevails throughout a section of music. It seldom happens that musical material is reordered fundamentally during a section, or that entirely new components emerge to define a new texture. On the other hand, new sections normally usher in entirely new textures. The new textures generally enter unprepared; gradual transitions to a new texture--in the form of incremental transformations of existing components--are uncommon. When a transition between sections is present, it virtually always precedes a reprise; rarely does Schumann 'set the stage' for the arrival of material not yet heard. He prefers instead to change texture and character abruptly.

"Fürchtenmachen," from *Kinderszenen*, clearly illustrates these tendencies (see Example 5-3).

following pieces, the seventeenth piece of Op. 6 forms a finale to the set as a whole. The last two pieces of *Carnaval* are similar in this respect. These 'finales' each quote a piece heard earlier in the cycle; however, their finale character stems more from their larger spans than from a recounting or synthesis of previous material. Modulations in texture and emotional tenor fill out the larger structures.

pp

⑨ *Schneller.*
pp

⑮

⑳ *p* *ritard.* *p*

㉓ *Schneller.*
pp

㉙

Example 5-3. *Kinderszenen*, op. 15,
"Fürchtenmachen," complete.

Here, individual sections consist only of one or two phrases; each is texturally consistent within its own boundaries. (In the first section, the inversion of parts in m. 5 modifies the texture, without changing its essence.) The sectional boundaries, marked by double bars, are underscored by significant changes in texture, melodic material, rhythmic activity, tonal direction, and tempo. These changes occur quickly, and are perhaps meant to suggest unease, after the title of the piece, "To Frighten." Only the reprise in m. 29 is prepared; its register, articulation, tonality, and placement of the melody in the top line are anticipated in mm. 27-28.

In furthering a sense of dislocation, the absence of textural common ground between sections helps to convey musical character; the manipulation of texture--i.e., textural process--plays an aesthetic role in the piece. Schumann's avoidance of full cadences at the close of all but two of the sections enhances the sense of unrest: thoughts are not permitted completion. The whole is analogous to a state of mind in which images run through one's consciousness, out of control.

Before examining correlations between texture and expression in his character pieces any further, I would borrow from Schumann to establish a frame of reference for the inquiry. I will follow the example set by Schumann in

the first edition (1838) of the *Davidsbündlertänze*, where he attributes individual pieces either to Florestan, to Eusebius, or--in three cases--to both.

Schumann's adoption of these fictive voices in the very first of his critical writings (the review of Chopin's Variations on "*Là ci darem la mano*," op. 2), and his continued use of them as twin alter egos, is widely known and discussed.⁶ Peter Ostwald has suggested that Schumann modeled these imaginary voices on the twin brothers Walt and Vult, the central characters in Jean Paul's novel, *Flegeljahre* (Awkward Years), which was very dear to Schumann.⁷ An appreciation of these characters, the revelation of whose natures and personalities is the prime motivating force behind much of Jean Paul's sprawling novel, adds a dimension of meaning to Schumann's ascription of pieces to Florestan and Eusebius.

Accepting Ostwald's hypothesis, Florestan corresponds to Vult and Eusebius to Walt. Vult is wise to the world, having run away from home at an early age, and is active, cynical, energetic, both impetuous and savvy. He describes himself as a *Schmollgeist*, or a peevish, sulking spirit.

⁶Two modern accounts are found in Leon Plantinga, *Schumann as Critic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 63-68, and Peter Ostwald, *Schumann: The Inner Voices of a Musical Genius* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985), pp. 77-79.

⁷Ostwald, *Schumann: The Inner Voices of a Musical Genius*, p. 78. Edward Lippman made this point in a 1964 article, "Theory and Practice in Schumann's Aesthetics," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* (1964), pp. 310-345.

Florestan is commonly described as an 'extrovert' in the literature on Schumann; this is an apt description of Vult as well.

Walt, on the other hand, is introverted and naive. One of the funniest scenes in the novel centers around his formal entry into the adult world, as he attempts to ride a horse from his boyhood home to a neighboring town where he will take up an apprenticeship as a notary. Thoughtful, trusting, and gentle, he is more sensitive to those around him than is Vult, who tends to be dismissive of others.

While there are obvious dangers of oversimplification in doing so, I consider Schumann's character pieces ultimately to reflect one or the other of these personality types and world views. To be sure, both the body of pieces and the literary characters are many-faceted and multi-dimensional. My intention is neither to define permanently the character of any one piece nor to create an immutable set of correspondences between Jean Paul's fictional characters and Schumann's music. Instead, I mean to offer a point of reference from which to begin a coming-to-grips with Schumann's extraordinary ability to imbue music with characteristic expression.

A further *caveat*: the essential dichotomy of extroverted versus introverted music must not be confused with music for the public versus the private sphere. Schumann was fully aware of the distinction between music

appropriate for the public and that appropriate for private circles. In March 1838, he wrote the following to Clara Wieck:

You did well not to play my pieces.--that does not suit the public--and then it would be lame, if later I should want to complain that [the public] had not understood something that was not calculated for such applause--not at all so calculated--and exists only for its own sake.⁸

All of Schumann's first-decade piano works--save portions of the *Abegg Variations*, the Toccata, and the Allegro in B minor (all begun by the year 1830)--strike a tone whose avoidance of outward display and attention to inner emotional experience place them in the private sphere. Florestan, though extroverted, is every bit as self-aware as the more introspective Eusebius. His extroversion as expressed in Schumann's piano music is an extroversion of spirit, abstracted from actual human behavior.

The following analyses are drawn from the *Davidsbündlertänze*, *Carnaval*, *Kreisleriana*, *Humoreske*, and *Novelletten*, works which find Schumann at a far remove from the virtuosic *stile brillante*. I have chosen a minimum of two pieces as emblematic of each generalized textural type.

⁸Clara and Robert Schumann, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 1, pp. 126-127. "Du hast wohl gethan, [dass] meine Stücke nicht zu spielen.--das passt nicht für Publicum--und dann wär es lahm [von mir], wenn ich mich später dann beklagen wollte, es hätte etwas nicht verstanden, was für solchen Beifall nicht berechnet, wie es überhaupt nicht berechnet und nur um seiner selbst willen da ist."

The analyses of single pieces address issues of textural quality and process; correlations between texture and musical character are observed both within individual pieces and at the level of the three sub-genres.

Generalized Textural Types

1. Dance Textures

Pieces in the first sub-genre display dance textures, i.e., textures in which a dance rhythm is present. In dance-like music for the piano, this rhythm is often an accompanimental component, typically consigned to the left hand. Overwhelmingly in Schumann's case, the dance rhythm is that of the waltz, beloved of his as well as one or two previous generations.

Many of Schumann's character pieces bear the imprint of waltz music, which he knew first-hand: the waltz's tremendous popularity in the major European cities during the first three decades of the nineteenth century rendered it impossible to avoid. Waltz-related activities appeared in the prose of the day: the "*Larventanz*" episode at the end of Jean Paul's *Flegeljahre* made a deep impression on Schumann.⁹ Perhaps most importantly, Schumann was familiar with the waltz cycles for solo piano of Hummel, Weber, and Schubert.

⁹Lippman, "Theory and Practice in Schumann's Aesthetics," pp. 314-320.

Hummel's *Tänze für die Apollo-Säle* (1808) are considered the first cycle of waltzes for solo piano intended as concert rather than purely as dance music.¹⁰ Weber's *Aufforderung zum Tanz* (1819), also concert music, is a cycle of four large, highly sectionalized waltzes, knit together by close tonal relationships, much repetition of material, and programmatic inscriptions (which outline a courtship). Schubert's sets--published throughout the years 1815-1827--lack the programmatic element found in Weber, and were indeed intended for dancing.¹¹ The twelve to thirty-six individual dances which make up Schubert's sets are generally related to one another by identity of key, or through third or fifth relationships; they eschew virtuosity and tend toward a genteel *Biedermeier* character.

The waltzes of all three composers display strongly patterned textures, with the traditional waltz rhythm generally assigned to the left hand, and the right hand taking on either a melodic or figural role. The following waltz by Schubert (Example 5-4) typifies the

¹⁰Friedrich Blume, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, s.v. "Walzer," p. 229.

¹¹Franz Schubert, *Sämtliche Tänze für Klavier*, ed. Alexander Weinmann, 2 vols. (Vienna: Wiener Urtext Edition, 1973), vol. 1, pp. XIII: "Franz Schubert's relationship to dance music was undoubtedly intimate....It is well known that, when among friends, Schubert never had to be coaxed to play for dancing...we have every reason to assume that he gave full play to his imagination, drawing on the vast resources of his art of improvisation. If one or another theme happened to please himself or his friends, he seems to have written it down later."

consistency of texture which results from a strict division of function between the hands.



Example 5-4. Schubert, Waltz, D. 365, no. 6 (complete).

(Reprinted from Schubert, *Waltzes and German Dances*. Edited from the autographs and first editions by Alexander Weinmann. Fingering by Hans Kann. Copyright 1973 by Wiener Urtext Edition. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission of European American Music Distributors Corporation, sole U.S. and Canadian agent for Wiener Urtext Edition.)

Schumann's waltz-inspired pieces were decidedly not intended for the dance hall; indeed, he rarely identifies them explicitly as waltzes. They are sprinkled throughout his collections of character pieces, but are concentrated in

the *Papillons*, op. 2 (1829-1831), the *Davidsbündlertänze* (1834-1836), and in *Carnaval* (1834-1835). Of these cycles, *Papillons* most clearly resembles a Schubert cycle in its dimensions.

In general, Schumann treated the waltz with greater freedom than his predecessors. While the textures of a few of his dance-like pieces resemble waltz-textures in Schubert and Weber, others liberate the left hand from an oom-pah-pah pattern and erase the strict division of function between hands. (The scherzo movements of some of Schubert's piano sonatas--notably the third movement of the Sonata in A major, D. 959--scatter waltz components as well, foreshadowing the freer treatment of waltz textures found in Schumann.) In order to gain an appreciation of Schumann's handling of texture throughout this sub-genre, let us imagine a continuum extending from the strict maintenance of traditional waltz components to a less literal treatment. The latter end of such a continuum would include pieces which borrow from the waltz tradition, but which bear scant resemblance to what one might hear a dance band play. The breadth of this continuum is a testament to Schumann's resourceful handling of texture in the dance-like sub-genre.

At the near end of the continuum lies the sixteenth piece of *Carnaval*, "*Valse allemande*," quoted in full in Example 5-5. The title ("German waltz") distinguishes the

piece from the slower, French-style waltz, of which "*Valse noble*" (heard earlier in the set) is representative.



Example 5-5. *Carnaval*, op. 9, "*Valse allemande*" (complete).

The waltz rhythm is set in the left hand; the right hand assumes a melodic function throughout. These two textural components could not be defined more clearly. Only once are they disturbed: in m. 21, the change to a fully chordal texture brings sudden closure.

The waltz is replayed as a Da Capo after the "Paganini" episode which immediately follows it, and as such, it constitutes the outer parts of an ABA scheme whose 'B'

section (the "Paganini" episode) is unusually imposing. At the same time, subtle modifications in texture--in conjunction with melodic and harmonic design--help to articulate a rounded binary form, A/BA, within the waltz itself.

Each section of the waltz's A/BA scheme consists of eight measures. The two 'A' sections (mm. 1-8 and mm. 17-24) begin identically from the standpoint of texture, but close very differently. The first 'A' phrase accumulates sonority in its final four measures by reinterpreting the right-hand figure as consisting of two components versus one, and by expanding its registral reach (with the help of the pedal). It finds therein a textural equivalent to the Classical technique of increased rhythmic activity leading to a cadence. This gradual modification in texture is altogether dispensed with in the phrase beginning m. 17, which changes suddenly to sharply articulated six-note chords in the corresponding measures (mm. 21-24). This mid-phrase departure from the well-controlled waltz texture is atypical, yet integrated into the piece owing to its evocation of m. 9 through the shared motive of a quarter plus four repeated eighths.

The initial left-hand setting of the waltz rhythm is modified in the phrase beginning m. 9, although the pattern remains entirely waltz-like. The more rounded accompanimental pattern in mm. 9-12 counteracts the new,

detached melodic figure which enters in m. 9 on e^{b3}. Three factors conspire to modify the texture in this 'B' section: the gradual descent of the melodic line, the elimination in m. 12 of that line's octave reinforcement, and the registral reduction of the waltz rhythm beginning in m. 13. This modification, i.e., the gradual contraction of register and concomitant thinning of textural components, is coordinated with the parameters of articulation and dynamic scale to give the phrase a single, wedge-like shape. The steadily falling line and receding sonority in mm. 9-16 create a decidedly un-Classical phrase shape: one that begins with its high point. The graduated, recessive textual process itself could readily occur in a Classical context, of course. Typically Romantic is the placement of this phrase in the structure: the return of the following 'A' phrase is prepared by a dissolution of energy; the return to tonic harmony is not a dramatic event.

The suppressed excitement (*Molto vivace, pianissimo*) and slight awkwardness of the initial melodic motif suggest an Eusebian utterance; the exuberant *forte* in m. 9 finds him taking a dance step or two with greater confidence. However, Eusebius is incapable of an affront such as the outburst in mm. 21-24. Florestan's unlikely intrusion into an Eusebius-piece demands a new texture; the chords do not so much round off the piece as bring it to a standstill.

The clear setting-out and maintenance of waltz components in the "*Valse allemande*" place it at the near end of a textural continuum of Schumann's waltz-inspired pieces. At the far end of this continuum lies the first of the *Davidsbündlertänze*. With a texture as free as any in Schumann's dance-like pieces, the first of Op. 6 is altogether more fluid and dynamic than the "*Valse allemande*." A close examination of its textural qualities and processes proves rewarding: Schumann's manipulations of material within the confines of a veiled dance texture are responsible in no small measure for the elusive, elastic quality of the piece. Example 5-6 quotes the entire dance.

Lebhaft. $J = 160.$
Molto v. C. W.

6

13 ritard. Im Tempo.

20 pp

37 *Immer lebendiger*

39 *p*

40 *p*

47 *p*

54 *p*

60 *Im Tempo.*
ritard. *pp*

67 *p*

Example 5-6. *Davidsbündlertänze*, op. 6,
no. 1 (complete).

Florestan borrows a motif from Clara Wieck to open the piece. Eusebius continues, recharacterizing the opening motto: the dotted-figure upbeat is transformed into a *legato*, chromatically decorated arpeggio. Both versions of the upbeat commence with the same perfect fifth, G-d. The two-note motif (b-a in m. 1, becoming b¹-a¹ in mm. 6-7), originally two quarter notes, is augmented rhythmically, albeit in an asymmetrical manner. There is, however, a larger metric symmetry at work: the upbeat, which took the space of a single quarter at the beginning, is expanded threefold in mm. 5-6ff., now taking the space of three quarters. The two-note motive also takes three times as long beginning in mm. 6-7 ff., though instead of three beats plus three beats, the former quarters now last two and four beats respectively. The skewing of this simple figure lends a rhythmic imbalance to the phrase.

Together, the upbeat and the two-note motif form the principal melodic material in the piece. Atypically for a dance piece, this material is divided between the two hands; melodic activity is present in all sounding registers. The absence of a clearly defined melody and accompaniment is an essential quality of the piece, realized texturally through the combination of a pianistically conceived figure (left-hand arpeggio) with a melodic motif (right-hand two-note groups).

Another idiosyncratic feature of the piece is that the waltz rhythm is not strictly present. It is intimated by the left-hand staccato chords on beats one and two of mm. 7, 9, 11, and 13. These chords could initiate the familiar pattern, but are distracted by the melodic business at hand, and so stop short of explicitly setting forth a waltz rhythm. The piece only alludes to the conventions of the waltz; this is striking in light of its placement as the first in an avowed set of dances. A texture both allusive and elusive challenges the listener to meet the composer in a subjective realm, where the shadow of a dance becomes a dance. Schumann was entirely at home with this subjectivity during his first decade of composition.

The left-hand chords are of interest polyphonically as well. They support a downward chromatic motion, d-c#-c-B, above the stationary G in mm. 5-9; this chromatic line runs more or less parallel to the descending two-note figures in the right hand. In an article on Bach and Romantic polyphony, Carl Dahlhaus describes similar voice leading as "concealed counterpoint" (*"verborgener Kontrapunkt"*). He traces this sort of linear, chromatic motion of an inner voice in an arpeggiated or chordal context back to Bach.¹² Voice leading such as this demands careful tonal control of the pianist: the parallel voice must be heard, yet remain

¹²Carl Dahlhaus, "Bach und der romantische Kontrapunkt," pp. 16-17.

subordinate to the right-hand motives. When a later variation of mm. 6-9 appears in mm. 26-29, a more 'harmonic' treatment of essentially the same sonorities engenders a texture more neatly divided into melodic and accompanimental components. The more chordal left-hand setting dilutes the effect of the descending chromatic line.

Schumann indicates a division of the piece into seven sections by means of double bars. All but the first of these sections begin with a melodic arpeggio in one hand or the other; each new section brings a reconfiguration of the textural components, taking its cue from the placement (in left or right hand) and direction (ascending or descending) of the arpeggio.

The richest configuration of components begins in m. 42. This strain opens as though repeating the music of m. 6; however, a new top voice enters in m. 43 to create an imitative duet based on the descending, two-note melodic motive. The greater melodic density in the right hand during mm. 43-52 reduces the melodic presence of the left-hand arpeggio, which begins to sound more purely accompanimental in these measures. The right-hand duet is not strictly notated as such, i.e., separate stems are not given for each of the treble voices. Still, the impression of one voice reaching over another sequentially is undeniably present. Composers for the keyboard of all eras have enjoyed the freedom to modify an existing texture by

adding or dropping a component line. However, the possibilities inherent in textural processes such as these must have particularly attracted Schumann, who was deeply concerned with the poetic in music, and whose notion of the poetic involved suggestion, concealment, and revelation only to the sensitive few.¹³ The momentary projection of lines or voices previously relegated to the background--or previously non-existent--is typical of Schumann's first-decade style.

Around m. 53, the duet effect initiated in m. 43 ceases to be audible. The right hand forgoes polyphonic suggestion for a more direct sonority, reinforced at the octave. At the same time, the pattern of reaching over is foreshortened, occurring every two measures (in mm. 51, 53, 55, and 57) as against the previous four-measure spans (mm. 43 and 47). All of this takes place in the context of a *crescendo*, and creates tension. The new development in the phrase rhythm is coordinated with a simplification of the texture; in Berry's terms, the progressive tendencies of phrase rhythm and dynamics are compensated for by a recessive tendency in the texture.

As outlined above, some of the most distinctive characteristics of the piece are either revealed through or

¹³Carl Dahlhaus and Edward Lippman have further thoughts on polyphony and the poetic in Romantic music. See Dahlhaus, "Bach und der romantische Kontrapunkt," and Lippman, "Theory and Practice in Schumann's Aesthetics."

enhanced by its textural qualities and processes. These include its sectionalized construction, the lack of a clear presentation of melody and accompaniment, and a fluid, mercurial quality which is manifest in a texture which changes configuration often, both adds and drops voices freely, and implies the presence of certain lines rather than expressly putting them forth. Only a trace of a waltz is present, its perception dependent upon the sensitivity of both player and listener.

The waltz as art music counts Schumann as one of its most subtle practitioners. He was extraordinarily resourceful in setting out its components, sometimes revealing them plainly, at other times only alluding to them. His waltz-inspired pieces never have a stock quality about them, owing in part to the variety of answers he found to the question of how to project the dance rhythm. The waltz was a highly versatile vessel of expression for Schumann; the waltz-like texture *per se* did not condition an exclusively Eusebian or Florestanian mode of expression.

The above waltzes are however not entirely typical, in that Florestan appears--albeit briefly--in an otherwise Eusebian context; it is more common for an individual waltz to explore one mode of expression to the exclusion of the other. At the same time, the presence of both expressive attitudes in a single piece is emblematic of the broad range of musical expression encompassed by Schumann's waltzes as a

whole. Unquestionably, his flexible treatment of waltz-inspired textures helps to foster this range of expressive possibilities. Just as we have observed a textural continuum in Schumann's waltzes, there exists an expressive continuum. At one end lies the fiery "Florestan" from *Carnaval*, at the other the concluding C-major waltz of the *Davidsbündlertänze*, where Eusebius dreams as tender a waltz as could be imagined.

2. Étude Textures.

A character piece belongs to the sub-genre of étude-like pieces when a single pianistic figure is a significant, (nearly) thoroughgoing component of its texture. For the purposes of textural analysis, this chapter divorces the étude from its generic expectations of didacticism and virtuosity. This done, it is plain that many of Schumann's character pieces exhibit textures typical of études. In the nineteenth century, the practice of creating a significant portion of a texture by chaining together repetitions of a figure is closely associated with the étude. However, the practice spread to other genres, akin to the way the techniques of sonata form spread, in the later eighteenth century, to the concerto and rondo. In both cases, a compositional procedure crossed a generic boundary.

The eighty-four Studies of J. B. Cramer are prototypical of the nineteenth-century étude. The two

volumes of forty-two apiece appeared in 1804 and 1810, and are concerned with specific technical formulae, most often chained together to create a perpetual motion. The *étude* has deeper roots, however: many of Bach's preludes from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, including the famous C-major Prelude from Book I, are entirely *étude*-like in their thoroughgoing repetition of a single figure.

Schumann's *étude*-like character pieces tend to be Florestanian in expression. The energy, even athleticism required merely to articulate figures such as those in "*Traumes Wirren*" (from the *Fantasiestücke*, op. 12) leaves scant room for the expressions of Eusebius, who is little inclined to sustained physical exertion. There is thus a degree of expressive determinism inherent in *étude*-like textures which is entirely absent from Schumann's waltz-like textures.

On the whole, pianistic figures in these pieces tend to be derived from the breaking apart and arpeggiation of chords rather than from the incorporation of scalar patterns. This is typical of Schumann's piano style in general, as discussed in Chapter Two, and is amply clear in a piece such as the second *Novellette* (Example 5-7).



Example 5-7. *Novellette*, op. 21, no. 8,
mm. 1-4.

Here the right hand breaks a three-note chord using the same formula for measures on end. Melodic function is split between the hands, the thumbs of each tracing parallel, largely stepwise lines. Schumann indicates that these lines are to be heard above the din of the total texture by placing accents on the line played by the left-hand thumb, and staccato dots on that of the right-hand thumb. The two hands together complete the harmonic progression; neither is self-sufficient in this respect. The figuration thus participates fully in the voice-leading structure; neither harmony nor melody is complete without it.

Kreisleriana opens with an étude-like piece of extraordinary vehemence. The piece's formal outline stands as follows: three sections, each twenty-four measures long, constitute an ABA. Each of these sections in turn consists of three phrases of eight measures apiece; the first and last of these eight-measure phrases begin identically. The design is therefore similar to that of the *"Valse*

allemande," "*Paganini*," "*Valse allemande*" (reprise) sequence, in that within each section of the large ABA design lies an A/BA pattern of smaller dimensions.

However, the first piece of *Kreisleriana* differs from "*Valse allemande*" in that a single, distinctive pianistic figure is the primary component of its texture. In the opening section of the piece (mm. 1-24), the figure is confined to the right hand, and assumes an essentially rising shape. Example 5-8 consists of a series of jagged, five-note broken chords preceded by a half-step upbeat.

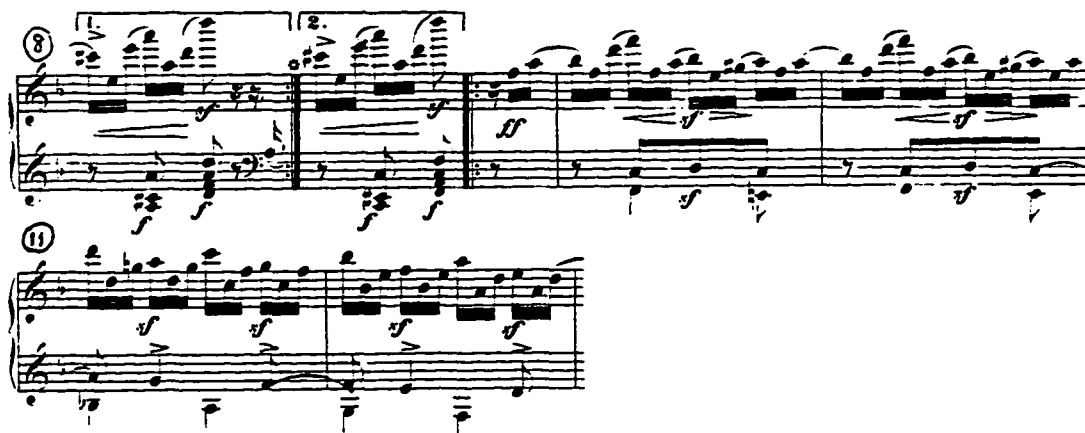


Example 5-8. *Kreisleriana*, op. 16, no. 1, mm. 1-4.

The left hand is set against this tangled figure; its displacement at the eighth note clashes harmonically with the right hand on the two principal beats of each bar. The

extreme rhythmic and harmonic tension between hands helps to define the first eight measures relative to what follows.

The greatly increased diatonicism of the figure in mm. 9-16 contrasts with the chromaticism and dissonance of the opening. A change in the relationship between textural components contributes to this sense as well: a more euphonious relationship is fostered by a less strongly syncopated left hand, and even a parallel *cantilena* effect. This latter effect establishes itself in m. 9 (see Example 5-9), where the upper line of the left hand and the middle fingers of the right hand begin to trace a line which--in the course of four measures--descends a fifth, a-d.



Example 5-9. *Kreisleriana*, op. 16,
no. 1, mm. 8-12.

The fleeting dissonances of the parallel *cantilena*, i.e., those formed between the upper line in the left hand and the accented neighboring tones in the midst of the

right-hand figure (a^2 , g^2 , etc., mm. 11-12, second and fourth eighth notes), serve to color the texture; they do not deny the underlying octave doublings. Schumann may have learned this means of coloring from Beethoven, whose Piano Sonata in E minor, op. 90, has a similar effect in its second movement. With the help of the damper pedal, the note-against-note dissonance in mm. 48ff. of Example 5-10 produces euphony.



Example 5-10. Beethoven, Piano Sonata in E minor, op. 90, II, mm. 45-51.

(Reprinted from Ludwig van Beethoven, *Klaviersonaten* Band II. Copyright 1953 G. Henle Verlag. Used by Permission.)

Schumann puts the euphony in the *Kreisleriana* excerpt to structural use: the more sonorous relationship between hands lends a sense of departure and contrast to mm. 9-16, despite the continued presence of the initial instrumental

figure. This modification in texture is coordinated with a registral process as well. The first eight measures of the piece (hands polarized) ascend steadily, while mm. 9-16 (hands harmonized) slowly descend. Measure 17 brings a renewed ascent, and a return to the more antagonistic relationship between hands.

A change of key and dynamic level are by no means alone in drastically changing the character of the 'B' section, mm. 25-48 (Example 5-11). Schumann modifies the texture in these measures through a masterful transformation of the principal figure.



Example 5-11. *Kreisleriana*, op. 16,
no. 1, mm. 22-28.

Inverted, the figure now essentially falls; this, together with its greater diatonicism and more open position--enabled technically by the participation of the left hand--results in a more transparent sonority. The topmost layer of the

figure traces a melodic line which must not be over-emphasized; the absence of double stems suggests that this line should hover, rather than sing, above the rest of the texture.

Perhaps the subtlest aspect of Schumann's modification of the texture regards the bass line in mm. 25-48. The syncopated, *marcato* octaves of the opening are of course absent, yet a faint echo of them persists: the fifth finger of the left hand articulates a similarly syncopated line at the bottom of the texture.

Schumann uses his material with great subtlety and economy here. Transformations of the right-hand figure, i.e., the expansion and contraction of its constituent intervals, the introduction of different proportions of diatonicism and chromaticism, and the changes in its relationship to the left hand, assist in articulating musical form and character. The texture is *étude*-like throughout, however; the modifications do not begin to alter its essence. As with the best of *études*, the leading figure projects a range of coloristic possibilities.

The twelfth piece of the *Davidsbündlertänze* is less obviously *étude*-like than the first of the *Kreisleriana*. In the *Davidsbündlertänze* excerpt, the principal pianistic figure--which consists of four thirty-second notes--does not create a perpetual motion. At the least, the space of an

eighth note elapses between recurrences. However, the figure nearly saturates the texture in spite of this; the piece therefore belongs among the étude-like of Schumann's character pieces.

In the 1838 edition, Schumann supplied this segment of Op. 6 with an 'F.' for Florestan. As with the first piece of *Kreisleriana*, Schumann modifies expressive potential and articulates an episodic (rather than rounded binary or ternary) form in part by setting a principal figure in different contexts. Example 5-12 quotes the piece in full.

Mit Humor. $\text{♩} = 104.$

6

11

16

20

Example 5-12. *Davidsbündlertänze*, op. 6, no. 12 (complete).

The first four notes in the right hand constitute the leading figure. It is a chord-derived formula in which the thumb plays a quasi-melodic note which is joined to a sliding figure played by fingers 3, 4 and 5. The rate at which the figure is repeated, or the extent to which it is chained together, is one modification to which the figure is subject; another is the way it is set against the left hand.

Schumann coordinates modifications of the figure with a play of register, as follows: in mm. 1-4 and 9-12, the hands move contrariwise, towards the outer reaches of the keyboard. The principal figure initiates a total of four two-measure sub-phrases, and the indicated *Humor* is rough, blunt, and bold: Florestan chortles. In mm. 5-8 and 13-21, the hands also move contrariwise, but in these measures toward the middle register, i.e., toward one another. This, together with a softer dynamic and the more frequent occurrences of the leading figure, suggests a *Humor* which is both lighter and more genial. Florestan seems to scurry about, perhaps preparing a ruse.

Until m. 21, the right-hand figure is largely syncopated: it enters with emphasis against a bass line which is clearly aligned with the prevailing meter (note the placement of the *forte* in mm. 1-4 and 9-12, and the slurring in the *piano* phrases). The syncopated feeling gives the figure a sense of propulsion; the three 'sliding' notes move decidedly forward. At regular intervals of two or four

measures, Schumann brings the right hand into metric conformity with the accompaniment. The final measures (21-24) undo the syncopation permanently: the right-hand thumb loses its direct melodic connection to the succeeding eighth note, and the sliding figure begins to be heard as an afterbeat. The bass component of the texture is eliminated as the two hands join forces in mm. 21-23, moving in the same direction for the first time in the piece. These bars therefore resolve the figure's metric and directional contradictions relative to the left hand, and prepare the ending--which, as a result, is not one of Schumann's abrupt ones. He modifies and realigns the components of his texture to foster a sense of resolution; were it not for the rude *sforzando* on the final downbeat, Florestan would make a rare graceful exit.

These two analyses give a sense of the ways Schumann treated étude-like textures. Though he was perhaps not a master of controlling the progression of multiple textures on a large scale, his étude-like pieces are brilliant for their subtle modifications of textures in which a single pianistic figure predominates. The persistence of a figure for the duration of a piece does not spell monotony; indeed, the opposite is true. Schumann's minute adjustments to a figure in the course of a piece, and even more, the different contexts that he creates for a figure by recasting

the role of the opposite hand, serve both to articulate the small, sectionalized forms typical of his étude-like pieces and to recharacterize and color their material.

As a postscript to the discussion of étude-like textures, let us examine a further sub-category of textural type, one in which chordal writing in both hands saturates a texture in much the same way that chord-derived figuration predominates in other étude-like textures of Schumann. Textures characterized by successions of four-or-more-note chords did not originate with Schumann's generation; indeed, Helmuth Hopf finds Hummel, who avoided this type of texture, to be virtually alone among Schumann's immediate precursors in so doing.¹⁴ As we saw in Chapter Two, Schumann's awareness of the tonal possibilities of chordal textures was conditioned in part by the piano works of Beethoven and Schubert. What Schumann heard as "fullness of voicing" in their piano works is largely accomplished by means of chordal writing in one or both hands.

In Schumann's music, fully chordal textures are typically associated either with *Humor* or with the grandeur and heroic character of the march. Examples of both abound.¹⁵ The opening of the sixth *Novellette* (Example 5-

¹⁴Helmuth Hopf, *Stilistische Voraussetzungen der Klaviermusik Robert Schumanns*, p. 85.

¹⁵In the case of *Humor*, cf. especially numbers three and sixteen of the *Davidsbündlertänze*, and "*Grillen*" ("Whims"), the fourth of the *Fantasiestücke*, op. 12. Among Schumann's

13) displays a high-spirited volatility, its *subito forte* chords seeming to jab at the listener.



Example 5-13. *Novellette*, op. 21, no. 6, mm. 1-8.

At the same time, the stentorian character of the opening of the Fantasy's second movement is closely connected to the sonorities afforded by a chordal texture (see Example 5-14).



Example 5-14. *Fantasy*, op. 17, II, mm. 1-8.

many chordal, march-like pieces are the "*Préambule*" and finale of *Carnaval*, the last of the *Symphonic Etudes*, "*Wichtige Begebenheit*" from *Kinderszenen*, and the first pieces of both the *Novelletten* and the *Nachtstücke*.

It is significant that when Beethoven sought a heroic affect in his solo piano works, he did so rather less pervasively than did Schumann. Chordal textures in Beethoven are certainly less thoroughgoing than in Schumann. In general, Beethoven's treatment of texture was more closely allied with the articulation of dynamic musical structures than with the delineation of musical character. The early Romantics strengthened the connections between instrumental texture, its corollary, instrumental sonority--particularly the sonority of the piano--and musical character. They did this in a such a way that, in their finest and most distinctive works, texture, sonority, and character are interrelated and mutually dependent.

3. Lyric-Piece Textures

I describe pieces in this sub-genre as 'lyric' for lack of a more precise designation. The present connotations of the word differ from those when 'lyric' is used in reference to poetry. A lyric poem is typically brief, highly personalized, and conveys an intense emotion or mood; both lyric poems and songs based thereon may express joyous exuberance, despair, or anything in-between. The expressive range of character pieces in this sub-genre is narrower; I designate as 'lyric' those pieces either in a *cantabile* style--i.e., pieces possessing a textural component of strongly linear, melodic, and songful quality--or those of

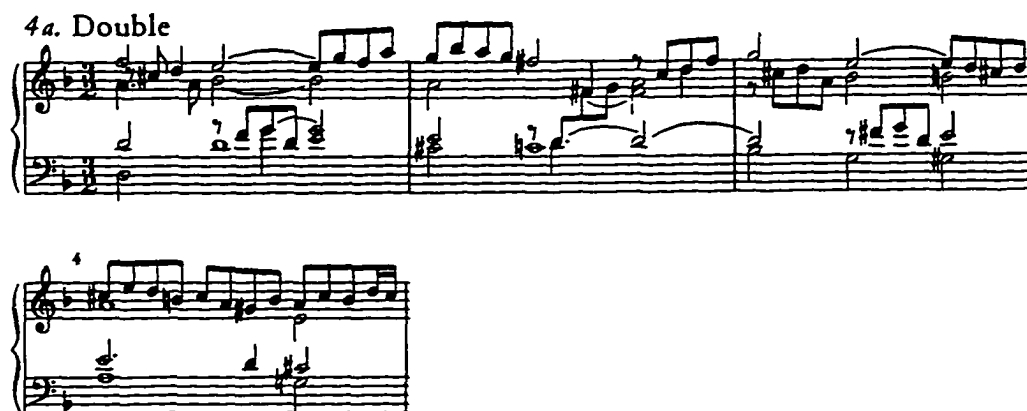
slow to moderate tempo and ruminative character. Schumann wrote many such pieces for solo piano.

This loosely defined sub-genre does not exhibit the consistency of textural feature characteristic of the dance- and étude-like pieces examined above. The boundaries of the lyric sub-genre are determined in part by character, which is overwhelmingly Eusebian, and in part by the reaches of two very different tendencies in the creation of texture.

One such tendency yields a nocturne or song-without-words texture, i.e., one in which a *cantilena*, usually in the right hand, is supported by a patterned, often arpeggiated, accompaniment. This type of texture is central to nineteenth-century piano music from Field to Liszt and beyond. The second tendency produces textures in which the hands of the pianist are more tightly interwoven both registrally and in their respective musical functions; the latter textures tend to be richer contrapuntally than the song-without-words type, as well as subject to near-constant modification in the number, range and function of components. Often, such textures blur the distinction--so central to late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century piano music--between right-hand melody and left-hand accompaniment.

Textures of this latter variety are Schumann's most original contribution to Romantic pianistic style; pieces such as the seventh of the *Davidsbündlertänze* and the middle

section of the third piece of *Kreisleriana* have no real precedent in the literature. Their closest precursors are found in the keyboard works of J.S. Bach. Example 5-15 quotes the *double* of the sarabande from the D-minor English Suite, BWV 811.



Example 5-15. Bach, English Suite no. 6 in D minor, BWV 811, Sarabande, mm. 1-4.

(Copyright 1979 Bärenreiter Verlag.
Reprinted by permission.)

Figuration is distributed between the hands in such a way that the listener is unaware of where one leaves off and the other begins. No break in register is discernible. To the player, this texture feels similar to those textures of Schumann where clear distinctions in the roles played by each hand cannot easily be drawn. Both Bach and Schumann seem to have associated this type of texture with a sense of introspection. (Another well-known example of this in Bach

is the F-major Prelude from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book II.)

The deeply personal tone struck by many of Schumann's 'lyric' pieces of either textural leaning places them at a high point of his art. One of his loveliest song-without-words textures is found in the opening segment of the *Humoreske* (see Example 5-16). Three textural components are set out clearly at the beginning of the piece and remain distinct throughout. These include a top-line melody, a bass line whose melodic presence is variable, and an accompanimental figure of a falling arpeggio, divided between the hands.



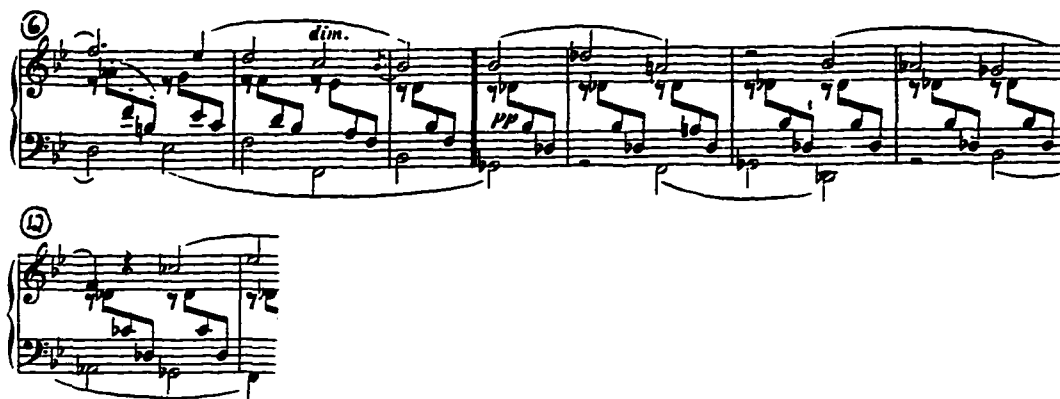
Example 5-16. *Humoreske*, op. 20,
first segment, mm. 1-4.

The magic of this texture lies in Schumann's treatment of the accompanying arpeggio, which lends different hues to what might have been a monochromatic texture. A rough formal outline of the piece is as follows.

A: mm. 1-8, (I).
 B: mm. 9-20, (^bVI, leading to V).
 A: mm. 21-28, (I).
 Coda: mm. 28-36, (I).

Each phase of this formal scheme features a particular balance of textural components. In mm. 1-8 and 21-28 (sampled in Example 5-16), the second note of the accompanying arpeggio shadows the melody. (The arpeggio as a whole of course fills out the harmonies implied by the outer voices.) It falls to the left-hand thumb to trace this parallel line; the shadow, plain enough to the performer, should remain tonally just beneath the level at which a listener might become fully aware of it. In fact, the mere act of reaching for the f[#]¹ and g¹ with the left-hand thumb will probably lend sufficient contour to the line; no deliberate accentuation or emphasis is necessary. A clearer example of Schumann's notion of the poetic possibilities of musical texture could scarcely be found: only a sensitive listener will perceive the parallel, whose substance hints at a supportive presence, a sympathetic spirit, or a hidden union.

The arrival of ^bVI and resultant departure from the opening tonality in m. 9 brings a slight modification in texture: as seen in Example 5-17, the relationship between the outer parts changes. The shorter melodic utterances of the top line are now imitated by the bass line.



Example 5-17. *Humoreske*, op. 20,
first segment, mm. 6-12.

The accompanying figure accommodates this change by becoming more neutral: the consistent shadowing of the top line disappears. Its former echoing of the melody made explicit by the quasi-canonic bass line beginning in m. 9, the accompanying arpeggio is now a canvas on which the melodic lines are painted. Schumann maintains this relationship until the second half of m. 20, where an exquisite doubling of $f\sharp$ alters the prevailing B^b -major triad, recalling the harmony which opened the piece. At this point (mm. 21-22), the textural components resume their initial balance.

The final shift in relations between the three components occurs in conjunction with the *Etwas lebhafter* indication in m. 28 (Example 5-18).



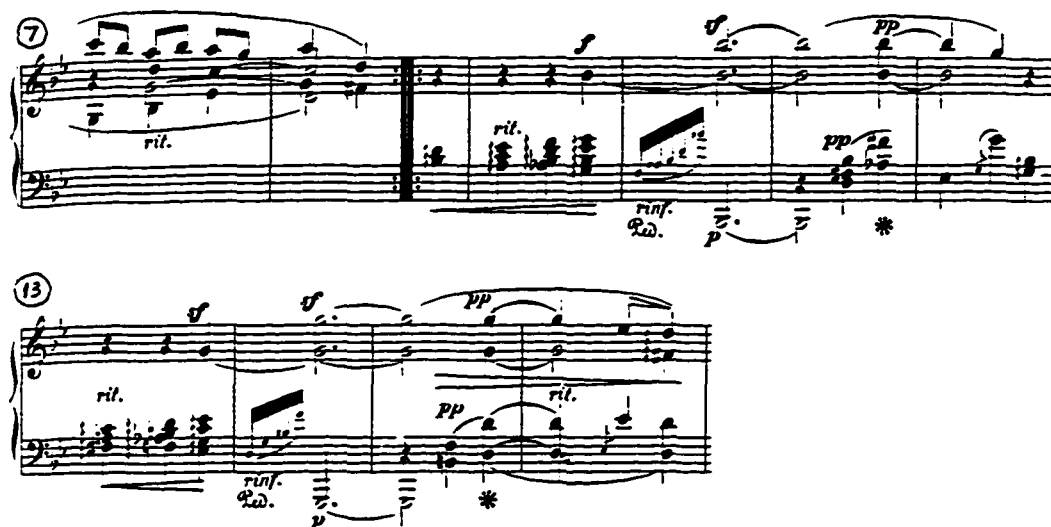
Example 5-18. *Humoreske*, op. 20,
first segment, mm. 25-36.

Here the bass line attains its greatest degree of independence from the top line; its one-measure gestures create a relationship less reciprocal with the longer phrases of the right hand than at any previous point in the piece. Of course, the (mostly) chromatic ascent from B^b to f, heard on successive downbeats in mm. 28-34, traces a longer line at a different level of perception. It is precisely the segmentation of this line which sets it in relief, however, and which imparts the sole sense of urgency felt in this otherwise calm, rarefied setting.

The piece closes with a pedal effect of which Schumann was a pioneer: harmonic change articulated by the withdrawal of sonority previously held in the pedal. A release of the pedal at the downbeat of m. 36 leaves the final tonic sounding, while only one tone of the B^b-major

triad is newly struck at the moment of the pedal's release. While not notated with the customary indication of Ped. and *, the ties from the previous measure suggest that Schumann intended a special effect here.

An explicitly notated pedal effect plays a larger, phrase-structural role in another of Schumann's pieces in the lyric sub-genre: the seventh of the *Davidsbündlertänze*, which exemplifies the second of Schumann's two approaches to the configuration of material in this sub-genre. In mm. 10-12 and again in mm. 14-16 of Example 5-19, the notated pedaling enhances the effect of expansion and contraction of register and sonority which is an organizational feature of the piece.



Example 5-19. *Davidsbündlertänze*, op. 6, no. 7, mm. 7-16.

The pedaled sonority in m. 10 obviously represents a striking opening-up of the texture relative to the beginning of the phrase (the upbeat to m. 9): the distance between outer parts grows from the span of a major third to the space of four octaves. The *pianissimo* chords on the second and third beats of m. 11 help to fill in this registral space, and should sound as overtones, brought into sympathetic vibration with the prevailing harmony (the $f\sharp$ notwithstanding). The contraction of register which occurs along with the change of pedal on the downbeat of m. 12 both completes the arch-shape of the phrase, and resolves the entire sonority held previously in the pedal.

The opening, shown in Example 5-20, creates a similar if less extraordinary effect.



Example 5-20. *Davidsbündlertänze*, op. 6, no. 7, mm. 1-8.

The expansion and contraction is accomplished by adding lines and filling out the sonority, then subtracting lines and thinning the sonority. The texture waxes and wanes; phrases arch and flatten. Schumann is not concerned with strict part writing; indeed, the number of and relations between parts change from one moment to the next. For instance, after the uncertain doubling of the top line in m. 5 (with upbeat), the b^b -a in m. 6 (i.e., the peak of the phrase) is tripled. The strangeness of this voicing is further enhanced by the b^b 's forming a diminished fourth with the lowest voice. The effect is poignant, not least for its subsequent quick return to a more normal configuration of parts in mm. 7-8. The momentary tripling of the b^b has no justification on contrapuntal grounds; it is perhaps best understood as a tonal analogy to a pang of emotion.

Schumann employs a more traditional doubling of parts in the 'B' section of the piece (Example 5-21), where a reinforcement of the right-hand line at the lower octave--decidedly not a parallel *cantilena*--leads clearly to the height of a phrase in m. 42.



Example 5-21. *Davidsbündlertänze*, op. 6, no. 7, mm. 34-44.

Octave reinforcement was commonplace in piano writing of the time, but it occurs here in a context which is anything but commonplace. As in the first section of the piece, Schumann avoids a strong division of function between the two hands; together they create a web-like texture, no strand of which is obviously subordinate to any other. This is most readily apparent in mm. 25-29 (see Example 5-22), the opening of the section, where it would be wrong to speak of melody and accompaniment.



Example 5-22. *Davidsbündlertänze*, op. 6, no. 7, mm. 25-28.

The left hand, which seems at first as though it could be accompanimental, introduces what becomes the chief melodic motive of the section (compare the many filled-in ascending and descending thirds in Example 5-21); the right hand comments freely upon it. The effect is quizzical: which hand leads? What is melodic? Adding to the uncertainty of textural make-up is a metric dislocation: where is the downbeat? A key to the aesthetic of the piece is that there are no definite answers to these questions. The entrance of the right hand at the end of m. 26 is particularly enigmatic, seeming to interrupt, answer, and continue the left-hand line all at once. The music seems improvised, the texture entirely free to develop as it wishes.

Schumann has not set out a particular configuration of parts to be tinkered with throughout, as he did in the first segment of the *Humoreske*. Instead, he follows his fancy, enlarging, reducing, and shifting the focus of the texture at will. It is not difficult to imagine him discovering

such a texture while seated at the piano, with hands on the keyboard and foot on the pedal. The latter is indispensable to the intermingling and blending of lines which characterize this and similar textures in Schumann's lyric character pieces, in which a lack of clarity in the setting-out of parts is crucial to the ruminative, highly sensitive moods of the pieces.

Most of Schumann's lyric character pieces exhibit one of the two textural approaches outlined above. The first approach, which I have called nocturne- or song-without-words-like--and is represented here by the opening segment of the *Humoreske*--is by far the more common of the two. Schumann imbued his nocturne-like textures with great beauty and variety; the subtleties of the present example are by no means unique. The second, freer approach to texture, represented here by the seventh of the *Davidsbündlertänze*, is Schumann's most idiosyncratic contribution to Romantic pianistic style. Pieces with similar textural characteristics surface occasionally, and always memorably, in his output. Other examples include "*Träumerei*" from *Kinderszenen* (see Example 2-5, p. 34), the opening section of the second piece of *Kreisleriana*, the eighth piece (1838) in the collection *Bunte Blätter*, op. 99 (published in 1852), and the final segment ("*Zum Beschluss*") of the *Arabeske*, op. 18. The lack in these textures of clear divisions in left-

hand/right-hand function was unusual for the time; an overwhelming majority of short, lyric pieces for solo piano adopted the textural paradigm established by the operatic *cavatina*, that of melody with figural accompaniment. One facet of Schumann's originality lay in his discovery of a freer, contrapuntally denser alternative to this type of texture.

Juxtaposition of Textural Types

It remains to note that Schumann's multi-sectional character pieces often contain a plurality of textural types. Juxtapositions of dissimilar textures are a principal means of creating contrast in pieces of three or more distinct sections. For instance, the third piece from *Kreisleriana* contrasts a texture of the freer lyric variety with étude-like outer sections; the fourth *Novellette* employs a dance-like texture in its principal sections, while sections of contrast display both song-without-words and étude-like textures.

Most of Schumann's longer character pieces are organized in this manner; new, contrasting material generates textures of a fundamentally different type. The *Blumenstück*, op. 19, is a notable exception to this: it is a multi-sectional piece which maintains lyric song-without-words textures throughout. Schumann seeks no relief in the domain of the dance or étude. This is not to say that the

opening texture *per se* continues unvaried from beginning to end; significant modifications do occur. Without question, however, the consistency of character in the work results in large measure from the constant presence of a single type of texture.

"*Reconnaissance*" from *Carnaval* mixes textural sub-genres in a most suggestive way. The formal design is once again ABA. However, Schumann uses similar melodic material throughout; as a result, the 'B' section contrasts with the outer sections primarily in the parameters of tonality and texture.

The texture of the 'A' section is a hybrid of dance and étude textures (see Example 5-23).

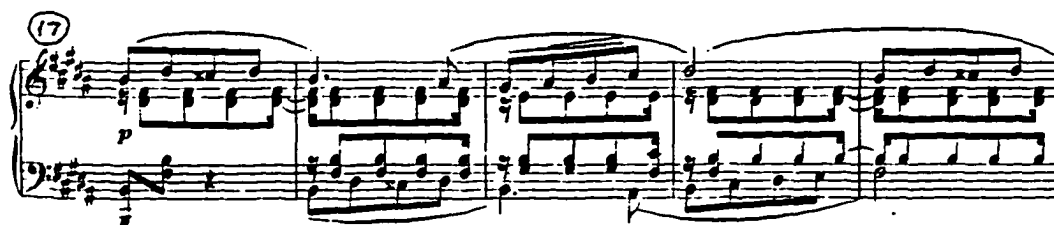


Example 5-23. *Carnaval*, op. 9,
"Reconnaissance," mm. 1-4.

The left hand plays a duple-meter dance rhythm throughout, while the right hand busies itself with an étude-like figure. The presence of the repeated notes imparts a mechanized, clock-like quality to the right-hand pattern.

The two hands maintain considerable distance both functionally and registrally; treble and bass are distinct, all is formal and correct.

The song-without-words texture of the 'B' section (Example 5-24) features melodic material in both its highest and lowest strata.



Example 5-24. *Carnaval*, op. 9,
"Reconnaissance," mm. 17-21.

The canonic duet is accompanied by after-beat chords sounded by the two hands together. The hands share registral space (i.e., the middle of the keyboard) as well as melodic material; their proximity is felt most clearly in the close position of the accompanying chords. It is unusual when the span from bottom to top of these chords exceeds an octave. A denser, more sumptuous sonority than that of the opening is the inevitable consequence.

Schumann's use of the same melody as a principal component of two textures so dissimilar in musical effect underscores the contribution to musical expression potentially made by textural quality. To be sure, the

contrasting effect of the 'B' section is not achieved solely by the change in texture. Both the change of key and the more chromatic leading of the melodic voices enhance the effect. The new texture provides a different backdrop, as it were, against which musical events unfold.

It was Schumann's practice to provide music of departure and contrast in a multi-section character piece. Rarely does he use identical melodic material in a contrasting section. What motivated him to do so in "*Reconnaissance*"? The title itself, 'Recognition,' may offer a clue to his intentions. The first texture suggests an attitude of dispassionate formality, while the second treats the melodic idea more warmly, and in a two-part setting. The piece is part of a cycle of dances whose inscriptions refer to persons both actual and imagined, among them some of Schumann's dearest friends. For this reason, a frankly personal interpretation of the textural implications is perhaps appropriate. One such interpretation takes a masked dance as its point of departure. The first section transports the listener to a ballroom. Among dancers present is a pair of lovers who, masked along with the rest of the guests, remain aloof to one another. The second section, with its twin melodic strands, finds these lovers--having recognized one another--exchanging intimacies. The notion of a love duet, once brought to mind, is virtually impossible to dispel here.

The return to the opening tonality and texture suggests that the lovers have rejoined the dancing, now feigning anonymity.¹⁶

Whether or not Schumann held a similar view of the piece is beside the point. The present concern is hearing form and expression in Schumann's music through the agency of texture and its manipulations. The ideal listener brings the full power of his imagination to bear on this music, allowing extramusical scenarios to come to mind--indeed, even welcoming them. In this, the listener would not differ from Schumann in the 1830s, whose writings for the *Neue Zeitschrift* show him to be eager to discuss what we call the affective or expressive, as well as the technical, properties of a musical work. Music's less tangible qualities were of central concern to Schumann. It is inconceivable that he would frown upon any sincere attempt to hear expressive substance in his own or others' compositions.

I believe that a thorough understanding of the textures of Schumann's character pieces can aid such an attempt. Textural quality and process play a crucial role both in the articulation of form in the character pieces and in determining the nature of their expression. The fact that formal characteristics are easier to identify than

¹⁶I am indebted to Carl Schachter, who outlined this possible scenario for me during a piano lesson.

expressive qualities should not discourage the puzzling out of these less tangible features. Needless to say, textural quality and process do not act alone in defining form and expression in a musical work. Both concepts are by definition connected with the melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and other features of a work. It has not been the aim of this chapter to suggest any sort of functional or aesthetic autonomy for the parameter of texture. I have not hesitated in the analyses to point out ways in which textural qualities and processes are determined by, coordinated with, or dependent upon other aspects of a composition.

My intention, rather, has been to show that texture in Schumann's character pieces can be 'decoded' in ways both general and specific. The proposed taxonomy decodes textures in a general sense. That is, it classifies textures according to the essential qualities of their components. The taxonomy suggests that Schumann's character pieces are strongly imprinted with textural features borrowed from the genres of waltz, étude, and nocturne/song without words. The decoding of texture in a specific sense is done in the analyses of individual pieces. There, particular textural qualities and processes are identified which carry clear formal and/or expressive significance for the piece under discussion. Taken together, general and specific assessments of texture in the character pieces

point to the importance of texture as a stylistic trait,
formal agent, and expressive catalyst.

CONCLUSION

Schumann interweaves musical material to create distinctive textures throughout his first decade of composition. For their time, his textures are richly polyphonic, and, being of their time, their polyphony is solidly anchored in a many-tiered harmonic structure. Schumann demonstrates a marked preference for the middle and lower registers of the piano, and tends to situate the hands in close proximity to one another. This results in much sharing between hands of accompanimental material, and enables Schumann's beloved pedal to act as fully as possible on the sounding material. Virtuosity and instrumental fluency arise from the activation--through figuration and the rhythmic displacement of textural components--of abundant voice-leading structures, rather than from the contemporary norm of register-traversing scalar and arpeggiated patterns.

Schumann was most prolific in composing short forms during these years, but he turned his attention to the genres of variation and sonata as well. The *Abegg Variations* and the *Symphonic Études* are his two most ambitious variation sets. In each, he departs from the early-nineteenth-century norm of organizing a set according to increased rhythmic activity and technical difficulty from one variation to the next. The two sets offer a succession of textures whose qualitative variety equals that found in

one of Schumann's character-piece cycles. A look at textural process reveals a more consistent application of the model presented by the theme of the *Symphonic Études* than is the case with the *Abegg* set.

No two of Schumann's first-decade sonata-form movements are alike from the standpoint of textural quality and (especially) process. As such, textures in these movements testify to the variety of approaches to sonata form taken by Schumann in the years 1831-1839 (there are no published sonata forms dating from 1829-1830). The Toccata and the first movement of the Fantasy are the most striking texturally. (Both are informed by sonata-allegro conventions, despite their titles.) The Toccata reveals Schumann's genius for modifying a texture dominated by perpetual motion: within narrow confines, he aligns texture and formal outline via a masterful control of the thoroughgoing figuration. The Fantasy is altogether greater in scope; the breadth of its principal sections--achieved partly through long-term textural recessions (exposition and recapitulation) and progressions (*Im Legendenton*)--exceeds that of any other of Schumann's first-decade works. The first movement of the F#-minor Sonata is problematic, in that large portions of the exposition--and above all the development--lack significant textural progression or recession. Less-than-dynamic relations between textures at different phases of the movement lend it an overlong

feeling. Schumann's final sonata form of the decade, the last movement of the *Faschingsschwank aus Wien*, op. 26, points the way to his sonata-form efforts of the 1840s in its clarity and concision.

The short piano piece, together with the *Lied*, offers Schumann the opportunity to evoke psychological states with the greatest immediacy. A texture and sonority enters fully formed, then vanishes; an impression is recorded. The longer character pieces are invariably sectionalized; sudden changes of texture at sectional boundaries are the norm. Qualitatively, character-piece textures tend to be derived from the waltz, the *étude*, and the nocturne, with an additional category marked by a particularly close intertwining of textural components. An effective performance of a Schumann character piece creates a mood with the opening sonority, surrenders itself utterly to that mood, and then releases at the close, only to begin the process anew with the next piece in the cycle.

The present study treats texture as an aspect of musical style; its analyses are therefore (partial) style analyses. The analysis of texture differs from a Schenkerian approach in its fundamentals: textural analysis seeks to illuminate the variegated surfaces of a work, while Schenkerian analysis attempts to see through those surfaces to the common tonal backgrounds of works whose surfaces may differ radically. The two approaches are similar, however,

in that each seeks to rationalize a structure (the composition) brought into existence by an ineffable mixture of conscious planning and intuition. The validity of neither approach lies in a claim that composers think in terms similar to the analyst's. Instead, voice-leading and textural analyses are valid to the extent that they elucidate musical effect for the benefit of the listener who is open to the enjoyment of music on many levels.

Of course, the chief responsibility for the elucidation of musical effect falls to the performer. In its attention to the aspects of a score that a performer confronts directly--the layout and function of its component parts--a textural analysis can help the performer in the complex task of projecting musical effect. A conscious awareness of textural quality and process in Schumann's first-decade piano works alerts the performer to the wealth of Schumann's polyphony, the various uses to which he puts figuration, the links between texture, sonority, and musical character, and the marking of form through textural modification and change. Ultimately, the analysis of texture can help the performer to find a unique 'Schumann sound' through Schumann's "own way of shaping notes."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Books

- Abraham, Gerald. *Schumann; A Symposium*. London: Oxford University Press, 1952.
- Berry, Wallace. *Structural Functions in Music*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice Hall, 1976.
- Boetticher, Wolfgang. *Robert Schumann's Klavierwerke. Neue biographische und textkritische Untersuchungen. Teil I, Op. 1-6*. Wilhelmshaven: Heinrichshofen, 1981.
- , *Robert Schumann's Klavierwerke. Neue biographische und textkritische Untersuchungen. Teil II, Op. 7-13*. Wilhelmshaven: Heinrichshofen, 1984.
- Dahlhaus, Carl. *Nineteenth Century Music*. Translated by J. Bradford Robinson. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.
- Dale, Kathleen. *Nineteenth Century Piano Music*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1954.
- Ehrlich, Cyril. *The Piano: A History*. 2nd (revised) ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
- Eismann, Georg, ed. *Robert Schumann: Ein Quellenwerk über sein Leben und Schaffen*. Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1956.
- Franks, A.H. *Social Dance: A Short History*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963.
- Hallmark, Rufus. *The Genesis of Schumann's Dichterliebe*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979.
- Harding, Rosamond E. M. *The Pianoforte: Its History Traced to the Great Exhibition of 1851*. 2nd (revised) ed. Surrey: Gresham Books, 1978.
- Marston, Nicholas. *Schumann: Fantasie Op. 17*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Niecks, Frederick. *Robert Schumann*. London: J.M. Dent, 1925.
- Plantinga, Leon B. *Schumann as Critic*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967.

- Puchelt, Gerhard. *Verlorene Klänge: Studien zur Deutschen Klaviermusik 1830-1880*. Berlin-Lichterfeld: Lienau, 1969.
- Reich, Nancy. *Clara Schumann*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Rosen, Charles. *The Classical Style*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1972.
- . *The Romantic Generation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- . *Sonata Forms*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1988.
- Samson, Jim. *The Music of Chopin*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985.
- Schumann, Clara and Robert. *Briefwechsel*. Complete ed., 2 vols. Edited by Eva Weissweiler. Basel: Strömfeld, 1984, 1987.
- Schumann, Robert. *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*. 5th ed., 2 vols. Edited by Martin Kreisig. Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1914.
- . *Tagebücher*. Edited by Georg Eismann (vol. 1) and Gerd Nauhaus (vols. 2-3). 3 vols. Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1971.
- Schwarz, Werner. *Robert Schumann und die Variation*. Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1932.
- Walker, Alan, ed. *Robert Schumann: The Man and his Music*. London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1972.
- Wieck, Friedrich. *Piano and Song* (translation of *Clavier und Gesang*). Translated by Mary P. Nichols. Orig. pub., Boston: Lockwood, Brooks, 1875. Reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1982.
- Wolff, Konrad. *Masters of the Keyboard*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983.

B. Articles

- Bessler, Heinrich. "Spielfiguren in der Instrumentalmusik." *Deutsche Jahrbuch der Musikwissenschaft für 1956*: 12-38.

- Blume, Friedrich. "Bach in the Romantic Era." *The Musical Quarterly* 50/2 (July 1964): 290-306.
- Brendel, Franz. "Robert Schumann mit Rücksicht auf Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, und die Entwicklung der modernen Tonkunst überhaupt." *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 22 (1845): 63-67, 81-83, 89-92, 113-115, 121-123, 145-147, 149-150.
- Chechlińska, Zofia. "The Nocturnes and Studies: Selected Problems of Piano Texture." In *Chopin Studies*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 143-165.
- Collet, Robert. "Studies, Preludes, and Impromptus." In *The Chopin Companion*, ed. by Alan Walker. New York: W. W. Norton, 1973.
- Dadelsen, Georg von. "Robert Schumann und die Musik Bachs." *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 14/1 (1957): 46-59.
- Dahlhaus, Carl. "Bach und der romantische Kontrapunkt." *Musica* 43/1 (1989): 10-22.
- Dale, Kathleen. "The Piano Music." In *Schumann: A Symposium*, ed. Gerald Abraham. London: Oxford University Press, 1952.
- Daverio, John. "Schumann's 'Im Legendenton' and Friedrich Schlegel's *Arabeske*." *19th Century Music* 11/2 (Fall 1987): 150-163.
- Demus, Jörg. "Einige Gedanken zur Klaviermusik Robert Schumanns." *Musikerziehung* 14 (September 1960): 22-23.
- Demus, Jörg, and Phillips, P. "Playing Schumann's Piano." *Early Music Gazette* (October 1980): 1-2.
- Dickinson, A. E. F. "The Chamber Music." In *Schumann: A Symposium*, ed. Gerald Abraham. London: Oxford University Press, 1952.
- Hahn, Kurt. "Schumann's Klavierstil und die Klaviere seiner Zeit." In *Robert Schumann: Aus Anlass seines 100. Todestages*, ed. Hans Joachim Moser, Eberhard Rebling. Leipzig: VEB Breitkopf und Härtel, 1956: 120-128.
- Kramer, Lawrence. "The Mirror of Tonality: Transitional Features of Nineteenth Century Harmony." *19th Century Music* 4/3 (Spring 1981): 191-208.

- Langley, Robin. "John Field and the Genesis of a Style." *Musical Times* (January 1982): 92-99.
- Leipold, Eugen. "Vom Melodieklang in Schumanns Klaviermusik; über die klangliche Bedeutung paralleler Kantilenen." *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 117 (July-August 1956): 415-418.
- Lester, Joel. "Robert Schumann and Sonata Forms." *19th Century Music* 18/3 (Spring 1995): 189-210.
- Levy, Janet M. "Texture as a Sign in Classic and Early Romantic Music." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 35/3 (Fall 1982): 482-531.
- Lippman, Edward. "Theory and Practice in Schumann's Aesthetics." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 17/3 (1964): 310-345.
- Neighbour, Oliver. "Brahms and Schumann: Two Opus Nines and Beyond." *19th Century Music* 7/3 (April 1984): 266-270.
- Newcomb, Anthony. "Schumann and Late Eighteenth-Century Narrative Strategies." *19th Century Music* 11 (1987): 164-174.
- . "Schumann and the Marketplace: From Butterflies to *Hausmusik*." In *Nineteenth Century Piano Music*, ed. R. Larry Todd (New York: Schirmer Books, 1990), pp. 258-315.
- Nordgren, Quentin R. "A Measure of Textural Patterns and Strengths." *Journal of Music Theory* 4/1 (April 1960): 19-31.
- Plantinga, Leon B. "Schumann's View of 'Romantic'." *The Musical Quarterly* 52/2 (April 1966): 221-232.
- . "The Piano and the Nineteenth Century." In *Nineteenth Century Piano Music*, ed. R. Larry Todd (New York: Schirmer Books, 1990), pp. 1-15.
- Primmer, Brian. "Unity and Ensemble: Contrasting Ideals in Romantic Music." *19th Century Music* 6/2 (Fall 1982): 97-140.
- Roesner, Linda Correll. "Schumann's 'Parallel' Forms." *19th Century Music* 14/3 (Spring 1991): 265-278.
- . "Schumann's Revisions in the First Movement of the Piano Sonata in G minor, op. 22." *19th Century Music* 1/2

(1977): 97-109.

Schachter, Carl. "Rhythm and Linear Analysis: Aspects of Meter." In *The Music Forum*, Vol. VI/I, ed. Felix Salzer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), pp. 1-59.

Sutcliffe, W. Dean. "Haydn's Piano Trio Textures." *Music Analysis* 6/3 (October 1987): 319-332.

Temperley, Nicholas. "John Field and the First Nocturne." *Music and Letters* 56/3-4 (July-October 1975): 335-340.

Turchin, Barbara. "Schumann's Conversion to Vocal Music: A Reconsideration." *The Musical Quarterly* 67/3 (July 1981): 392-404.

C. Dissertations

Gagné, David. "Performance Medium as a Compositional Determinant: A Study of Selected Works in Three Genres by Mozart." Ph.D. Dissertation, The City University of New York, 1988.

Gertler, Wolfgang. "Robert Schumann in seinen frühen Klavierwerken." Ph.D. Dissertation, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1931. Published Leipzig, 1931.

Goldenberg, R. "Der Klaviersatz bei Schumann." Dissertation, Universität Wien, 1930.

Hopf, Helmut. "Stilistische Voraussetzungen der Klaviermusik Robert Schumanns." Inaugural Dissertation, Universität Göttingen, 1957.

Leipold, Eugen. "Die romantische Polyphonie in der Klaviermusik Robert Schumanns." Ph.D. Dissertation, Universität Erlangen, 1954.

McNab, Duncan Robert. "A Study of Classic and Romantic Elements in the Piano Works of Mozart and Schumann." D.M.A. Dissertation, University of Southern California, 1961.

Trimmer, Maud Alice. "Texture and Sonata Form in the Late String Chamber Music of Haydn and Mozart." Ph.D. Dissertation, The City University of New York, 1981.