ROBERT SCHUMANN'S *GENOVEVA* AND THE CREATION OF A GERMAN OPERA

by

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Abstract

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History tells us that Wagner, in the 1840s, was attempting to put his stamp on a modern German operatic tradition. Schumann too, in his only opera *Genoveva* (1847–49), was preoccupied with many similar issues. His aim was not so much to create something completely new, but something truly German, devoid of all foreign influence. His criticisms and correspondence attest to just how important the idea of a national German musical identity was to him. While a complete break with the surrounding musical world was unrealistic, Schumann did incorporate significant elements that can be identified as incontrovertibly progressive: the use of an almost continuous arioso style of vocal writing; the eschewal of conventional recitative and coloratura; a rudimentary leitmotif technique; and an almost unbroken through composition, where each number flows effortlessly into the next.

Schumann's text was an amalgam of several different literary sources (chiefly those of Ludwig Tieck and Friedrich Hebbel), but the finished libretto was very much dictated by Schumann's own literary predilections. Contemporary criticism largely read Schumann's characters as flat and undifferentiated but, in actuality, the individuation of his characters and their resonance in the tension of the Schumann household have left us with a stronger view of the composer's personality. In particular, closer attention to Schumann's treatment of characterization, in his libretto as well as in the details of the composition, supply evidence of the need for a critical reexamination of the work.

PREFACE

Robert Schumann was in many ways a fragile man, yet despite his *Innigkeit* (inwardness) and frequent self-doubt, the legacy he left behind is prodigious. Indeed, it is not difficult to believe that he retained many things with an eye to posterity. Schumann completed an abundant compositional output, and there is so much music and so many related items remaining that in-depth research continues to uncover new materials today, some 200 years after his birth. In fact, the past two decades are quite possibly the most productive research period since his death.

Genoveva, Op. 81, is a late, great work of Schumann's. It is his only completed opera. After searching for a subject for over a decade and a half, Schumann settled on *Genoveva* literally overnight in 1847. His opera is one of the few worthy operas composed in Germany during the time of Wagner's earliest successful music dramas. *Genoveva* is very much due reappraisal a national opera, composed as it was during the tumultuous period in the early nineteenth century when national identities were eagerly sought.

At the present time a plethora of Schumann research is underway. The most ambitious project is the *Neue Gesamtausgabe* being issued by the *Robert–Schumann–Forschungsstelle* in Düsseldorf. Begun in 1986, some eighteen edited volumes of a projected fifty-three have been published (the most recent of lieder), including Margit L. McCorkle's monumental *Thematisch-bibliographisches*

Werkverzeichnis, which appeared in 2003. At this point in time, no plan has been made for an edition of *Genoveva.*

Various types of Schumann projects abound. There are copious new books, articles, chronicle-like undertakings and recordings. Quite apart from these projects, a major research feat has revealed that there are at least 20,000 extant letters relating to Robert and Clara. This is an extraordinary number, by any account. It would seem that Schumann retained and even indexed the vast majority of letters he received. The c. 2,400 written by Schumann himself have been entered into a database, the index located in Zwickau, the Saxon town of Schumann's birth.[1]

There have been two recent live performances of Schumann's opera *Genoveva* in the early 21st century. One was in Annandale–on–Hudson, New York, in July/August 2006 (conducted by Leon Botstein), the other in Zurich in February 2008 (conducted by Nikolaus Harnoncourt). The direction of the two performances was very different, but this points to the fact that Schumann's opera has the potential for varied schemes of interpretation.

Genoveva has also returned to a place of popularity within the repertoire of conductors and orchestras. We find four quite recent compact discs and one DVD currently in the marketplace. The earliest recording, conducted by Gerd Albrecht (Orfeo) comes from 1993 and, for some unaccountable reason, is abridged. The next, chronologically, is the Kurt Masur recording from 1994 (EMI). Nikolaus Harnoncourt conducted a rather idiosyncratic disc in 1997

[1] The only prior selection of Schumann's letters that has been available is the two-volume publication edited by F. Gustav Jansen: *Robert Schumann's Briefe: Neue Folge,* 2nd Edition (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1904).

(Teldec), and then also produced a DVD (of the Zurich performance) in 2008 (Teldec). Finally, we have Thomas Lang's recording, which became available only in 2009 (Acousence). Each performance has its merits, but to my mind the Masur recording is superior.

Apart from the new musical edition, the letters project, and the growing discography on *Genoveva*, there is also a recent resurgence of biographical literature. In 1997, the very impressive *Robert Schumann: Herald of a "New Poetic Age"* discusses both the composer's life and the works. There is a sizeable section on the dramatic repertoire, particularly *Genoveva*. The author, John Daverio, is the only biographer who places great emphasis on the music within the context of Schumann's life.

Chronologically, the next book is Eric Jensen's *Schumann* (2005), a biography with only a spartan mention of the music. John Worthen's *Robert Schumann: Life and Death of a Musician* (2007) is lively and discusses in considerable depth Schumann's life and its complexities, but again makes scant mention of the Schumann repertoire other than its place in the larger scheme of Schumann's life.

One of the newer pieces of research (2003) and an important contribution to the Schumann literature in general and *Genoveva* is particular is Hansjörg Ewert's *Anspruch und Wirkung: Studien zur Entstehung der Oper* Genoveva *von Robert Schumann*. Ewert takes up many issues regarding the creation of *Genoveva,* among which are Schumann's work habits, explanation of the opera, related works and sketch studies.

Thus, we have a picture of the considerable, varied, and significant work that has been going on in Schumann studies over the last decade and a half. Since its rather dismal beginning at the first performance in Leipzig on June 25, 1850, *Genoveva* has most certainly begun to receive the reevaluation and acclaim it so richly deserves. Schumann's *Genoveva* is flourishing and promises to continue doing so for years to come.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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For her generous help with early nineteenth-century German I wish to express my gratitude to Ortrud Varenholz. Tim Schumacher also helped in this endeavor. The staff of three German institutions have given generous aid by answering my queries: the Robert–Schumann–Forschungsstelle, Düsseldorf; the Robert–Schumann–Haus, Zwickau; and the Heinrich–Heine–Institut, Düsseldorf.

To Professor Allan Atlas and Professor Ora Frishberg Saloman my thanks for coming to the dissertation quite late yet reading my work very carefully.

My greatest debt goes to the late Professor Siegmund Levarie. He was my most loyal supporter throughout the dissertation process and a true friend as well. To him I dedicate this work.

Robert Schumann's *Genoveva* and the Creation of a German Opera

MUSICAL EXAMPLES

CHAPTER I

SCHUMANN'S SEARCH FOR AN OPERATIC SUBJECT

On September 1, 1842, Schumann wrote plaintively to one of his literary colleagues, Carl Koßmaly: "Do you know my morning and evening artist's prayer? It is for *German opera* . . ."[1]

Even as a young man Schumann was intent upon writing an opera. Throughout the course of his creative life, he persistently selected and evaluated the musical and dramatic potential of a wide array of subjects, his critical judgement informed by his natural literary instincts and his early experiences as the son of a writer, translator and publisher. Yet despite his oft-expressed interest in operatic composition and his consideration of almost fifty subjects, the only opera he ever saw through to completion was *Genoveva* (1847–48).

One aspect that is notable about the many texts Schumann evaluated and rejected is their inherent literary merit. By and large, he sought materials with elevated poetic qualities, at times with seeming disregard for their dramatic potential or suitability as pieces of musical theater. John Daverio reflects on Aristotle's categories for the elements of drama:

> To put it in Aristotelian terms: Whereas most opera composers are chiefly concerned with the *mythos* (plot) of a potential text and the possibilities it holds out for *opsis* (spectacle), Schumann placed equal weight on *lexis* (verbal texture or diction), and *dianoia* (thought).[2]

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[1] "Wissen Sie mein Morgen- und abendliches Künstlergebet? *Deutsche Oper* heißt es . . . " *Robert Schumanns Briefe. Neue Folge,* ed. F. Gustav Jansen (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1904), p. 220. Italics mine.
[2] John Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a "New Poetic Age"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 331.

An example of this fidelity to the specific Aristotelian categories mentioned by Daverio is found in *The Corsair*, fragments of which constitute the only extant operatic music by Schumann apart from *Genoveva.* What survives consists of only two musical numbers from George Gordon Lord Byron's pirate tale of 1819. Schumann's interest in the subject first took hold in late June of 1844 and flourished in the early weeks of July. Entries in his *Haushaltbuch* from this time refer constantly to *The Corsair*.[3] Schumann went so far as to complete an outline of the scenic/musical treatment of the work,[4] as well as an opening chorus of corsairs and a fragment of an aria for Conrad.[5] As with other characters who inspired Schumann – Manfred, Faust and Golo (the villain in *Genoveva*) – Conrad, a nobleman/pirate, is a brooding misanthrope, although blessed with one redeeming characteristic – a sense of chivalry.

Schumann offered the task of creating a libretto to Anton von Zuccalmaglio (a writer and composer, and one of the contributors to the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*) and to the dramatist Oswald Marbach, both times without success. From the scenario, it would seem that Schumann took matters into his own hands. One can see that he intended to follow Byron's dramatic poem with little alteration, and he "also planned to adopt much of Byron's text (in translation) intact, witness the opening Chorus of Corsairs . . ."[6] This procedure, preserving much of the precise wording of the poetic source, anticipates what

[3] For example, an entry for June 28 reads, "Corsar v. Byron"; one for July 7, "Arbeiten im Corsar" *Corsair*. There are half-a-dozen more, equally brief allusions. See *Robert Schumann Tagebücher: Teil III*, 1837–1847, ed. Gerd Nauhaus (Basel & Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1982) pp. 366–367. [There are in fact 4 Tagebücher: Bd.1 ed. Georg Eismann; Bd. 2 – 4 ed. Gerd Nauhaus. Henceforth they will be abbreviated as *TBI, TBII, etc.*]

[4] The scenario is located at the Robert-Schumann-Haus, Zwickau, Sign. 10497-A3.

[5] The sketches are located at the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek-Berlin, Mus. Ms. 11.

[6] Daverio, *Robert Schumann,* p.331

will be seen later in *Genoveva,* as well as in his two other dramatic works from the late 1840s and early 1850s, *Manfred* and the *Scenen aus Goethes Faust.*

Long before *The Corsair*, indeed as early as 1831, Schumann was immersed in the world of the composer and keen critic E.T.A. Hoffmann. On June 5, in his *Leipziger Lebensbuch,* Schumann contemplated writing a "poetic biography" of Hoffmann and reworking his *Bergwerke zu Falun* as an opera libretto.[7] He also gave serious consideration to what seemed a promising subject, a tragic tale by Hoffmann. In a *Tagebuch* entry for October 13 of that year he writes: "Regarding plans for the future, Doge and Dogaressa stands in first place . . ."[8] But it was not until almost nine years later, in early 1840, that Schumann actually attempted to work the subject into material feasible for an operatic setting.

At this later date, during his *Liederjahr,* Schumann was completely preoccupied for several months with the story of *Doge und Dogaressa*, from Part 2 of E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Serapionsbrüder* (1819). A number of letters written to Clara between March and May attest to just how genuine were his musical intentions regarding the subject; he even entreats his wife to borrow a copy of Hoffmann's book from the library so that she can offer him her opinion of it.

In choosing *Doge und Dogaressa,* a number of considerations came into play. One of these, his deep concern with the underlying character of a text and its subject, is evident in the letters to Clara from this time: in one he commends the original Hoffmann tale for its

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[7] Daverio, "Schumann, Robert," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 22, p. 763. This was also the year of the birth of the Davidsbund and its cast of characters.

[8] "An Plänen für die Zukunft steht oben an: Doge u. Dogaresse . . ." *Robert Schumann TBI,* ed. Georg Eismann (Basel & Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1971), p. 372.

consistently "noble and natural tone,"[9] yet in another he laments that he misses "a German, deep element" in the story.[10]

Schumann sketched out a plan for the opera libretto himself [11] and asked his friend and colleague on the *NZfM*, Julius Becker, to turn it into verse for him. At first all went well, and Schumann wrote to Clara on May 10, 1840:

> The opera has taken up all my morning. The first sketch is finished, and I burn to begin, though I am nearly overwhelmed by the vastness of my material. It is very tragic at this point, though without bloodshed or the usual stage effects. I am quite enthusiastic – as I'm sure you will be – over the characters which I am to recast in a musical mould.[12]

Despite a great deal of work on Schumann's part, however, the project was eventually discarded. The reasons for this are not completely clear, but Schumann did mention to Clara more than once that he had encountered obstacles in the text, and at a late stage he wrote to her: "Indeed, sometimes I begin to despair about how I am to master this great, tragic subject."[13] A significant factor must have been Julius Becker's libretto. The poor quality of the versification was unpalatable to Schumann. Again he wrote to Clara: "To compose to weak words is loathsome to me."[14] One other issue inhibiting Schumann's progress on the opera was undoubtedly his editorial responsibilities on the *NZfM*. He wrote

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[9] "An der Novelle gefällt mir das durchweg Noble und Natürliche." Wilhelm Josef von Wasielewski, *Robert Schumann: Eine Biographie*, ed. Waldemar von Wasielewski (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1906), 4th ed., p. 379.
[10] " . . . ein deutsches, tiefes Element . . ." *Ibid.*
[11] The autograph is located at the Robert-Schumann-Haus, Zwickau.
[12] *The Letters of Robert Schumann,* ed. Karl Storck; trans. Hannah Bryant (New York: Arno Press, 1979), p. 226.
[13] "Freilich, manchmal fange ich an, zu verzweifeln, wie ich diesen großen tragischen Stoff bewältigen soll." Wasielewski, *Robert Schumann,* p. 380.
[14] "Schwache Worte zu komponieren ist mir ein Greuel," *Ibid.*

to his friend Keferstein on February 19, 1840, "I am seriously thinking of an opera, which would be easy if I could only get rid of my editorial duties."[15]

The presence or absence of a "German, deep element" in a potential opera subject was an important consideration for Schumann. The metaphor of "depth" was a highly significant topos of early German Romantic aesthetics. Schumann would have encountered the idea in detail in Hoffmann's *Die Bergwerke zu Falun,* which itself built on Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen.* Both tales deal with the descent of young men (Elis and Heinrich, respectively) into the depths of mines in search of knowledge and a more profound access to their own inner beings and to the sublime. As Holly Watkins expresses it, "Preoccupied as Hoffmann was with braving the depths, *The Mines of Falun* can be read as a disquieting allegory of the analytical impulse."[16] Schumann, too, sought the depth he felt was necessary as the essential basis of German musical nationalism.

Schumann was devoted to both the noble and the *völkisch* patriotism and emerging nationalism of his native land. One of his most deep-seated aspirations was to write an opera in a distinctive style that was truly German (as opposed to the then internationally popular Italian *bel canto* and French *grand opéra* styles), relieved of all foreign influence and free from what he considered the abuses and sensationalism of his day. In fact, Schumann encouraged "Germanness" in composition in general, as witnessed often in his reviews in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*.

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[15] Wilhelm Josef von Wasielewski, *Life of Robert Schumann*, A. L. Alger, trans. (Boston: O. Ditson,1871), p. 128.

[16] For an extensive overview of the origins and amplification of the depth metaphor, see Holly Watkins, "From the Mine to the Shrine: The Critical Origins of Musical Depth," *19th-Century Music,* Vol. xxvii, no. 3 (Spring, 2004), p. 179ff. For further discussion of the widespread Romantic interest in mining and its relation to the depth metaphor, see Theodore Ziolokowski, *German Romanticism and its Institutions* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990); chapter 2, The Mine: Image of the Soul, p. 18ff.

A review from 1842 of Karl Reissiger's grand opera *Adèle de Foix* is telling in its clarity regarding Schumann's viewpoint. His praise for the opera is tepid, at best, but he takes the opportunity to use his editorial position as a forum for dicta representing his nationalistic opinions on operatic composition. The review also has something of a lament about it: " We are so lacking in German opera . . . German composers fail mostly by the intention to please the public. If only one of them produced something original, simple, deeply felt, he will see whether or not he will succeed."[17]

He belabors the point a little:

> Once again: write just once a really original, simple, deep German opera, as if there were no public, but point then to the genuine artist, the genuine education, and we will see whether or not you are better off. It has been said many times, but it was never more needed than now, when the belief of the public in German opera composers has begun to sink lower and lower. Already we see Italian troupes seizing several German stages, and the French can't be far behind! So beware, that they don't take your own territory away from you![18]

We can see that the metaphor of "depth" recurs frequently in various of Schumann's writings, reinforcing his own desire to find it in his quest for a libretto. Depth, as noted, along with such other qualities as hard work and naturalness, was seen as part of the very essence of "Germanness." This was counterposed to the superficial qualities attributed to music from outside the German states. Arno Forchert speaks to this cultural juxtaposition:

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[17] "Wir sind so arm an deutscher Oper . . . Die deutschen Komponisten scheitern meistens an der Absicht, dem Publikum zu wollen. Gebe aber nur einmal einer etwas Eigenes, Einfaches, Tiefinnerliches ganz aus sich heraus, und er soll sehen, ob er nicht mehr erlangt." Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker, 2* vols. ed. Martin Kreisig (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1914), 2 vols., vol. 1, p. 94.

[18] "Noch einmal: gebt nur einmal eine recht originelle, einfache, tiefe, deutsche Oper, schreibt, als gäb' es kein Publikum, aber zeigt den echten Künstler, die echte Bildung, und wir wollen sehen, ob ihr euch dabei nicht besser steht. Vielmal ist das schon gesagt worden, aber nie war es nötiger als jetzt, wo der Glaube des Publikums an deutsche Opernkomponisten immer tiefer und tiefer zu sinken anfängt. Schon sehen wir italienische Truppen sich mehrerer deutschen Bühnen bemächtigen, französische könnten leicht nachfolgen. Also acht gegeben, daß man euch nicht euren eignen Boden unter den Füßen wegzieht!" Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften,* Vol. 1, p. 95.

> Either the German musicians were seen as somehow better at being Italian or French than the Italians or French themselves, or "thoroughness, uprightness, technical solidity and depth of thought as specific values . . . of German music" were compared with "the foreign thoughtlessness, shallowness and cheap showmanship."[19]

In a related discussion of "ideal types" of the German in music, Bernd Sponheuer presents a list of binary opposites which occur in discussion of the first ideal type, that of the specifically German. These opposites revolve around sensuality (Sinnlichkeit) versus intellect (Geist). Examples of such antitheses include melody versus harmony, *galant* versus learned, prosaic versus poetic, civilization versus *Kultur,* and entertainment versus ideas.[20] All of these concepts were part of the lively discussion of the relative merits of different countries' operatic contributions in Schumann's time.

While Schumann's determination and devotion to the cause of German opera may have been particularly passionate, he was nevertheless following in the footsteps of his composer predecessors Spohr and Weber. In his literary partialities, too, he was very much a man of his time. The opera subjects that he considered over the years cover a wide range of the significant and popular literature of the day, a literature that encompassed many contemporary writers as well as the mythology and classics of the past. This was a period when the concept of a "national" style in art – instigated in England by Ossian and Percy and spearheaded in Germany by such eminent writers and folk literature collectors as Herder, Tieck, Körner, Arnim and Brentano, the Schlegel brothers, and the brothers Grimm – was blossoming. Donald Jay Grout observes that, "All this fairy tale, legend, and myth in German romantic opera is national in character, as opposed to the earlier use of Greek

[19] Arno Forchert, "Von Bach zu Mendelssohn: Vortrag bei den Bach-Tagen Berlin 1979," *Bachtage Berlin: Vorträge 1970 bis 1981,* ed. Günther Wagner (Neuhausen-Stuttgart: Hänsler, 1985), p. 211.
[20] Bernd Sponheuer, "Reconstructing Ideal Types of the 'German' in Music," *Music and German National Identity,* ed. Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 44 & 40.

mythology, medieval epic, or Roman history . . . Folk tales, fairy tales, patriotic odes, historical novels and dramas were produced by many authors. Much of this literature was not only national but also popular, that is, 'of the folk.'"[21] Carl Dahlhaus confirms a predilection for the "characteristic" (as opposed to the typical), for folklore and for folk music.[22]

Yet Schumann was not immune to foreign influence, if the quality of the material was high enough. A non-German author whom he found most sympathetic and inspiring was the Spanish dramatist Pedro Calderón de la Barca. On March 25, 1829, Schumann noted in his *Tagebuch,* "Lectüre: Calderon's d. Leben ein Traum [Life is a Dream]."[23] In 1841, Schumann considered two of Calderón's dramas – *La Puente de Mantible* (The Bridge of Mantible) and *El Magico prodigioso* (The Marvellous Magician) – for operatic treatment. In his *Tagebuch* in July 1841, Schumann noted that he had been thinking of Calderón, in whom he could perhaps find something for himself; he had already begun work on *The Bridge of Mantible.* Only a scenario survives.[24]

Perhaps the non-German dramatist for whom Schumann held the greatest reverence was William Shakespeare. Schumann read Shakespeare in the widely renowned "classical" translations of August Wilhelm Schlegel and Ludwig Tieck. Shakespeare played an important part in Schumann's life and thought but inspired, surprisingly, only a few musical works.

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[21] Donald Jay Grout, *A Short History of Opera* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 378.
[22] Carl Dahlhaus, *19th-Century Music*, J. Bradford Robinson, trans. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 69, 128.
[23] *Robert Schumann, TBI,* p. 183.
[24] *Robert Schumann,TBII,* p. 177. "Ich hab' an Calderon gedacht, in dem sich vielleicht etwas für mich findet, und bereits mit der 'Brücke von Mantible' angefangen." Schumann's scenario for a text is located at the Robert-Schumann-Haus, Sign. 10494–A3.

Shakespeare did, however, play a significant role in a large literary undertaking of Schumann's. He hoped to publish a collection of poetic writings about music – *Dichtergarten für Musik* – and Shakespeare appears as a large part of this endeavor. Schumann applied himself assiduously to the *Dichtergarten* throughout the late spring of 1852, and his systematic reading of the playwright's works occupied him for a year.[25] Ultimately, his "Poet's Garden," while remaining incomplete, contained citations from the extraordinary number of thirty Shakespeare dramas.[26]

In terms of opera, Shakespeare's influence was spread throughout Schumann's creative life. In December 1830, probably under the influence of his trip to Italy and the works he had heard at Milan's La Scala, Schumann planned to write a *große Oper* after Shakespeare's *Hamlet.* He wrote of the project with great enthusiasm, but all that was to come of it is a minute sketch for a *Sinfonia per il Hamlet,* perhaps intended as the overture to this *Hamlet* opera.[27] Once again, we see Schumann drawn to a complex, troubled protagonist.

In June of 1846, Schumann approached Robert Reinick (the poet with whom he would work on *Genoveva* shortly thereafter) with a plan for an opera on Shakespeare's *The Tempest.*[28] Reinick was responsive and wrote to his friend Franz Kugler on June 6, 1846, about Schumann's operatic aspirations:

Schumann proposes material from Moore, Byron, and similar authors. I

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[25] A clear example of the degree of his involvement with Shakespeare's works is found in the *Haushaltbücher* (volumes 3 and 4 of the *Tagebücher*). The entries for April 1852 include the plays King John, King Richard II, King Henry IV, Henry VI, All's Well That Ends Well, Othello, King Lear, Much Ado About Nothing. *TBII,* pp. 590 – 591.

[26] Gerd Nauhaus, "Schumanns *Lektürebüchlein*" in *Robert Schumann und die Dichter: Ein Musiker als Leser,* ed. Bernhard R. Appel and Inge Hermstrüwer (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1991), p. 87, fn.54.

[27] Susanne Hoy-Draheim, "Robert Schumanns Opernpläne nach Dramen von William Shakespeare," in *Robert Schumann und die Dichter,* p. 100.

[28] Mendelssohn had considered the same subject for an opera topic some time before.

> look over a good many things with this in mind, but to me they are too little physical; in a word, not dramatic stuff. Because of that Schumann wishes very much that I rework The Tempest of Shakespeare. It would also provide a beautiful opera . . .[29]

The project came to nothing – Schumann's ill health may have been a factor – although he was also always nervous when attempting to set great poetry to music. Indeed, while referring to a performance of his *Paradies und die Peri* in a letter to Franz Brendel of July 3, 1848, Schumann noted, ". . . the most moving thing to me was to hear from many that the music made the poetry clear for the first time. Because, I often feared the reproach: 'Why write music to such perfect poetry?"[30]

Finally, on May 31, 1850, just a few weeks before the first performance of *Genoveva,* Schumann notes in his *Haushaltbuch,* "Sketches to 'Romeo and Juliet.'"[31] A scenario for the opera exists on a double-sided leaf at the Robert-Schumann-Haus;[32] it gives no hint of the time of origin, but it is most probably tied in with the notice in the *Haushaltbuch.*

Schumann's plot outline changes very little from the original play. The two most notable differences are a consolidation of Acts III and IV into one (making for four acts in all, as with *Genoveva*), and the alteration of the means of Romeo's demise—he stabs

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[29] "Schumann schlug Stoffe aus Moore, Byron and dergleichen vor; ich las manches zu dem Zweck durch, aber es war mir alles wenig körperlich, mit einem Wort keinem dramatischen Stoffe. Darauf wünschte Schumann sehr, daß ich den Sturm von Shakespeare zur Oper umarbeite. Es würde auch eine schöne Oper geben . . ." Johannes Höffner ed., *Aus Biedermeiertagen. Breife Robert Reinick und seiner Freunde* (Bielefeld: Droste Verlag, 1910), p. 148.

[30] ". . . am liebsten war mir von Vielen zu hören, daß ihnen die Musik die Dichtung erst recht klat gemacht. Denn oft fürchtete ich den Vorwurf: 'wozu Musik zu solch vollendeter Poesie?'" *Robert Schumanns Briefe, Neue Folge,* p. 245.

[31] "Skizzen zu 'Romeo u. Julie.'" *TBIV,* p. 528.

[32] Robert-Schumann-Haus, Zwickau, Sign. 4871/IIIb, 2, 1.

himself (a more dramatic gesture) rather than taking poison. Otherwise, Schumann is very faithful to the original source.[33]

Why, once again, and especially after the joy he had experienced in creating *Genoveva,* did the project come to nothing? Hoy-Draheim confirms the letter regarding the *Peri* cited above:

> Apparently Schumann harbored such great reverence for Shakespeare that he could not venture to change more of the original than was absolutely necessary for revision into an opera libretto. He had scruples about misappropriating an author's admirable dramaturgy, because he saw it as a classic of world literature. In the end, this was most likely the reason why the opera *Romeo and Juliet* stayed as a sketch.[34]

Militating against this premise is the fact that in many of his operatic projects, Schumann showed no hesitation in appropriating and adapting works of great literary merit. *Genoveva,* to choose the most relevant example, conflates the dramas of two highly-esteemed German men of letters, Ludwig Tieck and Friedrich Hebbel. Was Shakespeare held in yet higher esteem? The conclusion would appear to be positive, as is evident in the minor changes Schumann made to the dramatic thrust of the play. This is reinforced in Schumann's letter to Carl Wettig cited below. Here Schumann actually encourages the younger man to take up works of Shakespeare as a possible subject for operatic setting.

On the other hand, one cannot deny the reverence for Shakespeare clearly revealed in a review from Schumann's pen in 1839. He is discussing the first symphony of Gottfried

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[33] For a full discussion of the scenario, see Hoy-Draheim, "Robert Schumanns Opernpläne," pp. 101–103.
[34] "Offenbar hegte Schumann für Shakespeare eine so große Verehrung, daß er es nicht wagte, am Original mehr zu ändern, als für die Umarbeitung zum Opernlibretto unbedingt nötig war. Er hatte Skrupel, sich an der bewunderten Dramaturgie eines Autors zu vergreifen, den er als einen Klassiker der Weltliteratur ansah. Letztlich war dies wohl auch der Grund, warum die Oper *Romeo und Julie* als Entwurf liegenblieb." Hoy-Draheim, "Robert Schumanns Opernpläne," p. 104.

Preyer, and in a wide-ranging overview he compares the contributions made to civilization by various nations. No less a composer than Beethoven is ranked with Shakespeare.

> Just as Italy has its Naples, the Frenchman his revolution, the Englishman his sea voyage, etc., so the German has his Beethoven symphonies. . . . With Beethoven he has recovered in spirit what he lost to Napoleon. He dares even to equate him with Shakespeare.[35]

After the aborted *Romeo and Juliet* project, Shakespeare did not disappear from Schumann's firmament, but his presence is felt in dramatic music of a less expansive nature—an Overture to *Julius Caesar,* Op. 128. It was sketched in January 1851 and the orchestration largely completed by February 2nd. This was not the end of the project, as Schumann continued to revise the work right up to July 30, 1852, when he writes in his *Haushaltbuch,* "the overture to *Julius Caesar* from afar and suddenly decision and joy."[36] Annotations in the margins of the manuscript source reveal that he knew the play well,[37] but for Schumann, tackling this Shakespeare play in musical form *without* words was apparently more congenial to his own conception. There is nothing to indicate, however, that this was a choice tempered by a lack of courage regarding the reshaping (if necessary) of Shakespeare's dramaturgy.

After all his years of experience searching for and examining texts, Schumann responded to a letter from an aspiring composer, Carl Wettig, on October 8, 1848, shortly after putting the finishing touches to *Genoveva*:

> With regard to opera I reply with this: everything theoretical and written will not help you. You must set about the matter choosing your material from history or from the imaginative world of poetry. Only thus can you

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[35] *Schumann on Music: A Selection from the Writings,* ed. and trans, Henry Pleasants (Dover Publications, Inc.: New York, 1988), p. 148.
[36] Jon W. Finson, "Schumann and Shakespeare," in *Mendelssohn and Schumann: Essays on Their Music and Its Context,* ed. Jon W. Finson and R. Larry Todd (Duke University Press: Durham, N. C., 1984), p. 134.
[37] The manuscript sketch is located at the Heinrich-Heine-Institut, Düsseldorf, Archiv-Nr. 74.256.

> take the next step. Take up Shakespeare, Calderón, perhaps also Boccaccio, arrange the material musically and theatrically, and then seek to get hold of a poet who will put the material into verse for you! Never count on getting an opera text by chance which you can use directly from a poet. You must always lay your own hand on it first.[38]

The letter is instructive not only because all of the authors Schumann suggests are non-Germans, but also because it provides a window into his own creative process. To Schumann, there was clearly a difference between setting operatic material in a German manner and the use of strictly German subject matter. It would seem that the cause of German opera could be served with an esteemed foreign author in excellent translation. Also, while he states a belief in using a poet to set the text in verse (which contradicts much of his own treatment of the *Genoveva* libretto), he espouses the belief that it is the responsibility of the composer to be the first to scrutinize the material. This could be in the sense of creating the scenario, of which many survive, or of even greater involvement, down to individual words and passages, as is the case with *Genoveva, Manfred* and the Scenes from Goethe's *Faust.*

In the second half of 1841 Schumann was still constantly on the lookout for an appropriate text. He seems now to be relying not on his own great consumption of literature but on that of others. To that end he wrote to a number of friends and acquaintances in an attempt to inspire their interest. Among his entreaties was one to Wolfgang Robert

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[38] "Wegen der Oper möchte ich Ihnen dies erwiedern: Alles Theoretisiren und Schreiben hilft zu nichts. Sie müssen die Sache anpacken, irgend einen Stoff aus der Geschichte oder der Phantasie der Dichterwelt herausgreifen. Dann erst läßt sich weiter rathen. Nehmen sie Shakespeare, Calderon, vielleicht auch Boccaccio zur Hand, ordnen sie sich einen Stoff musikalisch und bühnengerecht und suchen dann eines Dichters habhaft zu werden, der Ihnen den Stoff in Verse bringt! Rechnen Sie nie darauf, von einem Dichter etwa zufällig einen Operntext zu erhalten, den Sie gebrauchen könnten! Sie müssen selbst die erste Hand anlegen." *Robert Schumanns Briefe. Neue Folge,* pp. 291, 292.

Griepenkerl, a Braunschweig contributor to the *NZfM*: "Have you no opera text? How I long for one."[39]

It seems that no response was forthcoming immediately, but much later, in one of Schumann's *Haushaltbücher,* the entry for January 7, 1845, reads, "Opera text from Griepenkerl" and on the 18th we find: "King Arthur – wonderful opera text."[40] Wolfgang Boetticher misconstrues the proximity of these two entries as an indication that Griepenkerl sent Schumann a text drawn from the King Arthur legends[41] but, according to Nauhaus, there is no relationship whatsoever between the statements. Schumann's interest in the topic was actually stimulated by his own reading of August Bürck's *König Artus und seine Tafelrunde*.[42] It was simply a coincidence that Schumann happened to have been considering the King Arthur legends at the very time that Griepenkerl's text arrived.

There is no record of the subject matter of the text Griepenkerl sent, but in any case Schumann returned it on May 13, 1845. Boetticher cites a letter from Schumann to Karl Winkler, vice-director of the Waldenburg Hoftheater, in which Schumann declares that he sent the libretto back to Griepenkerl as it was too big a task for him at present—"Perhaps later," he writes.[43] Clara confirms this explanation in a diary entry of January 16: "Robert occupies himself a great deal with opera texts. Robert Griepenkerl sent him one but it was of little interest, and Robert was all the more interested in the subject of *King Arthur*, which

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[39] "Haben Sie keinen Operntext? Wie verlangt es mich danach." Wasielewski, *Robert Schumann* p. 380.
[40] "Operntext v. Griepenkerl" *Robert Schumann TBIV*, ed. Gerd Nauhaus (Basel & Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1982) p. 377; "König Artus, – schöner Operntext", p. 378.
[41] Wolfgang Boetticher, *Robert Schumann: Einführung in Persönlichkeit und Werk* (Berlin: B. Hahnefeld, 1941), p. 255.
[42] Gerd Nauhaus, in *TBIII*, pp. 746–47, fns. 513, 516.
[43] "Die Operntexte ihm zurückgeschickt, da ich jetzt noch keine so großen Arbeiten annehmen dürfe. Vielleicht später." Boetticher dates this letter as July 19, 1845, but says it is no longer extant. Boetticher, *Einführung,* p. 255, fn. 25.

he would like to have adapted. He is looking carefully on all sides and is sure to find a poet.[44]

In a letter to Felix Mendelssohn written in November 1845, Schumann confirms that he had been considering a *King Arthur* theme all year. On November 17, however, Richard Wagner unexpectedly read him his *Lohengrin* text, and Schumann wrote to Mendelssohn again on the 18th: "Yesterday, to our surprise, Wagner read to us his new opera text to *Lohengrin* – to my double surprise, in fact, since for almost a year I have contemplated the same thing, or at least something similar from around the time of the Round Table – and now I must only throw it all away."[45] The last statement is odd, for surely Schumann could not have thought that the subject matter of *Lohengrin* precluded him from using other Arthurian legends.

1845 was the year Schumann began compiling a source of great interest regarding his literary choices and reading habits, a slim volume known as the *Lektürebüchlein*.[46] It consists of forty pages of which sixteen contain notes in Schumann's hand. The title page declares: "*Zeitungsmaterial. Lecture.* [stet] *Musikalische Studien*.[47] The volume was begun in Dresden on January 21, 1845, and the final entries are dated 1852.

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[44] "Robert beschäftigt sich viel mit Operntexten. Robert Griepenkerl schickte ihm einen, der jedoch wenig interessant war, um so mehr aber interessierte ein Sujet Robert 'König Artus,' das er gern bearbeitet hätte. Er wird nun nach verschiedenen Seiten hin operieren, es wird sich doch noch ein Dichter finden." Quoted in Berthold Litzmann, *Clara Schumann: Ein Künstlerleben nach Tagebüchern und Briefen*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1906–08), vol. 2, p. 130.

[45] "Wagner hat uns zu unserer Überraschung gestern seinen neuen Operntext vorgelegt, Lohengrin – zu meiner doppelten, denn ich trug mich schon seit einem Jahre mit demselben, oder wenigstens einem ähnlichen aus der Zeit der Tafelrunde herum – und ich muß ihn nun in den Brunnen werfen." Wasielewski, *Robert Schumann,* p.382.

[46] It is located at the Robert-Schumann-Haus, Zwickau, Archiv-Nr. 4871/VII, C5–A3.

[47] A facsimile reproduction with a diplomatic transcription and footnotes is published by Gerd Nauhaus, "Schumanns *Lektürebüchlein,"* in *Robert Schumann und die Dichter,* pp. 50–87.

Some of the early entries are meant to be pursued as journal articles,[48] but the vast majority of the notations are titles of dramas, epics, novels, poetry and the occasional non-fiction work, which Schumann devoured over the course of eight years. Looking at it from the perspective of the present, we see which materials interest were brought to musical realization in one form or another, and which, even if originally earmarked for musical, particularly operatic treatment, were not.

The very first page listing reading material, page 11, is headed "Lectüre. 1845 in Dresden." Here we find the first reference to his in *King Arthur and His Roundtable,* with the annotation "incidentally, marvelous stuff for music."[49] After a mention of the nine-volume edition of *Memoiren üb[er] Napoleon* v[on] [Emmanuel de] las Cases, we encounter another subject seriously considered for musical setting, Goethe's pastoral idyll *Hermann und Dorothea.* A parenthetical note to this entry reads "(at least for the tenth time!)"[50] Further to this is added "the same by Töpfer for the stage very weak."[51]

Schumann also notes *Hermann und Dorothea* in his *Haushaltbuch* on March 25, 1845, so it was obviously a topic very much on his mind. Again in March 1846 he considered it for treatment as a *Singspiel,* but disliking the Töpfer adaptation as he did, he instead approached the poet Julius Hammer for a libretto on April 14.[52] Nothing came of it, but as late as 1851 Schumann corresponded with Moritz Horn over the project once again. Ultimately, he composed only an Overture to *Hermann und Dorothea,* Op. 136, in December of that year.

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[48] As, for example, the entries on p. 3, which include "Charakteristik der musikalischen Schriftsteller u. Kritiker der Gegenwart" and "Die Erziehung eines vollkommenen Musikers."
[49] "übrigens herrlicher Stoff für Musik." Nauhaus "Schumanns *Lektürebüchlein,*" p. 59.
[50] "(zum 10mal wenigstens)" *Ibid.*
[51] "dasselbe v. Töpfer für die Bühne sehr matt." Actually, Töpfer's stage adaptation was expressly approved by Goethe.
[52] See *TBIV,* p. 749, fn. 528.

The final entry on page 11 of the *Lektürebüchlein* indicates "Gedichte von Annette v[on] Droste-[Hülshoff]," with the parenthetical praise "extremely outstanding."[53] The entry indicates no operatic intentions, but perhaps because of this mention of the poetess Clara decided to intervene, and, unbeknownst to her husband, she wrote to Droste-Hülshoff seeking an opera libretto on June 17, 1845.[54] Clara opens rather obsequiously and inquires whether Droste-Hülshoff is familiar with her husband's latest large work, the oratorio *Das Paradies und die Peri;* she goes on to talk of his long-held desire to create an opera. Clara drops a few hints about possible material:

> I believe he has several subjects; we have spoken a lot about a comic opera *Till Eulenspiegel* which, as my husband said, has to become something amazing and fantasic. He spoke as well about *King Arthur,* and now we have paused at *The Corsair* by Byron, which in his opinion would make a magnificent opera libretto.[55]

It is of interest that although *The Corsair* had been "shelved" incomplete the previous year, in Clara's mind – and she intimates her husband's, too – it is still an open subject. And, as noted, nothing came of *King Arthur* because of Wagner's *Lohengrin. Till* continued to linger on the back burner.

And what of Droste-Hülshoff's response? Her reaction is recorded in a letter of July 5th to her brother Werner.[56] She was obviously very much flattered by Clara's letter,[57] but

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[53] Annette von Droste-Hülshoff was a well known German poetess. Perhaps her best known poem is the spooky "Der Knabe im Moor." Her novel *Die Judenbuche* also assured her lasting fame.

[54] The letter is reproduced in full in Bernd Kortländer, "Ein gescheitertes Projekt: Annette von Droste-Hülshoff als Librettistin Robert Schumanns," in *Robert Schumann und die Dichter,* p. 107.

[55] "Ich glaube, er hat manches Sujet; wir haben viel über eine komische Oper gesprochen 'Till Eulenspiegel' die, wie mein Mann sagte, etwas recht Tolles Phantastisches werden müßte; auch vom König Artus aprach er, und jetzt blieben wir beim Corsar von Byron stehen der nach seiner Meinung ein herrliches Opernbuch geben könnte." *Ibid.*

[56] The letter, which exists only in a fragmentary form in an unknown hand, is reproduced in Bernd Kortländer, "Ein gescheitertes Projekt," p. 109.

[57] Clara had rather ostentatiously signed her letter "Kammervirtuosin Sr. Majestät des Kaisers von Oesterreich."

she indicates an aversion to writing opera libretti: ". . . writing opera texts is something only too wretched and a mediocre craft."[58] She found the letter odd, presumably because it was written by Clara and not by Schumann himself (of whom, incidentally, she had never even heard). The only area that tempts Droste-Hülshoff is the financial aspect, which she feels to be relatively lucrative. But, ultimately, this is not enough, and no libretto was forthcoming.

The *Lektürebüchlein* is indeed fascinating for what it shows of Schumann's literary tastes overall. In the realm of potential operatic subjects alone, one can estimate there are at least thirteen entries spread over five years.[59] These entries are listed below:

1845: König Artus u. s[eine] Tafelrunde von A. Bürk
Hermann u. Dorothea v. Göthe (zum10tenmal wenigstens)
1846: Tristan u. Isolde v. Immermann (Reizendster Juwel)
1847 (seit Monat April): Mazeppa, Trauerspiel n. d. Polnischen d. Slowacki
Mazeppa von Byron
Wilhelm Meister v. Göthe (zum 3tenmal)
Genoveva v. Hebbel[60]
Genoveva v. Tieck
Die Glockendiebe v. E. Möhricke [sic][61]
Till Eulenspiegel, Komödie von Radewell (Studentengenialität)
1848: Vieles, namentlich Manfred, von L[ord] Byron
Sakontala (Uebers.[etzung] v. W. Gerhard)[62]
Hans Köhlhas v. Frh. v. Maltitz[63]
Der deutsche Bauernkrieg v. W. v. Norman
1849: Sardanapal von Byron[64]

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[58] " . . . das Operntextschreiben ist etwas gar zu Klägliches und Handwerkmäßiges . . ." in *Robert Schumann und die Dichter*, p. 107.

[59] With a number of titles – e.g., Auerbach's *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten,* Hebbel's *Judith* and *Maria Magdalena,* Grabbe's *Hannibal,* Herz's *König René's Tochter,* and many more – it is difficult to discern what type of musical treatment (if any) Schumann may have had in mind. There are no specific references to operatic settings.

[60] The entry intervening between the two versions of the Genoveva legend is Homer's *Odyssey*. If this were considered for an opera, it would have required a significant stylistic challenge and been a massive endeavor for the stage. But, it is not completely out of the question that Schumann considered it.

[61] *Die Glockendiebe* is actually part of the subtitle of Eduard Möricke's verse epic *Idylle vom Bodensee* (1846). According to Nauhaus, "Schumanns *Lektürebüchlein,*" p. 87, fn. 32, Schumann made note of the material as a potential comic opera.

[62] Wilhelm Gerhard translated the theatrical treatment of Kalidasa's drama in 1820. Besides the entry in the *Lektürebüchlein,* Schumann also made an entry on October 9, 1848, in his *TBIV,* p. 472.

[63] According to Nauhaus, (*Lektürebüchlein,* p. 87, fn. 45), Schumann contemplated combining the *Köhlhas* and *Bauernkrieg* material as the basis for a theatrical piece. There is also an entry "Kohlhas v. Maltitz" in the *TBIV,* p. 472, on October 11, 1848, a mere two days after the *Sakontala* entry.

Schumann almost certainly continued to consider opera topics after 1849—*Romeo and Juliet,* for instance—but the *Lektürebüchlein* gives few clues. Under the heading 1849, Schumann added the note "Revolutionary year. More newspapers read than books,"[65] and in 1850, which has only two entries, "Much in this year not noted."[66] His reading picks up dramatically in 1851 and 1852, but there are no known opera projects amongst the literature listed.

Returning to other sources and opera plans, we find Schumann persevering in 1846 in his quest for suitable operatic literary material. Schumann approached Robert Reinick in June and convinced him to work on a libretto for *Tristan und Isolde* (another subject that Wagner would make his own). Reinick knew Eduard Geibel's *Tristan*, and he himself thought it would make a splendid opera, too.[67] Sources of the legend other than Geibel's were also consulted; in a subsequent letter from Reinick to Schumann, Reinick entreats the latter to have a look at Immermann's poetic version of the legend,[68] or else to locate the story in Marbach's *Volksbücher* Nos. 13 and 14. Despite ill health, Reinick, who was clearly deeply interested in this subject matter himself, worked extremely rapidly on a plot outline and sent it to Schumann. On June 15, Schumann notes in his diary that he visited Reinick and found him very poorly, but in the same entry he mentions *Tristan und Isolde.*[69]

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[64] Schumann made note of this epic as an opera project on more than one occasion. He mentions it in his *TBIV,* p. 508 on November 10, 1849: "Sardanapal v. B.[yron]."
[65] "Revolutionsjahr. Mehr Zeitungen gelesen, als Bücher." Nauhaus, *Lektürebüchlein,* p. 77.
[66] "Vieles in diesem Jahr nicht notirt." *Ibid.*
[67] " . . . da schlug mir Geibel Tristan und Isolde vor, und ich glaube, das kann eine prächtige Oper abgeben." Quoted in Friedrich Schnapp, "Robert Schumanns Plan zu einer Oper 'Tristan und Isolde,'" *Die Musik*, Bd. 62 (July, 1925), p. 754.
[68] Schumann had, in fact, read the Immermann version in September 1842, as is attested in his *TBIII,* p. 223. He described it in his *Lektürebüchlein* in 1846 as a "charming jewel." Schumann also read Immermann's *Merlin* and some of his poetry in 1845.
[69] "Früh Reinicks z. Besuch – sehr schlechtes Befinden – Tristan u. Isolde. *TBIII,* p. 343.

On June 25, however, Schumann informed Reinick that he wanted "to set aside the opera plan until better times."[70] Once again it was an endeavor for which no music was ever written.[71]

In 1847 Reinick became involved with Schumann on still another operatic project. This was the cossack tale of *Mazeppa*, which centers on the Byronic type of courageous, troubled adventurer for whom Schumann seemed to have a predilection. Schumann was reading *Mazeppa* in late March, and Reinick agreed to work with the material a mere day before Schumann's first reading of the much-lauded Friedrich Hebbel's tragedy *Genoveva*. There are several diary entries indicating Schumann's consideration of the Mazeppa story: that of March 27 reads, "Thought over Mazeppa a great deal."[72]

Schumann read *Mazeppa* in the *Trauerspiel* by the Polish writer Juliusz Slowacki, translated into German by A. Drake. Immediately after reading this version he went directly to the poetic source by Byron, and he liked the story well enough to take it to Reinick on March 31st for his opinion: "With Reinick early on account of Mazeppa."[73] Clara confirms that once again her husband had been preoccupied in his search for an opera libretto. When he consulted Reinick about his latest enthusiasm, "They came to an agreement, and Robert gave him *Mazeppa* to look through."[74] But only the next day, April 1st, we read in Schumann's *Haushaltbuch* "'Genoveva' by Hebbel . . ." *Mazeppa* was summarily

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[70] " . . . unseres Planes aber bis auf bessere Zeiten aufgehoben." Schnapp, "Robert Schumanns Plan zu einer Oper," p. 756.
[71] Two sketches of Reinick's plot outline are located at the Robert-Schumann-Haus, Zwickau, Archiv-Nr. 4871/IIIb, 3a/b—A3.
[72] "Ueber Mazeppa nachgedacht viel . . . ," *TBIII,* p. 343.
[73] "Früh mit Reinick wegen Mazeppa—" *Ibid.,* p. 344.
[74] "Sie vereinigten sich und Robert gab ihm Mazeppa mit zur Durchsicht." Berthold Litzmann, *Clara Schumann: Ein Künstlerleben,* vol. 2, p. 165.

abandoned for an undertaking that proved to be one of Schumann's most inspired and deeply heartfelt – at last he had settled on a drama as a basis for his long-awaited opera.[75]

The list of other opera topics Schumann pondered (although without the dedication he showed to those aforementioned) is long and spans the whole period of over twenty years represented by the examples discussed thus far.[76] It includes mythical subjects such as two more eventually treated by Wagner, *Der Wartburgkrieg* (i.e., *Tannhäuser*) and the *Nibelungenlied*. In June of 1853 Luise Otto, a German authoress, sent Schumann a version of the text of *The Nibelungen* (a Middle High German epic poem, rediscovered in the mid-18th century – it became a German national epic), which she had originally written for Niels Gade, who never completed its composition. Schumann appeared interested and finished reading the text on July 7, but in a letter of July 24 he informed Otto that he was not "in a fit state of health to undertake such a work."[77]

Schumann delved into works by Goethe: *Hermann und Dorothea*, *Faust* and *Wilhelm Meister*. Goethe's *Bildungsroman Wilhelm Meister* is first mentioned in Schumann's diaries as early as 1828. Sixteen years later, on February 21, 1844, he writes in his Tagebuch "Considering transforming Wilhelm Meister into an opera."[78] In 1847 he read the story again, but it was not until mid-1849 that he finally used material inspired by the novel in a series of songs and in his *Requiem for Mignon,* Op. 98b. The two volumes of *Wilhelm Meister* were never developed into an opera.

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[75] A sketch for the dramatic sequence of events ("Handlungsablauf") of *Mazeppa,* in Schumann's hand, is at the R.-S.-H., Zwickau, Sign. 10496-A3.
[76] Full details can be found in published works by both Schumann's first biographer, Wasielewski, *Life of Robert Schumann,* p. 382, and Boetticher *Einführung*, pp. 319–20, 326–327.
[77] *The Life of Robert Schumann Told in his Letters*, trans. May Herbert, 2 Vols. (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1890), Vol. 2, p. 159.
[78] "Ob W. Meister zur Oper zu verwandeln," *TBII,* p. 284.

Schumann considered the idea of *Till Eulenspiegel* for a number of years. In November 1843, in the *Ehetagebuch* (Wedding Diary), he mentions that: "A pair of opera plans occupies me greatly: *The Veiled Prophet of Korassan* from *Lalla Rookh* [by Thomas Moore],[79] and *Till Eulenspiegel,* for which I have already sketched plans."[80] Scenarios to both works are to be found in the Robert-Schumann-Haus in Zwickau.[81]

While *The Veiled Prophet* had no discernible longevity as an opera subject, *Till* reappears in a *Haushaltbuch* entry of June 9, 1844, while in Schumann's *Projektenbuch,* it is earmarked for treatment as a comic opera in two places.[82] In June 1844, Schumann followed up by asking Zuccalmaglio if he could provide a libretto for *Till* (at the same time, he asked for one for *The Corsair*), but he met with no success. In 1845 Clara mentioned the subject and its need to be "amazing and fantastic" in her letter to Droste-Hülshoff and, the following year, on May 5, 1846, Schumann also brought up the opera plan in a letter to Reinick. Finally, we see mention made in the *Lektürebüchlein* in late 1847. There the matter seems to rest. It is of note, perhaps, that the *Lektürebüchlein* entry follows directly upon Möricke's *Die Glockendiebe,* which appears to be one of the few comic subjects Schumann considered setting as an opera. His concept of "German opera" tended toward serious drama and tragedy, even though he might have had more success finding a performance venue for works in a lighter vein.

Still a few more opera topics were reviewed by Schumann over the years, but none had musical consequences: Chateaubriand's *Atala,* Immermann's *Der steinerne Fingerzeig,* Eichendorff's *Der Glücksritter,* L. Robert's *Der tote Gast,* and *Abälard und Heloise.*

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[79] *Das Paradies und die Peri* was also from *Lalla Rookh.*
[80] "Ein Paar Opernpläne beschäftigen mich aber sehr [:] 'der verschleierte Prophet von Korassan' aus Lalla Rukh, u. 'Till Eulenspiegel,' zu denen ich mir schon Pläne entworfen." *TBII,* p. 270.
[81] *The Veiled Prophet,* Sign. 10495-A3, 1 leaf; *Till Eulenpsiegel,* Sign. 10493-A3, 1 double leaf.
[82] See *TBIV,* p. 744, fn. 496.

Schumann considered the story of *Abälard und Heloise* (Abälard was an early 12th-century philosopher and theologian, known through his exchange of letters with Heloise) very early in his career (May/June 1831). Even in these early years, Schumann attempted to dramatize the story himself.[83] Wasielewski also mentions a host of other, rather more obscure topics that Schumann perused for operatic possibilities: *The Last Stuart, Kunz von der Rosen, The Noble Bride, The Pariah,* and *The Smith of Gretna Green*.[84]

Why did Schumann choose Hebbel's version over Tieck's as the fundamental basis for his opera? One must certainly give primacy to the dramatic power and impact experienced in a reading of the Hebbel tragedy itself. It is a gripping but desolate tale. On April 12, less than two weeks after reading this version of the medieval legend, Schumann turned to Tieck's *Trauerspiel, Leben und Tod der heiligen Genoveva.* It, too, is hardly light fare, but there are significant digressions in this *Lesedrama*,[85] which lessen the tragic impact. The abundant ancillary material is fascinating but can be distracting.

That Schumann thought Hebbel's tragedy well-suited for operatic treatment is attested in a letter he wrote to the author in Vienna on May 13, 1847, about six weeks after first reading his play. Schumann is actually asking Hebbel for help with Robert Reinick's unsatisfactory libretto, but he opens the letter with an acclamation of faith in the drama's musical potential:

> After reading your Genoveva (I am a musician), the poem occupied my mind a good deal, as did the thought of what a wonderful subject it would make for treating musically. The more I read your tragedy, which is incomparable – it is not necessary to say more – the more the poetry became shaped with musical

[83] The first scene is extant at the R-S-H Zwickau.
[84] Wasielewski, *Life of Robert Schumann*, p. 153.
[85] A *Lesedrama* is a drama that is meant only to be read, not enacted on the stage. The common translation is "closet drama."

life in my mind. . . .[86]

This testimonial is further reinforced by a note from Schumann to Reinick dated April 2, the day after Schumann's discovery of Hebbel. Here, he mentions not only the tragedy's suitability for musical development but also its theatrical potential: "Read at once Hebbel's Genoveva – in the treatment much is unpleasant – but it is marvelous material for music and stage."[87]

Virtue, villainy, chivalry, all with the pageantry of a medieval backdrop – the stage was set for a Romantic, dramatic presentation of the first order.

[86] "Nach dem Lesen Ihrer Genovefa (ich bin Musiker) beschäftigt mich wie die Dichtung selbst, so auch der Gedanke, welch herrlicher Stoff sie für Musik sei. Je öfter ich Ihre Tragödie las, die ihres Gleichen sucht – lassen Sie mich darüber nichts weiter sagen – , je musikalisch lebendiger gestaltete sich die Poesie in mir. . . ." Robert Schumann, *Schumanns Briefe in Auswahl,,* ed. Karl Storck, (Stuttgart, 1906), Nr. 112, p. 190.

[87] "Lesen Sie doch einmal Hebbel'sche Genoveva – in der Behandlung vieles Widerwärtige – aber doch ein herrlicher Stoff für Musik und Bühne." Reinhold Sietz, "Zur Textgestaltung von Robert Schumanns 'Genovefa'," *Die Musikforschung,*vol. XXIII. (1970), p. 398.

CHAPTER II

THE SEARCH FOR A COLLABORATOR AND THE CREATION OF A TEXT

After years of searching, Schumann had finally decided on a subject for a Romantic opera. Now began the hard work. As was his custom when attempting libretti, Schumann looked around for a collaborator. Once again, he decided upon writer and painter Robert Reinick, whom he had approached regarding three earlier, unrealized projects, and they set to work with alacrity. By April 4, 1847, just three days after Schumann had finished reading Hebbel's *Genoveva,* they had had their first meeting. The sketch of the text was ready by April 8,[1] and Schumann notes in his *Haushaltbuch* that the following day he and Reinick had concluded their discussions about the text. Yet, only one day after that, Schumann indicates "A lot with regard to Genoveva's text."[2] In actual fact, the Schumann/Reinick collaboration continues intermittently until at least January of 1848, although as early as April 11, 1847, Schumann notes that he has "Reservations regarding Reinick."[3] Still more confusing, when Reinick headed off for a trip to Giebichenstein on July 21, Schumann, again prematurely, declared the *Genoveva* text to be finished.[4]

The reservations regarding Reinick that Schumann expressed on April 11 suggested to the composer an interesting, if somewhat unusual solution. His

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[1] Unfortunately, this scenario does not survive.
[2] "Viel am Text zu Genoveva." *TBIII,* p. 345. For a sequential list of diary entries regarding the genesis of the work, see Appendix 1: *Genoveva's Genesis: Haushaltbücher Entries.*
[3] *Ibid.* "Bedenken wegen Reinick."
[4] "Schluß d. Genoveva." *TBIII,* p. 432.

relationship with Reinick was such that he was able to write to the librettist, albeit diplomatically, proposing a potential change in approach. By now, Schumann had also acquainted himself thoroughly with the Tieck version of the legend. On April 12, he writes that he has been considering,

> . . . whether it might not be best if I put together my own libretto. If I am considered the adapter of the texts, nobody would reproach me, the musician, for the use of existing material. You, however, appreciating your good name, would have to be careful of reminiscences. On account of that I, as a composer, would lose so much that the two poets have created so effectively. Therefore I fear, like the other day, we will not find common ground for our respective ideas. You strive for me, and I, on my part, am not able to separate certain of my favorite ideas, which I took over from Hebbel especially: thus we will reach the end late, or not at all.[5]

Noteworthy is Schumann's mention of not finding "common ground for our respective ideas." Even at this very early stage, Schumann seems to have had his own very particular conception in mind.

Schumann asked Reinick to respond if he approved of the plan, and he also requested that Reinick allow him to report on his progress from time to time. He is careful not to break the bonds of friendship. Reinick appears to have acquiesced, yet for many months his name still recurs fairly regularly in diary entires mentioning the formation of the libretto.

There is no evidence to suggest that Ludwig Tieck, who was an elderly man at the time of Schumann's endeavor, knew of the composer's interest in his

[5] ". . . ob es doch nicht am besten wäre, wenn ich dem Text mir selbst zusammenzustellen versuchte. Gelte ich als Bearbeiter des Vorhandenen Niemand verargen; Sie aber, lieben Sie Ihren guten Namen, müßten Sich vor Reminiscenzen hüten, and darüber büßte ich als Componist doch wieder vieles ein, was zwei Dichter so wirkungsvoll geschaffen. So fürchte ich aber, kommen wir, schon wie neulich, in unseren Ideen nicht zusammen; Sie bemühen Sich für mich, und ich kann mich wiederum von gewissen Lieblingsgedanken nicht trennen, die mir namentlich Hebbel in den Kopf gesetzt – und wir gelangen spät oder garnicht an's Ende." R. Sietz, "Zur Textgestaltung," p. 398.

almost fifty-year-old epic. Hebbel, on the other hand, was made very much aware of Schumann's operatic project. Schumann wrote to Hebbel in Vienna on May 14, 1847, expressing discontent with Reinick's efforts and attempting to enlist the dramatist's help. After opening with blandishments, Schumann relates his textual progress thus far:

> I consulted with a poetically-gifted man who lives here (Robert Reinick), and moved by the extraordinary beauty of the poetic work, he quickly agreed to my request and turned it into an opera libretto to the best of his abilities.
>
> Two acts lie before me now, the last two I will receive within the next few days. But although the adapter has the best possible intentions, still, not much of what he has done pleases me; above all, there is an overall lack of power, and *the conventional opera-libretto style is repugnant to me. I do not know how to write music for such tirades, and I don't like them*.[6]

Presumably, by "tirades" Schumann meant dramatic/poetic material and perhaps grand massed vocal forces. Lengthy, ranting monologues are absent from *Genoveva,* with the exception, perhaps, of Golo's rage after Genoveva's rejection. But although his words are angry, even violent, musically he is controlled and quiet.

A fine example of Schumann's distaste for so-called operatic tirades is found in his 1837 review of Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots.* Schumann was not afraid to articulate a very real loathing for this opera. "Debauchery, murder and

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[6] "Endlich berieht ich mich mit einem hier lebenden poetisch begabten Mann (Robert Reinick), und von der außerordentlichen Schönheit der Dichtung ergriffen, ging er schnell auf meinen Wunsch ein, sie mir zu einem Operngedicht nach besten Kräften umbilden zu wollen.

Zwei Acten liegen jetzt vor mir, die beiden letzten erhalte ich in diesen Tagen. Aber so vielen guten Willen der Bearbeiter zeigte, so behagte mir doch das Wengiste; vor Allem, es fehlt überall an Kraft—und der gewöhnliche Operntextstyl ist mir nun einmal zuwider; ich weiß zu solchen Tiraden keine Musik zu machen und mag sie nicht." Robert Schumann, *Robert Schumann's Briefe in Auswahl*, Storck ed. (Stuttgart:1906), p. 190. Italics mine.

prayer – The Huguenots offers nothing else. . . . 'Astonish or titillate' is his [Meyerbeer's] slogan, and he can accomplish it even with the mob. As for that interwoven chorale [Ein' feste Burg] . . .'"

Schumann has a few good words for Act IV, the ingenious section of the consecration of the swords and the ensuing duet for Valentine and Raoul. "But what does it all amount to against the vulgarity, distortion, immorality and non-musicality of the whole?"[7] A typical, pro-German remark is found in the criticism, too: "Meyerbeer's success in our musically healthy Germany is enough to make one questions one's own sanity . . ."[8].

In this same review, Schumann states that he was consumed with fury when he first heard *Les Huguenots,* although it is only in the very next sentence that he proclaims: "After hearing it a few times I found better things in it, and much to condone. But the verdict remains the same."[9] This type of rather puzzling about-face reflects that found in letters written to Mendelssohn regarding Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. Schumann found it sadly lacking when he played it on the piano, but in the concert hall admitted it was successful and even skillful.

What was it exactly that Schumann viewed as the "new" German opera? Stephen Meyer posits three interpenetrating impulses which were part of the search for German opera: "the search for a new, through-composed Germanic operatic form; the effort to create a new audience and a new social position for

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[7] *Schumann on Music: A Selection from the Writings,* ed. and trans. Henry Pleasants, (New York: Dover Publications,1965), pp. 138, 139. It is of interest that "debauchery, murder and prayer," even if in a much less dramatic form, are present ten years later in the material for *Genoveva.* And Schumann, too, uses a chorale-style melody as a unifying device.
[8] *Ibid.,* p. 137.
[9] *Ibid.*

German-language works; and finally the effort to articulate a new national ideology through music and drama."[10] Meyer goes into some detail on these matters.

Dissatisfied with the libretto he had in hand, Schumann specifically requests Friedrich Hebbel's assistance with his project, although he does not ask him to construct an operatic version of the tragedy. He rather wants him to look the whole thing over and perhaps make improvements here and there. After all, "Isn't your own child asking for your protection? And should it later appear before your eyes clothed in music, I very much hope you would say, 'even so I love you still.'"[11]

Hebbel was responsive. He replied to Schumann, letting him know he held him in the highest regard. Hebbel seems to have known something of what an opera libretto entailed, for he acknowledged that "the composer, through his independent art, is forced to place certain requirements on the poetry."[12] Much to the composer's delight, Hebbel agreed to meet with him while on a trip to Dresden. Schumann had hoped to have a completed libretto available at their meeting. When this was not the case, Schumann, now a little concerned, wrote to Hebbel again on June 28, 1847:

> The completion of the text is somewhat delayed. In the last act we have encountered difficulties, which we had not allowed for. Now the book will hardly be completed before your arrival here (the end of July, as

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[10] Stephen Conrad Meyer, *Performing Identity: The Search for a German Opera in Dresden, 1798-1832* (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Stony Brook, December, 1996).
[11] "Ist es nicht das eigene Kind, das um Ihren Schutz bittet! Und tritt es dann musikalisch angethan später vor Ihre Augen, so gern wünscht' ich, daß Sie sagten, 'auch so liebe ich dich noch." *Ibid.*
[12] "Der Komponist durch seine selbständige Kunst gezwungen, einige Anforderungen an die Poesie stelle." Adolf Stübing, *Friedrich Hebbels Dramen als Opern,* (Ph.D University of Rostock, Rostock, 1911), p. 10. Quoted in Sietz, "Zur Textgestaltung," p. 399.

you had written to me.)[13]

Despite the incomplete libretto, Schumann and Hebbel met on July 27, 1847. Unfortunately, Schumann's taciturn personality interfered with their interaction, and the encounter was negative on both sides. The dramatist later wrote in his diary that "Schumann was not only stubborn, but also an unpleasantly silent man."[14] In a letter to a friend, Hebbel asserted that: "Schumann 'gaped' at him for the duration of their meeting. Completely 'imprisoned' in his talent, he appeared to listen just as little as he spoke."[15] There was to be no help from Hebbel, who apparently felt he could not work productively with such a man.

Schumann was now thrust back on his own resources. Despite Schumann's letter to the contrary, Reinick continued to contribute to the project. Schumann was still less than happy with his literary contributions and was disappointed that Reinick did not seem to be making the most of the dramatic possibilities inherent in Hebbel's work, which continued to be dominant over Tieck in Schumann's libretto conception. Schumann had written to his friend, fellow musician Ferdinand Hiller, at the beginning of July: "The text for the opera goes on slowly, but it is progressing. Our Reinick is a good, kind man, but terribly sentimental. And precisely with our material he had such an extraordinarily powerful model in Hebbel."[16]

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[13] "Die Vollendung des Textes verzögete sich etwas. Wir sind im letzten Act auf Schwierigkeiten gestoßen, deren wir uns nicht vorgesehen hatten. Nun wird das Buch schwerlich vor Ihrer Ankunft hier (Ende Juli, wie Sie mir schreiben) ganz fertig." Robert Schumann, *Schumann's Briefe,* p. 191.
[14] "Schumann war nicht bloß ein hartnäckiger, sondern auch ein unangenehmer Schweiger." Sietz, "Zur Textgestaltung, p. 400.
[15] Daverio, *Robert Schumann,* p. 554, fn. 47.
[16] "Mit dem Text zur Oper geht es langsam, aber doch vorwärts. Ein guter, freundlicher Mensch unser Reinick, aber schrecklich sentimental. Und gerade bei unserm Stoff hat er so ein

Work on the libretto continued throughout 1847, although it was intermittently interrupted by other musical projects, for instance *Beim Abschied zu singen,* Op. 84, for chorus and winds, in May and June; and the two piano trios, Opp. 63 and 80, from June till November. With regard to the project, Reinick's name appears for the last time in the diaries on January 15, 1848, when Schumann notes a meeting regarding the second act. Reinick had been basically out of the picture even as co-librettist for some time, however, and this fact is echoed in a letter he wrote to Ferdinand Hiller on November 11 of that same year:

> For a long time I have not seen the Schumanns. . . . Actually, I re-worked the text for him twice. But now he himself has worked on the text, which he had obliged me to adapt with rather peculiar caprices and in such a questionable way, and very often reduced it in such an eccentric manner that I no longer recognize the child as mine and must therefore disavow it in public. I cannot let this go under my name if I do not want to make a fool of myself, and I urge, should you hear my name mentioned in this connection, that you circulate something like: the text was written by Schumann based on Tieck and Hebbel and at most a few verses by me. . . . Certain parts Schumann surely cut short in the music, but also in the poem. And then again such crazy things can be found, that one is absolutely flabbergasted. Well, you know our ingenious, stubborn, whimsical saint with all his brains and his strange quirks. . . [17]

Now we can see that the withdrawal of Reinick's name from the libretto was mutually agreeable. Reinick seems to feel his reputation will be most

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außerordentlich kräftiges Vorbild in Hebbel." Johannes Häffner, *Aus Biedermeiertagen. Briefe R. Reinicks und seiner Freunde* (Bielefeld: 1910), p. 158.

[17] "Schumanns habe ich lange nie gesehen. . . . Den Text habe ich allerdings für ihn 2mal durchgearbeitet. Nun hat er aber dieser Text, in den ich schon manche curiose Capricen nach seinem Willen aufnehmen mußte, so wunderbarlich verarbeitet, und oft höchst abenteuerlich zugestutzt, daß ich mein Kindlein nicht mehr als solches anerkennen kann und es öffentlich desavouiren muß. Ich kann meinen Namen, ohne ihn zu blamiren, nicht dazu hergeben, und bitte Sie dringend, wenn Sie mich in dieser Beziehung nennen hören,daß sie möglichst es verbreiten: Der Text wäre von Schumann, nach Tieck, Hebbel und allenfalls nach einigen Versen von mir. . . . Manches hat Schumann gewiß musikalisch, oft auch poetisch zugestutzt, dann kommen wieder so tolle Dinge drin vor, daß man ganz stutzig wird. Nun! Sie kennen ja unsern genialen, eigensinnigen, wunderlichen Heiligen, mit all seinem Geist und allen seinen Schrullen." Reinhold Sietz, "R. Reinick und Ferd. Hiller. Dokumente einer Freundschaft," *Jahrbuch des Kölnischen Geschichtsvereins,* 36/37 (1963), p. 248.

severely compromised by "Schumann's peculiar caprices" and the way he "reduced" and "cut short" the original sources to fashion his text. But in one sense the reduction was a necessary evil, for both the original Tieck and Hebbel dramas each come to well over 200 pages apiece.

Yet Reinick's role had served an essential function, most probably in the niceties of versification,[18] an area where Schumann was lacking in experience. In a letter of May 19, 1848, we find evidence of just such a situation. Schumann had finally received the first two acts of the opera (text and music) from the scribe. He is happy with the outcome, but nevertheless writes earnestly to Reinick: "Word by word it needs much in the way of finishing touches, otherwise everything appears to me very dramatic and lively. I hope I can count on your help later to still add a few pieces, such as the chorus of vassals, etc."[19]

Ultimately, Schumann rather audaciously gives a tally to the forbearing Reinick, noting just how much of the latter's contribution he feels he has used. He writes high-handedly to Reinick on May 19, 1850, just before *Genoveva* went into rehearsal for its first performance in Leipzig: "You know, I only used a very small portion of your text, maybe 200 lines – but I could not do otherwise, if I wanted to comply with the musical and dramatic standards that I set myself."[20]

Schumann was pleased with himself and felt that his way of putting the text together was the right way. He perceived himself as the ultimate authority

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[18] Daverio, *Robert Schumann,* p. 339.

[19] ". . . Im einzelnen Wortausdruck bedarf Vieles der Nachbesserung, sonst scheint mir Alles recht dramatisch und lebendig. Auf Ihre Hülfe bei später noch nachzutragenden einzelnen Stücken, wie dem Chor der Knechte, pp. pp., kann ich wohl rechnen." *Ibid.* The Chor der Knechte (Chorus of Vassals) is an important part of the Finale to Act II of the opera.

[20] "Sie wissen, ich habe nur einen sehr kleinen Theil Ihres Textes benutzen können, vielleicht 200 Zeilen, —aber ich konnte nicht anders, wollte ich den muskalisch-dramatischen Forderungen, die ich mir gestellt, einigermaßen genügen." Sietz, "Zur Textgestaltung," p. 402.

with regard to questions of operatic aesthetics and dramaturgy, and he seemingly could not see beyond his own, independent conception of these things. He did not, however, renege on his promise of remuneration, and offered Reinick part of his publisher's honorarium of 20 Louis d'or. But 200 lines, plus various and sundry "tweaks," is no small order. It is actually more than the total number of direct quotes from Hebbel and Tieck combined, amounting to about 15 percent of the final libretto.

Schumann's concern that the libretto retain the Romantic strength and vigor he perceived so vividly in Hebbel is given further testimony in another letter, written to colleague Heinrich Dorn on November 6, 1849. This was some time after Schumann had yet again declared the text finished – August 4, 1848 – but not so long after a diary entry of July 11, 1849, when Schumann, still "tweaking," noted "Opera text put entirely in order." [21] During this period he was also concentrating on his *Requiem für Mignon,* Op. 98b, for soloists, chorus and orchestra.

Clearly, Schumann thought that the opera in its final form had overcome any tendency toward sentimentality. He declares to Dorn, with great confidence, almost as an acclamation:

> You can have both score and libretto at once. "Genoveva!" But don't think of the old sentimental one.[22] I think it is just a bit from a life story, as every dramatic poem should be. Indeed, the libretto is mainly founded on Hebbel's tragedy.[23]

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[21] "Operntext g[an]z in Ordnung gebracht." *TBIV,* p. 497.

[22] To Schumann, it was to remain essential that his *Genoveva* did not reflect any of the sentimentality of the original legend or its early dramatic redactions. It is quite plausible that his dramatic reduction of the original wilderness scene, with its child, doe and angel, was an attempt to remove such a quality from his opera. He did, however, introduce a mystical scene with cross and heavenly chorus.

Pairing "just a bit from a life story" and "mainly founded on Hebbel's tragedy" is an odd concatenation. The Hebbel drama is dark and unforgiving, relentlessly moving us on to its tragic end. It is strange, indeed, that Schumann's concept of a contemporary "life story" is in accord with this. What does this say about Schumann's own life story? Could it, too, become dramatic poetry? Was this what he thought he was living?

As was customary in literary circles, Schumann read his libretto to many people, ostensibly for creative input, but in his case more realistically for approbation. Many of the names mean nothing to us today; for instance, Bendemann, Hübner, Schmidt and Wenzel.[24] But there are a few leading lights of the time listed in the diaries: soprano Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient, Dr. Härtel of the famous publishing house Breitkopf & Härtel, and fellow composer Richard Wagner. Just as Wagner had read his *Lohengrin* to Schumann, so the favor was returned. Indeed, Wagner was the very first person to whom Schumann read his text, on August 12, 1848.[25]

Wagner entertained reservations about the effectiveness of Schumann's beloved creation. He attempted to give voice to them, but without success. In his autobiography he writes:

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[23] *The Life of Robert Schumann Told in his Letters,* vol. 2, p. 112.

[24] The four gentlemen noted as "lesser lights" were all good friends of Schumann. Eduard Bendemann was an historical painter and also a contributor to the *NZfM.* Julius Hübner was a portraitist. The most probable Schmidt (August) was both creator and redactor of the *Wiener allgemeiner Musikzeitung.* Ernst F. Wenzel was a teacher and a one time student of Friedrich Wieck. He also contributed to the *NZfM.*

[25] Wagner may well have been the first to whom Schumann read his work, but as late as June 10, 1850, he read it to Danish composer Niels Gade (1817–1890). This was at the point where the opera was actually in rehearsals, but Schumann continued to need support and continued to make slight revisions.

> [Schumann] invited me to hear him read his libretto, which was a combination of the styles [sic] of Hebbel and Tieck. When, however, out of a genuine desire for the success of his work, about which I had serious misgivings, I called his attention to some grave defects in it, and suggested the necessary alterations, I realized how matters stood with this extraordinary person: he simply wanted me to be swayed by himself, but deeply resented any interference with the product of his own ideals, so that thenceforward I let matters alone.[26]

Wagner, however, with typical egotism, was under the impression that his example of writing his own libretti had stimulated Schumann to do the same. There is another possible model, though, another influential Romantic figure prior to Schumann (and Wagner) who considered most thoughtfully the option of writing one's own opera text. This was Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann, (1776–1822) a man of many talents: a polemicist and critic, a storyteller and a musician.

If one were to choose an aspect of Hoffmann's production that garnered him the most recognition in his own lifetime, it would be in the area of his extraordinarily imaginative tales and criticisms. And because of a musical education – he studied with J. F. Reichardt – he was able to incorporate intelligent and believable musical imagery and dialogue into his stories. Much of it is on a high philosophical level. As Eric Sams expresses it, "His writings on music (like Schumann's) were technical and analytic because he was a practitioner and also descriptive and evocative because he was a writer."[27]

One of Hoffmann's major musical essays, "Der Dichter und der Komponist," appeared originally in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in two

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[26] Richard Wagner, *My Life,* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1939), authorized translation, p. 386.
[27] Eric Sams, "E.T.A. Hoffmann, 1766–1822," *Musical Times,* Vol. CXVII (January 1976), p. 29.

installments, December 8 and 15, 1813. The essay was to reappear six years later, however, in Hoffmann's extended, arch-Romantic collection *Die Serapionsbrüder,* and the musings it offers on the roles of composer and poet can reasonably be viewed as his most developed presentation of his operatic theories. It is useful to step back and examine Hoffmann's essays, because it reminds us that some three decades before the productive musical years of Wagner and Schumann, similar thoughts were on the minds of such textual luminaries as Hoffmann.

In *Die Serapionsbrüder, "*Der Dichter und der Komponist" appears near the end of the *Erster Abschnitt,* and is the focal point to which the evening's discussion among the brotherhood of Serapion has progressed.[28] Prior to it is an essay entitled *Die Fermate,* a "fantasy on Italian opera, singers, amorous intrigues, music lessons and the like."[29] Suddenly, seemingly out of the blue, Theodore, the young composer of the group, is confounded by the charge that he has not written an *opera tragica,* "which may be considered probably the highest goal at which a composer can aim."[30] Theodore retorts that he has not written such a work because he could not "ever succeed in inducing either of you [his two poet friends in the group] to write me a libretto, with all my entreaties."[31] The poet Cyprian responds that in order to write a libretto, a poet would have to study music, "so as to be able to understand and comply with your requirements."

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[28] One cannot help but see a parallel between Hoffmann's Serapion Brotherhood and Schumann's Davidsbund.
[29] Aubrey S. Garlington, "E.T.A. Hoffmann's 'Der Dichter und der Komponist' and the Creation of the German National Opera," *Musical Quarterly,* Vol. LXV/1 (January 1979), p. 28, 29.
[30] E.T.A. Hoffmann, *The Serapion Brethren by Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann*, trans. Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Ewing (London: G.Bell and Sons, 1892–1908) 2 vols., vol.1, p. 75.
[31] *Ibid.*

Now comes an interesting turn of events. Another poet in the group, Lothair, asks Theodore why he doesn't write his own librettos! After all, "Are perfect unity of text and music conceivable, except when poet and composer are one and the same person?"[32] Theodore responds that it is wholly impossible for one individual to write a work in which both words and music are excellent. Lothair's rejoinder is that "to a really inspired composer, words and music would appear simultaneously."[33] Regrettably, the debate comes to an end without reaching a firm conclusion, but "to understand Hoffmann is to understand the groping, hesitant search towards an intrinsically Romantic opera, synonymous with German opera . . . "[34]

In the essay "Der Dichter und der Komponist" proper, Theodore and Cyprian have been replaced by Ludwig (an obvious homage to Beethoven) and Ferdinand. Once more the question is leveled: Why doesn't the composer write both libretto and music for his own opera? Ludwig believes that it is simply too high a demand for one artist to learn the craft of another. He avers that it is enough for the poet to understand the "nature of music" for him to write a good libretto. The composer and poet share a common bond, and together create a more highly potentiated language:

> Indeed, in that faraway country, which surrounds us often with the strangest presentiments and from which wondrous voices call down to us, wakening all the echoes that sleep in our restricted breasts . . . there poets and musicians are members of a faith, related in the most intimate way; for the secret of word and tone is one and the same. . . . In a word, it would seem to me that only that opera in which the music arises directly from the poem as its inevitable offspring is

[32] *Ibid*.
[33] Hoffmann, *The Serapion Brethren,* p. 76.
[34] Garlington, "E.T.A. Hoffmann's 'Der Dichter,'" p. 32.

a genuine opera.[35]

Ferdinand persists further, and questions Ludwig as to whether it is only Romantic opera he would consider. Now we are drawing even closer to what is dear to Hoffmann's heart and, in the character of Ludwig, he offers an impassioned response:

> I certainly think the Romantic opera the only perfect kind, because it is only in the realm of the Romantic that music is at home. Of course, you will understand that I profoundly despise that miserable class of productions . . . where wonders are heaped upon wonders without rhyme or reason, merely for the delectation of the eyes of the musical groundlings. It is only a poet of genius who can write a book of a proper Romantic Opera. . .[36]

The echoes of Schumann and his admiration for the "poet of genius" are particularly strong here. Also, as noted previously, Schumann told Hebbel that "the conventional opera-libretto style is repugnant to me." He, too, heartily disliked the prevalent taste for "wonders heaped upon wonders," as he found in such composers as Meyerbeer.

Of interest, needless to say, is Hoffmann's participation in the creation of the libretto to his own major opera *Undine* (1816). Aubrey Garlington posits that Hoffmann entered into an active collaboration with librettist Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué. As a gifted writer himself, it would seem quite plausible that Hoffmann would feel a need to involve himself in the creative process.[37] It is actually

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[35] Oliver W. Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History from Classical Antiquity Through the Romantic Era* (New York: Norton, 1950), p. 787.
[36] Hoffmann, *The Serapion Brethren,* pp. 84, 85.
[37] Indeed, good librettos were in such short supply that, within the same decade in which *Undine* appeared, Spohr, Weber and Marschner all found themselves obliged to advertise publicly for opera texts.

surprising that Hoffmann did not write the libretto himself given his great interest in this manner of proceeding.

Even more expressively than Garlington, Mark Doerner describes the level of involvement Hoffmann had in the preparation of the *Undine* libretto.[38] One significant aspect was his devising of an entirely new ending – just like Schumann – and the discarding of an enormous amount of poetic material – again like Schumann. In a letter to Fouqué of August 15, 1812, Hoffmann explains explicitly his views regarding the power of music:

> I cannot adequately assure you how little I presume to restrict the distinguished poet in the least; only permit me to remark that if a good many events are omitted because the space of the drama cannot accommodate them, and thus many nuances seem to be lost, the music, which with its marvelous tones and chords reveals to man the mysterious spirit-realm of Romanticism, is capable of replacing everything.[39]

The effect of Hoffmann's writing on those around him was extraordinary (having the impact, one might conjecture, that he wished for his musical compositions). In *Mein Leben,* Wagner – an obvious real life successor to Lothair and Cyprian – claims that in his youth Hoffmann was his favorite author; Wagner's opera scenario to *Die Bergwerke zu Falun* (1842) is a dramatization of the tale of the same name in *Serapionsbrüdern.* And, in the same collection, the description of the Sängerkrieges auf der Wartburg ("Der Kampf der Sänger"), provided one of the sources for the *Tannhäuser* libretto.[40]

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[38] Mark Frederick Doerner, *The Influence of the "Kunstmärchen" on German Romantic Opera, 1814–1825* (Ph.D dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1990).
[39] Quoted in English translation in Doerner, *The Influence of the "Kunstmärchen,"* pp. 94, 95. Original source *E.T.A. Hoffmann: Dichter über ihre Dichtungen.* ed. Friedrich Schnapp (Munich: Heimeran,1974), vol. 13, p. 51.
[40] Siegfried Goslich, *Die deutsche romantische Oper* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1975), p. 88.

Schumann was well acquainted with the literary effusions of Hoffman; indeed, Schumann's primary experience of Hoffmann was through his writings, as neither of his operas, *Undine* and *Aurora*,[41] made it into the "standard repertoire," such as it was in the early nineteenth century. Schumann's earliest reference to Hoffmann the writer comes from a diary entry – in a section Schumann called "Hottentottiana" – dated August 15, 1828. There, Schumann fêtes Hoffmann, along with his other literary heroes, by giving them the highest of praise and comparing them with music. "Schubert is Jean Paul, Novalis and Hoffmann expressed in sounds."[42]

Schumann's next diary reference to Hoffmann comes in the *Leipziger Lebensbuch* and is dated two years later, June 5, 1831. It is surprisingly vitriolic: "In the evening read damned E.T.A. Hoffmann. *Klein Zaches* and ugly, disgusting fundamental idea." Yet a little later in the same entry some excitement is evinced: "One ventures hardly to breathe, if one reads Hoffmann."[43] And, by the next day, all is forgiven: "Read Hoffman uninterrupted. New Worlds. *Bergwerke zu Falun.* Opera text, which has me very enthusiastic."[44] *Die Bergwerke zu Falun* is another of the tales in *Die Serapionsbrüder.* Despite the enthusiasm to which Schumann

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[41] In December of 1838, Schumann was to make a reference to this composition of Hoffmann's. In his diary he notes: "Looked through *Aurora* by E.T.A. Hoffmann from Fuchs autograph collection." He offers no musical reaction. There is also never any mention of Hoffmann in Schumann's musical criticisms, but this is not surprising, as invariably he reviewed only the music of his immediate contemporaries.

[42] " . . . Schubert ist Jean Paul, Novalis u. Hoffmann in Tönen ausgedrükt [sic]." In Robert Schumann, *TBI,* p.111.

[43] "Abends in verdammten E.T.A. Hoffmann gelesen. Klein Zaches u. haßliche, ekelhafte Grundidee." "Man wage kaum zu athmen, wenn man Hoffman ließt." In Robert Schumann, *TBI,* pp. 336, 337.

[44] "Im Hoffmann gelesen, unausgesetzt. Neue Welten. Bergwerke zu Falun. Operntext, der mich sehr begeistert." In Robert Schumann, *TBI,* p. 337.

attests, however, he never made any attempt to create an opera libretto from it himself or to suggest it to a potential librettist.

A diary entry for October 13, 1831, appears promising, as at last a tale by Hoffmann seemed destined to bear operatic fruit: "Among plans for the future one stands above all: *Doge and Dogaressa*."[45] This title also stems from a tale in Part II of *Die Serapionsbrüder.* The projected opera, based on this story, was begun but never completed.

This is the extent of Schumann's diary acknowledgements of readings from Hoffmann. If he was not directly acquainted with "Der Dichter und der Komponist*,"* then he nevertheless was a part of the Romantic ethos that absorbed the approach to libretti espoused by Hoffmann. But it seems highly unlikely, given his detailed reading of *Die Serapionsbrüder,* that Schumann did not read this essay, too. Here was a fellow spirit, one who believed in the possibility of the composer and librettist of Romantic German opera being one and the same. It is not beyond the bounds of probability that Hoffmann's position on this matter had some influence, even if unconsciously, on the direction that Schumann chose to take with his *Genoveva* text. At least it could provide him with confidence that this was a road already traveled.

Although creating a text from a combination of Tieck and Hebbel that pleased him was a long and painstaking process, this did not prevent Schumann from proceeding with the music to *Genoveva* even before beginning the text. Indeed, contrary to the prevailing practice of creating it as the final element, Schumann drafted the overture first, on April 3, 1847, only two days after

[45] "An Plänen für die Zukunft steht oben an: Doge u. Dogaressa." Robert Schumann, *TBI,* p. 372.

"discovering" the subject matter. On April 1, the very day on which Schumann decided on the topic, he already notes "Overture Ideas." It is as though he wanted to capture the essence of his idea of the drama in sound alone. A sketch was ready two days later, and then the music was seemingly put aside until its instrumentation was completed on December 26.[46]

From April to December 1847, Schumann was primarily concerned with his libretto. Although the *Haushaltbücher* do not specify when the text to Act I was prepared, it was certainly prior to January 3, 1848, when the musical sketches for that act were begun. By January 26, the text for the second act was ready as was the third act by approximately April 5, and that for Act IV on June 29. (For documents relating to the genesis of both libretto and score, see Appendix 1.)

In January of 1848 Schumann had begun a productive working routine that sustained him throughout the completion of the entire opera. Once he was satisfied that the text was in order, he would begin to sketch the music for the particular act, his continuity draft generally consisting of the vocal line(s) and a skeletal piano score.[47] Then he would move on to the instrumentation, which would occupy him for anywhere from a couple of weeks to a month. He even had "false starts." After the sketches to Act III were finished on May 3, 1848, Schumann noted in his *Haushaltbuch* on May 13 that the orchestration for the act had commenced. Yet, on June 6 there is another entry: "Begun third act instrumentation again."[48] The most probable reason for this interruption was Schumann's preparation for the première of the music to the *Schlußszene* of his

[46] See Appendix 1. *Genoveva's* Genesis: Entries from the *Haushaltbücher* (*TBIII* and *TBIV*).
[47] Daverio, *Robert Schumann,* p. 340.
[48] See Appendix 1.

Scenen aus Goethes Faust, WoO3*,* which he had completed "with joy" on April 23, 1847, while in the thick of working on the *Genoveva* text.

By August 4, 1848, *Genoveva,* text and music, were essentially complete. Schumann noted "Great joy. Also Clara's." in his diary.[49] Yet, on August 10, Schumann is still noting that he is making improvements to the text and, even much later, on July 11, 1949, he notes: "Text put entirely in order."[50] With some considerable difficulty, Schumann had managed to surmount the obstacles inherent in putting together a libretto from divergent sources. He had combined the dramas of Tieck and Hebbel into what he deemed a satisfactory unity.

[49] He immediately moved on to the Overture to *Manfred,* Op 115.
[50] See Appendix 1.

CHAPTER III

THE SOURCES FOR THE PLOT

Robert Schumann's opera *Genoveva* was not based on a pre-existent libretto, nor was it an operatic retelling of a tale derived purely from his own imagination. Rather, it was constructed from an operatic retelling of a tale of early nineteenth-century literary tragedies: the *Genoveva* dramas of Ludwig Tieck and Friedrich Hebbel. These tragedies, in turn, were founded on the medieval legend of Geneviève of Brabant.

Schumann delved deeply into his models, deriving significant plot elements and quoting actual lines verbatim from both contemporary sources. Needless to say, much from the sources was also modified, predominantly to render it more suitable for opera but also, one assumes, to suit the creative sensibilities of its composer. Schumann's own imaginative resourcefulness was at play, and although he was not to give himself credit as the librettist of the opera, it would have been more than fitting for him to do so.

It is important to familiarize oneself with the Tieck and Hebbel tragedies in order to ascertain just what these originals offered dramatically and to see what Schumann both rejected and accepted from them. The following material thus attempts to present a précis of the Tieck and Hebbel plays, keeping in mind that the originals are constructed and conceived of very differently and run to well over 200 pages apiece. Both important concurrences and divergences are illustrated, the better to show Schumann's own literary talents and proclivities.

Turning works intended for the theater into a serviceable, dramatic opera libretto was no easy task and, of course, Schumann sought to achieve much more than the simply mundane or commonplace. He tackled the "reduction" with alacrity, concluding the endeavor within the space of a mere fourteen months. As each act of the text was completed and edited, Schumann immediately placed it in its musical context. Such a dual compositional method helped to thrust the work forward and aided in the coalescence of text and music.

The reduction of the original texts into an opera libretto was indeed a vast task. Somehow, Schumann cut the texts (Tieck and Hebbel's plays combined) down to a more feasible 1,120. In order to do so in a way that still made sense would have been a considerable challenge. Fortunately, Schumann had a strong literary background, and this surely enhanced his powers of discrimination. His knowledge of operas was also extensive, and he realized the strengths and limitations of his chosen genre.

As noted, a significant aspect of Schumann's adaptation of these dramas into an operatic libretto was the inclusion of direct and sometimes lengthy extracts taken from the two dramas. While perhaps unusual for his time, this concept of *Literaturoper* gained wide currency in the late nineteenth century. From Hebbel, Schumann used 111 pre-existent lines, while from Tieck, he took only twenty-five. One could infer that the opera as a whole is considerably more indebted to Hebbel's *Genoveva* – as is the accustomed view – but I would suggest that this view is not completely accurate. Schumann interweaves cleverly between his two

sources. He does not extract lines from them in a precise order, but moves back and forth as his libretto dictates.

What increases the word count of contributions from Hebbel's play so considerably is the verbatim inclusion of two rather lengthy soliloquies – Golo's "kiss" scene in Act I and Margaretha's evil dream in Act III – as well as the twenty-five-line dialogue that occurs directly after Drago's murder in the Finale to Act II.[1] These numbers clearly suited Schumann's dramatic purpose and thus remained intact.

Hebbel's words are spread most evenly throughout Schumann's libretto. Each of Schumann's four acts has a significant amount of material while, with regard to Tieck, Act III has no direct borrowings whatsoever. Yet, in this very act, it is Tieck's lengthy, fantastic conception of the Magic Mirror Scene that Schumann uses. Each type of contribution thus seems to have been considered very carefully.

Knowing the original dramas from which Schumann extracted plot, action and language helps in the understanding of his opera. Indeed, this foreknowledge allows one to read details into the opera that might otherwise go unrecognized. Audiences of Schumann's time most probably had this advantage, too, for both Tieck and Hebbel were respected and popular authors in their day, widely read throughout The German-speaking regions. And, various versions of the original legend were very well known throughout Europe as a whole.[2]

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[1] See Appendix 2: Direct Quotes from Ludwig Tieck's *Leben und Tod der heiligen Genoveva: Ein Trauerspiel.*

[2] Copies of sources for both Tieck and Hebbel's plays are housed at the R-S-H Zwickau: Ludwig Tieck, *Leben und Tod der heiligen* Genoveva. Ein Trauerspiel (G. Reimer, Berlin, 1820). D-Zsch

The following exploration of theatrical versions will serve as an introduction to *Genoveva* the opera. Subsequently, we shall explore the content of Schumann's libretto itself, examining how he fashioned it with inspiration from the two dramas, while adding much that was purely original.

LUDWIG TIECK'S *LEBEN UND TOD DER HEILIGEN GENOVEVA*

Ludwig Tieck's (1773–1853) *Leben und Tod der heiligen Genoveva: Ein Trauerspiel* dates from 1799 and, despite the youth of its author, is surprisingly sophisticated.[3] While it is based on the medieval legend of Geneviève of Brabant, Tieck was also familiar with at least two redactions of the story from more "modern" times. In 1797, in Hamburg, Tieck read the unpublished manuscript of a drama by Friedrich Müller (1749–1825) entitled *Golo und Genovefa.* It was based on a puppet play. Tieck's chief source, however, was the seventeenth-century German chapbook, *Eine schöne anmutige und lesenswürdige Historie von der unschuldig bedrängten heiligen Pfalzgräfin Genoveva,* which Tieck read in 1798.[4]

The sources from which Tieck derived his Genoveva material were by no means the only ones available. In 1685 the Jesuit priest René de Cérisier had written a novel based on the legend entitled *L'Innocence reconnu.* Still earlier, in

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7184-A4/C1); C..F. Hebbel, *Genoveva: Tragödie* (Hoffmann & Campe, Hamburg, 1843). D-Zsch 6072-A4/C1.

[3] The designation *Leben und Tod* was by no means an unusual one. In 1800, immediately after *Genoveva,* Tieck wrote a comic folk tale entitled *Leben und Tod des kleinen Rotkäppchens*. Christoph Martin Wieland (1733–1813) translated Shakespeare's *King John* as *Leben und Tod des Königs Johann* and *King Lear* as *Leben und Tod des Königs Lear.*

[4] Alan Corkhill, *The Motif of "Fate" in the Works of Ludwig Tieck* (Stuttgart: Akademischer Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1978), p. 167.

the *Decameron,* Giovanni Boccaccio included two tales which bear some resemblance to the Genoveva tale – those of Bernabò and Zinevra (the ninth tale of the second day)[5] and Griselda (the tenth tale of the tenth day). The latter of the these had profound musical consequences – it spawned some twenty-five operas. The best known composers of these works include Antonio Bononcini (1718), Alessandro Scarlatti (1721), and Antonio Vivaldi (1735).[6] Post-dating Schumann's opera are at least two others: Jacques Offenbach's *opéra bouffe Geneviève de Brabant* from 1859 and Jules Massenet's *Grisélidis* of 1891, which, of all the versions of the Griselda story, resembles Schumann's *Genoveva* most closely.[7]

Genoveva's story is a typical example of the tale in which a chaste wife is falsely accused and repudiated, generally due to the claim of a rejected suitor. Genoveva's "story is said to rest on the history of Marie of Brabant, wife of Louis II, Duke of Bavaria and Count Palatine of the Rhine. Marie de Brabant was suspected of infidelity . . . and beheaded on 18 January 1256. . . . The change in name from Marie to Geneviève may be traced back to a cult of St. Geneviève, patroness of Paris."[8]

The Tieck version of *Genoveva* also had great impact on the literary world. In 1806 Christoph von Schmid created a novella based upon *Genoveva,*

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[5] The Bernabò and Zinevra story bears an even more striking resemblance to Weber's plot for his 1823 opera *Euryanthe.* The name Zinevra is a cognate of Geneviève, via which we arrive at Genoveva.

[6] All three of these works were based on the libretto of Apostolo Zeno (1668–1750), which was originally written for Bononcini's opera.

[7] Giacomo Puccini's publisher Ricordi posited that the opera *Suor Angelica* was inspired by Hebbel's play.

[8] Max Lüthi, *Once Upon A Time: On the Nature of Fairy Tales* (New York: Frederick Ungar 1970), p. 76.

and as late as 1914 Hanna Rademacher produced *Golo und Genovefa: Drama in drei Aufzügen.* Tieck's play was not only popular in Germany, but also disseminated widely in both adaptation and translation in southeastern Europe.[9]

The fundamental legend is simple enough. Geneviève of Brabant is married to Count Palatine Siegfried of Hohenstimmen near Trèves. During her husband's absence at a holy war, she is falsely accused by Golo, a steward who is in love with her, of infidelity. She is condemned to death but is spared by a compassionate squire, who neverthless leaves her in the forest, apparently doomed to death from starvation. However, for six years she manages to survive in a cave, nourishing herself and her young son Schmerzenreich with the milk of a doe. Finally her husband discovers her innocence, finds her while on a hunt, and takes her back to the castle. All is forgiven.[10]

With regard to the plot, Tieck's dramatized version of the legend adheres closely to the essentials of the "original," although with the introduction of substantial episodes of typical Romantic fare – magic, witchery and battle scenes of the war against the Moors. He turned the simple story into a dramatic, epic-lyric glorification of the Middle Ages, with a strong Catholic element which

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[9] Miroslav J. Hanak and Nadeza Andreeva–Popova, "Folklore and Romantic Drama," in *Romantic Drama,* ed. Gerald Gillespie (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1994), p. 115 ff.

[10] Lewis Spence in *Hero Tales and Legends of the Rhine* (London: George G. Harrap 1915), pp. 82-84), notes that there are a number of different versions of the legend, which is not a surprise given its medieval, orally transmitted origins. He suggests that the true location of the tale is the Rhine city of Andernach. After giving a synopsis of the simple plot – which differs in some small regard from Tieck's – he ends his discussion with the following charming rhyme, which gives a new complexion to Golo's unhappy end:

"Oh! There was joy in Andernach upon that happy night:
The palace rang with revelry, the city blazed with light:
And when the moon her paler beams upon turrets shed,
Above the Roman gate was seen the traitor Golo's head!"

represented the perceived simplicity of the early Middle Ages and the mystical faith in providence that was part of it.

Ultimately, Tieck's drama evolved into a 6,500 word play, broken into some sixty segments. These segments are not acts but scenes. They amplify locations of the action, which change quickly and constantly, both energizing the play and at the same time disrupting it. Edwin H. Zeydel sees the work as a fundamental example of Romantic drama:

> Tieck's primary purpose was not to dramatize this plain tale. True to a Romantic tenet, he would create a "picture of the times" by conjuring up musical moods and atmosphere and reproducing the heartiness, courtly love and piety of Genevieve's day. . . . The age he presents is one surcharged with religion. Crusades, religious speeches, visions, dreams, prophecies and miracles figure prominently.[11]

The above pertains perfectly to the dramatic style of Tieck's play, which is rich and highly varied. The subject is widespread and the range of form and expression attempts the universal.

> This marshalling of a bewildering and bewitching variety of lyrical forms, these fascinating synaesthetic flickers . . . are not an exercise in Romantic self-gratification with the iridescence of language; [but] the desire to transcend existing forms of drama . . . to create poetry which is in itself more than a mere amalgamation of styles, but a higher synthesis of them.[12]

Indeed, one could make the claim that in Tieck's version of the legend, the dramatic element is almost surpassed by the lyric passages. If his *Genoveva* were a musical work one could aptly designate it a fantasia. In two letters from 1801 to his publisher Frommann, Tieck himself actually referred to *Genoveva* as "my

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[11] Edwin H. Zeydel, *Ludwig Tieck, the German Romanticist: A Critical Study* (Hildesheim, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1971), p. 119.
[12] Roger Paulin, *Ludwig Tieck: A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 119, 120.

opera, the fairy tale."[13] This statement could have a multiplicity of meanings, but the most apparent seems to be the idea of the much revered synthesis of artistic forms.

In a letter to Robert Reinick dated April 12, 1847 – ten days after his discovery of Hebbel's tragedy – Schumann comments on having become preoccupied with Tieck's *Genoveva* and its many beauties.[14] Yet, in the main it is not the beauties of the language itself that Schumann adopted. Rather, it is the complexities of the character portrayals – particularly Genoveva – and the delights of the fairy tale-like development. Even more importantly, he extracted the essence of the medieval tale and wisely dispensed with multifarious episodes which, though attractive, were too tangential to furnish sound material for his dramatic opera libretto.

Tieck's cast of characters is long, with some twenty-nine named *Personen,* as well as sundry retainers, burgers and soldiers. Schumann wisely reduces this vast number to a core cast of ten characters. Some of them, such as Tieck and Hebbel's nurse and witch, he combines into one.[15]

In Tieck, the dramatic action is preceded by a prologue in which St. Bonifacius tells of the noble deeds of Charles Martell and the holy Genoveva. The narrative is static and descriptive rather than dramatic. Schumann introduces a parallel character, the Bishop Hidulfus who, in the first number of the opera, also tells of the deeds of Martell and calls all able-bodied men to battle. Both

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[13] Zeydel, *Ludwig Tieck,* p. 121.
[14] Sietz, "Zur Textgestaltung," p. 398.
[15] Tieck's nurse is Gertrud and her evil sister is Winfreda. Hebbel uses the names Katharina and Margaretha in the same opposed relationship. Schumann's Margaretha is nurse and witch rolled into one.

Bonifacius and Hidulfus will reappear at their respective work's conclusions, to sum up and circumscribe the action of the story.

After we have been introduced to St. Bonifacius, we move to what will be one of many interspersed pastoral scenes, the static and "non-essential" nature of which no doubt caused Schumann to ignore them. The shepherd Heinrich is singing a *Grablied* to his companion Dietrich. In the distance they perceive Golo, a carefree, courageous, feckless young knight. He, too, is singing and Heinrich says admiringly: "Er kann alles; er singt, er musizirt/Er kann Gemälde machen und Reimweisen." (He can do everything; he sings, he makes music/He can paint and write poetry.)[16] Golo gallops up on his stallion and asks Heinrich to repeat his song. This *Schicksalslied* will stay with Golo, rather like a leitmotif, and recur at disturbing moments in his personal drama.

It is surely from Tieck's introduction of Golo that Schumann derived the idea to cast his character as a fearless knight and an accomplished musician. His Golo, however, only reveals his musical abilities on two occasions, the second of which, his duet with Genoveva in Act II, no. 9, becomes a critical moment in the opera. Here we move from relative serenity to an atmosphere of hatred and revenge.

Tieck's Golo reveals a much more complex psyche than the simple villain of the chapbook. He is conflicted between desire and conduct, and this idea plays out with even greater depth and skill in Schumann's opera. Common to every source consulted for the opera is the fact that, to Golo's dismay, he is not to go to battle but must remain behind as Genoveva's trusted guardian. This is a grievous

[16] Tieck, *Genoveva,* p. 10.

disappointment to him and will serve to induce his downfall into dishonor and treachery.

The scene that follows is a complete digression, yet another of the many interwoven throughout Tieck's drama. Siegfried arrives at the German camp and talks with Martell.[17] They will fight against the Moors for God and Christendom. Schumann, probably wisely, forgoes the opportunity to present Tieck's many battle scenes on the stage. The need for greater concision of action surely occasioned this decision. And Schumann was not attracted to scenes that easily devolve into empty, melodramatic shows of bravado or what he would have considered cacophony or bawdiness.

At the castle, Golo is reflecting on why he is suddenly so troubled and unhappy. He evinces all the symptoms of a growing passion. Genoveva, who is musical, too, requests that he sing to her: "Hier is die Laute, spielt es noch einmal." (Here is the lute, play it again.)[18] Still in a state of confusion he agrees, reluctantly, only to break down sobbing after singing the first verse of the *Grablied*. Genoveva's misconception and innocent response is that it is his excessive virtue and loyalty to her husband that have so distressed him.

Schumann is influenced considerably by a scene in which Golo plays and sings his *Grablied* to Genoveva. At the climax of Act II (no. 9), Golo takes up a zither, at Genoveva's behest, and they sing harmoniously a lengthy strophe about loneliness and separation – "Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär'." (If I were a Little Bird.)

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[17] In all, battle scenes occupy some sixty pages in Tieck's drama.
[18] Tieck, *Genoveva,* p. 42.

Tieck moves us to the garden of the castle where, under the moonlight, Golo once more sings with this lute. Genoveva, with Golo's old nurse Gertrud, listens from the castle balcony. A decisive moment occurs. Golo starts singing compliments to the countess. Genoveva finally stops him with "Halt't inne Golo mit den Schmeichelworten,/Die in der stillen Nacht mein Ohr bezaubern . . ." (Golo, stop your flattery,/which enchants my ear in the quiet night.)[19] So, she herself is not unaffected by him! She will never proceed to act on her attraction to Golo, but when she subsequently confides in Gertrud (who will not keep the secret), she inadvertently fans the flames of Golo's hopes.

Schumann picks up this idea of reciprocity of affection in the mildest of manners. Just prior to the scene where the two sing their duet in Act II, he includes a very subtle flirtation, as Genoveva cajoles Golo into singing with her. This influences the nature of the duet. In Tieck's drama, everything moves much more slowly, but the parallel between play and opera is unmistakable, even if Tieck will take the mutual attraction idea considerably further than does Schumann.

Inside the castle, Gertrud reveals her great affection for her ward Golo. He is a *Liebeskind* whose father, a count, died in battle and whose mother, a commoner, grieved to death.[20] He has been brought up by Gertrud and the noble knight Wolf, and despite his illegitimate origins, has been revered by all for his many talents and knightly conduct. But Golo's illegitimacy, in both play and opera, is almost unbearable to him. The reverence accorded him by court and folk

[19] *Ibid.,* p. 74.
[20] At the time the play is set, a man of unknown familial origins was also know as a "natürlicher Sohn."

is mirrored in Schumann, but it is the explicit mention of his bastardy by Genoveva that has a devastating effect on him.

Tieck tells us something of Genoveva's early days. She was to have become a nun, but left the convent to marry Siegfried. Nevertheless, her faith remained sure and deep. She reveals that in her youth she had a vision of Christ, who told her: "Du bist für Gram und Leiden nur geboren." (You are born only for grief and suffering.)[21] Rather than being afraid she was ecstatic, for with her deep devotion she revelled in the fact that she had been chosen for special Christian service. Alan Corkhill reflects, "The certainty of Christ's love and the promise of an everlasting reward tend to dissolve the ensuing tragedy, since they give meaning to her suffering and reveal the justice of the universal order."[22] There is certainly truth to this, but the degree of Genoveva's suffering seems inordinate, and thus a tragic element remains. Schumann, regrettably, omits all mention of Genoveva's heavenly visitation. Thus, in the opera, her considerable suffering, although still interpreted by her as the work of divine providence, lacks a certain strong and persuasive underpinning.

Once Gertrud becomes fully aware of Golo's love, she actually encourages him to pursue his passion. She makes reference to Golo's physical beauty, and not so subtly mentions its potential effect: "Wär ich ein wackrer junger Herr, mit Augen/Wie ihr, ich hielte meine Hoffnung fest,/Und wäre ich in die Königin verliebt." (Were I a valiant young man, with eyes/like yours, I would

[21] Tieck, *Genoveva,* p. 88.
[22] Corkhill, *The Motif of "Fate,"* p. 189.

hold fast to my hopes,/were I in love with the queen.)[23] Schumann uses these three lines verbatim in the Finale to Act I of his *Genoveva,* where they are sung by the witch Margaretha. He, too, it seems, appreciated the added impetus of reckless encouragement to fan the fire of Golo's secret hopes.

In the castle, a servant arrives with a painting of Genoveva. When Golo enters and begins to rave, generous Genoveva at first believes him to be ill. But his wildness does not cease, and he breaks out with "O Zauberin/Du hast mein Leben mir durch Kunst entführt!" (Enchantress/You have stolen my life with magic art!)[24] Genoveva is understandably taken aback and reminds Golo that she is the wife of the Pfalzgraf Siegfried, who will learn of this behavior upon his return. Nothing can stop Golo now though, and in his rage he engages in a frenzied mutilation of Genoveva's portrait. The confrontation is adjourned by the fortuitous arrival of the aged steward Drago.

Schumann omits the scene with the painting. (Hebbel, however, borrows it.) In lieu of a passionate exchange at this juncture, Schumann moves it back to the scene of the musical duet, and thus obtains much increased plot succinctness. The idea, however, is based on a similar foundation: the ability of art and beauty to move one to excesses of sensibility.

In Tieck's play, the conflict between Genoveva and Golo still prevails. In the garden, the two speak of the beauties of nature, but Golo simply cannot contain himself, and by this time his lack of grounding in reality amounts to an almost psychotic disturbance. He tells Genoveva that she loves him, and her

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[23] Tieck, *Genoveva,* p. 95.
[24] *Ibid.,* p. 104.

despondent response is "O weh mir! wieder fällt ihn Wahnsinn an!" (O woe is me! He is again assailed by madness!)[25] Once again, Schumann moves the material to the compact duet scene, using the lines directly from Tieck's play.

Drago is the scapegoat in Tieck's play. At the castle, in Genoveva's private chambers, he and Genoveva speak of spiritual matters. Suddenly, Golo, Benno and other vassals force their way in. Cruelly and hypocritically Golo announces he has been sent to watch over Genoveva's honor and Drago has besmirched it. Without benefit of trial or judge, Drago is taken to the tower. Genoveva, too, is dragged off to prison where, to the surprise of all, she will soon bear Siegfried's son, Schmerzenreich (rich in pain).

Schumann omits the child Schmerzenreich from his opera completely.[26] The only reference to even the possibility of offspring occurs in Act II, no. 13, when Margaretha, ostensibly healing the wounded Siegfried (but in reality trying to poison him), asks him bluntly whether he has a child. His response is wistful: "Noch ist's ein Wunsch/Schon lang harr' ich auf Kunde." (It is still a wish/And I have long awaited news.) One could suppose that the possibility and wish for a child could make him more open to believing in Genoveva's infidelity.

Yet again Golo appears and tells Genoveva that all he wants is a word, a kiss, an embrace, "und du bist frei" (and you are free). And again Genoveva says no, even to death. Schumann takes this moment – Golo's entreaty and further rejection – and moves it all the way to the wilderness scene, Act IV, no. 17 of *Genoveva.* These are almost Golo's final words in the entire opera – the final

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[25] *Ibid.*, p. 121.
[26] For more on Schumann's purposeful omission of Schmerzenreich, see Chapter VI below.

sentences come from Hebbel. Broken and defeated, Golo will leave her to the henchmen. Just as Genoveva, in Hebbel's tragedy, will wander off disconsolately into the wilderness towards the end of the drama, so, in Schumann's opera, Golo disappears down the path by which he had come, his ultimate fate unknown to us. Neither of these ultimate exits is terribly satisfactory, for understandably the listener wants to know what becomes of these main characters.

In Schumann's libretto, it is the term "bastard" that drives Golo to try to destroy Genoveva. After the duet in Act II, it is this very word that Genoveva uses in her expostulation to drive Golo away: "Zurück, ehrloser Bastard!" (Keep back, dishonorable bastard!) Three lines later, when Genoveva has departed, Golo responds darkly "Fluch dir!" (Curse you!) He and Margaretha will be the instruments of this curse. While "bastard" comes from Tieck, the idea of the curse is taken from Hebbel (Act II, scene x).

Golo decides it is time that Siegfried knew the "truth" about his faithless bride. Siegfried has been gone ten months, which would now make Schmerzenreich's paternity an open question. Golo reasons, too, that he must get to the Count in some way before he returns to his castle, where Genoveva may full well convince him of Golo's heinous crime. Schumann's Golo acts on the same impulse.

Benno, a vassal, is dispatched to Strasbourg to be the bearer of a letter with the incriminating news. Upon reading it, Siegfried's feelings of love for his wife are erased instantaneously, as is his sense of trust in her virtue. And, this peremptory outburst of hatred is not just a shocked initial reaction to the news the

letter bears, but continues right up until the moment that Siegfried believes Genoveva to have been executed. A similar dire reaction pertains in Schumann's opera, where Golo himself bears the letter to Siegfried; it is equally inexplicable. Male honor, it seems, prevails over reason.

When Benno has departed, Siegfried momentarily allows his deep anguish and feebleness to come forth: "Ich fühl mich matt und hülflos wie ein Kind." (I feel weak and helpless like a child.)[27] Hebbel paints Siegfried as an emotional weakling, but Schumann does not take up much of this helpless aspect of Siegfried's character. In fact, he transforms Siegfried into a courageous, self-determined man, although without strong wit or imagination.

Golo remains uneasy that Siegfried may find out what has really transpired. Gertrude tells of a sister, Winfreda, who is learned in various devilish arts. This is perfect for Golo. Perhaps this sorceress – a fitting accessory for the Middle Ages – can conjure up something that will make the claims laid against Genoveva irrefutable.

Now Golo sets out for Strasbourg. He tells the wounded Siegfried of Winfreda, that she knows of deeply hidden things and has the gift of prophecy. Siegfried is easily convinced, the two men leave for her hut, and Siegfried immediately demands to see how his wife has behaved since his departure. Winfreda tells the men to gaze at her magic mirror. It is only after the fifth incantation that forms begin to become visible. A parallel to the Wolf Glen's Scene in Weber's *Der Freischütz* is unmistakable, and Schumann will "tighten"

[27] *Genoveva,* p. 167.

the drama of the scene to make it even more compact. At the same time he expands the scene musically, recreating the magical aspect of his source.

While Schumann will treat the incantation aspect a little differently, his magic mirror scene is divided into three scenes and three images, which, in their progression, are very close to those invented by Tieck. Again, in both Schumann and Tieck, Siegfried is duped by appearances. His gullibility and limited world view are further reinforced, as is his tendency to make snap judgements and be tricked by superficial appearances.

In the final event the vassals Benno and Grimoald are conscripted to take Genoveva and the child into the wilderness to kill them. (Schumann also uses vassals as the intended executioners.) In both play and opera, the party arrives at a dreadfully desolate, rocky valley, which terrifies Genoveva. Her emotions gain ascendency, and she suddenly cries out for clemency, "So helf' mir Gott, wie ich unschuldig bin! . . . Ein böser Mann hat alles angestiftet." (Thus help me God, as I am innocent! . . . An evil man instigated everything.)[28] Why she does not name Golo as the villain is something of a mystery, and why the vassals do not ask or taunt her is another curiosity. Although it takes her a little time, in both Hebbel and Schumann Genoveva states Golo's culpability explicitly.

Grimoald has a conscience, and after hearing Genoveva's entreaties he decides to let her live. (Schumann's retainers, Balthasar and Caspar, reveal no such qualms, and are quite prepared to murder her.) Tieck's Genoveva promises never again to turn to men for help; she will flee into the wild mountains with her son and end her life in loneliness. Thus her prophesied *Probezeit* (time of trials)

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 191.

begins. She surrenders herself to the will of God. At once a doe appears, a source of milk for Schmerzenreich. Genoveva is reassured, and the three enter the cave which is to become their home for seven long, lonely years.[29]

Tieck moves us many years into the future. By some unlikely accident, Siegfried has found a letter from Genoveva. It identifies Golo as the instigator of the evil plot to malign her character. Siegfried seeks Golo urgently, but when he finds him Golo takes the letter and answers indignantly: "Ein schlimmer Argwohn hat dein Herz umzogen . . . Ich lüge nicht, und habe nie gelogen!" (A wicked suspicion has possessed your heart . . . I am not lying and have never lied!) His depravity contrasts strongly with both the Hebbel and Schumann redactions, where a deeply conflicted yet remorseful Golo thrice and twice, respectively, begs Siegfried to believe he has lied. Ironically, Siegfried will have none of it, believing Golo to be acting the role of the truest of friends.

Meanwhile, Genoveva's extreme piety has made her the object of a miracle. One day she is kneeling by her cave praying, when an angel descends from heaven carrying in his hand an ivory crucifix upon which is affixed the figure of Christ. The angel speaks: "Ich bring ihn aus der Höhn, den lichten,/Daß du vor ihm magst Gebet verrichten." (I bring it from on high,/That you may pray before it.)[30] In the vicinity is a rock altar, upon which the crucifix stands

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[29] Noteworthy is the fact that both Tieck and Hebbel change the six years of Genoveva's life in the wilderness, as seen in the original legend, to seven. The number seven has many spiritual associations: seven virtues, seven deadly sins, seven days of creation, Aristotle's (Politics) seven-year periods for educating children, even the seven wonders of the world. One can only assume thinking along these lines was the reason for the change. Schumann, on the other hand, can hardly afford to depict the semblance of seven years on stage. While never made absolutely explicit, his wilderness scene at the opening of Act IV appears to last no more than a day or two at most.

[30] Tieck, *Genoveva*, p. 213.

unaided.[31] With great religious devotion, Genoveva kneels humbly, thus reuniting with her spiritual bridegroom as foretold in her vision at the convent. This is a significant moment when Genoveva, her steadfastness and faith rewarded, is transfigured from a mere woman into a saint. Her exemplary spiritual conduct redeems her from sin through divine grace.

Schumann, too, will use this idea of a cross in the wilderness to great dramatic effect. It is the instrument of Genoveva's spiritual and physical salvation, and she is moved to both ecstasy and acceptance of her fate by its presence. Indeed, her protracted prayer before the cross is what ultimately saves her from death.

As ordained, the sorceress Winfreda (as does Hebbel's Margaretha) arrives at Siegfried's castle after seven years, wanting desperately to confess her wicked trickery with the magic mirror (before she herself dies). She reveals that Golo was the one who bribed her. Siegfried rails against him, exploding with impotent rage: "O Golo! höllenschwarzer Bösewicht!/Wie konnt' ich doch dem niedern Bastard trauen?" (O Golo! Diabolical villain!/How could I trust the low bastard?)[32] Schumann's Margaretha will also confess – immediately, though, per Drago's threat – and will lead Siegfried and his men directly to Genoveva, arriving within mere moments of Genoveva's planned execution. Once again,

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[31] This image of a crucifix on a rock altar is strikingly reminiscent of many of the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich, especially *The Cross in the Fir Trees* (c. 1808). A more pertinent famous Romantic painting of Genoveva with doe and child entitled *Genoveva secluded in the Forest,* is by Adrian Ludwig Richter.

[32] Tieck, *Genoveva,* p. 223. While on occasion it has been mentioned that the word "bastard" was rather too strong for Schumann's time and place, here we see it in Tieck's drama from 1791!

Schumann must condense the drama in order to contain it within the musical time frame of his conception of a well-timed (i.e., not too long) opera.[33]

In Tieck, the sad, broken Siegfried finds Genoveva while on a hunt. He has set off in pursuit of a doe that conveniently leads him into Genoveva's cave. There he sees a figure that he believes to be a ghost. Superstition predominating, he asks if it is from God. Genoveva responds quietly, "Ich bin von Gott . . . ein arm, nackt, schwach und elend Weib." (I am from God . . . a poor, naked, weak and wretched woman.)[34] Piece by piece she tells him the story of her trials. He asks for her name and that of her noble husband. With complete innocence she tells him. He is appropriately horrified when he realizes who she is, and that he is the cause of her great misery and deprivation.

In Genoveva's mind it is providence that is responsible for her salvation, and the saintly woman forgives her husband his lack of trust and mercy without one word of reproach. Schumann adopts this scenario in Act IV, no. 19 of *Genoveva;* he borrows Tieck's lines unaltered, but presents the entire number in a much more condensed form, with the extent of the reunion between husband and wife considerably truncated. Once again this makes Siegfried appear insensitive – the duration of his apology to his wife is grossly inadequate in relation to the hardships he has brought upon her.[35] The only indication that they have really reunited is the singing of phrases in thirds and sixths (à la "Vöglein.")

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[33] According to Steven Billington, annotations in Schumann's continuity draft indicate very precise timings for each number and act. Schumann wanted to keep *Genoveva* under three hours, and this he was able to achieve. Steven Billington, *Genoveva,* pp. 185, 189.

[34] Tieck, *Genoveva,* p. 230.

[35] A similar, brief scene takes place in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* where, finally, the Count asks for the forgiveness of his wife. One wonders whether she believes he is sincere.

Additionally, Genoveva's repeated excuses for her husband are almost all fully accepted by him.

Golo, after all the misery and death he has caused, is to be executed. This is just, and he welcomes such a decision, for death is seen as a welcome release from his protracted emotional suffering. He is to be put to death in the same desolate, rocky valley where Genoveva's murder was to have taken place. He is told that he will not be buried after death, but rather left to the wild beasts and the ravens.[36]

Genoveva is dying. She has had another heavenly vision and Tieck presents her as welcoming death. Schumann's Genoveva does not aspire to an illustrious, hagiographical role. While a pure and virtuous woman, she does not attain to the heights of sainthood. She is a somewhat simpler character than that of Tieck, and her greatest desire is to be with the husband in whom, despite what she has endured at his hands, she has never lost faith. Perhaps for this very reason – as well as dramaturgical and contemporary operatic convention – she does not die after her joyous reunion with her husband.

After Genoveva's death, a pilgrim appears to comfort Siegfried, who is suddenly overcome by a spiritual awakening. Siegfried's final words are that he will found a small chapel for Genoveva . Schumann's Siegfried is much more "earthly," and nothing so munificent and holy is forthcoming from him. He is inspired to fulfill no real spiritual missions, but merely orders a feast day and a

[36] In the Middle Ages, ravens were seen as harbingers of ill fortune. Schumann uses one for just such a purpose when Golo rides up to give Siegfried the (false) news of Genoveva's adultery in Act III, no. 14. The raven pecks on Siegfried's window, and he muses on what it could purport.

special mass to be read. Needless to say, in true operatic fashion, his subjects praise him with jubilation.

To round out the drama, the holy Bonifacius makes one final speech (as does Bishop Hildulfus). He talks of the miracles that surround Genoveva. The holy woman will enter heaven in order to create paradise anew, to redeem, and to aid the pious. The ugly, tainted world of which she has been a part needs the intercession that only she can give. "Ora pro nobis Sancta Genoveva."[37]

3. FRIEDRICH HEBBEL'S *GENOVEVA: EINE TRAGÖDIE IN FÜNF ACTEN*

Friedrich Hebbel's (1813–1863) *Genoveva: Eine Tragödie in fünf Acten* (1841) was only the second of his published dramas, yet its ambitious and compact dramatic form is highly successful.[38] Twice in his diary Hebbel states that it was Ludwig Tieck's *Leben und Tod der heiligen Genoveva* that had brought forth his own play: "I have begun *Genoveva,* because I read the Tieck version, with which I am not happy."[39] He also mentions his "indignation" over Tieck's drama, but without stating his reasons. It can perhaps be inferred that his opposition rested on two propositions: the sentimental and variegated character of Tieck's work and its undramatic structure, which tends to dilute the central plotline.

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[37] Tieck, *Genoveva,* p. 272.
[38] Hebbel's first drama was *Judith,* written in 1840. Unlike Tieck's drama, Hebbel's *Genoveva* is intended for the stage. The original Schumann copy of Hebbel's *Genoveva* is located at the Robert–Schumann–Haus. It is dated 1843. (D-Zsch 6072–A4/C1).
[39] "Habe die *Genoveva* angefangen, weil ich die Tiecksche las, mit der ich nicht zufrieden bin." *Tagebuch,* Vol. 2, September 13, 1840. Cited in Edna Purdie, *Friedrich Hebbel: A Study of His Life and Work* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 74.

Yet, despite his objections to Tieck's play, in many ways Hebbel was very much indebted to it. He often fleshed out the simple plot of the legend in a very similar fashion. His Golo is almost Tieck's Golo, although even more unstable. Hebbel's magic mirror scene also owes much to Tieck. And so too does the scene involving the painting of Genoveva, where both dramatists depict a Golo desperately unhinged and where the direction of the drama turns. Schumann, not including this scene, portrays Golo's insanity in Act II, scene 1.

One significant difference between the two dramas, however, is the emphasis placed on the two chief protagonists. The character of Genoveva predominates in Tieck's play while, without a doubt, the chief character in Hebbel's psychological drama is the knight Golo; he governs the action of the whole play. When his advances are rejected, Golo resorts to causing pain although, at the same time, he never loses sight of justice absolutely. In contrast, as in Tieck, Genoveva has a chaste, virtuous persona which remains always constant. Siegfried is a secondary, shadowy figure, weak and impotent when courage and trust are required.

The sphere in which these characters move is that of the early Middle Ages, a period of holy wars. Hebbel attempts to create a world so corrupt that redemption is desperately needed. The role of redeemer was to fall to Genoveva, but her transfiguration is never accomplished by Hebbel. He himself was aware of his failure in this regard.

Hebbel's diaries are indeed constructive regarding his conception of his "hero." He sees Golo as a passionate, hasty man: youthful, excelling on the battlefield, a celebrated sportsman, and a singer.[40]

> . . . the nobler his character is, the more bitterly will he feel this love which has come to him. Hatred of its object, which, even if unconsciously, sets him at war with himself, mingles from the beginning with his tenderest feelings, and it is not unjust . . . He has lost his self-respect.[41]

Hebbel's description fits Schumann's operatic conception of Golo perfectly. He is tortured by his love for Genoveva, and this love turns to hatred when he is cruelly, albeit justifiably, rejected by her. Golo's self-respect is shattered by her reference to his illegitimate birth; it is a wound with which Turns to obsession and from which he is unable to heal.

Hebbel continues on the intensity of Golo's passion: "Genoveva's ruin must be complete so that Golo's *hell* can be perfect; if he cannot be completely blessed, he will be completely damned."[42] This progression takes time and builds in intensity as the drama unfolds. Yet, as Hebbel would have it, "What a man can become, he is already."[43]

Here Schumann differs. Golo does not aspire to a "perfect hell" but to the joys of reciprocated love, and his end is not the complete devastation to which Hebbel moves unremittingly. Schumann's Golo, so very conflicted, alternates

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[40] In Hebbel's final drama, the vision of Golo as a musician is completely abandoned.
[41] Hebbel, *Tagebuch,* February 2, 1839. G. Brychan Rees, trans., *Friedrich Hebbel as a Dramatic Artist,* (London: G Bell & Sons Ltd., 1930), p. 73.
[42] *Ibid.,* p. 75.
[43] "Was Einer werden kann, das ist er schon. . . ." Rees, *Friedrich Hebbel,* p. 85.

between vicious hatred and renewed attempts to win Genoveva's love. His end – simply striding down a path in the wilderness – is somewhat inconsequential.

At the very beginning of Hebbel's drama, Golo's feelings for Genoveva seem to be those of simple and pure veneration, but by the end of the brief and somewhat abrasive departure scene between Genoveva and Siegfried in Act I, scene ii, his feelings undergo an unrealistically rapid transformation into romantic love coupled with lust. He realizes his predicament, which is exacerbated, to his great distress, because he is not chosen to go to battle with Siegfried but must remain behind as protector of Genoveva.

Schumann will observe these elements of the plotline – once again taken from Tieck – with barely any alteration. His Golo, too, is destined to remain behind as Genoveva's guardian and with equally catastrophic results. But, in contradistinction to Golo's newly awakened romantic love, Schumann's Golo expresses his deep attraction for Genoveva even prior to the departure scene.

Golo almost goes insane. His descent into this state moves quickly, for by Act II of Hebbel's drama we begin to see him becoming unhinged, even before Genoveva's rejection. In scene ii, when conversing with Genoveva, he suddenly bursts into tears and begins to speak irrationally. His behavior becomes increasingly unnerving, and in this act he offers a series of action-impairing monologues showing his irrationality and desperate desire. By Act III, scene x, he is truly out of his senses.

In the opera, Golo's descent into depravity also moves very rapidly. In the Finale to Act I, he makes his pact with the evil Margaretha to win Genoveva for

himself. But, there is an important distinction between the two versions: Golo is never truly mad, only desperately infatuated and emotionally corrupt. This is unfortunate, for total madness would have made very exciting material for the opera.

At this point in Hebbel's drama – in parallel with Tieck – a painting of Genoveva is delivered to the castle. It drives Golo into a frenzy. He makes a lengthy speech to it, kissing and caressing it and lamenting its lifelessness. Now comes a pivotal moment in the libretto: Golo persists in asking Genoveva for a word of love. In desperation she takes up a crucifix and cries passionately, "Allmächt'ger Gott, tritt zwischen mich und ihn!" (Almighty God, step between me and him!)[44] Golo is undeterred and continues to taunt her, even struggling for an embrace. The panicked Genoveva's modesty is only salvaged by the appearance of Katharina, Golo's childhood nurse, who drags him away. He turns and flings a threefold curse at Genoveva as he departs: "Dann, Ehweib, sey verflucht! Verflucht! Verflucht!" (Then wife, be cursed! Cursed! Cursed!)[45]

Golo's hatred, the obverse of love, has now come to the fore. His perfervid response to her relatively sedate rejection seems an exaggerated one, but for him there is now no turning back. She has rejected him but, notably, unlike both Tieck and Schumann, Genoveva has not made any reference to his illegitimacy. Indeed, this issue is not even an element of Hebbel's drama. Golo's deranged love alone drives him to commit his base deeds.

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[44] Hebbel, *Genoveva,* p. 89.
[45] Hebbel, *Ibid.,* p. 95. During the ten pages just described from Act III, scene 10 (pp. 85–95), Golo makes six long speeches, all of them approximately one page in length. This pattern of raving monologues continues henceforth throughout the play.

At the opening of Act III, the sorceress Margaretha, sister of Katharina, is integrated into the plot. She rapidly insinuates herself into the lives of those around her. Pure maliciousness appears to be her motive, perhaps exacerbated by jealousy at Genoveva's enviable physical and spiritual attributes. It is Margaretha who develops the cruel plan to hide Genoveva's trusted servant Drago in her chambers, thus instigating the slander that Genoveva is an adultress. In Schumann's *Genoveva,* it is Golo who will instigate this perfidious idea, but only after Margaretha has assured him of Genoveva's reciprocated affection.

After a mob breaks into Genoveva's chambers the action moves very quickly. Drago is discovered hidden under the bed (by Golo), he is stabbed by the vassal Balthasar without time for explanation, and Genoveva is dispatched to the tower. Schumann's treatment of this scenario is almost identical with that of Hebbel. Drago, once he knows the mob will search Genoveva's chambers, comes rushing out, only to be stabbed peremptorily by Balthasar, a cocky and impudent vassal whose bold, objectionable nature is purely Schumann's invention. In the opera, the stabbing incident takes but two measures, matching the rapidity of the action of the play.

Schumann takes more than twenty lines of dialogue directly from Hebbel for this section, using it as the climax to the Act II Finale. Predominantly, it consists of Balthasar haranguing Genoveva, even proclaiming defiantly that the mob of witnesses will tell her lord what they have seen. He is the one who contends that her pride may be broken were she consigned to the keep. The mob

concurs, and she is dragged off. The level of authority he espouses is highly disproportionate to his status as a vassal.

In Act IV, scene iv – after some 120 pages of Hebbel's play – we are to reencounter Count Siegfried. It is Golo who brings the bad tidings to Strasbourg, where Siegfried is recouperating from a battle wound. Golo arrives in the dead of night. After assuring Siegfried that his wife lives, Golo adds provocatively, "Ihr Kind lebt auch!" (Her child lives, too!)[46] Siegfried calculates that he has been absent ten months and believes the child cannot be his.[47] Without a second thought, he falls back on his chauvinism as a salve and declares: "Ich bin ein Mann, und hab' als Mann ein Recht auf ein getreues Weib!" (I am a man, and as a man have a right to a true wife!)[48] This arrogance and lack of reflection on his own wife's virtue are characteristics that sustain his role as the emotionally weakest protagonist in the drama and, because of his inability to even attempt to verify Golo's accusations, the character perhaps the most responsible for Genoveva's ultimate desolation.

Peter von Matt points out that although at first glance Siegfried seems to be the noble character of the drama, at a second view it is very clear that "Der Pfalzgraf vertritt die starre Ordnung, die Norm, das Gesetz." (The Count represents the rigid order, the norm, the law.)[49] We will see this to be true. He has no inherent talent for flexibility or creativity in his thinking.

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[46] Hebbel, *Ibid.,* p. 145.
[47] Golo, cleverly, does not disclose when the child was actually born.
[48] Hebbel, *Genoveva,* p. 148.
[49] Peter von Matt, "Die Kunst, die Freiheit, der Teufel und der Tod: Stratagien des Ueberlebens bei Heine und Schumann," *Uebergang zwischen Künsten und Kulturen: Internationaler Kongress zum 150. Todesjahr von Heinrich Heine und Robert Schumann,* ed. H. Herwig, V. Kalisch, B. Kortländer, J.A. Kruse and B.Witte (Stuttgart, Weimar: Verlag J.B. Metzler, 2007), p. 10.

The very depth of Siegfried's ignorance is underscored when, upon a sudden impulse towards the good, Golo, momentarily rational, kneels and declares: "Herr Graf, ich log." (Count, I lied.)[50] Siegfried will have none of it. Golo repeats the utterance a second and yet a third time but, counter-intuitively, this only convinces Siegfried of Genoveva's guilt all the more. He believes his fellow knight, Golo, is only trying to lessen his despair.

Schumann, too, incorporates the idea of the lie into his libretto. After his bold delivery of the letter containing the accusation of Genoveva's infidelity, to his own surprise Golo finds himself overwhelmed with remorse as he watches Siegfried's anguish upon reading it. He is compelled, by a sudden burst of conscience, to claim that "Der dieses schrieb log!" (He who wrote this lied!), but as in Hebbel, Siegfried sees this only as a sign of Golo's compassion. Contrary to Hebbel, however, Schumann's Golo has many such instances where he sees his crimes clearly and will voice his wish that he had followed another path.

We now turn to the chamber of the sorceress. Margaretha is reflecting on a dream she has had in which she killed her own little girl: "Ich sah ein Kind in Traum." (I saw a child in a dream)[51] This fifteen-line soliloquy, from Hebbel, is the second long speech for one individual that Schumann uses verbatim in the entire opera.[52] The tale it tells seems somewhat extraneous to the plot and even distracting from the flow of the drama, but it provides important information on the extent of Margaretha's vileness.

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[50] Hebbel, *Genoveva,* p. 160.
[51] Hebbel, *Ibid.,* p. 156.
[52] All other borrowings are either short utterances or dialogues.

For the Romantics, the concept of the dream and its ramifications was a central topic. For Herbert Schueler the dream in Hebbel has two general functions, which Schueler puts this way:

> Two elements may be distinguished, the experiential element in which the dream leads its subject back to previous events, and the element of the wish, in which the dreamer's innermost desires are given expression.[53]

Margaretha's dream is used principally for expository purposes – we learn of her heinous past as a child murderer. This reinforces our already perceived knowledge of her evil and sinister nature. This is the only dream from Hebbel that Schumann incorporates. Hebbel does use the dream idea again in his drama, but Schumann does not take it up. Golo is painted more intrinsically grotesquely than Schumann chooses to portray.

In Act IV, scene vi, Siegfried and Golo have arrived at Margaretha's lair in order to view scenes in the magic mirror over which she is reputed to have supernatural powers. This Romantic element of the plot is quite a digression from the "naturalistic," reality-bound scenarios which have preceded it, and its unexpectedness gives it greater dramatic impact in both Hebbel and Schumann.[54] Hebbel is once again borrowing from Tieck with this element of the plotline, although he presents the idea with much more concision. Schumann adopts a considerable amount of Tieck's more elaborate version, spinning out the scene with his musical elaboration.

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[53] Herbert Schueler, *Hebbel and the Dream* (Pennsylvania: Lancaster Press, 1941), p. 29.
[54] Because Tieck's *Trauerspiel* has a more fanciful and often folk-like construction, the magic mirror sequence is more harmonious within the drama than it is in Hebbel's *Tragödie*.

At once, Siegfried imperiously demands to see an image of his wife and her activities nine months previously.[55] Margaretha calls out an incantation, to all evil yet to be, to all evil past and, most significantly, to all evil that never was. At first Siegfried is calm, but soon he is raging "Der Teufel hat es angestiftet!" (The devil incited it!)[56] He destroys the mirror with his sword, but not before Margaretha sees the devil smirking at her from its glass.

Siegfried thrusts his sword and signet ring into the hands of Golo, with orders to kill Genoveva and the child. Schumann follows suit, with the exception of any mention of the child. This one taste of magic has decided the matter for Siegfried. Again, he proves himself to be a product of his time, putting more faith in a conjured vision than in a wife whom he has no reason to distrust.

Meanwhile, Margaretha is having visions of her own. With a dramatic thunderbolt, the ghost of the murdered Drago arises from the earth.[57] Now Hebbel presents a detailed speech in which Drago commands Margaretha to confess to Siegfried her chicanery in precisely seven years, not one day before, nor one day after. Margaretha wants to make her confession to Siegfried immediately, but Drago relates the torture she will endure if she does so. She proposes killing herself, against which Drago also issues dire warnings: "Im Flammen wirst du Salamander seyn . . . Im Schoß der Erde Wurm . . ." (In flames you shall become

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[55] This detail of precisely nine months indicates that Siegfried is bent on ascertaining how Genoveva became pregnant. Tieck's Siegfried is less precise, and asks to see only what has happened in his home since he left for battle – a vague idea, as we never learn precisely how long Siegfried is absent. Schumann chooses the period of six months, which seems to have no particular pertinence whatsoever. It does, however, suggest, as does nothing else in the opera, that this is how long Siegfried has been away from his realm.

[56] Hebbel, *Genoveva,* p. 171.

[57] This scene in the opera bears a resemblance to the stone guest scene in Mozart's *Don Giovanni.*

a salamander . . . In the bowels of the earth a worm.)[58] These elements, the appearance of Drago's ghost and his colorful descriptive language, resonated appealingly with Schumann's theatrical sense, and he uses them freely to conclude the third act. Before disappearing, Drago insists that Margaretha do what God decrees, or her fate will be indescribable. Schumann goes further. His Margaretha rushes from the stage enveloped in flames, crying for immediate mercy and for Siegfried.

The seven-year waiting period allotted Genoveva is meant to be a testing time, one where her Christian character, through deprivation and reflection in the wilderness, will be transfigured. Hebbel had initially conceived of her as an intercessor with the Almighty, one who, as in Tieck's drama, would redeem mankind. This plot line, however, is never developed. But, unlike Tieck's version, Genoveva's sufferings – of which we learn surprisingly little – are not a propitiation before the Almighty for Golo's wrongdoing. In Hebbel's drama, Genoveva simply becomes a saddened, abandoned woman. She redeems no one and where the plot ends is herself not redeemed.

Hebbel was concerned about the two threads he had intended to develop in *Genoveva* – the Golo tragedy on one hand and the symbolic tragedy of Genoveva on the other. He wrote in his diary in mid-February, 1842: "*Genoveva* no longer satisfies me. I fear that in trying to solve two problems at once, I have failed to solve either."[59] The Golo tragedy is developed to a powerful and fitting climax, but the Christian, spiritual aspect of Genoveva is indeed lost. She simply fades out

[58] Hebbel, *Genoveva*, p. 178.
[59] Rees, *Friedrich Hebbel,* p. 88.

of the story line, and we never actually learn what becomes of her. That Hebbel "disposes" of her in this way is an odd aspect of his otherwise passionate, dramatic play.

In Act V, scene i, Golo's cowardly nature is underscored. Rather than undertaking Genoveva's execution himself, he hands the task over to the vassals Balthasar and Hans.[60] Balthasar asks Golo why he does not do the deed, to which Golo replies: "Ich bin der Richter, doch der Henker nicht." (I am the judge, not the executioner.)[61] This contrasts markedly with his attitude in Act III, scene xvi, where, upon Genoveva's question as to what he thinks about the charge of adultery against her, his response is: "Ich heiß nicht Siegfried, bin der Richter nicht." (I am not Siegfried, am not the judge.)[62]

Schumann places Genoveva's execution scene in a dreadful, rugged place in the wilderness (just as had Weber in *Euryanthe*). He once again takes a lengthy passage of dialogue directly from Hebbel's text. Of the next twenty-one lines, fifteen are Hebbel's. The majority are voiced by Golo who, because he is too craven to raise the sword against her, continues his pleas for Genoveva to flee with him. This, needless to say, is directly contrary to his curse and evil plotting against her and shows the conflict that continues to fester within him.

Schumann's knowledge of and versatility with his textual sources is evidenced eight lines after the borrowed Hebbel section ends. Now Schumann takes just two lines from Tieck: "O sprich es aus, ein einzig Wort./Und du bist

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[60] While Schumann does adopt the name Balthasar for one of the vassals in his opera, the characters of the two bear no similarity to one another, as noted above.
[61] Hebbel, *Genoveva,* p. 181.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 125.

frei!" (O pronounce it, a single word./And you are free!)[63] Golo entreats her fervently, but to no effect. One wonders how Schumann could (or would particularly want to) recall such an infinitesimal detail in the first place.[64]

Ultimately, Golo must concede defeat, and he turns to the vassals and orders them to undertake the execution. Schumann, in a bold dramatic stroke, takes Golo's final words from Hebbel's Act V, and uses them verbatim as Golo's farewell in the libretto (Act IV, no. 17): "Ich sei zu Roß, den Falken auf der Hand,/Ins Land hineingesprengt!" (I took to my steed, my falcon on my hand,/To ride to foreign parts!) We are left to wonder whether Golo is going to his death or simply far away, to hide himself from the world and the deep shame that has enveloped him.

After Golo's departure, Hans asks Genoveva if she has anything in her heart that she wishes to confess. With a still trusting sense of compassion and loyalty she responds that she has forgiven Siegfried everything. Schumann takes up and incorporates her lines into Act IV, no. 17.

Additionally, Genoveva goes on to tell of Golo's treachery, and her rejection of him, as her duty demanded.[65] She is no saint trying to redeem the world through her personal sacrifice, but a woman who wants simply to save herself and her child. The executioners, however, remaining loyal to Golo, will not believe in her innocence or in his culpability.

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[63] Tieck, *Genoveva,* p. 205.
[64] Scrutiny of Schumann's original libretto may cast light on such matters. Unfortunately, the MS source of the libretto is in private hands in Southern Germany and is unavailable for consultation.
[65] This raises the interesting question of whether Genoveva would have rejected Golo if her "duty" had not dictated otherwise. After all, Gertrud, Katharina and Schumann's Margaretha all tell Golo that it is common knowledge that Genoveva is attracted to him.

At last the killing is to take place, and Genoveva begs to die before her child.[66] Unexpectedly, Balthasar and Hans cannot bring themselves to carry through with the act, and they call to the simpleton Klaus[67] and demand he carry out the executions. Klaus turns instead on Hans and smites him and then threatens Balthasar, who agrees to let Genoveva go free provided she nevermore returns to the castle. She must subsist in the wilderness. We know, because of the ghost Drago's decree, that in seven years she is to be found and returned to Siegfried but she must feel that her time on earth will be short and desolate. This is how the play leaves her. She is never heard from again, which is both puzzling and dissatisfying.

Act V, scene ix, the end of Hebbel's play, is seething with drama and mixed emotions. The weak Siegfried appears and asks, almost expressionlessly, whether the execution has taken place. Caspar, Siegfried's trusted servant, steps in and quietly entreats Golo to spare his master and not confess to him the true history of his perfidious actions, no matter how great the inclination of his conscience. Golo, unexpectedly clear-headed, accedes on condition that Caspar promise to wreak the vengeance on him that Siegfried would have had he discovered the truth.

Siegfried is a truly confused and grieving man. Suddenly, he cannot decide whether Genoveva's supposed murder is legitimate or not. He reproaches

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[66] The child has been a background figure throughout Hebbel's drama. He is not even given a name. He is used simply as the "device" which brings about Genoveva's downfall.

[67] Schumann's counterpart to "tolle" Klaus, Angelo, is introduced briefly in Act I, no. 4. His reappearance in Act IV is thus more logically set up than in Hebbel, where Klaus enters the plot only at this point. One wonders why Balthasar or Hans could not have carried out the same function of saving Genoveva.

himself for not doing the murderous deed, even in his self-proclaimed "verwirrt" state. He simply does not know how to reconcile all that has transpired; his compromised personal honor and pride, his knightly sense of chivalry, and his love for his wife all conflict and crush his spirit.

For reasons that can only relate to his observation of Siegfried's great anguish, Golo's conscience has now fully reawakened. He says to himself "Ich trag' es nicht!" (I cannot endure it!)[68] and is even more agonized when Siegfried, leaving desolately, declares him to be the new Pfalzgraf. Golo is incensed. Schumann, too, incorporates this idea of an appalled Golo succeeding Siegfried, but places it much earlier in the plot (Act III, no. 14). This is directly subsequent to Golo's revelation of Genoveva's adultery. Once again, Schumann is reorganizing his source material to create both greater concision and to allow the opportunity for the possibility of a "happy ending."

Hebbel's Golo now wants to die a slow and tormented death as appeasement for his crimes. He devises what he deems an appropriate punishment for his deeds. He concludes that his eyes have gazed too much upon Genoveva and far too little on Siegfried. Without pause, he puts them both out with his knife. Thus he tries to salvage a modicum of dignity and honor, if not his life. In that he has failed, although through his fitting and self-imposed punishment, Golo – rather than Genoveva, who is never given the opportunity to redeem anyone – manages to redeem himself. As the curtain falls, Caspar whispers "Ich tödt ihn

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 231.

gleich" (I'll kill him at once).[69] Hebbel himself declared of his tragedy: "*Genoveva* ends in a shrieking discord."[70]

While we have reviewed in detail the two main dramatic contributors to Schumann's *Genoveva,* mention should also be made of an unexpected textual insertion in the final act. It is a poem by Heinrich Heine (1797–1856), a *Gaunerlied* (Rogues' song), of which a portion is placed in the wilderness scene (Act IV, no. 16). The poem is taken from Heine's *Neue Gedichte,* published in 1844 (although the poem itself dates from 1836). The title is "Ein Weib" (A Woman), and it describes a "loose" female who has no sense of morality or propriety.

Schumann takes the first and final strophes of the original poem and gives them to the two henchmen, Balthasar and Caspar, to sing. For some inexplicable reason they do so behind a rock, perhaps so that the bawdy song cannot be overheard by the suffering countess? This conclusion seems somewhat unlikely though, as thus far they have shown no concern for her feelings whatsoever. Clearly, the song is intended to represent their view of the moral status of their captive. It is simply presented, with a spartan accompaniment of divisi violas as well as cellos.

> Sie hatten beid' sich herzlich lieb,
> Spitzbüben war sie, er ein Dieb;
> Wenn Schelmenstreich er macht.
> Sie warf hin und lacht',
> Und lacht!

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[69] *Ibid,,* p. 234.
[70] Rees, *Friedrich Hebbel,* p. 93. Fully ten years later, Hebbel was to add an Epilogue, in which Genoveva and Siegfried are reunited and reconciled. The profound dramatic impact of the drama's conclusion is significantly diminished.

> Um sechse früh ward er gehenkt,
> Um sieben drauf ins Grab gesenkt,
> Sie aber schon um acht
> 'nen Andern küßt, und lacht,
> Und lacht!
>
> Those two they loved so tenderly
> She was a rogue and he a thief;
> When naughty tricks he played,
> She just sat down and laughed,
> And laughed!
>
> At six they hanged him by his neck,
> At seven he was laid to rest,
> But she, at eight o'clock,
> Another kissed and laughed,
> And laughed![71]

Matt sees very interesting associations and implications in the poem. Of the "Weib" ballad, he notes that Heine has written of an

> unrestrained, free woman, free in love and enjoyment, dangerously free, deathly free, immoral as a beautiful animal, disregarding danger, death and morality. From the aesthetic point of view, this poem is a perfect mix, in which art, liberty, the devil and death deliver a combined performance. It marked a sort of protest which also revealed a certain political expression.[72]

Regarding this political association, Matt observes that this section of the opera was written during the heated revolutionary year of 1848. The societal rifts that the figure of Golo portrays so frighteningly lie in Schumann himself as well as in Heine. Thus, the inclusion of the poem involves drama for composer, poet and character alike.

See Matt, "Die Kunst, die Freiheit, der Teufel und der Tod," *Uebergänge zwischen Künsten und Kulturen,* p. 12.

[72]*Ibid.,* ". . . die Ballade von einer schrankenlos freien Frau geschrieben, frei im Lieben und Genießen, gefährlich frei, tödlich frei, außermoralisch wie ein schönes Tier. Sein Gedicht ist ein äesthetisch vollkommener Wurf, in dem die Kunst, die Freiheit, des Teufel und der Tod durcheinander spielen. Es markiert einen Widerstand, der auch politisch gefärbt war."

CONCLUSION

While Tieck and Hebbel both utilized the same legend for their dramatic treatments, it is clear that they approached the material, both content and structure, in different ways. Tieck chose a looser, lyrical and flexible nature for his drama, while Hebbel's dramaturgy was condensed, ta ightly-constructed whole. Yet, despite their dissimilarities, the dramatists both fit very well within the Romantic ethos of their time.

Hebbel's drama is akin to the genre of the *Schicksalstragödie*,[73] although it does not fully represent the form. The *Schicksalstragödie* presents protagonists who set in motion connections of cause and effect and sin and retribution, all contained within an atmosphere of dire gloom. Curses are common, as are dreams, revenge, emblems and annihilation. Gerhart Hoffmeister explains the fate motif in this context, as well as the underlying determinism of the genre:

> Fate is man-made, consisting of a combination of character and circumstances, which make man responsible for his deeds. While the protagonist metes out death on account of greed, lost love, or some kind of revenge, thus acting as an *agent fatale,* his victim, who is usually passive, upholds the voice of providence . . . surmounting senseless fate, or reinforces it by ending in complete despair.[74]

The elements of this definition are apposite to both dramas and to Schumann's opera. Indeed, Hoffmeister's description paints a vivid picture of the

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[73] Such a genre was not specific to Germany only, but also proliferated in other parts of Europe, particularly England. Generally, such catastrophes as the deaths of entire families were part of this Romantic drama, the fates of the characters most often decreed as the result of a past crime. German examples spread over a wide chronological period. The included K.P. Moritz's *Blunt, oder der Gast* (1781) and *Die Heimkehr* (1821) by Baron von Houwald.

[74] Gerhart Hoffmeister, "The Romantic Tragedy of Fate," in *Romantic Drama,* ed. G. Gillespie (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1994), p. 175.

characters of both Golo and Genoveva. Golo's succumbing weakness and the circumstance of Siegfried's absence give Golo the perfect opportunity to pursue a path that otherwise he could not have taken. His inability to win Genoveva's love leads him on to acts of premeditated revenge, while Genoveva emerges as valiant and steadfast in her belief in the divine grace of providence. Hebbel's drama ends in complete despair on all counts, while both Tieck and Schumann use the positive possibility, where Genoveva surmounts her cruel lot and is restored to happiness.

As we have seen, the Genoveva legend itself is a simple enough story and quite typical of folk legend and myth, genres that were very much in vogue in Schumann's time. An interest in such folk stories was part of the revolutionary passion to identify and sustain a national identity.[75] Hanak and Andreeva-Popova would subsume such a legend under the classification of "primitivism," a nucleus of features that determined the Romantic *Weltbild*.[76] Implied in this classification are interests in nature, the folk, the creative act, the past – Hellas, the Middle Ages, Christianity (specifically Roman Catholicism) – and in the recovery of ethnic origins. As a source for dramatic elaboration, legend and myth were not, needless to say, a new discovery. The Romantics differed somewhat from their predecessors in the literature they used mainly in order to exhibit their own philosophical ideas.

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[75] Matt concludes that the *Genoveva* plot, ". . . is of limited stimulus. But, for Schumann, it was wonderful German material in the folk-like tradition rooted in the *Faust*-saga or the *Vier Haimonskinder* [M.W. Balfe]." Matt also comments that with this text Schumann wanted to realize his old dream: German Opera. "Die Kunst, die Freiheit, der Teufel und der Tod," *Stratagien des Ueberlebens bei Heine und Schumann,* pp. 9 – 11.

[76] Hanak and Andreeva-Popova, "Folklore and Romantic Drama," p. 119.

The prominent nineteenth-century literary figure August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767–1845) promoted a specific knightly mythology, *Rittermythologie.* Schlegel "rejected received notions of a medieval barbarism, arguing that this was an era of physical and spiritual greatness for the German races."[77] Schlegel declared,

> The knightly spirit emerged from the combination of the robust and honest bravery of the German north with a completely spiritual religion coming from the Orient – Christianity, an occurrence that was not just brilliant but truly enchanting, and hitherto without parallel in human history.[78]

The spirit of knighthood fused with religious elements, "giving rise to a Christian mythology that centered on brave saints, bold quests, and crusading wars of religion."[79] The Genoveva legend and the treatments we have discussed here have aspects of much of Schlegel's definition encapsulated within them, although Schlegel is over-enthusiastic about the non-existence of the element of "barbarism" in the Middle Ages. Yet, in other respects, his notions of "physical and spiritual greatness" are at least intimated (Schumann), or fully played out (Tieck). Hebbel incorporates next to nothing of either concept.

The tragic issue of the hero and his relationship to his time is something that had to be confronted by the Romantic writer. According to Liszt, during this period "bold heroes give way to brooding anti-heroes, stirring deeds to inner

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[77] George S. Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany: Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 77.
[78] A.W. Schlegel, "Über das Mittelalter: Eine Vorlesung, gehalten 1803," Deutsches Museum 2 (1812), p. 434. Cited in Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany*, p. 77.
[79] *Ibid.,* p. 77.

psychological impulses."[80] One thinks immediately of Goethe's Faust and Werther, Schiller's Wallenstein, and Byron's Manfred and Cain. Golo, too, fits well within this profile.

Romantic authors are sometimes accused of emphasizing a flight from reality, but for most the aim was, in fact, deeper knowledge of the self. The idea of the workings of the imagination and intellect are incorporated in the concept of *Selbstanschauung*, which aimed at a more profound contemplation of the world (especially its darker side). The individual was now more independent, but this independence often brought with it a deep sense of alienation, isolation and disenchantment. Jeffrey Cox writes:

> . . . when the Romantic protagonist turns inward, he discovers a chaos of passion and thought, spiritual longings and physical appetites. Neither providence nor society provides him with the means to structure the complexities of the self. He has no map to chart out the regions of the intellect, the will and the appetites, nor a role to shape his personality.[81]

Cox's description is most appropriate when one thinks of the troubles of Golo. He is a man consumed by emotional chaos and isolation, as well as almost insatiable physical appetites. Within his own mind, however, he sees no way of dispelling them. There is no evidence of providence – the manifestation of divine grace and guidance – aiding him, and understandably society has no element in place to direct him against his depraved deeds. Held back from his natural role as a courageous and revered knight, his true virtue is smothered and gradually breaks down.

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[80] Daverio, *Robert Schumann,* p. 335. Liszt was in fact speaking of the modern epic, but the principle is equally relevant to the tragedy.
[81] Cox, "Romantic Definitions of the Tragic," in *Romantic Drama,* p. 159.

Tieck's *Trauerspiel* is special in its individual constituents and the way they are played out. Friedrich Schiller's drama *Die Braut von Messina* (1803) attempts a *Trauerspiel mit Chören*.[82] Schiller's workings of fate appear as the consequence of the main protagonists' actions, with the concept of individual freedom and responsibility set in bold relief (such possibilities, of course, were always available to Golo). Schiller also saw fate as a metaphor for past guilt haunting a family and this, too, ties in with Tieck's emphasis on Golo's sidereal beliefs and his conviction regarding hereditary guilt (provoked by his own illegitimate birth).

Calderón de la Barca's Christian fate tragedies (e.g., *La vida es sueño*) were favorites of Schumann. They overcome the fatal mechanism of crime by stressing divine destiny (providence), which intercedes at the vital moment if the protagonist is ready for God's grace. Golo's begging for God's forgiveness at the close of Tieck's drama is a case in point. He is "saved" in the Christian sense, if not in life. As for Genoveva, she is a party to God's providence from the outset, but God's grace is particularly intense at the moment she is visited by the angel with the ivory crucifix in the wilderness scene.[83]

And then, of course, there are plays that pay special attention to the magical or Gothic side. Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* (1801) is subtitled "eine romantische Tragödie." Its treatment of a serious historical subject is fanciful and introduces visions, miracles and apparitions. It is episodic in nature

[82] In ancient Greece, the chorus was considered one of the actors and an important part of the tragedy.

[83] Friedrich Schlegel (brother of August Wilhelm) attempted to fuse ancient fate and Calderonian Providence in his *Alarcos* of 1802. But the play's weak plot led to failure, even despite its reliance on such Gothic elements as a curse and a ghost.

and full of contrast, but concludes in tragedy. In many dimensions it is reminiscent of Tieck's treatment of the *Genoveva* subject. And, of course, the magical element is common to all three authors.

Matt suggests that because of the number of written sources involved in *Genoveva,* it can appear to be seen as a piecemeal work *(ein Flickwerk)*. He believes, however, that there are excellent and sufficient grounds for it to be viewed as a unity. Schumann coalesced all his various forerunners into a believable and effective whole.[84]

What distinction lies between the forms of the *Trauerspiel* (Tieck) and the *Tragödie* (Hebbel)? While current German language usage would define both simply as "tragedy," John Daverio invokes authors of the seventeenth century to dictate a distinction between the two terms and thus applies this distinction to Schumann's *Genoveva,* notwithstanding that Schumann used neither term. On the title page he states simply: "nach Tieck und Hebbel." According to Daverio,

> In contrast to the tragedy, which is grounded in myth and reënacts the fall of a hero who is ethically superior to the gods, the *Trauerspiel* is firmly grounded in history and thus portrays the transience of mundane existence. Its central character is either a tyrant, who arouses fear, or a martyr, who arouses pity, both characters sharing an important trait: as earthly representatives of the godhead, they embody the dialectic between human and divine qualities that distinguishes Christ.[85]

Needless to say, despite the conflation of sources, Daverio sees Tieck's drama and Schumann's opera as examples of the martyr drama. G.P.

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[84] Peter von Matt, "Die Kunst, die Freiheit, der Teufel und der Tod," *Stratagien des Ueberlebens bei Heine und Schumann,* p. 9.
[85] John Daverio, *Robert Schumann,* p. 349.

Harsdörffer's definition of 1648, (although coined in the masculine) cited by Walter Benjamin, would certainly describe the character of Genoveva:

> The hero must be the perfect embodiment of all virtues and must be afflicted by the faithlessness of friends and enemies; and yet, in such a way that he shows magnanimity in all circumstances and courageously overcomes the pain which causes sighing, loud cries and much lamentation."[86]

There is no concrete evidence to show that either Tieck or Schumann were acquainted with seventeenth-century examples of the *Trauerspiel.* Yet, Daverio is correct in viewing some of the aspects of the genre as applicable to *Genoveva.* It may well be, however, that this is more by accident than by design in the case of Schumann, for in the first two acts of his opera the emphasis is unquestionably on Golo, who is most certainly no example of "the dialectic between human and divine qualities." Genoveva, on the other hand, most certainly is. If anything, Golo would represent rather a feeble example of the main protagonist in the tyrant drama.

Yet, Harsdörffer's depiction of the heroine resonates with that in Tieck's *Trauerspiel* of *Genoveva*. Genoveva (in all three texts), is "the perfect embodiment of all virtues . . ." Her magnanimity in Tieck's play goes so far that she does not even reveal Golo's name as the person who instigated her terrible trials. With her death, she overcomes all the suffering she has endured. Siegfried and Schmerzenreich's lamentation inspires a spiritual awakening for them both. Perhaps it would not be saying too much to suggest that all three redactions of the

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[86] Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama,* trans. John Osborne (London: Verso, 1985), p. 72.

Genoveva legend, to differing degrees, reveal an amalgamation of both the tyrant and martyr types.

The Romantics did not feel that formal features necessarily defined a genre. As Cox notes: "We miss the heart of the Romantic revision of the tragic if we focus too narrowly upon formal issues. . . . The tragic was no longer identified with a particular aesthetic form, but rather with a vision or philosophy of life."[87] This vision allowed for the stylistic experimentation of Romantic drama.

Hebbel's *Genoveva* is an excellent example of the Romantic tragic vision. While his *Tragödie* is experimental in nature, it does retain some of the formal features that its subtitle would suggest. And it, too, has its precursors in such experimentation. Schiller's individual plays reflect a certain classical restraint; his *Die Räuber* (1781) stages the contrast between Karl Moor's heroic past and his debased present. Nowhere, however, does Schiller attain the sharp concentration reminiscent of Greek tragedy as seen in Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (1787). Friedrich Hölderlin attempted to recreate the Greek spirit in his *Der Tod des Empedokles* (1800); he emulated a Greek model only to revise it. Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Hellas* (1822) suffered much the same fate.

Hebbel's Golo fits into the classical tragedy as defined in Aristotle's *Poetics*. To Aristotle, the ethos of a man included his mind as well as his morals, in fact his whole personality. The best kind of plot required an unhappy ending, which came about not through wickedness but "through a great *hamartia.*"[88] The *hamartia* must be *in* the tragic character, not external to it, for then his actions

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[87] Jeffrey N. Cox, "Romantic Redefinitions of the Tragic,", p. 155.
[88] G.M.A. Grube, ed. and trans., *Aristotle: On Poetry and Style* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1986), p. xxiii. *Hamartia* means mistake, moral flaw, error of judgement or merely misstep.

would cease to be probable or inevitable. We must feel either pity or fear, as that is the supposed pleasure of tragedy.

Now all this could be applied to Golo. He could well be described as having a "moral flaw" or having exercised a great "error of judgement." As such descriptions fit his personality so well, his ethos is a rather negative one, although not irrevocably wicked. In no way, however, can he fit the classification of the traditional hero, but rather the brooding "anti-hero" of Liszt's definition.

Translator G.M.A. Grube quotes Aristotle:

> In characterization, as in plot structure, one must always aim at either what is probable or what is inevitable, so that a certain character will say or do certain things in a way that is probable or inevitable, and one incident will follow the other in the same way.[89]

Thus consistency in characterization is very important, although inconsistency in characterization is actually permissible to Aristotle as long as it, too, is consistent. Golo's pursuit of Genoveva, once underway, is unremitting in Tieck's version of the legend. But in both Hebbel and Schumann, he does try, several times, to convince Siegfried that he has been lying. After he is back on track trying to ensure Genoveva's undoing, he again has a moral reversal at the very conclusion of Hebbel's play and, in Schumann's libretto, his negative course is constantly interrupted by doubt and self-questioning. Ultimately, however, evil is his choice.

Quite apart from the characters of the story is the combination of the incidents. Aristotle states that:

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[89] *Ibid.,* p. 30.

> Tragedy is essentially an imitation not of persons but of action and life, happiness and misery. All human happiness or misery takes the form of action; the end for which we live is a certain kind of activity, not a quality. Character gives us qualities, but it is in our actions – what we do – that we are happy or the reverse. In a play accordingly they do not act to portray the characters; they include the characters for the sake of the action. So that it is the action in it, i.e., its fable or plot, that is the end and purpose of the tragedy; and the end is everywhere the chief thing.[90]

The plot of Hebbel's *Genoveva* is dramatically compact and driven by powerful momentum (though diluted to a degree by Golo's lengthy monologues). If action is the thing, then it is certainly present. And if it is in our actions that we are happy or the reverse then Hebbel's conclusion is a fine stroke. After the trials and tribulations of both main protagonists, we arrive at a point where Golo is forced to make an ultimate moral decision. If he is not to tell Siegfried of his evil doings, then he must either accept his fate and the heavy burden of guilt which will be his lot, or he must try to redeem himself and take a moral stand. He chooses the latter path, by dooming himself to certain death (arousing both fear and pity). His redemption is assured – "and the end [purpose] is everywhere the chief thing" – although one wonders what good this does poor Genoveva.

Golo's taking out of his own eyes cannot help but bring to mind Sophocles' *Oedipus* trilogy. Oedipus seeks the truth about his life at whatever cost and, despite his "innocence," he sentences himself. Blinding himself and going into self-willed exile "opens the door to the restoration of his former human dignity and his eventual salvation by the gods in *Oedipus at Colonus.*"[91] Golo, of course, differs from Oedipus in that his guilt is brought entirely upon himself.

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[90] Richard McKeon, ed., *Introduction to Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1947), p. 632.
[91] Hoffmeister, "The Romantic Tragedy of Fate," p. 168.

Aristotle would most probably have been a harsh critic of Tieck's version of *Genoveva.* He stated that of simple plots and actions, the episodic was the worst:

> . . . the various incidents must be so constructed that, if any part is displaced or deleted, the whole plot is disturbed or dislocated. For if any part can be inserted or omitted without manifest alteration, it is no true part of the whole.[92]

There is little question that in Tieck's drama, the episodic tales within the play – the lengthy battle descriptions and the stories of Heinrich and Elsa, Abdorraham and Zulma – could be omitted or at the very least modified without any real detriment to the plot as a whole. They do disrupt the flow of the main story, but they are consistent with Tieck's imaginative, Romantic, fairy tale-like spinning of the story. Their presence leads to a more surprising, rich and captivating version of the legend. It is quite possible that Tieck was emulating the episodic, digressive nature of the medieval romance.

Tieck's *Genoveva* ends in peace, with the villain dead and the heroine beatified. Hebbel's drama ends in ugliness, with Siegfried shattered, Genoveva abandoned, and Golo inflicting blindness and death upon himself. Schumann, as we have ascertained, was greatly influenced and impressed by both dramas but, quite apart from numerous variants in the body of the libretto, he chose a conclusion of his own making, one most closely allied with that of the original legend. Somehow, he had to reconcile the incongruities of his sources and construct a text that not only made sense in itself, but was also made for setting to music.

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[92] Grube, *Aristotle: On Poetry and Style,* p. 17.

CHAPTER IV

THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS IN EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY GERMANY

The place of women in German society in the first half of the nineteenth century was not an enviable one. Subject to repression and discrimination particularly from males in the upper echelons of society, it was the rare female who was able to rise above her indifferent status and achieve any form of positive recognition other than for being a good *Hausfrau.*

Schumann's opera *Genoveva* is concerned with the acts and ultimate fate of a woman of the Middle Ages. Her role is a complex one, teetering between courage and despair. In this respect, she is no different from her counterparts in the nineteenth century, where women continued to be viewed as inept, second-class citizens. We see here a brief discussion of their status and expectations, in order better to understand Schumann's muse Clara. Understanding her reveals to us a better picture of Schumann's imagined Genoveva.

Clara Wieck/Schumann was one of the few individuals who was successful in attaining and maintaining a sustainable career, but her path to transcendence was not without considerable personal sacrifice and travail. A brief discussion of the milieu of which she was a part gives us some idea of her resolve and commitment to follow resolutely her own path. We see similarity, in a milder form, in the character of Genoveva.

In a discussion of Liszt's "Faust" Symphony, Lawrence Kramer espouses the opinion that "the chief representational practice by which nineteenth-century ideology tries to regulate femininity [is] symbolic immobilization." He goes on to say:

> Like most cultural icons, the immobilized woman forms a vehicle for numerous and conflicting meanings, among them sexual purity, erotic passivity, self-abnegation, commodification, and – perhaps above all – availability to be gazed at. . . .
>
> As daughter, wife, and mother, the domestic angel was supposed to preside over a "place of Peace" set apart from the contested spheres of historical time and public life. To achieve this, she was asked to practice self-renunciation in order to cultivate qualities that were supposedly hers by nature: simplicity, altruism, moral beauty.[1]

Julia M.H. Smith offers astute observations on the place of women in the Middle Ages. There is a remarkable similarity between this period and the nineteenth century discussed by Kramer. They were both times of ingrained assumptions about women's marginality, weakness and inferiority.

> As a powerful cultural reflex, the notion of women's natural weakness served many purposes – political, legal, religious, literary. It could encourage exploitation as easily as protection; it could be turned to praise or slander at will.[2]

Nineteenth-century culture seems to have admonished women to be ill. Throughout much of the century, they were frequently defined as "sick" (frail, ill). As Dr. Mary Putnam Jacobi writes in 1885, it was: ". . . considered natural

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[1] Lawrence Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice, 1800–1900* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), p. 107.

[2] Julia M. H. Smith, *Europe after Rome: A New Cultural History 500 – 1000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 124.

and even laudable to break down under all conceivable varieties of strain – a winter dissipation, a houseful of servants, a quarrel with a female friend . . .."[3] Additionally, as the Romantic poets feared, "Too much imagination may be dangerous to anyone, male or female, but for a woman in particular culture has always assumed mental exercises would have dire consequences."[4]

This, needless to say, was not the case with Clara Schumann, although like Robert, she suffered from a degree of hypochondria.[5] It was never carried to the point of invalidism, however, and Schumann's severe health problems late in life were in no manner hypochondriacal. He was truly an ill man.

An account of a concert appearance on March 19, 1844, during Clara's Russian tour – although admittedly noted some thirty-five years later by one Juri Arnold – gives an interesting account of her masculine and her feminine aspects:

> As a pianist she proved herself a great artist possessing masculine energy and female instinct in her understanding and performance, although she was only 25–26 years old. [But] one could hardly call her a gracious and agreeable woman.[6]

One wonders what occasioned this final, condemnatory remark. It may well have been that Clara did not follow entrenched female protocol, and Arnold was perturbed by the "male-like" qualities she possessed.

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[3] Cited in Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 54, 55.

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 55.

[5] For example, on August 19, 1840, Clara wrote to Robert "I have a lot of headaches and chest pain . . . I'm very seldom cheerful for fear that we might not be healthy when we see one another again." *The Complete Correspondence of Clara and Robert Schumann.* Critical Edition*.,* 3 vols., Eva Weissweiler, ed., Hildegard Fritsch and Ronald L. Crawford, trans. (New York: Peter Lang, 1996) vol. 2, p. 268.

[6] John Worthen, *Robert Schumann* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 239.

Noted nineteenth-century critic Eduard Hanslick (1825–1904), in a review from 1856, also makes reference to, amongst other things, a certain "masculinity" in Clara's playing:

> She is not given to the choice of extremely forceful pieces; but in what she does play she rather shames the brilliant virtuosos of our time, by the masculinity of her playing. There is nothing effeminate and retiring, nor an over-abundance of emotion. Everything is distinct, clear, sharp as a pencil sketch.[7]

Hanslick appreciates Clara's style, with its seemingly masculine traits. Additionally, he mentions that she has on occasion played the works of her husband: " The more courageous and successful, . . . the achievement of a woman in fulfilling the double mission of artist and wife."[8] We see that a woman's masculine traits are honored.

A valuable place to pursue the nature of female success (or lack thereof) in general in the nineteenth century is with the female authors and journalists who attempted to give voice to their thoughts on propriety and civic activism in the spheres of both female rights and politics. But, while a number of women – Kathinka Zitz-Halein, Louise Aston, Louise Otto-Peters, Fanny Lewald, to name a few – were very insistent on the granting of more dignity and freedom to women, strangely far fewer desired great advances in their own curtailed, domesticated lives.

Kathinka Zitz-Halein (1801–1877) was one German woman whose literary and political endeavors reaped some rewards. In 1837 she married a

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[7] Eduard Hanslick, *Music Criticisms 1846–99,* Henry Pleasants, trans. (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1950), p. 50.
[8] *Ibid.,* pp. 50, 51.

lawyer, Franz Zitz, but the marriage was of brief duration. She then embarked on a literary career, partially as a means of making a living, partially to fulfill her need to express herself in writing. As she was female, however, it was not financially lucrative for her, and she wrote to her lawyer during her acrimonious divorce proceedings

> If he [Zitz] now seems to be of the belief that I could earn a significant income through my literary works that is a colossal error. Germany, which lets even its greatest poets starve, makes no exception with us insignificant lesser lights. Most of the periodicals, particularly local ones, pay at best with a thank-you [and] don't even give you a free copy. . . . you will concede that the lowest of your clerks earns as much with copying work without straining his brain.[9]

Clara Schumann, too, expected to be paid adequately for her artistic efforts. Quite apart from a well-developed sense of personal honor and even entitlement, she simply needed the money. In Düsseldorf in 1850, she appeared as soloist on the same program as her husband, the newly-appointed director of music. All she received as payment for her performance was a basket of flowers. Highly indignant, she wrote to a mutual friend, Ferdinand Hiller:[10]

> It is simply incomprehensible that the men could think that for the first time here I will play gratis. Moreover, I cannot understand the indelicacy of just demanding this! Do they take us for rich people? Or do they think I will play whenever they like for the salary my husband receives?[11]

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[9] Kathinka Zitz-Halein to Paul Kramer, May 19, 1842. Stanley Zucker, "Female Political Opposition in Pre-1948 Germany: The Role of Kathinka Zitz-Halein." Quoted in John C. Fout, ed., *German Women in the Nineteenth Century: A Social History* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1984), p. 137.

[10] Hiller had just moved from Düsseldorf to take up the position of music director in Cologne. It was he who had recommended Schumann for his old post.

[11] *Aus Ferdinand Hillers Briefwechsel (1826–1861),* ed. Reinhold Sietz (Cologne, 1958), p. 85. Quoted in Nancy B. Reich, ed., "Women as Musicians: A Question of Class," *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship,* ed. Ruth A. Solie (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), p. 143.

From the sentiments so vehemently expressed here, it is clear that Clara held an esteemed reputation in the musical world and was accustomed to much more professional treatment.

Zitz-Halein's position on what was due both to her and to womanhood in general (quite apart from financial remuneration) is somewhat contradictory and thus difficult to reconcile. She was angry that women writers could only really attain fame under the cloak of anonymity or of male pseudonyms,[12] yet, at the same time, she inclined towards a traditional view of a woman's place in society.

Zitz-Halein gives a wonderfully colorful description of the belittlement of women by men. She uses the term "domestic heroism" to label the fruitful nature of woman's role, but as Zucker tells us, she descries the fact that

> . . . men did not realize this. Because of the tyranny of their pride, and the "injustices of their laws," men made women's virtues into liabilities; "one condemns them for their tenderness, belittles their talents, and regards them as incapable of great things." Men, she continued, claimed a monopoly of all great virtues. But what they "in their egoism call character," she notes sarcastically, "they regard as stubborness and disobedience in the woman."[13]

Guides to female behavior were rampant throughout Europe. In 1839 a British woman, Sarah Stickney Ellis, produced a manual entitled *The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits.* Her publication was fully characteristic of guidebooks proclaiming women's morality in Germany. She addressed the issues of men's difficult place in the age of industrialization, but at

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[12] Cf. George Sand and George Eliot.

[13] Solie*, Musicology and Difference,* p. 138.

the same time seems to belittle the woman's position: "Thus, woman, . . . by becoming, as it were, the safekeeper of his soul while she stayed at home, 'cherishing and protecting the minor morals of life'."[14]

A widespread resistance to any change whatsoever in the role played by women was very deeply entrenched in German society. Even a "forward-thinking" democrat such as Johannes Scherr, at the time of the 1848 revolution, criticized emancipated women in cruel and virulent terms. His stance was so harsh that he seems almost to despise women:

> You can be sure that the contingent of women who are pushing themselves unasked into public life is made up of old, ugly and hysterical spinsters . . . or else slovenly housewives and mothers who have forgotten their duty, whose housekeeping books – if they have any – are in disorder, whose rooms, kitchens, pantries, and linen cupboards are in a state of chaos, . . . and whose children are physically and morally unwashed.[15]

Scherr falls back on the stereotypes that ushered in the nineteenth century, equating physical cleanliness with good order on the moral front. The *Staatslexicon* of Carl von Rotteck and Carl Welcker has much the same to say on the *Geschlechtsverhältnisse:*

> The relationship between the sexes is the most general and weighty relationship in human society . . . This mysterious, basic relationship is the ever-renewing life force for the entire society, for the physical and moral education (or mis-education) of each of its members, in every generation. . . . it must be morally pure and healthy, for it is the basis of society.[16]

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[14] Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 11.

[15] Johannes Scherr, *Von Achtundvierzig bis Einundfünfzig. Eine Kömodie der Weltgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1868), Vol. 2, pp. 188,189. Quoted in Lia Secci, trans., "German Women Writers and the Revolution of 1848," in John C. Fout, ed., in *German Women in the Nineteenth Century*: *A Social History* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1984), p. 153.

Rotteck and Welcker do not elaborate specifically regarding what is expected of the male and female roles, but clearly they expect them to be morally complementary, one to the other.

Quite apart from literary and political emancipators, one group of women who had to make a living in "unconventional" female roles were musicians. Professional performers were working women from what Nancy Reich terms the "artist-musician class."[17] Almost all of these women were born into families who worked together to earn a living and had done so for over one generation.[18] Clara Schumann was one such woman: as a child prodigy she had toured with her father Friedrich Wieck, a piano pedagogue. Her mother Marianne Bargiel was a singer, and as a child her half-sister Marie also toured as a pianist with Wieck.

Opposed to the artist-musician class was the bourgeois aristocracy, which was comprised of highly gifted women – Fanny Hensel and Henriette Voigt are representative examples – who played, composed, held "salons" or "musicales," but never appeared in public, for it was deemed improper for women of their breeding. Even after the French Revolution, in the world of music power and authority were still vested in the male members of society. "Men held the important posts in music education and publishing, formed the committees . . .

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[16] Carl von Rotteck and Carl Welcker, *Staats-Lexicon, oder Encyclopädie der Staatswissenschaffen* (Altona: 1834–1843). Quoted and translated in Stephen Meyer, *Performing Identity: The Search for a German Opera in Dresden, 1798–1832* (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1996), p. 194.

[17] Reich, "Women as Musicians," *Musicology and Difference,* p. 125.

[18] Reich has undertaken a valuable study of thirty-six working musicians: twenty-seven were from the artist-musician class; the other nine were from families who were ardent music lovers and encouraged their daughters' professional lives. *Ibid.*

conducted the orchestras, hired the players, and determined the fees.[19] Women continued to have next to no power, and were constantly belittled and insulted.

Fanny Hensel (née Mendelssohn) was four years older than her brother Felix and, despite her female gender, was brought up almost as an equal in their highly cultured and educated bourgeois family. The bond forged between the two siblings was unbreakable, and in that sense it bears comparison with the fervent relationship between Robert and Clara Schumann.[20]

Like her brother, Fanny had profound musical gifts, and at the age of twelve she was capable of performing the first book of Bach's *Das wohltemperirte Clavier.* She also had talent as a composer and, over the course of her short life (1805–1847), she composed some 400 works.[21]

As noted above, any aspirations Fanny may have held about a professional musical career would have been quashed by her family's status in German society. Indeed, her son Sebastian felt it prudent to "set the record straight" regarding his mother's role as a typical and socially acceptable German woman in his two-volume family history *Die Familie Mendelssohn,* published in 1879.[22]

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[19] Reich, "Women as Musicians," *Musicology and Difference,* p. 130.

[20] Marcia Citron asserts that Felix "was the most influential person in her [Fanny's] life." See "The Lieder of Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel," *Musical Quarterly* 69 (1983), p. 572.

[21] Piano works and lieder dominate her output, although she also composed some large dramatic pieces as a very young woman. The majority of her œuvre remains unpublished, although significant progress in this area is being made in the twenty-first century.

[22] Sebastian Hensel, *Die Familie Mendelssohn 1729–1847 nach Briefen und Tagebüchern,* ed. Konrad Feilchenfeldt (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1995), p. 877: "als Chronik einer guten deutschen Bürgerfamilie." Cited in Marian Wilson Kimber, "The 'Suppression' of Fanny Mendelssohn: Rethinking Feminist Biography," *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 26 No. 2 (Autumn, 2002), p. 115. In the scholarly community, Hensel's biography has received increasing attention in the past twenty years. See especially Alison Booth, "The Lessons of the Medusa: Anne Jameson and Collective Biographies of Women," *Victorian Studies* 42 (1999/2000), p. 260.

The biography includes letters from Abraham Mendelssohn to his daughter, anticipating her adult role not as a musician but as a mother and *Hausfrau.*

Felix was certainly in favor of Fanny's composing and was most encouraging in this area, but when it came to doing something so public as publishing, he was reluctant even to discuss the matter with her. He did, however, permit her to include three of her songs under his name in each of his Opp. 8 and 9 lieder from 1826 and 1830,[23] while, on the other hand, Schumann strongly encouraged Clara to publish three of her songs in her own name in Op. 37, *Zwolf Gedichte aus F. Rückerts 'Liebesfrühling'* (1841)*,* a volume credited to both husband and wife.[24] With rare exception, Schumann continued to encourage Clara's composing throughout their married life.

Mendessohn's mother Lea attempted to urge Mendelssohn to aid his sister in publishing her compositions. A letter from 1837 was meant for Lea's eyes only:

> I will not persuade her to do this [publish], forgive me. . . If Fanny, on her own initiative, . . . decides on it, I am, as I said, ready to be as helpful to her as I am able, but to urge [her] on to something that I do not consider right, this I cannot do.[25]

Ultimately, Fanny did decide to publish just a few works but, perhaps sensing her brother's attitude, she was hesitant and ambivalent about it herself.

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[23] Her contributions were, Op. 8: No. 2, Das Heimweh; No. 3, Italien; and No. 12, Suleika und Hatem. Op. 9: No. 7, Sehnsucht; No. 10, Verlust; and No. 12, Die Nonne.

[24] Clara's contributions were No. 2: Er ist gekommen; No.11, Liebst du um Schönheit; No. 12, Warum willst du and're Fragen.

[25] Letter from Felix Mendelssohn, Frankfurt, June 24, 1837 (New York Public Library), quoted in Marian Wilson Kimber, "The 'Suppression' of Fanny Mendelssohn," Appendix, p. 129.

Fanny knew her place in early nineteenth-century society and had no strong desire to compromise herself.

CHAPTER V

A COMPLICATED MARRIAGE: ROBERT AND CLARA SCHUMANN

Having looked at the frustrating and lowly place of women in the nineteenth century, we can proceed to examine the relationship directly between Robert and Clara. Although almost inextricably close, the manners of their time most definitely had an impact on them. And, we can perhaps expect that Schumann's relationship with Clara also influenced his depiction of an idealized Genoveva.

Robert and Clara Schumann are known as one of the most devoted couples in the history of music. Beate Perry eloquently expresses this as a manifestation of the cultural, visionary milieu of their time:

> . . . the courtship and marriage between Clara and Schumann seems to render real the Romantic dream of bringing together two human beings through the magically communicative power of music alone, itself in no need of words, yet capable of operating on the deepest emotional level.[1]

This is not to say that this wonderful synthesis was the only aspect operating in early nineteenth-century Romanticism. In his article on the origins of early German Romantic opera, Aubrey Garlington quotes A.W. von Schlegel from the turn of the century:

> . . . the romantic delights in indissoluble mixtures, all contraries, nature and art, poetry and prose, seriousness and mirth, recollection and anticipation, spirituality and sensuality, terrestrial and celestial, life and death, are by it blended together in the most intimate combination.[2]

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[1] Beate Perry, "Schumann's lives, and after lives: an introduction," *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann,* ed. Beate Perry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 19.

There is abundant documentation from both Robert and Clara avowing great love, devotion and emotional need; indeed, almost a desire to merge into one. This documentation is found in the four published volumes of *Tagebücher*, most especially in the *Ehetagebuch,* which the couple initiated at the very beginning of their wedded life. A multitude of reciprocal correspondence, almost all from the early days of their courtship and marriage, also survives.[3]

Despite their very real devotion, however, there was yet considerable conflict in the minds of both individuals, particularly Robert's. The couple was forced to reconcile competing needs: his for quiet domesticity and peace for composing, hers for time to practice and to travel and perform as she had since childhood. This opposition at times gave rise to frustration and bitterness, although as the years together passed and Robert's reputation as a composer grew, it lessened considerably. The two attained some sort of equilibrium between private and public lives, which they managed to maintain – albeit a little tremulously – throughout their marriage.

When Schumann and Clara declared their wish to get married, they met with vehement opposition from Clara's father, Friedrich Wieck. For Schumann

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[2] August Wilhelm von Schlegel, *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature,* John Black, trans., 2nd edition, rev. A.J.W. Morrison (London, 1914), pp. 342, 343. Quoted in Aubrey Garlington "German Romantic Opera and the Problem of Origins," *Musical Quarterly,* vol. LXIII, No. 2 (April 1977), p. 259.

[3] Needless to say, the letters and diary entries may seem excessively sentimental and hyperbolic to a twenty-first century reader, but they were not unusual for Schumann's time. An extreme example of a letter from Clara reads: "Oh, you are the most wonderful man on God's earth, and I love you so inexpressibly, so terribly, I could die from my love . . ." Letter dated February 25, 1839, found in *The Complete Correspondence of Clara and Robert Schumann,* Critical Edition, 3 vols., Eva Weissweiler, ed., Hildegard Fritsch and trans. Ronald L. Crawford, vol. 2 (Peter Lang: New York, 1996), p. 76.

this was a particularly harsh blow for, as Wieck's student, he had long considered him to be something of a surrogate father. Clara showed great strength of character, actually taking legal action against Wieck. Schumann felt forced to do the same. Ultimately, after a protracted battle the two prevailed and were wed. It is perhaps of note that Schumann considered Wieck to be a "father" to him. In Act I no. 2 of *Genoveva,* Golo cries in anguish, after his initial betrayal of his lord, "Siegfried, Siegfried, du ein zweiter Vater mir!" (O Siegfried, Siegfried, who has been like a second father to me!)

In their early years together, both musicians – particularly Clara – were somewhat inclined to denigrate themselves to the other. Clara craved Robert's acceptance and approval (with her marriage she had lost these things from her father), and she did not keep her fears to herself. In the second week of their marriage she writes:

> . . . I can say truthfully that I only live through you. It is my greatest good fortune when you are always happy with me, and if something seems wrong to you, tell me at once, truly, my beloved husband – will you do that?[4]

According to Dijkstra, this is precisely what a man of the mid-nineteenth century desired.

> What the mid-century male wanted most of all, was a woman who would not only be the safekeeper of his soul but who would, in fact, offer up her own being, her own soul completely to that task, a woman who would become a mere extension of himself, who would let herself be absorbed completely by him.[5]

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[4]. ". . . Ich kann wohl sagen, ich lebe mir in Dir. Es ist mein höchstes Glück, wenn Du immer zufrieden bei mir bist, und ist Dir Etwas nicht recht, so sag' mir es gleich, nicht wahr, mein geliebter Mann, das thust Du?" *TBII*, p. 102.

[5] Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity,* p. 20.

Dijkstra refers in some detail to Wagner's *Lohengrin* (1850) as an example of complete self-negation on the part of Elsa who, after being saved from infamous allegations by the "hero," gives herself up to be absorbed into the very being of her defender. Lohengrin equates his success with the fact of her purity, "indicating once again that in mid-nineteenth-century mythology, the worldly success of the male was deemed to be inextricably intertwined with the self-denial of woman."[6]

In 1839 and in 1840 (Schumann's "Year of Song"), Robert actively encouraged Clara to compose piano pieces and lieder. He wanted her to stay at home and become more domestic and more like him. Eva Weissweiler posits: "he desires a double, a female alter ego, someone he himself can create."[7] It seems incontestable that Schumann did want Clara to be more like himself (and this would not have been such an unusual wish for a marriage partner), yet in the throes of love he had written to her, his fiancée, on April 15, 1839: "Dear Klara, you please me totally, quite enormously; Heaven has been inexpressibly gracious and given you to me – you my love, my charming, sweet girl . . ."[8]

Schumann's encouragement regarding Clara's composing met with yet another self-deprecating remark: " I don't have any talent for that. I'm even less capable of writing an entire song; to understand a text completely requires an intellect."[9] Ultimately, soon after their marriage in September 1840, she

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[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Eva Weissweiler, Ulrike Bode, trans., *Lieder by Clara and Robert Schumann,* Sound recording, Sony Classical, SK 62372, © 1996, p. 5.

[8] *The Complete Correspondence of Clara and Robert Schumann,* ed. Eva Weissweiler, vol. 2, p. 144.

[9] Weissweiler, *Lieder by Clara and Robert Schumann,* p. 5.

acquiesces to Robert's request and unexpectedly develops a passion for song-writing that continues until 1843. As time passed, she was to explore, along with Robert, other forms as well. Her confidence as a "complete" musician – not only as a performer – grew.

Critic Franz Brendel (1811–1868), who took over editorship of Schumann's *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in 1844, had much to say about the composer in said journal in 1845.[10] After a detailed study of the early piano cycles, he moves on to Schumann's lieder:

> Just as the composer was able to articulate the simple and naïve in *Kinderszenen,* so in the song cycle *Frauenliebe und –leben* [Op. 42] he expressed the deepest inwardness, the intimate life of a female sensibility. The heart has been revealed without mediation in these songs; one looks straight into the depths of the soul.[11]

Schumann's choice of text is an interesting one.[12] Did he really feel that with this cycle he was expressing the "intimate life of a female sensibility" and her "deepest inwardness"? The verses by Adalbert von Chamisso (1781–1838) perfect the submission of womanhood. They indicate a very narrow view of a woman's propensities and capabilities. The adulation in which the female persona holds the man she loves seems extraordinarily exaggerated. Such lines as "Er, der Herrlichste von allen" (He, the noblest of all) – from No. 2 – are outdone by a later verse from the same number: "Darfst mich, niedre Magd, nicht

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[10] Franz Brendel, "Robert Schumann with Reference to Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and the Development of Modern Music in General (1845), *Schumann and his World* ed. R. Larry Todd, trans. Jürgen Thym (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[11] *Ibid.,* p. 329.

[12] Prominent nineteenth-century composer of vocal music, Carl Loewe, set seven of these Chamisso poems as his Op. 60. Schumann set eight.

kennen,/Hoher Stern der Herrlichkeit!."[13] (. . . take no notice of me, the lowly maid,/O high and splendid star!)

Was this type of submissiveness and adoration attractive to Schumann? The answer may well be in the affirmative, as at this time he was enduring the protracted battle to secure Clara's hand in marriage. His natural despondency over Clara's father's animosity may have made him hope for a wife who would be docile and offer a stable influence.[14] Of course, while Clara espoused humility and subservience, her true nature was more complicated. She frequently got what she wanted through the subterfuge of submission.

Clara had been lauded since girlhood, but Schumann's fame was to come significantly later. There seems no question that he envied his wife-to-be, and in 1838, he admitted in his private, pre-marriage diary that although he had expected that Clara would be appointed *Kammermusikerin* to H.M. the Emperor of Austria, it gave him no real joy. He felt inferior and thought this was highly inappropriate for a man. But Clara could not relinquish her rich participation in the external musical world as well as the admiration and means of self-expression it offered.

In August of 1842, Schumann and Clara made an excursion to Bohemia. On Friday 12th they climbed the mountain Milischauer, and Robert was taxed by the heat. He lamented that "Today Clara was more vigorous than I, which pleased me and made me angry; because the man doesn't always like to be twenty paces

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[13] English translations of Chamisso's cycle are taken from Philip L. Miller, ed., *The Ring of Words: An Anthology of Song Texts* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973).

[14] For a different take on Frauenliebe und –leben see Elissa S. Guralnick, "Ah Clara, I am not worthy of your love": Rereading 'Frauenliebe und Leben,' the Poetry and the Music," *Music and Letters,* Vol. 87 no. 4 (2006), pp. 580–605. Guralnick sees the cycle as having a more independent and spirited role for the woman. She sees the piano as the voice of the heroine's husband, where Schumann gives voice to a man's inner fears of disappointing the woman he loves.

behind the wife."[15] Schumann's ambivalence about Clara's success was pertinent to many spheres of their life together.

Yet, some sense of superiority did awaken fully in Schumann by January of 1846. The publisher Härtel had requested that the Schumanns sit for a double portrait. Ernst Rietschel, who specialized in the portrait medallion, was chosen as the artist. The two faces on the portrait are very stern and unflinching, but the interesting question is why is Schumann in front and Clara behind him? According to John Worthen, Robert's attitude was very simple: "Oh no, the creative artist takes priority over the practising one!"[16] To Schumann, it was a point of principle.

Clara attests to a reason – other than personal gratification – for wishing to perform publicly: it brought in much-needed income. She was clearly aware, however, of reproval from Robert. He frequently stayed at home with their young family and worked on the *Neue Zeitschrift*, and he resented her absences a great deal – she dared to leave him alone. In a letter from Gotha, written when she was on tour in September 1840 (the month of their marriage), she entreats him:

> You aren't angry with me because I am giving concerts, are you? You can imagine that I am not in the mood for this sort of thing now, but I thought I would make a little pocket money; people like me need a taler now and then. How would you feel if I had to ask you for money all the time? So it's better this way; it'll also make things *a little bit* easier for you, my dear Robert.[17]

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[15] "Cl.[ara] war heutiger rüstiger als ich, was mich freute u. ärgerte; denn der Mannbleibt doch nicht (immer) gern immer 20 Schritte hinter der Frau zurük." *TBII,* p. 238.
[16] Worthen, *Robert Schumann,* p. 266. No source given.
[17] *The Complete Correspondence of Clara and Robert Schumann,* vol. 3, p. 278.

There are examples aplenty of Clara's concert tours making Robert displeased, but Clara was readily aware of other pianistic talent burgeoning around her – Liszt, Thalberg, Anton Rubinstein, Camilla Pleyel – and she did not want to jeopardize her status, which was exceedingly important to her, any more than she could help. Even when Robert did accompany her – at that time even a married woman could not travel alone – she was often greeted with accolades denied her husband. In an *Ehetagebuch* entry for February 26, 1842, Schumann notes his anger when Clara travels to Oldenburg, a duchy near Bremen. He had not been invited: "Clara travelled to the court and returned with great joy at her reception. The thought of my undignified position in such cases did not allow me to feel any happiness."[18]

Clara was clearly aware of her husband's emotional struggles at such times for, as noted, she, too, contributed to the diary. She was torn to a degree, but ultimately she chose to let her needs prevail. She did, however, harbor some fear of losing Robert's affections. In a lengthy letter from Hamburg written on March 16, 1842, while she was in the middle of a major concert tour, Clara tries to persuade Robert that by going on to Copenhagen she will recoup losses accrued in other, German cities:

> Oh, don't be angry with me, my beloved Robert! Heaven knows I had the best intentions when I left you. I wanted to help you; I wanted to make taking/care of the family at least a little easier for you by making a small contribution . . . you will still be fond of me, won't you?[19]

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[18] "Clara fuhr also zu Hof u. kam erfreut über die Aufnahme zurück. Der Gedanke meiner unwürdigen Stellung in solchen Fällen ließ aber keine Freude in mir aufkommen." *TBII,* ed. Gerd Nauhaus, p. 209.

[19] *The Complete Correspondence of Clara and Robert Schumann,* vol. 3, pp. 285, 286.

As noted earlier, a life of domesticity and motherhood was deemed the appropriate role for all German women in the early nineteenth century. Schumann desired this and dropped hints about it to Clara. While being sorry that he could not provide an appropriate environment for her piano practice – there was no question of it if he was composing – he considered that his needs must take precedence while he was still youthful and vigorous. Clara bore this stoically, but not without some frustration and ofttimes melancholy. In January 1841 she writes: "Now I don't get to play at all; partly because I am unwell,[20] which prevents it, and partly because of Robert's composing. Were it only possible to rectify the evil of these thin walls; I unlearn everything.[21]

Before the two were married Schumann was gently trying to point Clara in the direction of a life of domesticity. She herself seemed not disinterested, at least at first. In March of 1839, Robert was musing on the fact that the two might live in Zwickau (his birthplace) after they were wed, and that his sister-in-law Therese could teach Clara housekeeping and the art of cooking. These aspects of her "female" education had been ignored in her upbringing as a prodigy. Only three days after his first mention of domestic training, Schumann turned to it once again, trying to make it into an enticing proposition. He even manages to slip in what appears to be an admonishment about her concert tours:

> Wouldn't Zwickau be possible? First (another kiss), young wives must be able to cook and keep house properly if they want to have satisfied husbands; you could laugh and have fun while learning that from Therese – and then young wives must not take long trips right away, . . .[22]

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[20] Clara was pregnant.
[21] *TBII*, p. 144.
[22] *The Complete Correspondence of Clara and Robert Schumann,* Vol. II, p. 111.

In mid-August of 1840, Clara claimed to be ready to assume the wifely role Robert wanted of her. "Oh, how I'm looking forward to our nice little household, and if things go the way I want them to, I'll learn to manage things perfectly like the housewife you want me to be; isn't that right, my Robert?"[23] Notable is the phrase "you want me to be." Did Clara really want this for herself?

Only a week after their marriage, four acquaintances arrived to have dinner at the Schumann's home. Clara was not at all confident in her new role. She noted: "I lost my appetite because of all my housewife anxieties, which are that the guests may not like the food, or that there wouldn't be enough to eat, and so on."[24] This must have been not only stressful for her, but also hardly how she felt she would best like to use her time.

Six months into their marriage, Clara appears to have fully accepted her new role as *Hausfrau. "*My father at all times mocked at the so-called domestic good fortune. How I pity those who do not know it; they are only half-alive."[25] What is uncertain, though, is whether Clara really reveled in her domestic duties or simply in living with Robert and sharing life together.

As early as mid-1841, Clara began to have qualms about domesticity (although this did not diminish her passion for her husband). Her piano playing was falling ever further behind, and she could find no time to concentrate wholly

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[23] *The Complete Correspondence of Clara and Robert Schumann,* vol. 3, p. 247.

[24] English translation quoted in Peter Ostwald, *The Marriage Diaries,* p. 8. Diary entry of October, 1840: Mir schmeckte es nicht vor vor lauter Hausfrau-Aengsten, das da sind: daß es den Gästen nicht schmecken möchte, oder, daß das Essen nicht zureichem uns so Verschiedene . . ." *TBII*, p. 103.

[25] ". . . ein sogennantes häusliches Glück verspottete mein Vater allerzeit. Wie bedauere ich Die, die das nicht kennen! Sie leben doch nur half!" *TBII,* p. 150.

on herself, something to which she was well accustomed. In May, 1841, she wrote in the diary:

> The more Robert involves himself in his art, the less I can do as an artist, Heaven knows! There are always interruptions, and as small as our household is, I always have this and that to do and that robs me of my time.[26]

Robert did feel guilty, but at the time both agreed that his needs must come first.

Schumann's position regarding his wife's secondary musical status – although he was very moved and proud when he heard her perform – was hardly unusual. A passage from *De l'Allemagne* (1813) by the prolific writer Germaine de Staël, herself a highly-gifted woman of letters, seems pertinent:

> It is right to exclude women from politics and civic [musical] affairs: anything that puts women in competition with men goes against their natural vocation. Fame itself is only a brilliant way to bury the happiness of a woman."[27]

De Staël was a famous intellectual in her own time, so this statement seems more than a trifle incongruous.

Clara was determined not to give up hope, and 1842 brought the reinstatement of her solo piano career. This was a great joy to her. Yet, now she was the one who felt guilty, as her touring involved leaving her husband and small daughter, Marie, at home. While she struggled with this issue, she nevertheless made the decision that she would continue performing, and in a letter

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[26] Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman,* p. 87.
[27] Daverio, *Robert Schumann,* p. 244.

to her friend Emilie List, dated May 30, 1842 – after her trip to Copenhagen without Robert[28] – she asserts with self-justification:

> . . . I am a woman, am not neglecting anything at home, earn nothing, why shouldn't I use my talent for once to contribute my mite to Robert.
>
> Could anyone blame me for this? Or my husband for going home to his child and his business?[29]

Of course, stating she is a woman and then going on to justify her absence as permissible is not in accord with nineteenth-century social mores. Yet, it would seem that ultimately Robert and Clara struck some kind of workable balance between their competing professional claims. They both realized the great need of the other to be productive in their respective musical careers and each tried to honor these needs as best they could. In his day, Schumann would actually be viewed as tolerant.

Despite this, perhaps Schumann had the last word. In his heart, he still clung to the notion that a woman's role should be a subordinate familial one or at least a deferential one. In the *Ehetagebuch* (where Clara would see it), an entry of February 17, 1843, reads as follows. Clara had just completed a set of small piano pieces,[30] which he felt to be her best work thus far.

> But having children and a constantly daydreaming husband does not go together with composing. . . . Clara herself knows her main occupation is that of a mother, however, so that I believe she is happy under these conditions, as they simply cannot be changed.[31]

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[28] A young woman named Marie Garlichs fulfilled the role of traveling companion on this occasion.

[29] Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman,* p. 89.

[30] Probably the first three of the *Pièces fugitives,* Op. 15, published in 1845.

[31] "Aber Kinder haben und einen immer phantasirenden Mann, und componiren geht nicht zusammen. . . . Klara kennt aber selbst ihren Hauptberuf als Mutter, daß ich glaube, sie ist glüklich in den Verhältnissen, wie sie sich nun einmal nicht ändern lassen." *TBII,* p. 255.

ROBERT, CLARA, AND THE OPERA *GENOVEVA*

When considering Schumann's choice of *Genoveva,* one cannot help but wonder why this opera subject had such a strong and immediate appeal not only for him, but also for Clara. Was Schumann simply tired of waiting for the "ultimate" in plots, or did the tale of the beleaguered Countess resonate with him in some special way? Unsatisfactory libretti and Schumann's perception of a fundamental dramatic inadequacy in so many potential subjects clearly played a large part in his rejection of earlier possibilities. Nevertheless, it is striking that the appeal of *Genoveva* was so immediate and so final. The decision to set the drama was made virtually overnight. We read in his *Haushaltbuch* on April 1, 1847, "*Genoveva* by [Friedrich] Hebbel – Ideas for an overture and resolution on this text."[32]

Also, it is noteworthy that despite the significant problems Schumann had fashioning a libretto, the allure of this subject was always sufficient to encourage his perseverance. He had labored hard on other projects and yet abandoned them, but with *Genoveva* he never wavered in his commitment. One factor here may have been the state of his health. This was a particularly prolific period in general for Schumann. He was plagued less by the ill health that had forestalled a number of other operatic enterprises,[33] and he could now see a large-scale undertaking through to completion.

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[32] "'Genoveva v. Hebbel – Ouverturengedanken u. Entschluß zu diesem Text." *TBIII,* p. 344.

[33] He was ill during the middle of the year.

Ostwald, in his Schumann biography, posits that the appeal of the tale lay in its theme of a faithful woman with an adventurous husband, a scenario which reflected a reverse image of Schumann's own domestic situation.[34] Schumann's desire was thus to honor Clara, or perhaps unconsciously to punish her. Genoveva's trials and tribulations were an operatic "retaliation" for Schumann's suffering at Clara's success and independence.

It seems equally possible, however, that the dramatic portrayal of Genoveva's honorable and steadfast character was simply a straightforward tribute to similar qualities in Schumann's Clara, while her relative passivity in the face of blatant treachery was the representation of Schumann's semi-conscious wish for a wife whom he could control completely. Because Genoveva (Clara?) displays distinct elements of self-determination, she must undergo trials either to redeem herself or to fail. The powerful woman of virtue must be chastened.

It should be mentioned that Clara gave her whole-hearted approval to her husband's choice of subject matter: her opinion was of inestimable value to him. In her diary Clara reports that, "It [Genoveva] is a beautiful opera subject, and we both decided on it immediately."[35]

Did husband and wife see different virtues in the themes of the drama? Almost certainly, Schumann was drawn towards the medieval or historically remote, the supernatural, sacrifice, and "happy endings." One has only to turn to the *Doge und Dogaressa* sketches of 1831. Not only was a witch a prominent

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[34] Peter Ostwald, *Schumann: The Inner Voices of a Musical Genius* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985), pp. 213, 214.

[35] "Das ist ein schönes Opernsujet, und haben sich beide gleich dafür entschieden." Berthold Litzmann, *Clara Schumann: Ein Künstlerleben,* vol. 2, p. 165.

character in this "noble" plot, but the lovers, who in the original perish in a storm, survive to live happily in Schumann's redaction. Clara perhaps saw a mirror of herself in the long-suffering Genoveva. Her independence in embarking on concert tours was always an element of tension between the couple. It is noteworthy that she does not simply say "subject" in her diary, but "*opera* subject."

The character of Golo would have been of considerable interest to Schumann. This complex and conflict-ridden individual – torn between his love for his lord and his desire for Genoveva – has counterparts in literary sources upon which the composer drew for other works – for example, Manfred, Faust and Julius Caesar. Perhaps Golo's turmoil and indecision touched on something all too recognizable by Schumann in his own, often precarious, mental state: he was certainly a man given to significant doubts and conflicts. Golo's struggle to win the woman he loves may also have touched off a reminder of Schumann's own particular (though very different) hardships in winning Clara.

A further element of appeal may have been provided by the opportunity to portray a strongly-drawn image of a beneficent God. Ultimately we do have a "happy ending," and the just Genoveva, who has never lost her trust in Providence, is saved from what appeared to be certain death. This, of course, is not an element of either the original Hebbel or the earlier Tieck version of the drama (although Tieck comes close), but a conclusion reconfigured by Schumann after the original legend. The possibility of appending such a conclusion to the work must have been a reassuring, if somewhat sentimental image for the

frequently troubled and uncertain composer. It could also be viewed as an homage to Clara, whose steadfastness and love provided the ultimate happy ending for Schumann.

And, one must certainly give primacy to the dramatic power and impact generated by a first reading of the Hebbel tragedy itself. On April 12, less than two weeks after reading this version of the medieval legend, Schumann turned to Tieck's *Trauerspiel.* It, too, is hardly light fare, but there are many lengthy digressions in this *Lesedrama* (closet drama) that do lessen the tragic impact.

One should naturally be cautious in drawing too many parallels between an artist/composer's personal life and that of the themes or characters he creates. Yet, in the case of Schumann and *Genoveva,* it is hard to resist seeing parallels or allegories between Robert and Clara's personalities, their relationship, and their experience of the world. Schumann's characters are certainly not carbon copies of those he encountered in Hebbel and Tieck. Yet, the aim was the same – the furtherance of German music and literature.

Having attempted what to him was a project of supreme importance, a German opera, Schumann naturally wanted to infuse elements of "Germanness" into his characterizations. Schumann's published criticisms tell us about his nationalistic musical views. He was deeply concerned about the influence of what he viewed as the shallow, sensational appeal of French and Italian operatic repertoire and its proliferation throughout the German states. In 1836, already frustrated by the incursion of foreign repertoire, he had written: "Marschner's *Templer* und *die Jüdin* and *Hans Heiling* were welcome German appearances in

the theater."[36] A note by him from 1840, sarcastically comments on an announcement that five of the most important German theaters were to stage French and Italian operas: "Bravo German theater! It is only a wonder that we in Germany still compose in a reasonably German manner."[37]

A letter from Clara dated February 15th, 1839, unreservedly stresses her convictions on nationality. At the time she was living and touring in France, and Heinrich Probst, the Parisian agent for Breitkopf & Härtel, had been trying to convince her to have a change of heart regarding her attachment to Robert:

> He thinks that I will change my mind here. The nerve! Are the French, who have no heart, who have no conception what the word "heart," a "*German heart"* means, to rob me of my love, to change my mind? Oh, I am so proud to be a German; I feel so noble when I am among them! My Robert, you do want me to come back with a *German* heart, don't you? – And *that I will!* –[38]

Schumann would have been completely in accord with Clara's remarks. His response to this letter was not precisely what we would expect regarding masculine German nature as it was understood at the time, however. It shows a slightly hysterical "Romanticism": "I'll cry when I see you again; I'll scream and then I won't let you go again."[39] As we will see, his tears portray the precise opposite of what is permitted a German woman. Yet, he also has Siegfried cry in Act IV of the opera at his reunion with Genoveva.

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[36] "Marschners *Templer und die Jüdin* und *Hans Heiling* waren erfreuliche deutsche Erscheinungen am Theater." Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker von Robert Schumann,* Martin Kreisig, ed., (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1914), 5th Edition, vol. 2, Anmerkungen, p. 445.

[37] "Bravo, deutsche Theater! Es ist nur ein Wunder, daß wir in Deutschland noch so leidlich deutsch komponieren." Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften,* vol. 2, p. 446.

[38] *The Complete Correspondence of Clara and Robert Schumann,* vol. 2, p. 53.

[39] *Ibid.,* p. 56.

Regarding the issue of showing emotion, we need only turn to the opera itself to see how Schumann (Hebbel, Tieck) felt it should be portrayed when pertaining to a noblewoman or man in the Middle Ages.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHARACTERS OF THE DRAMA

1. GENOVEVA: PIOUS AND PERSECUTED

Early in Act I of *Genoveva,* Count Siegfried is excitedly heading off to fight Abdorraham and the Saracens under Karl Martell, proclaiming that there is no greater glory than to fight a holy war. His newly-wed wife, Genoveva, is not comparably convinced, and Siegfried peremptorily admonishes her: "Du bist ein deutsches Weib, so klage nicht!/Sollt' ich ertragen unsers Glaubens Schmach?" (You are a German wife, so do not weep!/Am I to suffer insults to our faith?) Genoveva responds with due deference: she would not love him were he not a hero. This resonates strongly with Clara and Robert's feelings – each was a hero/heroine to the other. Yet, the love espoused by the opera characters seems almost conditional: Genoveva will love Siegfried if he is courageous in battle; he will love her only if she is stoic and behaves with due German female decorum.

Tieck introduced the idea of female stoicism in his play where, in a similar scenario, Siegfried tells Genoveva to collect herself as "eine deutsche Frau."[1] And Hebbel follows Tieck's lead, although now it is Genoveva herself who shows that she knows well her responsibilities as a German wife: "Ich bin ein Weib./Ein Weib verhüllt den Schmerz." (I am a woman./A woman covers up her pain.)[2] In all cases, Genoveva's responses to Siegfried's insensitive behavior are strong and direct, despite her youth. That a man cannot hide his pain is evident many times in

[1] Tieck, *Leben und Tod,* p. 15.
[2] Hebbel, *Genoveva,* p. 9.

the opera. Such lack of concealment is an odd inversion of the commonplace view of things. And this reversal is to be observed also in what can be documented of the lives of Clara and Robert.

What are we to make of the harsh demands Siegfried makes of his wife? Was a German woman in the Middle Ages (as interpreted from a mid-nineteenth-century viewpoint) expected to control her emotions completely and show composure and fortitude whatever the situation? In the opera, this position serves the dramatic purpose of depicting Genoveva as somewhat vulnerable, revealing to us something of Schumann's own perspective on a woman's place. It additionally presages the chauvinism, archaic notions and insults she will encounter throughout the plot.

Genoveva's extreme piety and *Innigkeit* (characterized most clearly in her soliloquies) do actually exemplify a type of woman considered ideal in early nineteenth-century German bourgeois society. Her purity was considered essential not only for marriage but for the moral life of the community as a whole. Siegfried's sexist and self-involved behavior in the opera is reinforced by Genoveva's learned subservience and allegiance to the social mores of both the Middle Ages and also of Schumann's time.

The Anglo-Saxon missionary Boniface reported, in 746/7, codes on the ethical behavior of women. Their conduct carried the honor for the entire extended family group, and there was summary retribution for any perceived breach of her relatives' integrity. Julia M.H. Smith notes:

> For the most part, early medieval societies left the punishment of errant women in the hands of their male kin, whether father and brothers

> or husband. . . . In return for maintaining her – and their – honor, she could expect them to defend her from shameful treatment and false accusations.[3]

These statements reveal incontrovertibly how extraordinary is Siegfried's treatment of his "beloved" wife. Siegfried, Genoveva's closest relative in the opera and thus the one to mete out justice, does not consider for a moment that she may be innocent of adultery, and he has no intention of defending her from "shameful treatment." The supposed word of a castle cleric, as well as his own quavering ego, are sufficient for him to declare her guilty.

The closest things to a learned legal profession during the early Middle Ages lay in the ranks of the clergy. According to James Brundage,

> When a Germanic ruler wished to produce written versions of his people's laws, he was likely to entrust the task to the clerics in his household who routinely drafted his charters, letters, and other documents. . . . Even where lay judges predominated, as they usually did in civil courts, clerical judges and advisers remained common.[4]

Tradition, however, discouraged clerics from outright representation of parties in litigation.

The esteemed early nineteenth-century writer and thinker Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg, 1772–1801) was hardly enamored of a woman's moral nature. "Only in respect of the capacity to love does Novalis acknowledge the moral strength of women to be very great."[5] This type of worldview leads readily to the casting of blame and mistrust. An example is found in Act IV no. 17

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[3] Smith, *Europe after Rome,* pp. 103, 104.

[4] James A. Brundage, *The Medieval Origins of the Legal Profession: Canonists, Civilians and Courts* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008), pp.73, 74.

[5] *Novalis: Philosophical Writings,* trans. Margaret Mahony Stoljar (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 14.

when Golo, in his final attempt at seducing Genoveva, asks her what she thinks of Drago's "call at night." Genoveva, ever deferential to her husband, responds by asking Golo what Siegfried thinks, to be answered with: "Daß *Ihr* aufs ärgste ihn berückt!" (That *you* shamelessly seduced him!).[6] Thus woman – in this case Genoveva – is painted as the seductress and therefore the agent of sin. This is contrary to the submissive behavior one expects to be depicted and has no substantial foundation in the plot of the *Genoveva* drama.

As we have seen, in the nineteenth century men were viewed as exemplifying outward excitement and action as compared with a woman's stalwart, chaste and pure role. Genoveva, in Siegfried's dim view, does not measure up to this ideal. In Tieck's version of the drama, immediately upon learning of Genoveva's supposed infidelity, he exclaims: "O schmachvoll Weib! O heuchlerische Schlange!/. . . In unsern Weibern gab uns Gott der Fluch!" (Oh ignominious woman! Oh hypocritical snake!/. . . In our women God gave us a curse!)[7] Thus, once again, unexpectedly, it is suggested that women, too, have been divinely created to exercise initiative. Genoveva is indirectly accused of fabricating her apparent virtue and high moral principles.

Nikolaus Harnoncourt believes that Genoveva's difficulties evolve from her very essence:

> [Genoveva's] "guilt" stems simply from the fact that she exists: she puts others to shame with her spotlessness. Her beauty and the fascination

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[6] Italics mine.

[7] The image of the snake or serpent was a widespread emblem for the depiction of the inherent evil considered to reside in womankind. In Act IV of the opera we will see Balthasar accuse Genoveva of being just like a serpent who, when once stepped upon, can sting again. This particular reference comes directly from Hebbel. In Weber's *Euryanthe,* Euryanthe attempts to save Adolar from a giant serpent, and this after he has condemned her to death.

she exerts are the cause of Golo's downfall.[8]

Genoveva, in Schumann's redaction of the drama, is invariably high-minded and sincere. She makes one cajoling remark to Golo, but she is really no flirt and is completely dedicated to Siegfried. Schumann may here be projecting something of his experience with Clara during the rather tumultuous period of their courtship. Clara was likewise always dedicated to Robert, but as an attractive, self-assured young woman, it is not at all surprising that suitors should approach her while she was alone in Paris in 1839. She reported all such incidents to her future husband. She never appears to have considered encouraging her would-be lovers, although it is within the bounds of possibility that she did so unconsciously. Here we see a clear parallel between opera and life. Genoveva strove to stay chaste and so did Clara.

One particularly offensive series of events in Clara's life concerned one Sch. (his full name is never given). Sch. was a married man, who indicated that he would leave his wife for Clara. Robert wrote an almost frenzied letter of advice to her on February 23rd. He had no doubts about Clara's fidelity, but was absolutely incensed at Sch.'s advances; he dictated to Clara what she should do to stave him off and discretely distance herself from him. Schumann's letter can be viewed as somewhat harsh, and at the very end he admonishes Clara not to be overwhelmed by it: ". . . listen Clara, if you shed one tear over my letter regarding Sch., I'll say 'You're not a very strong girl' – but I'd have to love you anyway, oh, so much!"[9]

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[8] Nikolaus Harnoncourt, *Genoveva,* Sound recording, Teldec 0630-13144-2, (c) 2005, p. 23. Tannhäuser and Venus are brought to mind. Tannhäuser cannot tear himself away from the pleasures and beauty of Venus and the Venusberg.

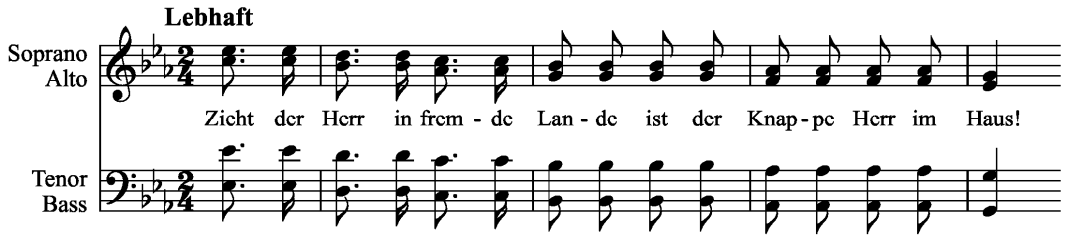
[9] *The Complete Correspondence of Clara and Robert Schumann,* vol. 2, p. 68.

An example of courage (also naïveté) on Genoveva's part takes place in the opera in Act I no. 5 where, as the troops depart, Genoveva laments, "O könnt' ich mit dir!" (Oh, if only I could come with you!), hardly a recognized female sentiment.[10] Siegfried's response to Genoveva is by this time almost predictable: "Getrost und fasse Dich!" (Take heart and compose yourself!). She is an embarrassment to him.

Immersed as she has been in a milieu proclaiming male strength and dominance, it is no surprise that in the opening scene of Act II (no. 8), when the castle vassals begin to grow restless and rowdy with drink, Genoveva is once again struck forcibly by her husband's absence at war. Her reaction to the revels seems a little exaggerated. During their rollicking the retainers drink a toast to her, but she is justifiably unnerved by their claim that "Zieht der Herr in fremde Lande,/Ist der Knappe Herr im Haus!" (When the master's gone abroad,/Then the vassal rules the roost!). (see example 6.1) Her soliloquy is a picture of fear and adoration: "Herr'nloses Haus, Haus ohne Rat!/. . . Mit ihm die Lust, mit ihm der Mut,/Wo er nicht ist, da wankt es." (No master, no wisdom in this house!/. . . When he is here, there is joy and strength, When he is gone, all falters.)

[10] No doubt this idea comes from Tieck's drama, in which the saracen Abdorrhaman's sweetheart Zulma actually slips into camp, disguised as a man, in order to be with her beloved.

Example 6.1: Act II, no. 8, m. 40



One is naturally surprised by the audacity and seeming freedom of the vassals in this scene. The main medieval social unit was not the nuclear family we know today, however, but rather the household. The medieval word *familia* translates this extended family concept most effectively. Julia Smith notes:

> Although in practice a *familia* commonly had a conjugal group at its core, both the word and the social grouping embraced servants, dependents, and sometimes other close kin.[11]

Indeed, in the early Middle Ages a noble household included ". . . a staff of officials, domestics, stewards, clerics, scribes, huntsmen . . ."[12] A *familia* functioned as a large, social mechanism.

During Siegfried's absence, Genoveva feels that the castle is without security or splendor. Were he there to command his domain, all would be well. In a reversal of roles, Schumann, when Clara was absent, seems to have felt much the same sense of insecurity.

There are several strands intertwined in the nineteenth-century's depiction of morally upright German womanhood: Schumann's own inner conflict

[11] Smith, *Europe after Rome,* p. 86.
[12] *Ibid.,* p. 87.

regarding these concepts and, ultimately, their application to womankind in the Middle Ages as well as in the mid-nineteenth century. Schumann was resolutely attempting to create a German opera, so his conception of his characters' "Germanness" was crucial to him.[13] If we consider the "German" opera as a whole, we discover that Genoveva was conceived with a wide array of emotional capacities, albeit considered to be subordinate to those of men.

What is a fair assessment of Genoveva's persona overall? Critics of the time were predominantly negative about characterization in the opera as a whole, and this is of interest for a contemporary appraisal of this aspect of *Genoveva.* In 1869, in his book *Consonanzen und Dissonanzen,* composer and theorist Johann Christian Lobe (1797–1881) wrote a mixed review on features of Schumann's opera. Steven Billington quotes:

> In the artificial and learned musical language he has chosen, Schumann often succeeds in the expression of emotions, but one misses the characteristic coloring, which results from the individuality of the characters, almost everywhere . . .[14]

Eduard Hanslick, who in general was a great advocate for Schumann's music, had far broader comments to make. He, too, dealt with the issue of characterization:

> Schumann's libretto is poor and uninteresting, in particular as far as the characteristics of the main protagonists are concerned. Without Hebbel's precise psychological motivation, Golo is reduced to a common theatrical scoundrel, Genoveva turns into a boring sufferer, and Count

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[13] Norman Currie has an interesting tid-bit on the desire for "Germanness" that dates from Schumann's youth. On March 18, 1838, Schumann is negotiating with Raimund Härtel regarding the possible publication of his *Kinderscenen.* Härtel agrees, to Schumann's delight, and Schumann has a design issue to raise: "As for the script of the title and the individual pieces, take, if you don't mind, a nice German one. For the rest, I leave it all to your taste." Norman Currie, *Robert Schumann, Hector Berlioz, and their publishers* (Ph.D. diss., CUNY Graduate School, 2004), p. 75, fn. 17.

[14] Steven Miles Billington, Robert Schumann's *Genoveva: A Source Study* (Ph.D diss., New York University, 1987), p. 146.

> Siegfried is nothing but an idiot. Tieck's old temptress Gertrud, as well as Hebbel's wicked pair of sisters, Schumann melded into one Golo-witch, who does not differ very much from numerous operatic colleagues of the genre.
> . . . All characters in *Genoveva* are presented to us in the same colors, and their various states of mind we see equally colored through the prism of Schumann's subjectivity.[15]

There is undoubtedly an element of truth in Hanslick's summary descriptions of the *Genoveva* characters' core features, but these syntheses do not do justice to the manifold small details that make each of the characters unique. Certainly they are seen through the "prism of Schumann's subjectivity." How else could he create them? And, the characters as delineated by Tieck and Hebbel were not always seen by Schumann as the most apposite for his operatic rendition. Although a highly cultivated music critic, Hanslick's remark about "the same colors," shows a certain lack of discernment in his hearing of the opera, although in a reading of Hebbel, for instance, there are indeed gaping differences between Siegfried and Genoveva. (These vast discrepancies are tempered for the stage.) Schumann attempted to create distinct individualization with all his characters and fundamentally succeeded in achieving this. Naturally, there are cross-currents and shared details, but this is perfectly legitimate in the portrayal of all operatic characters, no less for Schumann than for Mozart and Wagner.

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[15] "Schumann's Textbuch ist dürftig und interesslos, namentlich in der Charakteristic der Hauptpersonen; ohne die scharfe psychologische Motivirung Hebbel's wird hier Golo zum gewöhnlichen Theaterschuft, Genoveva zur langweiligen Dulderin, Graf Siegfried zum Schwachkopf. Tiecks alte Versucherin Gertrud und Hebbel's böses Schwerterpaar hat Schumann in eine Golohexe, Margaretha, zusammengeschmolzen, die sich nicht merklich von ihren zahlreichen Operncolleeginnen unterscheidet./Alle Charaktere in der *Genovefa* und deren verschuedenste Seelenzustände erblicken wir gleichmäßig gefärbt durch das Prisma der Schumann's Subjectivität." Eduard Hanslick, *Die Moderne Oper* (Berlin: Allgemeiner Verein für deutsche Literatur, 1885), pp. 257, 258.

Another critic who had to have his say was George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950). He attended a performance of *Genoveva,* produced by England's Royal College of Music, in December of 1893. He wrote a lengthy critique of both work and performance in *The World* on December 13.

At first Shaw is not too harsh and, indeed, praises Schumann's "strong feeling for harmony as a means of emotional expression."[16] But, it is not long before Shaw's sharp wit and whimsy come into play: ". . . *Genoveva,* from the moment when the witch enters in the first act, degenerates into pure bosh, and remains mostly at that level to the end." One more comment proffers a more positive reaction: "The opera is at its best when Genoveva is on the stage; and it is never absolutely vulgar and trivial except in the witch music."[17]

Had it not been for the title of the medieval legend upon which it is based, Schumann's opera could legitimately have been called *Golo.* Usually egged on by the sinister Margaretha, it is Golo, the evil protagonist, who gives the operatic drama its forward thrust. Genoveva has been viewed almost as a bystander, who allows things to happen to her rather than taking an active stance and participating in the evolution of her own future. This view of her character is not completely fair. Elements of Genoveva's more "accepting" and docile characterization, however, bear little resemblance to Clara. In Schumann's imagination, he may have projected qualities of Genoveva that he would happily have imputed to Clara.

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[16] Bernard Shaw, *Shaw's Music: The Complete Musical Criticism in Three Volumes,* ed. Dan H. Laurence. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1981), p. 61.
[17] *Ibid.,* p. 62.

At least one significant factor must be taken into account in any analysis of Genoveva: her extreme religious fervor and the role it takes in her actions (and inactions). At all times, she feels that she is in the hands of a beneficent God (Providence) and that there is a holy plan for her to follow. Needless to say, her virtue is unblemished, and devout references are scattered plentifully and regularly throughout the libretto, concentrated particularly in her arias.
Perhaps the greatest question regarding Genoveva's "passive" behavior is why she does not denounce her betrayer until almost the very last minute of the final Act (Act IV no. 18).

That she had not done so at the time of the assault of the vassals (Act II no. 12) is perplexing. Golo certainly manages to maintain his equilibrium during the vassal scene, even, rather strangely, defending Genoveva at first. She, on the other hand, remains completely silent about the unwelcome and frightening advances he had made a mere few numbers previously. Quite possibly she feels that, given her status, drawing attention to this event will make her an object of disparagement and ridicule, just at a time when she has no one to protect her. It is only substantially later, in Act IV, when the vassal Balthasar tells her that the hour has come for her execution that she fully defends herself: "Golo, im mich entbrannt,/Und abgewiesen, wie es sich geziemt,/Spann Ränke." ('Twas Golo who desired me/Whom I rejected as was proper,/Who sowed intrigue.) An interesting phrase that arises here is "as was proper." Could one posit then that,

without her duty as a member of the nobility, she may have been tempted to succumb?[18]

One of several highly charged scenes that relate to the above occurs in Act II no. 9. This is the famous "bastard" scene between Genoveva and Golo, where Genoveva most assuredly shows she has some mettle. Margaretha, in her folk song in the Finale to the previous Act, has assured Golo that "Sie will dir wohl, wie die Leute sagen." (She [Genoveva] cares for you, it is well known.) He, so desperate to believe, gains hope extraordinarily quickly, and by the end of the number asserts vehemently "Mein muß sie werden,/Jetzt oder nie . . ." (She shall be mine,/Now or never . . .).

When the opportunity arose in Act I no. 6, Golo only hesitated momentarily before he gently kissed the insensate Genoveva. Already by Act II no. 9, however, this pure love and adoration has taken a turn to the extreme, and he is totally consumed by a burning, unassuageable passion. While it adds considerable interest to the drama, the urgency of the transformation seems unbelievable.

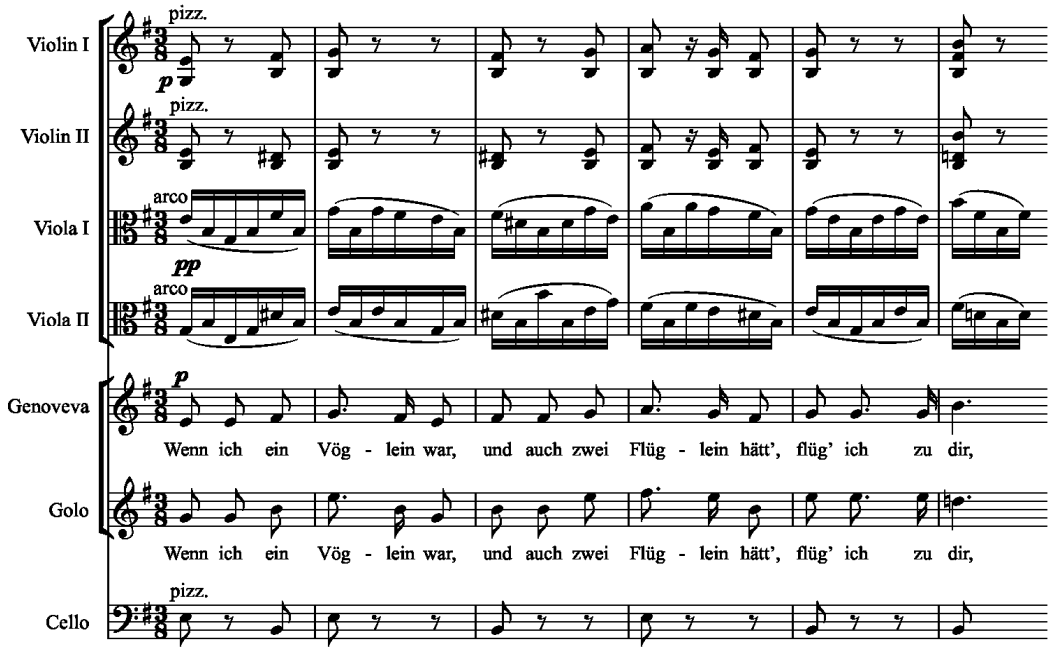
Early in Act II, Golo comes calling on Genoveva late at night. He tells her that the battle against Abdorrhaman has been won. Genoveva, wishing to sing with joy about the Christian triumph, enjoins Golo to sing with her, evoking the response (aside): "O anmutvollste Zauberin!" (Enchantress, who could say no to you?). She spins, he plays the zither, and the catastrophe draws near.

[18] In the Tieck drama, there are clear intimations that Golo's affections are returned to some degree by Genoveva.

The two begin the euphonious strophic folk song, "Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär,'" in close harmony, predominantly singing in unison, thirds and sixths.[19] The first verse goes smoothly, the text referring to the desire to fly to a loved one but, as it cannot be, to dream of them instead. Naturally, Genoveva is singing of Siegfried, while Golo sings of her and almost certainly, through wishful thinking, misreads her as singing of him. It is a clever idea on Schumann's part, as musically we cannot differentiate who is singing to whom, and the music, with its close harmony, simply tells us that these two characters are exceedingly intimate in some way. This is the only protracted example of real closeness in the entire opera (see example 6.2). Scenes with Siegfried and Genoveva maintain only momentary unity of purpose.

[19] "Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär'" is taken from one of Schumann's own works, the Drei zweistimmige Lieder, Op. 43 No. 1. The text is from Arnim and Brentano's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn.* In an inventory of concerts by contemporary virtuosi, Christopher H. Gibbs lists Clara Wieck's recital of December 14, 1837, as including – "4a [Adolph] Henselt, Etude, 'Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär,' flög ich zu dir.'" While the title is clearly also from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn,* the melody of what is actually a set of variations bears no resemblance to Schumann's song. Christopher H. Gibbs, "Just Two Words. Enormous Success: Liszt's 1838 Vienna Concerts," *Franz Liszt and His World,* edited Christopher H. Gibbs and Dana Gooley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 213. The singing in close harmony brings to mind a duet in Carl Maria von Weber's opera *Euryanthe* (1823). In a largely unadorned C major, the two lovers, Adolar and Euryanthe, sing of their mutual devotion – "Take my own soul,/ Breathe my life's breath!" (Hin nimm die Seele mein/Atme mein Leben ein!). United musically and textually, they sing as one and, whenever musical motifs change, just as in "Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär,'" they change together. But, note that here it is the two lovers who sing together harmoniously, not a married Countess and her liege.

Example 6.2: Act II, no. 9, m. 1



In the second verse all goes awry. While Genoveva sings on obliviously, Golo breaks away in great distress. He confesses his innocent kiss, then grows more and more reckless and demanding: "O Zauberin, du hast das Leben mir/Durch Kunst entführt" (Enchantress, with magic art/you have stolen my life!).[20] The tension escalates as Genoveva tries to calm him. Outrageously, Golo now accuses Genoveva of ensnaring *him!* He makes the claim, "Du schlugst die Wunde . . ." (You dealt the blow . . .).

Naturally, Genoveva becomes increasingly agitated as she fears for her honor. She uses her social position in yet another petition to have him stay his

[20] These lines come directly from Tieck, as do fourteen in this number.

advances. She also reveals considerable strength of character as, in an attempt to curb his near madness, she cries to him:

> Erwacht, denn Ihr verkennt mich!
> Ich bin es, Genoveva, die jetzt spricht,
> Gemahlin Eures Herrn,
> Des Grafen Siegfried![21]
>
> Awake, you forget yourself!
> 'Tis I, 'tis Genoveva,
> Count Siegfried's wife,
> Who is your lord and master!

Golo now comes out with the astounding claim, "Du liebst mich, holde Braut!" (You love me, charming bride!). This effrontery is clearly a consequence of Margaretha's insinuations in the Act I Finale. Genoveva is now absolutely terrified and, like all four main characters in the opera – they all have divergent aims and fears – she wishes simply to "fly away," as in the duet. In this situation, however, she finds the courage to stand firm.

In a vain attempt to save herself, Genoveva calls Siegfried's name, entreating him to return. By so doing, she insults Golo's honor and increases his ire. Finally, as he moves towards her she is utterly incensed, and in one extraordinary moment of self-assertion she cries out menacingly "Zurück, ehrloser Bastard!" (Stand back, dishonorable bastard!).[22] (see example 6.3) Golo, shamed beyond measure by this reference to his illegitimacy, curses her and vows

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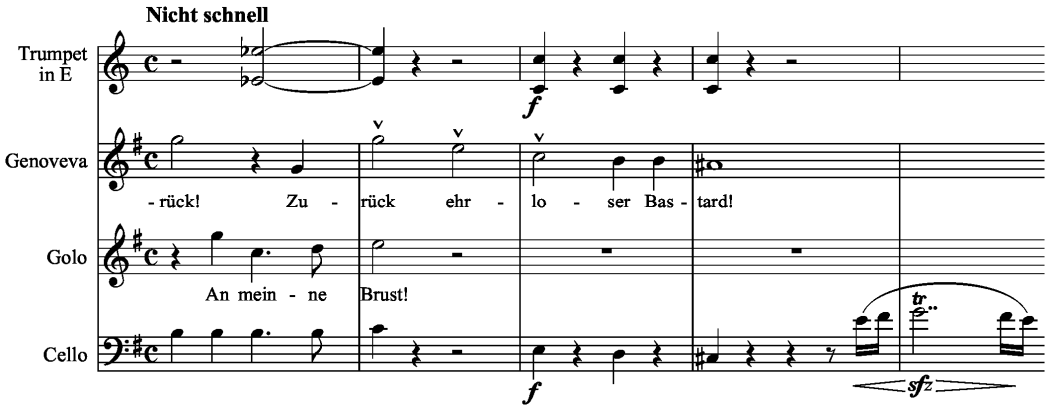
[21] Lines 2 – 4 of this outburst are from Tieck's *Leben und Tod.*

[22] Such language was seen as somewhat objectionable in Schumann's time, though less so in our own. Schumann's wording is actually a reworking of Genoveva's expostulation in the Tieck play: "Hinweg! Gottloser ehrvergessner Mann!" According to Schumann's *Scenerie,* Golo is supposed to collapse at these words, as though struck by lightning.

revenge.[23] After a general pause, the orchestra supports him with sustained brass chords to be followed by ethereal sustained woodwind chords. He sings of Genoveva's annihilation, and this is the catalyst precipitating the unfolding of the drama to come. He will take neither food nor drink, nor will he sleep, until she is destroyed.[24] (see example 6.4)[25]

Example 6.3: Act II, no. 9, m. 139

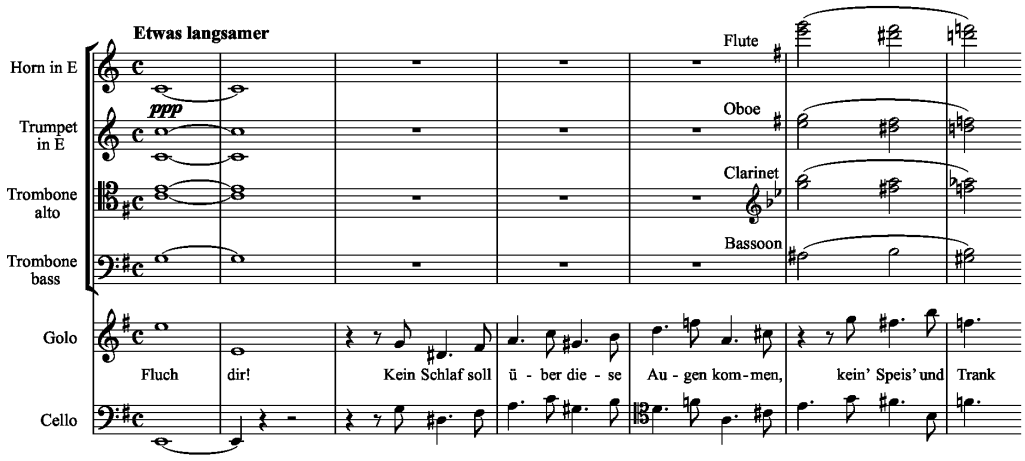


[23] In the Middle Ages, illegitimate children were considered to be marked with disgrace.

[24] The extremity of Golo's reaction is reminiscent to that of Eglantine and Lysiart – the villains in Weber's *Euryanthe* – when in the second Act both are forced to acknowledge that Adolar and Euryanthe, respectively, can never be theirs. In no. 11, they both wish those who have rejected them dead. In a raging duet they proclaim, "Dunkle Nacht, du hörst den Schwur!/Sei mit unser Tat im Bunde!/Ja, es schlägst der Rache Stunde,/Rache, rache atm' ich nur!" (Dark night, you hear our oath;/Join with us in what we now do./The hour of vengeance strikes:/Vengeance, vengeance, alone I breathe!).
Directly subsequent to this, in the Act II Finale, Euryanthe, like Genoveva after her, is judged guilty of adultery. Presaging this verdict, when Euryanthe enters the "Hall of Columns," is her remark: "Doch, mein Gebieter, Frankreichs hohe Frauen/Vermiß ich hier." (But my lord [the King], the noble ladies of France/I do not see here.). The King says he "hopes" she will welcome them soon, but clearly the scene tells us: "This is no place for noble women!"

[25] It is of interest to note that Golo's vocal line at this point is very close to a twelve-tone row.

Example 6.4: Act II, no. 9, m. 159



A significant element in the scene just discussed engages with the medieval idea of courtly love, although Genoveva's harsh words do constitute a transgression of this mode of interaction. Andreas Capellanus describes clearly all the different variations of appropriate courtly, "romantic" behavior in his *The Art of Courtly Love* (c.1170).[26] There are prescribed approaches to love-making at all levels of society. In his *Second Dialogue,* he conjures the scene of a man of the middle class making an approach to a woman of the nobility.[27] One finds a rather remarkable parallel with Golo and Genoveva's "bastard scene," although the gentleman here is cogent and reasonable. He is appealing to an upper-class woman to attend his plea:

[26] Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love,* trans. John Jay Parry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960).
[27] *Ibid.,*pp. 44, 45.

> So, if you will give me a patient hearing, I shall try to ask only what you can have no reason for denying me, and if my remarks offend you in any way and you use harsh words in defending yourself, that will be an unbearable misfortune to me and the cause of all sorts of grief.
>
> You must know, then, that many days ago I was smitten with the arrow of your love, and that I have tried with all my might to conceal the wound . . .

Unfortunately for the suitor, the noble woman is affronted by the man's petition:

> . . . If I were not determined to ignore the shame you cast on my nobility, I would rebuke you very bitterly; but since it is too unladylike for a noblewoman to speak harsh and discourteous words to anyone, no matter who he is, my soul endures with patience your crazy remarks and gives you a soft answer.[28]

The obvious resonances are with the man's "harsh words" causing "all sorts of grief" (Golo's threat to destroy the countess) and the professed intention of the noble woman not to utter anything discourteous. We know that Genoveva's fully justified, cruel words, do cause a disastrous segue, but in the opera she is fully repentant after uttering them. In the brief but exquisite solo aria (Act II no. 11), "O Du, der über alle wacht" (O Thou that watches over us), she pleads for God's mercy. Noticeable in her vocal line is a variant of her own motif. (see example 6.5). The plea highlights the fact that she is very much aware of the class distinction between herself and Golo. In her prayer, however, she does apologize for her breach of etiquette.

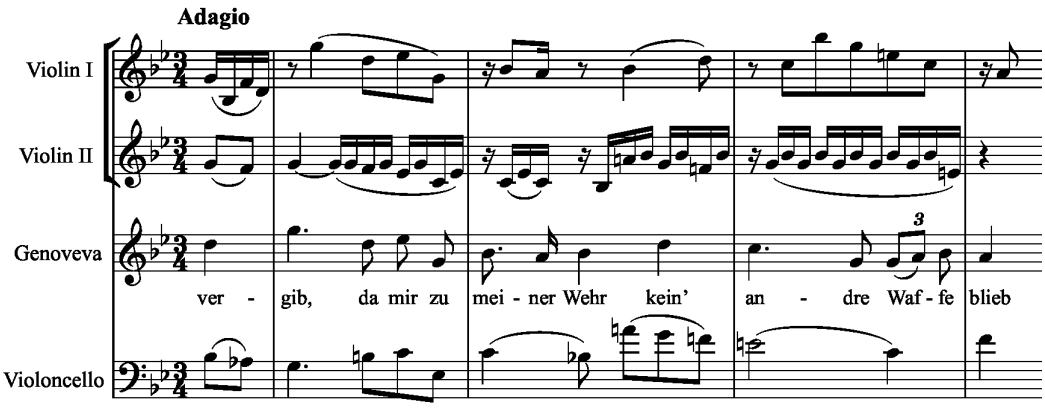
> Und wenn ich mich vergaß,
> Weil sich ein Bub' an mir
> Und meiner Ehr vermaß,
> Vergiß, da mir zu meiner Wehr

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

Kein' andre Waffe blieb.

And if I should have failed
In charity, because a wretch
My honor dared to touch
Then pardon me, that cruel words
I spoke to save myself.

Example 6.5: Act II, no. 11, m. 18



In the Act II Finale, the household vassals, urged on by the malicious machinations of Margaretha and Golo, are about to invade her private quarters. With the greatest effrontery, these lower-class individuals presume to judge their mistress, accusing her of adultery and insisting upon examining her private chambers. Their "moral" conclusion is that she is guilty of seducing the elderly vassal, Drago (an unlikely lover, described by Hebbel as "sehr häßlich"). Throughout the scene Genoveva does show fear, but she also reveals pride and cries "Herr, schütz vor Frechheit mich!" (Lord, protect me from this impudence!) The mob grows completely out of control, marching off the stage with Genoveva

captive. She has broken the community pact of "femininity" and must be punished by being taken to the keep.

Genoveva makes no appearance in Act III, but we see her in the wilderness at the opening of Act IV. She cannot have been there long, for the score's stage directions indicate that the towers of Siegfried's castle are still visible in the distance. She is struggling to walk and beseeches the henchmen who lead her: "Gönnt eine Weile Ruhe der Müden!" (I am exhausted, grant me a respite!) Presumably, as a countess (and unlike Clara) she is unaccustomed to traversing rough, rocky terrain.[29] Her plea is ignored with a brusque response, which is surprising because of her noble status. Yet, in the eyes of the castle's retainers, she has been stripped of her rightful place in the social hierarchy.

A most notable omission in Schumann's *Genoveva* is the absence of Genoveva's baby son Schmerzenreich (Rich in Pain), who neither appears nor is mentioned.[30] Schumann actually leaves the child out of the opera altogether. Schumann's original co-author, Reinick, could not conceive of this cut, where Genoveva struggles to sustain her child with the milk of a doe, while at the same time acting as an emissary of the Almighty, whose purpose it is to redeem mankind. As noted, Schumann absolutely insisted on truncating this section to next to nothing, despite precursors in the original legend and in the Tieck and Hebbel sources. Hansjörg Ewert notes that Reinick felt Schumann would be well advised to adhere primarily to the Genoveva saga. Ewert quotes the words of Joseph von Wasielewski (1822–1896), Schumann's first biographer:

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[29] This barren wilderness alludes to the final act of *Euryanthe,* where the heroine has been taken by Adolar to be executed for supposed infidelity.

[30] Schmerzenreich is Siegfried's son.

> He [Reinick] felt very rightfully that a Genoveva without a child and doe would not be a real Genoveva. Only with reluctance and because of Schumann's desperate desire did he desist from incorporating these attributes into his adaptation. He might have overlooked the probably insoluble issue of creating something viable out of two such antipodal products as Tieck's romantic deliquescent poetry and Hebbel's slightly hair-raising, monstrous drama. Reinick made two different drafts; one of them included Genoveva's banishment in an expanded manner with the intention of inserting another plot. Schumann desisted from this plan, and his wishes remained decisive: Genoveva's banishment and rescue in the fourth act should follow directly one after the other.[31]

Wasielewski was also a strong supporter of the Tieck-style ending of *Genoveva.* He felt that the most beautiful part of the old legend had been reduced to an unacceptable minimum:

> . . . all this [the conclusion with mother and child], which is so highly moral, so productive of the deepest sympathy, so clearly and inseparably connected to the popular conception of Genoveva is omitted.[32]

Morality comes into the picture once again. Why Schumann remained so adamant about the excision of this extensive line of plot development is most readily explained by the need for succinctness in the libretto. Telescoping the final act into a day or two balances the three preceding acts in a way that seven years could not. The extension of the plot (its loss lamented by Reinick and

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[31] "Sehr richtig hatte er [Reinick] empfunden, daß eine Genoveva ohne Kind und Hirschkuh gar keine sei, und nur mit widerstreben auf Schumann's dringendes Begehren von diesen Attributen bei der Bearbeitung abgesehen. Dagegen scheint ihm die vielleicht unlösbare Schwierigkeit entgangen zu sein, aus zwei so scharf entgegengesetzten Producten, wie die romantisch zerfließende Dichtung Tiecks und das etwas haarsträubende, ungeheuerliche Drama Hebbels, etwas drittes Lebensfähiges hervorgehen zu lassen. Reinick hat zwei verschiedene Entwürfe gemacht; in dem einen derselben was die Verbannung Genoveva's, mit der Absicht eine anderweitige Handlung einzuschieben, in ausgedehnterer Weise behandelt. Hiervon sah Schumann indessen ab, und sein Wunsch, Verbannung und Rettung der Genoveva im vierten Akt unmittelbar auseinander folgen zu lassen, blieb maßgebend." From a report by Wasielewski, cited in Ewert, *Anspruch und Wirkung*, pp. 143, 144.

[32] Wasielewski, *Robert Schumann: Eine Biographie* p. 214. Trans. and quoted in Linda Siegel, "A Second Look at Schumann's *Genoveva,*" *The Music Review,* vol. 36, p. 21.

Wasielewski) would be, because of its subject matter and length, rather static; creating a sung text to depict either this seven-year period or a scene seven years from her downfall would have been a difficult and dramaturgically risky task. Schumann did, however, concur that the shape of the legend required some kind of resolution in the wilderness, but he abbreviates it so completely that one can easily contend that Genoveva subsists there for only a very brief period. The unexpected introduction of the child at this point would serve no dramatic function, particularly as Schumann has removed all mention of him at the earlier, pertinent points in the plot where Tieck and Hebbel introduce him. So, while Reinick may have been gravely disappointed to see the often tender and religious tableaux struck from his text, Schumann's conception seems to make more sense in the context of the opera house. Additionally, Schumann is the only one of the three nineteenth-century poets discussed here to adhere closely to the simple happy ending of the original legend. Quite conceivably, he himself could not confront such extended suffering and abandonment.

One oddity regarding the wilderness scene comes from an article by Schumann's old friend Emil Flechsig. It would seem to indicate that Schumann may have, at some point, contemplated a longer fourth Act in the wilderness:

> In 1848 I visited him for the last time and met him in Dresden at his home in Reitbahngasse. He was working on *Genoveva.* Lots of pictures and copperplate engravings with images of woods, deer, hunting scenes were lying all over his room, and he explained that they inspired him to get into the right mood for his work.[33]

[33] "1848 habe ich ihn zum letzen Male aufgesucht und gesehen in Dresden, in der Reitbahngasse. Er arbeitete eben an 'Genoveva,' hatte in seinem Zimmer eine Menge Bilder und Kupferstiche mit Wald, Hirschen and Jagden um sich her liegen und sagte, das versetze ihn in die richtige Stimmung zu diesem Werk." Emil Flechsig, *"Erinnerungen an Robert Schumann," Neue Zeitschrift für Musik,* 117 (1856), p. 395.

In the final Act, after she is dragged through the wilderness to the place of her intended execution, Genoveva exhibits many facets of her personality, most already witnessed in milder form. Sinking onto a rock, she begins a song, a lament, one encapsulating her awful predicament and the loss of her sense of honor: "Sterben müssen, so jung/Sterben von Mörderhand,/Preisgegeben der Schande!" (To die like this, so young,/To die by brutal murder,/And delivered to disgrace!) Once again she calls desperately for Siegfried to save her. She believes, realistically, that she will never see him again, and thus will not be able to comfort him for her loss, nor tell him that she has forgiven him, "Vergessen alles Weh um deinetwillen!" (Forgotten all I suffered for your sake!). This reference to "for your sake" seems odd. Is she referring to all she has suffered because she is the wife of a nobleman? She still firmly believes that Siegfried does not know of her predicament, and that he would pronounce her innocent if he were present. The fact that she says she forgives him does not make sense in this context, although it presages the more emphatic redemption that ensues only a brief time later.

To her great happiness and surprise, in the wilderness Genoveva espies a cross and a picture of the Virgin in a niche in the rocks. In a rare (for Schumann) three-line repetition of text,[34] she puts herself into the Virgin's hands, and prays

[34] One of the things that Louis Spohr, who attended the final rehearsal of *Genoveva,* particularly admired in Schumann's work was the almost complete lack of word repetition. Spohr had attempted much the same thing in his opera *Der Kreuzfahrer.* As his biographer expressed it: ". . . it especially pleased him to observe that the same method of treatment which he had resorted to in the composition of the 'Crusader' had been followed, in that Schumann did not permit the unnatural interruption of the action by a wearisome and constant repetition of words." *Louis*

that she will stay with her.[35] She sings a gentle arioso, as she beseeches the Virgin to help her to bear her anguish.[36]

The encounter with the shrine strengthens Genoveva. Her fear is diminished, and she believes she is now being led to bliss. This central section, gentle and fluid and accompanied by a softly-intoning, heavenly off-stage chorus, gradually grows in intensity. Genoveva becomes more and more ecstatic, and cries gloriously and gratefully to "Almighty God" (Allgütiger) on B-flat^3.[37] "Was ist vor Deines Himmels Herrlichkit/Der Menschen Not, der Erde kurzes Leid!" (Of what account is human suffering/And anguish when the joys of heaven beckon?). Her religious transcendence is complete.

Robert and Clara were not deeply religious, but there are references scattered throughout their correspondence that mention God and blessings. They frequently give thanks for their children, especially the favored first-born, Marie. Schumann is credited with saying, in 1830, that he was "religious without religion."

Spohr's Autobiography, trans. [N.A.], (London: Longman Roberts & Green: 1865) vol. 2, p. 296. Spohr started the autobiography himself, but it was completed, after his death, by family members.

[35] Despite the "Lutheran" chorale at the opening and conclusion of the opera, here Genoveva has unexpectedly embraced Catholicism. This helps move her into a more appropriate past, while making the religious element ambiguous.

[36] Tieck's version of the drama has a beautiful section, late in the work, where an angel, carrying a crucifix, descends from heaven to provide Genoveva, still living in the wilderness, with hope for a better future, telling her she will once again see happiness. The crucifix stands unaided on a rock. Schumann appears to have incorporated this scene in two parts: the references to angels descending from heaven in the Act I Finale, and the scene we see here, in Act IV, with the shrine among the rocks. Genoveva will refuse to leave the cross right up until she is rescued by the huntsmen.

[37] All of Schumann's characters have a limited vocal range, with one syllable or word to a note. This is partly for the sake of intelligibility, partly because he could not count on the capabilities of German singers. Thus, Genoveva's high B-flat is a rare and welcome occurrence. Her ecstasy is readily comparable with Euryanthe's prayer, "Schirmender Engel Schaar!" (although Genoveva restrains her extremes of emotion considerably more than does Euryanthe). The syllabic text settings and limited vocal range may also be an anti-Italianate gesture.

In his 1837 review of *Les Huguenots,* Schumann attacks Meyerbeer for the presence of the sacred chorale "Ein' feste Burg" in his opera: "I am no moralist, but it is too much for a good Protestant when he hears his most hallowed song bawled forth from the stage."[38] As we know, Schumann creates a chorale of his own to play a role in *Genoveva.*

Genoveva's opening arioso returns then slowly abates as the bright light from the cross begins to fade. John Daverio notes: "The emblematic focus of Schumann's literary opera, the image that inspired the luminous music for Genoveva's prayer in the final act, is the Cross."[39] This is the most significant emblem of the Catholic faith.

From amongst the rocks Golo approaches, the rosy light and heavenly tones dissipate, and the religious tableau comes to an abrupt end. In no. 17 he shows Genoveva Siegfried's sword and ring, cruelly pronouncing that Siegfried has ordered that she should be put to death.[40] Nevertheless, Genoveva still innocently believes, although little by little she becomes more anxious and doubting. Ultimately, she is convinced and, *in extremis,* expostulates that her true unhappiness has now begun. The craven Golo cannot carry out Siegfried's command to kill Genoveva, and he iterates his request that she allow him to rest his head on her breast and then abscond with him. Having promised himself (Act II no. 10) complete self-denial until he has destroyed her, his vow now seems strangely forgotten. Unexpectedly, Genoveva reverts to the character evident in

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[38] Schumann, *Schumann on Music,* p. 138.
[39] Daverio, *Robert Schumann,* p. 356.
[40] In Wagner's *Lohengrin,* Gottfried is handed the insignia of the grail, a horn, a sword and a ring by Lohengrin. Here, however, they are symbols of the future, not omens of death.

the "bastard" scene, calling him demented, a scoundrel, and finally crying "Hinweg, du fluchbelad'ner Mann!" (Stand back, you scoundrel by heav'n accursed!). Again, she has forgotten her noble and repentant bearing.

Daverio identifies *Genoveva* as a *Trauerspiel,* a seventeenth-century genre, which deals only with "the commands of kings, killing, despair, infanticide, patricide, conflagration, war and commotion, lamentation, sighing and suchlike."[41] Of the two principal types – tyrant drama and martyr drama – in almost all respects, *Genoveva* clearly belongs to the latter category. Notably, Daverio goes on to say that the principal characters of the genre "may be viewed as representatives of the figure of Christ, insofar as they embody his dual essence, at once human and divine."[42] This description clearly attends to Genoveva, whose deep religiosity is contrasted sharply with her down-to-earth perception of what is happening in the all-too-human world around her.

Golo commands the vassals to carry out the murder. He disappears down the path by which he had entered, presumably to kill himself (in the *Detaillierte Scenerie,* Schumann had indicated that this was definitely to be the case, although it is not clearly defined in the final version of the opera). Golo's final speech, stating that he is riding to foreign parts with his falcon on his wrist, is taken from the very conclusion of Hebbel's play. Only moments after this departure, Hebbel's Golo has the retainer Caspar kill him.

Finally, Caspar asks Genoveva if she has a last wish. This is a sad moment. With language again from Hebbel, Genoveva must finally admit to

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[41] Daverio, *Robert Schumann,* p. 345.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 345.

herself that her husband has forsaken her. Yet, with a great capacity for forgiveness, through love and magnanimity she will redeem him from his sins and also find salvation for herself:

> Wenn mein Gemahl zurückkehrt, sagt ihm dies:
> Daß ich, wie hart er auch mit mir verfuhr,
> Ihm alles noch, bevor ich starb, vergab!
>
> (When my husband comes home, then tell him this:
> However cruelly he treated me,
> Yet I forgave him with my dying breath!)

Genoveva's desire to redeem her husband from his blind and arrogant behavior is not applicable to Schumann's opera alone. Uniting many of Schumann's dramatic works, both secular and sacred, there are certain thematic connections: guilt and especially redemption are main themes.[43] Redemption and apotheosis come in the form of female sacrifice: Rose gives up her life in *Der Rose Pilgefahrt,* Op. 112, as does Mignon in *Requiem for Mignon,* Op. 98b. The Peri in *Das Paradies und die Peri,* Op. 50, seeks salvation with astounding determination, while Genoveva's prayers and deep forgiveness give her an almost hagiographic status.[44]

In the melodrama *Manfred,* (begun the very day after the conclusion of *Genoveva*)*,* Astarte, Manfred's mysterious love, appears only for a fleeting instant.

> . . . she can barely be considered a character independent of Manfred's reminiscences, [and] joins the ranks of Genoveva and Gretchen both as a love object and a female vehicle for the

[43] On redemption see also Wagner's works from the same time period as *Genoveva.* This is the pivotal element in both *Der fliegende Holländer* (Senta) and *Tannhäuser* (Elisabeth).
[44] On redemption in *Faust* see Eric Jensen, *Schumann* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 241.

redemption of the male protagonist.[45]

In *Der Rose Pilgefahrt,* it was Schumann who suggested to poet Moritz Horn that the dying rose (who had wished to experience life as a human) become an angel. Schumann noted: "The progression from Rose to Maiden to Angel seems poetic to me and also points to the doctrine of higher transformations of the inner self, which indeed we all seek so keenly."[46] "Clara has what Schumann seeks but cannot find. She inhabits it, like a birthright: a place in the world of music and *in the world at large*."[47]

Now that Genoveva's great capacity for love has reconciled her with the ill-deserving Siegfried, the opera moves quickly to its conclusion. The assassins flee, the huntsmen and squires who have been searching for the Countess appear on the hilltops. Once again overwhelmed – as she had been in Act I – Genoveva falls into an unbecoming faint. The male chorus asks the question: "Wo ist der Graf?" (Where is the Count?). He is suddenly ushered in and, at this almost final moment, for the very first time in the entire opera utters his wife's name: "O Genoveva!" Has he not recognized her as a vivid individual previously, but rather as a beautiful, simple, self-abnegating example of German womanhood?

Actually, the four main protagonists each utter Genoveva's name but once, seeming (at least initially) not to recognize her particular uniqueness. Golo cries her name in Act II no. 1, when he begs her forgiveness for his inappropriate kiss. Genoveva refers to herself by name when she is, a little later in the same number,

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[45] Paley, "Dramatic Stage and Choral Works," p. 215.
[46] Mike Ashman, "Schumann: Choral Works," *Der Rose Pilgefahrt and other Works.* Sound recording, EMI Classics, 3 50900 2, (c) 2006, p. 5.
[47] Paley, "Dramatic Stage and Choral Works," p. 19.

desperately trying to fend him off and invoking the name of her absent husband. Lastly, in Act II, no. 10, Margaretha scolds Golo for being too wild in his wooing. So these three do at one point "see" her, but Siegfried takes significantly longer than anyone else. And, notably, Golo is the first to acknowledge her by name.

Now that Genoveva and Siegfried are finally reunited, they sing a brief, simple duet. Even here, however, they only rarely sing at the same time. This serves the dual purpose of making them seem emotionally distant from one another – an appropriate stance – and aids in the clarity of the text, which was all-important to Schumann and a characteristic aspect of the opera as a whole.[48] There is never anything flowery or frivolous about Genoveva's vocal lines, just as these qualities were absent from Clara's personality.

Genoveva, with her abiding faith in Providence, once again forgives Siegfried for his readiness to believe the charges brought against her. The two lines are from Tieck: "Sprich nicht so, es war nicht deine Schuld,/Der Himmel fügt' es so!" (Say it not, it was no fault of yours, For God decreed it thus!)

And, most fascinating, when the two actually do sing simultaneously, Genoveva sings of them both – "Gelingen wird es unsrer Lieb und Treu!" (*Our* love and faithfulness will now prevail!), while Siegfried, surprisingly appropriately, can initially give assurance only to her capacity – "Gelingen wird es deiner Lieb' und Treu" (*Your* love and faithfulness will now prevail!).[49] (see example 6.6)

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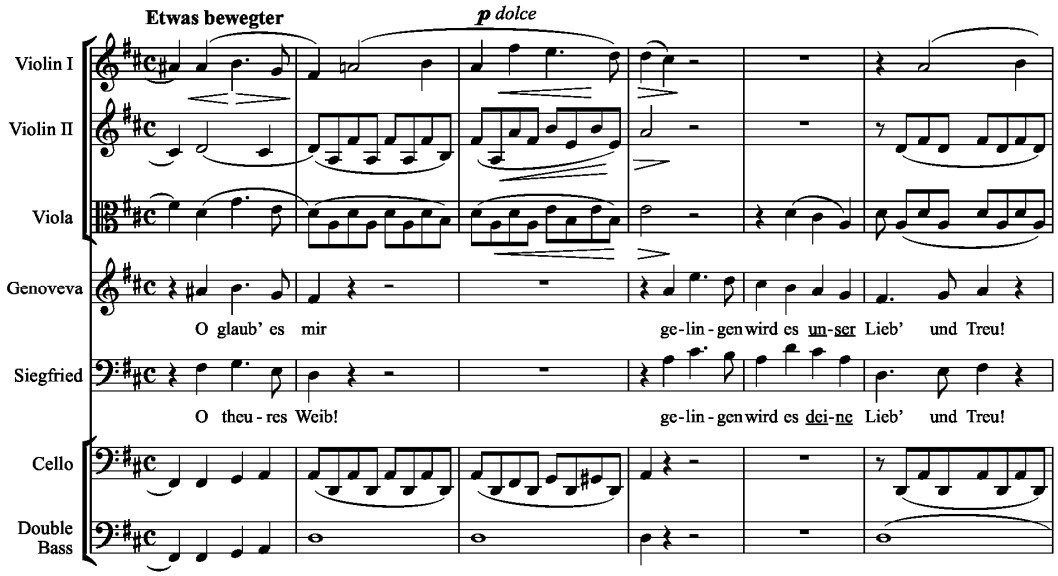
[48] In Spohr's *Jessonda* and Weber's *Der Freischütz,* respectively, there are no sustained duets for the main characters Jessonda and Tristan d'Acuhna and Agathe and Max.

[49] Italics mine.

Example 6.6: Act IV, no. 19, m. 26



His sense of intimacy being as weak as it is, Siegfried is almost immediately transformed back into a man of action and proclaims a holy day. A double chorus (Act IV no. 20) praises the restoration of their noble mistress, and in the grand Finale (no. 21) Bishop Hidulfus, who opened the proceedings in Act I, blesses them both and congratulates them for overcoming their trials. The opera concludes with these acclamations: "Hail to Siegfried, the bravest of heroes; Hail Genoveva, noble wife!" It is tempting to hear a subtext: Hail to Robert, the bravest of heroes; Hail Clara, noble wife!

2. Margaretha: A Witch For All Occasions

In the plot of *Genoveva,* Margaretha is a multiply transformed character. She assumes three roles: wicked childhood nurse of Golo; attentive, ostensibly caring nurse of Siegfried; and the evil witch in the Magic Mirror Scene. Golo recognizes her in all her incarnations, but we must suspend our disbelief that she is not recognized by Siegfried in her various transformations. She is inherently malignant and cruel and appears to take pleasure in her evil deeds. As a witch, she has secret powers at her disposal, and Siegfried had banished her from his castle as a result of her practice of black magic. Yet her desire to destroy Siegfried – by destroying Genoveva – seems rather disproportionate to her grievance against him.

Witchcraft, in early modern Europe, was seen as a vast diabolical conspiracy against Christianity, so Margaretha's appearance in the plot provides a stirring contrast to Genoveva and Siegfried. Witches were almost invariably rendered as female, and included in their repertoire of apostasy, evil and malicious deeds was the feat of creating local chaos. This is the principal method Margaretha uses, but she is also prepared to murder in order to have her revenge.

In the *Malleus Maleficarum,* a famous witch-hunting manual from c. 1486, woman is depicted as the practitioner of all things wicked, through being imperfect and sullied. In its almost pathological hatred of womankind, women are

seen to be creatures in league with the devil. There was also a traditional association between women and monsters.[50]

Discussing the Magic Mirror Scene, in which Margaretha plays the prominent role, Linda Siegel observes:

> If we judge this portion of *Genoveva* by the standards of German Romantic literature, then all the sorcery, miracles, visions, prophecies and magic which appear here are proper ingredients of the libretto. . . . Schumann's main concern in the third act is to re-create the spirit of the mediaeval legend – an undertaking common to all opera composers of the time.[51]

It is true that there is plenty of precedent for the types of ingredients Siegel mentions as part of German, Romantic literature. It is only surprising that Schumann uses so many of these ingredients, purist that he purported to be. This was indeed sensationalism, something he claimed to abhor in the musical arts.

We see Margaretha for the first time in the Finale to Act I of the opera. Her character is actually a composite of characters from Hebbel and Tieck. From Hebbel she is a combination of Gertrud (nurse) and Winfreda (witch). In Tieck, Katharina (nurse) calls her wicked sister Margaretha a *Scheusal* (monster). Schumann took over this last-mentioned name for his witch; perhaps this "monster" was the witch character with whom he identified most closely.

In the Act I Finale, Margaretha is depicted as unremittingly wicked. Her aim is to cajole Golo into seducing Genoveva for her own seditious purposes. She spies on Golo and observes the gentle kiss he bestows on Genoveva. She calls to

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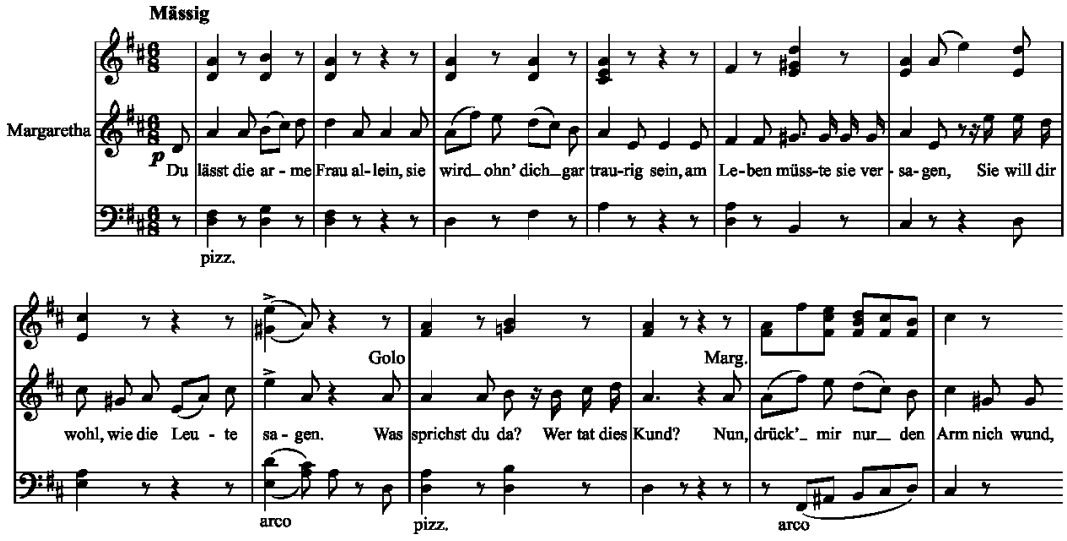
[50] Heinrich Institoris, *Malleus maleficarum 1847/*von Heinrich Kramer (Institoris); herausgegeben und eingeleitet (deutsch und englisch) von Günter Jerouschek (Hildesheim/New York: G. Olms, 1992).

[51] Siegel, "A Second Look at Schumann's *Genoveva,"* Music Review, No. 36 (1975), p. 27.

him, and when he realizes who she is he indignantly and hatefully berates her: "Ich aber hasse dich,/Seit bösem Wandel du dich ergeben" (But I detest you,/Since you have turned to wicked practice). Seeming to have forgotten his own transgression, he claims that Siegfried's castle is a house of virtue. Margaretha, who has been trying to entice him into her service with high drama and histrionic singing, unexpectedly breaks into a lilting folk song in an attempt to calm and ensnare him. (see example 6.7) It is effective, and Golo picks up her melody. He will be her follower.

Example 6.7: Act I Finale, m. 148



Now, to Golo's great surprise, Margaretha tells him that it is well known that Genoveva cares for him. Golo's defences are breaking down, and he begs to know what he should do. Gleefully, in an aside, Margaretha whispers "Es dringt ihm in Herz" (I've touched his heart). She rejoices that, without his being aware,

he has entered into her devilish plan to bring about the downfall of the count and countess. Golo will be the instrument of her vengeance.

Golo, in one of his many moments of weakness, cries to Margaretha that if *she* will lead on, the plan will come to fruition. In this reversal of traditional roles, he shows no trace of masculine leadership or forcefulness. He is now, however, overjoyed and confident that Genoveva will be his, even if angels should descend to earth and protect her.[52] For Margaretha things are simple: "Ich halt ihn umgarnt/Ich halt ihn umstrickt" (He is in my power/He's caught in my web).

How are we to understand the appearance of a character such as Margaretha in the nineteenth century? As we know, this was a period of prejudice against the active, publicly successful female. It was also an era when superstition continued to prevail, although by c1850 most people did not take it seriously.

Joyce Carol Oates has made the astute observation that critics often "fail to see how the creative artist shares to varying degrees the personalities of all his characters, even those whom he appears to detest – perhaps at times, it is these characters he is really closest to."[53] It is easy to see Schumann allied with the purity of Genoveva and even the questionable masculinity of Siegfried, but how does he relate to Margaretha? One readily sees her as a foil to Genoveva, a bifurcation of the "bad" woman and the good. But, perhaps this diametric opposition also had a home in the unconscious mind of Schumann. He may have vaguely identified his own struggle to behave magnanimously and quell his envy

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[52] The reference to angels descending from Heaven parallels the scene in Tieck (p. 208) when a single angel descends to give Genoveva hope by bringing her an ivory crucifix.

[53] Joyce Carol Oates, *The Hostile Sun: The Poetry of D.H. Lawrence* (Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1973), p. 44. Quoted in Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic,* pp. 68, 69.

of Clara by pairing himself with the abhorrent behavior of Margaretha. She is the temptress, the woman who dupes others into doing her bidding. She is a caricature of masculinity. He may have identified with his own internal, dichotomized impulses and found himself able to reconcile them with Margaretha's subversion and Genoveva's purity.

Though they are talking about women authors, Gilbert and Gubar touch on issues also pertinent to males and to Margaretha:

> Even the most apparently conservative and decorous women writers obsessively create fiercely independent characters who seek to destroy all the patriarchal structures which both their authors and their submissive heroines seem to accept as inevitable. Of course, by projecting their rebellious impulses not into heroines but into mad or monstrous women (who are suitably punished in the course of the novel or poem), female authors dramatize their self-division . . . What this means, however, is that the madwoman in literature by women is not merely . . . an antagonist or foil to the heroine. Rather she is usually in some sense the *author*'s double, an image of her own anxiety and rage.[54]

Schumann fits into this scheme exceedingly well. His own lack of self-confidence could easily have compelled him to project his "rebellious impulses" into an imaginary, subjective world. And, it is easy to recognize Schumann as a "double" of one of his characters, they, in lieu of him, exhibiting deep rage. Further, in Bram Dijkstra's words, "witches, sirens, and predators were all the more dangerous because their deceptive appearance of activity only served to mask the *engulfment* of the striving male by the forces of passivity.[55]

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[54] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic,* pp.77, 78.
[55] Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity,* p. 265.

Just as Act IV belongs predominantly to Genoveva, Act III is, by and large, Margaretha's. It opens with a wounded Siegfried being tended (poisoned) by the nurse Margaretha. Siegfried refers to her as a wise woman, in what is an unusual reversal of a witch's persona.

After poison fails, Margaretha devises a secondary plan for Siegfried's – and Genoveva's – downfall. She invites Siegfried to come and view her magic mirror. Siegfried, not astute but very much a Catholic, asks her about the mirror: "Geht das mit rechter Dingen zu?" (Is all in order?) She assures him that the mirror is harmless and will show all he desires to see.

After Golo has arrived at camp and apprised Siegfried of Genoveva's supposed sin, Siegfried immediately thinks of Margaretha's magic mirror. When the two arrive at her hut, Margaretha is asleep.[56] As she awakens she recalls her dream, an excerpt from a repressed memory.[57]

The entire dream is taken from Hebbel. It had shown her a pretty little girl, with glistening white teeth and plump rosy cheeks. But the child cried: "Zum Engel war ich dir bestimmt,/Du warfst mich in den Bach!" (Your angel I was meant to be,/You drowned me in the brook.). The insidious propensities of Margaretha are shown in high relief: she killed her own child.

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[56] The score indicates that the room in which Margaretha resides is to be decorated with plentiful magic paraphernalia. The *Scenerie* emphasizes that "this scenery is to be treated with particular diligence." Billington, *Robert Schumann's* Genoveva, p. 95.

[57] Laura Tunbridge points out that the extended non-vocal section immediately preceding Margaretha's recollection of her dream "is repeated exactly as she narrates her vision." This internalized, psychological phenomenon is typical of all the characters with the exception of Siegfried. "Weber's Ghost: Euryanthe, Genoveva and Lohengrin," *Music, Theatre and Politics in Germany: 1848 to the Third Reich,* ed. Nikolaus Bacht (Cambridge: Ashgate, 2006), p. 24.

Hansjörg Ewert makes an interesting point regarding Margaretha. Beginning with her dream and throughout the Magic Mirror Scene she moves, claims Ewert, from a bad character to a more human one. By humanizing her, Hebbel's version of the drama removed the "typical" representation of a witch and created a character capable of at least some level of transformation: "The scene obviously belongs to Schumann's 'most favorite thoughts' based on Hebbel . . . With its impressive monodrama, Schumann follows Hebbel's humanization of the witch."[58]

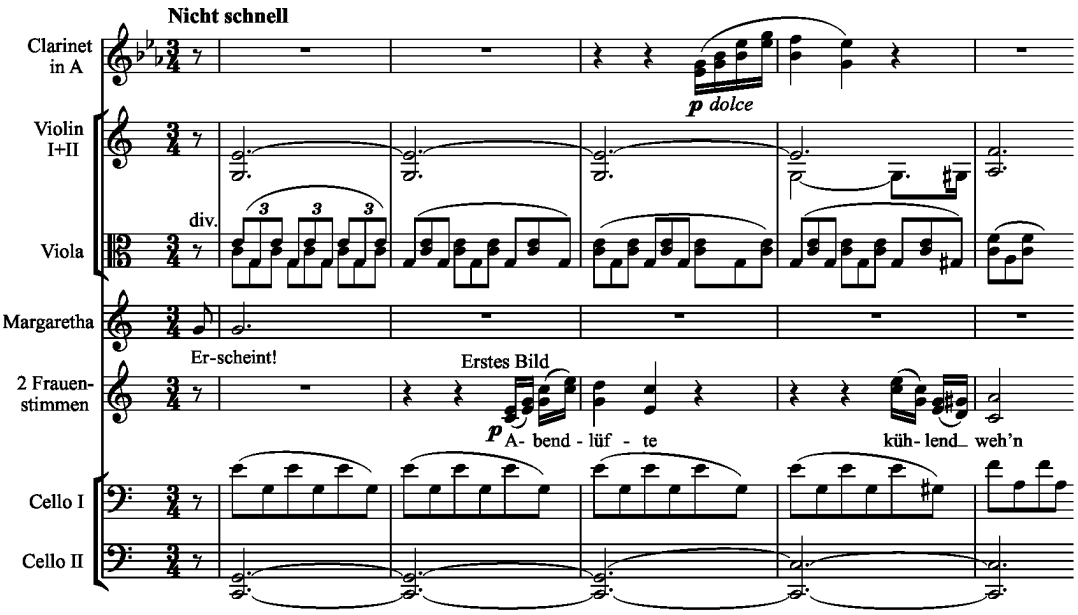
To my mind, no such transformation takes place. Firstly Margaretha fools the two knights and, when she is accused by Drago, defies him. It is only when she catches fire from the shards of the mirror that she changes. But this is not because her nature has suddenly changed. She runs after Siegfried only out of terror, not out of the moral conversion that Ewert contends.

Margaretha is fully awoken by a knocking at her door. Siegfried immediately claims ownership (*my* wife) of Genoveva and demands to see what she had done six months previously. Margaretha suggests that Golo should leave but, ironically, the "innocent" Siegfried states, "Wir beid' sind rein!" (We both are pure!). Siegfried is impatient and expostulates that he must discover the truth (via the verity of the mirror). "Laßt seh'n den Spiegel!" (Show me the mirror!) he

[58] "Die Szene gehört offensichtlich zu Schumanns 'Lieblingsgedanken" nach Hebbel . . . Schumann schließt sich mit seinem eindrücklichen Monodram Hebbels Humanisierung der Hexe an." Ewert, *Anspruch und Wirkung,* p. 267.

cries, and after several more exhortations Margaretha obliges. She raises her magic wand to heaven and calls solemnly "Erscheint!"[59] (see example 6.8)

Example 6.8: Act III Finale, m. 125



The structure of the Magic Mirror Scene stands alone in the opera as a self-contained climactic scene. Drago's apparition from the dead precipitates the dénouement of the entire work. Margaretha's cry to heaven reminds us that one of the most obvious characteristics of a witch was her ability to cast a spell. Amongst other things, the spell could consist of a formula or of a simple set of words, by the recitation of incantations, by the employment of magical potions and by gazing at mirrors. Margaretha thus shows herself as typical.

[59] This section and those that immediately follow bear reference to Weber's "Wolf's Glen Scene" in *Der Freischütz,* when Caspar summons Samiel and forges the magic bullets.

Given his public and private writings on scenes of unreality, bombast, and frivolousness in opera, the inclusion of the Magic Mirror Scene in *Genoveva* seems rather un-Schumannlike. Typically for his time, he appears to be playing to the popular audience. Thus, despite his claims for the need for reserve and realism in German opera he, too, succumbed to the need – at least on a small scale – simply to be successful and to titillate the public.[60]

The operas Schumann criticized are many and concentrate predominantly on operas from without the German states. His famous diatribe on Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* is discussed elsewhere (p. 28). *Robert le diable* was also dismissed as trivial, and as for *Le Prophète* (February, 1850), in his collected works Schumann simply lists the title and has absolutely nothing to say.[61]

Amongst his German contemporaries, Schumann singled out Wagner's *Tannhäuser* for a great deal of scrutiny. The opera, in summary, presents the struggle between the sacred and the profane, as does *Genoveva.* Initially, Schumann wrote a scathing criticism, addressing it to his friend Mendelssohn. The letter, dated October 22, 1845, tells of Schumann's perceived inadequacies in the opera. The premiere had been in Dresden on October 19th, but clearly Schumann had not been in attendance.

> Wagner once again has an opera ready. Certainly he is an ingenious fellow full of fantastic ideas and bold beyond measure – the aristocracy go into raptures as far as *Rienzi* is concerned – but truthfully he cannot put together four beautiful measures, let alone four-part chorales with

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[60] In his *Scenerie,* Schumann showed some interesting indecision, which again touches on contemporary operatic practice. He wondered whether Margaretha, instead of simply disappearing behind a rock at the end of Act IV, might not perhaps fall dead in a fit on stage. Steven Billington, *Genoveva,* p. 97.

[61] Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften,*ed. Martin Kreisig, vol.. 2, p. 163.

> skillfulness. . . . And now before us lies the entire score beautifully printed and the fifths and octaves therein – and now he would only wish to change and erase. Too late! . . . The music is not a bit better than *Rienzi,* more weak, more forced.[62]

After Schumann actually saw a performance of *Tannhäuser,* he found himself to be deeply stirred. Now he wrote to his old friend Heinrich Dorn, on January 7th, 1846:

> I wish you had seen *Tannhäuser* by Wagner. It contains depth, originality, overall a hundred times better than his earlier operas – also much that is musically trivial, of course. In sum, he has the potential to become an important composer for the stage and, as I recognize, he has the courage to do that.[63]

Schumann's magnanimity is laudable, as he was desperately trying to fashion an opera himself.

As a celestial, off-stage chorus sings mellifluously in the background, Margaretha's mirror shows Genoveva strolling among the hills near Siegfried's castle.[64] Drago greets her and they engage in light conversation. Siegfried, typically states his ownership of property before all else: "Sieh da, mein Schloß, wahrhaftig!" (Just look, there is my castle!). After recognizing his oak trees he finally mentions his wife whom, almost predictably at this point, he seems not to

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[62] "Da hat Wagner wieder eine Oper fertig – gewiß ein geistreicher Kerl voll toller Einfälle und keck über die Maßen – die Aristokratie schwarmt noch vom *Rienzi* her. Aber er kann wahrhaftig nicht vier Takte schön, kaum vierstimmigen Choralgeschicklichkeit. . . . Und nun liegt die ganze Partitur schön gedrückt vor uns – und die Quinten und Oktaven dazu – und ändern und radieren möchte er nun gern. Zu spät! . . . Die Musik ist um kein Haar breit besser als *Rienzi,* eher matter, forcierter!" Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften,* Bd. II, ed. Martin Kreisig, p. 446.

[63] "*Tannhäuser* von Wagner wünscht' ich, daß sie sähen. Er enthält tiefes, Originelles, über haupt 100mal Besseres als seine früheren Opern – freilich auch manches musikalische Triviale. In summa, er kann die Bühne von großer Bedeutung werden, und wie ich kenne, hat er den Mut dazu. *Ibid.*

[64] The soft, gentle chorus bears great similarity to those in *Das Paradies und die Peri,* and *Der Rose pilgefahrt.*

recognize at first: “Und dort auf dem Fußpfad die Gestalt?” (And there, on the footpath, who is that?).

Margaretha and Golo wheedle Siegfried into staying to see two more visions. The tension rises, until in the third vision she exhorts her false conjuration, “Erscheint!” three times. Now we see Genoveva’s bedchamber. Drago enters, and she stretches out her hand to him. The chorus suddenly becomes provocative, and falls back on the evil nature of womankind and their propensity to be the instigator of devilish trysts:

> Von dem Baum im Paradies
> Dess’ verbot’ne Frucht so süß,
> List’ge Schlange, bricht auf’s neu
> Gold’ne Frucht und kriech herbei!
>
> From the tree of paradise
> With its sweet, forbidden fruit,
> Shall the cunning serpent pluck
> Apples, virtue to seduce!

When Siegfried sees the final scene, he rushes out, but not before shattering Margaretha’s mirror. This action precipitates dire consequences, for she exclaims, most uncharacteristically, “O God!”

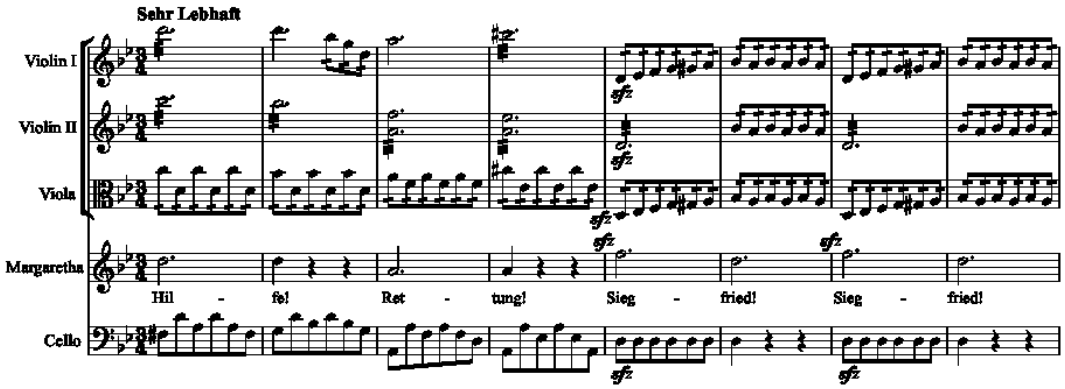
The ghost of Drago rises from the shards of the mirror.[65] As an emissary of God, he has more power than Margaretha – thus her terror. Drago demands of Margaretha that she immediately hasten after Siegfried and confess her treachery. She remains intransigent. In Hebbel’s words, he describes all the horrors that

[65] The appearance of an apparition was not unusual during Schumann’s time. Hoffmann’s *Undine* (Kühleborn) and Marschner’s *Hans Heiling* (Heiling) both contain individuals with magic powers. Wagner created Ortrud in *Lohengrin,* and Weber created Eglantine (and Emma) in *Euryanthe.*

await her if she does not heed his command. Flames appear from the fragments of the mirror as, after his decree, Drago's ghost disappears.

Margaretha is now terrified. "Wo flieh ich hin, wo berg ich mich!" (Where can I fly, where can I hide?) she screams.[66] She becomes rather pathetic as she iterates "Hilfe! Rettung!" (Help me! Save me!). (see example 6.9) Ultimately, as flames begin to envelop her, she acquiesces to Drago's command and three times calls desperately for Siegfried as she flees. She is heard from only once again, when in Act IV she shrieks to Siegfried that Genoveva has been found. Her abundant confidence has been transformed into an almost child-like obeisance.

Example 6.9: Act III Finale, m. 460



Less diabolical witch than sorceress with limited powers, Margaretha helps instigate crimes rather than carry them out herself. Her abilities tend to lie

[66] Here she echoes the desire to fly also indicated by Siegfried and Golo, although for different reasons. A parallel can also be found in Weber's *Euryanthe* where, at the opening of Act II, Lysiart also cries "Wo berg ich mich!" when he realizes he can never engage the affections of Euryanthe.

predominantly in her capacity for duplicity.[67] In this, Golo mirrors her. Eric Jensen considers her the most "unredeemingly evil character in the tale," but also contends that she "never appears dark or menacing."[68] Margaretha transfers many of her devilish impulses onto her pawn Golo, continually encouraging him from the sidelines. As in the case of Golo, however, Schumann's libretto never holds her accountable for her crimes. When Genoveva is finally discovered, Margaretha simply disappears behind a rock, never to be seen or heard from again. Her "flat," rather weak departure from the tale is reminiscent of Golo's. Again, this lack of justice in a medieval setting, strikes one as highly uncharacteristic.

Eduard Hanslick, in *Die moderne Oper,* indicates that the portrayal of Margaretha was in keeping with the witches of her time, although it is difficult to ascertain from his critique whether this is a positive or a negative aspect. One suspects he sees the similarity as unfortunate, for by using considerable theatrical and musical variation, Schumann could have created a witch who stood alone, divorced from the stereotypes of the genre. According to Hanslick,

> Tieck's old temptress Gertrud and Hebbel's wicked pair of sisters, Schumann melded into one "Golo-witch," Margaretha, who does not differ very much from numerous operatic colleagues of this genre.[69]

Ewert points out that there was contemporary dissension when judging in detail the quality of the many facets of the characters.

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[67] The exception here is her attempt to kill Siegfried with her magic potions.

[68] Jensen, *Schumann,* p. 247.

[69] "Tiecks alte Versucherin Gertrud und Hebbels böses Schwesterpaar hat Schumann in eine Golo-Hexe Margarethe, zusammengeschmolzen, die sich nicht merklich von ihren zahlreichen Operncolleginnen unterscheidet." Hanslick, *Die moderne Oper,* p. 257.

> . . . the character of Margaretha, on the one hand, was disparaged as a personification of the operatic witch of the worst kind, i.e., an unmotivated monster, a conglomerate of theatrical triviality. But, on the other hand, [she was] praised as the most well-drawn of all the characters, seemingly due to the especially respectable stage performance of the actress at the premiere. This is what the critic of the *Illustrierte Zeitung* wrote about Margaretha's monologue at the beginning of the finale of the third act: " . . . that fantastic, original vocal performance." He considered it one of the best musical parts of the entire opera.[70]

We can see that personal tastes were a significant factor in the evaluation of Schumann's success at characterization. Also, as in any operatic presentation, the qualities and abilities of the vocalists make all the difference to the work's success.

3. Golo: The Nineteenth-Century Anti-Hero

Just as womanhood is depicted as somewhat fragile, dependent and controlled, so the main male protagonists are pictured as epitomizing a stronger, self-determined condition. Neither presentation of gender roles is completely consistent, but there are significant threads that can be recognized as dominant.

Golo is the most complicated character in *Genoveva.* His actions are so inconsistent – his thoughts and actions vacillate constantly – that it is hard to

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[70] "Aber man war sich durchaus uneinig über die Einschätzung dieser Charakteristik im / einzelnen; zum Beispiel wurde der Charakter Margarethas sowohl als "Opernhexe der schlimmsten Art, d. h. ein unmotivirtes Ungeheuer, ein Conglomerat von theatralischen Nichtigkeiten geschmäht, als auch, besonders durch die offensichtlich beachtliche Bühnenpresenz der Darstellerin bei der Uraufführung beeindruckt, als gelungenster Teil der Charakteristik gerühmt, wie etwa des Rezensent der *Illustrirten Zeitung* Margarethas Monolog zu Beginn des Finales zum dritten Akt – "dieser phantastisch originelle Gesang"! – für "eines der besten Tonstücke der ganzen Oper" hielt." Ewert, *Anspruch und Wirkung,* pp. 96, 97.

discern whether or not he should be credited with any moral integrity. He is a weak man who finds it almost impossible to make rational decisions.[71]

In *Genoveva,* the first aria of the opera (Act I no. 2) goes to Golo who, through some curious means, has intuited that he is not to accompany Siegfried and the warriors to battle against Abdorrhaman and the Saracens. He laments his plight, reflecting on the true nature of the knight: "Wer doch wie sie in blut'ger Feldschlacht könnte werben,/Um Ruhm, den Tod der Ehre sterben!" (How happy is he who, in cruel battle,/Can strive for glory and can die a hero!)[72] This is the most powerful statement of Golo's dual nature, manifested on this occasion as his deep introspectiveness versus his exuberant and comfortable masculinity. He hearkens back to recent years when he lived as a brave, fearless knight and no challenge was too great for him. (see example 6.10) We have had a glimpse of the man Golo has been and may have remained were it not for his obsessive passion. Death as a courageous warrior is markedly preferable to the predicament he finds himself in as Genoveva's guardian.[73]

Golo's identity as a musician (from Tieck) is first introduced at this point, for he breaks into song and recalls how merry was the sound of his voice to the

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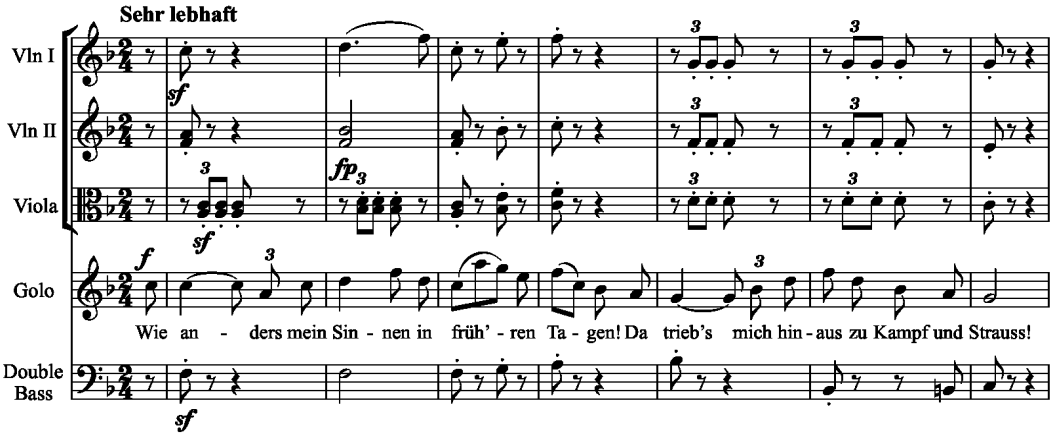
[71] An interesting precursor to Golo is found in Étienne Méhul's *Ariodant* of 1799. Here we see the full panoply of medieval chivalry. The Romantic plot is very much like Weber's *Euryanthe* and also *Genoveva,* although most probably this is mere coincidence. Nevertheless Othon, the vengeful, rejected lover, is, like Golo, cast as a tenor, not the conventional villainous operatic baritone. Othon, too, plays the role of bard. But, there is no evidence that Schumann ever heard this opera.

[72] The phrase "Frieden zieh' in meine Brust" is the sole point in the opera where Schumann indicates an ornament – a turn in the vocal line at m. 25.

[73] Early medieval perceptions of masculine honor implied a constant reinforcement of manliness through both word and action. To fail in this (or to be forbidden) was considered the behavior of a woman. Smith, *Europe after Rome,* p. 108.

zither when he returned from battle.[74] The bold, triadic directness of the joyful section "Wie anders mein Sinnen" (How different were my thoughts) is precursory to Siegfried's equally positive and proud martial tone in No. 14, "Bald blick ich dich wieder" (Soon I'll see you again). Golo's nostalgic reminiscences come to an abrupt halt, however, as he once again laments his plight and wishes for internal peace.

Example 6.10: Act I, no. 2, m. 40



Although of its time, Siegfried's treatment of Genoveva, as he heads jubilantly off to war, is callous. Golo is incensed. Act I no.6 begins with his words: "Der rauhe Kriegsmann!/Auf das Schwert versteht er sich,/. . . Auf Liebe nicht!" (The uncouth warrior!/A master of the sword,/. . . But not of love!)[75] Needless to say,

[74] Schumann's German text identifies Golo simply as "Sänger," which in this period would translate loosely as minstrel. The German tradition of the minnesinger naturally comes to mind, too, but while Schumann's opera is set in the eighth century, the minnesinger flourished between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. Perhaps this anachronism was irrelevant to Schumann. His opera as a whole contains other elements from different periods in history. Another word for minstrel could be bard.

[75] Perhaps unconsciously, Siegfried's lordly treatment of his wife helps Golo justify his attempted seduction in the following act.

Golo's reaction will prove to be the height of hypocrisy as his cruelty and total disregard for Genoveva's feelings unfold throughout the course of the opera. He appears oblivious to the many chauvinistic characteristics he shares in common with Siegfried.

At the close of the same number, in response to the terrible distress he feels about protecting Genoveva, Golo suddenly utters the words: "Siegfried, Siegfried, du ein zweiter Vater mir,/Dem ich alles danke,/Was hast du mir getan!" (Siegfried, Siegfried, who has been like a second father,/To whom I owe everything,/What have you done to me!)

There are actually a number of statements of the "second father" type scattered throughout the libretto. Siegfried truly loves Golo and, as much as he is constitutionally able, Golo loves him. In Act I no. 4, Siegfried refers to Golo as "my closest kinsman" and "my closest friend."

In the early Middle Ages, kinship had three different yet related meanings: the affiliation to a group defined by consanguinity; the alliance between groups of kin effected by marriage or other major factors; and, most importantly for our understanding of Golo and Siegfried, "the persons whom an individual chooses to acknowledge as kin at any particular moment," as Julia M.H. Smith puts it. Kinship, in her view " is a matter of socially constructed interrelationships, not simply of biologically determined ones."[76]

The greatest of ironies occurs in Act III no. 14 when Siegfried believes that his closest kin, Genoveva, is guilty of adultery. Fearful of being emasculated

[76] Smith, *Europe after Rome,* p. 84.

and ridiculed by the vassals if he returns to his castle, Siegfried offers Golo "Mein Schloß, und was sonst mein gehört,/Nimm du's, du warst mir immer treu!" (the castle, and all my other goods,/Are yours, you were my one true friend!). After such affectionate words one would expect Golo's guilt to be insuperable, but his inherent propensity for deception, and further opportune moments afforded him to indulge his ill-conceived passion, overwhelm any upright tendencies directing him to maintain his kinship relationship with honor.

In the nineteenth-century hero and anti-hero were strangely interconnected. The seeking, lonely, ambiguous figure was often heroic in his quests but could be equally cruel and dismissive when an appropriate occasion presented itself. Golo can be conceived of as the epitome of the Romantic anti-hero. He responds to the world around him more through feeling than reason. He views everything from a subjective viewpoint, although he is not completely indolent, as he does make a couple of weak attempts to act in a moral way. Simon Williams writes:

> Most commonly, the romantic hero feels a sickness unto death[77]
> . . . when the direction of energy is reversed and the world impinges on the self, and his preoccupation with the self and his difference from others becomes so intense it consumes him.[78]

Another of Williams's contentions is that "anguished, alienated heroic characters" can live in outright defiance of God and human law.[79] This brings to mind Byron

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[77] A fine example of this occurs in the Finale to Act I where Margaretha, threatened with death because she saw Golo's secret kiss, asks him if he is ill. His response is "Ja, krank zum Sterben!" (Yes, unto death!). This seems melodramatic, but is typical of early nineteenth-century hyperbole.
[78] Simon Williams, *Wagner and the Romantic Hero* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 10.
[79] *Ibid.,* p. 11.

– an immensely popular figure for the Romantics – and his *Manfred, Cain* and *Childe Harold.* Golo is isolated because he is left behind, but when his passion for Genoveva takes complete hold, his isolation is increased manifold. Margaretha is the only person to whom he can turn and, as we know, she has a treacherous agenda of her own.

Throughout the opera Golo is a confused personality wavering between a measure of goodness and an excess of delusion and evil. It is because this vacillation exists, however, and we do recognize some slight amount of decency in him, that he is seen in a somewhat more sympathetic light than are his counterparts in Tieck and Hebbel.[80] But, once he has made his advances to Genoveva and experienced her expressions of derision and contempt, he has trapped himself. He must now discredit her or lose his own life at the hands of the count. In the process of attempting to annihilate Genoveva, however, he actually annihilates himself.

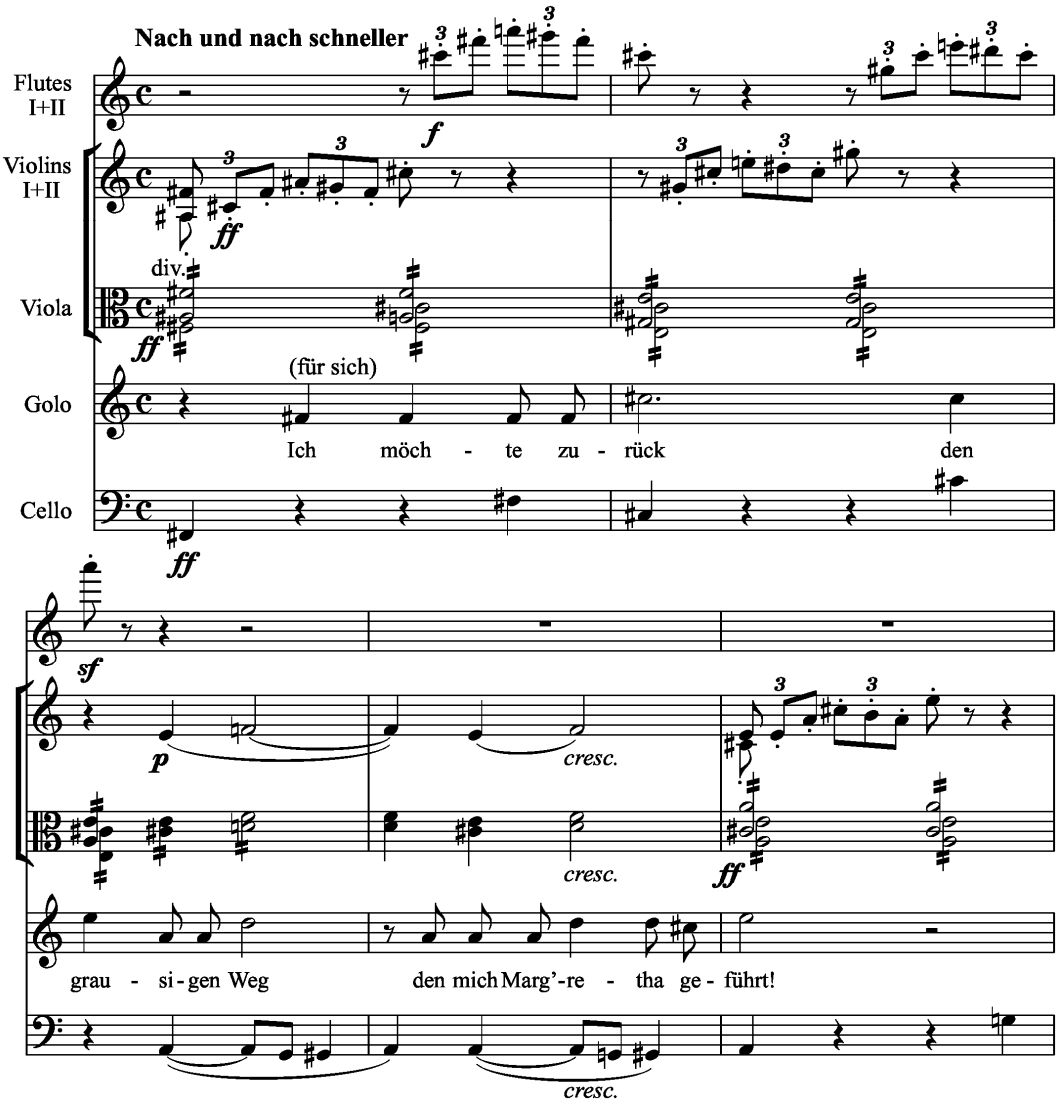
Examples of Golo's ambivalence and fear regarding the route he has chosen are not difficult to find. When, in Act III no. 14, he delivers to Siegfried the awful letter citing Genoveva's infidelity he trembles as Siegfried reads it. Subsequently, interspersed among the Count's horrified exclamations, Golo iterates four times in asides: "Ich möchte zurück den grausigen Weg,/Den mich Marg'retha geführt!" (Oh, could I retrace the terrible path/That Margaretha induced me to take!) (see example 6.11) Note that yet again he casts the fault not upon himself, but upon Margaretha, with whom he has actually colluded of his

[80] In the Hebbel drama, Golo is incontrovertibly without conscience. In Tieck, he converts to Catholicism when condemned to death.

own free will. She will receive blame once again in Act III as he claims, in one of his asides, "Sie reißt zu Sünd' und Schande mich fort!" (She leads me on to sin and disgrace!).[81] While this may be true, he was by no means compelled to follow her. It is of note that this section is in F-sharp major, a key used almost singularly for Margaretha. Her motif appears in the accompaniment (flutes and violins), too. (see example 6.11)

[81] In Act I, when he learns he is not to go to battle, Golo regrets that he will not receive a blessing from Bishop Hidulfus. This, plus the sin reference above, are his only acknowledgements of Catholicism and Providence. He is not concerned with faith but with subjective feeling.

Example 6.11: Act III, no. 14, m. 180



In both Hebbel's and Tieck's tragedies, the steward Drago becomes the scapegoat for Golo's uncontrollable lust and is murdered. The same pertains in Schumann, but he presents the issue in a peculiarly convoluted manner. First Drago confides to Golo that there is a rumor among the servants that Genoveva is having an affair with the young chaplain of the castle (a character in name only, whom Schumann introduces by title but who never

appears on stage). Drago, persuaded by Golo, agrees to hide in Genoveva's bedchamber in order to prove the accusation false. When the drunken vassals intrude, strangely they are not in search of the chaplain but of Golo, who at that moment is absent. Golo arrives, and Drago is forced to show himself. He is instantly stabbed by Balthasar. Despite the discovery of Drago, the vassals are still certain there is someone in Genoveva's chambers and search futiley. One could say that Golo did not directly wish for Drago's death, but he arranges things so that this outcome is almost guaranteed. His perfidy seems to cause him no qualms. Perhaps all this needless complication is one of the "peculiar caprices" to which Reinick was attesting in his letter to Hiller.[82]

How evil is Golo? As we have seen, he opens the opera with a sensitive, heart-felt lament, and the acts of fearlessness and communal activity he recalls also reveal him to have been a brave and positive influence on those around him. But, after he kisses the insensate Genoveva, catastrophe ensues. He very nearly succeeds in destroying Genoveva, he places Drago in a disastrous position, he crushes the spirit of his loyal Count Siegfried, and he even threatens Margaretha with death in Act I simply for viewing his indiscretion with Genoveva in the castle yard.

Once again, Bernard Shaw has comments on the characters:

> Another of the failures of Genoveva is Golo, the villain. As he is, unfortunately, a sentimental villain, it would require a Mozartian subtlety of characterization to differentiate him from the other sentimental people in the opera – the hero and heroine, for instance.[83]

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[82] See above, Chapter II, p .

[83] Shaw, *Bernard Shaw's Music,* p. 63.

Whether or not this assessment is accurate, Schumann portrays Golo in such a way that it is difficult not to have slight compassion for him. His is a lost and confused soul. Despite the brave example Siegfried sets as he heads off to war, Golo has no one to provide him with support and moral guidance. He is indescribably stricken by adoration and lust. But, like Margaretha, Golo fully upsets his world and its parameters and thus can be held responsible for the great turmoil and near tragedy that is contained therein.

4. SIEGFRIED, COUNT PALATINE: A MAN OF LIMITED INSIGHT

A Count Palatine was an important man in his day. As a public figure, he was an official of the sovereign's court, in particular of his court of law. In the Middle Ages, in addition to his judicial responsibilities, the Count Palatine had active functions within the king's household. Although not very elevated in the ranks of the nobility, he was the representative of the king in the provinces and responsible for the administration of the royal domain.[84] Also, "Churches relied on strong warrior kings to defend their lands as well as to spread Christianity, [and] nobles were happy to let some of the sacred aura of kingship brush off onto themselves.[85]

All of this seems a lot to associate with the Siegfried we encounter in Schumann's *Genoveva,* yet he does command an army (under orders from Bishop Hidulfus), and he appears to garner respect from the soldiers who volunteer to fight under him. Despite his well-represented responsibilities, however, – they

[84] "palatine." *Encyclopædia Britannica* 2009. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 12 May, 2009 <www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/439218/palatine>
[85] Smith, *Europe after Rome,* p. 250.

take up only a small portion of the opera as a whole – critic Franz Brendel described Siegfried as an utter "Dummkopf" of a husband.[86] And, it is in this role of a husband to Genoveva that his many weak, thickheaded characteristics are revealed.

The fact that Siegfried, a warrior, is apportioned a presence, albeit the smallest one, in the opera is partial testimony to the many political upheavals in the early-nineteenth century. John Warrack writes that a reaction against military action, "encouraged adventures into distant worlds of the imagination." A fictionalized Middle Ages offered a flight – undoubtedly an appealing element for Schumann – into an invented historic past.[87]

J.P.E. Harper-Scott's view of Wagnerian medievalism and its relation to the *Ring* cycle would seem to contradict the notions espoused by Warrack, whose attitude to the fictionalized past would seem too simplistic for his arguments. He writes of the three-fold Wagnerian [narrative] interlace, of which point 1 is outlined below:

> First, its derivation from medieval sources allows it to constitute a more aesthetically sensitive medievalism than is acknowledged by the dismissive judgments of such writers as Eco and John Haines; the latter suggests that Wagner did little more than recreate a naïve sense of the Middle Ages as "the good old days.[88]

Documentary evidence does not indicate that – apart from consulting others' redactions of the *Genoveva* drama and being conversant with the simple original legend – Schumann did specific research into medievalism for his opera.

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[86] Daverio, *Robert Schumann,* p. 344.
[87] Warrack, *German Opera,* p. 268.
[88] J.P.E. Harper-Scott, "Medieval Romance and Wagner's Musical Narrative in the *Ring*," *Nineteenth Century Music,* vol. XXXII, No. 3 (Spring 2009), pp. 223, 224.

The wide and varied reading he had enjoyed since childhood, however, would certainly have informed his settings and character delineations. His operatic depictions are invariably distinct and, despite anachronisms which nevertheless detract little from the thrust of the plot, his Middle Ages did to a degree "recreate a naïve sense . . . of the 'good old days.'" His sensitivity to his models was punctilious and intense.

Although Siegfried is a count, his participation in the fight against Abdorrahaman is in the role of knight, the medieval designation for professional cavalry warriors. Golo, too, falls into this category. He remains very conscious of the import of his knighthood, for a short while after kissing Genoveva (Act I no. 6) he utters rhetorically:

> Was hast du getan?
> In freveldndem Wahn?
> Du hast geküßt deines Herren Weib! . . .
> Du hast gebrochen dein Ritterwort;
> Elender, fort, so weit dich deine Füße tragen!
>
> What have you done
> In mad delusion?
> You have kissed your master's wife! . . .
> You have broken your oath as a knight;
> You must away, as far as you can!

The text is interesting, as it not only highlights the furtive kiss, but also acknowledges that Golo realizes he is not in his right mind and has eschewed the

tenets of knighthood. The issue of his mental state, however, is never mentioned again.[89]

The breaking of an oath by a knight was a serious matter in the medieval world. Chivalrous conduct was expected of all who bore the title. The knight was to display courage, courtesy and generosity at all times. He was to defend the weak and champion the right and good against all evil.

Chivalry had its inception around the ninth or tenth centuries and thus fits readily into the scheme of Schumann's *Genoveva.* Léon Gautier (1832–1897) codified the major precepts of comital conduct in his *La chevalerie.*[90] Of the ten tenets he gives as the most pertinent, the majority are particularly inapposite to Schumann's male knightly operatic characters. Defending the church and making war against the infidel were central to the knight's responsibilities: here Siegfried is clearly appropriate. Remaining faithful to one's pledged word was also a given, but neither count nor knight seem able to accomplish this.

On Siegfried's part, allegiance to the church and its defense are positive occupations, and his courageous leadership in battle mark him as the more righteous of the two chief male operatic protagonists. Yet, he does not even attempt to defend Genoveva. Rather, he concentrates on what he sees as his despoiled honor: "Nach Hause will ich nicht;/Die Knechte, sie zeigten wohl auf mich mit Fingen." (I cannot go back home;/The serfs, I know, will laugh and point their fingers.)

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[89] At the end of Act II, no. 9, Schumann cut the line "Ich bin krank." Its retention would have afforded us more evidence that Golo's actions towards Genoveva were not only ill-conceived and ignominious, but were also the product of a frenzied, unwell mind.

[90] Léon Gautier, *La chevalerie,* (Paris: C. Delagrave, 1890), trans. Henry Frith as *Chivalry: The Everyday Life of the Medieval* Knight (London: G. Routledge and Sons, 1891).

Siegfried is indeed no example of the medieval courtly lover described so precisely in Andreas Capellanus's *The Art of Courtly Love* (c. 1170).[91] While the source may be late for a ninth-century setting,[92] its precepts are indeed fitting for earlier centuries, too: "O what a wonderful thing is love, which makes a man shine with so many virtues and teaches everyone, no matter who he is, so many good traits of character!"[93] We see that this definition of love is applicable to neither Siegfried nor Golo. Their self-centered love, masculine values, and concomitant jealousy bring out the worst in them both.

In addition to Siegfried's prominent negative qualities – lack of compassion, slow-wittedness, chauvinism, vanity, gullibility – one more significant trait should be added: impatience. This attribute explains many things in the opera, not least his very rapid reading of the fraudulent letter and his unhesitating need to be avenged. As early as Act I no. 4, we see him chastising Genoveva and Golo, just as they are discussing their new relationship vis-à-vis Golo's protection. Siegfried utters impatiently: "Sparte die Worte!" (Save your words!), and mere moments later "Kostbar, kostbar ist die Zeit!" (We're wasting precious minutes!). His impatience is further underlined in the Magic Mirror Scene, where he persists in haranguing Margaretha to begin conjuring images.

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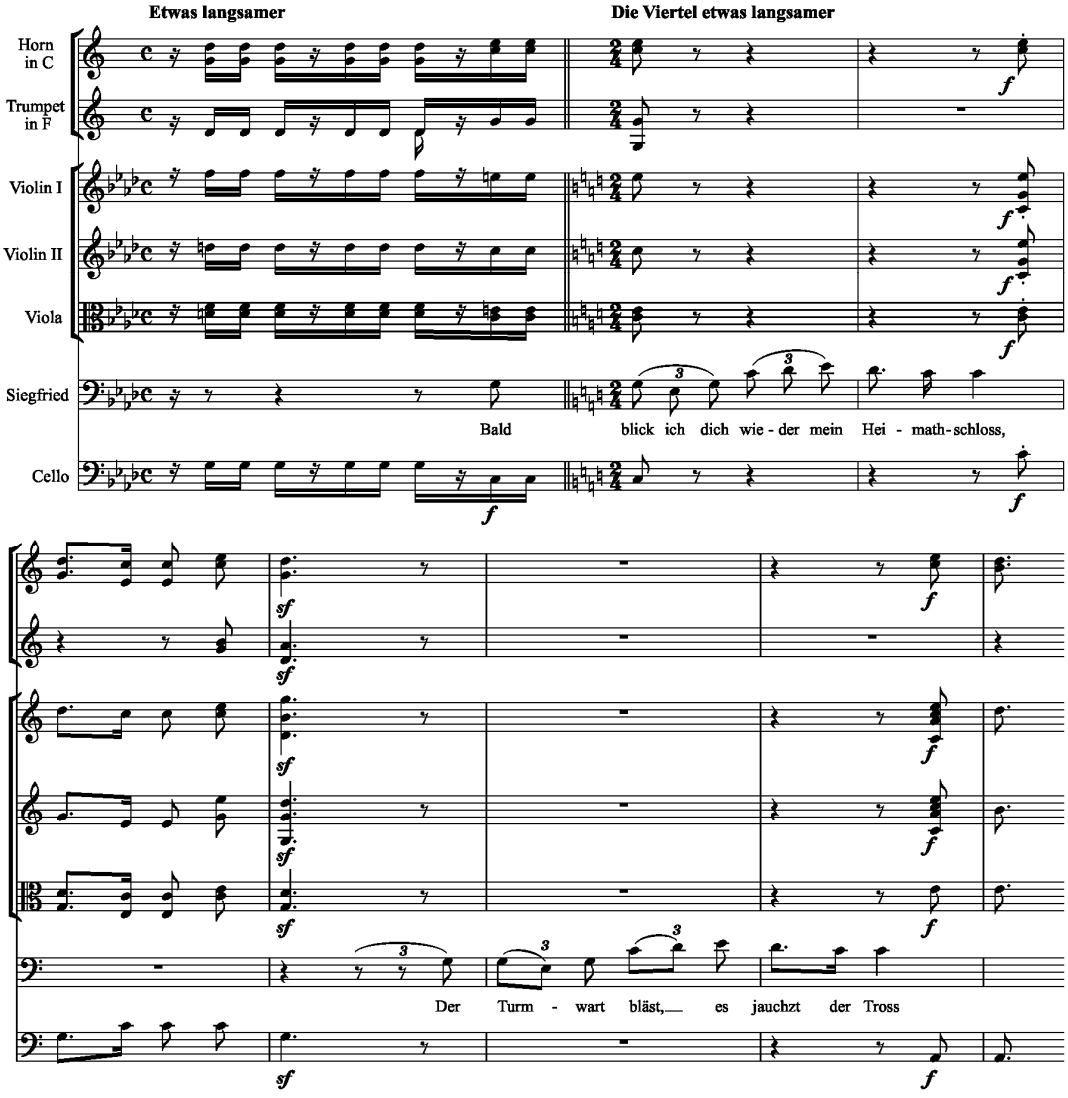
[91] Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love,* trans. John Jay Parry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960).

[92] Actually, Schumann nowhere indicates the time period in which he is setting his *Genoveva.* It is clearly early medieval, however, discernible from both the date of the Martell crusade and the time of the Genoveva legend. Hebbel indicates no period either: he simply describes his drama as set in "poetic" time. Tieck says nothing, although again one can gauge the period from the drama's content. "Poetic" time would be an apt designation for his drama, too.

[93] Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love,* p. 31.

In the first number of Act III (no. 13), before the arrival of the fateful letter, we find Siegfried, who has been absent at battle in Act II, highly excited. All is right in his world, with its admixture of Christian faith, martial victory and conjugal love. (see example 6.12) The Saracens have been dispatched, and he finally allows some capacity for love and longing to come to the fore as, in a lied (no. 14) “Bald blick ich dich wieder” (Soon I will see you again), he imagines embracing his wife, “O Liebestreu, wie reich an Segen!” (O faithful love, how richly blessed!). This, however, not until he has reminisced about his castle and his home.

Example 6.12: Act III, no. 14, m. 35



In Act III no. 14, when she has failed to kill him with her potions,[94] Margaretha hopes her magic mirror will utterly convince Siegfried of his wife's duplicity. At this early stage he has no interest and makes haste to head for home. He sings a

[94] Margaretha is incredulous that her poisons have not caused Siegfried's death. She refers to his physical prowess: "Der muß von Eisen sein!" (He must be made of iron!).

rollicking lied and shows a hitherto absent prescience in the second strophe of his sprightly rendition:

> Voll Bangen blicktest du aus nach mir,
> Mein Weib, aus deinen stillen Mauern.
> Was bangst du noch? Wirf fort dein Trauern,
> Nun trennt keine Macht mich mehr von dir!
>
> How anxiously you did look for me,
> Beloved wife in lonely vigil.
> Why fear you still? Away with tears,
> No power on earth can keep us apart!

How, one wonders, does he know of his wife's continued loneliness and fear? Where does this sudden compassion come from (or is it simply a command)?[95] He is perhaps falling back on the stereotype of womanhood, and there is an awful irony in his fourth line, for only moments hence he will be condemning his wife to death for being unfaithful.

A pale Golo gallops up with the condemnatory letter.[96] Siegfried's initial morbid reaction is that Genoveva is dead. This is, one supposes, the result of the male belief in the propensity of the female to weakness and physical and emotional frailty. When he absorbs the horror of the letter's contents, however, Siegfried's response is instantaneous, harsh and vengeful. While he does murmur some expressions of horror *sotto voce,* there is no questioning, none of the doubt and disbelief one might expect. He commands Golo to kill him at once, then suddenly "Doch wart', erst sie! Erst sie!" (But wait, first her! First her!) Male

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[95] His acknowledgement of something he really is incapable of knowing is reminiscent of Act I, where Golo knows he is not to go to war before he is told.

[96] A major debacle occurred at the premiere of *Genoveva.* The character of Golo forgot to carry the incriminating letter on stage, and general confusion ensued.

honor is at stake. The exaggerated sense of shame and accompanying selfishness that are part of Siegfried's makeup once again create a great sense of fear about the collapse of his stature in the community. This fear is so intense that he cannot even conceive of attempting to clear his young wife's name.

Golo, whose conscience unexpectedly pricks him, actually tries to console Siegfried by telling the truth and admitting that the letter is a lie. Siegfried will have none of it: "Geh' guter Golo! Du möchtest lügen/Mein Schmerz zu lindern, es gelingt dir nicht." (Go, good Golo! Though you would lie/To ease my pain you will not succeed.) Notable is the fact that Siegfried will attribute more credibility to his fellow knight than to his "beloved" wife.

In Act IV we concentrate on Genoveva, but both main male protagonists play significant roles as well. When Golo appears and beseeches her to go with him, Genoveva, having made her peace with God, is now surprisingly provocative: "Hier bin ich, tötet mich . . . !" (Here I am, kill me . . . !). Golo continues to demean himself, but eventually, when he has lost all hope, he strides off the stage and leaves the drama for the duration. Steven Billington tells us that the *Detaillierte Scenerie* at the Robert-Schumann-Haus indicates that the viewer is supposed to know that at this point Golo is leaving to commit suicide – perhaps at last attempting to be an honorable man – and certainly this is the thread in the Hebbel play.[97]

Somewhere behind the scenes Margaretha has found Siegfried and confessed her treachery and Golo's guilt. Incredibly, there will be no attempt to

[97] Billington, *Genoveva,* p. 83.

punish either individual, a significant shortfall in the plot and one that conflicts with the concept of retribution inherent elsewhere in the drama. Siegfried ultimately finds Genoveva in the wilderness and falls at her feet, but because of her emotional ordeal she has again collapsed in a faint and does not know him at first.[98] When she does revive, she is filled with joy (where fear or reproach would seem more understandable). As no. 19 begins, we have a line directly from Tieck: "Ich mische meine Tränen mit den deinen!" (My tears and yours, how they mingle!)[99] Now the brave warrior is crying, too. He even cursorily acknowledges his culpability in the travail she has suffered, admitting he has caused her bitter anguish and has no right to ask for her forgiveness. Genoveva's gentle and generous response again comes directly from Tieck: "Sprich nicht so, es war nicht deine Schuld/Der Himmel fügt' es so." (Do not say it, it was no fault of yours,/For God decreed it thus.)[100] Her belief in divine Providence overrides all else. Not unexpectedly, given what we know of him, Siegfried never actually asks Genoveva how she has fared, what has happened to the villain Golo, or anything else one may expect after a long and desolate separation.

Writing of Wagner and his concept of redemption, Simon Williams could easily have had Schumann's *Genoveva* in mind:

> [In] Wagner, the glory is rarely the hero's alone, for it is often shared by a woman who dies with and for him, and, by her very act of self-sacrifice, she not only vindicates his heroic stature, but evinces her own mode of heroism, based upon pure altruism. In each case where the altruism prevails, it embodies values superior

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[98] This is reminiscent of and balances out the scene in Act I (no. 6), where Genoveva also falls in a faint and does not recognize Golo.
[99] Tieck, *Leben und Tod,* p. 198.
[100] *Ibid.*

to those for which the male hero stands.[101]

Genoveva was willing to die for Siegfried, just as Senta was for the Dutchman and Elisabeth for Tannhäuser. These acts of redemption bear some resemblance to Robert and Clara's relationship: on the surface at least, she was willing to do anything for Robert, just as Genoveva would do likewise for Siegfried.

According to Tieck, Genoveva's suffering is necessary to redeem mankind, but this is a thread not apparent in Schumann's libretto. Schumann, instead, attempts to provide some sense of redemption in the hagiographical scene where Genoveva prays in the wilderness, but although she espouses that she is willing to die for Siegfried, in reality she really has no choice. It is the timing of Siegfriend's arrival that saves her. This is no credit to him, but it removes the need for Genoveva's demise. Perhaps it is best said that she *would* have redeemed him had he not precluded it by arriving at the scene. Her altruism is never in question.

Siegfried's natural sense of command cannot be suppressed for long, and quickly his authoritarian demeanor returns. To the sound of pealing bells Siegfried declares a holy day, when he and all those within his dominion will render fervent thanks to God for the reunion of their count and countess. The fact that he was the one to perpetuate Genoveva's despair and isolation seems to have evaporated from his mind.

The chorus interjects with joyous cries that lead us to the work's conclusion. Genoveva is appropriately acknowledged (after Siegfried, of course)

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[101] Williams, *Wagner and the Romantic Hero,* p. 37.

while the adulation is predominantly accorded to Siegfried. Siegfried, as we have established, has behaved abominably towards his wife, yet in the male-dominated society in which the two reside, the people are completely forgiving of him.[102] Until he – and only he – cleared Genoveva's name, she was condemned to certain death.

In *Genoveva,* knighthood and masculinity are not as firmly grounded in medieval culture as one might expect. Siegfried certainly carries out duties pertaining to his martial responsibilities, but Golo's knightly responsibilities are subsumed by his all-consuming passion, exemplifying one stereotype of the Romantic anti-hero in the colorful Middle Ages. Neither man can be held up as the epitome of the righteous one should expect of the aristocracy. Yet, in both the medieval world and in Schumann's nineteenth-century enactment, much is actually similar. The characters are engulfed by feelings that dictate their allegiances and ultimately their deeds, be they base or honorable.

[102] One should not forget, however, the cries of the household members in Act II, no. 8: "When the master's gone abroad, then the vassal rules the roost!" A sense of insurgency is emphatic here, although the household vassals are only a part of the operatic population.

CHAPTER VII

LEITMOTIFS IN *GENOVEVA*

In his opera *Genoveva,* Schumann uses a limited, but nevertheless perceivable, leitmotivic technique to create a dramatic and symbolic texture that involves both protagonists and orchestra. Leitmotifs are short, characteristic, musical ideas used as signifiers that point to and, in the form of symbols often unite with, extramusical ideas (signifieds). Motifs may or may not be altered after their initial appearance, but changes in such areas as melodic outline, rhythm, orchestration and so on cannot be so great that the motif loses its fundamental identity. Motifs also serve a function that is purely musical, however, and musical considerations will, at times, dictate a motif's treatment and modification.

This, of course, is how the leitmotif is viewed today, from a post-Wagnerian perspective. Schumann seems to have experimented with such an idea in *Genoveva,* just as it was coming into general use in a tentative way. He also had a limited exposure to Wagner's early, more limited use of associative musical motifs in the "Dresden" operas.

Schumann was by no means the first composer to employ such a procedure, which aims at binding such things as characters, emotions, events, ideas, states of mind, and symbolic elements into an interactive and unified whole.[1] Notable predecessors and

[1] At the time Schumann wrote *Genoveva*, the term "Leitmotif" had not yet been applied to the technique with which it is now conventionally associated. Although it is commonly believed to have been first coined in 1871 by F. W. Jähns in his book *Carl Maria von Weber in seinen Werken,* it actually dates from writings by A.W. Ambros circa 1865. Ambros was referring to the fact that Wagner in his operas and Liszt in his symphonic poems, "seek to establish a higher unity across the whole by means of consistent leitmotifs (durchgehende Leitmotivs). August Wilhelm Ambros, *Culturhistorische Bilder aus dem Musikleben der Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Matthes, 1860) 2nd Edition, 1865, pp. 142, 143. See also Thomas S. Grey, *Richard Wagner and the Aesthetics of Form in the Mid-Nineteenth Century (1840–60*), (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1988).

contemporaries who employed a similar, though even more basic approach, in various styles and to varying degrees, include Méhul (*Euphrosine*, 1790), Spohr (*Faust*, 1816), E.T.A. Hoffmann (*Undine*, 1816), Weber (*Euryanthe*, 1823), Marschner (*Der Vampyr*, 1828; *Hans Heiling*, 1833), Meyerbeer (*Robert le diable*, 1831) and Wagner (*Der fliegende Holländer*, 1841; *Tannhäuser*, 1845).

The first person to pay attention to Schumann's use of motifs was Hermann Abert in an article in the *Zeitschrift der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft* in 1910.[2] He concludes that,

> "Schumann's treatment of his motifs surpasses considerably the position of Wagner in *Tannhäuser*, for Schumann treated his motifs for the most part organically, from the inside out, as Wagner did in his later works. Also, the symbolism of the motifs occasionally undergoes an equally exciting and deep poetic use. As with Wagner, they serve the inner, psychological connection and deepening of individual, dramatic, fundamental ideas . . ."[3]

It seems somewhat surprising that so much time elapsed after the creation of *Genoveva* before anyone noticed such a significant structural feature as the leitmotif. The reason may be that the work does not have an extensive reception history between 1850 and 1900. Schumann"s examples are all of very brief duration, however, and it is their very brevity and germinal nature that makes them especially appropriate for incorporation into the opera's symphonic texture. Although their presence is relatively constant – especially so

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Schumann makes no mention of such a musical procedure, by any recognizable name, in either his musical writings or in his personal diaries. Nevertheless, his use of this concept as a basic principle, developed to a reasonable level of sophistication, is unmistakable.

[2] Hermann Abert, "Robert Schumanns 'Genoveva'," *Zeitschrift der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft*, XI Jg./Heft 9 (1910), p. 277ff. Reprinted in *Musik-Konzepte Sonderband: Robert Schumann II*, ed. Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn (December 1982), p. 177ff.

[3] "Hierin geht Schumann noch ein gutes Stück über den Standpunkt von Wagners *Tannhäuser* hinaus, denn er verarbeitet seine Motive zumeist organisch, von innen heraus, wie dies Wagner erst in seinen späteren Werken tut. Auch die Symbolik der Motive erfährt gelegentlich eine ebenso überraschende als tief poetische Ausnützung. Sie dienen, wie bei Wagner, der inneren, psychologischen Verknüpfung und Vertiefung der einzelnen dramatischen Grundgedanken . . ." See Abert, "Robert Schumanns 'Genoveva'," p. 188.

in the case of the "Providence" motif – it is never intrusive.[4] And none of the motifs in the opera ever takes on the form of an easily recognizable, fully-fledged melody;[5] actually, none is ever longer than one or two phrases, with consecutive repetition, often in the form of sequences, providing extensions. One could reasonably claim that Schumann's motifs are actually not sufficiently conspicuous and consequently never succeed in creating the dramatic impetus and clarification of which such a technique is capable.

John Daverio shows distinct circumspection regarding the use of the leitmotif in *Genoveva:*

> . . . early commentators who detected a Wagnerian stratum in Schumann's work have argued for the existence of a leitmotivic system in Schumann's opera – a highly questionable claim. Judged against Wagner's leitmotif technique, Schumann's is certain to seem deficient. Often taking on a life of their own, Schumann's "leitmotifs" frequently appear curiously out of synch with the perspectives of the characters they supposedly represent or decidedly lacking in individuality.[6]

But, despite his caution, Daverio does allow that of all the characters, Margaretha may indeed have two leitmotifs allocated to her in the opera. Complicating the matter, however, is the fact that she "shares" one with Genoveva and one with Golo. I would also advocate (as does Billington) for a singular motif pertaining only to Margaretha, her "Power" motif.

Daverio goes on to say that the "so-called" leitmotifs are too brief or without referential specificity and warrants that only Genoveva's motif is "accorded the gestural profile, the elaborate extension, and the referential fixity required of a leitmotif. . ."[7] He also

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[4] The motif in question is conventionally entitled the "Golo" motif. I believe it has greater implications, however, and I will proceed to discuss these as the chapter develops. As noted, my title for the motif is "Providence."

[5] The only exception is in the overture, where motifs related to Golo, Genoveva and Siegfried are developed into longer strands.

[6] Daverio, *Robert Schumann,* p. 351.

[7] *Ibid.,* p. 352.

states that the motif belongs more to Margaretha than to Genoveva, for it is in her distorted "voice" that the motif most frequently appears. After Margaretha's tutelage, it is also appropriated by the vassals at the end of Act II. Thus, despite his skepticism, Daverio does allow that there is indeed material that is at least rudimentarily leitmotivic in character. The second appropriated motif is that of "Providence." We will see that this is by far the most complex motif of all.

Before working on any other musical element of *Genoveva,* Schumann composed the overture. It was sketched in a surge of inspiration between April 1 and 5, 1847. Immediately afterwards Schumann worked on the opera's text for several months, but he did not begin the music for the opera proper until December 27. In the meantime, between December 17 and 26, he had begun and completed the orchestration of the overture.[8]

As the overture was the first portion of the opera to be composed, the leitmotifs it contains must have been thought out in some detail before Schumann was even sure of the final construction of his text and before he had made more than simply an outline of the musical fabric it would inhabit.[9] His dramatic conception of his characters and of ideas for appropriate musical figures with which to denote them must, therefore, have been very immediate. Perhaps the overture initially provided an experimental arena in which he was able to explore and crystallize his musical/dramatic ideas. In order to render such an effective summary of the opera's action in the overture, he must have had a fairly clear idea from the outset of how his retelling of the medieval tale would unfold.

It is of note that to all but one of his dramatic overtures (the *Fest-Ouverture*), Schumann appended programmatic titles. While some of the overtures were originally

[8] These dates and information are derived from Schumann's *TBIII* and *TBIV*.
[9] Schumann's preferred way of working in larger forms seemed to be predominantly overtures first and drama second. He had intended to write the overture to *Doge und Dogaressa* before work on the opera itself.

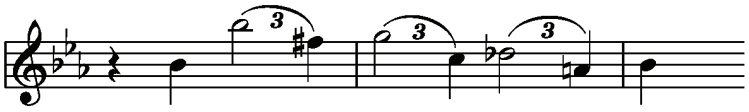
meant to preface larger works (*Julius Caesar, Hermann und Dorothea*), the only two that eventuated were *Manfred* and *Faust.* In the case of *Manfred,* Schumann again wrote the overture first (indeed only days after completing *Genoveva*). The overture has some slight associative gestures, but no real motifs to speak of. Schumann understood associative and characteristic motifs to work in "untexted" music. Perhaps his experience as an instrumental composer with "signifying" aims helped shape the approach he took in *Genoveva*.

1. The Individual Leitmotifs

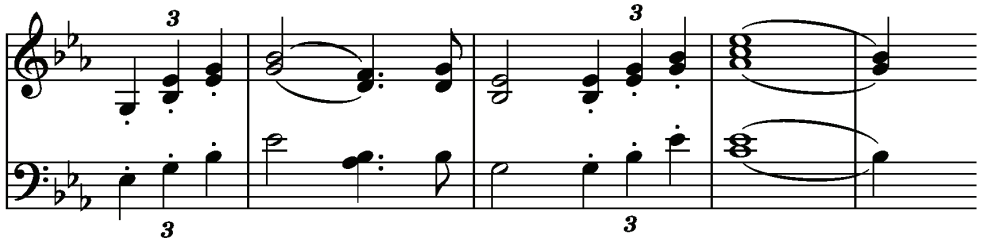
In his 1910 article, Hermann Abert identifies what, to his mind, are the three most important leitmotifs in the opera and overture, those associated with Genoveva and Golo, and what he calls the "Bastard" motif.[10] In addition, he discusses several other motifs of lesser prominence (such as those of Count Siegfried) that appear infrequently in the opera itself yet also appear in the overture, and a couple of minor motifs that are represented only in the opera.[11] In the following discussion, I will deal almost exclusively with what I consider to be major motifs; i.e., those that play a significant role in both the opera and in the overture (see examples 7.1a through 7.1f). Below are the six motifs that I deem most essential to an understanding of the opera. Noteworthy alternate versions will be mentioned also.

[10] My labels for these motifs differ somewhat from Abert's, as will be seen.
[11] Other writers who deal with the leitmotifs in *Genoveva* are, in chronological order, Wolfgang Boetticher, Linda Siegel, Steven Billington, John Daverio and Hansjörg Ewert. Their studies lead back in obvious ways to Abert, although they are considerably more elaborate.

Example 7.1a: Genoveva

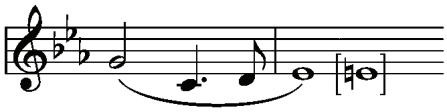


Example 7.1b: Siegfried's Horn Call

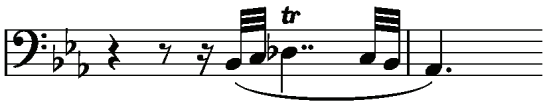


Example 7.1c: Siegfried's Reflection/Honor

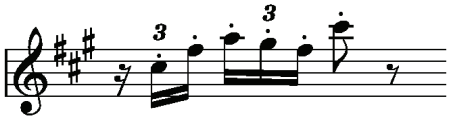
Example 7.1d: Providence (Golo)



Example 7.1e: Golo's Curse



Example 7.1f: Margaretha's Power



In his major study, *Anspruch und Wirkung: Studien zur Entstehung der Oper* Genoveva, Ewert[12] calls attention to what he considers the six major "historical" motifs in *Genoveva,* only three of which – the most omnipresent – are in accord with my own choices. These are the "Providence" motif – originally named Golo, but renamed by me as discussed below – the "Genoveva" motif, and "Margaretha's Power" motif. I also consider four less prominent figures of semantic interest.[13] I readily agree with Ewert that the "Providence" and "Genoveva" motifs are the most important and are intertwined most ably into the body of the work, although their specificity is sometimes rather hard to discern, thus making their association a trifle difficult for the listener.

Ewert offers different titles – from earlier critics – for four of the motifs he quotes, the most straightforward of which is "Genoveva's Humility" motif.[14] For "Margaretha's Power" motif he quotes three possible titles from earlier commentators: "Golo's inner agitation and soul pain" (Abert, *Genoveva,* p. 286ff.); "Siegfried's Pain" (Siegel, "A Second Look . . . ," p. 29ff.); and "Margaretha's Power" (Billington, *Genoveva,* p. 127). To complicate things further, of the six motifs Ewert cites, as many as four are associated with Golo. Ewert, quite reasonably, does not take up all motifs from his predecessors because he considers some of them simply too insignificant. For instance, "Siegfried's Reflection/Honor" motif is not deemed worthy of inclusion, yet two almost equally brief motifs are allocated to Golo: "Golo's Repentance" motif and "Golo's Sadness" motif. Both designations are faulty, in my opinion – Golo shows neither repentance nor unbearable sadness – and these short and somewhat tangential musical fragments are readily open to obfuscation and oversight. Ewert does, however, introduce some interesting comparisons

[12] Ewert, *Anspruch und Wirkung,* p. 275.
[13] One of these, the "Trumpet Call," is not a leitmotif *per se,* but more a much-varied instrumental pattern.
[14] This same motif I name simply "Genoveva's" motif.

between various musical phrases and sentences from the opera, showing us germinal ideas.[15]

2. The Genoveva Motif

The "Genoveva" motif is, in essence, only four notes long. It almost always appears in some form of extension or sequence, however, creating a descending pattern. The motif invariably opens with an upward octave leap, followed by a falling diminished 4th and then a rising half-step, in a triplet motion.[16] Its frequent continuation is a series of falling 4ths or 5ths, always interrupted by rising half-steps of brief rhythmic duration (non-harmonic tones). This chromatic, lower-neighbor inflection adds a certain piquancy and momentum, and its resolution up a half-step is a hopeful gesture.

The "Genoveva" motif is the first of the motifs that Abert discusses. He suggests it is taken from an earlier Schumann work, the Innig section of the *Humoreske,* Op. 20.[17] According to Abert, in the opera the musical figure represents the "longing, trusting-in-God love of Genoveva for her husband."[18] Abert probably made this connection based on the first appearance of the motif in No. 3, m. 49, at Genoveva's words, "Der dich mir gab, er sehe mich bereit,/Auf sein Gebot mein Liebstes hinzugeben" (Let Him who gave you to me,

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[15] See Ewert, *Anspruch und Wirkung*, Chapter VI *(Wiederholte Spiegelungen),* p. 265ff.

[16] It is of interest that Siegfried's main leitmotif, the "Horn Call" motif, also utilizes the lyrical mien of triplet motion in a 2/4 section. This is an instance of a musical device bringing these characters into closer harmony.

[17] He must mean the section that begins 25 measures after "Innig." The intervallic similarity of the descending diminished 4th followed by a rising minor 2nd is clear, as is the trochaic rhythm, but two intervals hardly seem sufficient material to constitute a borrowing some nine years later (the *Humoreske* dates from 1838). I would suggest that the likeness is coincidental, although such a pattern appearing at both a "heartfelt" or "intimate" moment and being connected with the fervent Genoveva may indicate some unconscious association in Schumann's mind between this progression and a particular emotional content.

[18] " . . . die sehnsuchtsvolle, auf Gott vertrauende Liebe Genovevas zu ihrem Gatten." Abert*, "Robert Schumanns 'Genoveva',"* p. 185.

witness that/I will not stop you following his call.) Abert mentions some, but by no means all, of the motif's repetitions.

Steven Billington discusses Genoveva's motif, too.[19] He calls it "Genoveva's Devotion" motif, no doubt also basing his nomenclature on the motif's first appearance at Genoveva's pious words as Siegfried leaves for war (or he may, of course, simply have adopted and simplified Abert's label). Billington lists a number of the motif's appearances, but his list is also not exhaustive.

To me, the straightforward appellation "Genoveva" seems perfectly adequate for this motif, irrespective of its first appearance at a moment of piety. Genoveva's profound religiosity is a given throughout the work (as are less prominent traits of her personality), and her motif's application is quite proliferant. The motif is simply the sign that, either directly or indirectly, identifies her character. It is limpid and arabesque-like, painting both the delicacy of her figure and of her temperament.

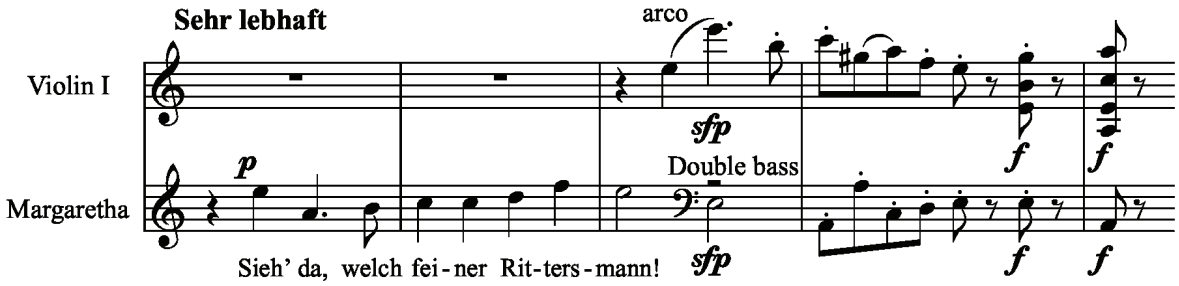
It should be added that Genoveva's leitmotif is not used only in a straightforward manner. Margaretha, the most unequivocally evil character in the opera, acquires a motif of her own but more often takes on and distorts Genoveva's (e.g., Act I, no. 7, m. 113ff.).[20] So, on occasion, does the chorus (e.g., Act II, no. 8, m. 47ff.) and the orchestra (Act I, no. 7, m. 4ff.). This practice of sharing motifs – the "Providence" motif is also very much shared – interrelates the characters, but it also tends to diminish strong delineation of individuality and to confuse a motif's intimate referential intention. Example 7.2 is of particular interest because it uses two of the opera's motifs in succession. Margaretha, who has not as yet actually exercised her evil ways, sings the "Providence" motif, referring in the text to

[19] Billington, Genoveva, p. 126.
[20] This technique is akin to Liszt's treatment of the Gretchen/Mephistopheles theme in the *Faust* Symphony (1854). Sketches for this symphony exist from the early 1840s.

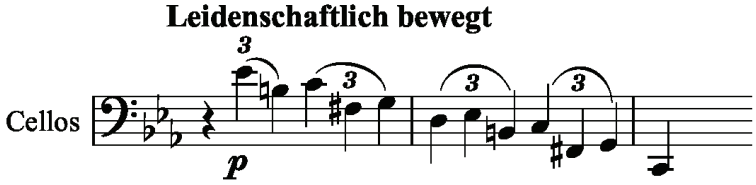
Golo's fine physical form. Immediately thereafter is an instrumental version of "Genoveva's" motif, one which will be taken up by the vassals as they mock her in Act II. Via the Providence motif, Margaretha momentarily insinuates herself into the relationship between Genoveva and Golo.

One should also point out an example of Schumann's clever manipulation of the "Genoveva" motif at m. 20 *(Leidenschaft bewegt)* of the Overture (see example 7.3). Here, at the beginning of the exposition, the motif becomes the mainstay of the double bass line, and with its triplet motion offers a demeanor of mixed emotion.

Example 7.2: Margaretha's Appropriation (Act I no. 7, m. 4ff)



Example 7.3: Overture, m. 20



Overall, there are some fifty iterations of the "Genoveva" motif. The "Providence" motif has approximately the same total number of appearances. Both the main character and the overarching premise of the opera are represented here.

Siegfried's Motifs

3. THE HORN CALL MOTIF

This motif is constituted by variants of a typical horn call pattern (triadic arpeggios and leaps of an octave or fifth, most often harmonized in 3rds and 6ths and using a triplet rhythm) than a rigidly defined motif. It is allied with the militaristic, distant character of Siegfried and serves a unique and specific function in the overture and in the opera but, with the exception of the overture (where it appears four times), never occurs in precisely the same form twice. The motif serves a specific denotative function in addition to having various connotative roles.[21] One of these appearances is a similar motif used in Golo's first aria (Act I no. 2), which tells us of Golo's bold, heroic past. Schumann uses four horns in his score, but at times allots their contingency to solos. And it is important to note that the title "Horn Call" refers most specifically to the use of the motif in the overture. In the opera proper, where a variant opens Siegfried's bravura aria in Act III, the motif is played on a trumpet in F.

The horn, most probably for its purely timbral attributes, was associated (through actual historical use) with the hunt, gentle pastoral scenes and, to a lesser degree, with the military. Like the trumpet, it could represent nobility and royalty and connoted events happening at a distance. A variation of the motif is found on horns in D at m.188 and in the following measures in the Finale to Act III.

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[21] "Connotations are extensions of the denoted meaning. They form special kinds of signs, similar to the double-leveled romantic symbol, in that they result not from a relationship between only one signified and one signifier, as denotative signs do, but from chains of transformations of signs of the denoted system into connotative signifiers, which constantly acquire new signifieds." Vera Micznik*, Meaning in Gustav Mahler's Music: A Historical and Analytical Study Focusing on the Ninth Symphony* (Ph.D. diss., S.U.N.Y at Stony Brook, 1989), pp. 186, 187.

In the Romantic period, the horn also had a significant symbolic function dependent on the predominant ideological and cultural frames of reference of the time. It was an instrument beloved of Romantic literary figures,[22] and its veiled, mysterious, and often melancholy sound was popularly employed for Romantic mood painting.[23] It was also one of the the rich legacy of characteristic figures of which composers frequently made use. A more remote signification was the concept of the betrayed or cuckolded husband.[24]

In *Genoveva* all of the above-mentioned connotative possibilities are brought into play in relation to Siegfried: he goes off to war, he returns triumphant and, so he at least believes, is betrayed by his wife.[25] Thus various aspects of the horn's ability to signify are used to advantage.

At its first appearance in No. 6, m. 70ff., the motif's association with Siegfried is underlined. Genoveva has fainted after Siegfried's departure for war, and Golo uses this tempting opportunity to steal a kiss. It can perhaps be posited that Genoveva revives at the sound of a rising horn-like motif on clarinet (in major)[26] and calls Siegfried's name, but to no avail. The horn-like motif is repeated, but now in minor, and it is the deceiving betrayer Golo who identifies himself.

The "Horn Call" motif differs from the majority of motifs in *Genoveva* in that it is performed almost exclusively by only two parties: the commenting voice of the orchestra

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[22] For the early Romantic writer Wilhelm Wackenroder's thoughts on the meaning of the horn see Carl Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, trans. Roger Lustig (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 61.

[23] In *Genoveva*, this aspect of its associative conventions is well exemplified in the introduction to Genoveva's aria "Steil und steiler" (No. 16). Weber, too, used this potential of the horn to effect in his overtures to *Der Freischütz* and *Oberon*.

[24] See Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, c.1980), p. 18.

[25] At the beginning of Act II of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde,* King Mark goes off to the hunt heralded by horns. The lovers' assignation takes place after this departure.

[26] At this point in the opera, she revives from only a momentary unconsciousness. At the sound of Siegfried's Horn Call in Act IV she regains her life.

and Siegfried, the character to whom it refers. It appears in Act III (the act where Siegfried features almost uninterruptedly) and in Act IV. The triplet motion and the rising triadic movement of the original version of the motif in the overture are maintained in all the opera's orchestral variants; Siegfried's vocal variants of the motif are recognizable by this rhythmic similarity as well as by their bold, strong triadic outline. To some degree, the triplet motion unites him with Genoveva and Golo.

The "Horn Call" motif may also have a distinctive relationship to the married protagonists in the opera. Despite his initial betrayal of her trust, Siegfried could ultimately be seen as an unwitting agent of God who saves Genoveva from imminent death in the Fourth Act. It is the urgent tones of the horns off-stage that are harbingers of his approach, Genoveva's swiftly following salvation and, ultimately, Siegfried's redemption.

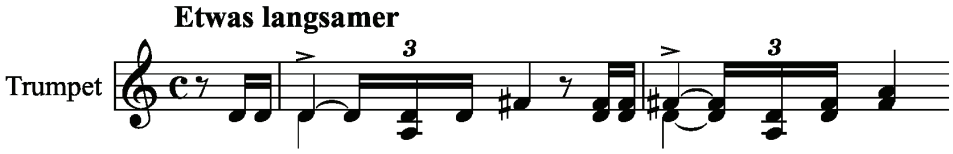
4. The Trumpet Call

Although commentators[27] have identified the "Horn Call" as the predominant motif associated with Siegfried, the trumpet as herald and signifier of grandeur is actually more pervasive. It is difficult, however, to decide whether or not the use of the trumpet warrants the title of a motif. The reason that it does not attain such status is because despite its proliferation, the trumpet call rarely has any incarnations that have an easily recognizable, repetitive style. Each incarnation, however, fits under the aegis of trumpet style. Typically with an anacrusis and with trumpets in pairs, it rises in an emphatic militaristic fashion (see example 7.4). Siegfried is extremely proud of his noble heritage, and this not uncommon use of the instrument pays homage. While not exhibited in such a way in Schumann's

[27] See Billington, *Genoveva,* p. 136.

opera, in historic times trumpets were used as shrieking and blaring instruments to frighten foes in battle.[28] Schumann's trumpets do not fulfill this function in *Genoveva,* and only alert us to Siegfried's presence and to the full panoply of grandeur when the entire opera draws to a close.

Example 7.4: Trumpet Call



5. SIEGFRIED'S "HONOR/REFLECTION" MOTIF

Abert first identified this motif with the character of Siegfried, but it was named specifically by Billington.[29] While its use in the opera leaves no question as to its association with Siegfried, its relationship specifically with the characteristic of his honor is, in my view, unsupported. He has little enough of this quality. The motif seems rather to be associated with Siegfried's limited plaintive, reflective side, in contrast to the "Horn Call" motif and the trumpet's accolades, which are linked with the active and confident side of his personality.[30] The motif is also associated with Siegfried's sadness regarding the reports of Genoveva's infidelity and incorporates a "sigh" figure of a falling second. "Siegfried's Reflection" simply is perhaps the most supportable designation, although it is worth

[28] Michael Ferber, *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 220.
[29] Abert, "Robert Schumanns 'Genoveva'," pp. 188, 189, simply indicates that it is devoted to the knightly figure of Siegfried ("der ritterlichen Gestalt Siegfrieds"); Billington*, Robert Schumann's* Genoveva, p. 135, does not give any source for his choice of label. He probably just extended somewhat (or misunderstood) Abert's idea of the "knightly figure" (i.e., a man of honor).
[30] For discussion of the broader ramifications of the idea of "doubleness" in *Genoveva* see below.

remembering that Siegfried is not much given to such a state. He is generally rash, thoughtless and impatient in his behavior. Hebbel's *Genoveva* drama is the only one of the sources that places emphasis on Siegfried as a troubled, weak man and this can at least justify the reflection attribution.

The basic motif consists of a falling 4th, followed by a rising minor 3rd and a descending major 2nd. In the opera the tones are often repeated or the intervals filled in. More often than not the entire motif is also immediately repeated, as if in musing (and the falling second "sigh" of the first phrase is matched by a falling half-step "sigh" in the second phrase).[31] As with the "Horn Call" motif, it is performed predominantly by Siegfried himself. In its brevity and simplicity, as well as its constricted vocal range and lack of a striking intervallic or rhythmic profile, this motif is, perhaps appropriately, the least readily discernible of all the opera's motifs. It could be argued that the brevity of the figure makes it ineligible for leitmotif designation. This is the legitimate decision taken by Ewert.

6. The Providence (Golo) Motif

The "Providence" motif is the most prevalent motif in the opera, appearing in sixteen of the opera's twenty-one numbers, as well as featuring prominently in the overture. Primarily, it occurs in two slightly different melodic forms and has a distinctive, dotted rhythmic imprint that does not bear the lyrical mien of Genoveva's motif and Siegfried's triadic motifs. The dotted rhythm, coupled with the intervals of a descending fifth and a rising major or minor third (delineating the primary tones of a triad), outlines this brief motif in its various

[31] Compare with the "Genoveva" motif's ascending half-step.

permutations. As I will go on to show, I do not believe it is associated specifically with Golo but with the concept of Providence, an association that permeates the entire opera.

Linda Siegel suggests that what she refers to as Schumann's "Golo" motif was not a completely original creation. She draws attention to a connection between Schumann's chorale "Erhebet Herz und Hände" (Lift up your hearts and hands), which is the first number of *Genoveva*, and the German protestant chorale "Ermuntre dich mein schwacher Geist" (You lift up my weak spirit).[32] Yet any similarity between the two is indiscernible. Schumann's chorale is certainly founded on the style of a Protestant chorale (despite its placement in an opera based on an eighth-century Catholic tale).[33] But the motif is of short duration and its defining characteristics sufficiently commonplace that the similarities to any existing chorale can quite reasonably be regarded as coincidental, or at least as of no moment in the interpretation of the motif in *Genoveva*. The simple style of the chorale still acts as an historicizing element at the outset of the opera, establishing a tone suggestive of the remote past.[34]

In the opera proper, the "Providence" motif recurs again and again in the parts of all the characters and in the orchestra and chorus. It is employed in a flexible manner, undergoing harmonic and orchestral modification, but intervalically it remains almost always constant. Its omnipresence tends to invalidate its traditional association with the

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[32] Linda Siegel, "A Second Look at Schumann's *Genoveva,*" *Music Review* 36 (February 1975), p. 18. "Ermuntre dich" is BWV 454.

[33] The original chorale melody exists in a wide number of variants, yet while they are similar in melodic direction and harmonic implication, none of the examples I examined has an opening melodic figure and rhythm clearly identifiable with Schumann's motif. Thus I find Siegel's contention unconvincing.

[34] If Schumann had really wanted to be historically "correct" with his liturgical singing, he could have used a simple plainchant melody. The account of Robert and Clara's Russian tour of 1844, however, makes it abundantly clear how much the couple disliked the chanting they heard in Moscow. Clara notes: "The singing of the monks is quite unusual . . . and very monotonous. . . . The composition is partly barbaric, partly childish, full of octaves and fifths. Robert escaped after two hours of martyrdom. . . ." *The Marriage Diaries of Robert & Clara Schumann,* Peter Ostwald, trans., (Boston: Northeastern Press, 1993), p. 289.

character of Golo alone. The motif operates as a contradictory element and loses meaning if it is associated only with him and is not given broader significance.

One complicating factor with the "Providence" motif is that it occurs in two versions that are almost identical. What seems at first to be only a trivial variation, however – a conclusion in the form of a rising, stepwise minor third, or a conclusion with the parallel progression in the major – creates very different expressive qualities (ominous versus hopeful and strong), and this gives rise to significant conflicts in the motif's interpretation. At a cursory hearing the extensive use of the variant forms of the motif throughout the opera and the overture seem to create only inconsistency and confusion, but a closer examination of the application of the different forms indicates that the motif has a more complex symbolic function and thus more profound extramusical implications than are attested to by the "Golo" label assigned originally by Abert.[35] There is definite purpose in the motif's dual nature.

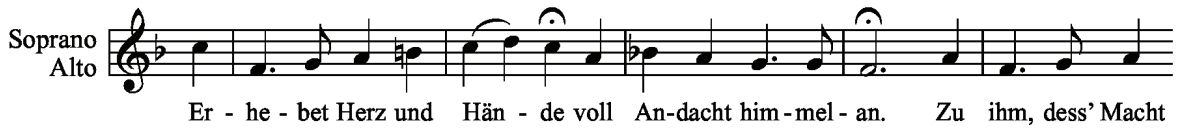
Abert does not state explicitly why he chose to associate the motif with Golo.[36] He actually refers to it as a *Motivreihe* (series of motifs) that "steht mit der Gestalt Golos in Verbindung" (are connected with the figure of Golo). His interpretation of the score was significantly influenced perhaps by an obtrusive appearance of the motif in the Finale of Act I, no. 7, there performed by Margaretha in typical appropriation mode.

While Abert is firmly committed to his label of "Golo," he does express puzzlement over what he sees as the inconsistent use of the motif in both the overture and in the opera itself. Its identity is confused, he feels, by its free use as a sign for both the evil Golo (its primary use) and for joyous or celebratory texts such as the opening chorale and the final

[35] Abert, "Robert Schumanns 'Genoveva.'," p. 186. The "Golo" label is also adopted by Siegel.
[36] Abert, *Ibid.*

number of the opera, "Heil Genoveva."[37] He is accurate in his assessment of the variety of uses, but it would seem obvious that the impulse for the concept could just as easily lead in the opposite direction from the one he posits – i.e., from chorale (positive sentiments/major) to Golo (negative sentiments/minor), particularly as the motif's inaugural appearance in the opening chorale (No. 1; see example 7.5) takes the form of the major version, and the opera also ends with the major version variant (No. 21). Thus the entire work is neatly circumscribed in a "happy" mode.[38]

Example 7.5: Providence (Act I, no. 1, m. 1; chorus)



Instead of accusing Schumann of inconsistency and lamenting his confused use of his main leitmotif, it would seem more realistic to examine the double nature of the motif and rename it in accordance with its discernible actuation in the opera.[39] Of its approximately fifty total appearances, some two-thirds consist of the minor version, and of these almost half are performed by Golo himself. Most of the remainder are equally distributed among Genoveva, Margaretha and the orchestra and, as with Golo's renditions,

[37] "Diese Identität hat ihn, wie in der Ouvertüre, so auch im letzten Finale zu einer direkten Inkonsequenz verleitet, indem er nunmehr jenem Motiv Worte wie 'Heil Genoveva, der hohen Frau' unterlegt, als hätte er alles Vorangegangene vergessen." *Ibid.,* p. 187.

[38] The use of the motif in the overture, from minor (mm. 3–4) to major (m. 348ff.), in no way compromises its use and interpretation in the opera; it rather confirms the need for a new designation.

[39] Billington, *Robert Schumann's* Genoveva*.,* p. 122ff., also recognizes the inadequacy of a label associating the motif with Golo alone and suggests that it was inappropriately named by Abert. Billington correlates its appearances in minor with the threat to Genoveva and in major with Genoveva's victory over evil through divine assistance – he designates it "Genoveva's Fate" motif. This is certainly much more accurate to my mind, but still not tightly enough defined.

they are employed at moments of evil, great travail or danger, or at twists in the plot that appear to be leading Genoveva (via Golo's actions) to destruction. The major versions of the motif occur at moments of triumph (either actual or potential) or at moments when characters can still hope for the best (i.e., Golo will do what is morally right). The major form is most commonly performed by the "innocent" Siegfried, Genoveva and the chorus (the last-mentioned being active participants in the unfolding of the drama).

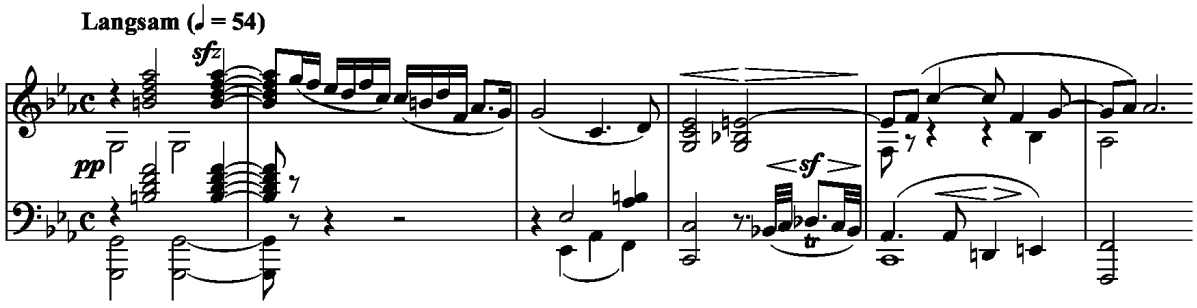
The total distribution outlined above supports the perception that the motif symbolizes a fluctuating idea rather than an individual character. One could not dispute that Golo has a uniquely significant and predominant connection – he is the material manifestation of the motif's symbolic representation of all-consuming desire (with its concomitant potential to cause harm and suffering) – but, at the deepest level, the motif's musical behavior indicates that it is fundamentally representative of something much more all encompassing, an *absolute* force ultimately responsible for both good and evil. This force can be identified as Providence, the concept so liberally invoked throughout the text of Schumann's opera and seen to even greater effect in Tieck's redaction of the *Genoveva* drama. The Almighty tests, yet at the same time protects, the virtuous Genoveva and the dull-witted Siegfried.[40]

The motif's "double" form, with its conflicting implications, contends with the opposing tendencies of good and evil; it is finally reconciled once and for all to the major, the fundamental form both harmonically and symbolically, when, at the opera's end, Genoveva's steadfastness and trust have overcome Golo's descent into treachery and she is reunited with Siegfried. The very final occurrence of the minor version of the motif appears

[40] This does not mean that Schumann's representation of God condones evil-doing; he creates situations that test faith, yet at the same time allow the individual freedom of choice.

at the crucial moment in Act IV, no. 18, when the servants Balthasar and Caspar are about to execute Genoveva. Genoveva cries "Doch deinen Willen muss ich mich neigen!" (But I must bend to your will!)), as Caspar sings "Mir bebt die Hand" (My hand is trembling) and Balthasar sings "Faß an, Faß an!" (Come strike, come, strike!). The motif is shared among all three, as well as with the orchestra (m. 62), while simultaneously a version of the "Horn Call" idea is heard. Genoveva has conceded submission to God's will, the executioner falters, and the horns – used sparingly – herald Siegfried's arrival and Genoveva's salvation. Now that her danger has finally passed the minor version is never heard again, although up until the conclusion of the opera there are many instances of the major. The overture represents this same dramatic progression in microcosm (see example 7.6).[41] Indeed, in the first four measures we see three of the significant motifs used prominently. While the "Genoveva" motif is inverted, the "Providence" motif and the "Curse" motif are already in their final forms.

Example 7.6: Overture, m. 1



[41] Abert, "Robert Schumanns 'Genoveva.,'" p. 188, suggests that it might be possible to interpret the overture as the development of a "christlichen Idee." He ultimately discards this possibility, however, claiming it is inconsistent with the "Golo" motif as developed in the opera.

On occasion Golo performs the "Providence" motif himself, or is in some way associated with it when it is in its major form. This is by no means an incongruity. At a superficial level he, as an individual, is also subject to this idea of "doubleness" that characterizes the motif, in that the good forces of his nature do battle with his darker side. In this sense Golo is part of the popular Romantic tradition of the double, and in certain respects a parallel exists in Adalbert von Chamisso's novella *Peter Schlemihl* (1814), a tale in which a man, having sold his shadow to the devil in exchange for the purse of Fortunatas, is tortured by moral division. As in *Genoveva*, the dramatic tension hinges on whether the main protagonist will succumb to temptation or resist and be redeemed.[42] Unlike Golo, Schlemihl resists.[43]

In Tieck's telling of the Genoveva story, the idea of warring internal moral forces (i.e., "doubleness") is not peculiar to Golo alone; in a far less extreme form, it is also related to Genoveva, with her semi-conscious attraction to Golo. Schumann almost completely abandoned this additional thread in his libretto,[44] but in so doing he eliminated an opportunity to provide a more convincing motivation for the psychological complexity of two of his characters.

The theme of duality can additionally be derived from the idea of the submerged unconscious personality. As noted by Ralph Tymms, Tieck makes reference to it in one passage of his drama:

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[42] For discussion of the double idea, and its use in *Peter Schlemihl*, see John Herdman, *The Double in Nineteenth-Century Fiction,* (Macmillan: London, 1990), p. 43ff.

[43] Genoveva, in whom goodness and right action are dominant features, portrays Golo's complementary opposite, yet the conflict into which she is drawn with him links their mutual destinies. In this sense the pair is similar to the "quasi-doubles" discussed by Herdman, *ibid.*, p. 14. This aspect was less ambiguously delineated in the original Tieck and Hebbel dramas; Golo's moral ambivalence in Schumann's libretto dilutes the idea.

[44] There is only a hint of it in the duet at No. 9, when Genoveva flirts subtly with Golo in order to persuade him to sing with her.

> ". . . the Palsgrave [sic] Siegfried speaks of his wife's supposed infidelity as being incompatible with her normal nature, yet [it is] seemingly a manifestation of her inmost being as in a dream, when (to our horror) we are shown our inmost desires. Tieck is clearly not far from the conception of the shadow-self dwelling in the night-side of the mind . . ."[45]

Schumann's omission of Tieck's allusion to this contemporary theme is one more unfortunate handicap for his libretto, for while it may have diminished the perception of Genoveva's perfect moral character, Siegfried's belief in the subconscious mind would at least help to explain his extraordinary readiness to believe in his wife's betrayal. But then, Schumann's Siegfried is so rigid and unimaginative that belief in subconscious desire would seem to be beyond his emotional range.

One final piece of evidence, derived again from the dramatist Tieck, substantiates profoundly the need for a new title for the "Golo" motif. It is an idea drawn from a remarkably pertinent spiritual philosophy encountered in Tieck's personal frame of reference, an idea which he skillfully assimilated into his *Genoveva* drama. It finds an extraordinary parallel in the dual nature of the "Providence" motif, whether by Schumann's conscious intention or not.

Tieck, along with other early Romantic figures such as Schelling, Hegel and Novalis, was a dévotée of the newly rediscovered seventeenth-century mystic Jakob Böhme (1575–1624). Böhme's *Morgenröthe im Aufgang* (1610) presented a "Schicksaltheologie" that appealed to Tieck both aesthetically and religiously. It posited a belief in one God, who was the source of both good and evil:

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[45] Ralph Tymms, *Doubles in Literary Psychology* (Bowes & Bowes, Cambridge: 1949), pp. 35, 36. The Tieck passage reads: "Allein die Macht der Zauberei is Gross,/Die hat sie in ein andres Weib verwandelt,/Die innre Bosheit arg herausgekehrt,/Wie man im Traume oft die eignen Wünsche/Zum innigsten Entsetzen kennen lernt." (*Deutschen Literatur in Entwicklungsreihen* Reihe *Romantik*, vol. VIII, ed. P. Kluckhohn, Leipzig, 1936) p. 208.

> Böhme's theosophy dissolved . . . the contradictions arising from the existence of good and evil, "Schicksal" [divine fate/good genius] and "Verhängnis" [demonic fate/evil genius] as co-related powers, by positing a single cosmic order, a monistic system governed by a single Supreme Being. The monist is confronted with the old ontological problem of deducing both good and evil from a single all-inclusive absolute. For Böhme, too, the paradox of good and evil, light and darkness, could not be harmonised but only tolerated dialectically, i.e., they are different but yet the same, emanating from the one source which he calls the *misterium magnum* . . . evil . . . is useful and serves the purpose of manifesting God's hidden goodness. If man were not brought face to face with evil, he would never know good![46]

Böhme's theosophy was attractive to Tieck because of its conception of free will: man is an individual free to choose light or darkness. In Tieck's *Genoveva*, Golo exercises his free will in a negative direction, psychologically hindered by the deterministic notion of the sins of the fathers (i.e., Golo's illegitimate birth) being visited upon their children.[47] The heroine Genoveva, however, does not succumb to a deterministic philosophy, nor does she despair or resign herself to the unknowable.[48] For her, "evil is conceived of as a means to an end, to the absolute goal of moral and spiritual perfection."[49] Genoveva's ultimate confession of faith is found in No. 19 of the opera when, after Siegfried briefly berates himself for the suffering he has inflicted upon her, she forgives him instantly with the calm response "Der Himmel fügt es so!" (Heaven [God] decreed it thus!).

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[46] Alan Corkhill, *The Motif of "Fate" in the Works of Ludwig Tieck* (Akademischer Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, Stuttgart: 1978), p. 19.

[47] Corkhill, *ibid.*, p. 168. Golo must also contend not only with his love for Genoveva but also with the awful irony of being appointed her guardian by Siegfried "ein zweiter Vater" (a second father). In No. 2, m. 127ff., Golo sings in despair, "Und ich, ein Mensch, soll diesen Himmel wahren!" (And I, a mere mortal, am to protect this angel!)

[48] Genoveva has an advantage in that she gains foreknowledge of her impending "Probezeit" in a mystical dream vision of Christ. Her "long phase of suffering [is] a necessary condition for the highest spiritual reunion in love." This certainty tends to soften Tieck's ensuing tragedy for it reveals "the justice of the universal order." Corkhill, *ibid.*, p. 189.

[49] Corkhill, *ibid.*, p. 21. This is certainly true in Tieck, but not in Hebbel and only partially in Schumann. In Schumann, Genoveva resists accusations and imprisonment with all her might. It is in the wilderness scene in Act IV that her faith is revitalized by the cross and the picture of the Virgin in the rocks, and she is ready to surrender fully to the will of God.

While this information about Genoveva's spiritual fortitude is by no means revelatory,[50] the knowledge that Tieck was an adherent of the monistic philosophy outlined above adds a further dimension to our perception of the underpinnings of Tieck's drama. The "Providence" motif's two aspects are remarkably consistent with Tieck's personal outlook,[51] for Böhme's theosophy posits polarity in unity, one God responsible for all. The "Providence" motif also subsumes two modal variants – one foreboding, one clear and positive – within one ultimate, "all-inclusive" form, negating thereby the motif's singular character association. During the course of its working out in the opera, this emphasis on the motif's two faces symbolizes the spiritual turmoil generated by the struggle for the triumph of good over evil (for major over minor).[52] And the fact that it was originally composed in Schumann's conception of the style of a sacred chorale provides even more support for the position that the fundamental form of the motif has a primary relationship with the concept of God. The chorale-like shape of the motif lends a providential aspect to its meaning.

I would suggest then, that the label of "Providence" reconciles both the spiritual implications and the apparent "inconsistencies" in the musical treatment of the motif in the opera and in the overture: it is a label that adequately represents the motif's true symbolic and musical functioning and reconciles all the musical and extramusical considerations in a cogent fashion. Whether Schumann was aware of Tieck's personal beliefs or not, it is not

[50] Schumann makes it very apparent in his libretto; he simply omits its foundations.
[51] Hebbel's comment on ignoring the individuals as trivial and always tying questions raised in his drama directly to "die Gottheit" is also surprisingly consistent with Tieck's approach.
[52] A foretaste of the implications of the major/minor twist in the motif occurs in the opening chorale (No. 1). At m. 21, the final phrase of the chorale is sung to the minor version of the "Golo" motif; the text is telling: "Das Heil bei ihm allein" (And only He can save). A typically Schumannesque four-measure postlude ensues, and, via a chromatic excursion into an inner voice, the section comes to a close with a *tierce de Picardie*. In other words, although it seemed that a D minor triad would conclude the section, the extension transforms the motif's harmonic underpinnings into the major. The effect is repeated, to the same words, in the very final measures of the number.

farfetched to say that he perceived their manifestation in Tieck's *Genoveva* and developed a musical counterpart in the dual form of the leitmotif.

7. THE CURSE MOTIF (Bastard Motif)

The "Curse" motif is the least prevalent of the main motifs. It is very distinctive, however, and thus easily recognized. It is also used more specifically than the other motifs, never being shared in ways that confuse its meaning. Like the "Providence" motif, the "Curse" motif is associated primarily with an emotion or concept – Golo's rage and shame and his cursing of Genoveva when she utters her vituperative words – rather than with a character. It does have a clear connection with Golo, of course, but once Golo utters the curse, the "Curse" motif seems to take on a momentum of its own and is heard in the symphonic web at moments when its effects are determining or reflecting the course of the drama. It is an agitated foil to the gentler, slower-moving "Providence" motif.

The "Curse" motif appears only in the orchestra. It is thus again separated from the other motifs, which are predominantly sung. Abert terms the motif the "Bastard" motif – Billington terms it the "Curse" motif – and although Abert correctly identifies its origins, his label hardly seems adequate to its subsequent role. Its effects are far-reaching, representing the dark, evil side of the dramatic action.

The "Curse" motif is, like all the motifs, of brief duration. It consists of a rapid rising minor third topped often by a diabolical trill (which creates a frenzied effect) and followed by a falling third. In the opera, it is first heard repeated seven times in Act II no. 9,

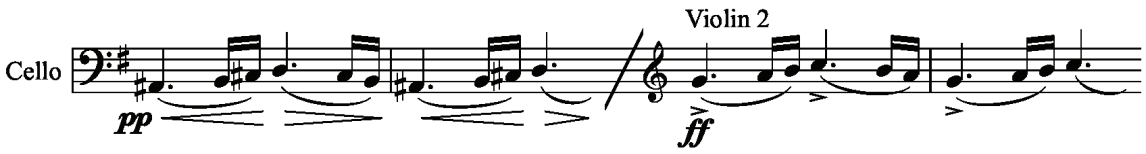
m. 81ff.,[53] when Golo calls Genoveva an enchantress; it is heard again in the same number after Genoveva's fateful words "Zurück, ehrloser Bastard!" (Back, infamous bastard!) Here, it is subject to six descending repetitions, as Golo sings his anguish.

This motif may have been inspired by a similar figure in the work of one of Schumann's Romantic contemporaries, Carl Maria von Weber. In the "Wolf Glen's Scene" (Act II, No. 10, Finale) of Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz,* there is a motif so similar that it seems to be more than simple coincidence (see example 7.7). It appears in the orchestra at the eerie moment when Max and Kaspar are casting the third magic bullet. It functions in a series of repetitions (like Schumann's) and also conveys the same strange, supernatural quality. The major difference between the two is the dynamics and the fact that Weber's figure is repeated in a series. His figure is consistently *fortissimo*, while Schumann's is *pianissimo,* but with surges of sound in each measure. This gives a more eerie quality than Weber's, which sounds consistently anguished.

Whether Schumann consciously "borrowed" this figure from Weber is, naturally, open to conjecture. He certainly knew *Der Freischütz* and liked it. The only diary entry even close in date to the composition of *Genoveva* that speaks of Weber's work is from February 15, 1843: "In the evening I revelled in *Freischütz,* which I had not seen since my childhood."[54] Schumann may have owned the score: it was published in 1822.

[53] Here, without the trill.
[54] "Abends ergötzte ich mich an dem *Freischütz,*den ich seit meiner Kindheit nicht gesehen." *TBII,* p. 258.

Example 7.7: Orchestra, Act II no. 9, m. 81 / *Der Freischütz* Act II no. 10, m. 316



8. MARGARETHA'S POWER MOTIF AND HER MOTIVIC APPROPRIATIONS

The sinister Margaretha is present in three leitmotifs in *Genoveva.* One of these belongs specifically to her, but the other two are distortions of motifs that are associated predominantly with another major character and concept – Genoveva and Providence.

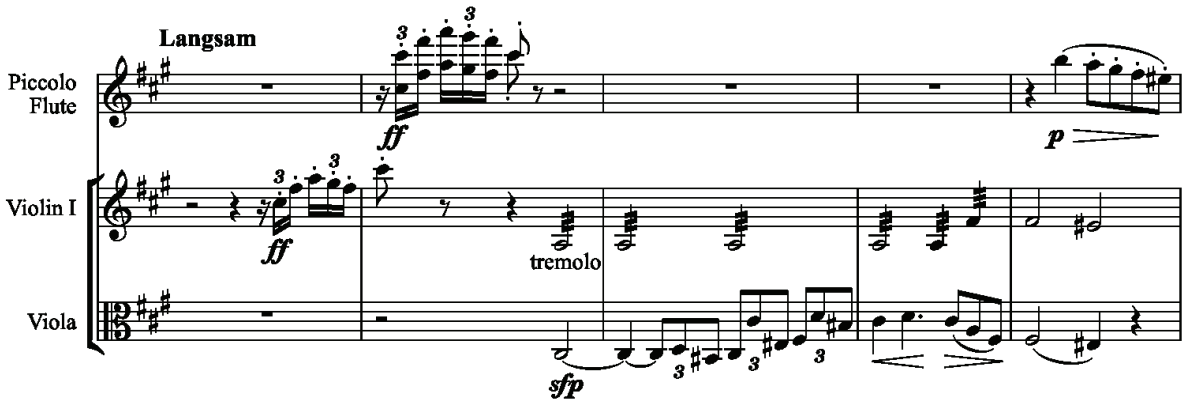
The fact that Margaretha appropriates the leitmotifs of others is of interest. Shallow and empty woman that she is, she is almost incapable of maintaining a motif of her own. The *Verwandlung* that prefaces the Magic Mirror Scene in Act III is the only place where she is successful with a sustainable motif (see example 7.8), but not before it is partially explored by Golo in the previous number.

As we know, Golo and Margaretha have cemented their perfidious relationship by this point in the opera, so their sharing of a motif is hardly extraordinary. The leitmotif in question initially appears – albeit briefly – in the key of A-flat minor, but moves with rapidity into F-sharp minor – Margaretha's predominant key throughout the opera – , this at the point where Golo is bewailing the fact that he has followed the path laid out for him by Margaretha. The number concludes back in the "simpler" key of A minor.

We arrive at the motif in full throttle at the *Verwandlung* (Finale of Act III, no. 15). Slowly and *fortissimo,* as Margaretha's room is described in the score, the woodwind shriek

out in mischievous pizzicato articulations "Margaretha's Power" motif.[55] It is an apposite title, for we are about to see her ability with magic as she conjures up false images for Siegfried and Golo.

Example 7.8: Act III, no. 15 – *Verwandlung*



Now we are once again in the key of F-sharp minor, about which Schumann had something to say in his 1835 article "Characteristics of the Keys." After taking the theorist and poet Christian F.D. Schubart (1739–1791) to task for being too specific in his key associations, he continues:

> If it is, indeed, true that in various epochs certain stereotypes have come to be associated with certain keys, then we should assemble all the master-pieces set in any given key and compare their prevailing moods. The difference between major and minor may be assumed at the outset. The one is masculine and active, the other feminine and passive. Simpler emotions have simpler tonalities. Compound emotions move better in strange keys, less familiar to

[55] The leitmotif was titled by Billington.

> the ear. The emotional rise and fall can best be discerned by tracing one's course through the circle of fifths, moving upward from C, the high point will be reached with F sharp . . .[56]

At the same time that Margaretha's motif is so prominent and attention-grabbing, variations on another motif are apparent in an inner voice. This motif emerges in the viola, as variations on the leitmotif we associate with Genoveva, here with its twists and turns in triplet motion inverted. It bears comparison not only with the initial presentation of Genoveva's leitmotif in the clarinet in the overture (beginning at m. 58), but also with the prominent descending cello melody at the overture's exposition *Leidenschaft bewegt.* Again, the melody presents itself in triplets, providing a sustained, lyrical lilt in the accompaniment to the main melody.

The most vividly memorable of Margaretha's appropriations is seen in no. 7, the heated Finale to Act I of the opera. Margaretha's very first entry, in m. 2, reveals a brief extension of the "Providence" motif in the minor mode to the words "Sieh' da, welch' feiner Rittersmann!" (My, what a handsome knight he is!) She is singing somewhat snidely of Golo, having just espied him in the castle courtyard. This is the first example of the motif that Abert cites.[57] This is somewhat odd, as the leitmotif has appeared conspicuously since the commencement of the opera, most obviously in the opera's opening chorus. Of course, this does not diminish its significance in Margaretha's bastardized version. This number strengthens Margaretha's connection with all around her. In a sense, everyone and everything is present except Siegfried, off at his holy battle.

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[56] Schumann, *Schumann on Music: A Selection from the Writings,* Henry Pleasants, ed. and trans. (Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1988), pp. 62, 63.

[57] This is somewhat odd, as the leitmotif has appeared conspicuously since the very commencement of the opera, most obviously in the opera's opening chorus.

In the Act II opening (no. 8), we find a number of distorted variations on Genoveva's motif. She has been tremulously singing of her husband's absence while the drunken vassals revel in the hall below. A fine example of the motif transformed is found at m. 61 in the score, sung by the tenors to the text "Führwar, ein schönes Weib des Küssens werth" (In truth, a beautiful woman worth kissing). Margaretha has been mixing with and showing magic to the household, and it is she who has taught them this uncouth and vulgar version of Genoveva's motif. It is no wonder that hearing the unruly vassals singing "her" song is so frightening and invasive. And, naturally, the text is referring back to Golo's surreptitious kiss of the unconscious countess in the first act.

As we know, Margaretha's most important moments are found in the third act, in the Magic Mirror Scene. Ewert notes that the mirror, despite being "the central image of the opera," is not given a separate motif, and that the Magic Mirror Scene appears to have been excluded from the web of motivic detail.[58] I do not concur, for variations on the "Providence" motif as well as "Genoveva's" motif and even Siegfried's "Horn Call," provide protection for the blameless characters in the lengthy number.[59] The mirror, while indispensable to the drama's third act and probably to an excitement-loving audience, appears only in this one scene complex and functions satisfactorily without a motif of its own. It is really a background structure, for what we are interested in is what it shows, not the mirror itself. A light, mischievous yet provocative behind-the-scenes chorus accompanies the scene for the duration and substitutes for any other musical technique.

[58] Ewert, *Anspruch und Wirkung,* p. 274.
[59] Siegfried is not blameless for his judgement of his wife's predicament, but he is not inherently evil like Margaretha and Golo.

And, Margaretha's surreptitious comments and disjointed fragments are all "ciphers for the grotesque."[60]

Schumann's system of motifs is not highly complex, but it is ingenious in that the very brevity of the motifs builds a texture in which they are not so overly prominent that they stand out like beacons. In the main, they blend discretely and subtly into the opera. This creates a consistent web of sound where we hear the familiar but can also concentrate on the new.

[60] Daverio, *Robert Schumann,* p. 353.

CONCLUSION

Schumann's opera *Genoveva* was a groundbreaking work in mid-nineteenth Germany. Although not fully appreciated in its own time, ultimately its many beauties and thoughtful complexity have found a following with modern listeners. The opera offers a great deal, not least in its individual character delineation and orchestral underpinning. The story is an old one, but it reveals new aspects as a result of Schumann's skillful merging of text and music.

The only predecessor with whom Schumann had a considerable affinity with regard to operatic composition was Carl Maria von Weber, who, in his *große romantische Oper Euryanthe* (1823), revealed many of the same ideals – most particularly a deep-seated longing for successful German opera.

Like Schumann, Weber was a critic. In a review of Hoffmann's *Undine* he maintained:

> Of course, when I speak of opera, I am speaking of the German ideal, namely a self-sufficient work of art in which every feature and every contribution by the related arts are molded together in a certain way and dissolve to form a new world.[1]

This statement not only relates clearly to Schumann's viewpoint but also presages Wagner's ideals in his *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* of 1849. Additionally, it should be remembered that Hoffmann's writings were available to Weber, and the duality inherent in the essay "Der Dichter und der Komponist" (from *Die Serapionsbrüder)* may have helped shape his published review.

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[1] Carl Maria von Weber, *Writings on Music,* Martin Cooper, trans., John Warrack, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 201.

The early medieval period was a favorite locus of exploration for German Romantic intellectuals. Utilizing his operatic expertise, Weber used German elements of this period in his work. Schumann did likewise in *Genoveva,* for national elements were very much a part of the musical vocabulary of the time.

An idealized view of the Middle Ages in Germany had a societal history. It provided a flight from the prevalent national unrest into a fictionalized and heroic past, and it "gave new resonance to tales of medieval chivalry." With the political turmoil and division occasioned by the revolutions of the first half of the nineteenth century, people searched for sustenance in the historical *Vorzeit,* where all seemed idyllic and predictable. As Simon Williams expresses it:

> [German culture] had its roots in primeval nature, it prized feeling and instinct more than pure rationality, and German society was considered to have reached its apogee in the organic communities of the Middle Ages in which communal and individual interests had been at one.[2]

We can reasonably expect some form of consistency in Schumann's writings with regard to his deep, almost obsessive desire for a true "German" opera. Naturally, his ideals developed over time, however, and different levels of insistence are to be expected.

A very interesting but perplexing review appeared in 1840. Schumann was just thirty when he reviewed J.P.E. Hartmann's *Zauberoper* (magic opera) *Die Rabe,* and he used this opportunity to give instruction to youthful German composers:

> A young composer writing for the stage for the first time must have two concerns: to summon all his art and then be effective, to please . . .

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[2] Williams, *Wagner and the Romantic Hero,* p. 7.

> Whatever one has learned and knows has to be denied, discarded, when animation and inspiration of the audience are at stake![3]

This does not sound like Schumann. He wants audiences to be pleased, animated and inspired, which is completely understandable, and he wants these emotions integrated into the context of a German opera (as opposed to Italian and French). The peculiar issue is that Schumann tells the aspiring German composer to summon all his art, yet at the same time to deny all that he has learned. He appears to be suggesting that a German composer eschew his own heritage, and he is also showing himself more vulnerable to the tastes of his time than would be expected from the majority of his written legacy.

The following year, we see what is to become a more characteristic stance. In 1841, in a review of Karl Reissiger's (1798–1859) *Adèle de Foix,* we find Schumann implying that the adoption of national material and methods rather than foreign practices may lead to a composer's success: "German composers fail mostly by the intention to please the public. If only one of them produced something original, simple, deeply felt, he will see whether or not he will succeed.[4]

Just as *Genoveva* was criticized for a number of its individual traits, so too was *Euryanthe.* Michael C. Tusa posits that the constant presence of the orchestra

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[3] "Ein junger Komponist nun, dem es zum erstenmal in den Sinn kommt, für die Bühne zu schreiben, hat vorzüglich zweierlei im Auge, einmal seine ganze Kunst anzubringen, dann auch zu wirken, zu gefallen. . . Wieviel, was man gelernt hat, was man kann, muß man verleugnen, wegwerfen, wenn es die Belebung und Entflammung des Publikums gilt!" Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften,* vol. 1, p. 487.

[4] "Die deutschen Komponisten scheitern meistens an der Absicht, dem Publikum gefallen zu wollen. Gebe aber nur einmal einer etwas Eigenes, Einfaches, Tiefinnerliches ganz aus sich heraus, und er soll sehen, ober nicht mehr erlangt." Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften,* vol. 2, p. 94.

in *Euryanthe* reveals significant influence of French *grand opéra.* Bernard Shaw, with typical dry wit, comments that "Schumann, for the most part, leaves the stage to get on as best it can, and retires into pure symphony. . . ."[5] He does, however, commend Schumann for a gift that is essential to all composers for the stage: " . . . a strong feeling for harmony as a means of emotional expression. There are passages in *Genoveva* which are in this respect genuinely Wagnerian."[6]

Critic Johann Christian Lobe (1797–1881) also complained about the symphonic treatment of the orchestra in *Genoveva.* Given the Germanic tradition of this style and form, it is surprising that Schumann is criticized for it, even in an operatic context. But, it is the singers that the audience presumably came to hear and a richly symphonic score may have attenuated that issue. Performers simply had few full stops, and the preponderance of lyricism did not invite grand gestures. The continuous nature of the score left only negligible time to take breaks for applause, which may have irritated both singers and audience.

Liszt appreciated Schumann. A testimony of their aesthetic relationship, sometimes a little tumultuous, is found in a letter Liszt wrote to his "rival," the Russian pianist/conductor Anton Rubinstein (1829–1894), in early 1855. It provides a mixed review, but nevertheless is of consequence:

> I leave you to go and rehearse Schumann's *Genoveva,* which is to be presented next Monday [Weimar, Hoftheater, April 9 and 21, 1855.] It is a work worthy of consideration, and which bears strongly the stamp of the composer's style. Among the operas that have been produced in the last fifteen years, it is certainly the one I prefer

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[5] Bernard Shaw, *Shaw's Music: The Complete Musical Criticism in Three Volumes* (London: Bodley Head), p. 63.

[6] We must remember that this review was written in 1893, some ten years after Wagner's death and over forty since Schumann's opera was written. Shaw would be listening to *Genoveva* with the attention of someone who had heard Wagner's late works.

> (Wagner excepted – that is understood), notwithstanding its lack of dramatic vitality which, despite some beautiful pieces of music, is not compensated for sufficiently . . .[7]

While Schumann's determination and devotion to the cause of German opera throughout the 1840s and early 1850s was particularly passionate, he was nevertheless following in the footsteps of his predecessors Weber and Spohr[8] and working alongside Wagner, who was oriented towards many of the same operatic goals. Both composers hoped to raise the standards of operatic endeavors in their native land, using material of high literary and dramaturgical merit for their libretti. For Schumann, this meant not only appropriating dramas by revered German poets but also by writers of international stature whose superior works, even in translation, garnered high praise and thus serious consideration as musical texts. Paramount was a rebirth of excellence for German music, one that would continue the symphonic skills of the previous generation and attempt to educate current opera audiences to hold new intellectual and "poetic" expectations. The "poetic" included such attributes as reflective musical discourse, an intensity of subjective feeling, and a prominent and expressive lyricism.

It is clear that Schumann very much wished the peoples of Germany to be conscious of their musical heritage. The end of the *Vormärz* was a time of upheaval, when opposing parties were all clamoring for supremacy. Culture came

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[7] Billington, *Robert Schumann's Genoveva,* p. 45. At this time, Schumann was already in the asylum at Endenich.

[8] Spohr's convictions ran deep. A few weeks before the première of his his opera *Jessonda* (1823), he published an article entitled "Aufruf an deutsche Componisten" in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung.* The article was translated into English and published in the periodical *The Harmonicon* in 1824: "The important epoch now seems arrived, at which German art will resume its former dignified attitude on the stage, and the object of these remarks is to call on the German composers to use every becoming exertion to regain the former footing which they held in the opera, and to remove from thence every thing that is foreign, . . ." Clive Brown, *Louis Spohr: A Critical Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. vii.

first with Schumann, though, and he was to write a lengthy didactic piece as an attempt to pull the nation back in the "correct" musical direction:

> We believe that the German artistic element today still prevails in the composer; but significant progress begins only with the decisive rejection of all dilettantish pleasure, all Italian influences. Don't we Germans have our own way of singing? Have not the last years proven that there are still minds and and masters in Germany who know how to associate profundity with lightness, significance with grace? Spohr, Mendelssohn and others – don't they know how to sing, or to write for singers? . . . The highest peaks of Italian art do not even reach the earliest beginnings of genuine German art.[9]

Although *Genoveva,* with its consistent lyricism, sometimes seems to be akin to a large-scale "through-composed" song, Schumann still portrays it nominally as a number opera (at least on paper), with four acts and twenty-one numbers. Presumably this is to help it fit within the style of the time, although it is conceivable that Schumann thought in those terms, only shaping text and music differently. Almost without exception, each constituent "number" flows effortlessly into the next section. This aids in a logical continuity of both text and music, where narratives, soliloquies and ensembles exhibit closer relationships.

Schumann uses conventional sectional labels. The designation recitative occurs four times in Act I and once in every subsequent act. Schumann's style of recitative is unusual. His version of this method of presenting narrative material is predominantly subtle and melodious. The recitatives, accompanied now by minimal, now sometimes by substantial orchestral forces, tend to merge gently and almost imperceptibly into the following vocal form. In one instance, Act I, nos. 1 and 2, the first number ends with a so-called recitative and the second

[9] Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften,* Vol. 2, pp. 88, 89.

begins with one. But what one hears is that the initial, traditional recitative of Bishop Hidulfus entreating the masses to take up arms and fight for Karl Martell has actually blended subtly into the chorus, at first with spirited interjections from them, but finally with all singing as one. This then slips quietly into the second, brief recitative, prefacing Golo's aria. Golo's recitative is even more lyrical than that of Hildufus, and the distinction among all the different types of formal numbers is made somewhat malleable. It can even be difficult, occasionally, to note where one form ends and another commences.

The claim that Schumann did not, or could not, write a recitative must really be reexamined. His are simply more fluid and lyrical than was the norm and thus have usually been designated ariosos. They sustain the opera's style well, but were often reviled by critics. But, whatever the reservations, the ariosos do not affect cognition of the vocal narrative at all.

Schumann's great familiarity with opera in general is notable in the finales to the acts of *Genoveva.* The most outstanding in this regard are Act III and Act IV. The finale to Act III is reminiscent of *Schaueroper,* with its ghosts and frightening visions, while Act IV's finale is akin to a *grand opéra* (with shades of rescue opera). Schumann notes in his *Scenerie* that the entire opera must end brightly and happily, in contrast to the miserable scene in the wilderness.

Schumann's foremost critic, J.C. Lobe, complained of the absence of recitative and of popular melodies, lack of individuality in characterization, as well as the symphonic use of the orchestra in *Genoveva*.[10] He seems to have

[10] Billington, *Genoveva,* p. 47. No source given.

missed the point entirely, listening with some kind of pre-conceived critical bias. Lobe was a great champion of Berlioz, which makes his condemnation of *Genoveva* all the stranger, for clearly he was not averse to experimentation and new music.

Wilhelm von Wasielewski, while unhappy about the omission of the child and doe in the final act, was able to see beyond these issues and appreciate Schumann's work. Wasielewski had great sympathy for the composer's disposition, and from the way he writes he appears to have known Schumann's ouvre well. He did hold the fundamental idea that the conflation of Tieck and Hebbel was not really feasible, but once the work was completed he perceived its many beauties.

Wasielewski noted: "The music is incomparably superior, revealing, as usual, a rare amount of creative power, combined with deep and noble feeling."[11] But he notes that Schumann, "could not quite renounce his lyric nature, even to reach the heights of dramatic expression."[12] Wasielewski, too, felt that recitatives were "one of the chief constituents of dramatico-musical art."

Wasielewski took it upon himself to ask Schumann about the much-missed recitatives. Schumann replied, and Wasielewski took note:

> Schumann confessed in regard to such parts of 'Genevieve' [sic] as should have been recitatives, but were written as ariosos, that it was quite impossible for him to treat them as was customary. "But there's not a measure," said he, "in the 'Genevieve' that's not thoroughly dramatic.[13]

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[11] Wasielewski, *Life of Robert Schumann,* p. 155.
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] *Ibid.,* p. 156.

Further to this, and revealing a consistent, positive outlook on the part of Schumann, is a letter to Clara's half-brother Waldemar Bargiel from April 7, 1851. Bargiel was a composer himself, and he must have written something praiseworthy about *Genoveva,* because Schumann responded: "Despite all my efforts, I cannot discover the so-called 'defects' in it either."[14] Considering the negative criticism he had had to endure, it is marvelous that Schumann could maintain confidence about his opera.

About a year before his marriage to Clara in September 1840, Schumann wrote to his close friend Heinrich Dorn regarding the heavy toll his protracted argument with Clara's father regarding her betrothal had taken on him. This is certainly true, but Leon Plantinga offers a plausible, additional comment: "The concept of yearning for an unattainable ideal was part of Clara's appeal to Schumann, as well as a romantic symptom."[15] In the opera, Golo comes to mind immediately.

Schumann also points out how much the struggle had affected his art. He claimed that a good many of his works were inspired by Clara. In a letter from June 8, 1839, Schumann wrote to Clara about his almost overwhelming feelings. He is still a young man, but presciently observes he will not have a long life:

> . . . My great inner passions have raged within me, and grief about you has also gnawed at me. But you, as well, are the one who will again bring peace and healing to me. . . . My happiness is complete except for domestic order, peace and security.[16]

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[14] "Trotz aller Bemühungen kann auch ich in ihr [Genoveva] die sogenannten 'Mängel' nicht entdecken" Sietz, "Zur Textgestaltung . . . ," p. 407.

[15] Plantinga, *Schumann as Critic,* p. 99.

[16] Robert Schumann, quoted in Wolfgang Boetticher, *Robert Schumann in seinen Schriften und Briefen,* (Berlin: Hahnefeld, 1942), p. 254.

This quote is mixed in meaning. He has grieved deeply over Clara, but also believes that she will, in marriage, bring those things he feels he is currently without. He mentions domestic order, a theme we have seen discussed at some length in other of the early correspondence.

An even more telling letter about Robert and Clara's aesthetic life dates from 1835, when Clara was still only a girl. Schumann has just completed his piano cycle *Kreisleriana,* (based on tales by E.T.A. Hoffmann). Kreisler is a wild, eccentric *Kapellmeister,* and with a small stretch of the imagination the work can be viewed as a reflection of Schumann's nature. Yet, he says to Clara,

> . . . Kreisleriana I want to call it, in which you and a thought of you play the chief part, and I will dedicate it to you . . . you will smile so graciously when you recognize yourself.
>
> A truly wild love is to be found there in some movements, and your life and mine and many of your glances.[17]

Schumann was already merging himself with Clara. This was never to change.

A few small but telling details about Schumann and his creative process may be found in the *Detaillierte Scenerie der Opera Genoveva* (date unknown).[18] Schumann was an inveterate reviser. The section of the opera that gave him the most trouble was the climax between Genoveva and Golo at the beginning of Act II. And, as far as dramatic and crowd-pleasing elements were concerned, Schumann not only considered the possibility of Margaretha falling dead in a fit when she leads Siegfried onto the stage in the Act IV reunion, but also of having Golo's corpse carried onto the stage at a similar point in the action. Perhaps the

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[17] Robert Schumann, quoted in Berthold Litzmann, *Clara Schumann: Eine Künstlerleben* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1905–1909), Vol. 1, p. 206.

[18] This *Scenerie* (a directive for the staging and character action) is discussed in detail in Billington's *Robert Schumann's* Genoveva*.* The points mentioned are derived from this source. See, for example, pp. 92–97.

most unexpected proposition was the possibility of the inclusion of a ballet in the opera's Finale. Ultimately, this "French" idea was dropped also.

Although some would have it that a year or two after *Genoveva* Schumann's musical abilities began to wane, this is not borne out by the evidence. *Genoveva* is most assuredly not Schumann's swansong. The worklist of the early 1850's is full of compositions which run the gamut of traditional Romantic forms. According to John Daverio, in the final four years of Schumann's career, he created some fifty compositions. Two of the large-scale works he contemplated were an oratorio based on the life of Martin Luther and a second opera, this one based on Goethe's idyll *Hermann und Dorothea.*[19] In 1852, Schumann even noted the prospect of a Deutsches Requiem.

An enticing window into Schumann's personal musical precepts is provided in a letter to Franz Brendel dated July 3, 1848. It shows just how humbly Schumann approached great literature:

> The performance [*Schlußscene* of *Faust*] went off extremely well. . . . What pleased me more than anything was to hear from a great many people that the music first made the poetry clear to them. For I have often dreaded the charge: "Why write music to such perfect poetry?"[20]

Perhaps this thought had partially hindered Schumann as he sought the "perfect" literary material for a libretto over so many years.

What were Schumann's aims in writing *Genoveva*? It has often been noted, particularly by commentators from his time, that *Genoveva* quite distinctly strayed from the more dramatic norms of the day. But, by no means did

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[19] Daverio, *Robert Schumann,* pp. 443, 447.

[20] *The Life of Robert Schumann Told in His Letters,* trans. May Herbert, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1890), p. 75.

Schumann invoke innovation for innovation's sake. He was simply composing an opera in a manner that was idiosyncratic, and the expansive "through-composed lied" designation it acquired did not seem to have a deleterious impact on him. He was duly proud of his "German" opera, and despite negative criticism he maintained his confidence in it, believing every moment to be dramaturgically successful.

Appendix 1

Robert Schumann's
Haushaltbücher entries.

1847

April	1	Genoveva by Hebbel. Overture ideas. Decision on the text.
	2	Genoveva ideas. Happy mood.
	3	Overture
	4	Met with Reinick early about organization of Genoveva.
	5	First sketch [of overture] ready.
	7	A lot on Genoveva.
	8	The text ready sketched.
	9	Concluded with Reinick about text.
	10	A lot with repect to Genoveva's text.
	11	Reservations regarding Reinick.
	12	Genoveva by Tieck and Hebbel.
	14	Conference with Reinick.
	15	Genoveva.
	21	Reinick with First Act.
	24	Text of Genoveva.
	28	Reinick.
May	14	Letter to Hebbel.
	15	Always Genoveva. Text.
July	21	Farewell to Reinick. End of Genoveva.
Dec.	17	Overture.
	24	Always overture.
	26	Instrumentation finished.
	27	Progress –

1848

Jan.	3	First act ready in sketches.
	8	Instrumentation begun.
	15	With Reinick regarding second act.
	19	Clara played first act.
	23	First act instrumentation ready.
	24	Text of Act II.
	26	Text ready for second act.
Feb.	21	Genoveva ideas anew.
	24	Considerable amount on second act.
	28	Up to finale of Act II.
March	4	Sketches of Act II considerably ready
	7	Instrumentation of second act begun
	11	Happiness with the work.
March	30	Instrumentation of second act ready.

April	5	Work on text for third act.
	24	Begun third act.
	27	Remainder on Genoveva.
May	3	Third act sketches finished.
	13	Third act instrumentation begun.
June	6	Began third act instrumentation again.
	13	Third act instrumentation finished.
	29	Text to Act IV.
July	21	Ready with fourth act of Genoveva.
Aug.	4	Genoveva finished! Great joy, also Clara's. Evening read Manfred.
	10	Text improvement on Genoveva.
	12	Read Genoveva to Richard Wagner.
	24	Read Genoveva to Bendemann and Hübner.
Sept.	7	Read Genoveva to Schröder-Devrient.
Oct.	9	Read Genoveva to Schmidt.
Dec.	8	List of copying expenses for various parts of Genoveva.

1849

Jan.	23	Work on Genoveva.
	28	Read Genoveva to Günz.
Mar.	27	Rehearsal of overture.
July	11	Text put entirely in order.

1850

Jan.	20	Opera corrections.
	25	Always corrections.
Feb.	7	Opera annoyance.
	12	Extra rehearsal. The Overture.
	17	The opera text.
	20	Orchestra rehearsal Gewandhaus.
	23	Overture rehearsal. Read opera text to Wenzel, Böhme . . .
	24	Read text to Schleinitz, Dr. Härtel . . .
	25	Evening concert. Premiere of Overture to Genoveva.
Mar.	2	Transaction with Peters over Genoveva.
	16	Concert, including Genoveva Overture, in Hamburg.
	22	Movement from Genoveva.
April	7	Money from Peters as part payment for opera.
May	22	First rehearsal in theatre.
	24	Rehearsal of Genoveva.
	25	Rehearsal.
May	29	First *Correcturprobe* with orchestra.
June	1	First chorus and solo rehearsal.
	2, 3, 6	Early morning rehearsals

	7	Early morning rehearsal with soloists and chorus.
	10	Always revising. Read text to Gade.
	11	Morning “room” rehearsal. Annoyance, initiation.
	12	Morning rehearsal with chorus.
	13	Morning first rehearsal in order.
	15	Morning second rehearsal in order.
	20	Morning first orchestral rehearsal.
	22	Morning abortive rehearsal.
	23	Morning *Hauptprobe*.
	24	Morning last rehearsal.
	25	First performance of Genoveva. A mistake!
	27	Money (portion) from first performance.
	28	Second performance. Greater joy than then.
	30	Third performance. Very animated.
July	4	Payment for librettos
Aug.	21	Revision of piano arrangement finally finished.

Appendix 2

Direct quotes from Tieck[1]

ACT I
No. 7: Finale

(Golo)
Du kennst sie nicht, . . . / Du lügst, du kennst sie nicht . . .

(Margaretha)
Wär ich ein junger Herr ich mit Augen wie Ihr,
Ich hielt an meiner Hoffnung fest,
Und wär' ich in die Königin verliebt . . .

Mit neuem Leben / Du hast mit dieser Hoffnung neues Leben . . . mir gegeben.

ACT II
No. 9: Duet

(Golo)
O Zauberin, du hast das Leben mir
Durch Kunst entführt!

(Genoveva)
Ich bin es, Genoveva, die jetzt spricht,
Gemahlin Eures Herrn,
Des Grafen Siegfried!

(Golo)
Daß ich es reden, aussagen könnte,
Worte finden, Töne.

(Genoveva)
Es fällt ihn Wahnsinn an! / . . . wieder fällt ihn Wahnsinn an!

(Genoveva)
O Siegfried, mein Gemahl,
Wann kehrst du wieder!

[1] Where the line(s) used by Schumann are not precisely the same but are clearly derived from the same place in Tieck's drama, the original Tieck line is cited after the diagonal slash.

(Golo)
Nenn' ihn nicht, nenn' ihn nicht,
Sein Nam' ist Tod! / . . . dieser Nam' ist Tod!

(Golo)
Mein bist du!

(Genoveva)
Züruck, ehrloser Bastard! / Hinweg!gottloser ehrvergessner Mann!

ACT III

. . .

ACT IV

No. 17: Szene

(Golo)
O sprich es aus, ein einzig Wort. / . . . sprecht nur ein einzig Wort.

No. 19: Duett
(Genoveva)

Ich mische meine Tränen mit den deinen! / euren
. . .
Sprich nicht so, es war nicht deine Schuld
Der Himmel fügt' es

Appendix 3

Direct quotes from Hebbel

ACT I
No. 5: Chor

(Golo)
O, wie sie küßt!

No. 6: Recitative and Scene

(Golo)
Stirbt sie, ich will nicht knirschen,
Doch, sie seuftz!
Das holde Leben kehrt zurück,
Und auf die Lippen tritt das erste Rot!
O Lippen, süße Lippen!
Wer euch küßt,
Der stiehlt sich hier
Die ew'ge seligkeit,
Denn nie verglüht ein solcher Kuß!
Nie! Nie!
Ich könnt' es tun, ich bin allein;
Die heil'gen Augen steh'n noch nicht
Wie Cherubim abwehrend vor dem Paradies;
Ich will, ich muß sie küssen!

(Genoveva)
Mein Siegfried!
Wer bist du?

No. 7: Finale
(Golo)
Hinweg! Hinweg!

ACT II
No. 8: Scene, Chorus and Recitative

(Genoveva)
O käm' er bald zurück! / Siegfried, kehr bald zurück

No. 9: Duet

(Genoveva)
Golo, ich sah Euch niemals so,
Ihr seid wohl krank?

(Golo)
Fluch dir! / . . . sey verflucht! Verflucht! Verflucht!

No. 12: Finale

(Balthasar)
Frau Gräfin, mit Erlaubnis, das ist schlecht.

(Golo)
Freund, du bist rasch!

(Balthasar)
Was sagt Ihr nun?

(Genoveva)
Nichts zu euch!

(Balthasar)
Das glaub ich, nichts zu uns,
die wir er sah'n,
Was aber wohl zu dem,
Der's hört von uns?

(Genoveva)
Glaubt, was ihr seht, nur, bitt' ich,
Glaubt nicht mehr!
Ich brachtet Lichter mit,
Gebt mir ein Licht!

(Genoveva)
Euch ruf ich auf,
Sagt Ihr, Herr Golo,
Was Ihr glaubt!

(Golo)
Ich heiß' nicht Siegfried,
Bin der Richter nicht!

(Balthasar)
Die ist ja nach dem Fall viel stolzer noch!

Doch bräche sich der Stolz vielleicht im Turm!
Wär' ich der Herr, sie müßte gleich hinunter!

(Chorus)
Zum Turm mit ihr,

(Genoveva)
Führt mich, wohin es sei,
Nur führt mich hin,
Wo ich das Blut nicht seh!

ACT III

No. 14: Recitative, Lied and Duet

(Siegfried)
Du, Golo?
Doch wie so bleich du siehst / Und so bleich . . .
Mein Weib ist tot!

(Golo)
Sie lebt. / Ihr Kind lebt auch!

No. 15: Finale

(Margaretha)
Ich sah ein Kind in Traum,
Ein hübsches Kind, die Zähne weiß,
Die Backen rot und rund,
Die Augen, nein, die sah ich nicht so recht,
Zwei Tränen standen drin.
Es rief: "Zum Engel was ich dir bestimmt,
Du warfst mich in den Bach!"
Dummer Traum!
Da fällt mir ein:
Hätt' ich das Mägdlein nicht ertränkt,
Und wär es schön geworden,
Wie ich's sah im Traum,
So klopfte jetzt vielleicht ein Freiersmann,
Ein solcher, der das Glück bringt über Nacht;
Laß ruhn die Toten, denn sie ruhen gut!

(Golo)
Der dieses schrieb, der log! / Herr Graf, ich log!

(Siegfried)
Holla, macht auf!

(Margaretha)
Wer da?
Herr Graf, so spät?

(Siegfried)
Hör auf!

(Margaretha)
Das heißt: Fang an!
Doch die Bedingung:
Denkt jetzt nicht an Ihn,
Der einst die Welt erschuf
Und sie erhält!

(Margaretha)
Ich kenn ihn nicht! / Ich hör ihn nicht!

(Geist)
Du riefst ihn an,
Und er gebietet dir durch meinen Mund:

(Margaretha)
So töt' ich mich vorher! / Dann tödt ich mich!

(Geist)
Versuch es nicht!
Im Flammen wirst du Salamander sein, . . .
Im Schoß der Erde Wurm,
Und gegen Stahl und Eisen wie von Stein!

ACT IV
No. 17: Scene

(Golo)
Kennt Ihr den Ring?

(Golo)
Was denkt Ihr über Dragos Nachtbesuch?

(Genoveva)
Ich! Nichts, was denkt er?

(Golo)
Was ein jeder denkt,

(Genoveva)
In dieser Stunde fängt mein Elend an. / . . . hört Dein Elend auf!

(Golo)
Wenn Ihr so mutig seid,
Daß Ihr den Tod erwählt,
Ich bin zu feig,
Dies schöne Haupt,
Das mir wie Sonn' und Mond und Sterne war,
Ans Schwert zu liefern.
Kommt und entflieht mit mir!

(Genoveva)
Ihr sprecht in Wahnsinn!

(Golo)
Kommt und entflieht mit mir!
Einmal nur gib, was du geben kannst,
Nur einmal laß ruhn mich an deiner Brust!

(Genoveva)
Euch? O nie!

(Golo)
Ich sei zu Roß, den Falken auf der Hand,
Ins Land hineingesprengt!

(Genoveva)
Wenn mein Gemahl zurückkehrt, sagt ihm dies:
Daß ich, wie hart er auch mit mir verfuhr,
Ihm alles noch, bevor ich starb, vergab!

No. 18: Recitative, Trio and Scene with Chorus

(Balthasar)
Weib, heuchelt nicht im letzten Augenblick!
Ich sah Drago selbst in Eurem Schlafgemach!

(Genoveva)
Ich sah den Drago erst, als Ihr ihn saht!

(Balthasar)
Ihr macht es wie die Schlange;
Wenn man ie zertritt,
So sticht sie noch.

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