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Aspects of Tradition and Originality

in the Chamber Music

of Robert Schumann

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Abbreviations UsedSchumann's Works

String Quartet, Op.41 no.1 in A minor	- Op.41/1 or Op.41,1
String Quartet, Op.41 no.2 in F major	- Op.41/2 or Op.41,2
String Quartet, Op.41 no.3 in A major	- Op.41/3 or Op.41,3
Piano Trio no.1 in D minor, Op.63	- D minor Trio
Piano Trio no.2 in F major, Op.80	- F major Trio
Piano Trio no.3 in G minor, Op.113	- G minor Trio
<u>Phantasiestücke</u> in A minor for Violin, Cello and Piano, Op.88	- <u>Phantasiestücke</u> Trio
<u>Märchenbilder</u> for Viola and Piano, Op.113	- <u>Märchenbilder</u> or <u>Fairy-pictures</u>
<u>Märchenerzählungen</u> for Clarinet, Viola and Piano, Op.132	- <u>Märchenerzählungen</u> or <u>Fairy-tales</u>
<u>Fünf Stücke in Volkston</u> for Cello and Piano, Op.102	- Cello <u>Folk-pieces.</u>
String Quartet no.1, first move- ment, bars 1-6	- Op.41/1/i, 1-6 or Op.41, 1, i, 1-6.
E major	- E
Tonic (major)	- I
Tonic (minor)	- i
<u>Early Letters of Robert Schumann</u>	- <u>Early Letters</u>
<u>The Letters of Robert Schumann</u>	- <u>Letters</u>
<u>The Life of Robert Schumann told in his Letters</u>	- <u>Life in Letters</u>

Books

Alan Walker, <u>Robert Schumann</u>	- Alan Walker (Ed.) <u>Robert Schumann: The Man and his Music</u>
<u>Cobbett</u>	- W.W. Cobbett <u>Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music</u>
Niecks, <u>Robert Schumann</u>	- Friedrich Niecks <u>Robert Schumann: A Supplementary and Corrective Biography</u>

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INTRODUCTION

Of all the generalizations that have been quoted about Schumann, one of the most frequent and misguided -- initiated by Frederick Niecks --¹ is the statement that he had a "custom of concentrating on one thing at a time,"² and that 1840 was his "year of song", 1841 his "symphonic year", 1842 his "chamber music year", and so on. Such a generalization contains an overimplified truth about Schumann's method of composition, but whereas the songs and symphonies not composed in 1840 or '41 have not suffered in consequence, the chamber music composed after 1842 has been unduly neglected.

Of Schumann's nineteen completed, published, chamber works, only six were written in 1842: the Three String Quartets, op.41, the Piano Quintet op.44, the Piano Quartet op.47 and the Phantasiestücke Trio, op.88 -- which was later revised. Nor were these his first compositions in this medium. The first attempt that we know of is a Piano Quartet in C minor, of 1829, still unpublished (except in fragments in an article by Hans Redlich).³ Nine years later, in April 1838, came the first String Quartet, and a year later, the beginnings of three other String Quartets, all of these now lost, but mentioned in his early letters.

For instance, Schumann speaks of his very first String Quartet, with restrained enthusiasm, in a letter of April 3rd, 1838:

¹F. Niecks, Robert Schumann, p.221.

²J. Chisell, Schumann, p.166.

³H.F. Redlich, "Schumann discoveries", Monthly Musical Record, Vol.80, 1950, p.27.

I have never written so thoroughly from the heart as just lately: three books of Novelleten..., Kinderscenen, ...then a string quartet which possesses me at the present moment, and is making me quite happy, although it can only be considered as an experiment.⁴

In another letter Schumann says of the same Quartet:

It is a great delight to me, and a gain to the paper as well.⁵

Schumann thought even more highly of his next three, incomplete quartet "essays", which he felt were

As good as Haydn.⁶

Clearly, these works cannot be considered simply in the light of incomplete 'juvenilia' which bear no relationship to the mature works of three years later. They indicate a keen interest in mastering the difficulties of the classical quartet style, and evince the urgency and seriousness of Schumann's intent as a composer of chamber music.

It may have been Schumann's admiration for Mendelssohn's Op.44 String Quartets (written in 1837-8) also which provided a strong incentive to attempt quartets of his own; and more encouragement came from a rather surprising direction -- Liszt wrote to Schumann in 1839:

I think I have already expressed to you in one of my previous letters the desire I had to see you write some 'ensemble' pieces, -- Trios, Quintets, Septets. Will you forgive me for insisting again on this point? It seems to me that success, even commercial success, will not be denied them.⁷

⁴Letters, vol.1, pp.152-3.

⁵Op.cit., p.161. Chamber music was reviewed in the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik, the paper which Schumann had launched in April, 1834.

⁶Early Letters, p.292.

⁷Tr. A. Bouchourechlier, Schumann, p.192.

With this abundance of interest in chamber music surrounding Schumann in the late 1830's, it is only surprising that he waited even until 1842 before completing and publishing his first satisfactory string quartet.

In fact, one would be justified in saying that far from having a "chamber music year", Schumann was preoccupied with chamber music throughout his life. Moreover, Schumann's chamber works are not in any sense isolated phenomena, either within his own output, or within the mainstream of music in the nineteenth century. They do, in fact, belong to a clearly defined tradition of chamber music, and form important links between the early part of the century (Beethoven and Schubert) and the works of Brahms, Dvorak, Fauré, Saint-Saëns and César Franck in the later nineteenth century.

Schumann's chamber music must be seen in a broad context, and I hope that I have already made it clear that he did not suddenly discover the medium in 1842 as a surprising novelty.

It is perhaps worth mentioning here some points about the status of chamber music in this era, and the part it played in the musical life of the time; if only in the service of a better understanding of the rather special and unusual use Schumann in the end made of this medium, in spite of a sometimes equivocal position in relation to the gradually developing rift between popular and informal taste which was an as yet barely articulated feature of his own times. It was not with the more rigorous and demanding form of the late Beethoven and Schubert quartets, for example, that the public at large would have associated the genre. In an age innocent of rapidly distributed mass-entertainment, small-scale works for manageable resources filled a recognisable social need. What had once been entertainment for the

court now had its place in the middle-class home, a removal which changed its essential nature, but probably less than might be supposed, since a palace is also a "home" of sorts: the inherent intimacy of the medium remained, but was intensified.

Chamber music had been an integral part of the daily life of many families known to Schumann in his youth, and its largely domestic function was emphasized by the comparative paucity of professional chamber musicians in these early years, a situation which was not always unacceptable even to serious composers. Schumann described the ideal social setting for the enjoyment of chamber music when he reviewed Mendelssohn's Cello Sonata, op.45:

This sonata is...especially fitting for the most refined family circles; to be played after the reading of a Byron or Goethe poem.⁸

Chamber music was not only the prerogative of 'refined family circles' but was frequently performed at parties and soirées. Eventually, by the middle of the nineteenth century, numerous chamber music societies developed in Germany.

[W]e have now reached a period which might almost be described as one of mass-production in German chamber music -- a period when every German city had its group of highly respected composers, each of whom considered himself more or less under a moral obligation to supply the countless chamber music organizations, amateur and professional, with a succession of works. Curiously enough, these rarely fell below a certain acceptable level of competence. Though not epoch-making, they were pleasant to play; they overtaxed neither the executive proficiency, nor the musical understanding.⁹

⁸ On Music and Musicians, p.217.

⁹ Edwin Evans, "Chamber Music", Bacharach, ed. The New Musical Companion, pp.503-600, p.544.

So the popular domestic demand that existed was almost universally for untaxing compositions of little lasting merit; works which were the product of genuine inspiration or which made demands on listeners and performers alike received a much smaller share of this public acclaim. Consequently chamber music still remained largely the domain of domestic or society performance, although they were also gradually to be found in the more austere context of the public concert hall.

Thus, the appearance of chamber music at full-scale concerts was still to be looked on as an innovation. For example, while Mendelssohn was chief conductor for the Gewandhaus Society of Leipzig (in fact, from 1835-45) he quickly established a

pattern for 'symphony concerts'...[H]e endeavoured to take into account the broad taste of his audience as well as his own inclinations... Chamber music and piano recitals were interspersed among the larger events.¹⁰

However, "interspersed" seems to be an over-statement, since in an article on the 1837-8 season Schumann mentions that only four string-quartet recitals had taken place, out of a total of thirty-two concerts, and he regrets that the artists unfortunately

only gave four, but next winter that number must be at least doubled.¹¹

Since chamber works were characteristically aimed at a popular and widespread market, whether private or public, it was essential that they appear in print. Despite the non-professional demand for chamber music, it was the custom for it to be published in the separate parts, rather than with full score. Some of the tensions underlying Schumann's desire for popular acceptance of his efforts in this field,

¹⁰ Percy M. Young, The Concert Tradition, p.163.

¹¹ On Music and Musicians, p.378.

inherently in conflict with his natural tendency towards innovative and -- in some senses -- "difficult" writing, appear in an early manifestation through his demand -- unusual for the time -- that his chamber works be published in full score. His motive clearly sprang from the underlying fear that these works would be misunderstood and passed over if read in one part only -- a fear that was probably not groundless.

Schumann's persistence in the matter is shown by the way in which it sometimes took him several years to persuade his publishers to comply with his wishes. Perhaps part of the problem was a matter of simple economics. Schumann's requests were no doubt a "nuisance" to publishers because the expense of setting up a full-score version in one cover could not be compensated for by the price it would be possible to charge for it. Separate versions for each instrument would have appeared to them a far more practical and profitable proposition. Nevertheless, Schumann wrangled for a number of years to obtain the publication of his Op.41 Quartets in score. In 1847 (five years after their composition) Schumann was still trying to persuade Breitkopf and Härtel to go this far, although the separate string parts had appeared in February, 1843:

You may remember that I let you have the quartets very cheaply, because I made the publication of the score one of the conditions... You will guess what my wishes are...and will, I am sure, fulfil them, unless the quartets have had too poor a sale.¹²

The argument continues, a few weeks later:

[W]ould it not be a way out of the difficulty, if for the present you published one of the quartets in score, and the rest in the course of the next few years?... One rarely finds four musicians together

¹²Letters, vol.1, pp.248-9.

who, without a score, can grasp the more difficult combinations of such a composition, even after they have played it together several times. What is the result? After hastily playing it through, they lay it on one side. But with the score in their hands they will be much more likely to do justice to the composer, etc. That is why I firmly believe that publishing the score will only increase the sale of the parts.¹³

In this case, Schumann prevailed: the score was finally published late in 1848. Schumann's disillusionment from experiences like this is shown by his pessimistic advice, towards the end of his life, to Brahms to expect very little remuneration for the latter's first string quartet:

[A]s a rule, publishers prefer to give nothing at all for quartets, and even require a fee from the composer (for their expenses).¹⁴

Schumann clearly had in mind here the tradition of quartet-writing since Schubert and Beethoven: he always considered this form to demand the ultimate in perfection and control. Consequently his words suggest that as late as this (1853) there was still no firmly established market for published chamber works of any real complexity. His bitterness would have been increased by the way those composers listed in the Appendix to this chapter would no doubt have had far greater appeal to the "Biedermeier" tastes of the public than anything by Schumann, whose music would have been considered too scholarly or academic. Even Liszt mooted such a criticism of the 'academic' qualities of the Piano Quintet, saying that "it had too much of Leipzig about it".¹⁵

¹³Letters, vol.1, pp.250-1.

¹⁴Op.cit., vol.2, p.199.

¹⁵Tr. A. Boucourechliev in Schumann, p.130.

Schumann's articles on chamber music in the Neue Zeitschrift, however, did do much to promote wider acceptance and understanding of serious chamber music, particularly of string quartets, despite his pessimism above. The articles mainly took the form of reviews of recent contributions to the field by German composers of both major and minor importance, and would often include rhapsodic and unrestrained expression of Schumann's disapprobation at the standard of chamber music he frequently encountered.

Should I wish for the highest sort of music -- as Bach and Beethoven have given in certain of their works... [S]hould I demand in a work, poetic depth and originality throughout -- in details and in the whole -- I would have a long search ahead of me. For none of these works, in fact hardly music that has recently appeared, would satisfy me.¹⁶

In speaking of the works of his lesser contemporaries, Schumann is thus giving very early voice to the division between "highbrow" and "lowbrow" chamber music which was already manifest. Unfortunately, there is evidence that he was slow to accept the implications with regard to the more immediate popularity of his works. But even without the perspective provided to us by time, he would probably have agreed with the modern view that "the bulk of this music is as dead...as any music can be".¹⁷

Awareness of the alternative "high tradition" could, however, have negative and inhibiting effects of its own. The general decline in chamber music production, from 1830-40, may be attributed to a lack of both talent and also of confidence -- in the wake of Beethoven and Schubert's deaths. Even Schumann was at first not exempt from

¹⁶Tr. Leon B. Plantinga in Schumann as Critic, p.184.

¹⁷Edwin Evans, "Chamber Music", Bacharach ed. The New Musical Companion, pp.503-600, p.544.

the overawing effects of their example; and no one was more aware than Schumann of the difficulty of writing chamber works, particularly string quartets, which did not compare unfavourably with the late quartets of Beethoven and Schubert.

It is not so long ago...that Haydn, Mozart, and yet another lived and wrote quartets. Would it be possible for such fathers to have left behind them so few worthy descendants, that these have learnt nothing from them. Could we not try and feel out whether a new genius were somewhere in bud and required but a touch... 18

Two months after writing this, Schumann met the young composer Hermann Hirschbach, and seemed to have felt that perhaps here was the "genius in bud" who would redeem the status of chamber music:

...we must hear more about the music of a certain young man; this music, it seems to me, flows at times from the depths of real, live genius.¹⁹

But Schumann's enthusiasm was misled by a feeling of artistic kinship with Hirschbach, combined with an element of self-transference. He saw the young man as apparently successfully achieving the aim which Schumann himself aspired to in the late 1830's: writing his first symphonic and chamber works. He soon realized his mistake:

[U]pon a second listening some passages began to irritate me -- passages that don't so much violate the explicit rules of the craft, but sin against the sense of hearing itself, against the natural laws of harmony.²⁰

By the "natural laws of harmony" Schumann meant the harmonic style of the eighteenth century, and he always measured both his own and other people's works by the standards of Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. In a review of Cherubini's Quartet in E^b he asks

¹⁸On Music and Musicians, p.237.

¹⁹Tr. Leon B. Plantinga, Schumann as Critic, p.184.

²⁰Op.cit., p.185.

whether it represents "the true quartet-style, which we love and which we have come to regard as exemplary."²¹

And of Schumann's most famous articles on chamber music was "String Quartets in Germany", which was written in the same year as his first chamber works: 1842. In it he expands on the ideas expressed above:

The Quartets of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven! Who does not know them, and who dares cast a stone at them? Though it is definite evidence of the indestructible vitality of those creations that, after the lapse of half a century, they still delight all hearts, it is not to the credit of the recent artistic generation that in so long a period of time nothing comparable has been created...very few among us have known how to augment the existing capital.²²

Schumann may not be making exception of himself in this passage, but he certainly goes on to make an exception of Mendelssohn, "whose aristocratic-poetic nature was especially adapted to this musical form." Such self-abnegation and promotion of others was often characteristic of him.

Yet even with regard to his own chamber works, the situation was far from static. It was at the same period, the late 1830's, that Schumann initiated the first of his highly successful Quartet matinées; concerts at which he and his friends performed many of their own chamber works, and those of their predecessors and contemporaries (both great and small).²³

²¹Henry Pleasants, The Musical World of Robert Schumann, p.145.

²²On Music and Musicians, p.68.

²³Some idea of the extent of their potential repertoire may be gained from a glance at the Appendix, where 120 minor composers of chamber music in Germany and Austria, between the years 1820-60, are listed.

It was perhaps because of Schumann's considerable experience of inferior quartet-writing that he enforced the rigorous self-discipline of studying the classical quartet tradition in depth before attempting to augment it. This, in turn, sharpened his perception of the enormous discrepancy between the works of his contemporaries and those of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert. Again and again we find him affirming his belief that the late quartets of Beethoven, in particular, represented the ultimate attainment in quartet-composition. In a diary entry of 1837 he exclaims:

Beethoven's B flat Quartet, op.130, heard for the first time. Ultimate goal!²⁴

and later, in a letter to Hermann Hirschbach of June 30th, 1839:

I am now living through some of Beethoven's quartets in the truest sense, and feel even the love and hate in them.²⁵

In May of the same year, Hirschbach had begun a series of articles for the Neue Zeitschrift on Beethoven's late Quartets, an idea almost certainly instigated by Schumann, and one which showed very early recognition and appraisal of these hitherto misunderstood and obscure works.

Influences : Schumann's predecessors and contemporaries

Performance of late Beethoven Quartets were rare in the 1830's and '40's, but it was partly due to the enthusiasm of Schumann that they became gradually better understood and appreciated. An article entitled "A Retrospective View", written in 1838, includes rapturous descriptions of Beethoven's Op.127 and 131:

²⁴Tr. G. Abraham, Schumann: A Symposium, p.9.

²⁵Early Letters, p.29.

A treasure of art was also presented this winter by the quartets performed...in the little hall of the Gewandhaus. We had four evenings, and twenty numbers, among which the genius of the first water were Beethoven's quartets in E-flat major (Op.127), and C-sharp minor, the grandeur of which is inexpressible. They seem to me to stand with some of Bach's choruses and organ compositions on the extreme boundary of all that has hitherto been attained by human art and imagination.²⁶

There is little doubt that the late quartets of Beethoven were the chief formal influence in the first chamber works of Schumann, particularly those of 1842. The opening of Schumann's Piano Quartet

27

The image shows two systems of musical notation for the opening of Schumann's Piano Quartet. The first system consists of four staves: two for the piano (treble and bass clefs) and two for the violin (treble and bass clefs). The tempo is marked 'Sostenuto assai. M.M. ♩ = 76'. The piano part begins with a piano (p) dynamic. The second system continues the piano and violin parts, with dynamic markings 'ritard. e dim.' and asterisks (*) under certain notes. The piano part in the second system also has asterisks (*) under some notes.

was directly modelled on the 'Maestro' introduction of Beethoven's Op.127,

²⁶ On Music and Musicians, p.227.

²⁷ Piano Quartet, i, 1-12.

28

Musical score for piano, measures 28-34. The score is in G major, 2/4 time, and 4/4 time. It features a treble and bass clef with various rhythmic patterns and dynamics.

and Schumann, like Beethoven, also repeats the Introduction just before the development section of the first movement.

The first 'allegro' of the Piano Quartet opens in exactly the same way as the 'allegro' at the beginning of Op.132;

29

Musical score for piano, measures 29-35. The score is in G major, 2/4 time, and 4/4 time. It features a treble and bass clef with various rhythmic patterns and dynamics.

30

Musical score for piano, measures 30-36. The score is in G major, 2/4 time, and 4/4 time. It features a treble and bass clef with various rhythmic patterns and dynamics.

²⁸ Beethoven, Op.127, i, 1-6.

²⁹ Piano Quartet, i, 14-16, piano.

³⁰ Beethoven, Op.132, i, 9-10.

and Schumann's first String Quartet follows exactly the same initial pattern as Beethoven's Op.131: a slow contrapuntal passage in a minor key leading into an 'allegro' in $\frac{6}{8}$ time in a very remotely related major key.

So it is clear that, while he did not slavishly copy Beethoven, Schumann certainly found a way out of some of the problems of structuring the beginning of a movement by incorporating several of Beethoven's formal procedures.

In the slow movement of his second String Quartet, however, Schumann adopts wholeheartedly the variation technique used by Beethoven in the slow movement of Op.127. Both movements are in $\frac{12}{8}$ time and A-flat major, and the themes themselves are not dissimilar, especially in their rhythmic shape, harmonic outline and melodic rise and fall.

31

Handwritten musical score for measures 31-32. The score is written on two staves, treble and bass clef. The key signature is A-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 12/8. The notation includes various note values, rests, and phrasing slurs. The first staff (treble clef) begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats, and a time signature of 12/8. The second staff (bass clef) begins with a bass clef, a key signature of two flats, and a time signature of 12/8. The music consists of several measures of music, with some notes beamed together and some measures containing rests.

32

Handwritten musical score for measures 32-33. The score is written on two staves, treble and bass clef. The key signature is A-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 12/8. The notation includes various note values, rests, and phrasing slurs. The first staff (treble clef) begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats, and a time signature of 12/8. The second staff (bass clef) begins with a bass clef, a key signature of two flats, and a time signature of 12/8. The music consists of several measures of music, with some notes beamed together and some measures containing rests.

³¹Beethoven, Op.127, ii, 3-6.

³²Op.41, 2, ii, 1-3.

The second half of the theme is introduced by both composers after eight bars, and the beginning of Variation I is introduced in both cases by cello followed in canon by second violin:

33

34

Later in the movement Schumann adopts the identical melodic variation technique in his third Variation which Beethoven had used in his sixth:

35

³³ Beethoven, op.cit., 20-21.

³⁴ Op.41, 2, ii, 16-18.

³⁵ Beethoven, op.cit., 110.

Beethoven's influence was not confined to the late quartets, but also came through the piano music (compare the ii^7b chords at the beginning of Schumann's Op.41/3 and Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op.51 no.3)³⁷ and from the Ninth Symphony, whose slow movement theme seems to have been the inspiration behind the slow movement of Op.41 no.1:

³⁶ Op.41, 2, ii, 49.

³⁷ See chapter on Harmonic Language, p. 100.

³⁸ Beethoven, Symphony no.9, iii, 3-6, First violins.

³⁹ Op.41, 1, iii, violin I.

Since Beethoven was not simply a Romantic idol to Schumann, but a model for many points of structural, melodic and harmonic thought, it is surprising that some of Beethoven's wider concepts of the expansion of form in the string quartet were not adopted by Schumann: for instance, the growth of the number of movements to 5 (Op.132) 6 (Op.130) or 7 (Op.131), the contrasting sections within movements, the sudden changes in tempi and dynamics, and above all the fierce contrapuntal complexities of the "Grosse Fugue". In practice, Schumann ignored all these structural aspects of Beethoven's art, except the expansion of the Scherzo with two Trios (Op.131) which he used in several works, including the Piano Quartet and the Piano Quintet. The only other significant technical feature of Beethoven's late Quartets, adopted by Schumann, was his use of the fugue, though in Schumann's works the fugue is often treated with considerable romantic licence.⁴⁰

Schumann also certainly admired Beethoven's ability to develop organically short, plain motives:

Whosoever has a beautiful thought, let him not worry it and caress it till it is vulgar and profaned, as many composers do who call this 'development'. But if you want to develop, make something out of previous common-places.... There Beethoven...is a splendid ideal.⁴¹

Schumann's use of motives does not, however, lie in the same direction as Beethoven's,⁴² and as far as thematic development is concerned the two composers differ widely.

Greater stylistic similarities exist between Schumann and Mendelssohn, his greatest contemporary in the field of chamber music.

⁴⁰See chapter on Counterpoint, p. 369.

⁴¹Entry in Schumann's diary for 1831, Gerald Abraham, Schumann: A Symposium, p.9.

⁴²See chapter on Melody (ii), p. 161.

Schumann's admiration for Mendelssohn dated from 1835, when they first met, and during the late 1830's they became close friends. The friendship as such cooled a few years later, and in any case was always rather one-sided. But Schumann's letters, diaries and articles show that his feelings towards Mendelssohn never diminished, and he defended him sharply against criticism after the latter's death. He took Mendelssohn's opinions of his own work very seriously:

I always considered his praise the highest.... His judgements on musical matters -- especially on composition -- ..go straight to the innermost core -- he instantly and everywhere recognised flaws and their cause.... Highest moral and artistic principles; for that reason intransigent, sometimes seemingly rude and unkind.⁴³

This last phrase hints to us of the real nature of their relationship: that unstinting admiration was all on Schumann's side. His name is certainly almost absent from Mendelssohn's letters.⁴⁴

Many of Mendelssohn's best chamber works were written before 1842, including the three String Quartets, Op.44 (1837-8), the popular Octet (1825), the D minor Piano Trio (1839), and the Cello Sonata in B^b (1839). Schumann reviewed two of the Op.44 Quartets, describing them (rather fulsomely) as being "in a beautifully human sphere. Here, too, he bears away the palm among his contemporaries."⁴⁵

⁴³ (Reprinted and trans. in) Heinrich E. Jacob, Felix Mendelssohn and his Times, pp.105-6.

⁴⁴ Schubring's Recollections of Mendelssohn published in 1866, however, state that "there is no allusion to Schumann in the published Letters of Mendelssohn...[there are in fact two];...but this I do know, that Mendelssohn spoke to me with the greatest appreciation of Schumann's gifts. It was not merely for the sake of Madame Schumann's playing that he cultivated the Schumanns...I conclude that there must have been a familiar and friendly intercourse between Mendelssohn and the Schumanns." (Letters, vol.2, p.31.)

⁴⁵ On Music and Musicians, p.227.

As far as practical influence is concerned, there are some striking echoes of Mendelssohn in the string writing of the Quartets, particularly the rapid rising and falling bustle of their fast semi-quaver passages.

The image contains two musical excerpts. The top excerpt, labeled '46', consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) in C major and common time. It features a rapid, rhythmic passage with many sixteenth notes. The bottom excerpt, labeled '47', also consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) in D minor and 2/4 time. It features a similar rapid, rhythmic passage with many sixteenth notes.

And there is an even stronger similarity of key, rhythm and tone-colour in the respective Scherzos of the same two works. Some connections between the piano writing of the two composers will be made in the chapter on Instrumentation.⁴⁸

Mendelssohn's Piano Trio in D minor was almost certainly a model for Schumann's First Piano Trio, in the same key, written eight years later, in fact in the year of Mendelssohn's death. Schumann had reviewed the Mendelssohn Trio in the early 1840's, calling

⁴⁶Mendelssohn, Op.44, 3, iv, 1-2.

⁴⁷Op.41, 2, iv, 1-6.

⁴⁸See p.

Mendelssohn the "Mozart of the nineteenth century". He described the Trio as

the master trio of today as in their day were those of Beethoven in B-flat and D; as that of Franz Schubert in E-flat; indeed a lovely composition which in years from hence will still delight grand- and great-grand children...so let the new work have its effect everywhere, as it should have, and prove anew to us the artistic power of its creator.⁴⁹

It certainly "had its effect" on Schumann, as one can see from a glance at the openings of the two works, which have the same agitated accompaniment, the same melodic shape, and a similar low-pitched, dark, tone colour;

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Musical score for Mendelssohn's D minor Trio, measures 1-7. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features a bass line with a melodic shape and a piano accompaniment with a similar agitated character.

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Musical score for Schumann's D minor Trio, measures 1-2. The score is in common time (C) with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features a piano accompaniment with a similar agitated character to Mendelssohn's work.

⁴⁹On Music and Musicians, pp.217-8.

⁵⁰Mendelssohn, D minor Trio, i, 1-7.

⁵¹(Schumann) D minor Trio, i, 1-2.

and the third motif of the first subject is also strikingly similar:

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Both Mendelssohn and Schumann were of course deeply interested in the music of the past, and they were concerned that the traditional forms of the symphony, sonata and chamber music should not be ignored by composers of their generation.

As we have seen (p. 10) Schumann complained that the String Quartet especially (which he considered the purest and most 'classical' of the chamber music forms) had very few champions in

⁵² Mendelssohn, op.cit., 47-51.

⁵³ D minor Trio, i, 15-18.

the 1830's, and it is no mere coincidence that his article of 1842 was written in the same year that his first five completed chamber works were composed. He thus showed his concern for the medium both by verbal exhortation and by example.

Mendelssohn similarly felt it a duty for a contemporary composer to contribute to the chamber music tradition, and turned mostly to Mozart for inspiration, as Schumann rightly observed (cf. p.20). He expressed his thoughts on the subject in much the same way that Schumann had when he declared in the same year, 1838, that he was finding the piano "too narrow" for his ideas:

Piano pieces are not the most enjoyable form of composition to me right now; I cannot even write them with real success;... Moreover, a very important branch of piano music, and one of which I am particularly fond -- trios, quartets and other pieces with accompaniment, genuine chamber music -- is quite forgotten now, and I feel a great urge to do something new of this kind. It was with this idea that I recently wrote the sonata for 'cello and I am thinking of writing a couple of trios next.⁵⁴

The occasions on which Schumann's chamber music met with Mendelssohn's approval are avidly recorded in the Letters:

The first movement of a new quartet⁵⁵ of mine has been much praised by Mendelssohn.⁵⁶

And since Mendelssohn was the dedicatee of the Op.41 Quartet, he condescended to praise these as well:

...I have been most energetic in composing three quartets for violin etc. We played them several times at [Felicien] David's, and they appeared to please both players and listeners, particularly Mendelssohn.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Mendelssohn, Letters, p.279.

⁵⁵ The Piano Quartet was the one most recently completed.

⁵⁶ Letters, vol.1, p.303.

⁵⁷ Op.cit., p.229.

The connection between Mendelssohn and the Op.41 quartets continues in later years:

Through Mendelssohn's death [Nov.1847] my quartets... gained fresh significance for me. I still regard them as the finest work of my former days, and Mendelssohn often expressed himself to the same effect.⁵⁸

It is significant that Schumann can so distinguish his quartets from the rest of his early work. However, there are no references by Mendelssohn to any of Schumann's other chamber works, although we know that he played the Piano Quintet and the D minor Trio.⁵⁹

Another widely recognised influence upon Schumann was Schubert, for whose music in 1828

he developed a raving passion and got hold of everything of his that was to be had.⁶⁰

It is always strange to recall that until the year of Schubert's death the only published chamber works by him were the String Quartet op.29, in A minor, the Piano Trio in E flat, op.100, the "Rondeau brillant" in B minor, for violin and piano, op.70, and the C major Fantasy for Violin and Piano. However, by the end of the following year (1829) most of Schubert's remaining chamber works had been sold to Diabelli's by Schubert's brother Ferdinand, and these were undoubtedly acquired by Schumann as they came out. In fact he wrote an article on "Some later works by Schubert" published in the Neue Zeitschrift, and subsequently reprinted in On Music and Musicians.⁶¹ In this article he states:

⁵⁸ Op.cit., vol.2, p.248.

⁵⁹ See chapter on Instrumentation, pp.

⁶⁰ G. Abraham, Schumann: A Symposium, p.9.

⁶¹ pp.58-59.

Further affinities and parallels arise out of the fact that both Schubert and Schumann were composers of songs, and melodies from songs appear in both composers' chamber works. However, consideration of this very interesting feature must be left to the discussion of *Melody* (III), later in this study.

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Schumann's simplicity of style in later works has been ascribed to an increasing preoccupation with the music of Bach. At least in its terms, however, this suggestion is not entirely true, since Schumann had been a devotee of Bach throughout his life, from the early days of the 1829 revival of the St. Matthew Passion under Mendelssohn. We find, in 1831, Schumann noting in his diary:

Most of the time I constantly occupied myself with Bach, under whose influence there came into existence the Impromptus, Op.5.⁶⁶

and in 1832:

Let only Mozart and Bach be your models in form, treatment, motives and artistic poise.⁶⁷

During the 1840's Schumann studied much of Bach's keyboard works and many of his concertos -- as well as choral music -- which were regularly performed at Gewandhaus Concerts. One of the most popular keyboard concertos, the D minor, was performed there by Mendelssohn himself (on a piano, not a harpsichord) and Schumann, who had been in the audience, found it "one of the most admirable of all compositions."⁶⁸

⁶⁶Tr. G. Abraham, Schumann: A Symposium, pp.7-8.

⁶⁷Op.cit., p.8.

⁶⁸Letters, vol.1, p.117.

Schumann had known Bach's '48 at least since 1832, when he mentions it in a letter to one of his early piano teachers:

Sebastian Bach's 'Wohltemperirte Clavier' is my grammar, and is certainly the best. I have taken the fugues one by one, and dissected them down to their minutest parts. The advantage of this is great, and seems to have a strengthening moral effect upon one's whole system...⁶⁹

and Schumann's fugal studies are evident in his use of fugue in the chamber works.⁷⁰

By 1840, he identified himself and his German contemporaries so closely with Bach that he even declared him to be one of the founders of Romanticism:

...the thoughtful combinations, the poetry and humour of modern music, originates chiefly in Bach. Mendelssohn, Bennett, Chopin, Hiller -- in fact all the so-called romantic school (of course I am speaking of Germans) approach Bach far nearer in their music than Mozart ever did; indeed, all of them know Bach most thoroughly. I myself confess my sins daily to that mighty one, and endeavour to purify and strengthen myself through him.⁷¹

The uses of imitative, canonic or fugal devices, the reliance on seventh chords and pedal points, and the frequency of augmented or diminished seconds, fourths, fifths and sevenths are all elements derived from his close study of Bach.

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Classic and Romantic

This preliminary consideration of some of his primary influences, and of the importance of Bach in particular, unavoidably leads on to questions of classification with regard to Schumann's style. These

⁶⁹ Early Letters, p.179.

⁷⁰ See chapter on Counterpoint, pp. 338-370.

⁷¹ Letters, vol.1, p.238.

are questions which must be explained, if only to cast light on the way Schumann himself understood his art.

Since so many of Schumann's models were 'classicists' in the realm of chamber music, the question inevitably arises: how can the traditional, classical designs of many of these works be reconciled with Schumann's forward-looking, romantic temperament and style? This apparent contradiction is not to be explained simply by the fact that, among the different forms available to a composer, the medium of chamber music can often be the most conservative and tradition-bound; though the effect of tradition cannot be discounted entirely. Indeed, it must be said that no writer on Schumann has fully explained the supposed dichotomy between classical form and romantic style in the chamber music. A.E.F. Dickinson, for example, begins his article on Schumann's chamber music⁷² with the astonishing statement: "We may take it that the bulk, perhaps the entire content, of Schumann's chamber music was 'romantic' and 'unnecessary'."⁷³ This supposition conflicts strongly with an equally erroneous statement by Joan Chisell:

In his 'Spring' Symphony of the previous year [1841] he had managed to clip the wings of the solitary butterfly so that it flew well within the bounds of classical form. But in his quartets he eschews all kinds of 'programme' and concerns himself only with 'pure' music.⁷⁴

This contains more than a hint of the frequently reiterated belief that Schumann developed from youthful Romantic ('programme') music to a sober middle-aged Classical ('pure') style. And it is, moreover,

⁷²"The Chamber Music", G. Abraham, ed., Schumann: A Symposium, pp.138-175.

⁷³Op.cit., p.138.

⁷⁴J. Chisell, Schumann, p.166.

examples from the last thirteen chamber works which are usually quoted in support of the claim that his last years constituted a degeneration into pedantic neo-classicism. Take the following quotation, for example:

Within the Florestan-Eusebius-Raro union in Schumann's creative faculties, Raro achieved more and more the predominance -- so much that one must speak of a dissolution or disruption of this union. In no branch of Schumann's creative activity, except in his songs, does this dissolution admit of such exact observation as in that of his chamber music with piano. The transition from his youthfully free, "unclassical" piano music to these works is afforded by a trio entitled Phantasiestücke (Op.88)...Alongside this, Schumann set up a model of Classic-Romantic chamber music in his Piano Quintet, Op.44...At first slowly, then faster and faster, the descent ensues -- in a Quartet Op.47 (1842), in three Trios, Op.63 (1847), Op.80 (1847) and Op.110 (1851), in two Violin Sonatas Op.105 (1851) and 121 (1851) -- to repetitiousness, to mannerism.⁷⁵

The very fact that many of the late chamber works have ultra romantic titles such as Phantasiestücke, Märchenbilder, Romanzen and Märchenerzählungen seems to have escaped the author's notice.

But Einstein continues to connect what he sees as Schumann's decline into "mannerism" with his mental state in the 1850's, and final illness:

One may say that his real tragedy lay in the fact that he disintegrated in the attempt to do as the 'great ones' had done -- to become universal. The attacks of insanity are but an outward symbol of this tragedy, a typically Romantic fate. Schumann is a representative of eternal adolescence, of enthusiastic intimacy; the task of becoming a man, in the creative sense, weighed too heavily upon him... Schumann began as a champion of the future; in establishing a connection with the past he collapsed.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ A. Einstein, Music in the Romantic Era, pp.131-132.

⁷⁶ Op.cit., p.132.

We now know that Schumann's mental decline was not due to the strain of progressing from adolescent romanticism to mature classicism, but had an unenigmatic physical cause; and in fact Einstein's point of view contains a two-fold untruth. Firstly, Schumann's "connection with the past" dated back to his early discoveries of Bach, Haydn and Beethoven in the 1820's and '30's. Secondly, Einstein is making the basic mistake of believing that there is only one kind of romanticism, and not several different romanticisms, as is more generally accepted now by literary critics.⁷⁷ There are obvious "classical" elements in the style and form of all Schumann's chamber works, but the first attempts of 1842 have particularly close links, structurally speaking, with eighteenth-century formal designs, which some of the later chamber works do not have. The whole conception that Schumann's attempt to recreate eighteenth-century forms was disastrous for his musical career is highly suspect, in view of the success of his four symphonies, piano concerto and piano sonatas, to name but a few works in "classical" form. And in many of the late chamber works, on the other hand, the combinations of instrumentation, form, phrase-structure, melodic line and harmonic detail become increasingly free from the classical tradition, and therefore, one might say, more 'romantic'. During these works Schumann is obviously not still struggling to make a "connection with the past", but is writing wholly in the present. What path he might have continued to follow in the 1850's and '60's had he not died at the early age of 46, remains, unfortunately, conjectural.

⁷⁷ Cf. A.O. Lovejoy, "On the Discrimination of Romanticisms", A.K. Thorlby, ed., The Romantic Movement, pp.14-19.

Gerald Abraham seems to regard even the Schumann of the 1840's, however, as a comparatively "old" man: "no longer quite the same man as the composer of the host of romantic piano pieces and the majority of the songs".⁷⁸ He feels that Schumann's later music was concerned more with purely musical and less literary considerations:

Instead of Hoffmann and Jean Paul and Heine, his inspiration was now Mendelssohn...and Bach... Mendelssohn himself had been a much earlier renegade from pure romanticism. Now Schumann followed in his wake and the remainder of his output belongs to what we may call the neo-classical reaction against romanticism.⁷⁹

It is altogether too much of an over-simplification to say that Schumann progressed from romanticism to (neo-) classicism, particularly in the chamber music. These two opposing terms do not adequately explain the changes and developments in Schumann's style in his later music. Schumann cannot really be described a "neo-classicist" after 1840 any more than he could before that date, when he was first coming into direct contact with "classical" music.

During the years 1842-1853 Schumann proved that there was still much to be achieved within the traditional forms of the quartet, violin sonata and piano trio; and furthermore disseminated his ideas to Brahms and other later Romantics. As regards the variety of forms he chose, each was selected on the grounds that it most closely fitted the ideas he wanted to express: thus the Piano Quintet and the D minor Trio are the two "biggest" works, in which complex ideas are developed within an expansive sonata framework; and on the other hand the Oboe Romanzen and Viola Märchenbilder express their thoughts

⁷⁸G. Abraham, A Hundred Years of Music, rev. paperback edition, p.58.

⁷⁹Ibid.

in quietly lyrical solo melodies presented respectively in three or four short, simple movements.

The five works of 1842, although fairly well-known, have hardly become standard works of the present-day repertoire, with the exception of the Piano Quintet. Nor do they contain the best examples of his harmonic, melodic, structural and rhythmic originality, as can be seen from a study of these elements in the rest of his chamber works. These other fourteen works, of which no less than thirteen appeared in the last four years of his creative life, contain many examples of well-constructed forms, original harmonies, unconventional rhythms, and unusual instrumentation, thus refuting the oft-repeated idea that nothing good emerged from the years preceding his final two years' confinement in a lunatic asylum.

In the event, "classic" and "romantic" stand side by side, interpenetrating and regenerating each other, in the successful chamber works.

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Apart from critical analyses of the stylistic elements of rhythm, tonality (and tonal structure), harmony, melody, phrase-structure and instrumentation, I also hope to explain the function played by the chamber works in Schumann's development as a romantic composer.

The medium of chamber music, together with the "lied" and piano solo, was in many ways an ideal one for the particular combination of intimate emotion and intellectualism which characterizes Schumann. The scale is small, the instrumental style is highly intimate, and the means of formal structure did not require those

long, dramatic orchestral developments which are perhaps shortcomings of Schumann's symphonic music. "Development sections" in the chamber works are often misnamed as such, since they often rely on sequential repetition, on harmonic variety and also on contrapuntal ingenuity, rather than on motivic development. Nor are these kinds of development sections unsatisfactory or inappropriate, in terms of Schumann's whole approach to the medium, but in fact reflect accurately the introversion both of his personality and of his musical style.

His chamber works in fact provided a necessary balance between his more intimate compositions (the lieder and piano pieces) and his large-scale 'public' works such as the opera Genoveva, the oratorio Paradise and the Peri and the four Symphonies.

For all these reasons, I feel that Schumann's chamber works constitute an important body of work in their own right, and that they provided him with a vital outlet for many of his ideas on rhythm, tonality, harmony and melody, on a more controllable and more wieldy scale than his symphonies.

[T]he intimacy of the medium made it ideal for a composer like Schumann who was not intended by nature to be a public speaker yet who had tired of the solo piano and was ambitious enough to do more than go on coining whimsical or poetic aphorisms. Accordingly, not only Mendelssohn and Schumann but their numerous imitators composed chamber music prolifically.⁸⁰

The chamber works are thus essential to any full understanding of the way Schumann went about the business of composing, since they reveal so much in so concrete a way about his creative processes. But there is another estimate of them possible: one for which I hope the results of this study will provide broad evidence. This estimate

⁸⁰G. Abraham, A Hundred Years of Music, p.66.

suggests that a great many factors, both public and private, combined to render these small-scale works uniquely significant in Schumann's oeuvre. Partly because in them culminated Schumann's awareness of the growing rift between truly cultured and merely polite popular taste; partly because of his realisation that they were, to an extent, a "lost cause" as an aid towards establishing his vision of himself as a respected popular composer; partly for these and other reasons closely related to the nature of Schumann's own temperament and genius, the chamber pieces occupy a special place among his works: here the influence of past composers resulted not in a limiting attempt to emulate the stature of such revered figures, but stimulated him to genuinely original and entirely personal expression of a kind found perhaps in its purest form in this medium alone. The pity is that Schumann, beguiled by the idea of popular acclaim, was himself only partly conscious of their importance in this regard. But to the extent that they became almost his artistic "notebooks" as time went on, as a medium in which he was most free carefully to give shape to a private and innovative musical vision, these chamber pieces as a body can seem with familiarity to be among the most distinctive, individual, and instantly recognisable expressions of Schumann's art and genius.

I

TONAL STRUCTURE

The early nineteenth-century conflict between traditional and progressive styles in music was nowhere more apparent than in the inward struggle of many composers to come to terms with the problem of 'up-dating' sonata form. No other single, inherited, formal device had ever caused such debate, argument, conflict and despair amongst a new generation of composers. There were little or no problems with forms such as rondo, ternary, fugue, passacaglia, theme and variations and scherzo and trio. These were absorbed into the romantic stream of consciousness with barely a struggle or a murmur, and adapted without too much difficulty to their new surroundings.

Perhaps the main reason for the problem posed by sonata form to composers of the 1840's and '50's lay in the fact that it was traditionally not an architectural structure but a tonal device. One of the great strengths of sonata form in the eighteenth century lay in the fact that it had been essentially a stamping-ground for tonal tensions, and more particularly, for tensions between the irreconcilable key-centres of tonic and dominant (or tonic and relative major). By the 1840's this tonal conflict had become almost irrelevant, and so realizing this dilemma -- but to a certain extent evading it -- composers turned increasingly towards experimentation with the external, superficial framework of sonata form, and with details of harmony, melody and tone-colour engendered by the compulsion to write within this framework; however, the traditional I-V problem remained, like an ancient ghost that could not be laid. Thus with many of

Schumann's chamber works we find an apparent conflict between traditional and original form, and between traditional and original tonal tensions; and it is through these works that we can study Schumann's attempts to reconcile his attitude to form with his position in the vanguard of the Romantic movement.

Traditional and Original Form

In the field of the string quartet Schumann met the problem of tradition and originality in form head-on. He once described himself as "a German and therefore wedded to tradition",¹ and it is well-known that he made a close study of the classical quartet tradition immediately before writing his Op.41 quartets. From his studies of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven he assimilated the ideas of linear independence² and clarity of form, although he shunned the more radical innovations of the later Beethoven quartets. The four-movement plan (fast - slow scherzo - fast) and the simple, classical sonata principle employed in all three of the first movements link Schumann's quartets firmly to the quartets of the 1780's and '90's, and all this despite Schumann's own claim that "the sonata style of 1790 is not that of 1840,...the demands in respect to form and content are in every way much higher now."³ There is an apparent disparity between this statement of Schumann's and the earlier one about being "wedded to tradition", a disparity sharpened by his further comment that "we cannot repeat the same forms for centuries, and ought rather to think about creating something new."⁴

¹On Music and Musicians, p.51.

²Discussed in the chapter on Counterpoint.

³Trans. by Leon B. Plantinga in Schumann as Critic, p.100.

⁴On Music and Musicians, p.65.

But the following statement is more enlightening, and explains the relevance to Schumann of his study of traditional quartets:

Talents of the second order satisfy us when they master the traditional form; we approve of those of the first order when they enlarge it. Genius alone may act in freedom.⁵

In other words, traditional forms must be mastered and understood first, before original innovations can evolve. Schumann believed that there was

no basic contradiction between dependence upon models and artistic freedom. But never are historic models to be imitated literally; they served instead as a fund of ideas and techniques usable for the enrichment of contemporary style -- but it must always remain contemporary style.⁶

The conflict between tradition and originality seems, then, to have been resolved by using both traditional and original elements side by side.

Form and Content

The question of how Schumann reconciled traditional form with original expression leads inevitably to a discussion of the important problem faced by the early Romantics: that of reconciling form and content. For Schumann, in his chamber music, the problem was that of relating classical, traditional form with romantic, original content. In many of his pre-1842 piano pieces Schumann had evolved original forms to match the originality of his melodic and harmonic style (for example, in the Fantasia, op.17, the Novelletten, and the Kreisleriana) giving considerable truth to the statement that

Schumann is not governed by the more classic principle of form, but rather shapes the form

⁵Op.cit., pp.164-165.

⁶Plantinga, Schumann as Critic, p.100.

to fit his ideas.... The Novelletten...are held together by an emotional framework and a series of changing tonalities.⁷

The form of such works is conceived more or less unconsciously, and is in any case governed by poetical ideas. "I do not think about form any more while composing; I just do it", wrote Schumann in 1839.⁸ This attitude was originally given verbal expression by A.W. Schlegel, whose views on artistic form became virtually a creed for the Romantic movement:

Form is mechanical if it is imposed from without as a fortuitous addition unrelated to the object's essence; as a soft mass, for instance, is pressed into some shape which it retains on hardening. Organic form, on the other hand, is innate; it evolves from the inner being and attains its final pre-destined shape with the seed's maturity. Such forms may be seen throughout Nature, wherever living forces are active,.... In the fine arts too, as in nature, the greatest of artists, every genuine form is organic i.e. determined by the work's content.⁹

This description of "organic form" fits many of Schumann's smaller works: the form of each of the Cello Folk-pieces, for example, is certainly "determined by the work's content". And this attitude towards form and content explains to a large extent the enormous variety of forms found within the chamber works. Variety of form was, to Schumann, a necessary adjunct to variety of musical ideas:

As if there were only one or two forms into which all intellectual creations must mould themselves! And as if each thought did not come into existence clothed in a form of its own! As if every work of art must not have a different import, and a different aspect as well.¹⁰

⁷ T.A. Brown, The Aesthetics of Robert Schumann, pp.38-42.

⁸ Quoted by T.A. Brown in The Aesthetics of Robert Schumann, p.153.

⁹ Trans. by Lilian Fuchs in Romanticism in Perspective, p.334.

¹⁰ Life in Letters, vol.2, p.147.

Reconciliation between traditional and original form

Schumann's earliest compositions (before 1830) were 'classical' works -- a Symphony in G minor and a Piano Quartet in C minor -- but they were composed at the same time as a number of free piano improvisations. For the rest of his life these two kinds of work, the traditional and the original, existed side by side. One of Schumann's greatest contributions to the development of form in the nineteenth century was this very ability to switch rapidly from traditional to original form, and to blend the two together.

It is by no means enough to assume that because Schumann's last compositions were sonata works (the three Violin Sonatas of 1851-3) the end of his career represented a wholehearted 'return to classicism'. What these works in fact represent is a renewal of interest in the violin as a solo instrument, inspired both by Schumann's discovery of the Bach unaccompanied Violin Sonatas, and by his growing friendship with Joachim.

These works are also the culmination of a life-time preoccupation with chamber music, in which tradition and originality of form had always co-existed. There are both traditional and original elements in the Violin Sonatas: the traditional elements being the chaconne style of the opening of the D minor and the regular sonata form of the fourth movement of the same work, as well as the first and third movements of the A minor. Original elements can be seen in the literary unification of the Third Sonata by the F.A.E. motif, the substitution of a fugue for a development section in the fourth movement of the same sonata, the dramatic intrusion of the scherzo theme into the middle of the slow movement of the D minor, and the free romantic interpretation of rondo form found in the slow movement of the First Sonata. One can therefore no longer support the argument

that

the late sonatas sprang forth quickly because by then he had largely resolved or given up his attempts to fuse the literary and the musical. He was now more of a pure musician, concerned primarily with refinements of structure and texture.¹¹

This kind of argument usually follows naturally upon the supposition that the forms within the earlier Piano Quintet represent the perfect balance between classicism and romanticism, or between tradition and originality.

Schumann set up a model of Classic-Romantic chamber music in his Piano Quintet Op.44.... At first slowly, then faster and faster, the descent ensues.... Schumann began as a champion of the future; in establishing a connection with the past he collapsed.¹²

On the contrary, Schumann's strongest connection with the past is in the three earliest chamber works : the String Quartets. In works like the Piano Quintet, Piano Quartet and D minor Trio the connection with the classical tradition becomes less invulnerable, and several movements in these works are in highly original episodic forms (such as the slow movement and finale of the Quintet and finale of the D minor Trio). At no time in his life did Schumann sever all connections with classical formal tradition, but within the framework of classical form he introduced some most interesting and complex innovations. The most unusual and original forms are nearly always to be found in the more classical type of chamber work, such as the piano trio, quartet, quintet and violin sonata.

It is significant that in his famous review of Berlioz's Symphonie Fantastique Schumann recognized behind the bizarre romantic

¹¹W.S. Newman, The Sonata since Beethoven, pp.264-265.

¹²A. Einstein, Music in the Romantic Era, pp.131-132.

scheme of the symphony, a basic adherence to traditional, classical principles of form.

If we look at the five movements in their relation to each other, we shall find the old order of succession present up to the last.... The first movement begins with an adagio, followed by an allegro; the second takes the place of the scherzo; the third that of the middle adagio; the last two provide the allegro finale movement.¹³

Schumann clearly admired the way in which Berlioz achieved great originality of both form and content while at the same time founding such originality in principles of balance and proportion which were fundamentally classical:

[I]n spite of an apparent formlessness, there is an inherent correct symmetrical order corresponding to the great dimension of the work -- and this besides the inner connection of thought.¹⁴

It was the concept of classical proportion and balance that was crucial to Schumann's view of form; and it was this that provided a framework for originality. This idea even extended to tonal coherence within a work, which, while it may not necessarily adhere to the classical scheme of tonality, may yet be logical and proportioned. As Schumann said of the five movements of the Symphonie Fantastique:

All of them also cohere in point of tonality, the introductory largo being in C minor, the allegro in C major, the scherzo in A major, the adagio in F major, the last movements in G minor and C major.¹⁵

The tonal relationships of C - A - F - g - C were perfectly logical and acceptable to Schumann, and make for interesting comparisons with the tonal relationships found in his chamber works.¹⁶

¹³On Music and Musicians, p.166.

¹⁴Op.cit., p.168. By "inner connection of thought" Schumann presumably means the programme.

¹⁵Op.cit., p.166.

¹⁶See chapter on Harmonic Language, p.79.

During the process of development and enrichment of traditional form Schumann evolved a number of highly original and distinctive structures which bear witness to the fertility of his musical imagination and which have prompted a bewildering disparity of critical opinion and viewpoint. Even Schumann's own comments on the problems of form, as we have seen, are sometimes not exempt from this confusion. Once we turn to the chamber works themselves and witness the astounding variety of forms and tonal designs employed, the origin of this diversity of view becomes more readily apparent. It would seem appropriate, therefore, to accede to the advice of a famous literary critic:

Never trust the artist. Trust the tale.¹⁷

- - - - -

For Schumann there was no simple and obvious answer to the question of whether or not a movement should be in sonata form, or scherzo and trio form, or ternary form. The nearest he came to a certain level of consistency throughout his works was in the number and arrangement of movements within a whole work, and in the form of the first movements and scherzos of the sonata works. In all other respects it is impossible to generalize about Schumann's use of various formal devices. It appears superficially that many of his chamber works conform to an expected pattern of classical, traditional forms within the different movements, but closer examination reveals a wealth of imaginative deviation from classical "formulae", and a number of highly original and complicated new forms arise to take their place.

¹⁷D.H. Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature, 1923 .

Broadly speaking, there are four main categories under which these multiplicity of forms can be studied. The first I have called the sonata principle (in which the basic principles of sonata form are adhered to, sometimes with striking modifications). The second is the ternary principle (including simple A B A form, and the scherzo and trio form). The third is the rondo principle (including the basic A B A C A form as well as a number of deviants); and the fourth comprises the forms which do not fit into any of the three main previous types, namely, theme and variation form, arch-form,¹⁸ binary, and canonic form.

1(A) REGULAR SONATA PRINCIPLE

It is somewhat surprising to find that out of the total number of movements or pieces in the nineteen chamber works, only twelve adhere to the regular sonata principle, containing an exposition, development and recapitulation, with two principal subject-groups. As can be seen from the following list, one third of these movements are finales:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| i) Op.41/1/i | vii) Violin Sonata/1/i |
| ii) Op.41/2/i | viii) Violin Sonata/3/i |
| iii) Op.41/3/i | ix) Op.41/2/iv |
| iv) Piano Quintet, i | x) F major Trio, iv |
| v) Piano Quartet, i | xi) Violin Sonata/1/iii |
| vi) F major Trio, i | xii) Violin Sonata/2/iv |

Significantly, the most "classic" examples of sonata form occur in the five 1842 works, works by the very nature of which Schumann sought to attach himself firmly to a classical tradition.¹⁹ It is in

¹⁸A translation of the German "bogenform".

¹⁹Indeed, they are more "orthodox" than many of Haydn's or Beethoven's later sonata movements.

the later works -- the F major Trio and Violin Sonatas all date from 1849 onwards -- that slight modifications to the regular sonata principle occur. The F major Trio, i, for example, has a third subject in the exposition which reappears in a fragmented form in the recapitulation, and the finale has a modified recapitulation which excludes the first three phrases of the first subject (Ia, Ib and Ic) and begins only with Id. Furthermore, the finale of the First Violin Sonata has a modified development section, which consists mainly of development of a new theme rather than of the first and second subjects. The resulting structure

Exposition		"Development"	Recapitulation	
A	B	C	A	B
I	<u>V</u>		I	I

is unusual to Schumann's chamber works, although it was not unknown in the classical period.²⁰

It is significant that Schumann's other, more radical modifications of the regular sonata principle are also found in the development sections (of his later works) traditionally the most argumentative, challenging section of a sonata movement: an area where a composer's ingenuity and originality could find greatest scope. In this area no single work before Schumann's time was more influential than the first movement of Beethoven's "Eroica" symphony, with its new theme in the development.²¹

²⁰Cf. Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op.14, 1, i, for example.

²¹It is probable that Beethoven, who is always credited with the originality of this idea, modelled his development on that of Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony, i, which is structured: A - Development - B - Development - A.

1(B) SONATA PRINCIPLE WITH DIVIDED DEVELOPMENT

The influence of the "Eroica" development gave rise to four movements in Schumann's chamber works in which the development section is divided into two halves by the appearance of a new theme in the middle:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| i) D minor Trio, i | iii) G minor Trio, i |
| ii) D minor Trio, iv | iv) Violin Sonata/2/i |

In the first three works the development continues after the new theme, resulting in the structure

Exposition		Development	Development	Recapitulation	
A	B		C	A	B
I (i)	V (III)			I (i)	I

In the Second Violin Sonata the new theme takes up the whole of the second half of the development, and continues the intensely fugal style of the first half. In addition, this movement (which has a normal exposition and recapitulation) ends with a fairly long coda devoted almost entirely to yet another new theme. The resulting structure,

Exposition		Development	Development	Recapitulation		Coda
A	B	fugal development	fugue based on C	A	B	D
i	III			i	I	i

with its indebtedness to fugal devices in the development, led Schumann towards the inevitable step of substituting a fugue for the development section.

1(C) SONATA PRINCIPLE INCORPORATING A FUGUE

This novel and original deviation from sonata form appears only once, in the fourth movement of the "F.A.E." Violin Sonata,

significantly, perhaps, the last of Schumann's chamber works. The short development section of this work (only 22 bars long) consists of a fugal exposition on a subject derived from the inversion of theme Ia, followed by several modulatory middle entries, and one final entry in the tonic key, before a rapid dove-tailing into the recapitulation. In an obvious sense the technical innovation of this fugue-development is a logical outcome of a tendency, which runs throughout the development sections of classical sonata form, to rely heavily on contrapuntal techniques.²² In Schumann's case the fugue-development is a culmination of an increasing concern for counterpoint which characterizes his later chamber works.

1(D) MODIFIED SONATA PRINCIPLE

In Op.41/1/iv some of the basic principles of sonata form are modified, to a far greater extent than any of the slight modifications mentioned under section I(A) of this chapter. The recapitulation is considerably shortened, by almost half of the length of the original exposition, owing to the non-appearance of the second subject. The reason for this may be attributable to the very long development (nearly twice the length of the exposition), but as a result, the recapitulation does not provide sufficient weight to balance the two previous sections. This balance is provided by the coda, which is nearly as long as the exposition (67 bars) and falls into three parts: the first consists of a new theme in the tonic major key; the second, of a cryptic passage in semibreves, possibly derived from the rising fifth of the first subject; and the third part is a rapid closing section also based on the first subject. The whole structure can be

²² Schumann may possibly have modelled this idea on the fugal development on Beethoven's "Hammerclavier" Sonata, i.

summarized thus:

Exposition		Development	Recap.	Coda		
A	B		A	C		
i	III		i	I	I	I
76 bars		137 bars	40 bars	67 bars		

One significant area where Schumann made no attempt to modify traditional principles was that of key-centres for the first and second subject-groups, which in all the above works adhere to the traditional scheme of I-V or i-III. It was outside this inviolable area of sonata form that Schumann felt his search for originality lay, and this may have stimulated a desire to experiment with tonal relationships in forms other than the sonata: more especially, rondo and ternary form.

2(A) SIMPLE TERNARY PRINCIPLE (A B A FORM)

This formal principle (found in 16 movements) is one of the most widespread in the chamber works, and its fundamentally non-dialectic nature suited Schumann's romantic chamber style very well. Eschewing the need for conflict between first and second subject, for dramatic development of themes and for contention between antagonistic tonalities, the simple ternary principle provided Schumann with a balanced, proportioned form in which the main interest lay in thematic and tonal contiguity and in variety of texture, instrumentation, rhythm and metre, between the two main themes of the A and B sections.

The majority of movements in ternary form are fairly short, and their appearance in sonata works are confined to the slow movements:

- i) Piano Quartet, iii iii) G minor Trio, ii
 ii) F major Trio, iii iv) Violin Sonata/3/iii.

Schumann's method of enlarging the simple three-part form by expanding each section is clearly demonstrated in three of these movements, nos. i), iii) and iv). The following diagrammatic structural analysis reveals the symmetry of the underlying ternary principle found in the Piano Quartet, iii, and also demonstrates the extent to which Schumann veils the symmetry by using variation techniques within the A sections -- ostensibly to exploit different instrumental sonorities. To further complicate matters, the apparent simplicity of the overall form is heightened by the dramatic, abrupt changes of tonality and metre at section B.

	A			B			
Theme	A	A'	A''	Bi	Bi	Bii	
Instrumentation	Cello	Violin (+ Cello countertheme)	Piano (+ Viola countertheme)	Violin	Piano	Violin	(2-bar Transition to A)
No. of Bars	16	16	16	8	8	7	
Key	B \flat			G \flat			
Time-signature	$\frac{3}{4}$			$\frac{4}{4}$			

	A			Coda
Theme	A'''	A''''	A	
Instrumentation	Viola (+ Violin countertheme)	Violin (+ Piano & counterthemes)	Cello (over I Pedal)	(New material, anticipating next movement)
No. of Bars	16	16	16	14
Key	B \flat			
Time-signature	$\frac{3}{4}$			

The three-part structure of the A section reappears in the Third Violin Sonata, iii, the overall structure of which is A A' A B A. The brevity of the B theme, and the predominance of F major tonality throughout render the movement virtually monothematic, and certainly monotonal.

By contrast, the ternary principle found in the slow movement of the G minor Trio is complicated by thematic contrast and development within each of the three main sections, by a continuous restlessness of key (E^b , B^b , f , C , B^b , E^b) and by tempo changes which get progressively faster until the final return of theme A.

The non-sonata works generally employ a far less complicated ternary principle, which sometimes occurs in every movement, regardless of the tempo:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| i) <u>Phantasiestücke</u> Trio, i | vii) Oboe <u>Romances</u> , iii |
| ii) Clarinet <u>Fantasy-pieces</u> , i | viii) <u>Fairy-tales</u> , ii |
| iii) Clarinet <u>Fantasy-pieces</u> , ii | ix) <u>Fairy-tales</u> , iv |
| iv) Clarinet <u>Fantasy-pieces</u> , iii | x) <u>Fairy-pictures</u> , iv |
| v) Oboe <u>Romances</u> , i | xi) Cello <u>Folk-pieces</u> , iv |
| vi) Oboe <u>Romances</u> , ii | xii) Cello <u>Folk-pieces</u> , v |

However, in many of these pieces, the simplicity of thematic structure is offset by the interesting tonal juxtapositions, which rely heavily on key-relationships a third apart.

Similar tertiary key-relationships abound in many development sections of the sonata works and also in rondo movements, but in the framework of the simple ternary principle Schumann was able to indulge this penchant with more striking effect. The major-third juxtaposition of $B^b / G^b / B^b$ (which had already occurred in the slow movement of the Piano Quartet) is used in the Fourth Fairy-tale, while the Second Fairy-tale is based on the keys of $g / E^b / g$. A favourite key relationship of Schumann's was a or A / F which occurs in the Second Clarinet Fantasy-piece, the Fifth Cello Folk-piece, and the Third Oboe Romance. In nearly all these pieces it is the rule

to move downwards towards a key on the submediant side²³ (except in the case of the D / F / D key changes in the Fourth Fairy-picture).

In the Second Oboe Romance there are several tertiary key-changes within the A section, the keys moving downwards through a series of thirds -- b/G/e/C/A -- during the short space of eight bars. The freedom and simplicity of these rapid key-changes reflect perfectly the simple, wayward mood of the piece, and are re-echoed in the coda by means of a sudden descent from f[#] to F just before the final cadence.

2(B) TERNARY WITH DEVELOPMENT

In three works Schumann extended the simple ternary principle beyond the use of the variation techniques which were found previously, by introducing the idea of development into the middle section, either combined with a new theme or in place of it. The three works are:

- i) Op.41/1/iii
- ii) D minor Trio, iii
- iii) Fairy-pictures, i

In the first Fairy-picture and Op.41/1/iii, for example, the middle section is concerned mainly with development of the A theme. In the Fairy-picture the central development is disproportionately long, 49 bars, as opposed to the eight-bar length of the opening and closing A themes. This development takes the form of a dialogue between the two instruments, in which the tiny B motif is passed backwards and forwards with occasional contributions from fragments of the A theme. When the A theme finally returns it is accompanied by the B theme, so

²³The "sinking" effect of such a downward movement is vividly dramatised by the 1840 song Waldesgespräch (Op.39, iii) where the change of key from E to C symbolizes the poet's submersion in a world of mystery and enchantment.

that the feeling of dialogue continues to the very end of the movement.

In the D minor Trio, iii, the development section is added after theme B and is simply an extension of the B theme in a livelier tempo. Op.41/1/iii, on the other hand, pursues the form A - Development - A, and the first (A) section resembles the slow movement of the Piano Quartet:

	A			Development	A		
Theme	Introduction	Ai	Aii	Ai'	Fragmentary treatment of A	Ai & Aii	Coda
Instrumentation		Violin I	Violin I	Cello		Violins I and II	
No. of bars	3	8	8	8	16	16	8
Keys	B ^b d ^b F	F/C	F	F/C	A ^b f b ^b e ^b a ^b A	F	

The sudden appearance of the development section -- which interrupts the varied repeat of theme A -- is underlined by the remoteness and abruptness of its modulations which are framed by the mediant 'plunges': the first from C to A^b and the second from A back to the tonic F. This particular digression from the basic ternary principle was never explored further by Schumann -- regrettably, since it so efficaciously combines a classical sense of symmetry with internal originality of structure and key-relationships.

2(C) SCHERZO AND TRIO PRINCIPLE

This structural principle is of course related to the basic ternary principle, with a greater extension of the individual A and B sections, each of which normally contains two or three parts. Scherzo and Trio movements occur in most of the sonata works, and also in the Fairy-pictures. Schumann contributed towards the further development of this form by increasing the number of Trios from one to two,²⁴ and

²⁴ Schumann pursued the same line of development in the Scherzo movements of his Symphonies: nos. 1 and 2 have two contrasting Trios, and no.4 has the same Trio played twice.

by closely interrelating the scherzo and trio sections, making highly integrated structures. His nine Scherzos are listed here with their various structural idiosyncracies mentioned in brackets.

- i) Op.41/1/ii (Scherzo and 'Intermezzo')
- ii) Op.41/2/iii (Two interrelated Trios)
- iii) Piano Quintet, iii (Two interrelated Trios)
- iv) Piano Quartet, ii (Two contrasting Trios)
- v) D minor Trio, ii (Same Trio played twice)
- vi) G minor Trio, iii (Two contrasting Trios)
- vii) Violin Sonata/2/ii (Two contrasting Trios)
- viii) Violin Sonata/3/ii (One Trio)
- ix) Fairy-pictures, iii (One Trio)

The scherzo movements in Op.41/1 and 2 afford very good examples of Schumann's originality in enlarging the traditional scherzo and trio form, while at the same time remaining faithful to its outlines. The structures of the Scherzo from the First Quartet is as follows:

	SCHERZO					INTERMEZZO		SCHERZO						
Themes	Introd.	Scherzo I		Scherzo II		Introd.	Scherzo I		Intermezzo	Whole Scherzo				
		A	A'	A	B	B'	B		A	A'	A	C	C'	repeated exactly,
No. of bars	2	8	8	8	8	8	9	2	8	8	8	16	16	with five extra
Keys	a	E a		C c c		a	a E a		C	G C	bars as coda			
Time-sig.	$\frac{6}{8}$									$\frac{6}{8}$				

The Scherzo section itself corresponds to a complete scherzo and trio, in the sense that it falls into three balanced sections, the second of which is devoted to a new theme in the relative major key; furthermore, the ternary principle is employed in each section of the scherzo. But the real "trio" (here called an "Intermezzo") forms a greater contrast with the scherzo by virtue of its complete change of metre, structure (binary), texture and harmony. The resulting

structure of the whole movement follows very simple classical principles of key-relationships (relative major and dominant) but has a complex thematic structure based on a pyramid of ternary and binary sections, resulting in a highly original episodic form which can be summarized as follows:



The Scherzo of Op.41/2 has a similar substructure, but is even more original as to the structure of the Scherzo section, and more interesting in its key-relationships:

	SCHERZO										TRIO	
Themes	A	A'	B	A''	A	A'	B	A''	A	C	C'	
No. of Bars	8+8	8	8	8	16	8	8	8	8	18	16	
Keys	c/E ^b	B ^b A ^b E ^b	B/E ^b	E ^b /c	c/E ^b	B ^b A ^b E ^b	B/E ^b	E ^b /c	c	C	e/C	
Time-signatures	$\frac{6}{8}$									$\frac{2}{4}$		

SCHERZO					CODA
A	A'	B	A''	A	C combined with fragments of A
8+8	8	8	8	8	25 bars
c/E ^b	B ^b A ^b E ^b	B/E ^b	E ^b /c	c	c/C
$\frac{6}{8}$					

The shortened form of the return of the Scherzo section is balanced by the fairly long coda, which, moreover recalls the key, time-signature and theme of the Trio. The principle underlying the Scherzo inclines to extended (rather than simple) ternary (A B A B A) with quite free treatment of the original A theme (A' and A''). The B

theme is heralded by a dramatic tertiary key change, from E^b to B, and, moreover, this theme foreshadows the outline of the ensuing Trio theme (C):

In the scherzos with two trios the expansion of form implicit in the inclusion of the second trio necessitates a shorter and less complicated scherzo section. But here Schumann does not adhere to only one structural theme: that of a scherzo with two contrasting trios which are related to each other or to the scherzo. This principle occurs only once, in the G minor Trio, in which each trio is thematically quite distinct; the form is quite clearly

	Scherzo	Trio 1	Scherzo	Trio 2	Scherzo	Coda
Themes	(A)	(B)	(A)	(C)	(A)	(A)
Keys	c	C	c	A^b	c	c
No. of Bars	50	61	50	60	50	6

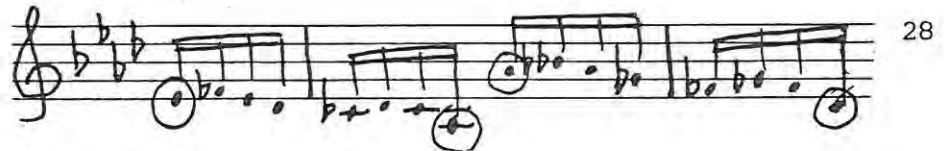
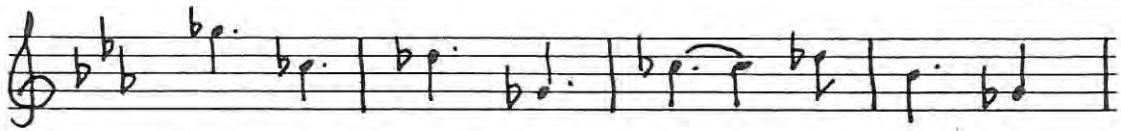
which is virtually synonymous to simple rondo.

In the scherzo of the Piano Quintet, however, there is a connection between the two trios, brought about by a simple thematic relationship: both are based on patterns of falling fifths:

²⁵Op.41, 2, iii, 25-28, violin I.

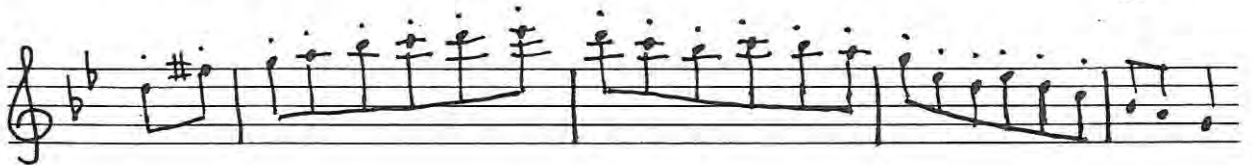
²⁶Op.cit., 89-92, cello.

27



In the scherzo of the Piano Quartet (rather uncharacteristically in $3/4$ time) the Scherzo theme interpenetrates both Trios by means of a cadential phrase:

29



This phrase reappears in the middle and end of Trio I (as well as giving rise to the contours of the Trio I theme itself) is also used as the basis of the second half of Trio II, and finally appears in the Coda, followed by a brief reference to the Trio I theme, with which the movement ends. By this means Schumann achieved a highly effective integration of the Scherzo and Trio sections, making a far more unified and homogenous movement than, for example, the episodic Scherzo of the G minor Trio.

In the Second Violin Sonata the Scherzo is not only integrated into both Trios, but also into the ensuing slow movement. This particular Scherzo movement was to have a most important influence on

²⁷ Piano Quintet, iii, 45-48, violin I.

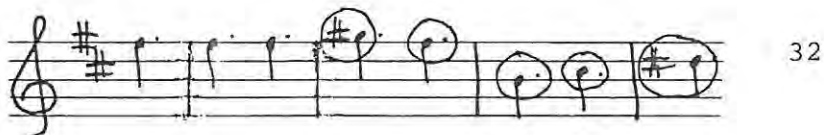
²⁸ Op.cit., 122-125, violin I.

²⁹ Piano Quartet, ii, 33-36, piano.

the scherzo style and form of Brahms, whose Scherzo movement for the original F.A.E. Violin Sonata³⁰ (of two years later) is obviously modelled on the Schumann scherzo. The plan of the movement is as follows:

	Scherzo		Trio I		Scherzo		Trio II		Scherzo		Coda
Themes	(A)		(B)		(A)		(C)		(A)		(A')
Bars	8	37	16	16	44		16	16		51	22
Keys	b		f#		b		B		b		B
Time-signatures	$\frac{6}{8}$		$\frac{2}{4}/\frac{6}{8}$		$\frac{6}{8}$		$\frac{2}{4}/\frac{6}{8}$		$\frac{6}{8}$		→

Trios I and II are not thematically related to the Scherzo, but are related to it by rhythmic implication in the piano accompaniment, which persists in the scherzo's driving $\frac{6}{8}$ piano octaves while the violin theme has a $\frac{2}{4}$ melody simultaneously. Consequently, the spirit of the scherzo continues throughout, despite contrasts of key and melody in the Trios. In addition, the coda is not simply an insignificant 'tail-piece', but introduces a new motif possibly derived from the original Scherzo theme:



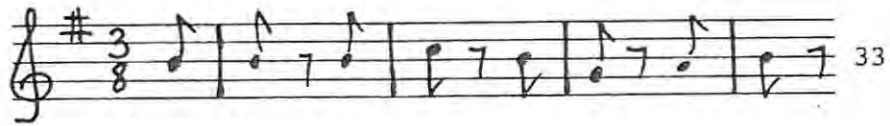
30

Sonatensatz in C minor.

31 Violin Sonata no.2, ii, 2-6, violin.

32 Op.cit., 204-208, violin.

This, in turn, forms a link with the next movement, whose main theme is a transformation of the coda theme:



Further integration of the two movements is achieved by the reappearance of the Scherzo theme in the middle of the slow movement.

3(A) SIMPLE RONDO PRINCIPLE

Schumann only uses this simple prototype three times:

- i) Fairy-pictures, ii iii) Violin Sonata/1/ii
- ii) Cello Folk-pieces, i

His other nine rondo-types (five of them finales) are all individual expressions of his genius for inventing forms which suit exactly the exuberant, wayward, romantic spirit of his music: more than any other forms in the chamber works they seem to justify Schumann's assertion

I do not think about form.... I just do it.³⁴

Spontaneity is the essential feature of these various rondo forms, which seem to evolve organically and are not bound by the limitations of imposed structures. Nevertheless, the resulting forms are not chaotic and aimless, but are on the contrary highly organized, if complicated, and have an inner logic of their own, a logic usually determined by an underlying sense of progressive (rather than conflicting) tonalities³⁵ and themes.

³³Violin Sonata no.2, iii, 1-4, violin.

³⁴See p. 37.

³⁵Cf. John Gardner, "The Chamber Music", in Alan Walker, Robert Schumann, pp.200-240, pp.202, 209 and 233.

3(B) MODIFIED RÓNDO PRINCIPLE

Three of the movements are in a rondo form that is only a slight variation on the pattern A B A C A:

- i) Fairy-tales, i
- iii) Phantasiestücke Trio, iv
- ii) Cello Folk-pieces, iii

The First Fairy-tale follows the pattern A B A C B A, which is a rather curious combination of rondo form (A B A C [B] A) and bogen-form (A B [A] C B A) with more of a tendency towards the latter, since the first repeat of A is shortened and hence less important.

Unity of key, combined with a very simple idea of progressive tonality and theme can also be found in the Third Cello Folk-piece, which is the form:

(Theme)	A B C A C
	<hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/>
(Key)	a A A a A

It is unusual in that it does not arrive full-circle at the end with a return to A, but simply refers back to A before progressing to the latest idea at the close of the piece. This thematic 'journey' is paralleled by the key-scheme -- the tonality progressing from minor to tonic major.

A similar, but slightly more advanced progression of ideas and tonalities occurs in the Phantasiestücke Trio, iv, whose structure is:

(Theme)	A B C D A E
	<hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/>
(Key)	a F C a a A

The progression from tonic minor, through submediant and mediant to tonic major creates more vividly than the previous example a linear (rather than cyclic) progression of ideas, not returning to the initial theme and key but moving forwards to a new sphere: a resulting musical structure very advanced for its time.

3 (C) DOUBLE RONDO PRINCIPLE

Schumann's remaining six movements which deviate from the basic rondo principle can be divided into those that are related to the sonata principle (by virtue of having a clear second subject and middle section which has elements of a development or an entirely new theme) and those that are really double or multiple rondos. The latter types occur in three finales:

- i) Op.41/3/iv
- ii) Piano Quartet, iv
- iii) G minor Trio, iv

Each of these is highly complex and extensive, and requires a detailed analytical diagram.

(i) Op.41/3/iv

	X					QUASI TRIO	X'					QUASI TRIO	
Themes	A	B	A	C	A	D	A	B	A	C	A	D	A/Coda
Bars	14	20	14	16	8	40	14	20	14	16	8	40	
Keys	Af [#] D	ACE	Ec [#] A	f [#] Dbf [#]	f [#] A	F	FdF	CE ^b G	GeC	aFdA	aCE	EA	Af [#] A

This movement is compounded of many different elements: ternary (in the overall structure up to the end of X), scherzo and trio (in the arrangement of sections X and X' which alternate with a "Trio"), rondo (in the A B A C A arrangement of themes within sections X and X'); and even sonata form, with the "Quasi Trio" corresponding to a second subject which is stated first in the submediant and then in the dominant and tonic. But the predominating structure is the double rondo principle of sections X and X'.

However, these two sections are not as self-contained and similar as they appear, since within each of them Schumann employs a unique system of progressive tonality which keeps the flow of ideas constantly moving forwards: firstly through sharper keys, then

through flatter keys, and finally back to sharp keys again. Despite the frequent appearances of the main theme, A, there is little feeling of thematic regression since the key-patterns do not coincide with the thematic patterns: theme A is always in a different key. The constantly shifting tonalities keep the whole structure fluid and linear, and the repeat of a particular theme never becomes associated fixedly with one key;³⁶ while at the same time a sense of unity and proportion is maintained by the similar length of each section and by a consistent use of three-fold tertiary key-relationships with each theme.

(ii) Piano Quartet, iv.

	X			'Development'	Y	X'		'Development'	Fugue	
Themes	A	B	C	D	E	B	C	D	A/Coda	
Bars	22	16	24	79	16	16	8	20	70	47
Keys	E ^b	C...F	B ^b	B ^b ...F...E ^b	A ^b ...A ^b		C...F	E ^b	E ^b ...F ^b ...E ^b	E ^b

This structure is less complicated than the previous one, especially as regards the tonal relationships which are more inclined towards the traditional areas of vi, IV and V, and have a pervading flatward trend, reaching the most flat key (F^b) in the middle of the two 'development' sections. The overall form is also more obviously linear than Op.41/3/iv, with the long final fugue as the consummation of the whole movement both thematically and tonally.

³⁶ An interesting parallel can be drawn here with the 14th-century isorhythmic motet, in which patterns of notes overlap with the isorhythm, with only periodic coincidence of the boundaries of the two patterns. In a broader sense, there is a certain similarity between the linear forms of the medieval period and the linear structures Schumann is approaching in his chamber works -- possibly a deliberate reaction against the cyclical forms of the 18th century.

(iii) G minor Trio, iv.

	X			Y				'Development'	X'										
Themes	A	B	A	C	A	D	E	D	F	G	F	A'	A	B	A	C	A	Coda	D/A
Bars	8	6	5	9	8	11	8	12	8	12	6	23	8	6	5	9	8	25	10
Keys	G	G	G	e	G	D	e/D	D	a	c/g	g	E...G	G	G	G	e	G	G	G

This apparently highly complicated movement is in reality fairly straightforward, and might well be described simply as a triple rondo with development: the themes are very short, and it is easy to discern here an overall ternary structure. X and X' are identical as to both theme and key, so that the idea of progressive tonality is here less significant than the traditional rondo principle of recurring themes and keys. The total structure appears to be much less sectionalized than that of Op.41/3/iv, and the double bars in sections X and Y are apparently of little importance. However, there is considerable thematic diversity which makes for a less homogeneous movement. The 'Development' section is the greatest point of tension in the whole movement, following as it does such a wide diversity of themes. Its function here is not to provide further contrast (as in the Piano Quartet, iv) but to turn the tide of events and bring the music back towards home ground -- a necessary function after such a digression of ideas. Without this development the movement would be in danger of seeming wayward and purposeless, and the return of the X' section too facile: as it is, X' partly fulfils the function of a recapitulation.

3 (D) SONATA-RONDO PRINCIPLE

This principle is applied in three works;

- i) Piano Quintet, ii.
- ii) Piano Quintet, iv.

iii) Allegro, from Horn Adagio and Allegro.

two of the most original and ingenious of which are the Quintet movements. In the slow movement he makes a very simple tonal alteration to the normal sonata-rondo scheme

A B A	C	A B C
I V I		I I I

and in the finale (which has always posed a perplexing problem of analysis to the Schumann critic) the basic sonata principle is complicated by an abundance of thematic ideas, and by the material of the middle (C) section. Both these works will be discussed later.

The Allegro of the Adagio and Allegro for Horn, as with the Piano Quartet, ii, contains a simple alteration to the traditional tonal scheme:

Allegro (from Horn Adagio and Allegro)

	Exposition				C	Recapitulation			
Themes	A	B	A	C	A	B	A	Coda	
Bars	17	24	17	27	17	24	25	9	
Keys	A ^b	E ^b	A ^b /E ^b	B...A ^b	A ^b	E ^b	A ^b	A ^b	

It will be observed that theme B remains in the dominant in the recapitulation, and through this simple deviation from the traditional principle of sonata-rondo form Schumann declares his basic disinterest in the idea of conflicting tonalities of I and V.

What he is chiefly interested in here is tonal contrast and juxtaposition, and the question of key for theme B in the recapitulation is overshadowed by the far more significant key-change in the middle section, from E^b to B (Schumann's favourite tertiary "plunge"). In order to get back to the home key for the

recapitulation another rapid tertiary key-change is necessitated, from B to A^b: and the dramatic juxtaposition of these three tonal centres -- E^b/ B / A^b -- overshadows all other structural considerations in this work.

Piano Quintet, ii.

	"Exposition"		"Development"		"Recapitulation"		
Themes	A	B	A	C	A	B	A
Bars	28	32	31	17	24	33	29
Keys	c	C	c	f	c	F	fcC

This work evinces a rare exception to Schumann's customary disinterest in conflicting tonalities, since it can be clearly seen that there is a profound contrariety of key throughout. The tonal conflict is, however, not between the traditional i and III, but between i and iv; and Schumann compounds this original digression by stating theme B initially the tonic major and only later in the subdominant major -- a reversal of the anticipated order. The total key scheme thus appears to be a deliberate reversal of the traditional order:

A	B	A	C	A	B	A
i	IV	i	iv	i	I	i

but the effect is far from unsatisfactory, and makes perfect sense in performance. Only in the final A section is the struggle between i and iv brought to a head and resolved in I.

The conflict, or vacillation, between tonic and subdominant is a feature which runs throughout the Quintet, as is manifest in the opening bars of each movement;

Musical score for measures 37-38. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. Measure 37 features a piano (p) dynamic with accents (>) on the notes. Measure 38 features a piano (p) dynamic with accents (>) on the notes.

Musical score for measures 38-39. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. Measure 38 features a piano (p) dynamic with accents (>) on the notes. Measure 39 features a piano (p) dynamic with accents (>) on the notes.

Musical score for measures 39-40. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. Measure 39 features a piano (p) dynamic with accents (>) on the notes. Measure 40 features a piano (p) dynamic with accents (>) on the notes.

Musical score for measures 40-41. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. Measure 40 features a piano (p) dynamic with accents (>) on the notes. Measure 41 features a piano (p) dynamic with accents (>) on the notes.

and is further evinced by the trend of the modulations in each movement, which are on the subdominant rather than the dominant side.

37 Piano Quintet, i, 1-3, piano.

38 Piano Quintet, ii, 3-4, violin and piano.

39 Piano Quintet, iii, 1-4, piano.

40 Piano Quintet, iv, 1-9, piano.

Piano Quintet, iv.

	Exposition				"Development"						Recapitulation			
Themes	A	B	C	A	D	A	B	A	B	A	E	A (Fugue) I	D	Coda (Fugue) II
Bars	20	30	26	37	22	20	8	8	40	12	24	26	45	109
Keys	g	E ^b d ^b B ^b	G G	bB	E	g [#] d [#]	B	b ^b	G ^b E ^b	gE ^b	E ^b	gc	E ^b	E ^b
	"First Subject"				"Second Subject"		"First Subject"						"Second Subject"	

The guiding principle underlying this extremely complex structure is the principle of progressive tonality, incorporated within the traditional sonata framework. There are three main directions for the tonal progressions, which ultimately lead towards an affirmation of E^b -- the home key of the Quintet. The first progression leads 'sharpward' from g through E^b, B^b, G and B to E major for the second subject; the second moves 'flatward' via g[#], B, b^b, G^b and E^b back to g for the recapitulation; and the third is not so much a progression as a vacillation between g and E^b, finally establishing the latter.

Thematically too, the movement is based on a linear rather than cyclical progression of ideas, with D and E representing the furthest points of digression from the opening theme. The Fugal Coda represents the ultimate realization of the need to incorporate the main theme from the first movement, in order to justify the thematic and tonal diversity of the finale.

4(A) THEME AND VARIATIONS

Schumann used theme and variation form only four times, in the following chamber works:

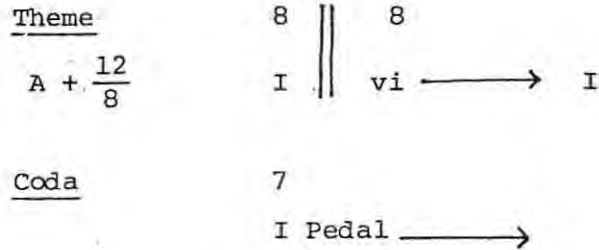
- i) Op.41/2/ii
- ii) Op.41/3/ii
- iii) Violin Sonata/2/iii
- iv) Andante and Variations, op.44.

In the first three movements one is constantly aware of the limitations imposed by the tonal scheme of the original theme, which necessarily dictates the tonal scheme of each subsequent variation. Tonal contrasts and progressions are, as we have seen, of great importance in the structure of many of Schumann's chamber works, and the lack of opportunity for them may have inhibited Schumann's sense of structure: it is significant that he uses variation form so seldom.

Schumann compensates for the tonal limitations of variation form in three ways: i) by means of rhythmic and metrical deviation, ii) by means of elaborate textural and melodic variation, and iii) by means of short and abrupt harmonic changes within the basic tonal scheme.

In Op.41/2/ii, for example, he makes use of all three ways:

<u>Theme</u>	8		8	
A ^b major, $\frac{12}{8}$	I		vi	→ I
<u>Var. I</u>	8		8	
A ^b , $\frac{12}{8}$	I		# _{II}	→ I
<u>Var. II</u>	8		8	
A ^b , $\frac{12}{8}$	I		# _{II}	→ I
<u>Var. III</u>	8		8	
A ^b , $\frac{12}{8}$	I		# _{II}	→ I
<u>Var. IV</u>	4		4	4
A ^b , $\frac{12}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$	I		# _{II} →I	# _{II} →I
<u>Var. V</u>	4		4	5
A ^b , $\frac{4}{4}$	I		# _{II} →I	# _{II} →I



The sudden harmonic change from I to \sharp I(A^b to B) at the beginning of the second half of each variation provides momentary tonal tension, but the effect is rather undermined by its appearance in every subsequent variation (even twice in Variations IV and V). There is an implied change of metre in Var. IV, and a real one in Var. V, coinciding with changes in the balance of the two halves of the variations. But these deviations are not quite sufficient to counteract the tonal uniformity of the movement.

Schumann was more successful with Op.41/3/ii, especially in terms of metrical variety. In this movement there is hardly any deviation from the original tonal scheme of the Theme -- $f^{\sharp} / D / F / A / c^{\sharp} / A / f^{\sharp}$ -- which is in any case interesting enough in itself, being composed entirely of keys related by thirds. What Schumann does do is to vary the time-signatures and metrical structure of the variations, and to end in the tonic major key in a coda which contains another remarkable tertiary key relationship -- $F^{\sharp} / E^b / F^{\sharp}$. Moreover, the theme is not repeated at the end, so there is a much greater sense of progression throughout the four variations and coda than was achieved in the previous Quartet. A diagram will illustrate this clearly:

<u>Theme</u>	16		4	4	4	4	10	6
$\frac{3}{8}$	i		VI	b_I	III	v	III	i
<u>Var. I</u>	16		4	4	4	4	10	6
$\frac{3}{8}$	i		VI	b_I	III	v	III	i
<u>Var. II</u>	16		8	8	8	8	8	8
$\frac{2}{4}$	i		VI	b_I	III	v	III	i
<u>Var. III</u>	16		6	3	3	4	8	8
$\frac{3}{8}$	i		VI	b_I	III	v	III	i
<u>Var. IV</u>	8		2	2	2	10	8	
$\frac{3}{4}$	i		VI	b_I	III	iv	i	
<u>Coda</u>	9		4	4	4	11		
$\frac{3}{4}$	I		bb_{VII}	I	bb_{VII}	j/I		

In the Andante and Variations, Op.46, Schumann demonstrates his prowess in variation technique to a greater extent than in any of the other three variation movements. Much of this skill lies in his flair for inventing a continuous stream of rhythmic and melodic decorations of the main theme, decorations that are directed mainly towards the exploitation of piano technique. In this respect many of the piano figurations in the Schumann work foreshadow those used later by Brahms in his Variations on a theme by Handel, in the same key.

But this long work, -- ten variations and a coda -- is not merely a succession of virtuoso keyboard variations in B^b. There is considerable attention given to the possibilities of harmonic variety within the theme, with subtle but effective harmonic deviations occurring in all of the first four variations, in addition to complete changes of key (to b^b and E^b respectively) in Variations V and VIII.

The harmonic alterations are indicated in the next (p.69) diagram by an asterisk (*): they are all fairly short-lived, occurring mainly at the opening or close of the variation. In addition, there are slight changes of tempo and structural length in some of the variations.

MISCELLANEOUS FORMS

Three of the chamber movements are in simple, but for Schumann, unusual forms, that are self-evident from their designation. The first is binary form (more precisely double binary or A B A B form) found in the Second Cello Folk-piece; the second is canon, the form of the Phantasiestücke Trio, iii; and the third is what could be called 'monothematic variation' type, which occurs in the Third Fairy-tale, the whole of which evolves from the theme and

ANDANTE AND VARIATIONS

<u>THEME</u>	Andante	B ^b	8	8
	($\frac{3}{4}$ through-out)			
<u>VAR. I</u>	Andante	B ^b	8	12*
<u>VAR. II</u>	Un Poco più animato	B ^b	*8	24
<u>VAR. III</u>	(Un Poco più animato)	B ^b	*16	⊕8 ⊕8
<u>VAR. IV</u>	Più animato	B ^b	*8	16
<u>VAR. V</u>	Più lento	b ^b	8	8
<u>VAR. VI</u>	Tempo I	B ^b	8	8*
<u>VAR. VII</u>	Animato	B ^b	16	24
<u>VAR. VIII</u>	(Animato)	E ^b	8	*16
<u>VAR. IX</u>	(Animato)	B ^b	16	25
<u>VAR. X</u>	(Tempo I)	B ^b	8	8+8+6 + 11
<u>+ CODA</u>				CODA

* Cadential harmony

* Opening harmonies

* Opening harmonies. ⊕ III instead of IV

* Opening harmonies

* Cadential harmony

* Instead of V

accompaniment of the first five bars. The conception of tonal conflict or even contrast is alien to these simple, short pieces, which remain isolated and curious phenomena amongst the structural ingenuities and complexities of the other chamber works.

4(B) ARCH-FORM (or Bogen-form)

By Bogenform, of course, is meant the arch-like construction, which arranges its themes, characteristically, in the A B C B A pattern, where the second half presents an exact, or near exact, mirror-image of the first. Inevitably Schumann's tireless innovative genius refused to remain content with this structure as it had been handed down to him, and here as elsewhere, he introduces additional variations and transmutations of his own; so much so, that even the introduction of this term might be thought arguable by some, who might assert that these constructions of Schumann's could just as readily be considered rondo forms. However, the distinction between the two kinds is most noticeable in the disposition of the keys used; and here there can be no confusion between the rondo, which involves the return of essentially linear fragments, and bogenform, where a definitely palindrome-like aim is integral to the whole construction. Although, admittedly, the pattern is almost never so exact as this analogy with the palindrome might suggest, the underlying tendency, after an expansion through a variety of keys and themes, to return by an approximately similar route to the precise point of original departure is really the distinguishing characteristic of this formal model.

Schumann's affiliations with this model occur in three fairly extensive movements: the Phantasiestücke Trio, ii, the F major Trio, ii and Op.41/3/3. Comparisons between the diagrammatic

analyses of these movements will make their correspondences and differences clear:

(i) Phantasiestücke Trio, ii

Themes	A	B	C	D	C	A
Keys	F	a	F	d	B ^b	F
Bars	44	60	16	32	16	45

(ii) F major Trio, ii

Themes	A	B	C	B	A	B	C	B	A	Coda
Keys	D ^b	A	c [#] /f [#]	A ^b	A ^b	B	e ^b /c [#]	E ^b /A ^b /D ^b	D ^b	D ^b
Bars	13	10	9	3	8	8	11	10	12	12

(iii) Op.41/3/iii

Themes	A	B	A'	C	B	A	B	A'	C	A	Coda
Keys	D	E ^b /a	a/c [#]	c [#]	D/G	G	A ^b /d	d/f [#]	f [#]	D	D
Bars	19	7	8	4	6	14	7	8	4	17	11

The Phantasiestücke Trio movement is obviously the most straightforward and simple of the three. The section which spoils the perfect symmetry of the curve (both as to length and remoteness of key) is the B theme, which, however, refers back to the main

a-minor theme of the first movement, so fulfils a cyclical function as far as the work as a whole is concerned. The length of the B theme and its retrospective function make it unnecessary to have it repeated: without this section the form would consist of a perfect arch-like curve, with section D representing the furthest point of digression and section C the two journeys towards and away from that point.

With the other Trio movement we have a construction which is almost identical with this, but in double form with a perfect symmetry of thematic and tonal digression in each of the two balanced halves of the movement. The central tonal pivot-point is not I -- which would make too emphatic a break between the two halves -- but the next closest key, V, which can give the suggestion of proximity to the home key without having to return to it unequivocally.

Within this symmetry of structure the key-progressions, whilst maintaining the arch-like format, pursue daring and abrupt tertiary relationships with their neighbours -- this in fact being one of the most exciting and original features of the movement, a feature which totally disguises the unusually perfect symmetry of the double-arch. The B theme is particularly noticeable in this respect, being, structurally speaking, in the weakest position, but tonally highlighted by the fact that it always precipitates an extraordinary key change from the previous theme: from D^b to $A, f^\#$ to A^b , A^b to B , or $c^\#$ to E^b .

The tonal form of this movement reveals complexities that are not present in...Bach or Mozart. First, the principal tonality of the movement marks off the outer form limits. [D^b] Second, distant-related keys outline the large sectional form of the movement, while near-related keys [A^b] create variety within sections,...

⁴¹Christ, Delone, Kliever, Rowell and Thomson, Materials and Structure of Music, vol.2, p.25.

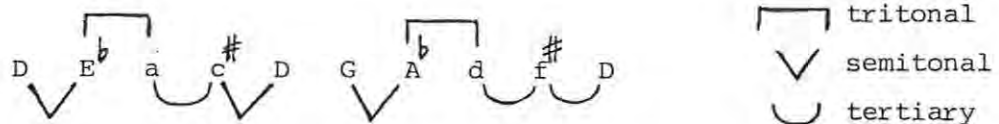
or, even more to the point, link the sections composed of distantly-related keys.

Equally complex, but similar as to tonal structure, is Op.41/3/iii. Like the Trio movement just discussed this, too, has a central pivot key-centre which is closely related to the tonic: but this time it is IV rather than V and it coincides with the central peak of the arch-shape of the movement not with the concavity between two balanced peaks, as in the F major Trio.

The tonal balance of this movement, with its progression towards and away from a central subdominant area, is more important than the thematic balance, which is, to say the least, uneven. As far as the distribution of keys is concerned, the movement follows the arch-shape

I	other keys	IV	other keys	I
19	22	17	19	28

with an almost perfect balance between the transitory keys, and between the outer and central keys of the arch. This tonal plan is obviously of far greater significance than any plan of thematic contrast and juxtaposition. And as in the F major Trio he infuses into this overall symmetry a plethora of rather jerky and abrupt key relationships from theme to theme, mainly semitonal or tritonal, and occasionally tertiary. The combination is totally unique:



The only marked exception is the mid-way change from D to G, which, in order to isolate the importance of the subdominant region, is approached, ironically enough, very conventionally.

II

HARMONIC LANGUAGE

The first part of this chapter contains a discussion of the broader aspects of Schumann's harmonic language, such as key-colour, choice of key, key-relationships and modulations. In the second part there will be more detailed discussions of specific aspects of Schumann's harmonic style, such as his use of seventh, ninth, diminished and augmented chords, of chromatic harmony, cadences and pedal points; and the chapter will end with an assessment of the origins of all these elements in Schumann's harmony. It is particularly surprising that so distinctively Schumannesque a tone-colouring as appears in the chamber works -- perhaps more distinctive in these works than anywhere else in his oeuvre -- can be shown to derive in many instances from the groundwork laid down by J.S. Bach.

The general impression of the harmonic tone-colour of Schumann's chamber music is of an elegaic, simple, rustic, almost reedy quality, engendered by his frequent use of minor keys, diminished harmonies and pedal points; and this quality is enlivened by the restlessness of his modulations and chord-changes, which often have a brilliant, dancing character, especially in the faster movements. These characteristics are trademarks of Schumann's style, and are so often present that they serve to make any of these works almost instantly recognisable as his own. And yet they are not simply personal in the sense that they flowed naturally and instinctively from his pen in the process of composition, as unconscious a part of his music as is a distinguishing gesture or tone of voice in someone we know. In fact they are often the carefully calculated result of a long process of deliberation

and study, however poetic and oracular the verbal expression he sometimes chose to couch these musings in.

The psychological effects of harmony and the aesthetic differences between the tone-colouring of different keys were subjects in which Schumann was deeply interested, and as early as 1834 he wrote an article for the Damenskonversationslexikon¹ called "Charakteristik der Tonleitern und Tonarten".² Many of the ideas expressed therein were heavily indebted to Christian Daniel Schubart's famous book, Ideen zu einer Aesthetik der Tonkunst,³ which had been published in Vienna as early as 1806. In 1839, Schumann quoted again from this book in various articles in the "Neue Zeitschrift für Musik", and although he was not in total agreement with all the ideas on key-colour expressed, he was certainly stimulated by what he read into formulating ideas of his own on the subject of key-aesthetics. But the influence of the current intellectual atmosphere and typical preoccupations of aesthetic thinkers of the day is often shown: for example, by the way in which expression of his ideas drove Schumann into drawing romantic parallels with nature:

May is the A minor key in nature and dissolves itself luxuriantly in June in C major. Perhaps the twelve keys which exist could be traced back to the twelve months. E major might be August, D major would be July, etc. Of course the minor keys would be missing, but Nature certainly has none, and is eternally young, eternally glorious and only when the month bids farewell does it appear sad.⁴

¹ Ladies' Encyclopedia.

² "Characteristics of the Scales and Keys".

³ Ideas on the Aesthetics of Composition.

⁴ Trans. by T.A. Brown in The Aesthetics of Robert Schumann, p.112.

It is significant that Schumann should have mentioned A minor first in this literary improvisation -- and this despite his denial of there being any minor keys in nature, three sentences later -- since this is one of the keys most frequently used in the chamber works. Schumann's penchant for certain keys may have also been influenced to a certain extent by his instrumentation at any given time: A minor predominates in the string works, for example. But he himself in the end came to declare that choice of key could not be explained except as a matter of mystic affinities; something governed by mysterious and largely unconscious creative principles.

The process by means of which the composer selects this or that principal key for the expression of his feelings is as little explicable as the creative process of genius itself, which selects a certain form as the mould which most accurately embodies the thought.... Simple feelings demand simple keys; the more complicated ones require those which are less frequently heard.⁵

But in the case of the relations of major and minor keys Schumann felt there to be more clearly definable associations:

The difference between major and minor must be allowed.... [T]he former is the active virile principle; the latter, the passive, feminine.⁶

The differences of association between the major and minor third embraced more than simply the expressions of joy or sorrow -- they were signposts to totally different vistas of emotion and memory.

The triad = times. The third bridges past and future as does the present. E(usebius).⁷

Consequently, Schumann felt that to remove a minor melody from its context and place it in the major mode was to be in danger of destroying,

⁵On Music and Musicians, pp.60-1. (Reprinted from Encyclopedia article of 1834 mentioned on p. 75.)

⁶Op.cit., p.60.

⁷Op.cit., p.42.

but simply to the minor mode, with its greater potential for dissonant harmonies. The exploration of harmonic subtlety was directly linked, in Schumann's mind, with the exploration of more subtle and complex emotional expression.

We have learned to express the more delicate nuances of feeling by penetrating more deeply into the mysteries of harmony.¹⁰

Nor was the exploration of the "mysteries of harmony" restricted to minor keys: many of Schumann's more subtle and complex harmonic explorations occur in movements in major keys: for example, Op.41/3 and the F major Trio, whereas Schumann's harmonic style in minor keys can be rather more starkly bleak and diatonic. In this respect A minor was very characteristic, being used in half of the thirty movements which are in minor keys.

Both A minor and A major are keys which had definite romantic associations with the warm Italian South: the Italian language was to Schumann "a sustained chord in A minor,"¹¹ and in a review of a Concerto in A major by Theodor Dohler he singles out "the key which, more than any other, overflows with youth and vigour." Schumann expressed his "hopes of meeting, at long last, a friendly person [the composer] who might have much to tell me of the beautiful Italy where he has been travelling for so long."¹²

The following table shows the distribution of keys throughout all the movements of the chamber works, and it will be seen that there are many keys that are not used (particularly sharp keys) while other "favourite" keys are used repeatedly. There is a fairly equal

¹⁰On Music and Musicians, p.45.

¹¹Letters, vol.1, p.22.

¹²H. Pleasants, The Musical World of Robert Schumann, p.104.

TABLE OF KEYS IN THE CHAMBER WORKS

		(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)
Op.41 (1842)	String Quartet no.1	A minor-F major	A minor	F major	A minor-major
"	String Quartet no.2	F major	A ^b major	C minor	F major
"	String Quartet no.3	A major	F [#] minor	D major	A major
Op.44 (1842)	Piano Quintet	E ^b major	C minor-major	E ^b major	C minor-E ^b major
Op.47 (1842)	Piano Quartet	E ^b major	G minor	B ^b major	E ^b major
Op.46 (1843)	Andante and Variations	B ^b major			
Op.63 (1847)	Piano Trio no.1	D minor	F major	A minor	D major
Op.80 (1849)	Piano Trio No.2	F major	D ^b major	B ^b minor-major	F major
Op.70 (1849)	Adagio & Allegro for Horn	A major			
Op.73 (1849)	Clarinet 'Phantasiestücke'	A minor-major	A major	A major	
Op.94 (1849)	Oboe 'Romanzen'	A minor	A major	A minor-major	
Op.102 (1850)	Cello 'Volkston' Pieces	A minor	F major	A minor-major	D major
Op.88 (1850)	'Phantasiestücke' Piano Trio	A minor	F major	D minor	A minor-major
Op.105 (1851)	Violin Sonata no.1	A minor	F major	A minor	
Op.110 (1851)	Piano Trio no.3	G minor	E ^b major	C minor	G major
Op.113 (1851)	Viola 'Märchenbilder'	D minor	F major	D minor	D major
Op.121 (1851)	Violin Sonata no.2	D minor	B minor-major	G major	D minor-major
- (1853)	(F.A.E.) Violin Sonata no.3	A minor	D minor	F major	A minor-major
Op.132 (1853)	'Märchenerzählungen' Trio	B ^b major	G minor	G major	B ^b major

distribution of major and minor keys (38 and 30 respectively) and most of the works which begin in minor keys end with a finale which progresses to the tonic major (exceptions being the Cello Folk-pieces and the First Violin Sonata).

The importance of A minor is particularly noticeable in the shorter, non-sonata works: perhaps the evocations of Italianate rusticity could more easily be brought into being through the use of this simple key in the pieces for oboe, clarinet or cello, whereas keys such as D^b , f^\sharp , E^b and A^b are reserved for the more serious, "teutonic" sonata movements.

The table also shows at a glance Schumann's propensity for choosing submediant key-relationships between adjacent movements, rather than the more traditional relationships of dominant/subdominant/relative minor. The progression of A to F dominates the First String Quartet and First Violin Sonata, for example, and is also important in the Cello Folk-pieces, Phantasiestücke Trio, Third Violin Sonata, and First Piano Trio. Further submediant relationships are to be found in other key-contexts: F to D^b in the Second Trio, g to E^b in the Third Trio, and d to b in the Second Violin Sonata, for example.

In addition, there are several other tertiary, though not necessarily submediant, key relationships; so much so that this can be called a central principle of key-relationships in Schumann's chamber music. This principle is to be found, sometimes combined with more conventional key juxtapositions, in every sonata work except the Piano Quintet: i.e.

Op.41/1 (a F / a / F / a A) Op.41/2 ($F / A^b / c / F$) Op.41/3
 (A / $f^\sharp / D / A$) the Piano Quartet ($E^b / g / B^b / E^b$) the First Trio
 (d / F / a / D) the Second Trio ($F / D^b / b^b / F$) the op.88 Trio
 (a / F / d / a) the First Violin Sonata (a / F / a) the Third Trio
 (g / $E^b / c / G$) the Second Violin Sonata (d / b / G / d) and Third

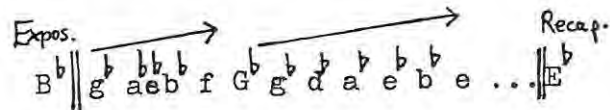
Violin Sonata (a d F a), and also in the Märchenerzählungen (B^b / g / G / B).

In several of these works the tertiary key-relationships of second and third movements almost undermine the supremacy of the key established in the opening movement, Op.41/1 being the most extreme example, very nearly "bi-tonal" in its oscillation between A minor and F major. The dilemma is only finally resolved by a compromise (A major) at the end of the last movement. As A.E.F. Dickinson has pointed out,¹³ this unusual duplicity of key runs counter to the traditional classical principles of a single overall key-centre for a whole work.

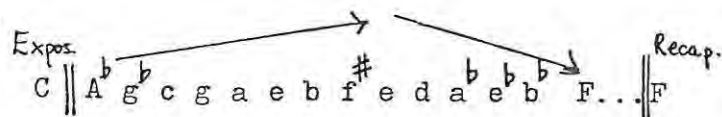
Key relationships within individual movements are also frequently tertiary, as for example in the Piano Quartet, iii (B^b / G^b / B^b) the Second Clarinet Fantasy-piece (A / F / A) the Trio of the second movement of Op.63 (F / A^b / F) and Op.88/ii (F / a / F / d / B^b / F) and iv (a / F / C / a / A). However, in the exposition of a sonata movement Schumann found it impossible to avoid the traditional, and largely irrelevant, key relationships between first and second subjects, which usually follow the pattern I-V or i-III, with the notable exception of the Piano Quartet's first movement (I-iii). This distaste for disrupting the archetypal relationship between the keys of first and second subjects is not a weakness on Schumann's part. He adopts this traditional key-scheme as whole-heartedly and unashamedly as the classical principle of sonata form itself, with which he clearly felt it to be inextricably bound up.¹⁴ And there is sufficient originality in his other key-relationships -- both those that have already been

¹³"The Chamber Music", in G. Abraham, editor, Schumann. A Symposium, pp.138-175, pp.142-3.

¹⁴Cf. Chapter on Tonal Structure, p.46,

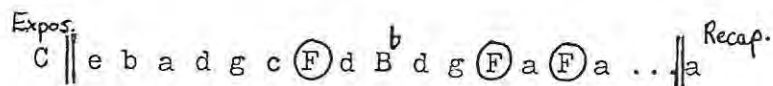


As in the previous example, the tendency towards flat keys is initiated by the opening "plunge" down a third with which Schumann frequently begins his developments, and which almost inevitably point him in the region of keys on the subdominant side of the tonic. A similar feature characterizes the development of Op.41/1/i which begins with a sudden jump from C to A^b , from which point Schumann proceeds sharpwards to the highest point of f^\sharp and then flatwards again back to the tonic, F:

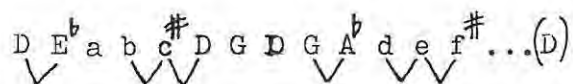


The key-relationships within this development, again, are mostly those of the cycle of fifths.

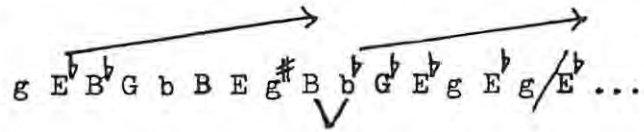
In the finale of the same Quartet Schumann was less successful in maintaining such a clear pattern of keys in the development section. Here the key of F major is like a magnet towards which all the modulations erratically tend, and which gives the development a rather haphazard appearance:



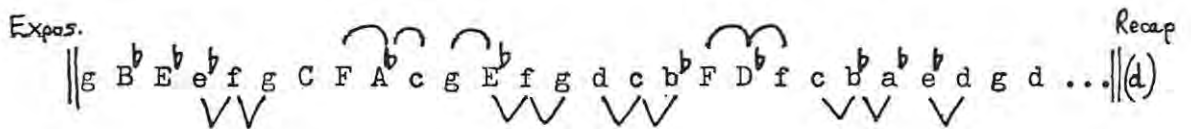
In later works Schumann tended to rely increasingly on more abrupt key-shifts of a tone or semitone. The key-sequence in the middle of the slow movement of Op.41/3, although short, contains six such abrupt changes;



and the fourth movement makes use of a 'semitonal shift' in order to change direction in the middle of a movement which is largely dependent on tertiary key-relationships:



In development sections from later works, the use of both tonal and tertiary key-relationships are established principles, guaranteeing originality and inventiveness of modulation, as can be seen from the first movement of the D minor Trio:



Such modulations and key-sequences create harmonic tensions upon which Schumann's development sections, and also other areas of his work, depend. The essence of these modulations is boldness, a boldness which Schumann felt necessary for the free expression of complex and profound ideas:

[A] waltz may be built on tonic and dominant, but when painting a landscape one must know how to use colours freely. Let the musician courageously strike the keys. A passing false tone will be quickly covered up by a powerful idea.¹⁵

But on the other hand:

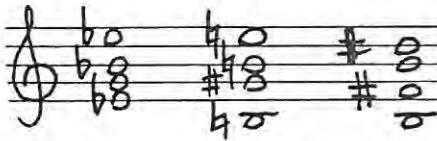
[H]ow happy the composer must be to have managed a return to the principal key. The writer of these lines understands this all too well; he knows it from his own experience.¹⁶

In certain of the chamber works Schumann experimented along the lines of boldness and freedom of harmonic change in areas other than

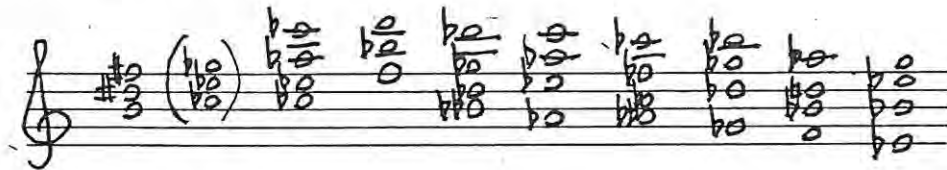
¹⁵ On Music and Musicians, p.72.

¹⁶ Op.cit., p.76.

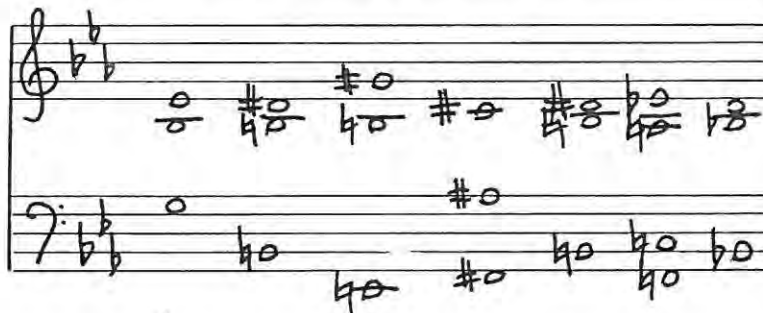
development sections. These harmonic changes are sometimes so peremptory that they can only be described as abrupt shifts of tonality, comparable to a "change of gear". In those chamber works where abrupt tonal shifts occur they are not usually limited to one or two appearances but they take on the nature of a calculated harmonic effect that recurs in several movements of the same work, greatly enhancing the liveliness and colour of the overall harmonic language. Such a work is Op.41/2 where abrupt modulations occur in three movements. In the second, Schumann moves freely from V to \sharp II by means of the simple progression



but in order to return he finds a more devious route, relying on enharmonic and chromatic harmony.



In the Scherzo of the next movement there is an identical key-change from E^b to B, but the return is more rapid:



and in the last movement a similar pivotal key-change, by which means the root of one chord becomes the third of the next (enharmonically E^b / D^\sharp in the above two examples) is the basis of the sudden shift

of tonality at the beginning of the development.



17

These abrupt modulations, although striking in their context, are very much simpler than those that occur in several passages of the F major Trio. This contains the most complex and colourful harmonic writing of all the chamber works, and much of this harmonic complexity is due to the rapidity and boldness of the modulations.

The first movement contains four main themes, Ia and Ib (first subject) and 2a and 2b (second subject), each of which ranges over several keys, sometimes far removed from the original tonic key of F or C. Thus Ia progresses from F through B^b, g, d and back to F in the course of its twenty bars; Ib proceeds from F through B^b, d and a to G ready for the second subject in the V; 2a contains the following curious modulation to the mediant minor and returns back through the supertonic major;

18



¹⁷ Op. 41, 2, iv, 48-50.

¹⁸ F major Trio, i, 54-60, piano.

and 2b ends with the most wayward modulation to be found anywhere in the chamber works -- a modulation which also touches briefly on the mediant minor.

19

The awkwardness of certain chords here may possibly be due to the deliberate incorporation of the F.S.E. motif of the D minor Trio²⁰ at two points, as the following analysis will make clear:

Without the two bracketed motives the passage would be a more straightforward progression of seventh chords modulating from C through e and d back to C.

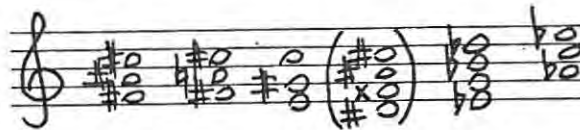
¹⁹Op.cit., 78-84, piano.

²⁰F(lorestan)-S(chumann)-E(usebius): see chapter on Melody (ii), p.181.

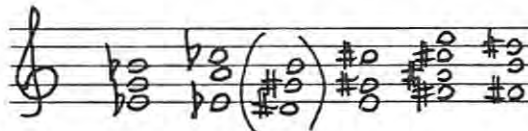
The second movement also contains several abrupt implied enharmonic modulations, which together result in a remarkable overall key-plan, characterized by vacillation between sharp and flat keys. The first of these abrupt modulations is from A^b to c^\sharp in bar 13,



the modulation back being achieved by a similar use of an enharmonically changed V chord:



The second enharmonic modulation changes the tonal direction back from flat to sharp keys:

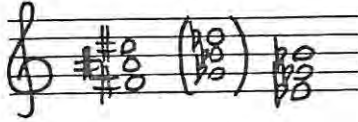


Seven bars later Schumann reverses the above modulation from e^b to B without using the intervening chords, simply moving directly from the dominant of B to the tonic of e^b ;



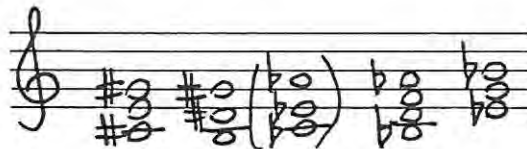
²¹F major Trio, ii, 51, piano.

but the enharmonic similarity between the chords of F^\sharp and e^\flat prevents the abrupt chord-change from jarring:



Schumann continues for the next twelve bars to move freely between flat and sharp keys, and finally oscillates between the keys of d^\flat and c^\sharp with some degree of indecision, despite the fact that a key signature of four flats prevails throughout:

The final modulation back to E^\flat is also achieved by characteristically simple and abrupt enharmonic progression.



Clearly, the harmonic luxuriance of this movement depends largely on the bold modulations described above and finds no parallel anywhere else in the chamber works.

The whole of the F major Trio evinces a wealth of harmonic inventiveness. It is not only the modulations and key-changes which

²²Op.cit., 55-61, piano.

are innovative, but also the use of traditional chords of the seventh and ninth, and of diminished and augmented chords.

Augmented chords

The presence of such chords is especially interesting in this Trio because of the comparative rarity of augmented harmonies elsewhere in Schumann's music. That their appearance, where they do occur, is entirely deliberate, is shown by the way in which they are used to define and create the unique stylistic character of the work in question: to provide it with the very particular harmonic flavour for which Schumann is searching. Despite their scarcity elsewhere in Schumann his use of them here is not confined to a single method. In fact, as always, his method of employing them is characteristically varied.

The first movement contains a number of augmented chords, many of which feature prominently in the first subject. Several are derived from augmented versions of the tonic triad:



which occurs in the very first bar of both the first movement

²³F major Trio, i, 1-2, piano.

and the finale.

Derivatives of this occur in bars three and four of i

and are simply augmented triads with major or minor sevenths added:

The second half of the first subject contains augmented chords built on the subdominant with sevenths or ninths added,

²⁴F major Trio, iv, 1-2, piano.

²⁵F major Trio, i, 3-5, piano.

for example in bars 7 to 13.

The end of the exposition of the first movement is dominated by the augmented triad on C, the new tonic key;

26

and the same harmony is suggested in the second subject of the last movement:

Diminished chords

Very often, in the F major Trio diminished harmonies are found in conjunction with augmented chords, the two being deliberately juxtaposed against each other, since the two kinds of chord have a very different effect on the harmonic ambience of the music. Whereas augmented chords sound by their very nature expansive, open and outward-moving, giving a liberated quality to the harmonic flow, diminished chords on the contrary withdraw the harmonies into a more introspective, constricted mood. Diminished chords are far more common in Schumann's harmonic vocabulary than augmented chords, and they contribute significantly to the complex intensity of his harmonic progressions.

In the F major Trio diminished seventh harmonies are often used to highlight the rhythm of a particular melody, either in juxtaposition with augmented harmonies, as in the following example,

²⁷ F major Trio, iv, 29-33.

²⁸ F major Trio, i, 15-20.

or in conjunction with ordinary seventh chords;

29

A musical score for piano, consisting of four staves. The top two staves are for the right hand, and the bottom two are for the left hand. The music is in a minor key and features a complex texture with many diminished chords and ordinary seventh chords. The notation includes various ornaments and dynamic markings.

and in one striking instance they help to disguise the harmony at the beginning of a recapitulation:

30

A musical score for piano, consisting of four staves. The top two staves are for the right hand, and the bottom two are for the left hand. The music is in a minor key and features a complex texture with many diminished chords and ordinary seventh chords. The notation includes various ornaments and dynamic markings.

The prevalence of diminished chords is on the whole less common in movements in major keys, as might be expected. Therefore diminished chords abound in the B-flat minor slow movement of the F major Trio, particularly the diminished sevenths on the leading-note of the tonic and subdominant keys:

²⁹Op.cit., 72-78.

³⁰Op.cit., 270-274.



The D minor Trio is particularly rich in diminished chords, which are used not simply because they characterize the minor key,

32



but also help to build up tension in passages such as the transition from first to second subjects in the first movement.

33



³¹F major Trio, iii, 165-168.

³²D minor Trio, i, 15-16.

³³Op.cit., 25-27.

The second subject itself continues to be coloured by diminished chords, especially its second phrase:

34



Finally, at the climax of the coda Schumann exploits fully the pianistic suitability of broken diminished seventh chords in an anguished outburst that has a very Mendelssohnian quality.

35



The slow movement is also characterized by diminished harmonies, frequently combined with chromaticism; and even in the largely diatonic major finale diminished sevenths are occasionally used, probably to create deliberately veiled harmonic interludes between the clear major and minor harmonies of the rest of the movement.

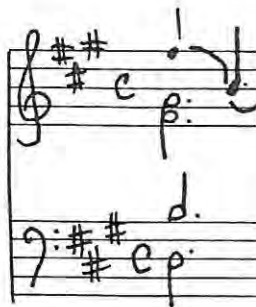
³⁴Op.cit., 35-38.

³⁵Op.cit., 220-221, piano.



Seventh and ninth chords

Such compound harmonies are firmly embedded in Schumann's harmonic vocabulary, and there is no chamber work which does not make extensive use of them. However, in certain works, such as the Third String Quartet and Piano Quintet there is an unusually high concentration of, in particular, seventh chords. One might almost say that the first inversion of the supertonic seventh was the controlling force behind the harmonic structure of the Third Quartet. In the first movement alone it introduces all the main themes and sections: the slow introduction,



³⁶ D minor Trio, iv, 121-124.

³⁷ Op.41, 3, i, 1.

the first subject,

38

the second subject (transposed to the new key of E),

39

the end of the exposition,

40

the beginning of the development,

³⁸Op.cit., 8-11.

³⁹Op.cit., 45-48.

⁴⁰Op.cit., 98-101.

and the beginning of the coda.

In the finale ii^7b is prominently incorporated in the main theme, even more highlighted than it was in the first movement by virtue of its rhythmic position,

and its pungent effect is recalled in each one of the six repeats of this theme throughout the movement.

In both first and last movements the supertonic seventh chord is also modified or expanded, by the addition of a ninth; for example,

⁴¹Op.cit., 102.

⁴²Op.41, 3, iv, 1-2.

or by transformation into a German Sixth chord which still retains a family resemblance to the original.

The reason for the importance of a single chord in this work is not hard to find: clearly the model was Beethoven's Sonata op.31 no.3, the first movement of which is dominated by the opening chord and motif:

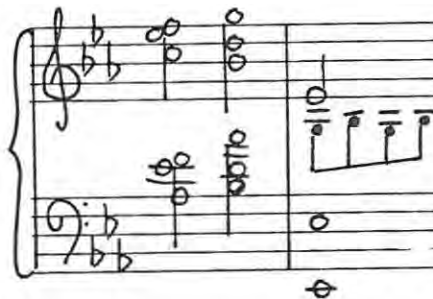
⁴³Op.41, 3, i, 92.

⁴⁴Op.cit., 42.

⁴⁵Beethoven, Op.31, 3, i, 1.

However, there is a certain ambiguity resultant upon the texture of this chord: the arrangement of notes in the left hand suggests that it can be viewed either as a supertonic seventh or as a subdominant chord with an added sixth. Such an ambiguity is not present in the Schumann chord, which is quite clearly $i\overset{7}{i}b$, and Schumann's application of it is in many ways more pervasive and ingenious than Beethoven's.

In the Piano Quintet, Schumann's predilection for seventh chords is, as in the Third Quartet, manifest at the very beginning of the first movement. The first subject abounds with seventh chords, and finally ends with the uncharacteristic cadence $i\overset{(7)}{b} - v^{(13)} - I$:



46

Other main themes follow suit, in their use of seventh and ninth chords, and this, together with the rapidity of harmonic change and brilliance of the tempo, make for one of the most spirited and restless movements in any of the chamber works.

A rather unusual chord, $vii^{(9)}$, is useful in creating the veiled, mysterious effect of the second subject of the slow movement:

⁴⁶Piano Quintet, i, 8-9, piano.

47

and an equally obscure chord, \flat III⁽⁷⁾, provides the highlight of the dramatic escalation of seventh chords which precedes the climactic fugal coda of the finale.

48

Chromatic harmony

Chromaticism is not a consistent feature of Schumann's harmonic vocabulary, and where it is found it is usually in movements whose harmonic style is complex in other ways, and the addition of chromatic elements serves to increase the emotional intensity of the movement in question. A typical example is the slow movement of the D minor Trio, where chromatic touches in the harmony go hand in hand with the angularity of the melodic line, the waywardness of the rhythms, and the use of the chromatic F.S.E. motif. The following progression

⁴⁷ Piano Quintet, ii, 29-31, piano.

⁴⁸ Piano Quintet, iv, 312-318, piano.

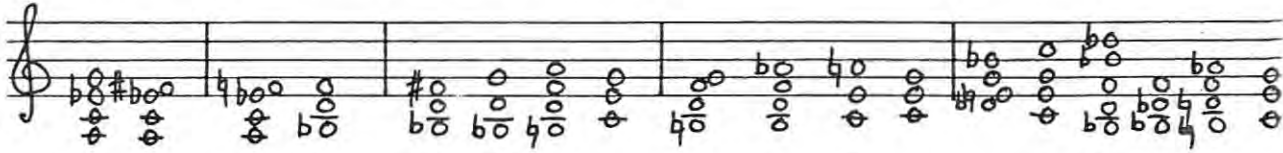
is characteristic of the harmonic flow of the whole movement, which is intense and tortuous rather than simply chromatic. Chromatic movement may be found between two or three successive chords, as in the above example, but not usually for longer periods; so that, although the harmony has a chromatic flavour, this impression is the result of sporadic rather than consistent use of chromatic chords.

Occasionally chromaticism is actually obscured by the rhythm, and by the addition of appoggiaturas and suspensions. Later in the development of the same slow movement the piano harmonies are more chromatic than they at first seem.

⁴⁹ D minor Trio, iii, 6-10, piano.

⁵⁰ Op.cit., 35-39, piano.

Without syncopated triplet ornamentation and appoggiaturas the progression would be simply



In another work, the F major Trio, chromatic harmony occurs in moments of greatest harmonic tension. In the development section of iv there are several chromatic passages which derive from the chromatic nature of some of the main themes. The second subject and its introduction contain several chromatic motives,

51



as does the first subject.

52



⁵¹F major Trio, iv, 22-23.

⁵²Op.cit., 3, cello.

In the development this is dramatically transformed into two intensely chromatic progressions,

53

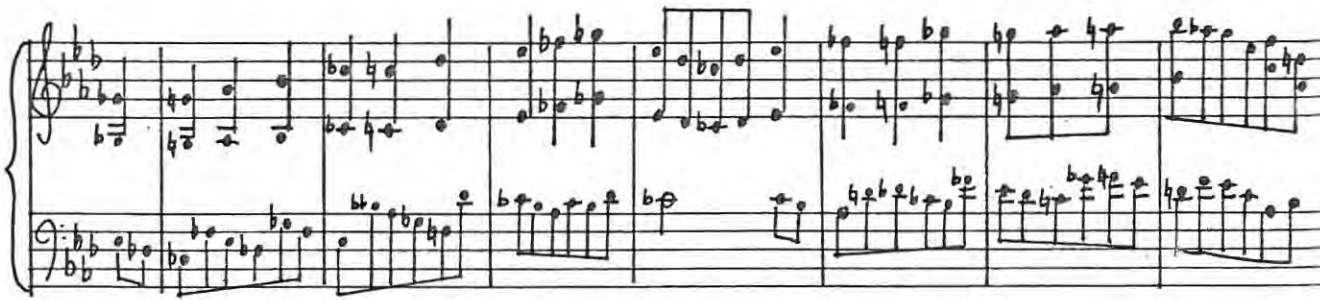
and

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Similarly, in the fourth movement of the Piano Quartet a striking passage of chromatic harmony is simply the result of "development" of a new chromatic melody introduced in double counterpoint, and is fairly short-lived:

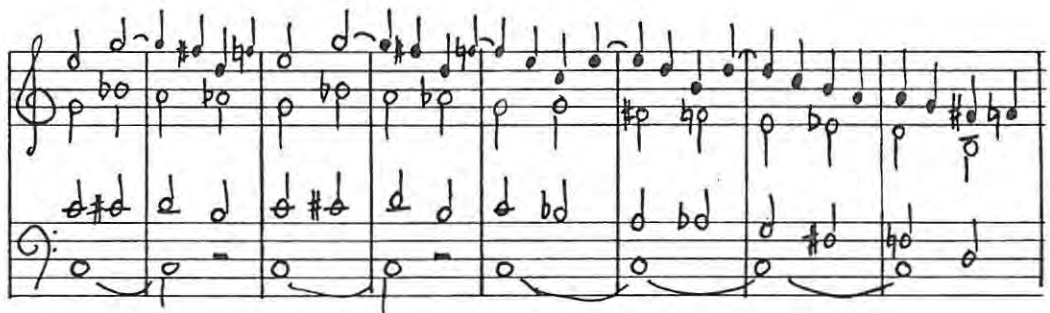
⁵³ Op.cit., 105-111, piano.

⁵⁴ Op.cit., 136-141, violin and piano.



Other notable, longer chromatic passages in the chamber works are not "free" chromatic progressions at all, because they are firmly anchored to a pedal point, usually in the bass. Paradoxically, it seems as if the discipline imposed by a pedal point gave Schumann the licence to explore chromaticism more extensively. The passage quoted above is preceded by such a pedal point, and two similar passages -- one in the Scherzo of the D minor Trio and the other in the Scherzo of Op.41/1 -- fulfil a similar function in that they are both interludes between more strenuous sections. The "Intermezzo" of Op.41/1/ii begins over a tonic C-pedal in the cello,

56



and most of the "Trio" of the D minor Scherzo is underlined by a tonic F-pedal.

⁵⁵ Piano Quartet, iv, 160-166, piano.

⁵⁶ Op.41,1,ii, 79-86.

The image shows a musical score for piano. The bass clef part features a dominant pedal point (F) that remains constant while the treble clef part moves through a series of chromatic chords. The chords in the treble clef are: F major (F-A-C), F# major (F#-A-C), G major (G-B-D), G# major (G#-B-D), A major (A-C-E), A# major (A#-C-E), B major (B-D-F#), and B# major (B#-D-F#). The bass clef part consists of a single F note with a dotted quarter note rhythm, repeated throughout the passage.

In the F major Trio a dominant pedal under chromatic harmony forms the basis for a prolonged escalation of harmonic tension prior to the recapitulation of the first movement,

58

The image shows two musical scores for piano. The top score is a single system of music with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef part features a chromatic melody with a 'cresc.' marking. The bass clef part features a pedal point. The bottom score is a single system of music with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef part features a chromatic melody. The bass clef part features a pedal point.

a passage the end of which, in particular, foreshadows the similar combination of chromaticism and pedal points that Wagner exploited so fully in "Tristan".

Pedal points

The last example above exemplifies one of the most common features of Schumann's harmonic vocabulary: the use of pedal points to enhance moments of harmonic tension. Nor is this the only way in which pedal points arise: they occur in a variety of situations and are used in a number of different ways. Two features which, however,

⁵⁷ D minor Trio, ii, 78-83.

⁵⁸ F major Trio, i, 258-270, piano.

characterize all pedal points are their increasing importance in the later chamber works (1849-1853) and their intrinsic nature:

they are always essential to Schumann's harmonic-structural thought, not incidental or ornamental.

The different kinds of pedal point can be summarized as follows:

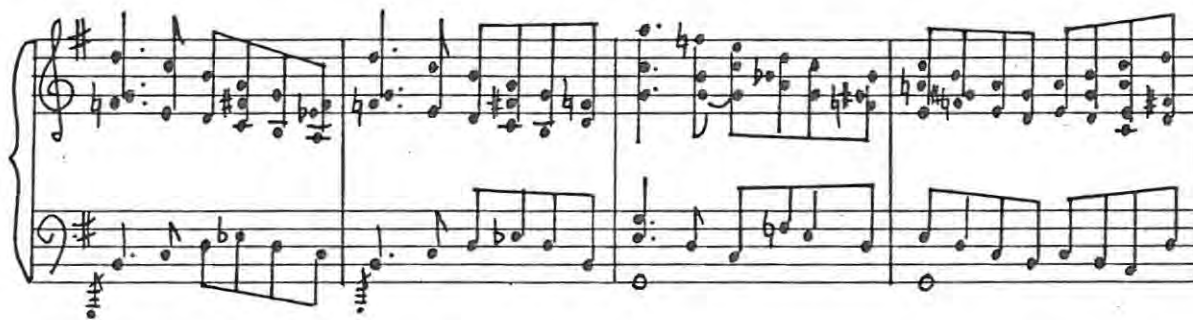
i) single pedal notes in the bass, i) single pedal notes in the treble or inner parts, iii) drone-fifth pedals in the bass or elsewhere, iv) tonic pedal notes and v) dominant pedal notes.

Single tonic bass pedals are almost twice as numerous as occurrences of dominant pedals (47 as opposed to 27, to be precise) and occur mainly in points of low tonal tension, such as the beginning of a movement or section as in the examples quoted on pp.106-107, or in the first statement of a new theme:

59

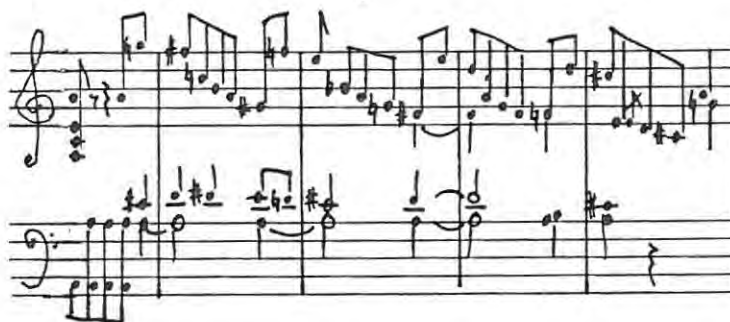
Other points of comparatively low tension where long tonic pedal points proliferate are codas -- very often the beginning of a coda -- where there is little sense of tonal conflict left, and the tonic pedal simply anticipates the final resolution of the tonic key:

59 D minor Trio, iv, 59-66, cello and piano.



Tonic pedals are also, more surprisingly, found in part or whole of the coda to short ternary or rondo movements in which little tonal conflict exists. The first Oboe Romance has a cadential tonic pedal lasting for nineteen bars after only 66 bars of music that had also relied on short pedal points throughout. The final pedal begins

61



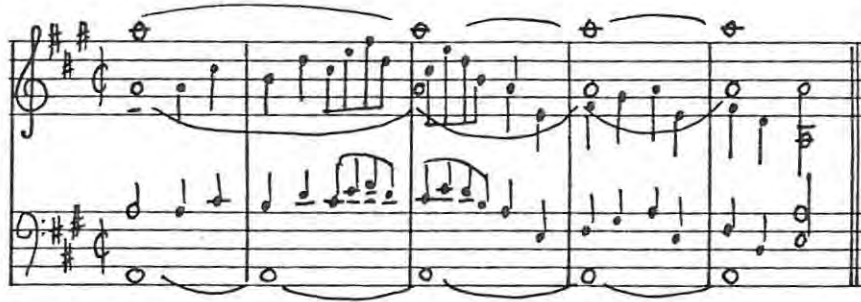
and in this, as in many other shorter pieces, the pedal point serves a picturesque rather than structural function: it evokes a mood of intentionally archaic rusticity. In the Cello Folk-pieces, similarly, the abundance of tonic pedals greatly enhances the primitive "folk-style" that the pieces clearly seek to convey.

⁶⁰ G minor Trio, iv, 154-158, piano.

⁶¹ Oboe Romances, i, 67-71, piano.

Such tonic pedals are obviously derived from folk origins, whereas pedal points in the sonata movements almost certainly owe their origin to the influence of Baroque keyboard music. In Op.41/1/iv however, the tonic pedal which initiates the coda has an unambiguously rustic flavour, since it recalls the bagpipe drone of a Musette:

62a



A more prominent drone-bass occurs intermittently in the "Quasi Trio" section of Op.41/3/iv, where it is often consigned to the viola part. This particular drone is significant in that it shows a confluence of origins, combining the rustic quality of the Musette with the more sophisticated style of the Baroque Gavotte:

62



⁶²Op.41, 3, iv, 72-76.

^{62a}Op.41, 1, iv, 254.258.

Drone-basses do not always simply serve the function of reiterating tonic harmony for a stabilizing purpose. In Op.41/2/ii for example, Variation IV is pervaded by a syncopated cello drone which counteracts the rhythm of the other instruments, totally undermining the $12/8$ time-signature.⁶³

Single V pedal points usually have an unequivocally tonal function, namely, the traditional one of contributing to the mounting tonal tension of areas such as the end of the development or transition to the coda. Or they may occasionally contribute to a deliberate obscuration of the sense of key; but their most common occurrence is in the last section of a movement just before the final cadence, or in the closing stages of a fugal passage. The final fugue of the Piano Quintet, for example, ends with an emphatic 15-bar V pedal in the piano part over which stretto entries of the two fugue-subjects are precipitated towards the ultimate cadence -- the overall effect of which is patently modelled on the closing bars of a typical Bach organ fugue.

64

⁶³ See chapter on Rhythm, p.302.

⁶⁴ Piano Quintet, iv, 355-370.

That the model for this, and other, crucial V pedals is the keyboard fugue of Bach is evident from the fact that all of these pedal points occur in the piano parts of Schumann's large-scale sonata works, particularly in their final movements. All three Violin Sonatas, for instance, culminate in extensive V pedals: in the First Sonata the final pedal note is sustained for twenty bars; in the F.A.E. Sonata the coda begins in the middle of a seventeen-bar V pedal and is finally resolved in a I⁹ chord; and the recapitulation of the D minor Sonata ends with a V pedal which extends through half the ensuing coda -- a fitting climax to a monumental work.

The proliferation of pedal points of all kinds indicates not only a specific concern -- amounting almost to an obsession -- with tonal resolutions, but also a desire to intensify the cadence as a focal point of tonal tension in a movement. Schumann's cadences are often, indeed, almost obscured by the pedal points which precede or even accompany them, and in addition, once the final cadence is reached it is often embellished with melodic and rhythmic ornamentation, the feeling of resolution being further delayed by such elaboration. The simple, unadorned perfect or plagal cadence is almost non-existent, even in the shorter pieces. Schumann usually prefers the greater sensation of finality created by the perfect cadence, but veils its incisiveness with the use of a simultaneous tonic pedal

65

⁶⁵F major Trio, i, 246-251, piano.

or counterbalances it with an immediate plagal cadence, so that a feeling of doubling, or 'piling-up' of cadential phrases ensues:

66

Apart from these elaborate, complex cadence-points Schumann occasionally ends a movement with an original, unusual variety of cadence, which suits the aphoristic, enigmatic quality of the piece in question. Such cadences occur at the end of the fourth Cello Folk-piece, Fairy-tale, and Fairy-piece, the last example being a variation of the vii-I cadence often found in Schumann:

⁶⁶ Phantasiestücke Trio, iv, 187-192.

⁶⁷ Fairy-pictures, iv, 92-94, piano.

In many of the features which characterize Schumann's harmonic language there has been frequent occasion to refer to Bach as the model for points of stylistic detail. Indeed, the excitement and intensity of Schumann's harmonic style is largely owing to his highly idiosyncratic and original modifications to harmonic features which originate in Bach. That there were few areas of traditional harmony not exhaustively explored by Bach was well-known to Schumann:

When we who come after him think we have discovered some marvellous configuration of tones, we find he has already used it or even developed it further.⁶⁸

Plantinga even goes so far as to suggest that in

Bach's luxuriant secondary dominants and dense polyphonic textures Schumann saw a real similarity to the expressive harmonies of romantic music.⁶⁹

The abundance of appoggiaturas, suspensions, diminished chords, seventh and ninth chords, dissonant chords whose resolution is protracted, and a bass line characterized by vigorous activity, are also elements of Schumann's harmony which are greatly indebted to Bach, although often heightened and intensified in their effect, in Schumann's chamber works. Indeed, Schumann has not been allowed to go uncriticized for what are usually described as his harmonic extravagances; criticism emerging particularly from the writings of his contemporaries:

Much of the harmonization employs dissonances whose subsequent resolution brings balm only to an experienced ear. Anticipations and suspensions, whose development often becomes clear only after the second or third bar, are frequently harsh, although justified.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Schumann, tr. Plantinga in Schumann as Critic, p.87.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ignaz Moscheles, tr. Henry Pleasants in The Musical World of Robert Schumann, p.197.

Schumann is a musical mannerist who strains and stretches harmonic relationships until yesterday's dissonances become today's consonances.⁷¹

That the preceding should have been written in reference to one of Schumann's last works is very apt, since it was in 1853 (two years after the Op.105 Sonata mentioned above) that Schumann consummated his life-long preoccupation with Bach with the accompaniments he wrote for Bach's unaccompanied Cello and Violin works. To the modern, puritanical musicologist these accompaniments may appear in the light of an heretical act, but Schumann's motives were undoubtedly honourable. He described the Bach works, which he only discovered in 1852-3 as his 'Bachiana';

pieces which would decidedly gain by a pianoforte accompaniment, and become accessible to a larger circle... The fact is that in these very compositions of Bach's is hidden a treasure, the existence of which is probably known to a very few; and I trust that the musical levers I have applied to it will help to bring it out in the light of day.⁷²

There can be no doubt that Schumann successfully "levered" out Bach's harmonic subtleties and complexities, and revelled in their luxuriance. His approach to the Bach works is that of a dedicated student making a serious analytical study but without detriment to the intrinsic value, particularly the harmonic value, of the music. In this sense the Bach-Schumann works can best be described as 'essays in Bach style analysis' rather than simply as 'piano accompaniments'. This is clearly evident in the rôle of the piano, which is far more restrained and self-effacing here than in Schumann's own chamber works, and merely fills out the harmonic implications of the solo line in as tasteful a manner as possible. Inevitably, though, it becomes at

⁷¹ Paraphrase of a contemporary review by Theodor Uhlig of Op. 105, tr. W.S. Newman in The Sonata Since Beethoven, p.277.

⁷² Life in Letters, vol.2, pp.265-266.

times annoying to have the harmonies 'writ large': the opening of the Fourth Sonata, for example,

73



implies simply.

$\text{I}:\text{i}$ V^7 i iv^7 V^7 i ii^7 $\text{F}:\text{I}$ ii $\text{F}:\text{V}^7$ IcV
 (III (IV)

Thus, it is disturbing to have the harmonization presented in the following unequivocally romantic manner by Schumann:

74

Potentially more disturbing is the rhythmic rigidity necessarily imposed by the piano accompaniment, which inhibits that rhythmic

⁷³Bach, Violin Sonata no.4, i, 1-3.

⁷⁴Bach-Schumann, Violin Sonata no.4, i, 1-4.

fluidity and subtlety which is so characteristic of Bach's solo works in performance. In this respect Schumann marks the cadence-points rather more crudely than would be the case in the unaccompanied version of these works. Indeed, the harmonizations are characterized throughout by increased emphasis on the cadence, and the introduction of emphatic pedal points, which is particularly significant in view of the importance of these features in Schumann's harmonic idiom as a whole.

III

MELODY (i) : STRUCTURE AND STYLE

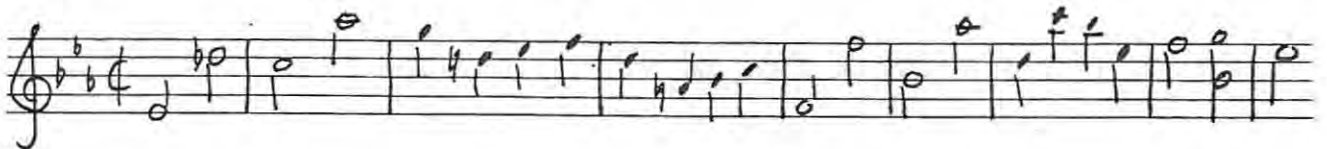
The word "melody" embraces such a wealth and variety of meanings that I have found it necessary, for the purposes of studying melody in Schumann's chamber music, to devote three separate chapters to the subject, the first on melodic style and structure, the second on the use of motto themes and motives, and the third on the relationship between Schumann's chamber melodies and song-melodies. The present chapter deals with

- a) the melodic style encountered in the different kinds of chamber works, and the relationship of style to context; and
- b) the structure of different types of melody found, with analysis and discussion of specific melodies.

a) Melodic Style

Two of the most important elements of romantic melodic style are tone-colour and the expression of yearning or longing, according to Bence Szabolsci's standard work on romantic melody.¹ Certain elements in Schumann's melodic style were influenced by these general trends, such as the rising 7th and 6th motives of the Piano Quintet,

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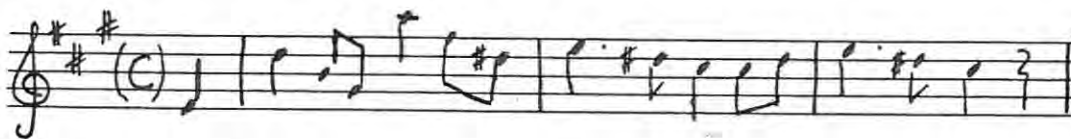


¹A History of Melody, translated by Cynthia Jolly and Sára King, pp.159-170.

²Piano Quintet, i, 1-9, violin.

the Second Clarinet Fantasy-piece,

3



and the Piano Quartet.

4



The fact that the seventh, in particular, possessed an emotive quality which lent an important new dimension to both romantic melody and harmony in the early nineteenth century, was well-known to Schumann:

...once upon a time, the seventh startled just as much as the diminished octave now does...through the development of harmony, passion received finer nuances by means of which music has been placed among those high mediums of art which have language and symbols for all spiritual states.⁵

But in many other respects Schumann was not a typically romantic melodist. In addition, there is a difference between his "vocal" melodic style as found in the songs and piano music prior to 1842, and the more "instrumental" style of the chamber music and symphonies,⁶ and which

³ Clarinet Fantasy-pieces, ii, 3-4, clarinet.

⁴ Piano Quartet, iii, 3-10, cello.

⁵ Quoted in Alan Walker, "Aphorisms, Maxims and Quotations", in Robert Schumann, pp. 188-199, pp. 192-193.

⁶ Schumann's own distinction between vocal and instrumental writing is a somewhat surprising one:

...[I] have always placed the composition of songs below instrumental music — indeed have never considered it as a great art. But don't tell anyone... (Life in Letters, vol. 1, pp.224-225.)

militates against easy relegation of Schumann to any one particular stylistic manner. Nor can one claim a uniformity of melodic style even among his chamber works. It would be justifiable to say that Schumann evolved here a personal melodic style that exactly suited the small-scale intimacy of the medium, the form of the individual movement or piece, and the tone-colour of the instrument in question.

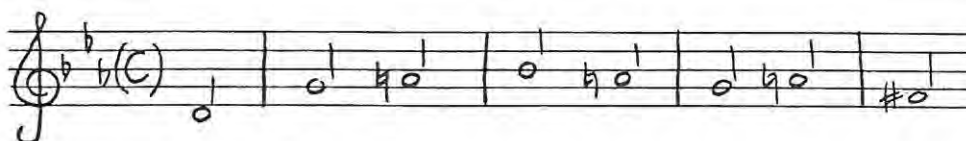
But in the broader context of the period to which these works belong, it is impossible to claim for Schumann the distinction of being, alone among mortals, sui generis. It is not that there are no similarities at all between the melodic style in his chamber works and his other music, nor was Schumann totally uninfluenced in any specific sense by the melodic language of the early nineteenth century. On the contrary, one of the most common melodic "blueprints" of this time,⁷ the rising motif in a minor key



is to be found in several of the chamber works: for example, the Third Cello Folk-piece, (bars 1-3),



and first movement of the Piano Quartet, (bars 72-6),



⁷ cf. Mendelssohn's "Scottish" Symphony and Brahms 1st Piano Sonata, slow movement, et.al.

and in a slightly modified form in the scherzo (bars 3-6),



and finale, (bars 10-11), of the First String Quartet,



and also in the Third Oboe Romance, (bars 1-2).



But in addition (partly as a result of his use of motto-themes) Schumann evolved his own personal melodic trade-marks, which recur throughout his chamber works, and which in their turn contribute to the melodic ambience of the later nineteenth century. One of the most easily recognisable of these is the descending-scale melody, beginning on the mediant of a major (or occasionally minor) triad, and usually involving syncopation of some kind:



⁸ Piano Quartet, iii, 48-50, violin.

⁹ D minor Trio, iii, 10-12, cello.



Similar melodic figures can be found in the works of several late nineteenth-century composers of chamber music:

This type of descending melody in Schumann works, so redolent with sighing, lingering emotion, contrasts sharply with a number of other typically-Schumannesque melodic shapes, which are characterized not by this kind of smoothly conjunct movement, but by vigorously disjunct movement and awkward leaps. Such melodic shapes are exemplified by the following themes:

¹⁰F major Trio, ii, 1-3, violin.

¹¹2nd Violin Sonata, i, 64-66, piano.

¹²Saint-Saëns, Second Piano Trio, slow movement, 1-2.

¹³Glinka, String Quartet in F major, i, second subject.

¹⁴Bruckner, String Quartet in F major, slow movement, 1-3.

¹⁵Fauré Violin Sonata in A major, i, second subject.



18



19



20

These two types of melody, the one romantic, persuasive and song-like, and the other severe, argumentative and instrumental, originate

¹⁶ Piano Quintet, i, 1-5, violin I.

¹⁷ D minor Trio, i, 1-6, violin.

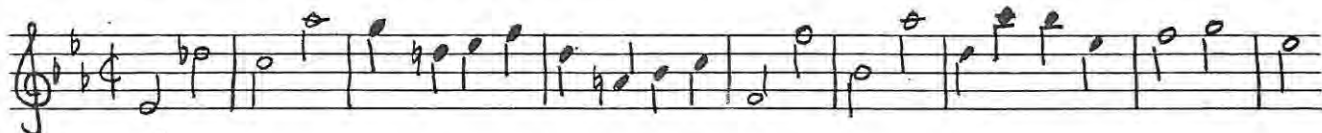
¹⁸ F major Trio, iv, 1-7.

¹⁹ Pantasiestücke Trio, iii, 1-2, cello.

²⁰ Second Violin Sonata, i, 1-6 of the Allegro.

from different sources. The former is akin to the typical "sighing"-phrase of early nineteenth-century Italian bel canto, and is romantic and "modern" in style; the latter's disjunct angularity is archaic in origin despite its modern setting, and in fact harkens back to the instrumental style of the late Baroque, and in particular to the melodic style of Handel and Bach. It was this latter source of inspiration which was by far the most influential on the melodic style of Schumann's chamber works.

The opening theme of the Piano Quintet, for example, has an almost Handelian pomposity, deriving not only from that composer's melodic style itself but also from the solid underlying harmonic rhythm typical of a Handelian theme. The whole of Schumann's harmonic accompaniment to the theme is implied in the theme itself, an implication intrinsic to many Baroque melodies:



Another Baroque feature, more typical of Bach than Handel, is the emphasis on the diminished or augmented intervals encountered in a minor mode, and this is an essential feature of some of Schumann's chamber themes, such as the first subject of the D minor Trio,²¹ or the first subject of the Violin Sonata no.1 (bars 1-5):

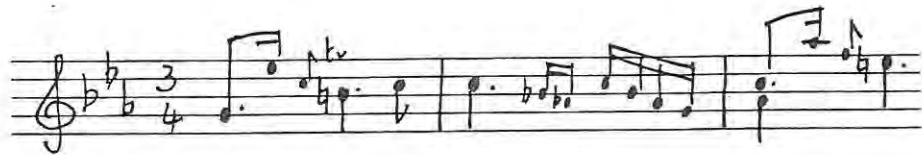


²¹ See above, p. 123.

The Bachian descending diminished 4th in a minor key also pervades many of Schumann's song and symphony themes, as well as themes in the chamber works. It was Brahms, for instance, who first noticed the similarity between the main theme of the slow movement of Schumann's Second Symphony,



and the subject of Bach's Musical Offering.²²



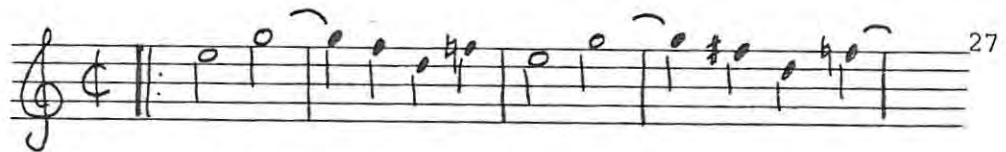
It is also in those passages in works by Mozart and Beethoven showing the greatest affinity with Bach, that come closest to Schumann's melodic chamber style. The transformation of the falling diminished 7th of the main theme from the finale of Beethoven's third Piano Concerto



into:



²²The Letters of Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms, vol. 1, p.58.



²⁴Op.cit., 50-53, violin I.

²⁵Op.cit., 58-59, violin I.

²⁶Op.41, 1, ii, 3-6, violin I.

²⁷Op.cit., 79-80, violin I.

²⁸Op.41, 2, i, 1-7, violin I.

²⁹Op.41, 2, iii, 1-3, violin I.

³⁰Op.41, 3, iii, 1-4, violin I.

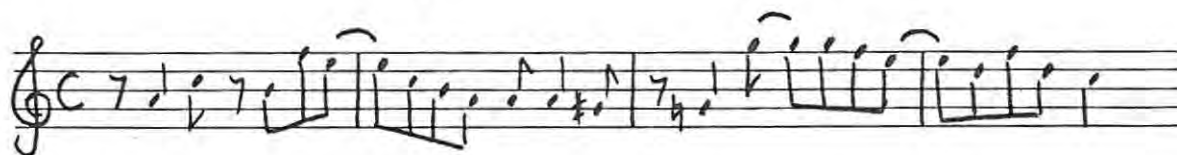
These rather simple, bland curvilinear melodies of 1842 are transformed gradually into a kind of melodic line that is characterized in later works by not just one broad curve, but a torrent of rapidly undulating phrases, such as are found in the G minor Trio, i (bars 1-6)



or the First Violin Sonata, i (bars 23-6):



The turbulence of this melodic shape can also be found in the slow movements, albeit in a less agitated framework, as in the following example from the beginning of the slow movement of the D minor Trio (bars 1-4):



The prevalence of rapid, disjunct motion and the undulating qualities of many of Schumann's themes leads inevitably towards a melodic style that is essentially diatonic rather than chromatic. Indeed, chromatic melodies are extremely rare in the chamber works, and when they do occasionally occur (in the Scherzo of the D minor Trio, or the Horn Adagio and Allegro, for example) they are usually accompanied by clearly diatonic harmonies:




31

(Piano: F major chords.....)

or the "anchorage" of a sustained pedal note :

32

(Piano: F octave pedal point.....)

The themes in the Horn Adagio and Allegro are not persistently chromatic, but include brief chromatic motives, such as the predominant figure, , and there is only one short-lived passage of chromatic harmony resultant upon this motif:

33

31. D minor Trio, ii, 3-5, violin.

32. Op.cit., 78-86.

33. Horn Adagio and Allegro, 139-146.

In this, the most chromatic of all the chamber works, Schumann was of course making a deliberate point in exploring the potential of the relatively "new" valve-horn, exploiting its melodic versatility by the use of chromaticism.

The basic diatonicism of Schumann's melodic style often results in melodies that are very tonally-orientated. That is to say, his melodies frequently emphasise the notes of the key which characterize that particular key. This results in a different kind of melody for major and minor keys. In major keys, Schumann tends to emphasise the three notes of the tonic triad, whereas in minor keys the sharpened 7th is often emphasised, and paralleled by a simultaneous raising of the 4th degree,³⁴ so as to increase the scope for using "anguished" intervals of the augmented 2nd and 4th, and the diminished 3rd, 4th, 5th and 7th.

Stylistic differences exist not only between works in different tonalities but also between works of different structure. As far as Schumann was concerned, the form and size of the work dictated not only the melodic style but also the length of melodies used. Practically every example so far given in this chapter has been taken from the big sonata works, and generally speaking the principal subjects of such works are long, substantial, wide-ranging themes which have a clearly defined underlying harmonico-rhythmic accompaniment, in which they are firmly rooted. Conversely, the melodic style in many of the shorter pieces is more fragmentary and aphoristic, partly because their simply-constructed (usually tripartite) movements do not require the grandiloquent statement of sonata ideas, and partly also because the pieces

³⁴See above, pp. 123-124.

themselves are romantic and characterful. Their very titles encapsulate the melodic style suitable to the particular form of romantic expression they contain. Thus the delicate suggestiveness of words such as Märchenbilder, Stücke im Volkston, Phantasiestücke, Romanzen and Märchenerzählungen is paralleled by the use of short, lyrical and fanciful phrases, evoking romantic-poetic fantasy worlds. The resulting melodic fragments or themes are among the most attractive instrumental melodies Schumann ever conceived, and the most novel. One of the reasons for their novelty and attractiveness could possibly be due to the fact of their not being dependent on literary mottoes and recurring musical motifs: there is no "interior monologue" behind the melodic design of these pieces, such as exists in so many of the sonata movements. Another reason is that they are not firmly embedded in the harmonic rhythm of their accompaniment but are slightly detached from it, and so can often stand alone as melodies without accompaniment. In this they are closely akin to folk-song, and like folk-songs they can be at the same time both simple and profound -- simple in their clearly diatonic shape, emphasizing notes from the tonic chord, and profound in their intervallic range, which encompasses rapid upward and downward leaps over a very short period, seeming to function as a kind of emotional barometer.

All these features the Oboe Romanzen possess to perfection, and the main themes of each of the three pieces will serve to illustrate the aforementioned characteristics.

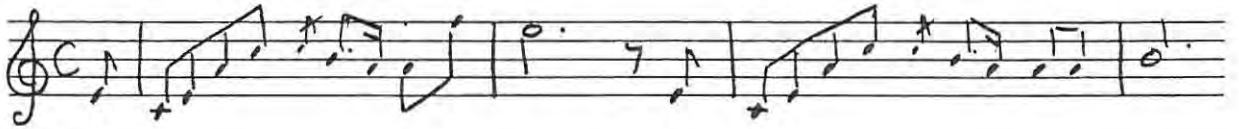
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37



Although Schumann found this particular mood easier to capture in association with wind instruments, he also achieved it in most of the five ello Stücke im Volkston, and four Viola Märchenbilder, three examples from which demonstrate clearly their affinities with the melodic style of the Oboe Romanzen.

38



39



³⁶Op.cit., ii, 1-4, oboe.

³⁷Op.cit., iii, 1-4, oboe.

³⁸Viola Märchenbilder, i, 1-8, viola.

³⁹Op.cit., iv, 1-8, viola.



In these shorter pieces Schumann came nearest to writing what he would have called "melodies", in other words short, self-contained, heavily-cadenced tunes, which were essentially vocal rather than instrumental in origin. As he himself said,

...there is difference between melody and melodies.... 41
 ...not everything which is easily singable is melody...

The latter phrase hints at the opinion that "melody" is something superior to "melodies", and in pursuance of this idea Schumann gives vent to feelings which, although they obviously bear on the contents of this chapter, are somewhat obscure, and not always easy to relate to his practice:

Whoever has melody, will have melodies; who, however, has melodies, will not always have the former; the child sings melodies to himself, melody, however, develops only later. In the first two chords of the Eroica Symphony, for instance, there lies more melody than in ten Bellini melodies. 42

Ironically it would seem that what Schumann had produced in the Oboe Romances and other late chamber works was "melodies" rather than "melody", so that in a sense his practice contradicts his theory. His theoretical reaction against "melodies" was not, however, conditioned by the fact of their being self-contained or imbued with child-like lyricism, but was influenced by a prejudice against the chief perpetrators

⁴⁰Cello Stücke im Volkston, i, 1-8, cello.

⁴¹Quoted in T.A. Brown, The Aesthetics of Robert Schumann, p.58.

⁴²Ibid.

of "melodies", Italian opera composers. "Melodies" were thus in a sense vehicles for the expression of trite emotionalism.

Clearly, the Oboe "melodies" are not in the slightest degree either trite or Italianate. But what they do possess is a strong affinity with German romantic poetry, in particular, folk-poetry, and this is what lends them a feeling of finite, self-contained simplicity. To continue the pursuit of the literary analogy, the distinction between Schumann's own "melody" and "melodies" is not one of style, but of structure: broadly speaking, his various types of sonata "melody" can be compared to the continuous, open-ended nature of prose, whereas his "melodies" of the short character-pieces often share an affinity with the short, frequently-cadenced stanza of early nineteenth-century German lyric poetry or folk-poetry.

- - - - -

(b) Melodic Structure

The close relationship between literary forms of the time and many of Schumann's chamber themes is perhaps inevitable, in view of his profound and lasting interest in literature. He was immersed in the fantasy-novels of Jean Paul, the folk-poems of Arnim and Brentano, and the lyric stanzas of Heine, throughout his life, and so far as his chamber music was concerned the different structures of prose and poetry had an important bearing on the structure of many of his chamber melodies, in addition to other elements.

There are two basic types of literary melody, the one a prose-type: declamatory, linear, asymmetrical, and closely related to the rise and fall of words or phrases; and the other a poetic-type: balanced, repetitive, usually symmetrical, and closely related to the four-line

poetic stanza.

As with all categorical distinctions, there are occasionally elements from one category which may appear in the other, so that these two melodic types are not always mutually exclusive.

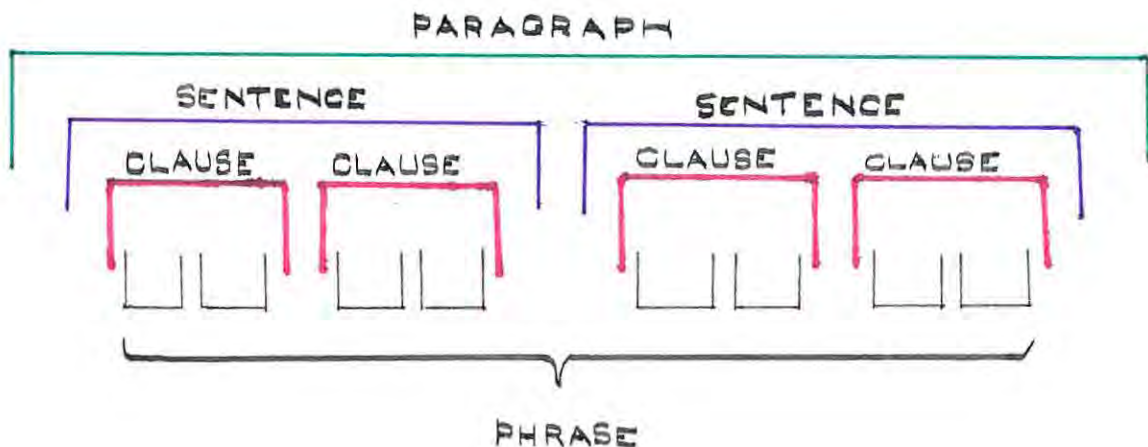
A third melodic type, which may be derived to some extent from either literary type, is what might best be described as the superimposed, or double melody -- that is, a melody that is dependent on a simultaneous complementary melodic line in another part. This type of melody is often fairly lengthy, and falls into two halves, in the second of which a new, contrasting melodic idea is accompanied by the melody from the first half, so that the structure of the first half of the melody influences the second, even though the two parts may be totally different as to their individual structures.

A fourth melodic type arises naturally out of the ubiquitous use of the sequence in Schumann's melodies, and so can be described simply as the sequential type. Some of Schumann's melodies are more heavily dependent on sequences than others, while at the extreme ends of the scale there are themes in which no hint of sequential writing occurs, and also themes whose structure depends entirely on sequences.

The fifth, and final type of melodic structure to be discussed here is the dialogue structure, found in melodies which are built almost entirely of question-and-answer phrases. Dialogue structures may often, naturally, contain sequences, so that these melodic types are sometimes closely related to the previous type. However, the dialogue feature of these kinds of melody counterbalances the repetitive or cumulative effect often resultant upon the use of sequences, and dialogue types often have a closer affinity with literature, resultant upon the "conversational" mood which such melodies frequently evoke.

The following analytical diagrams give examples of all five main types of melodic structure discussed, with comments on the details which contribute towards the overall structure of the individual melodies analysed. Most of these are principal themes from the D minor Piano Trio, which is in many stylistic and formal respects one of Schumann's most characteristic chamber works, and there are additional examples from the Piano Quintet, Piano Quartet and Adagio and Allegro for Horn and Piano.

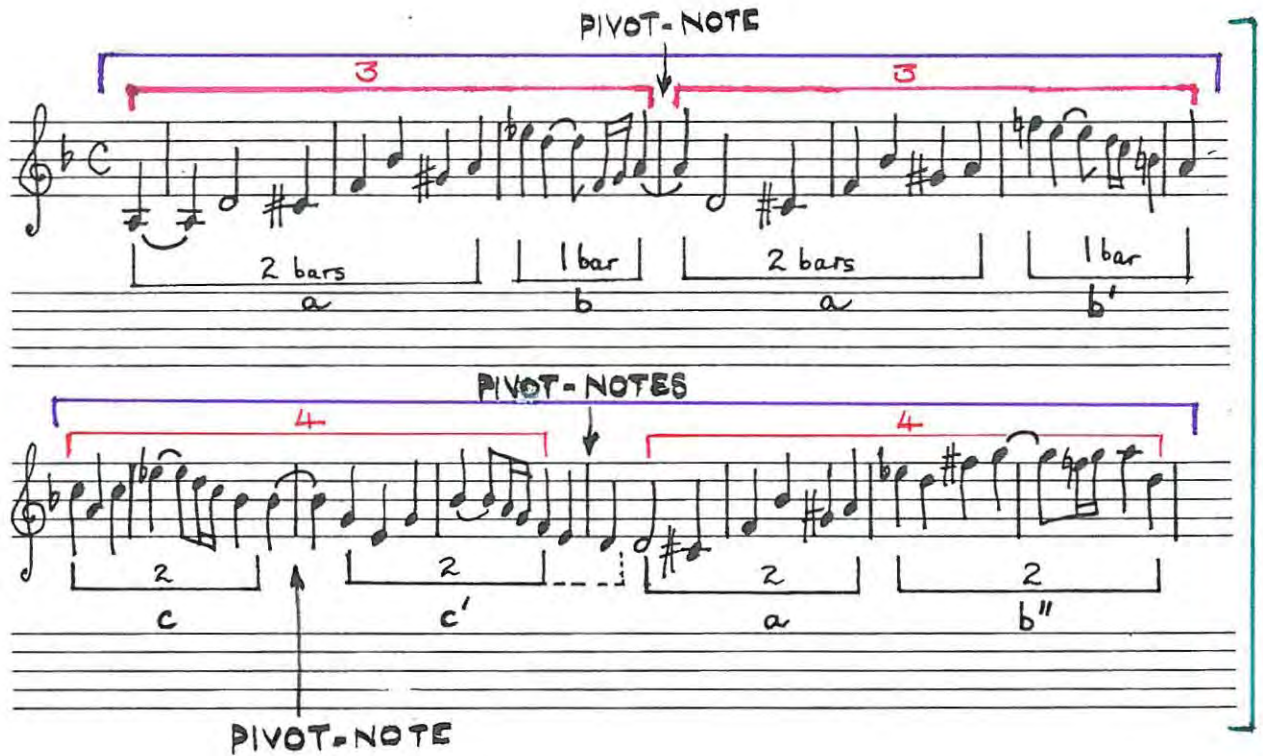
In order to clarify the way in which thematic details relate to the overall structure, I have used the four literary terms: paragraph, sentence, clause and phrase, as headings for the various components of the melodies analysed, relating each term to a different colour-identification in the diagrams. The key to the different components is as follows:



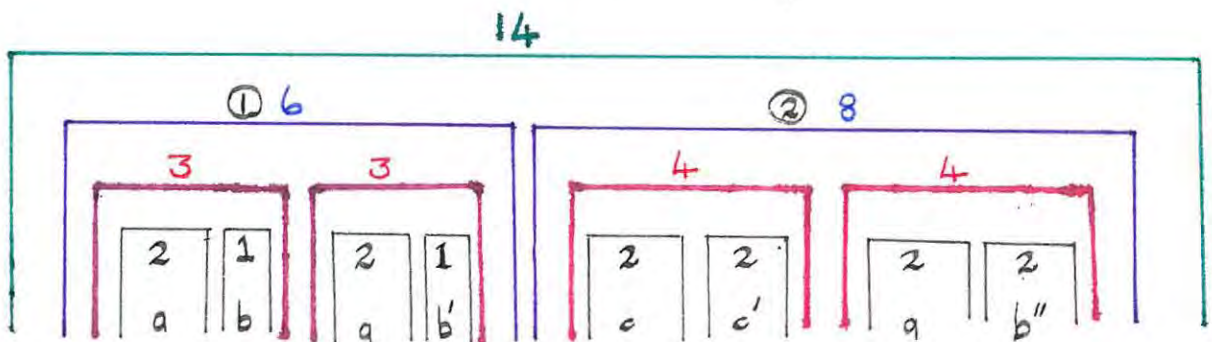
The first four diagrams show melodies which have close affinities to the finite stanza form of poetry. Diagrams five to eight are of prose-type melodies which in certain cases are combined with elements either from the double-melody type or the sequential type. Diagrams nine and ten concern sequential melodies, and diagram eleven the dialogue-type of melody.

Within each melody there are elements of symmetry and asymmetry balanced against each other, (except for no. 2), which may or may not effect the total melodic shape. Such elements are characteristic of Schumann's method of composing large melodic structures.

DIAGRAM I: D minor Piano Trio, i, 1-14, violin



The analysis can be summarized as follows:



From this it can be seen that the whole paragraph is only 14 bars (instead of the more regular 16-bar length) and is divided into two unequal sentences of 6 and 8 bars respectively. The second sentence falls into two balanced clauses and four balanced phrases, whereas in the first sentence the second and fourth phrases have been shortened by one bar, dove-tailing them into the ensuing phrase. The first sentence of 3 + 3 bar clauses is symmetrical within itself, but not when compared as a whole to the second sentence. In addition the pivot notes between certain phrases and clauses give some ambiguity to phrase or clause lengths, but are important structurally.

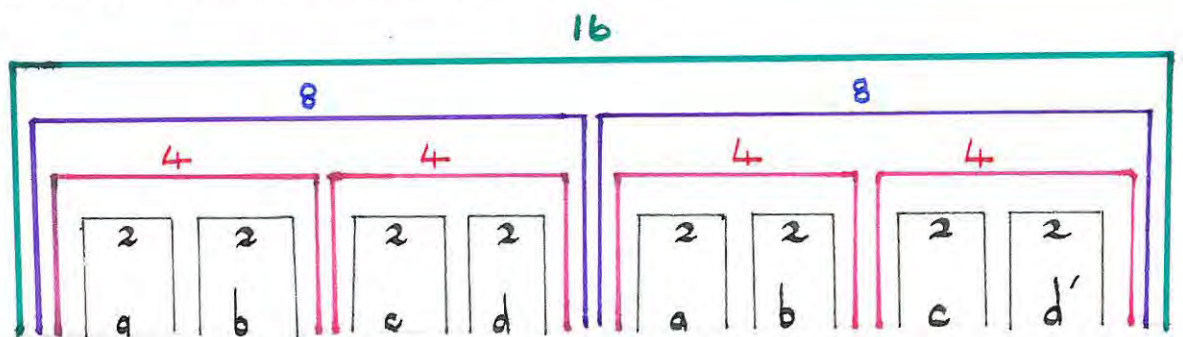
There are five contrasting melodic phrases (each of which is characterized by a cadential close) but the judicious balance between repetition and variety of phrase enhances the unity of the whole paragraph. The resulting melody is musically satisfying and logical, even though its substructure consists of unbalanced phrases, balanced clauses, unbalanced sentences, and five different musical phrases, a, b, c, d and e.

Another interesting feature of this melody is that the final clause is terminated a bar sooner than expected (in comparison to the first), in order that the next theme may begin with Schumann's much-loved device, the accented, syncopated crotchet tied over to the following bar. This results in a rather abrupt, firm cadence to a melody which has throughout been heavily dependent on actual or implied cadences.

DIAGRAM II: D minor Trio, iv, 1-16, piano

The diagram shows two staves of musical notation. The first staff contains the first 8 bars, with segments labeled 'a', 'b', 'c', and 'd'. The second staff contains the next 8 bars, with segments labeled 'a', 'b', 'c', and 'd''. Red brackets above the notes indicate 4-bar phrases, and blue brackets indicate 8-bar phrases. Bar numbers 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, and 16 are written below the notes.

The analysis can be summarized as follows:



This melody needs virtually no comment or explanation. It is one of the most symmetrical, finite, stanza-like melodic structures in all Schumann's chamber works, (in complete and deliberate contrast with the very free, open-ended melodic types of the movement which immediately precedes it). In both style and structure it recalls that most regular

of all melodic types, the four-line Victorian hymn tune.⁴³

DIAGRAM III: D minor Trio, ii, 77-140, piano, violin and cello

A

6 phrases

B

4 phrases

C

5 phrases

⁴³This melody bears a striking, though coincidental, resemblance to the Welsh hymn, "Guide me, O Thou great Redeemer":

DIAGRAM III (continued)

D

Diagram D (Bass clef) shows a 10-bar melodic line. The first phrase is 4 bars long, and the second phrase is 6 bars long. The 4-bar phrase consists of two 2-bar segments. The 6-bar phrase consists of three 2-bar segments. The final bar of the 6-bar phrase is circled and contains a fermata. Below the staff, the total length is labeled '10' and the number of phrases is labeled '5 phrases'.

B

Diagram B (Treble clef) shows an 8-bar melodic line. The first phrase is 4 bars long, and the second phrase is 4 bars long. The 4-bar phrase consists of two 2-bar segments. The 4-bar phrase consists of two 2-bar segments. The final bar of the 4-bar phrase is circled and contains a fermata. Below the staff, the total length is labeled '8' and the number of phrases is labeled '4 phrases'.

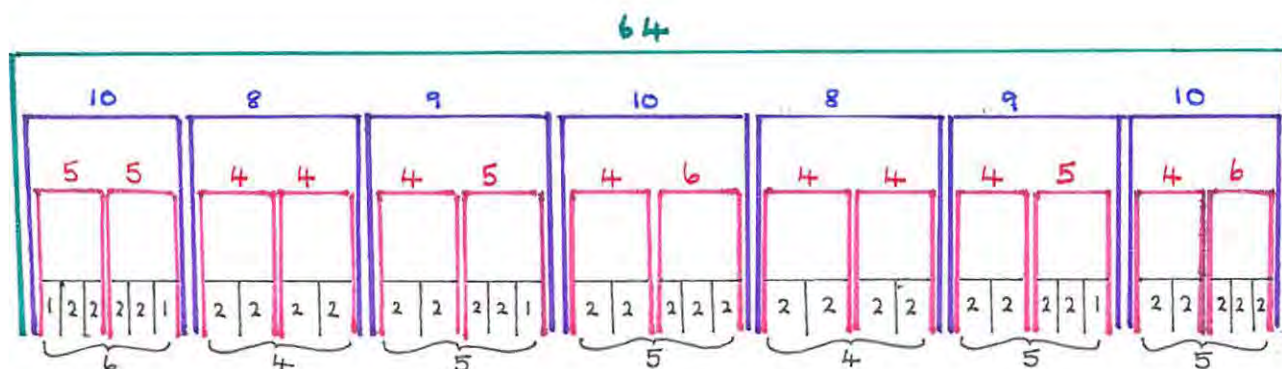
C

Diagram C (Bass clef) shows a 9-bar melodic line. The first phrase is 4 bars long, and the second phrase is 5 bars long. The 4-bar phrase consists of two 2-bar segments. The 5-bar phrase consists of three 2-bar segments. The final bar of the 5-bar phrase is circled and contains a fermata. Below the staff, the total length is labeled '9' and the number of phrases is labeled '5 phrases'.

D

Diagram D (Bass clef) shows a 10-bar melodic line. The first phrase is 4 bars long, and the second phrase is 6 bars long. The 4-bar phrase consists of two 2-bar segments. The 6-bar phrase consists of three 2-bar segments. The final bar of the 6-bar phrase is circled and contains a fermata. Below the staff, the total length is labeled '10' and the number of phrases is labeled '5 phrases'.

The analysis can be summarized as follows:



The complete paragraph of 64 bars (consisting of the whole Trio) looks innocently symmetrical, but upon closer examination, there are not 8 sentences as would be expected ($8 \times 8 = 64$) but only 7, varying in length between 8 and 10 bars each.

Within each sentence there are always two clauses, but these only produce a balanced pair when the sentence length is exactly 8 bars ($4 + 4$). In the 9- and 10-bar sentences there is always an irregular subdivision of the phrases (5 or 6) mainly because of the presence or absence of an extra bar at the beginning, or more normally, the end of each clause.

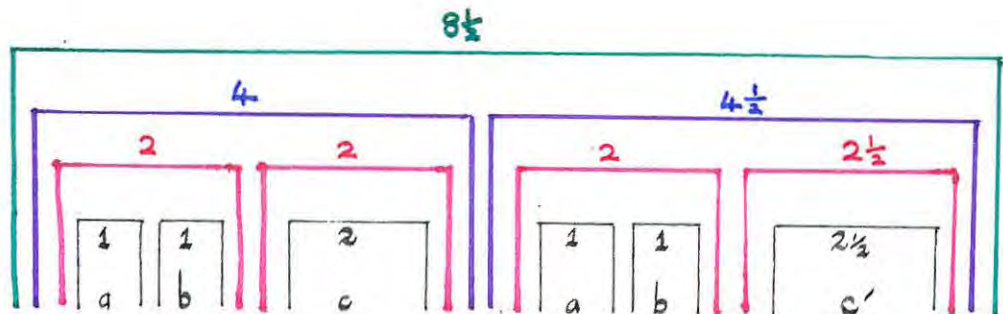
The overall symmetry-within-asymmetry is further complicated by the fact that sentences 2 and 5, 3 and 6, and 4 and 7 are exact repetitions of each other, both melodically and structurally, and all seven sentences are derived from the first.

Stylistically speaking, this is one of the most highly unified paragraphs in all Schumann's chamber works, since each sentence is either an exact or transposed repetition of the first. Structurally, though, there is constant variety, and the ambiguity of the clause-lengths prevents a feeling of "sameness" resulting from so much repetition. The only normal, balanced sentences in the whole paragraph are numbers 2 and 5.

The whole melody has a balanced, and yet far from perfectly symmetrical, stanza shape, and the frequent repetitions and definite final cadences of each sentence relate the overall form much more closely to poetry than prose, although it is not nearly so square-cut as the previous example.

DIAGRAM IV: D minor Trio, i, 26-34, piano and violin

The analysis can be summarized as follows:



The total paragraph length of $8\frac{1}{2}$ bars looks asymmetrical, but in fact the last $\frac{1}{2}$ -bar is simply a cadential extension of the final phrase, leading on to the next melody. So the resulting substructure consists of a symmetrical balance of four equal clauses. Within each sentence the phrase-lengths of $1 + 1 + 2$ bars correspond exactly to the structure of bar-form. Phrases b and c grow naturally out of phrase a, and the first and second clauses are virtually identical. The unity of the whole paragraph is further enhanced by the dominant pedal which runs throughout the accompaniment, and by the imitation of the melody which occurs between violin, cello and piano for the duration of the paragraph.

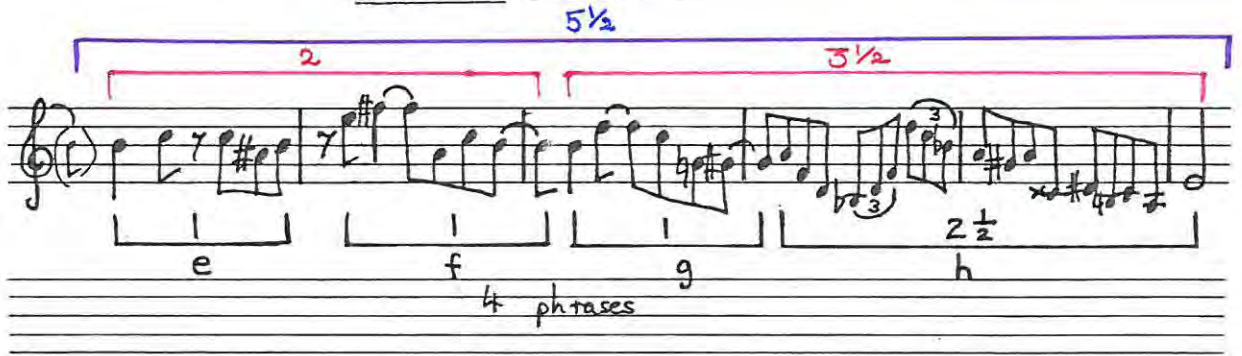
The following two diagrams show two of the three melodic components of the slow movement of the D minor Piano Trio. Superficially, this whole movement seems to approach nearer to a rhapsodic prose style than anything else Schumann ever wrote. Eric Sams said of this movement that its "fluctuating melodic lines...foreshadow Wolf's subtle declamation,"⁴⁴ and its flowing, recitative-like quality seems very much akin to the idea of Wagner's "endless melody". However, detailed analysis of each of the melodic substructures reveals an inner logic that in a sense counterbalances the rhapsodic style of the melodies themselves.

DIAGRAM V: D minor Trio, iii, 1-10, violin

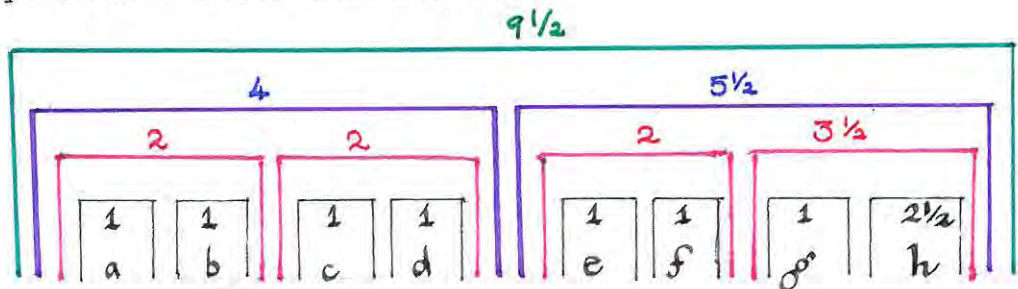
The diagram shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The melody is written in 7/4 time. It is divided into four phrases labeled a, b, c, and d. Phrase a is 1 bar long, b is 1 bar, c is 2 bars, and d is 2 bars. A blue bracket above the entire melody indicates a total length of 4 bars. Red brackets above phrases c and d indicate a total length of 2 bars for each. The notation includes a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a key signature of one flat (Bb).

⁴⁴"The Songs", in Alan Walker, Robert Schumann, pp.120-161, p.160.

DIAGRAM V (continued)



The analysis can be summarized as follows:



The whole paragraph divides clearly into 2 sentences, each consisting of 2 clauses and these, in their turn, of 2 phrases. The only slight rhythmic irregularity is the extension of the last phrase from 1 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ bars, the extra $1\frac{1}{2}$ bars decorating the cadence of the final clause and creating a brief link to the next paragraph. Each phrase, however, is melodically unrelated to adjacent phrases, although a, c, e and g are rhythmic sequences. The resulting accumulation of phrases seems disjointed and aphoristic, but is in fact extremely well-balanced, and highly organized in rhythmic structure: each phrase grows naturally from the one preceding it, and they all have a common origin in the first.

The whole melody is closely connected to the one which immediately succeeds it, (Diagram VI), and the two in certain respects flow together as one continuous paragraph. I have separated them here in order to highlight the details of phraseology within each one.

DIAGRAM VI: D minor Trio, iii, 10-19, cello

Cello

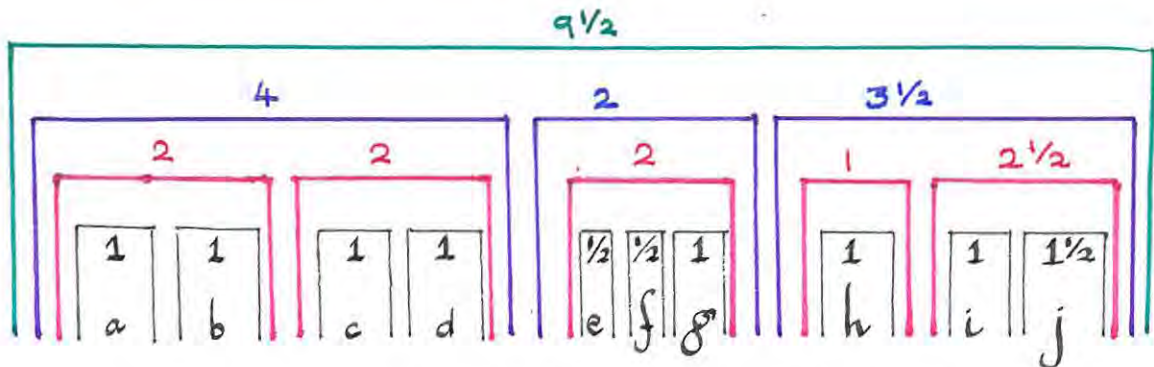
Piano

(bar 11)

(bar 14)

(bar 16)

The analysis can be summarized as follows:



This small paragraph contains three not very equally-balanced sentences of 4, 2 and $3\frac{1}{2}$ bars each, the middle one consisting of only one clause, the outer ones of two each. This, however, is the only reasonably symmetrical aspect of the whole paragraph. In other respects it is totally asymmetrical, and there are moreover no rhythmic sequences. Each phrase is approximately one bar long, and no two phrases are the same, each flowing almost imperceptibly into the next. In fact, this is one of the most continuous, linear melodic structures in all Schumann's chamber works, a structure of true "prosaic" character, and the total antithesis of the symmetrical, "poetic" stanza of Diagram II.

But the apparently aimless continuity of this melody is paralleled by an important countermelody played against it — the melody of the previous 9 bars.⁴⁵ This low, unobtrusive countermelody both balances and complements the upper melody, emphasizing some of the significant points of rest (not quite cadence-points) such as those in bars 12, 14, 15 and 16, and also maintaining the flow of rhythm during passages of syncopation in the upper melody. The countermelody provides such intricate, subtle counterpoint to the upper theme that it becomes difficult to separate aurally one from the other, and such close interdependence makes it clear that what we have here is not simply an isolated melody but a double melody, with two lines superimposed, the short, aphoristic phrases of each interlocking with an almost Schoenbergian complexity.

⁴⁵ See above, Diagram V.

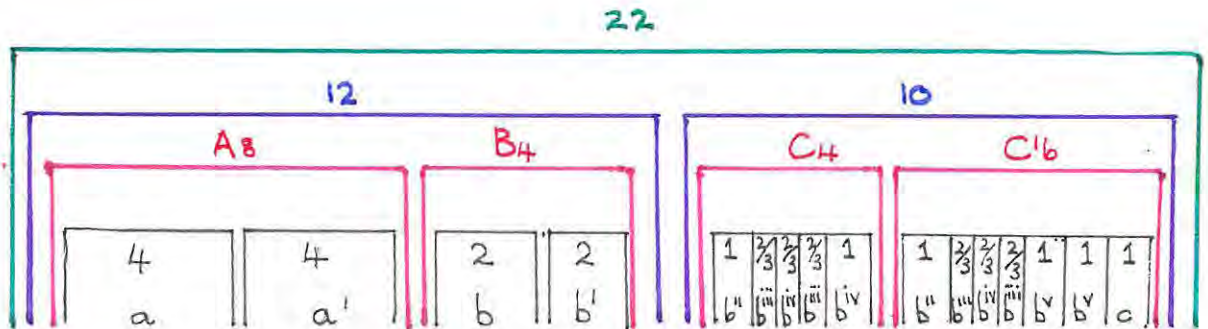
DIAGRAM VII: D minor Piano Trio, ii, 3-24, violin and piano

Handwritten musical notation for Diagram VII, showing four systems of music. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 3/4. The systems are labeled with red text and brackets:

- System 1:** Labeled **A8**. It consists of two phrases, each 4 bars long. The first phrase is labeled **a** and the second **a'**. The first phrase contains a 7-measure rest.
- System 2:** Labeled **B4**. It consists of two phrases, each 2 bars long. The first phrase is labeled **b** and the second **b'**. The second phrase ends with a fermata.
- System 3:** Labeled **C4**. It consists of five phrases: **b''** (1 bar), **b'''** (2/3 bar), **b''''** (2/3 bar), **b''''** (2/3 bar), and **b''''** (1 bar). The last phrase contains a fermata.
- System 4:** Labeled **C' b**. It consists of seven phrases: **b''** (1 bar), **b'''** (2/3 bar), **b''''** (2/3 bar), **b''''** (2/3 bar), **b''''** (1 bar), **b''''** (1 bar), and **c** (1 bar).

Vertical annotations on the left side of the page indicate bar numbers: **12** is written next to the first system, and **10** is written next to the third system.

The analysis can be summarized as follows:



The length of the whole paragraph, 22 bars, is in itself rather asymmetrical, but its two sentences more or less balance each other at 12 and 10 bars, within each of which there is a somewhat irregular balance of clauses: 8 + 4 + 4 + 6. However, the most interesting feature of the melody is the difference between the phraseological structure of the first and second sentences. The first sentence begins with two regular 4-bar phrases, very similar melodically, but ends with phrases of only 2 bars each, so that there is a resulting asymmetry in the total sentence structure. The second sentence, on the other hand, despite the fact that it is composed of so many small phrases, achieves a more symmetrical balance between its two clauses, because of their melodic and rhythmic similarity - the two extra bars at the end of the final clause simply serve as a cadential repetition and contribute nothing new to the melody itself .

In addition, the interesting cross-rhythms of the second sentence are complemented by the accompaniment of the dotted figure from the first sentence, which enhances the feeling of symmetry and balance in the second sentence.

The whole melody provides an unusual example of symmetry-within-asymmetry, and the most striking feature is the way in which the phrases gradually shrink from the initial square-cut 4-bar phrase, through

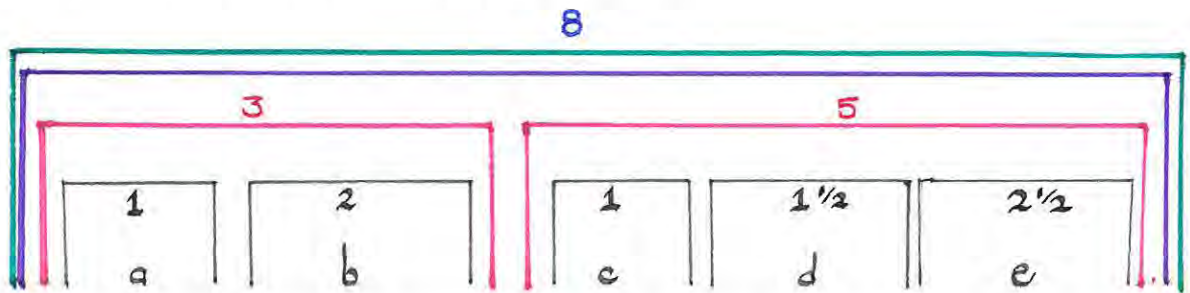
phrases of 2 and 1 bars, down to a mere $\frac{2}{3}$ of a bar, resulting in a feeling of phraseological disintegration throughout the melody.

The melody begins with a symmetrical, "poetic" stanza, but gradually dissolves into "prosaic" aphorisms that are balanced by simultaneous reminiscences of the opening stanza.

DIAGRAM VIII: D minor Trio, iii, 20-28, violin and cello

The diagram illustrates the structure of the melody in two staves. The top staff, labeled **A₃**, shows a melodic line in D minor with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a 7-measure phrase 'a' and a 2-measure phrase 'b'. The bottom staff, labeled **B₅**, shows a more complex melodic line with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features three phrases: 'c(a)' (1 measure), 'd(c)' (1½ measures), and 'e' (2½ measures). A large blue bracket on the right side of the diagram spans both staves and is labeled '8', indicating the total duration of the section.

The analysis can be summarized as follows:



The second sentence of this paragraph balances the first in terms of repetition and sequence, although the first sentence could also be taken as a complete self-contained paragraph within itself. The structure of each clause is asymmetrical : $3 + 5 + 3 + 4$, as is the phraseological structure : $1 + 2 + 1 + 1\frac{1}{2} + 2\frac{1}{2}$, and $1 + 2 + 1 + 1\frac{1}{2} + 1\frac{1}{2}$. But despite the irregularity of the phrase lengths the whole melody is unified both by a sense of continuity between phrases, and also by the cumulative use of sequences : phrase c grows out of phrase a, and d grows out of c. In addition, d and e themselves consist of nothing but minute sequential motives, so that the heavy reliance on the sequence draws the various strands of melody together to make a more highly unified prose structure than those of Diagrams V and VI.

Sequences are used in this example not simply as devices for continuing the melodic line and modulating through contrasting keys, but are intrinsic to the structure of the various phrases, particularly the last two in each sentence. In nearly every melody analysed so far, sequences have featured to a greater or lesser extent, whether they are purely rhythmic, or melodic as well. The use of the sequence is intrinsic to Schumann's conception of melodic structure, and not only in the chamber music. In the songs, for example,

"...sequences in voice and piano have both structural and expressive function."⁴⁶

⁴⁶Eric Sams, "The Songs", in Alan Walker, Robert Schumann, pp.120-161, p.140.

The sequences in Diagram I are both melodic (phrases c and cⁱ) and purely rhythmic (b and bⁱ), and there are also exact repetition, (phrase a occurs three times).

In Diagram VII the melodic material depends heavily on sequences: aⁱ is rhythmically and almost melodically sequential from a, and the same applies to b and bⁱ; finally, bⁱⁱ, bⁱⁱⁱ and b^{iv} are all sequential upon bⁱ. In Diagram V there are several rhythmic sequences, (clause A and B, and phrases e, f and g), and in Diagram VIII there are a number of minute sequential patterns in clause B.

In short, the D minor Piano Trio demonstrates not only a high instance of the use of sequences but also a considerable variety in the way sequences are used: they may be purely rhythmic, or both rhythmic and melodic; they may vary in length, (some involve whole clauses, some just phrases, and others simply fragments of individual phrases); they may occur in just one part of the melody or may run throughout; and they may be vitally connected to the substructure of the whole melody or serve a purely decorative function. However they are used, sequences are certainly an important part of Schumann's melodic language, and their appearance in the D minor Trio evinces a certain development in subtlety of treatment, when compared with the chamber works written five years earlier.

A very obvious example of an earlier melody which grows entirely by means of sequences is the main theme of the slow movement of the Piano Quartet:

DIAGRAM IX: Piano Quartet, iii, 3-18, cello

The diagram shows two staves of musical notation in bass clef, B-flat major, and 3/4 time. The first staff contains a sequence of notes with a pink bracket above it and a blue bracket on the right. Below the staff, two groups of four bars are bracketed and labeled '4 bass' and '4', with 'a' written below each. The second staff contains a sequence of notes with a pink bracket above it and a blue bracket on the right. Below the staff, two groups of bars are bracketed and labeled '4' and '3', with 'a' and 'a'' written below each respectively.

In the Op.41 String Quartets sequences are also used in a fairly rudimentary fashion, and not simply used, but heavily relied upon as means for prolonging the music. (In Op.41 no.1, i, there is not one single melodic idea that is not repeated sequentially, at least twice if not three times.) Often these sequences serve a modulatory function in transition passages or development sections. They also create a similarity of harmonic rhythm where this is needed, and in addition help to establish a new theme.

In the melodic structure of the first movement of the Piano Quintet these different purposes are much in evidence, so much so that one might almost describe it as the "apotheosis of the sequence". The first 56 bars are made up almost entirely of sequential ideas, in a framework of extreme structural symmetry. At bar 57 the second subject begins, itself consisting of nothing but a series of sequential phrases in the cello which are answered by inversion in the viola :

- DIAGRAM X: Piano Quintet, i, 57-69, cello and viola

The subsequent development section of 91 bars is devoted almost entirely to modulatory sequences based on the first subject, in 4-bar or 2-bar phrases, and the recapitulation naturally repeats the whole procession of sequences in bars 1-115 again.

The "dialogue" effect of the last example derives naturally from the use of sequences. However, such dialogue structures in Schumann's chamber melodies are rare. Their chief occurrence is outside the big sonata works, and one finds them almost exclusively in the small-scale pieces for solo instrument and piano, where the intimacy of form and instrumentation is more conducive to melodic "conversations" between two instruments. The "adagio" theme from the Adagio and Allegro for Horn and Piano illustrates this very well.

DIAGRAM XI: Horn Adagio + Allegro, 1-17, horn and piano

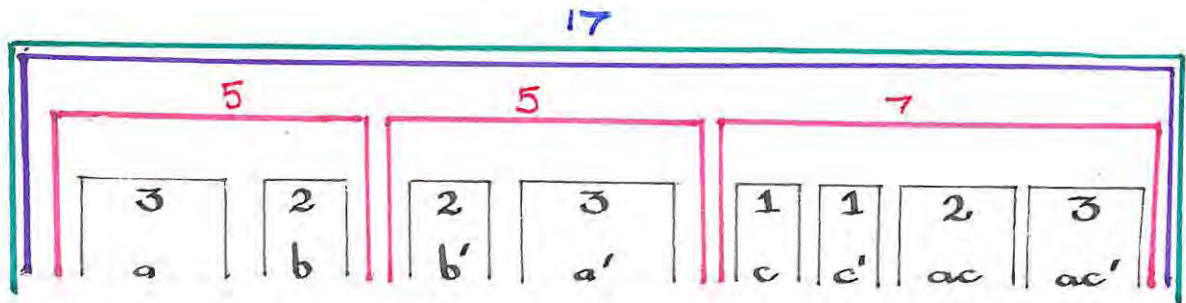
H = Horn

P = Piano

17

The diagram consists of three systems of musical notation, each enclosed in a pink bracket and labeled with a Roman numeral and a number (I 5, II 5, III 7).
System I: Labeled 'I 5'. It features a Horn (H) part on a treble clef staff and a Piano (P) part on a treble clef staff. The Horn part has a 3-bar phrase labeled 'a' and a 2-bar phrase labeled 'b'. The Piano part has a 2-bar phrase labeled 'b' and a 3-bar phrase labeled 'a''.
System II: Labeled 'II 5'. It features a Horn (H) part on a treble clef staff and a Piano (P) part on a treble clef staff. The Horn part has a 2-bar phrase labeled 'b', a 3-bar phrase labeled 'a'', and a 1-bar phrase labeled 'c'. The Piano part has a 3-bar phrase labeled 'ac' and a 3-bar phrase labeled 'ac''.
System III: Labeled 'III 7'. It features a Piano (P) part on a treble clef staff and a Piano (P) part on a bass clef staff. The treble clef part has a 1-bar phrase labeled 'a'' and a 3-bar phrase labeled 'ac'. The bass clef part has a 3-bar phrase labeled 'ac'.

The analysis of this melody is as follows:



Clearly this whole 17-bar sentence (or paragraph) is constructed entirely on the basis of a question-answer dialogue. Clauses one and two are a mirror-image of each other, while in clause three phrases c^i and ac^i are sequential repetitions of c and ac respectively. The three main "topics of conversation", phrases a , b and c , vary in length from 1 to 3 bars, so that there is a resultant structural asymmetry of phrasing which counterbalances the possible monotony resulting from the "dialogue". This kind of melodic structure successfully answers the problem of how to share melodic material between two instruments without making unnecessary and tedious repetitions. The literary association of such a structure is obviously neither poetic nor novelistic but dramatic.

In summarizing the main features which characterize Schumann's melodic writing in the chamber works, two important facts emerge : firstly, style is very intimately related to structure; and secondly, there are various important elements which play significant roles in the structural design of the melodies:

- 1) Symmetry and asymmetry are complementary aspects which recur throughout the chamber melodies.
- 2) The use of cadences determines whether a melody will be periodic or non-periodic. The exploration of the continuous, non-periodic structure

was one of Schumann's most original contributions to the development of melody.

3) Thematic structure is often determined by the harmonic basis: generally speaking, the more simple and clear-cut the accompanying harmony, the more regular and square-cut the melody will be. (The restless, shifting chromatic harmony of the slow movement of the D minor Trio, for example, is an inevitable adjunct to the flowing, continuous, asymmetrical qualities of its themes.)

4) The overall metrical structure of the melodies is determined by the length and rhythm of the individual phrases.

5) The complete melody may be made up of self-contained components which are contrasted or related to each other, or, more unusually, the growth of the melody may depend on tiny motives or phrases which generate other motives, and which may all connect back to an initial idea. The first type seems to be conceived as a whole, with the end of the theme in the composer's mind from the beginning, whereas the second, undoubtedly more original type, has an element of mystery and expectation, and a sense of journeying into regions that are not entirely visible from the beginning.

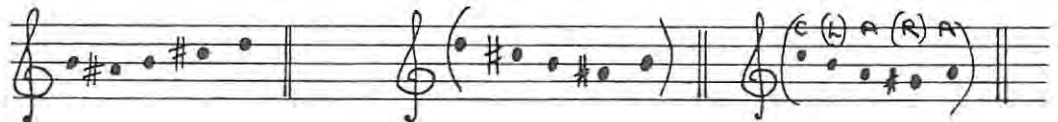
6) The most pervasive device, which is perhaps the single, most characteristic feature of the chamber melodies, is the sequence. However, in his exploitation of this traditional element in melodic writing Schumann gradually developed more original approaches, and the sequence enhances both the symmetry and asymmetry of his phraseology, and, ironically, makes a significant contribution to the individuality and originality of his melodic writing.

IV.

MELODY (ii) - USE OF MOTIVES AND MOTTOES

"I am writing in hieroglyphics," (wrote the seventeen-year-old Schumann to a fellow school-boy in July, 1827), "I shall hardly be able to decipher them even to you, who know every crevice of my heart..."¹ These words occur in the earliest letter to be included in the volumes of Schumann's published correspondence. They refer to the almost wilful obscurity of the exaggerated, highly metaphysical style he chooses to employ in this exuberant and rambling letter. Although there is nothing here to foreshadow the carefully worked-out musical cryptography to come -- a manner of composition which has aroused so much notice in recent years -- it is nonetheless interesting to find the words "hieroglyphics" and "decipher", which hint already at a romantic impulse to a "secret language" on the composer's part. They were, of course, words which were to have far-reaching application for critics in later attempts to understand the more cryptic and mysterious elements in Schumann's complicated melodic personality.

The significance of the five-note motto theme



representing the letters of the name CLARA was first expounded by

¹Early Letters, p.2.

Roger Fiske in 1964.² The following year, Eric Sams initiated a series of articles and correspondence (in the Musical Times) in which he probed the whole literary and musical background relating to Schumann's use of this, and other, musical mottoes, and established a convincing argument for their importance in relation to his songs and piano music up to 1840.³ Not unnaturally, his conclusions about the use of literary ciphers in Schumann's early music have an important bearing on the music composed after 1840, not least among which may be counted the chamber music:

Nearly all Schumann's music contains or derives from words, whether as texts, titles, programmes or epigraphs. It is also famous for its structure of music qua mosaic, an aggregation of small-scale motifs. Now, surely, these two basic facts about Schumann -- his obviously verbal content, his obviously motive form -- may well be related? He works by way of motto-themes, I suggest, because that is virtually what they are -- mottoes turned into themes.⁴

Sams goes on to describe these as Schumann's "Papillons", a word coined by Schumann himself in his Op.2:

By 'Papillons', I suggest, he means motifs that can appear or disappear, fly forward or backward, and assume an infinite variety of shapes and colours.⁵

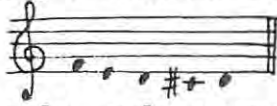
The 'Papillons' of the Abegg Variations, Dauidsbundlertänze and Carnaval, are clearly evident, and the use of the CLARA motif can certainly be traced throughout several early piano- and song-cycles; but it might

²"A Schumann Mystery", Musical Times, vol.105, pp.574-578, August, 1964.

³"Did Schumann use Ciphers?", op.cit., vol.106, pp.584-591, August, 1965; "The Schumann Ciphers", op.cit., vol.107, pp.392-400, May, 1966; "The Schumann Ciphers: A Coda", op.cit., vol.107, pp.1050-1051, November, 1966.

⁴Eric Sams, "Schumann and the Tonal Analogue", in Walker, Robert Schumann, pp.390-405, p.395.

⁵Op.cit., p.393.

perhaps still be supposed that the apparently more "absolute" musical forms of the chamber works and symphonies would resist the incorporation of literary ciphers -- at least in so ready a manner. However, it is obvious that there exists a CLARA-motif  running throughout the D minor Symphony, for example, and moreover,

Mosco Carner goes so far as to suggest that every one of the symphonies and...piano works and songs...represent 'a succession of musical tableaux, whose progress and purpose are chiefly determined by extra-musical thoughts...' The reason is that 'Schumann appears to have needed the stimulus of poetic ideas, and literary images to bring his imagination to the boil'.⁶

Sams and Carner here extend their inquiry to include the "symphonies, piano works and songs"; and the kind of interest and exploration dealing with the discovery of motto-themes has so far been conducted in these areas of -- for Schumann -- more recognised achievement. But the same kind of analysis applied also to the chamber works yields particularly significant and unexpected results. However, it is clear that, in this less programmatic world of the chamber music (as with the symphonies) the incorporation of the literary ciphers is more subtle, and the clues less open and evident. All this I hope to show from analysis along these lines of seven major works, dating from different periods in Schumann's life, each of which evinces a different application of the "literary stimulus" which is a clue to so much of Schumann's musical personality. These works are the String Quartet in A major, the Piano Quartet, the Piano Quintet, the Piano Trios in D minor, F major and G minor, and the Third Violin Sonata.

Most of these works have distinct, individual motives embedded in them, whose origins -- as will be shown -- may be literary or non-literary, but which do not normally travel beyond the bounds of a

⁶Op.cit., pp.395-396.

particular work. The only motif which is common to several works is the CLARA motif, which recurs in varying degrees of concealment or modification, according to the context.

Whatever the origin and application of the motives used, they generally have a common purpose, namely, they provide the initial impetus or framework for the main themes of a specific work. Inevitably, this leads to a recognisable family resemblance between themes from different movements of the same work, which in turn greatly enhances the unity of the work's overall structure. Judging from the evidence of the function of motives in compositions such as Carnaval and the D minor Symphony, we may assume that the achievement of structural unity was, similarly, Schumann's aim when he employed them in the chamber music.

From this it may be deduced that Schumann's incorporation of motives which originate in literary stimuli of one sort or another, ultimately fulfils a purely musical -- and moreover, extremely subtle -- function; the original "literary stimulus" is submerged in its musical application.

This helps to explain why the CLARA motif occurs in so many works from 1842 to 1853. Clearly, the motif is not used in these later works for the same reasons that it appears in the songs and piano works prior to 1840 -- namely, to symbolize to some extent an exquisite but forbidden passion. The revered name CLARA originally constituted a symbol of a purely "denoting" kind; but later its use as a motto-theme is more in the nature of a musical leit-motif than a literary signpost: a leit-motif that gradually becomes part of Schumann's own, highly idiosyncratic, melodic style.

Ultimately, chamber works which have a high instance of motivic usage can only be evaluated on musical grounds, since Schumann's literary intention can never be precisely calculated.

Oh Heaven, when will the time finally come, when we are asked no longer what we intend to express with our divine compositions! Look for the fifths and leave us in peace.⁷

The following analyses therefore attempt simply to reveal the extent to which certain chamber works are given a high degree of melodic unity by the use of motives (literary or otherwise).

String Quartet in A major, Op.41 no.3

The Third String Quartet is interwoven with not just one motif, but a number of small interlinked motives, all derived from the broader context of the B minor CLARA theme.⁸



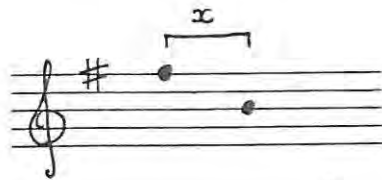
⁷ Schumann, quoted by T.A. Brown in The Aesthetics of Robert Schumann, p.47.

⁸ The whole 11-note pattern encompassing the CLARA-motif was first highlighted by Sams, in his book The Songs of Robert Schumann, p.23. It originated in Clara's Op.5,



in which the CLARA motif and its reversal are framed by the notes F.E. which Sams suggests refer to Florestan and Eusebius. See his article "Did Schumann use Ciphers?", Musical Times, 1965.

The number of ways in which this series of notes can be subdivided into short motives may appear to be almost limitless. However, the number of genuine motives which, having been drawn from this fertile source, find their way into the Quartet as leading-motives, are comparatively few. Moreover, their interdependence of shape and tonal similarities link them closely together. There are eight motives in all, derived from three basic prototypes -- the falling fifth motif x :



the CLARA motif y :



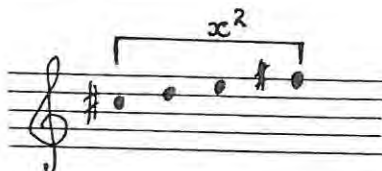
and the descending scale motif z :



From x is derived the inversion, x^1 ,



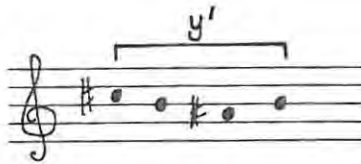
and its companion, x^2 ;



from y is derived the inversion, y^2 ,



and the shortened form, y^1 ;



and z can be reversed, to form z^1 .



Motif x appears in the very first bar of the slow introduction, combined with y^1 ,



9

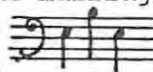
and it occurs also in the bass line four bars later, significantly transposed to B E E which encompasses the literary cipher E H E.¹⁰

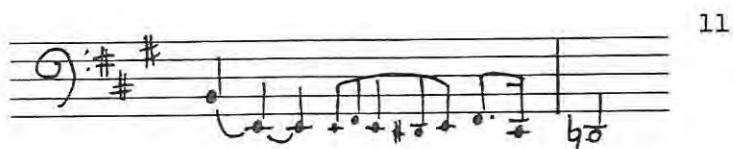
⁹Op.41, 3, i, 1, violin I.

¹⁰Schumann himself refers to this significant motif in a letter to Clara Wieck, of 1838:

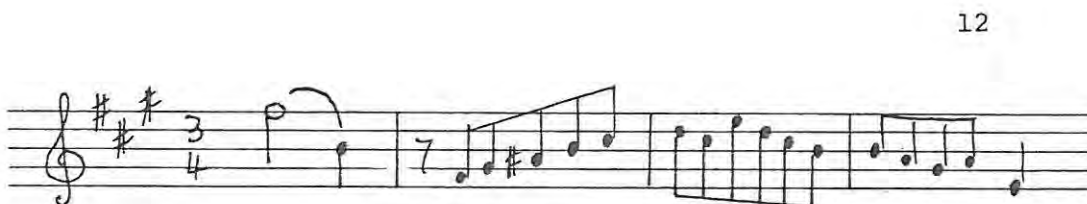
I have just noticed that marriage is a very musical word, and a fifth too:

(Early Letters, p.269.)

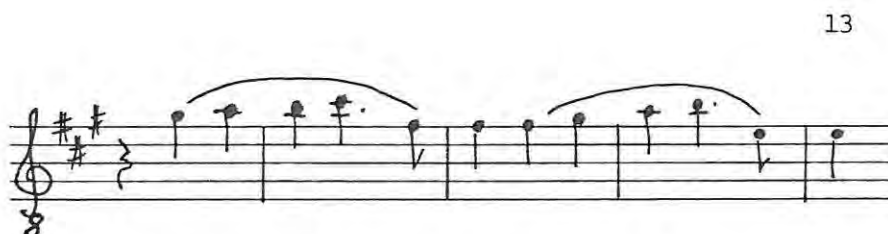




From this grows the first subject, Ia;



Finally, the second subject, 2a, is a combination of x and x^2



Motif x^1 is the basis for the main theme of the second movement,
both in its original form,



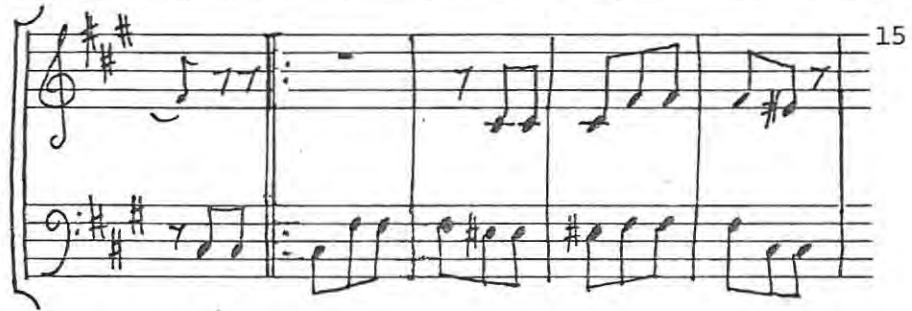
¹¹Op.cit., 5, cello.

¹²Op.cit., 8-11, violin I.

¹³Op.cit., 46-48, cello.

¹⁴Op.41, 3, ii, 1-3, violin I.

and even more notably in some of the variations, such as Variation I,



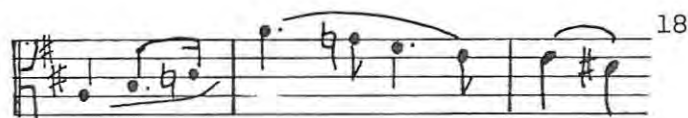
Motives x and z are interwoven into the continuation of the main theme, so that the whole first 16 bars are as follows:



Motif z reversed appears again as the first main theme of the slow movement;



the second theme, Ib, incorporates the original version of z;



¹⁵ Op.cit., 48-52, violin I and cello.

¹⁶ Op.cit., 1-16, violin I.

¹⁷ Op.41, 3, iii, 1-2, violin I.

¹⁸ Op.cit., 8-10, viola.

and theme 2a is based on motif x^1 :



The last movement opens with motif y^2 , the CLARA motif in its B minor key-context;



and the other three main themes of this movement are all based on the rising 4th motif y .



¹⁹Op.cit., 20, violin I.

²⁰Op.41, 3, iv, 1-2, violin I.

²¹Op.cit., 15, violin I.

²²Op.cit., 49-50, violin I.

²³Op.cit., 72-74, violin I.

Piano Quartet, Op.44

In the Piano Quartet, there are a number of related motives used throughout the work, but their relationship to each other is even closer than in the A major Quartet, since they are all derived from the five-note leading-motif, CLARA.



This motif is at first tentatively suggested in the fragmentary phrases of the slow introduction, (rather in the same manner as the beginning of the finale of Beethoven's Op.135, with its questioning "Muss es sein?" motif):

Bars 2-3

(C L A R A)
reversed

Bars 5-6

Bars 8-12

(C L A R A)

Finally, when the Allegro first subject is reached, the CLARA motif is embedded in the end of the theme, the beginning of which had been identical to bars 2-6.

During the rest of this movement there are no further allusions to the motif, (apart from those which occur during restatements of the first subject), but during the next three movements it reappears, having undergone successive transformations. The motif is subjected to inversion and retrograde inversion, and changes of tonality from major to minor. For example, the original CLARA motif I in the major mode becomes

from which the TRIO I theme is derived,

²⁴Piano Quartet, i, 21-24, piano.

²⁵Piano Quartet, ii, 37-39, piano.

and also the G-flat major theme in the middle of the slow movement:

26



If the original CLARA motif is inverted (by mirror-inversion) the result in the same key would be



This new motif pervades the whole Scherzo theme:

27



and it can also be found in the bass of the G-flat major theme,

²⁶Piano Quartet, iii, 48-51, violin.

²⁷Piano Quartet, ii, 1-4, cello.



as well as in the 3rd and 4th bars of the theme itself:



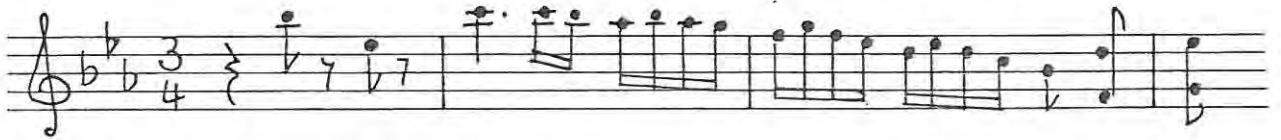
Retrograde statement of this motif (in other words, retrograde inversion of the original) would result in the following new motif:



This is found in both the main themes of the finale -- firstly embedded in the rapid semiquavers of the first subject,

²⁸Piano Quartet, iii, 48-49, cello and violin.

²⁹Op.cit., 50-51 violin.



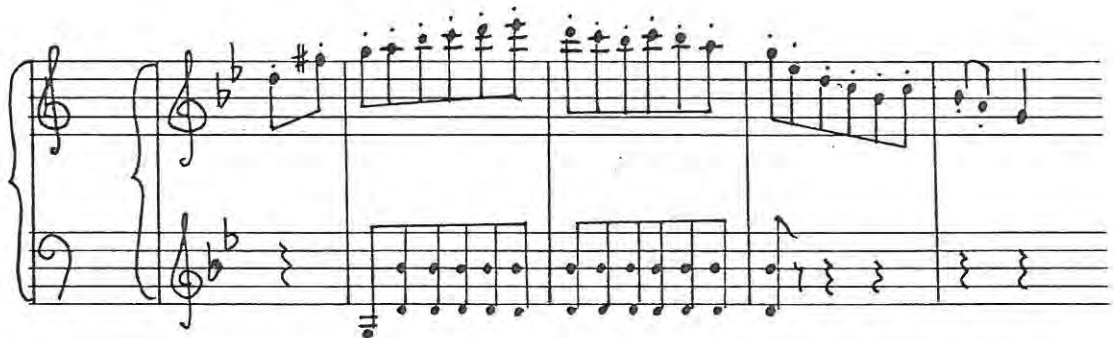
and then more openly in the second subject:

31



It had also been foreshadowed very briefly in the little "Florestan" piano figure which linked together the various sections of the Scherzo movement:

32



³⁰Piano Quartet, iv, 1-4, violin.

³¹Op.cit., 23-26, cello.

³²Piano Quartet, ii, 33-35, piano.

Apart from the two main themes just quoted, the finale contains other versions of the CLARA motif, so that in a sense the whole movement is almost an apotheosis of the motivic idea. The original motif, I, reappears in theme 2b;

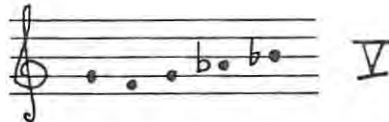
33



and a shortened, four-note version introduces a significant new theme in the development:



Finally, the retrograde version of I, which until this moment had played no part in the proceedings (and had only been hinted at in the slow introduction at the beginning),



now comes into its own, as the basis for a new theme, 3a, in the middle of the finale. This motif is used both in its entire form, and also without the first note, resulting in a chain of motives as follows:

³³Piano Quartet, iv, 39-41, piano.

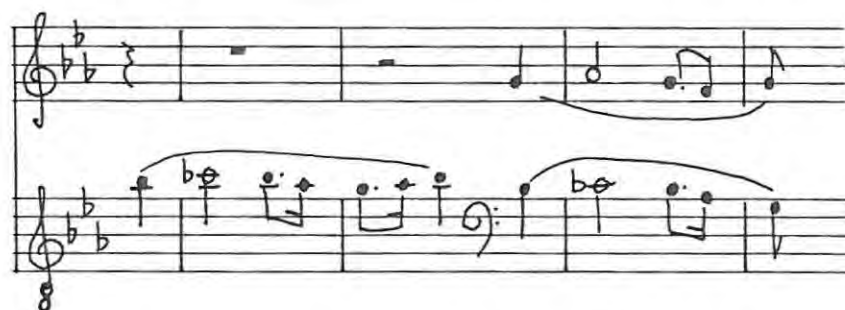
³⁴Op.cit., 93-95, cello.



The fugal coda, which brings this long and extraordinary close-knit movement to an end, consists of two subjects stated simultaneously, of which the second is a combination of themes 1a and 2a, in each of which motif IV had played such an important part. It now appears in a five-fold sequence:



Motif IV also has the last word in its slow form (as theme 2a) when it is nostalgically referred to just before the final cadential accelerando of the whole work.

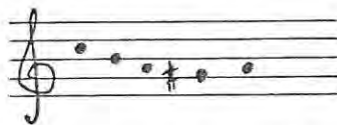


³⁵Op.cit., 144-147, piano.

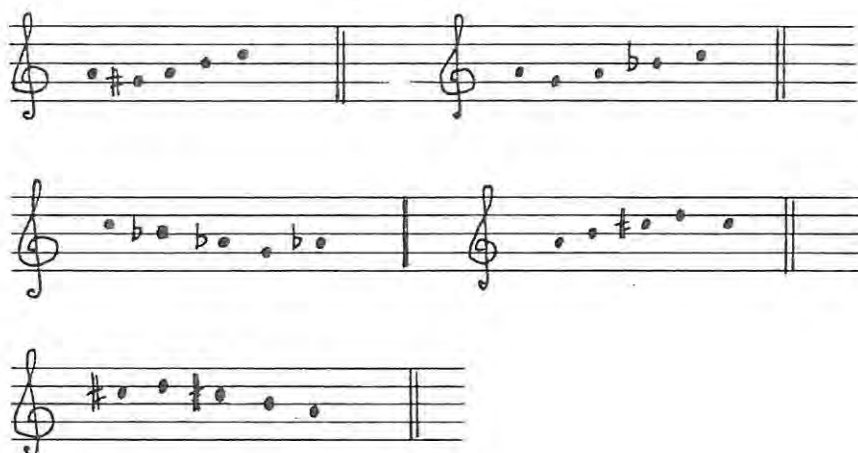
³⁶Op.cit., 278-279, piano.

³⁷Op.cit., 315-317, cello and violin.

Thus, from one original motto-theme:



the following five subsidiaries have all been derived, each of which plays a key rôle in the work :



In summarizing the dependence of the Piano Quartet on the CLARA motif, it can be claimed unreservedly that this is one of the most intricate uses of the basic, five-note motto-theme in any chamber work by Schumann (or, to the best of my knowledge, in any other work by him). It is also one of the most heavily disguised uses of the motif, especially if one compares its application here with the extrovert use of the ABEGB and ASCH motives in the earlier piano works. The CLARA motif in the Piano Quartet is obscure enough not to infringe on the melodic variety of the music (there are in any case three principal themes in the work which are not derived from it); and yet it works secretly and subtly towards imbuing the work with a tremendous sense of thematic unity. Although this particular "Papillon" (to recall

Eric Sams' phrase)³⁸ does not quite assume an infinite variety of shapes and colours, it certainly assumes a good many, and flies not only "forwards or backwards" but also in inversions and transmutations, and in a number of different keys.

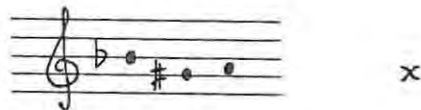
D minor Piano Trio

The motives in the D minor Trio are more diffuse than in the Piano Quartet. There is not just one motif in this work, but two, both characterized by a degree of chromaticism, so that in a sense they can be combined in a basic four-note chromatic blueprint:



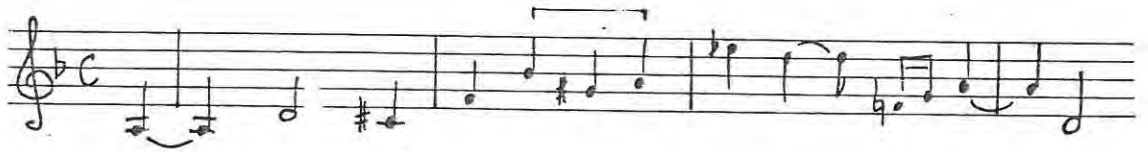
In addition, the CLARA motif appears several times during the course of the work.

The most important derivative of A is undoubtedly a three-note motif x :

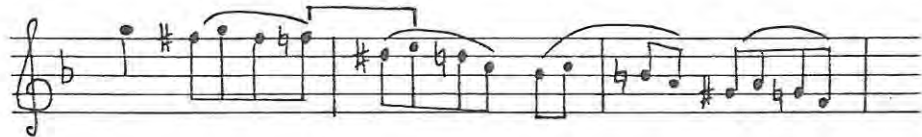


which pervades many of the main themes of the work, and enhances them with a typically Schumannesque angularity. As far as its appearance in principal themes is concerned, it occurs in the opening theme of the first movement,

³⁸See above, p. 159.



in the second half of the Scherzo theme,



in the fifth bar of the first main theme of the slow movement, simultaneously in violin and piano,

³⁹D minor Trio, i, 1-4, violin.

⁴⁰D minor Trio, ii, 15-17, piano.

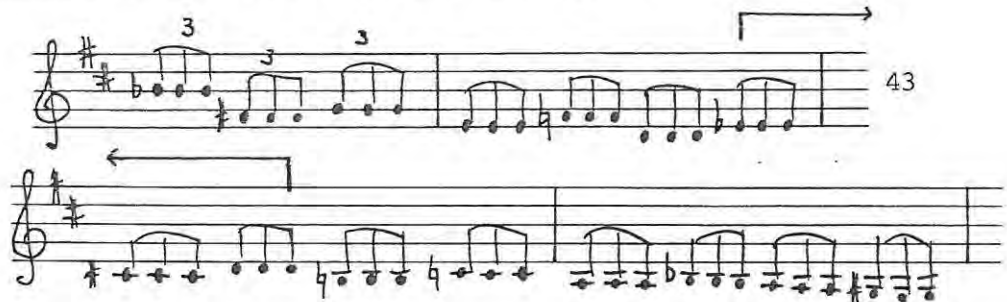
⁴¹D minor Trio, iii, 4-5, violin and piano.

and in theme Ib of the finale. In its first appearance here it is modified slightly to suit the brighter major key,

42



but soon afterwards the repeat of this theme contains the original motif, embedded in a chain of three-note motives.



Apart from these important thematic usages, motif *x* is also made great use of in numerous transition passages, codas and development sections, notably the development of the first movement, in the first six bars of which *x* occurs five times.

⁴²D minor Trio, iv, 19-20, piano.

⁴³Op.cit., 39-42, violin.

At the end of the development x is combined with the second subject over a dominant pedal, heralding the recapitulation; and the coda of the movement culminates in an emphatic statement of x to the notes $E^b - C^\sharp - D$, which results in a Neapolitan cadence -- a relatively unusual cadential harmony for Schumann.

In the slow movement x figures prominently in all the transitional bars from one section to another and to a lesser extent in the

⁴⁴ D minor Trio, i, 48-53, violin, cello and piano.

⁴⁵ Op.cit., 234-235, violin and piano.

main themes themselves.⁴⁶ As a transitional motif it is sandwiched firmly in between themes Ia and Ib (bars 9 - 10), between the end of Ib and the beginning of 2a,

47

and in the last four bars of the movement, which form a link to the finale:

48

⁴⁶See above, p. 177.

⁴⁷D minor Trio, iii, 19-20.

⁴⁸Op.cit., 54-57, piano.

The recitative-like themes of this movement aspire so earnestly towards the condition of actual speech that it is tempting to read verbal mottoes amongst the fragmentary phrases. It has already been pointed out that the first three notes of the movement, A, C, B, could represent the German exclamation "Ach!", and there is certainly a declamatory quality about the opening phrase which lends itself to this literary suggestion. There may even be a literary motive behind the x-motif itself, used so prominently in this movement; for at the pitch F, D[#], E,



it could be interpreted as representing the notes F, E-flat, E,



which in German would of course be F., S., E., perhaps indicating Florestan-Schumann-Eusebius.

It is dangerous to read too much into such delicate, possibly coincidental, musical devices, as Schumann himself pointed out:

People err when they suppose that composers prepare pens and paper with the deliberate predetermination of sketching, painting, expressing this or that.⁴⁹

But he goes on to say:

Yet we must not estimate outward influences and impressions too lightly. Involuntarily an idea sometimes develops itself simultaneously with the musical

⁴⁹ On Music and Musicians, p.251.

fancy; the eye is awake as well as the ear, and this ever-busy organ sometimes holds fast to certain outlines amid all the sounds and tones, which, keeping pace with the music, form and condense into clear shapes.⁵⁰

Certainly, on the face of it, the motives in the D minor Trio do not seem to be all that "involuntarily" introduced, although Schumann's precise method of composition naturally remains a subject for speculation rather than proof. The appearance of the x-motif in so many different guises in the work suggests most emphatically that it is deliberately used as a way of making cross-reference between movements. The same can also be said of the second, subsidiary motif.

This consists of the original chromatic blueprint A, as it stands, and in this form it monopolizes the second subject of the first movement, theme 2a,



and it also becomes the countersubject of theme 2b.

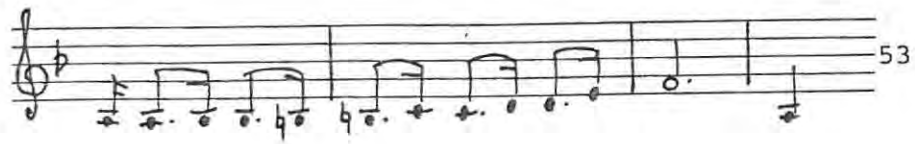


⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ D Minor Trio, i, 27-28, piano.

⁵² Op.cit., 35-36, piano.

Both Scherzo and Trio themes derive from A,



the latter, of course, being a theme that Schumann delights in, since it is a musical palindrome, and therefore easily reversible.⁵⁵ In the last movement it is the chromatic accompaniment to theme 2b which uses motif A, rather than the theme itself:

56

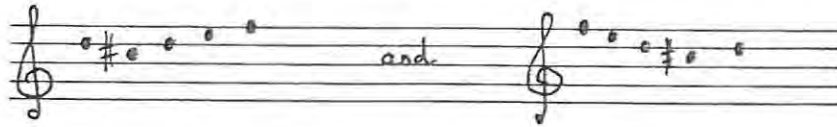
⁵³ D minor Trio, ii, 3-5, violin.

⁵⁴ Op.cit., 78-81, piano.

⁵⁵ His canonic treatment of this theme has been discussed in the chapter on Counterpoint, p. 359.

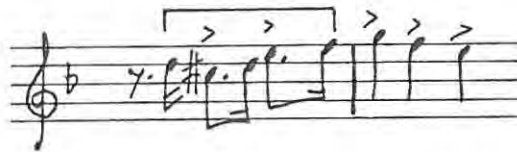
⁵⁶ D minor Trio, iv, 81-84, violin and piano.

The CLARA motif in this work is another subsidiary motif and by no means as pervasive or obvious as *x*, or even *A*, nor does it have the heavily-disguised structural rôle it maintained in the Piano Quartet. Nevertheless it is certainly present, in its two forms



in several main themes of the work. It first appears in Ib of the first movement;

57



then it has a transitory appearance in the Scherzo theme, immediately after motif *x* (see top of p.177); thirdly it forms the basis for theme Ib of the slow movement;

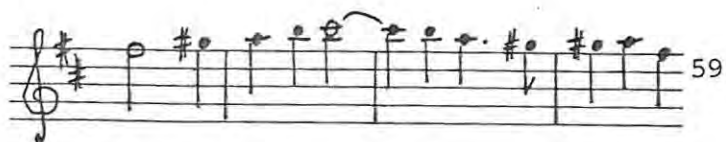
58



and lastly it occurs in three themes of the finale -- Ic,

⁵⁷ D minor Trio, i, 15-16, violin.

⁵⁸ D minor Trio, iii, 10-11, cello.



2a,

60



which later yields the very useful canonic theme,

61



and 2c.

62



⁵⁹D minor Trio, iv, 21-24, piano.

⁶⁰Op.cit., 67-68, piano.

⁶¹Op.cit., 103-104, piano.

⁶²Op.cit., 121-122, piano.

G minor Piano Trio

The fact that the time-honoured CLARA motif reappears four years later in the G-minor Piano Trio (1851) is ample evidence of its tenacity, and its significance in Schumann's chamber music.

Again, as in the D minor Trio, it is fairly well-hidden, and shares the motivic structure of the work with two other very short motives -- one consisting simply of a diminished 4th



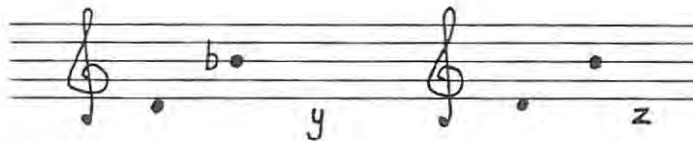
which may be reversed,



(and which may owe its origin to the CLARA blueprint),



and the other of a rising 6th, which may be major or minor:



The first two motives are by far the most pervasive, and exemplify the essence of Schumann's melodic style during the last few years of

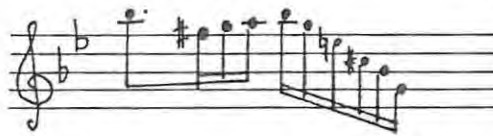
his life. Motif x^1 is implied in the middle of the first subject (Ia) of the first movement,

63



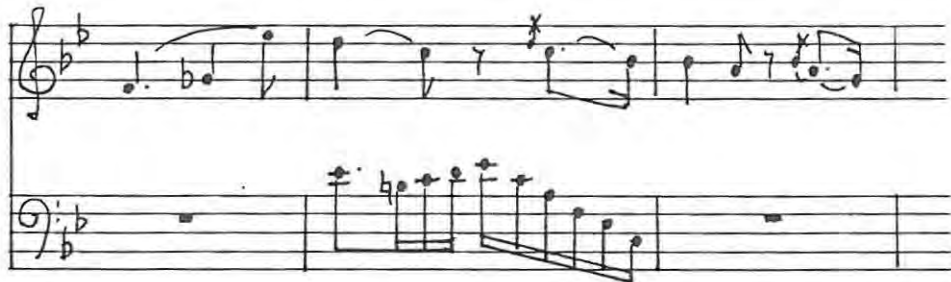
and x is incorporated more openly in theme Ib,

64



which is later used as a countersubject to 2a;

65



and x appears again in a new figure in the development:

⁶³G minor Trio, i, 4-5, violin.

⁶⁴Op.cit., 28, violin.

⁶⁵Op.cit., 35-37, violin and cello.



Motif x is prominently positioned in each half of the slow movement's two-part theme,



and it has the last word in the coda of the same movement.



⁶⁶Op.cit., 78-79, cello.

⁶⁷G minor Trio, ii, 1-3, violin.

⁶⁸Op.cit., 5, violin.

⁶⁹Op.cit., 59, violin.

The last part of the Scherzo theme contains x ;

70



and x^1 is contained in the first Trio theme, (which later reappears as a new theme in the finale),

71



while the descending fourth * appears soon afterwards as a diminished 4th, in the context of a minor key.

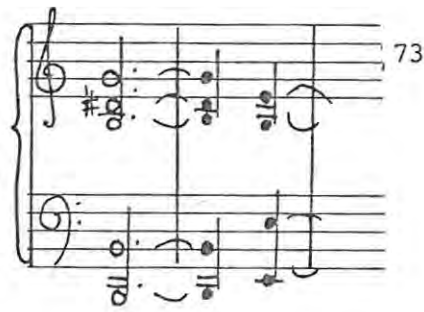


This phrase in fact ends with the rather unusual cadence $III_b^+ - i$ in E minor, in which the motif appears vertically.

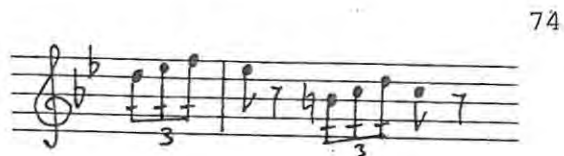
⁷⁰G minor Trio, iii, 31-34, violin.

⁷¹Op.cit., 51-56, violin.

⁷²Op.cit., 76-78, violin.



Lastly, it appears in the finale in theme 4b



in the transition to the recapitulation,



and in the coda.



⁷³Op.cit., 83-84, piano.

⁷⁴G minor Trio, iv, 79, violin.

⁷⁵Op.cit., 116, violin.

⁷⁶Op.cit., 154, cello.

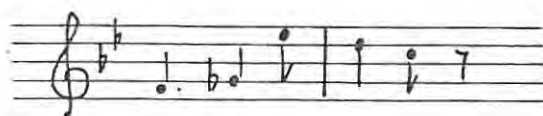
This last example is more complicated than it appears, for the three instruments together at this point proliferate in examples of all four motives as well as the CLARA motif: a summary, as it were, of these motivic ideas, which is certainly appropriate to the beginning of the coda to such a complex work.

77

The rising 6th motif z first appears in the second subject of the first movement;

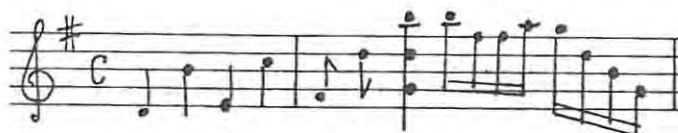
⁷⁷Op.cit., 154.

78



but its most ostensible use is at the beginning of the last movement.

79



It is further used three times in significant themes in the work, but each time in collaboration with the CLARA motif -- first in the main theme of the slow movement, (which also incorporates x);

80



secondly, in the emphatic "schneller" middle section of the same movement;

81



and lastly in theme Ib of the finale.

⁷⁸ G minor Trio, i, 35-37, violin.

⁷⁹ G minor Trio, iv, 2-3, violin.

⁸⁰ G minor Trio, ii, 1-3, violin.

⁸¹ Op.cit., 31-32, violin.



The CLARA motif by itself appears in five main themes, each time fairly well-disguised by the rhythmic figure which accompanies it, as it had been in the three examples above. It is first of all the basis for a mysterious new pizzicato theme in the development of the first movement,



which is transformed in the coda into a menacing rumble.

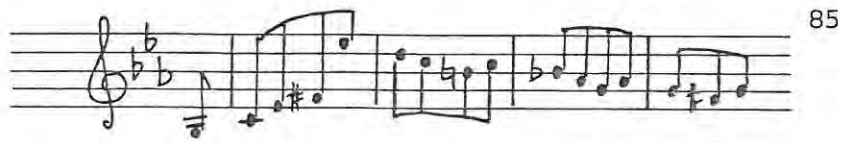


Then in the Scherzo it is used twice in succession, (and here bears a strong relationship to the first Allegro theme of the D-minor Symphony, which of course is also very closely structured around the CLARA motif).

⁸²G minor Trio, iv, 10, piano.

⁸³G minor Trio, i, 112, cello.

⁸⁴Op.cit., 241, cello.



And in the finale it appears twice in its 'familiar' key of B minor --
in themes 2a,



and 3b.



These extremely numerous occurrences of the various motives
(x, y, z and CLARA) in main themes of the work may perhaps be attri-
butable to the fact that the proliferation of clearly-defined main

⁸⁵ G minor Trio, iii, 1-4, piano.

⁸⁶ G minor Trio, iv, 21, cello.

⁸⁷ Op.cit., 49-50, piano.

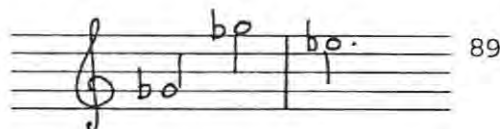
themes (eighteen altogether) necessitated some sort of systematic interdependence between the themes, which can most easily be achieved by the use of small motifs. It seems likely that there was a certain amount of deliberate contrivance in the way the motives were forged into themes of such varying character: for example, the recurrence of the prominent and easily-recognisable rising-6th motif could not have been merely coincidental, or even simply the result of subconscious reminiscence in the composer's mind. Possibly, therefore, the proliferation of themes in this Trio is a result of the use of motives. One of Schumann's weaknesses as a composer lay in the realm of development of themes, a weakness particularly noticeable in this work. Schumann possibly found here that one way of solving this problem -- or at least of evading it -- was to invent a continual stream of new melodic ideas to substitute for development of existing ones. But in order that the number and variety of themes should not subsequently lead to vagueness and differences of structure Schumann incorporated motives into the themes to give a semblance of unity to the whole work.

In other chamber works there are clues to the incorporation of motives, but generally speaking their use is limited, especially when compared to the more intensive motivic structure of the works already analysed. A notable exception is the Third Violin Sonata, which will be discussed later.

Works which contain a limited employment of motives are the Piano Quintet, the F major Trio, the First and Second Violin Sonatas, the Fairy-tales and the Horn Adagio and Allegro.

In the Piano Quintet a predominant idea (one can hardly even call it a motif) is the falling fifth, which, as we have seen, is also of great importance in the Third String Quartet.⁸⁸ In the Quintet, this interval permeates the second subject of the first movement, the main theme of the slow movement, both Trios of the third movement, and the first theme of the finale.

In the case of the rising seventh which opens the Quintet, a claim might also be made for this interval as a motif, but not in the same sense as the other motives discussed in this chapter, for it is neither a literary cipher nor a leading motif which remains consistently the same. It is more in the nature of a motivic idea that can be transformed or developed at will (in the Beethovenian sense -- a motivic usage comparatively rare in the chamber works). Thus it is sometimes transformed alternately into an octave or sixth, as in the following two themes,



and



both of which retain a natural affinity with the original rising 7th.

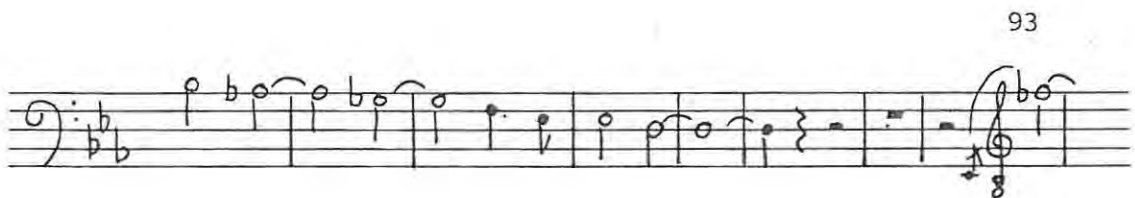
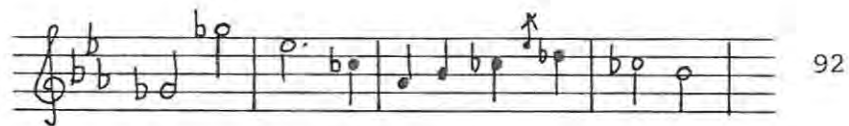
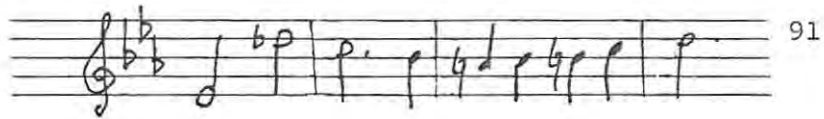
Another aspect of the Piano Quintet, which it shares with the F major Trio and the D minor Violin Sonata, is the infrequent and obscure introduction of the CLARA motif into certain passages of the

⁸⁸ See above, p. 165, and also John Gardner, "The Chamber Works", in Walker, Robert Schumann, pp. 228 and 232.

⁸⁹ Piano Quintet, i, 27-28, piano.

⁹⁰ Piano Quintet, iv, 115-116, violin.

work -- not necessarily main themes. It is difficult to assess whether this was a conscious decision or simply a result of the familiarity of this particular motif's turn of phrase in Schumann's melodic subconscious. In the case of the Piano Quintet, the close chronological proximity of this work to the Third String Quartet and the Piano Quartet (in which the use of the CLARA motif would seem to be intentional) suggests a certain air of conscious similarity between themes such as the following, into which the five-note motif is perhaps deliberately woven.



⁹¹ Piano Quintet, i, 9-12, piano.

⁹² Op.cit., 27-30, piano.

⁹³ Op.cit., 116-124, piano.



Again, in the F major Trio, the arrangement of notes which dictates the shape of the two main subjects of the first movement,



and



⁹⁴Piano Quintet, ii, 11-14, violin 2.

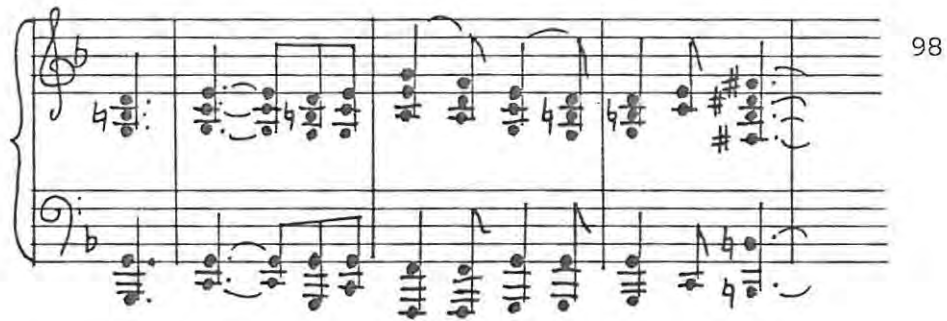
⁹⁵Piano Quintet, iii, 122-124, violin 1.

⁹⁶Piano Quintet, iv, 22-25, piano.

may have been a result of a manipulation of the notes



But the similarity between these two subjects is almost totally, and very skilfully, obliterated by the difference of rhythm:



In the last movement of the same Trio, much is made of the little figure which first appears in bar 3,



particularly in the development section.

⁹⁷ F major Trio, i, 1-2, violin.

⁹⁸ Op.cit., 51-54, piano.

⁹⁹ F major Trio, iv, 3-4, cello and piano.

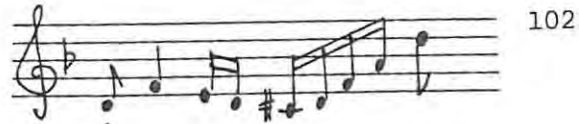
Similarly, in the Second Violin Sonata the tentative CLARA motif embedded in the slow introduction



becomes the accompaniment to the first subject of the Allegro,



and finally emerges as a theme in its own right.



An ensuing transition figure is also derived from this motif.



This expands into a quaver figure,

¹⁰⁰ D minor Violin Sonata, i, 8, violin.

¹⁰¹ Op.cit., 21, piano.

¹⁰² Op.cit., 43, piano.

¹⁰³ Op.cit., 45-47.

which in turn evolves into the second subject.

105

All five musical ideas (Examples 101 to 105) feature prominently in the development, but it is in the coda that the semiquaver theme of Ex.102 really comes into its own, as the persistent accompanying figure to a new theme in the violin.

106

The main theme of the Scherzo also makes prominent use of the inversion of the CLARA motif,

¹⁰⁴ Op.cit., 51-52, piano.

¹⁰⁵ Op.cit., 64-65, piano.

¹⁰⁶ Op.cit., 267-269.



and suggestions of the motif occur several times in the finale.



110



107 D minor Violin Sonata, ii, 2-6, violin.

108 D minor Violin Sonata, iv, 7-8, piano.

109 Op.cit., 24-25, violin.

110 Op.cit., 40-42, violin.

111 Op.cit., 58-59, piano, (new theme in the development).

In the A minor Violin Sonata (no.1) Schumann appears to be reverting to the F.S.E. motif of the earlier D minor Trio with a further dimension, namely the addition of the note C which could perhaps be interpreted in a literary sense as the first letter of Clara.



This new motif is not greatly exploited in other parts of the Sonata, but it does recur in the finale both in a rearranged form at the beginning of the movement,



and also at the beginning of the coda,



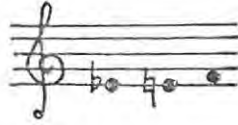
Similarly, the Fairy-tales, op.132, contain a three-note motif

¹¹²A minor Violin Sonata, i, 1-2, violin.

¹¹³A minor Violin Sonata, iii, 1-2, violin and piano.

¹¹⁴Op.cit., 168-175, violin.

The motif of the Horn Adagio and Allegro consists of a three-note chromatic figure, possibly another perspective on the F.S.E. motif



which acts as more of a leading-motif than is the case with the last two works mentioned. It not only characterizes the main themes and their harmonization,



118

119

¹¹⁸ Horn Adagio and Allegro, 1-3, horn.

¹¹⁹ Op.cit., 63-64.

120

121

but is also involved in many transition passages, accompanying figures and cadential phrases, so that it unobtrusively permeates the melodic structure and style of the whole piece.

¹²⁰Op.cit., 79-80.

¹²¹Op.cit., 120-128, horn.

Third Violin Sonata (F.A.E. Sonata)

In all the works so far considered, the various motives, in particular the F.E.S. and CLARA motives, have been largely ancillary to the work itself. They are woven into the textural fabric of the music, either in main themes or the development of those themes, but are not deliberately highlighted. Nor do we ever get the feeling that Schumann is slavishly working these motives into the music for a purely literary purpose. Their purpose is to enhance structural unity.

However, in the Third Violin Sonata the intention is clearly different -- to use the letters F.A.E. as a literary motif which controls every phase of the work. This kind of controlling-motif is directly akin to Schumann's earlier ABEGG and ASCH motives, so that in a sense the Sonata represents a regression to an earlier motivic system, and one ultimately less interesting than the system developed in the other chamber works already discussed.

To mention every single occurrence of the F.A.E. motif in this work would be both unnecessary and unrewarding. It appears distinctly in every main theme of the work, in any one of the six permutations which the three letters afford.¹²² Two examples will suffice here, to show how it can lead to three very different kinds of theme -- the first two beautiful in their simplicity and breadth,



¹²²FAE, FEA, AEF, AFE, EFA, and EAF.

¹²³Third Violin Sonata, iii, 3-12, violin.

124



and the third, tortuously complicated and nauseously undulating, in its vain attempt to disguise the motif as much as possible.

125



The most interesting bars of the work are those which incorporate the motif vertically, in a single chord. In the main key of the work, A minor, the notes F.A.E. form part of the submediant seventh chord,



a chord somewhat rare in Schumann's harmonic language, but useful in the immediate context: it is to be found very early on, in bar 5 of the slow introduction,

¹²⁴Third Violin Sonata, i, 46-50, violin.

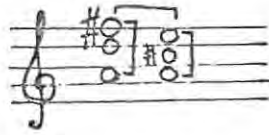
¹²⁵Op.cit., 35-39, violin.

and there is a subsequent penchant for seventh chords throughout the work which is traceable to this origin. Another, particularly cunning, chordal version of the motif comes at the very beginning of the finale, where the piano daringly plunges into the movement with a French 6th chord based on the letters F, A and D-sharp,

which sounds the same as the notes F, A, E-flat (Although the latter note is represented by the letter S in German). The same movement ends with another harmonic involvement of the motif, this time a IVc-I cadence in D major, (the chords of the subdominant and tonic having the closest affinity with the motto-theme),

¹²⁶Op.cit., 5.

¹²⁷Third Violin Sonata, iv, 1, piano.



a coincidence which is simultaneously intensified in the violin's last four notes:

In summarizing the use of motives it can, I think, be claimed that Schumann's method of composition shows a reliance on motives of some kind or other in almost every chamber work. In some works they are woven systematically and comprehensively into the music, while in others there are only limited allusions to a motivic idea in certain passages. But all the different kinds of motif have a bearing of paramount importance on melody and structure, and because of this, they lend to each work a different and distinctive character.

It is almost certain that most of the motives have a literary origin, and therefore Schumann's creative process can be said to be intimately connected with verbal imagery. This is particularly true of his melodic inventiveness: a melody seems almost to have possessed the quality of a verbal statement, in his musical imagination, and it is a natural step from this to the idea of a motto-theme. The medium of chamber music is ideally suited to the flowering and application of such an idea, since all these works are small-scale, intimate and essentially "private" in conception, as are the piano works and songs, in which motives also play a prominent rôle.

The literary aspect of Schumann's motives should not be unduly emphasized, for it is virtually impossible (as I have already stressed in this chapter) to distinguish literary from musical ideas in a composer like Schumann. However, the literary impetus was a characteristic part of his creative process, not least in the realm of his chamber works.

The following chapter will show another example of Schumann's literary inclinations in these works, not towards evolving a private musical language, but towards creating parallels with German Romantic literature through the use of song-melodies.

V

MELODY (iii) - USE OF SONG-THEMES

It is clear that thematic inter-relationships and cross-references were one of the natural and inevitable modes in which Schumann's musical imagination operated. So much so, that we find such relationships not simply within the bounds of any one particular work, but extending to and linking separate works, at first glance entirely different and distinct. Such direct echoes and resemblances are not the exclusive prerogative of any one genre in which Schumann worked. In several of his pre-1840 piano works, for example, he had included quotations from earlier works, so that the ABEGG theme unexpectedly returns in the "Intermezzo", op.4 no.6; the third of the Dauidsbundler-tänze uses a motif from "Promenade" in Carnaval; and "Florestan" in the latter work quotes from Papillons.

Similarly, cross-references exist amongst the chamber works: the central theme in the slow movement of the Piano Quartet reappears in the middle of the slow movement of the D minor Trio, and the first theme of the latter work is obviously related to the fourth movement of the "Rhenish" Symphony. Even more obvious are thematic relationships between different movements of the same chamber work (as distinct from the use of motives).

Where the internal relations of a single composition are concerned, a restatement in a later movement of a theme from an earlier one has, clearly enough, a structural function, being aimed at gathering the various sections of a work together into a unified whole. Schumann relies on this device particularly in those works which are written

on the largest scale, such as the Piano Quintet,¹ G minor Trio,² Piano Quartet,³ First,⁴ and Second Violin Sonatas;⁵ but even in smaller works melodic cross-references occur. For instance, there is a delightfully nostalgic glance back at the main theme of the First Clarinet Fantasy-piece in the middle of the Third, and the final coda is based on the main theme of the Second of these Pieces.

Schumann's propensity for melodic cross-references between works or movements goes hand in hand with the more interesting cross-fertilizations between his chamber works and songs. It perhaps is inevitable that a composer like Schumann, who was so pre-eminently a lyricist, should have written many themes in his chamber works which spring from the same source of inspiration as many of the melodies in his lieder. However, the connection of his song-themes and instrumental-themes is not simply a result of occasional stylistic affinities between the two, but can also involve direct thematic relationships between particular works, as will be shown.

That Schumann should have made direct connections between his songs and his chamber works is perhaps not quite so unexpected in view of the precedent Schubert had set in his D minor String Quartet, whose slow movement is a Theme and Variations on the composer's own song "Der Tod und das Mädchen". Schumann certainly knew both the Song and

¹The descending-octave transition theme of i reappears in iii, and the main themes of first and last movements are combined in the fugal coda.

²The chromatic rising theme in the first Trio of iii reappears in iv as theme 4a.

³The first theme of iv grows directly out of the end of iii.

⁴The main theme of i reappears in the coda of iii.

⁵The Scherzo theme intrudes into the slow movement.

the Quartet, and cannot have failed to appreciate the way in which the Quartet movement could expand greatly upon the ideas and emotions expressed in a necessarily limited way in the song. As Einstein puts it:

What Schubert could only suggest in the song here finds exhaustive expression in a fuller, freer, wordless sphere. He does not write 'programme' music, nor do we need to know the song, but we feel unmistakably in this music the symbols of inevitability and consolation.⁶

Again, though on a smaller scale, Schubert's A minor Quartet (op.29) incorporates a fragment from the beginning of his Schiller song, "Die Götter Griechenlands" into the Minuet, which thus forms the germ or kernel of the work. Here again, "Schubert achieves through the medium of chamber-music something at which he could only hint in a song which was both inspired and restricted by its text."⁷ Possibly through having learnt from Schubert's example, Schumann decided to make use of this kind of deliberate cross-reference between media first in some of his solo piano music. As T.A. Brown says: "He incorporates the song 'An Anna II' [1828] in the second movement of the Sonata in F minor, [1835], 'Im Herbst' [1828] in the [slow movement of the] Sonata in G minor, [1835] and 'Der Hirtenknabe' [1828] in the "Intermezzo", op.4, Number 4 [1832]."⁸

Later, during the composition of the Op.41 String Quartets in 1842, some of the 1840 songs must have been fresh in Schumann's mind, for fragments of them appear throughout these pieces. The first introductory motif of Op.41 no.1 bears a striking kinship of melody and key

⁶A. Einstein, Schubert, p.285.

⁷Ibid.

⁸T.A. Brown, The Aesthetics of Robert Schumann, p.36, and cf also Eric Sams, The Songs of Robert Schumann, p.275.

with the semiquaver motif that runs throughout the piano accompaniment of "In der Fremde" (Liederkreis, op.39 no.8), although the tempo of the Quartet-theme is much slower. This may perhaps be a case of unconscious stylistic reminiscence, but there is nothing tentative about the relationship between the Scherzo of this same Quartet and another 1840 song, "Es leuchtet meine Liebe" (op.117 no.3). This particular relationship was first pointed out by Fuller-Maitland in 1929,⁹ who, however, was misled by the late opus number of the song into thinking that it had been written eight years after the Quartet, in 1850. The story of the song (by Heine) admirably suits the new Scherzo setting and one cannot help pondering on the relevance Schumann might have seen in the words to his own situation two or three years earlier, in relation to Clara Wieck and her father:

Two lovers are walking in silence in the magic garden; nightingales sing in the shifting moonlight. The maiden stands still like a picture; the knight kneels before her. Then up comes the giant of the wilderness; the frightened girl runs away. The knight sinks bleeding to the ground, the giant goes stumping home.¹⁰

The minor mode, galloping compound time signature, "phantastisch" speed, harmonic texture, rhythmic vitality, and melodic shape of the opening of the song,

⁹J.A. Fuller-Maitland, Schumann's Concerted Chamber Music, p.27.

¹⁰Tr. Sams, op.cit., p.126.

in - rer dun-ke-ly Pracht wie'n Mühr - chen-traurig und trü - - be, er -

zählt in der Som - mernacht. 11

are all appropriated by the Scherzo.

Scherzo.
Presto. $\text{♩} = 138.$

12

¹¹ Op. 127, iii, 3-6.

¹² Op. 41, 1, ii, 3-10.

Moreover, the song has an overall ternary structure, like the Scherzo as a whole, of which the opening and closing lines spoken by the narrator of the poem,

My love shines in dark splendour like a sad tale told
on a summer night.... When I am buried, the story will
end.¹³

correspond to the Scherzo theme at the beginning and end of the movement.

In the first movement of Op.41 no.3 there is a rather more brief suggestion of an 1840 song: this time it is the first of the Liederkreis op.24, "Morgens steh'ich auf und frage", whose questioning little opening motif and off-beat, semi-staccato accompaniment,

14

Allegretto. *p*

Mor-gens steh'ich auf und fra-ge:

p.

are almost exactly paralleled in the second subject of the Quartet movement:

15

Allegretto. *p*

¹³Tr. Sams, *ibid.*

¹⁴Op.24, i, -8.

¹⁵Op.41, 3, i, 36-44.

The falling-fifth motif which permeates the whole movement, and the sweetly cloying major harmonies of the introduction are highly characteristic of many 1840 songs, particularly the Eichendorff Liederkreis, op.39. More precisely, the overall mood and texture of the Quartet movement are redolent of the atmosphere created in "Mondnacht", as a comparison will make clear.

16

war, als hätt' der Him - mel die Er - de still - geküsst,

17

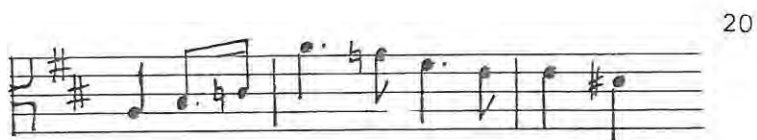
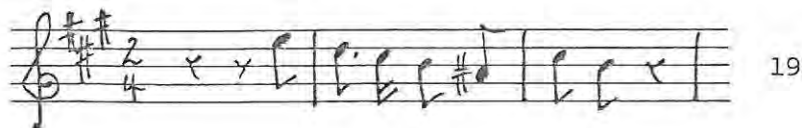
Even the CLARA and EHE motives are taken over from the song into the opening bars of the Quartet.¹⁸

¹⁶Op.39. v, 7-13.

¹⁷Op.41, 3, i, 1-6.

¹⁸cf Sams, op.cit., p.98.

Again, in the slow movement, the second main theme incorporates a melodic idea which probably originated in Op.39 no.2 "Intermezzo".



Eric Sams claims that the underlying inspiration behind the song-theme is a derivative of the CLARA motif.



This melody reappears...in the slow movement of the A major quartet, Op.41, No.3, as the second subject of the Trio, Op.80²¹.... (perhaps a clue to the emotive content of these works) and again in the Lenau song Meine Rose.²²

An even greater clue to the "emotive content" of the A major Quartet lies in the second movement, which I think may be called the "kernel" of the whole work. This is in the form of a Theme and Variations, and the origins of the Theme lie in not just one, but two

¹⁹ Op.39, ii, 2-3, voice.

²⁰ Op.41, 3, iii, 9-10, viola.

²¹ See below, p. 225.

²² Sams, op.cit., p.94.

1840 songs: the first is "Die Hochländer-Wittwe" (op.25 no.10) which merely suggests the melodic outline, key, and mood of the Quartet-theme,

Rasch, nach und nach heftig. 23

Ich bin ge - kom - men ins Nie - der - land, o
weh, o weh, o weh!

This musical score is for the song "Die Hochländer-Wittwe". It consists of two systems of music. The first system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Rasch, nach und nach heftig." and the number "23" is in the top right corner. The lyrics are "Ich bin ge - kom - men ins Nie - der - land, o weh, o weh, o weh!". The second system continues the piano accompaniment.

Assai agitato. $\text{♩} = 120$ 24

This musical score is for the song "Die Hochländer-Wittwe". It consists of two systems of music. The tempo is marked "Assai agitato." and the number "24" is in the top right corner. The first system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The second system continues the piano accompaniment.

²³ Op.25, x, 2-5.

²⁴ Op.41, 3, ii, 1-16.

and the second is the song "Mädchen-Schwermuth" (op.142 no.3) which is even more closely related, by its time-signature, harmonies and syncopations, as well as thematically, to the Quartet-theme.

25

Langsam.

Klei - ne Tro - pfen, seid ihr

Thrä - nen an den Blu - men - kel - chen da?

Fragments of the later part of the song, notably the rising seventh at the word "Himmelszelt" reappear in the second half of Variation III (bars 189-192). But it is above all the "authentic quality of sharp despair"²⁶ in the song which is captured in the chamber work, and expanded on at far greater length -- and with more variety -- than in

²⁵ Op.142, 3, 1-12.

²⁶ Sams, op.cit., p.165.

the song itself. It is perhaps not out of place here to quote the lines on which the song is based, which highlight the mood of the quartet-movement (albeit they are not of great literary value).

The dew shining on the flower-cups looks like tears;
to sad eyes, even flowers seem to be weeping.
The wind breathing along the fresh green leaves sounds
like a lament; to sad ears, even spring breezes seem
like a sigh for lost love.

Yet to the sad soul the stars in the night sky do
not seem like the presence of God; there can be no
gleam of comfort in this joyless world.²⁷

It was five years before another song-theme found its way into the chamber works, and by this time (1847) the echoes from Schumann's "year of song" were more remote. They only appear fleetingly in the Scherzo of the D minor Trio, where the suggestion of the accompaniment to "Das ist ein Flöten und Geigen" (Dichterliebe, ix)

28

die Herz-al-ler-lieb-ste mein, die Herz-al-ler-lieb

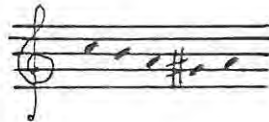
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is to be found in the early part of the Scherzo theme.

²⁷ Tr. Sams, *ibid.*

²⁸ Dichterliebe, ix, 25-30, piano.

The implicit cross-rhythms in the accompaniment of the song are emphasised more strongly in the Trio because of the phrasing, while melodically speaking they share a common origin in the CLARA motif.



The same song re-emerges in the "Scherzo"³⁰ of the F major Piano Trio which is separated from the D minor Trio by a gap of two years. This time the rhythmic pattern of the accompaniment in the song, as well as its melodic line, are taken over more fully into the piano part of the Trio movement, more especially in its middle section.

²⁹ D minor Trio, ii, 15-18, piano.

³⁰ It is not designated a "Scherzo" as such, but in its position between the slow movement and finale it substitutes for one. Schumann called it an "Allegretto" but the tempo indication at the beginning of the movement is actually "In mässiger Bewegung" (Andante).

31

32

In the Coda of the chamber work the dominant pedal underlying both the above extracts is transformed into a tonic pedal, and the melodic line transferred from piano to violin.

³¹Dichterliebe, ix, 1-4, piano.

³²F major Trio, iii, 77-80, piano.



As far as literary parallels are concerned, the chamber work does not capture the same anguished or demonic overtones as those extracted by Schumann from the Heine poem in the Song, but it retains in a subdued form some of the atmosphere of bleak ironical despair in the words:

[M]y own true love must be dancing there at her
wedding feast.

And among all this tinkling and booming...you can
still hear the angels weep.³⁴

The persistent, rather sombre dance rhythms, $\frac{3}{8}$ metre, minor key and use of pedal points, are all taken over from the Song into the Trio, though the context is now slightly different, and the music is no longer full of "self-torturing images".³⁵

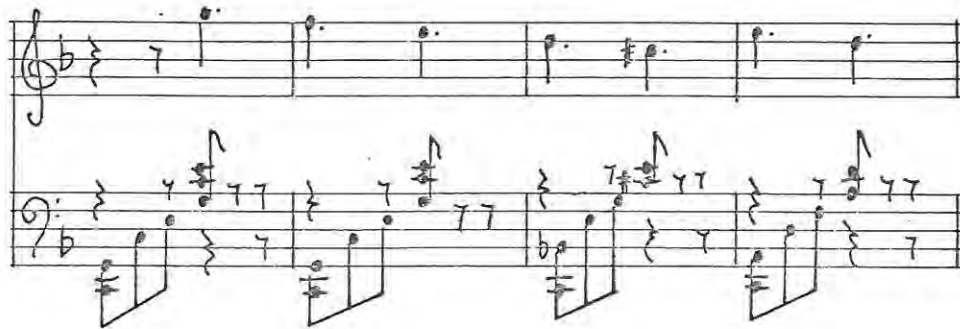
This is not the only movement of the F major Trio to have allusions to songs, and there is a reappearance of "Intermezzo", op.39 no.2 (which had already infiltrated into the slow movement of the Third Quartet)³⁶ now being used more overtly as the third subject in the First movement of the Trio.

³³ Op.cit., 161-164, violin and piano.

³⁴ Tr. Sams, op.cit., p.115.

³⁵ Op.cit., p.116.

³⁶ See above, pp.218-219.



In such a prominent position the song-theme initiates a vein of pure lyricism which the movement had clearly lacked until this point, and provides a welcome "interlude" (as befits the title of the song) between the vigorous bustle of the exposition and the strident counterpoint of the development. The song-theme is barely developed at all during this movement, unlike the other themes; but it does reappear, slightly transformed, at the end of the development -- accompanied, significantly, by the word "ausdruckvoll" -- and then again in the coda at the words "Nach und nach schneller". Here the melody undergoes a similar process of imitation and inversion over a pedal note, that occurs in the piano postlude of the Song.

The word "ausdruckvoll" (full of longing) is a clue to the way in which this particular song is used in the F major Trio; and, in a broader sense, to the way in which these fragments of song are used in all the chamber works. For they suggest a nostalgic, retrospective view of the past, a kind of 'longing' perhaps for the emotional highlights (both musical and personal) of the year 1840 which Schumann never managed to recapture in later years. The words of the Eichendorff poem on which "Intermezzo" is based are certainly nostalgic in the new context in which the song is used:

³⁷ F major Trio, i, 106-110, violin and piano.

[M]y heart sings softly to itself, an old sweet song
that wings into the air and flies swiftly to you.³⁸

The wistfulness of the original song-theme gains a new dimension in the Trio, and is also a key to the interpretation of these passages.

The mood of wistful nostalgia relapses into one of resignation in the slow movement of the F major Trio, although this poses a rather remarkable paradox. The main theme of the slow movement is closely related to a song with the actual title of "Resignation" (op.83 no.1), but the paradox lies in the fact that the song was written after the Trio, although the interval is only that of a few months. The Trio was completed late in 1849 and was only given its first public performance at the end of February, 1850, so that it was fresh in Schumann's mind when he came to setting the poem "Resignation" in April that year. He had mentioned shortly after the performance of the Trio that he liked the slow movement best out of the four, and was perhaps keen to use some of its musical ideas again. Both song and Trio-movement are in the same key, metre and tempo, and both begin with a rather contrapuntal texture, (although necessarily simplified in the song):

³⁸Tr. Sams, op.cit., p.94.

³⁹Op.83, 1, 1-2.

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Obviously the melodic line is not appropriated intact, but the feeling for the descending line of the Trio melody is recaptured to some extent in the song. It is possible that there is an echo from a much earlier, 1840 song, "Liebesbotschaft" (op.36 no.6) in the actual melody of the Trio,

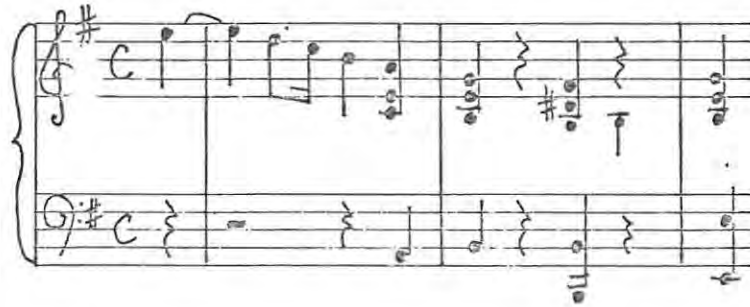
41

but this is more fragmentary by the time it re-emerges in "Resignation". However, the 1850 song does take over the modulation from D^b / A^b to c^\sharp at bars 13 to 14 of the Trio, using it for the change of key in the middle section (bars 17-18).

The mournful descending melodic line of these two works must have haunted the composer's imagination, for it reappears again, for the last time, in the fourth of the five Maria Stuart lieder, "Abschied von der Welt", (op.135 no.4).

⁴⁰F major Trio, ii, 1-4.

⁴¹Op.36,vi, 15-16.



The treatment of the melody here is much the same as that of bars 14 to 15 of the Trio,



though it is now made very much more poignant through the addition of the words

What is the use of the time still left to me? My heart is already dead to earthly desires; my spirit is sundered from all save sorrow; only happiness of death remains now for me.⁴⁴

⁴² Op. 135, 4, 1-2, piano.

⁴³ F major Trio, ii, 14-15 cello.

⁴⁴ Tr. Sams, op.cit., p.273.

Although the literary quality of this text may be called into question, there is no doubt that it is in a sense a kind of verbalization of the musical theme of resignation which dominates the three works just discussed, and which was highly significant to Schumann at this stage in his life.

It is possible, though not likely, that he was pursuing an idea already formulated by Schubert, the slow movement of whose String Quartet in G major was recalled in some of his last songs.

[Here] Schubert compressed and concentrated an instrumental movement into a song....[I]n Wilhelm Meister's 'Winterreise' he found a text to match the melancholy, the bewilderment, and the despair of this movement, and in 'Einsamkeit' he recalled it again. The commentary on the text was, so to speak, in existence before the text itself.⁴⁵

In the case of the F major Trio, and the two songs "Resignation" and "Abscheid von der Welt" it is very likely that the musical connections between them were in a sense symbolic -- with resignation as the literary theme, and with the musical cross-reference as the key to the symbolism, and it is possible to make the same speculation with regard to the earlier songs and chamber works.

In the last group of shorter chamber works (1849-53) there are a number of musical ideas that relate to songs from the same period. Although it is unlikely that there is any deeper significance in these relationships, they are interesting nevertheless for the mutual light they cast on the works concerned.

⁴⁵A. Einstein, Schubert, p.281.

The song "Der Bräutigam und die Birke" (op.119 no.3) shares a rather quaint melodic phrase with the Second Oboe Romance,

a phrase which has a simple rusticity that enhances the style and mood of both works. Moreover, during the interval between the composition of these two works (1849-51) Schumann used the same little phrase in his Cello Concerto (1850), where it appears in the second subject of the first movement.

The connection between the Third Cello Folk-piece and "Ich hab' in Traum geweinet" (Dichterliebe, xiii) has already been pointed out in the chapter on Instrumentation.⁴⁸ The similarity between the opening phrases of each of the two works is not specifically melodic but more tenuous in nature, and perhaps lies in the restraint of the

⁴⁶Op.119, 3, 5-7, piano.

⁴⁷Oboe Romances, ii, 10-14, oboe.

⁴⁸P.264.

piano writing and the fragmentary nature of the motives.

There are several melodic links between the Viola Märchenbilder (1851) and songs of the previous year. The little 'quasi-polonaise' figure that appears throughout the piano part of the First Märchenbild,

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was obviously borrowed from a tiny phrase in a rather trite little song of May, 1850, "Roselein, Roselein" (op.89 no.6);

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⁴⁹Viola Märchenbilder, i, 9-10.

⁵⁰Op.89, 6, 37-38, piano.

While the Second Märchenbild seems to have derived its galloping dotted rhythms and triplets from two op.125 songs, "Husarenabzug" and "Jung Volkers Lied", the resulting 'drinking-song' style would almost be more appropriate for a male voice duet than for a solo viola piece:



The final example, in which a fragment from the song "Die Hutte" (op.119 no.1)



appears as a motif in the First Fairy-tale

⁵¹Viola Märchenbilder, ii, 3-10, viola.

⁵²Op.119, 1, 28-29, piano.

epitomises the way in which the works of this late period cross-fertilize each other.

The parallels between these works are not the result of slavish or deliberate imitation, but arise, as I have said, out of a common source of lyrical inspiration characteristic of Schumann's small-scale works at this time. Both the small chamber works and the solo songs should thus perhaps in time to come cease to be considered in the separate conventional compartments they have hitherto occupied, but be seen instead as what they clearly are : two different outgrowths of the same lyric stock. The links we have seen at work between these two genres should possibly alert us to the fact that Schumann may have seen them as more closely akin, for the purposes of composition, than

⁵³ Fairy-tales, i, 25-27.

we are ordinarily accustomed to; and that the second of these two forms differed from the first only in that the human presence replaced the instrumental for one part, and that the use of words might sometimes give sharper point to emotions which remained necessarily only a little more abstract in their purer instrumental form.

This chapter has been largely concerned with the "literary" influence on Schumann's music; its conclusion thus might be that, at least to the terms of his musical thought alone, "literary" and "musical" were not to be so readily distinguished.

VI

INSTRUMENTATION

Introduction

A great deal has been written about Schumann as an orchestrator, much of it derogatory, and it has even led to the rather extreme remedy of Mahler's rescoring of Schumann's Symphonies.¹ About Schumann as an instrumental composer, on the other hand, very little has been said, and he has rarely been given any credit for his sympathetic understanding of the specific effects of orchestral instruments. In the realm of chamber music, of course, the extent of a composer's knowledge and understanding of instruments is more easily exposed to criticism owing to the lack of collective sonority and the individual prominence of each instrumental sound. However, somewhat surprisingly, Schumann's defects or virtues as a composer for individual instruments in his chamber works have been almost universally ignored, with the single exception of his writing for piano. In fact, many of the chamber works have been condemned solely on account of the ubiquitousness of the piano, a subject which will be discussed later in this chapter.

It certainly seems to have been Schumann's aim to produce as wide a variety of works as possible, for many different instruments, and to explore new paths. He exhorted other musicians to 'cultivate every style' and to pursue with enthusiasm aspects of novelty and originality in all branches of music. "Fresh ways and paths are continually opening out before me, and I don't know at all how I shall compose in ten

¹See Mosco Carner, "Mahler's rescoring of Schumann's Symphonies", The Music Review, vol.2, 1941.

years' time", he wrote in 1839,² and added, "...I am thinking of writing quartets this summer...." In fact ten years later came one of his more prolific periods of chamber music writing. In April of 1849 he wrote: "I have been very busy all this time; it has been my most fruitful year."³ He had just completed the Clarinet Fantasy-pieces and Horn Adagio and Allegro and was about to complete the Oboe Romanzen and Cello Folk-pieces. New sonorities fascinated him, and it was only to the piano trio combination that he consistently returned amid his experiments with other instrumental forms.

The complete list of Schumann's chamber works shows that he was constantly in search of variety and originality in the realm of instrumentation. In addition to the conventional forms of the string quartet, piano quartet and piano trio he wrote works for the favourite romantic instruments, the horn, cello, clarinet and violin, and also for the more unusual viola and oboe.⁴

Faced with such variety and diversity it is reasonable to surmise that Schumann's two main objectives in his chamber music were to extend the repertoire of works for those instruments whose repertoire was still fairly limited,⁵ and to provide specific works for his friends and acquaintances to play.

²Life in Letters, vol.1, p.215.

³Op.cit., vol.2, p.94.

⁴Schumann, like most of his contemporaries, largely ignored the flute, which is perhaps surprising in view of his liaison with Ernestine von Fricken, whose father was a keen amateur flautist. (It was Baron von Fricken who wrote the theme on which Schumann based his Etudes Symphoniques.)

⁵In connection with the Cello Concerto, for example, Schumann said that it would "perhaps supply a want felt by many, as there is a great lack of such compositions." (Life in Letters, vol.2, p.273.)

This raises the issue of just exactly who these works were written for : do they constitute a significant group of works in the 'oeuvre' of a major composer, or are they to be considered simply as professional 'by-products' for amateur musicians?

The latter may have been true to some extent in many of the quartets and trios of Haydn and Mozart, and of such composers as Ignaz Pleyel, who wrote hundreds of easy and approachable works explicitly for amateurs. But from Beethoven onwards, the chamber works of major composers, including Schumann, had been of such a high technical and musical standard that it could only have been musicians of the first rank who could perform them. In short, they are professional works for professionals (or at the least very gifted amateurs) to play, and the insight with which a composer like Schumann wrote for specific instruments and professional instrumentalists, deserves careful attention. Schumann himself was concerned that his chamber music should not only be performed but also understood by musicians; hence his concern over the publication of the String Quartets:

...One rarely finds four musicians together who, without a [full] score, can grasp the more difficult combinations of such a composition, even after they have played it together several times. What is the result? After hastily playing it through, they lay it on one side. But with the score in their hands they will be much more likely to do justice to the composer, etc....⁶

With regard to his other works, Schumann's choice of instruments hitherto seldom used in chamber music may have been largely pragmatic, especially in view of the large number of instrumentalists with whom Schumann came into contact throughout his life, who may not only have inspired, but also influenced, his use of different instruments.

⁶Life in Letters, vol.2, p.249.

Contemporary Instrumentalists

Foremost among Schumann's acquaintances and colleagues were some of the major pianists and violinists of the day. Mendelssohn, in particular, is frequently mentioned in Schumann's letters in respect to the early chamber works:

I have written a cycle of variations for two pianofortes, two violoncellos and horn, which I should like soon to hear performed. Mendelssohn is going to be kind enough to undertake a part... ⁷

This rather circumspect mention of Mendelssohn seems to have been typical of the relationship between the two composers. Mendelssohn's close association with the six chamber works written in Leipzig in 1842-3 was not confined to participating in private performances; (apart from the above, he also took the piano part in the first private performance of the Piano Quintet, reading it at sight); he also offered criticism and advice on the works themselves, particularly on the Op.41 Quartets, of whom he was the dedicatee.

In view of all this, it is no coincidence that the piano writing in both the Piano Quintet and the Andante and Variations is very Mendelssohnian in its delicate buoyancy, brilliant lucidity of texture, use of sequences and octave doubling. Even the harmonies of the Andante and Variations are more Mendelssohnian, with more frequent use of 7th chords and chromatic appoggiaturas than is characteristic even of Schumann.

Furthermore, Mendelssohn's interest in the Piano Quintet led him to suggest the interpolation of the 'agitato' section in the middle of the slow movement, which made a radical difference to the structure of this movement.

⁷ Life in Letters, vol.2, p.235.

A more important pianist in Schumann's life than Mendelssohn (especially after the latter's death in 1847) was of course his wife, who was intimately connected with both the performance and composition of all of Schumann's chamber music, and was herself a composer of two chamber works.⁸

Works with which she was particularly associated were the Piano Quintet (which is dedicated to her), the First Piano Trio, and the Second Violin Sonata, all of which she made familiar to later nineteenth-century audiences in frequent concert performances with Joachim and others.⁹ Other pianists closely associated with Schumann were Ferdinand Hiller and Ignaz Moscheles.

On the subject of Schumann himself as a pianist, opinions conflict as to the extent of the handicap imposed by his hand injury, although it seems likely that he could manage to play most of his compositions. In 1838 he wrote to Clara Wieck from Vienna:

It sometimes makes me unhappy that I have got a disabled hand, especially now that I am here. And I must tell you that it keeps getting worse.... It would have been such a great advantage to me just now to have had the use of my hands. I am so full of real genuine music that it is like the breath of my nostrils, and as it is I can barely manage to pick it out, and my fingers stumble over one another.¹⁰ It is very dreadful, and has often caused me much pain.

⁸Piano Trio in G minor, op.17, (published in 1847) and Romance for Violin and Piano, op.22.

⁹The famous "Monday Popular Concerts" in St.James's Hall, London, frequently featured Joachim and Clara Schumann in recitals of chamber music between the years 1860 and 1886. The following contemporary account is typical of the immense popularity of such recitals, in England:

... (Clara Schumann's)...ideal interpretation of the works of ...her husband afforded unalloyed delight for a period of over twenty years.... One remembers particularly the final concern of the season of '85-6, when, as usual, she joined Joachim, Ries, Straus, and Piatti in Schumann's magnificent piano quintet. (Richard Aldrich, "Popular Concerts", in Cobbett, vol.2, pp.232-235, p.234.

¹⁰Early Letters, p.284.

He explained more fully to a student friend, Theodor Töpken:

... I am still playing the pianoforte very little; don't be alarmed. I am resigned and regard it as fate -- one finger of the right hand is lamed and broken... ¹¹

Nevertheless Eric Sams claims that "despite the injury to his right hand, he retained a virtuoso's grasp of keyboard music."¹²

However, Schumann himself later put the whole problem in its true perspective in the following extract from a letter to one of his admirers, Simone de Sire:

I myself have been robbed by an unfortunate accident of the full use of my right hand, and do not play things as I have composed them... This has often perturbed me; however, heaven now and then sends me a good idea instead, and so I think no more about the matter. ¹³

It seems, then, as if the hand injury would have had little or no effect on Schumann's piano style, and may indeed have spurred him on in the matter of composing away from the piano, and to have sharpened his inner perception of instrumental sounds, during the 1840's. That he was able to turn his disability to good account, and benefit from the experience, is implicit in the following statement:

Love your instrument, but do not vainly suppose it is the highest and only one. Remember that there are others equally fine. ¹⁴

The violin, like the piano, features prominently in most of Schumann's chamber works, and although Schumann was not a violinist himself, he was surrounded by a positive galaxy of major violinists of the time, several of whom were close friends, so that he was able to

¹¹Quoted by Alan Walker, "Register of Persons", in Robert Schumann, pp.425-441, p.439.

¹²"The Songs", in Alan Walker, Robert Schumann, pp.120-161, p.121.

¹³Op.cit., p.438 (my underlining).

¹⁴On Music and Musicians, p.413.

have an intimate, if secondhand, knowledge of the instrument. Foremost among the violinists of the century was Paganini, whom Schumann heard, in Frankfurt in 1830 and who made a lasting impression. Among Paganini's most popular violin works were the Solo Capricci Opp.3 and 10 for which Schumann wrote piano accompaniments during the years 1853-6, (while he was also working on the Bach Solo Violin and Cello accompaniments). These, however, were not published until 1930.¹⁵

Another leading violinist of the 'older' school was Louis Spohr, who was for a while friendly with Schumann during the 1840's. Spohr was himself not only a virtuoso violinist and author of a famous "Violin School", (1831), but was also a prolific composer of chamber music of all kinds. Among his more original works are the Nonet, the Octet, four Double Quartets,¹⁶ and a programmatic Duo Concertante for Piano and Violin, op.96, subtitled "Echoes of a Journey to Dresden and the Sächusche Schweiz", (1836).¹⁷ Schumann, however, while not tempted into direct imitation of any of these works, may have gained from Spohr's encouragement and criticism. He knew many of Spohr's chamber works, which were frequently performed in the regular Quartet Mornings in the 1840's.

¹⁵Currently out of print.

¹⁶Opp.65, 77, 87 and 136.

¹⁷Spohr described the details of the programme as follows:

... In the Trio I depicted the fanciful dreaming in which one indulges in a carriage. The Adagio depicts a scene in the Catholic Hofkirsche in Dresden with an organ prelude on the piano, then the violin plays the intoning of the priest at the altar.... This is followed by an air for castrato, in which the violin copies exactly the tone of the singer. The last movement, a rondo, summarizes the beauties of the journey. (Quoted in Dorothy Moulton Meyer, The Forgotten Master, p.147.)

One of Spohr's most famous violin pupils was Ferdinand David, a contemporary of Schumann's, and Professor of Violin at the Leipzig Conservatoire from 1843, the year in which it had been founded by Mendelssohn and Schumann. Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto received its first performance by him in 1845, and of Schumann's two Violin Sonatas written in 1851 the Second, in D minor, was dedicated to him. David was also responsible for a vast amount of editing of 18th-century violin music in the mid-late 19th century,¹⁸ and performed frequently in chamber work. He participated in first performances of three of Schumann's chamber works, the Piano Quartet,¹⁹ Second Piano Trio in F major,²⁰ and Third Trio in G minor.²¹

In view of this close association between David and Schumann's music between the years 1843 and 1852 we may presume that technical advice on violin writing must have been available to Schumann throughout these years, though there is no record of such.²² There was, however, known to be a close artistic collaboration between David's most illustrious pupil, Joachim, and Schumann, during the last two creative years of Schumann's life, (1853-4), particularly over the two major violin works of this time, the D minor Concerto and the C major

¹⁸Die Hohe Schule des Violinspiels.

¹⁹First performed privately on 5th April, 1843. First public performance in Leipzig Gewandhaus on 8th December, 1844, with Clara Schumann (piano), Ferdinand David (violin), Niels Gade (viola) and C. Wittman (cello).

²⁰First public performance February 22nd, 1850, in Leipzig Gewandhaus, with Clara Schumann, Ferdinand David and Julius Reitz (cello).

²¹First public performance March 21st, 1852, in Leipzig Gewandhaus, with Clara Schumann, Ferdinand David and Andreas Grabau (cello).

²²"David's chief claim to fame is based on the helpful suggestions he is known to have given to Mendelssohn when composing his violin concerto." (Cobbett, vol.1, p.314.)

Phantasie for Violin and Orchestra. He wrote to Joachim in September, 1853:

I have...finished...a Phantasie for violin and orchestra, during the composition of which...I thought chiefly of you...Let me know if there is anything impracticable in it. And I would ask you to mark the bowings in the arpeggios, or, indeed, anywhere else in the manuscript, and then to send it back....²³

It was also Joachim who directly inspired the Third Violin Sonata of 1853, originally a joint gift from Brahms, Dietrich and Schumann to Joachim, and imbued with his famous 3-note "F.A.E." motto.²⁴

Possibly Joachim may also have been in Schumann's mind when he wrote the viola Märchenbilder and Märchenerzählungen.

Thus one cannot really level the criticism of ignorance at Schumann in connection with his violin writing, with such illustrious friends and mentors as these, not to mention less famous string-players such as Johann Verhulst, Niels Gade, Wasielewski and Heinrich Matthäi, (leader of the Gerwandhaus orchestra from 1827-35 and founder of a celebrated String Quartet): all violinists or violists who were at one time or another close friends of Schumann. In short, it is impossible to support the view that:

The piano...was his own instrument...But the stringed instruments he never played, such knowledge as he had of the latter being due only to genius.²⁵

²³Life in Letters, vol.2, p.190.

²⁴Joachim was also well acquainted with the D minor Sonata, of which he wrote:

To me it is one of the finest creations of modern times, in the wonderful unity of its feeling, and the significance of its themes. It is full of a noble passion -- almost harsh and bitter in its expression -- and the last movement might almost remind one of a seascape, with its glorious waves of sound. (Quoted in Cobbett, vol.2, p.390.)

²⁵Richard Aldrich, "Schumann", in : Cobbett, vol.2, pp.368-390, p.369.

Schumann had a rudimentary, first-hand knowledge of the cello as he mentions "taking up the cello again", after his hand injury;²⁶ and, indeed his cello-writing is always characterized by sensitivity to the instrument's physical and emotional propensities. Moreover, during the 1820's and '30's Schumann had frequently played chamber music with an amateur cellist, Dr Glock, in Leipzig, and during his later periods in Leipzig and Dresden he had met and befriended two cellists, Julius Reitz and Andreas Grabau (dedicatee of the Five Cello pieces, op.102.)²⁷ In fact, it is rather surprising that Schumann wrote only shorter pieces for the cello : the Folk-pieces, and Romances (now lost). The cello was then very much in vogue for 'big' works, and although Schumann wrote one concerto, he added no sonatas to the cello repertoire, though this form was popular with most other nineteenth-century composers, (from Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Chopin to Moscheles²⁸ and Brahms).

During his sojourn in Dresden (1844-50), Schumann had the opportunity of meeting several good instrumentalists through his conductorship of the local orchestra. His solo pieces for clarinet, oboe, cello and horn all date from the end of this period (1849-50) and, to judge from the technical difficulties encountered in the Adagio and Allegro

²⁶Early Letters, p.185.

²⁷The dedicatee of the Piano Quartet, Count Mathieu Wielhorsky, was also a noted amateur cellist, and "the solo part for the cello in the slow movement may be considered a tribute especially for him." (Richard Aldrich, in Cobbett, p.371.)

²⁸The G minor Cello Sonata (op.121) by Moscheles was in fact dedicated to Schumann upon its completion in 1851, and he wrote enthusiastically of it to the composer:

...As to the sonata itself,...I recognized our honoured master everywhere;...especially...the Bohemian Ballade, which seems to me particularly charming and poetical. I shall soon hope to hear an animated performance of the whole by my wife.... We have got a very good violoncello-player -- Herr Reimers, who has made great progress of late years. (Life in Letters, vol.2, pp.151-152.)

for horn and piano there must have been a horn-player of exceptional virtuosity in Dresden. Indeed, one can discover this obliquely from a letter Schumann wrote to his publisher (Härtel) in May, 1849:

Mr. Levy, the first horn-player in the band here, will ...send you a book of studies for the horn...What I have seen of them is good and practical, as cannot but be expected from one who has made his instrument the study of his life.²⁹

Presumably it was Mr Levy and his colleagues who also prompted Schumann to write the rather eccentric but brilliantly virtuoso Konzertstücke for four horns and orchestra, in the same year.

Changes in Instrumentation during the Early Nineteenth Century

In many ways, Schumann's chamber works typify the establishment of three major changes in emphasis since the chamber works of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Firstly, from 1800-40 the supremacy of the string quartet was increasingly challenged by works which included piano; secondly, Romantic modes of expression became increasingly suited to the big 'solo' sonata rather than to the classical ensemble of 4-8 more or less equal partners; and thirdly, the wind ensemble music so favoured as "entertainment music" by the eighteenth century was replaced by works for smaller combinations, which exploited the individual tone-colours of the instruments (either in conjunction with the piano, or in other small combinations).

Out of this three-fold development emerge two different categories of romantic chamber works in Schumann's output:

i) large-scale sonata works for piano and one or more string instruments, and ii) "salon" pieces for one or two instruments with

²⁹Life in Letters, vol.2, p.255.

piano accompaniment.³⁰ Into the first category belong pieces that form part of the standard concert repertoire, such as the Piano Quintet, Piano Quartet, three Piano Trios and three Violin Sonatas. Into the second category belong the many smaller pieces -- the Phantasiestücke, (whose original title, Soiréestücke,³¹ hints at their close affinity with the salon), the Horn Adagio and Allegro, the Märchenerzählungen, Cello Folk-pieces, Viola Märchenbilder, Phantasiestücke Trio, and the Andante and Variations op.46, (which Schumann himself described as a 'delicate creation').

Obviously the distinction between these two categories is not an absolutely rigid one, but it does perhaps serve to explain the large difference in instrumental style between trios such as the D minor and the Märchenerzählungen, or between solo works like the second Violin Sonata and Oboe Romanzen. Two of the main differences are evident in the piano writing and the technical difficulty of the solo parts: generally speaking, the piano writing is more restrained in the 'salon' pieces, and the level of virtuosity is less high in the individual instrumental writing of these works, in comparison to the sonata works.

³⁰To call these "salon"-pieces, is simply to distinguish them in size and scope from the sonata works, and does not imply a criticism of their style. W.W. Cobbett eloquently defends the word "salon" in his Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music:

Apropos of the...short ensemble works of Schumann, I am moved to express regret that the word 'salon' has suffered so great a declension of dignity since the end of the eighteenth century -- or a little later -- what time the grandes dames of the ancien régime convened artists and intellectuals to their 'literary salons'. For such an audience...a special type of music...would seem to be indicated, and such is the music which Schumann (and Chopin and Mendelssohn) have since composed when in lighter mood -- salon music, it may be said, but in a vanished sense of the word. (Cobbett, vol.2, p.390.)

³¹A.E.F. Dickinson in G. Abraham, Symposium, pp.138-175, p.172.

The difference in Schumann's piano style in these works leads inevitably to a general discussion of the various aspects of his piano writing in the chamber works.

The Piano in the Chamber Works -- Introduction

In order to understand the prominent rôle assigned to the piano in Schumann's chamber works it is worth remembering Mendelssohn's remarks about chamber music being an important "branch of piano music".³² This phrase embodies a significant truth about the piano in nineteenth-century ensemble music. The piano in such music was not simply one of a group of instruments, it was the most important member of the group, or 'group-leader'. This was a reversal of the situation which had existed in the eighteenth century. From 1750 until approximately 1830 chamber music for strings alone (above all, the string quartet), held a far more important position in any composer's output than chamber music with piano. "As with the Classic masters like Haydn, Mozart, and even Beethoven, all the chamber works in which Schubert included a piano part...are of less importance than the works for strings alone."³³ But by 1840, various factors, including the increased popularity of the piano as a solo instrument and of piano music in general, and the development of power and tone qualities of the instrument itself, assisted the piano in becoming established as the controlling force in any group of instruments in which it was included. Schumann quite naturally accepted this 'status quo':

³²See Introduction, p.22.

³³A. Einstein, Schubert, p.94.

In using the piano in the bulk of his chamber-music Schumann was being no more than typical of his generation.³⁴

But this should not influence our view of Schumann's use of the piano in a negative sense, as is only too often done by critics who judge his pianistic style by the standards of the eighteenth century.

The piano writing in Schumann's chamber music should be considered from two points of view. Firstly, the piano doubling of other parts is not so ill-judged as may appear: from an unbiased viewpoint it is difficult to decide whether the piano is doubling other instruments or whether it is not Schumann's deliberate intention to share material between two or more parts. Secondly, the balance between the piano and its partners should not be judged by the sonority of performances using a modern concert grand. On an early nineteenth-century piano, for example, it would be impossible for the strings in the Piano Quintet to be overshadowed by piano sonority.

Indeed, it was precisely because the forte-piano had only a limited range of dynamics that composers wrote so many piano trios; violin and cello versus one forte-piano was an evenly-matched contest.³⁵

We know, too, that Schumann's own piano was a light-actioned Viennese model, preferred by both himself and his wife. It was also the type of piano Schubert had written for:

...Schubert's music is perfectly suited to the light and sensitive Viennese piano which he (and Schumann) used, while Beethoven's explosive sforzati and orchestral effects ...strain the capacities of an early nineteenth-century Broadwood or Érard,...³⁶

³⁴ John Gardner, "The Chamber Music" in Walker, Robert Schumann, pp.200-240, p.201.

³⁵ Roger Fiske, "Ludwig van Beethoven", in Alec Robertson, editor, Chamber Music, pp.94-140, p.99.

³⁶ Leon B. Plantinga, Schumann as Critic, p.221.

Therefore, in evaluating the rôle of the piano in Schumann's chamber music these two facts -- the contemporary rôle of the piano, and its comparative lightness of sound -- must be taken into consideration.

The Importance of the Piano

In many passages Schumann has been accused of allowing the piano to "dominate" a work, and this traditional criticism usually has a two-pronged attack. On the one hand he is accused of thinking pianistically when writing for other instruments; and on the other hand he is criticised for putting too much into the piano part, and supposedly allowing it to overshadow every part of a composition. I shall attempt to investigate this latter criticism first.

i) Piano Sonority

Schumann's Piano Quartet supposedly exemplifies the nature of the problem, as it is the work most frequently attacked for its piano writing:

...the piano often butts into the conversation of the strings like a veritable intruder, in defiance of the very principle of the quartet. The basic design is sacrificed here to allow it to take the floor, almost as if it were playing solo to a string accompaniment. This is characteristic of the period when Schumann had not yet consented to put the piano 'in its place'.³⁷

This is a curious criticism on several accounts; (what, for instance, is the basic "principle" of the piano quartet?), and is for the most part incorrect. The reference to the piano as a rash "intruder" probably stems from the initial bars of the exposition, with its cadenza-like piano flourishes:

³⁷ Marcel Brion, Schumann and the Romantic Age, p.259.

38

The image shows two systems of handwritten musical notation for piano. The first system is marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and includes the instruction *sf espressivo*. The second system is marked with *mf* and *sf*. The music is written in a key with two flats and a common time signature. The first system features a melodic line in the right hand and a more complex accompaniment in the left hand. The second system continues the melodic line and accompaniment.

But it is a great mistake to judge the piano writing throughout the Quartet on the strength of the quasi-concertato opening. In fact, apart from repetitions of this opening idea there are hardly any other passages in the whole work which put the piano so firmly in the lime-light, and more often than not it is given passages of basic harmonic accompaniment to string solos. This can be observed throughout the solo movement, as well as in bars 35-51, 181-212, 236-251 and 329-355 of the first movement, (altogether a quarter of this very long movement). But most of the instrumental texture in the Piano Quartet (as in many other works) does not depend on obvious solo-accompaniment rôles such as these; usually the distribution of the ideas is far more complicated and subtle, and the shift of emphasis from one instrument to another changes continually. It is a great mistake, for example, to look at the first 8 bars of the Scherzo in the light of "ineffective doubling", and thus dismiss the whole movement.

What the cello doubling contributes here is a sharp, detached string sonority to the low, bubbling texture of the piano's octaves, and this accentuates the rhythmic buoyancy of the melody. At bar 9 the piano recedes in pitch and dynamics, and the violin and viola take over the octave melody. At bar 17 the piano briefly has the melody in thirds against string accompaniment, then the violin and viola resume the melody over cello accompaniment with light punctuations from the piano, between bars 21-24. Finally, the piano and the two upper strings play the melody in canon over the cello bass-line.

The instrumentation of the whole section relies on a continually-changing interplay between the instruments, in which none are allowed to dominate; and the whole effect is greatly enhanced by the delicate texture of the music, as well as by the use of staccato and mild dynamics, (which never rise above a mezzo-forte). Nor is this an isolated phenomenon -- there are numerous similar passages throughout this work, as well as in the other earlier chamber works. This continual interchange of ideas between instruments in the Quartet makes it

³⁹Piano Quartet, ii, 1-8. piano and cello.

nonsensical to suggest that "[much] of the music would be logically complete...without the string parts...they are redundant, merely adding to the volume of sound."⁴⁰

Again, in the Piano Quintet, although there are only one and a half bars in the entire work in which the piano does not play, a large proportion of the piano material would be meaningless and unintelligible without the contributions made by the strings. In a very limited sense, then, this work may be described as "piano-dominated", but it is by no means a piano concerto, and there are few passages in which the strings are overshadowed by the piano. The only passage in the Quintet where a quasi-concertato begins to emerge is in the development section of the first movement, which is dominated by a diminutive version of the first subject, a new figure that is perfectly suited to the keyboard:

41

⁴⁰G. Abraham, A Hundred Years of Music, p.58.

⁴¹Piano Quintet, i, 134-141.

However, the dynamics are for the most part low, rising only to a level of assertive brilliance in passages in which the strings resume equal partnership with the piano:



42

Some of the most brilliant, concerto-like piano writing occurs in the D minor Trio. This may be largely due to the coincidence that the piano style in the first movement is often reminiscent of the first movement of the Piano Concerto, (which had preceded the Trio by as much as six years). Broken-chord figurations in triplets proliferate in both works, and there is obviously a direct link between such passages as these:

⁴²Op.cit., 162-170.

43

44

⁴³Piano Concerto, i, 19-21, piano.

⁴⁴D minor Trio, i, 2-4, piano.

and

Handwritten musical score for piano, measures 43-44. The score is in treble and bass clefs. Measure 43 starts with a forte 'f' dynamic and a slur over the first two notes. Measure 44 continues the melodic line with various accidentals and dynamics.

Handwritten musical score for piano, measures 45-46. Measure 45 is marked with the number '45' and shows a melodic phrase in the treble clef. Measure 46 continues the phrase with a slur and various accidentals.

Handwritten musical score for piano, measures 47-48. Measure 47 is marked with the number '46' and shows a melodic phrase in the treble clef. Measure 48 continues the phrase with a slur and various accidentals.

Handwritten musical score for piano, measures 49-50. Measure 49 shows a melodic phrase in the treble clef. Measure 50 continues the phrase with a slur and various accidentals.

⁴⁵Piano Concerto, i, 221-225, piano.

⁴⁶D minor Trio, i, 48-49, piano.

But these connections, however obvious, do not turn the D minor Trio into a piano concerto, nor are the violin and cello parts in any sense subservient to the piano. What we have in this Trio is actually a very interesting balance between forces with which Schumann clearly felt more at home than in the quartet or quintet, a balance which had almost the same clarity of texture as the Baroque trio sonata, though with more emphasis on the bass. This can best be expressed diagrammatically:



In this particular balance of forces, the two strings match the piano in a near-perfect equilibrium, within which there is plenty of scope for variety, notably for changing the respective rôles of melody and bass and for using any one of the 4 'voices' to add inner texture. Obviously this basically 2-way balance will not be quite so successful if there are 3 or 4 instruments on the string side, (as in a Piano Quartet or Quintet), which poses the problem of what to do with the inner string parts, nor if there is only one solo string to match against the right- and left-hand piano parts, (as in the Violin Sonatas).

And so we find that in the D minor Trio the piano part, having reached an 'agreement' with the 2 strings, can be less concerned with matters of balance than of texture, and can contribute greatly to the overall sonority, without becoming overbearing. Two contrasting examples will demonstrate this, the first from the opening of the work:

Mit Energie und Leidenschaft

Vollino.

Violoncello.

Pianoforte.

Mit Energie und Leidenschaft. (M. M. $\text{♩} = 104$)

and the second from the beginning of the slow movement:

47 Op.cit., i, 1-11, piano, violin and cello. The piano adds a low, "dark", agitated accompaniment which points the string parts without detracting from them, and increase the lugubrious texture of the whole passage.

pp A

Långsam, mit inniger Empfindung. (M.M. ♩ = 88.)

pp *Una corda*

α

sf

dim.

E.E. 1186

In the works for solo instrument and piano, Schumann generally takes considerable trouble to maintain a satisfactory balance between the instruments, and not to allow the piano to become in the least overpowering.

In the Clarinet Phantasiestücke, for example, the agility and tone-colour of the clarinet are fully exploited, but not aggressively displayed; and this subtle emphasis on the clarinet part is achieved by means of a rather subdued piano accompaniment, which places the solo part in a prominent but not forceful position where it can speak lyrically for itself without recourse to violent dynamic contrast and virtuoso display.

⁴⁸ D minor Trio, iii, 1-10, piano and violin. The right-hand piano part contributes a very sparse chordal texture, not interfering with the tortuous, aphoristic phrases of the violin, and the left hand gives a firm foundation to the violin's syncopated rhythms.

While the piano part may echo, anticipate, complement, or occasionally share the solo melody, it does so without upsetting the fairly delicate balance between the instruments. In pieces such as these Clarinet Phantasiestücke, or the Oboe Romanzen or Viola

⁴⁹Clarinet Phantasiestücke, i, 1-6.

Märchenbilder, there is never the same sense of 'competition' or striving for supremacy that one feels sometimes exists in the Violin Sonatas. In the opening of the fourth movement of the Violin Sonata no.2, for example, the piano begins self-effacingly enough, but after two bars it sweeps the broad violin melody aside with an abrupt cadential phrase which seems to announce the piano's superiority:

Bewegt ♩ = 110

50

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece, with the piano part starting in a self-effacing manner. The second system shows the piano part sweeping the violin melody aside with an abrupt cadential phrase. The third system shows the continuation of the piano part, marked with a rehearsal mark '3'.

In some earlier passages, such as the first 45 bars of the Scherzo the violin had simply shared the demonic piano part:

⁵⁰ Violin Sonata no.2, iv, 1-4,

Sehr lebhaft $\text{♩} = 112$

51

6

However, such instances are not typical, nor should they be misinterpreted. In the First Violin Sonata the thematic material is shared with Schumann's customary sense of balance and equality. The piano takes care not to be overpowering, especially in view of the predominant use of the violin's middle and lower register in this sonata. Occasionally the balance between the two tone-colours is reminiscent of the partnership between voice and piano in Schumann's songs, as if the piano were allowing the violin to 'breathe':

⁵¹ Violin Sonata no.2, ii, 2-10.

Allegretto $\text{♩} = 96$ *rit.* **Im Tempo**

4

The same attention to breathing-space is obviously more functional in the wind pieces:

Nicht schnell. (Moderato.) $\text{♩} = 100.$

p *ritard.* *a tempo* *ritard.* *a*

p *ritard.* *a tempo* *ritard.* *a*

tempo *ritard.* *a tempo*

fp *tempo* *ritard.* *fp* *f* *a tempo*

fp *fp* *f* *fp*

In the Cello Folk-pieces the similarity between one passage and the partnership of voice and piano in Dichterliebe is particularly striking:

⁵³ Oboe Romances, iii, 1-7.

55

Leise.

Ich hab' im Traum ge - wei - net,

mir träum-te, du lä-gest im Grab.

54 Cello Folk-pieces, iii, 1-6.

55 "Ich hab' im Traum geweinet," Dichterliebe, ix, 1-7.

The extraordinary delicacy of the piano accompaniment in these solo works is carefully calculated by Schumann, and in addition to the restraint shown by the piano in terms of texture and dynamics, there is usually a more conscious effort in these little 'salon' pieces to omit melodic doubling of the solo line, however subtle and slight, in the piano part. An extreme example of Schumann's capacity for physically separating melody and accompaniment occurs near the end of the Third Cello piece:

56

In short, the criticism that the piano sonority in Schumann's chamber works is overwhelming and overshadowing could hardly be less valid than it is in these late, shorter pieces.

In the restraint and subtlety of the instrumental writing in these pieces Schumann clearly had the tone-qualities of each instrument in mind. This refinement of aural perception was a facility which increased during the course of the chamber works, chiefly through a conscious effort on Schumann's part to wean himself away

⁵⁶ Cello Folk-pieces, iii, 62-5.

from composing "at the piano". It had apparently been his normal practice to use the piano when composing, up to 1845:

It was only from the year 1845 on, when I began to invent and work out everything in my head, that a completely new type of composing technique began to develop.⁵⁷

His advice to other musicians followed suit:

...To develop your individual sense of melody, it is always best to write much for the voice and unaccompanied chorus; in fact to invent and develop as much as possible in one's own mind...⁵⁸

.....

...Above all things, persevere in composing mentally, not with the help of the instrument, and keep on turning and twisting the principal melodies about in your head until you can say to yourself, 'Now it would do'....⁵⁹

And late in life the advice was elevated almost to the level of a moral principle:

...Mind you get into the habit of thinking of music with ease in your own mind, and not with the assistance of the piano; only in this way are the foundations of the heart opened and brought out in ever greater clearness and purity...The principal thing is that the musician should keep the ear of his mind clear.⁶⁰

In the face of such evidence of Schumann's desire to cultivate the inner ear and to impose a strict self-discipline in methods of composition it is reasonable to assume that in the chamber works written after 1847 the pianistic effects and doubling, where they occur, are more carefully calculated than is usually given credit for. There is, moreover, a notable tendency in the late chamber works to create more lucid, airy textures, especially where more than two instruments are concerned, and this may be partly attributable to an increase in

⁵⁷ Quoted by T.A. Brown in The Aesthetics of Robert Schumann, p.99.

⁵⁸ Life in Letters, vol.2, p.49.

⁵⁹ Op.cit., p.78.

⁶⁰ Op.cit., p.157.

Schumann's ability to "keep the ear of his mind clear". An extreme example occurs at the end of the first movement of the G minor Trio, where earlier motives are alluded to by each instrument in turn, in the context of a fragmentary, illusive texture that is heightened by the use of 'pianissimo' dynamics, rests, and pizzicato, resulting in an incredible sparseness of sonority that is not normally associated with Schumann:

61

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 247-249) shows the Violin I and II parts with *sf* dynamics and the Piano part with sparse accompaniment. The second system (measures 250-252) features *pp* dynamics and includes a *Ped.* marking. The third system (measures 253-259) includes *pizz.* and *arco* markings, with *pp* dynamics and multiple *Ped.* markings. The overall texture is sparse and fragmentary.

ii) Pianistic Writing

While it is relatively easy to disprove the criticism that Schumann's piano parts are usually overpowering, it is not nearly so easy to dismiss the argument, frequently advanced, that he thought pianistically when writing for other instruments. In this area of instrumentation there was, however, a distinct development in Schumann's outlook between the early and late chamber works.

In some of the early pieces, for example, there are a number of ideas that seem to be "two-handed" in conception.

One extreme example of both pianistic ideas and piano sonority 'taking over' a whole composition is the Andante and Variations, Op.46, of 1843. Once this work had been revised for piano duet, and the two cello and horn parts discarded, there seems to have been very little justification for having included them. Only in two passages does one feel the lack of the sombre or exuberant qualities of the horn, associated so clearly with that instrument:⁶²

⁶² Schumann compensates horn-players for the loss of the horn part, however, in the later Adagio and Allegro, Op.70, for solo horn, which, despite the fact that six years intervene, is based on the same motivic idea as the Andante and Variations:



63

64

As in the *Andante and Variations*, the first two String Quartets contain several passages which seem to be "moulded...by the hands of the pianist. Not, of course, in the sense of the virtuoso but by the hands of a man accustomed to think of music too often in terms of two handfuls of sound."⁶⁵

⁶³ *Andante and Variations*, 125-128, second piano.

⁶⁴ *Op.cit.*, 212-216, second piano.

⁶⁵ G. Abraham, *A Hundred Years of Music*, p.57.

The four string parts of Op.41 no.1, for example, are nearly always grouped closely together in what would be the middle range of the piano, and there are few passages, particularly in the first movement of the work which could not easily be transcribed for piano solo.⁶⁶ Extreme ends of the quartet range, (the upper register of the violin and lower register of the cello), are rarely exploited in Op.41, no.2, either, and even on the rare occasions when the first violin part is allowed to 'soar' into leger lines, the other three instruments follow suit, so that the four parts still remain within the range of two and a half octaves:

67

Through the course of the three quartets Schumann's pianistic habits become less imperative, and by the Third String Quartet there are many passages that are more genuinely concerned with the exploitation of widely-spaced string sonority, such as the following; (albeit the figuration of the runs is still slightly pianistic in origin):

⁶⁶See bars 145-160, for example.

⁶⁷Op.41, 2, ii, 26-28.

It was only gradually that Schumann weaned himself away from his reliance on the piano as a medium of composition, and until 1845 he continued to compose at the piano, so that the "two handfuls of sound" infiltrate into the same passages in the Piano Quintet and Piano Quartet. Two early themes in the Quintet, for example, are piano-generated ideas:

⁶⁸ Op.41, 3, ii, 97-110.

⁶⁹ Piano Quintet, i, 9-12, piano.

and

70

as is the introduction to the second subject:

71

The other movements also begin with themes which sound as if they originated "at the piano", but the continuation of each movement contains numerous passages which are not in the least pianistic. It seems that once a movement or section had been set in motion by the piano the pianistic texture could recede and allow the strings

⁷⁰Op.cit., 27-30, piano.

⁷¹Op.cit., 51-54, piano.

greater scope.

Another feature of the pianistic influence of the Piano Quintet lies in the relationship between the piano and the string-quartet group. Sometimes the strings are treated as one single body of sound (rather like a 2nd piano part) in relation to the piano part itself, as in the following example from the Scherzo:

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a Piano Quintet. The first system consists of five staves: four for the string quartet (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello) and one for the piano. The second system also consists of five staves, continuing the same instrumentation. The piano part is characterized by dense, rhythmic patterns, while the string quartet provides a complex, textured accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'f' (forte).

72

In a sense, one might almost describe certain passages in the Piano Quintet as 'piano duets', with a piano on one side and four strings on the other. This is not, of course, to deny the string parts in the Quintet any importance or interest in their own right. On the contrary, the string writing here, as elsewhere in the chamber works, is full of variety and originality.

⁷²Piano Quintet, iii, 9-16.

String Writing

No better opportunity could be found for re-awakening in ourselves an appreciation of Schumann's artistic power and acumen than by specially listening to the strings next time we hear the [Piano] Quintet. Schumann writes for these solo strings even more simply than for the orchestral strings in his concertos, a fact that would be inconceivable in chamber music on classical lines: yet every note tells, and the instruments are vividly characterized in spite of all the preponderance of the pianoforte throughout...⁷³

It is indeed remarkable to compare the rather stodgy treatment of the strings in the Three Quartets, Op.41, with the lightness and delicacy with which they are handled throughout the Piano Quintet. One cannot really explain this in terms of greater experience or maturity in handling strings, since only a mere gap of a few days separate the last String Quartet from the Piano Quintet. Schumann was certainly confident of his ability to write for strings, even as early as 1838, and expressed himself to this effect to Clara Wieck:

You tell me to write quartets, "but please let them be very clear;"...And then, "Do you thoroughly understand the instruments?" Why of course I do, young lady, else how should I dare attempt it?⁷⁴

And yet, despite the fact that the completion of the three String Quartets took such a short time, (approximately 6 weeks), there is a noteworthy evolution of the independence of the four string parts, and a tendency to steer away from the dominance of the first violin.

In Op.41 no.1 the first violin takes the lead in no uncertain terms, giving the initial statement of virtually all the main themes of the work: Ia, Ib and Ic of the first movement; Ia, Ib, 2a, 2b and the 'Intermezzo' theme of the second movement; the main theme of the

⁷³D.J. Tovey, Essays in Musical Analysis: Chamber Music, p.151.

⁷⁴Early Letters, p.265.

slow movement; and Ia, Ib, Ic and Id of the Finale. Many of the subsequent repetitions of these themes are also assigned to the first violin. Clearly, it was no accident that many quartets in the early nineteenth century, particularly those of Mendelssohn and Spohr, were called "Violin Quartets". As Mendelssohn wrote to Ferdinand Hiller in 1838:

...My third violin quartet in D major [Op.44, no.1] is finished...I wish I could play it to you - especially a forte passage at the end which you would be sure to like...⁷⁵

Mendelssohn would have had no difficulty in conveying the essence of this quartet to Hiller by simply playing the first violin part, which, as in all of Mendelssohn's Quartets, takes the lion's share of thematic material.

Possibly it was because Schumann was not a virtuoso violinist, that he was not content to make all his Quartets "leader"-quartets, so that in Op.41 no.2 there is a more conscious effort to delegate material to the three lower strings from time to time. The second violin has a considerable amount of duet-playing with the first, and cello and viola are not always consigned to bass or harmonic 'filling' respectively, though they are still far from being totally liberated. One other notable feature of Op.41 no.2 is the greater care taken over phrasing, slurring, expression marks and accents, with the length of the bow taken more obviously into account than in Op.41 no.1. This is particularly noticeable in the last movement, where the terraced instrumental entries are matched by terraced dynamic markings, and each of the four parts has its own details of phrasing and expression: as, for example, in bars 48-150 of the development section of Op.41, 2, iv.

These concerns for detail are continued in Op.41 no.3, and moreover the cello can be seen here gradually emerging as a melody

⁷⁵Felix Mendelssohn, Letters, p.279.

instrument, most notably in the second subject of the first movement.

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On the whole, it is true to say that although Schumann may have learnt a great deal during the composition of the Three Quartets, when he came to writing the Piano Quartet the addition of the piano took a great weight off his mind as far as responsibility to the strings was concerned. With a firm pianistic foundation the four strings could feel more 'liberated' than they had before, although this is a curious paradox. Schumann suddenly seems to realize here that the strings can be more autonomous: not just in terms of using specific string devices such as pizzicato and tremolo (barely used in the Quartets) but also in terms of the individuality of each string part. "The pianistic activity, in fact, leaves the strings freer for those answering phrases and supporting sounds of single instruments or groups, which

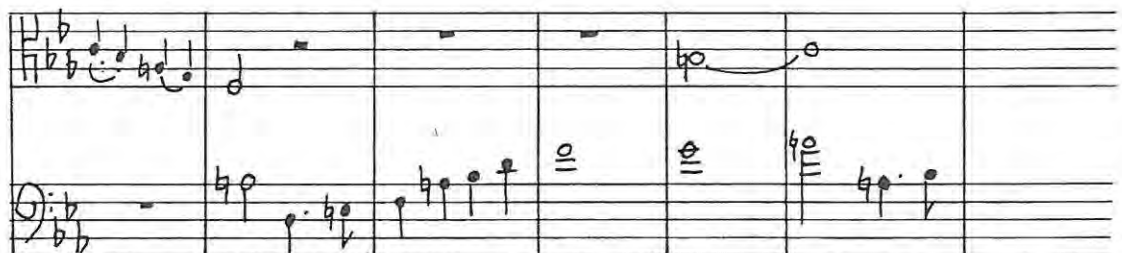
⁷⁶Op. 41, 3, i, 46-54.

are missing in the quartets."⁷⁷ Nor is it only answering phrases that are assigned to the strings: the Quintet opens with a bold first-violin theme which exploits strident and rapid bow-changes and leaps across the strings. This is a thoroughly violinistic theme, whose wide range and disjunct movement are as idiomatic as many a concerto-theme of Vivaldi. The same can be said of the opening theme of the G minor Trio.

78



In addition, thematic material is more easily distributed between the instruments in the Quintet than in the Quartets, and the two lower strings, in particular, are given far greater prominence. The second subject of the first movement is an obvious case in point. This is one of the most evocative passages for cello and viola in all his chamber works:



⁷⁷ A.E.F. Dickinson, "The Chamber Music", in G. Abraham, editor, *Schumann: A Symposium*, pp.138-175, p.150.

⁷⁸ G minor Trio, i, 1-5, violin.

⁷⁹ Piano Quintet, i, 57-69, viola and cello.

The main C minor theme (Ia) of the slow movement is divided between the violins and viola, the dark sonority of the latter's C-string being so well suited to it that Schumann allocates almost the entire recapitulation of this theme to the viola, with pungent contributions from the other strings, over a fragile piano accompaniment. The resulting texture is that of a vigorous and independent string quartet with obligato piano accompaniment:

80

In view of Schumann's superb judgement in the matter of the respective rôles of piano and four stringed instruments in this work, it is a great pity that he wrote only one such work, and, moreover, followed it by a Piano Quartet, in the allocation of whose string parts he was not nearly so successful. The reason for this is the opposite from what one might expect. Schumann did not try to compensate for the loss of the second violin here by over-writing for the other three strings, despite the misleading double-stopped chords of the opening:

81

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the opening of Schumann's Piano Quartet. It consists of three staves: the top staff is for the violin, the middle for the viola, and the bottom for the cello. The music is in C major, 4/4 time, and begins with a series of double-stopped chords. The first few measures show the violin and viola playing a sequence of notes (G4, A4, B4, C5) while the cello provides a bass line. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings.

This innocent introduction has enraged many a Schumann critic into the charge of over-doing the string writing, and also into unfavourable comparison with the Piano Quintet:

How the purity of chamber-music style may be affected by double stops will appear from a glance at the opening of Schumann's Pianoforte Quartet, which shows pressing reasons why it should have been a quintet; while, perversely enough, the...Quintet might, from first to last, be arranged as a quartet, or even as a trio, such loss as might exist being compensated by the disappearance of characteristic doublings.⁸²

⁸¹Piano Quartet, i, 1-11, violin, viola and cello.

⁸²D.F. Tovey, "Brahms' Chamber Music", in Essays and Lectures on Music, pp.220-270, p.251.

On the contrary, a glance at most of the rest of the Piano Quartet will show an almost complete lack of double stopping in the string parts, except for the occasional cadential or climactic passage in which string chords momentarily thicken the texture, for obvious dynamic effect.

The two main weaknesses of the string parts in this work are the subordination of the cello to a "harmonic bass" part, (except for two obvious melodic solos: the opening theme of the slow movement and the second subject of the finale), and the consistent withdrawal of one of the three string parts at any given time, so that its redundancy renders the texture more akin to a piano trio than a piano quartet. The slow movement gives ample evidence of the latter, and the former can be seen throughout the work, not least in the cello's very effective low B-flat pedal which ends the slow movement, and for which he has to tune his lowest string down a tone.

Therefore it would seem that there are perhaps pressing reasons why the Piano Quartet might have been more successful as a Piano Trio.

As far as the Piano Trios themselves are concerned, there is nothing tentative or ill-judged about the string parts, which on the contrary contain some of the most imaginative string writing Schumann ever achieved. The best examples of this are in the G minor Trio, where there is both consistent independence and inter-dependence of the three instruments throughout. What is more, the freedom of the string writing is more noticeable here than in any of his other chamber works, and Schumann is not content to keep the violin and cello parts within a limited technical and physical range. A few examples will make this clear; all from the first movement, which begins with a passionately Romantic violin theme.⁸³

⁸³ See above, p. 278.

Theme 1b is a forceful dialogue between violin and piano:

84

Theme 2a is a more wistful, fragmentary statement by violin, with convertible countersubject in the cello:

85

⁸⁴ G minor Trio, i, 28-31, violin and piano.

⁸⁵ Op.cit., 35-40, violin and cello.

In the middle of the development there is an extraordinary new theme for strings 'pizzicato', the first time Schumann had ever used this effect for the statement of a prominent new idea:



86

And the whole movement ends by recalling this pizzicato theme, amid sinister rumblings on the cello:



87

⁸⁶ Op.cit., 112-118, violin and cello.

⁸⁷ Op.cit., 253-259, violin and cello.

The effectiveness of such passages was recalled shortly afterwards in the theme of the slow movement of the 2nd Violin Sonata, which consists entirely of pizzicato chords.

There are, of course, string techniques which Schumann ignores almost completely, such as harmonics, 'col legno' bowing, etc., and there is very little in the way of tremolo, or contrapuntal double-stopping, except, once again, in the same movement quoted above (Variation 2). One other notable effect exploited on occasions (but again, not consistently) was 'sul ponticello', the most striking use of which occurs in the D minor Trio, at the introduction of a new theme in the development of the first movement. Its employment here emphasises the contrasts in pitch between the previous few bars, the 'sul ponticello' passage itself, and the low cello theme immediately afterwards. It is a very brief, and strangely ethereal passage, all the more unusual because what the strings actually play near the bridge ('Am Steg', to use Schumann's own term) is not a new theme, but the bass-line of a new theme; the theme itself is stated very high up on the piano part:

10

Tempo I, nur ruhiger.

ppp Am Steg bis zum Zeichen ♪

Tempo I, nur ruhiger.

ppp Verschiebung bis zum Zeichen ♪

Am Steg bis zum Zeichen ♪

ppp

f



88

With this, as with other string passages in which special string effects are used, it is not Schumann's intention deliberately to exploit specific effects for their own sake, but simply to use them as a means of achieving a heightened sonority for a particular theme. This is why there are so many passages in the Violin Sonatas specifically marked to be played on the G or D strings, which enhance the profundity of the violin register, and give certain themes a heavier string sonority than they might otherwise have. The opening 8-bar theme of the 1st Violin Sonata, for example, has to be played entirely on the fourth string, not only here but also at all subsequent appearances, including one towards the end of the last movement of the same work. The character of the theme itself demands this treatment, and gives it a specifically nasal quality peculiar to the G-string. The fact that during the course of this movement, (209 bars), there are only approximately 20 bars which demand the use of the E-string is yet another indication that it was the effects of the violin's middle and lower register that Schumann consciously sought to exploit here. Indeed, the resultant mood of oppressed melancholy and the repression of turbulent passions and

⁸⁸D minor Trio, i, 82-91.

longings characteristic of the whole movement are largely a result of Schumann's deliberate restraint of the pitch of the violin part, and is exactly in keeping with the direction 'mit leidenschaftlichen Ausdruck' at the beginning of the work.

Wind Writing

The three solo wind chamber works are all masterpieces of idiomatic wind writing. In each work, Schumann has matched not only his melodic style to the tone-qualities of each instrument, but also his choices of key: A minor predominates in the melancholy sections of the Oboe Romances, A major in the mostly sunny and exuberant Clarinet Fantasy-pieces, and the contrast of the richly romantic key of E^b and B major are exploited in the Horn Adagio and Allegro. In the case of the latter work, the sudden mediant plunge from E^b to B major in the middle, 'poco tranquillo', section of the Allegro is an exact parallel to the 1840 song, "Waldesgespräch", (Liederkreis, Op.39 no.3). It is only natural that the romantic woodland imagery of the song, the opening horn motif in the piano part, and the Lorelei's warning: "...wohl irrt das Waldhorn, her und him!" in the middle section should have recalled themselves to Schumann's mind during the composition of the Horn piece, but it is above all the sudden E major - C major keychanges in the middle of the song which is most explicitly referred to in the chamber work.

The song-comparison is also apt on another level, for in all three solo wind pieces the relationship between solo and piano is very similar to the relationship to the dialogue between piano and voice in Schumann's songs:

It is fascinating to see how the wind instruments which 'converse' with the piano always tend to speak in a mysterious voice...Perhaps it is partly because their tones have an affinity with the human voice that they evoke more successfully than the piano and strings a strange and more immaterial universe.⁸⁹

As is customary with solo chamber works, Schumann offers alternative instrumentation in all the solo wind pieces, but it is impossible to imagine any of them succeeding as well in any version other than that for which they have each been so perfectly conceived. In the Oboe Romances, for example, although

...the oboe part...is available for clarinet, violin or violoncello, the characteristic quality of the instrument for which it was first designed is...clearly in the composer's mind...that kind of rustic suggestion that the oboe brings appears in all three...⁹⁰

What is so remarkable about all these later solo or duet pieces (including the Märchenerzählungen and Cello Folk-pieces) is not simply the idiosyncratic treatment of the characteristics of each instrument, but the confidence of such treatment, (if one remembers the rather tentative rigidity of the string-writing in Op.41 no.1). Such self-assurance was the result of experience, imagination and increased maturity of style, and it is amazing that in Schumann's case it should have evolved during such a short time-span. The uniqueness and originality of the wind-writing -- particularly for clarinet and horn -- indeed directly inspired the idiosyncratic use Brahms later made of these instruments in his Trios Opp.40 and 114, Clarinet Sonatas in F minor and E-flat major, and Clarinet Quintet in B minor.

⁸⁹ Marcel Brion, Schumann and the Romantic Age, p.258.

⁹⁰ J.A. Fuller-Maitland, Schumann's Concerted Chamber Music, p.14.

VII

RHYTHM

"...unrestraint is always more ingenious than restraint..."¹

Schumann's idiosyncratic approach to rhythm, evident in his treatment both of large-scale structures and of minute details, is one of the most interesting elements of his musical style. The particularly individual and innovative features are to be found principally in the smaller rhythmic patterns of his works; at the other extreme, he emphasised the need for a sense of overall rhythmic drive, or "continuum", throughout a movement, and here he was following in the footsteps of the classical tradition. Foremost in his mind among these would probably have been the giant footsteps of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, to be described by Wagner as the "apotheosis of the Dance". His aim here, too, was the classical one: to achieve a balance of form and to give the music inner vitality. In the sketch for the first movement of his String Quartet Op.41 no.1, for example, Schumann left "specified numbers of empty bars at certain structural points; his sense of large-scale rhythm demanded something of a certain length at those points; precisely what was left for later decision."²

A sense of the inward driving-force of large-scale rhythm, especially in a fast tempo, was something that Schumann delighted in -- above all in his revered predecessor, J.S. Bach:

¹Schumann, tr. T.A. Brown in The Aesthetics of Robert Schumann, p.66.

²A.E.F. Dickinson, "The Chamber Music", in Schumann: A Symposium, ed. G. Abraham, pp.138-175, p.146.

This is my latest Bach theme:-



A thing to revel in!³,

he wrote to Mendelssohn, in 1845. Oddly enough, though, this is the very same kind of classical fugue-subject which Mendelssohn usually handled with far greater simplicity and dexterity than Schumann himself, notably in the former's String Octet (to quote an example from his chamber music):



Schumann quite often used "perpetuum mobile" themes of a similar type, in his finales, which, while clearly trying to emulate the Bach example above, fall far short of its masculine robustness and vigour, chiefly because the rather fatuous accompaniments he gives such themes undermine their inherent vitality (quite apart from the difference in texture and dynamics).

³Life in Letters, vol.2, p.33.

⁴String Octet, iii, 1-4, cello.

⁵"Spring" Symphony, iv, 7-10, strings.

And in Op.41/2 there is another striking example of the "accompanied fugue-subject" which is weakened by the accompaniment. 6

In another case, the potential energy of a good running-motif is immediately sapped by its tumbling ignominiously down to a premature cadence (although its fugal possibilities are more fully exploited later on):

7

Schumann failed to come to terms with these running "fugue-subject" themes not because he was incapable of handling them, but because, despite all his appreciation of the classical principles of continuous rhythmic energy, he was, at some more fundamental level, loth to adhere to the traditional, classical treatment of them. Particularly in his chamber music he was fascinated by the possibilities for far-ranging experiments involving deviations from the two most important facets of classical rhythm: symmetry and regular accent. In fact, the closer one looks at detailed rhythmic characteristics of

⁶Op.41, 2, iv, 3-6.

⁷Piano Quartet, iv, 1-4, violin.

Schumann's chamber music, the more abundantly clear it becomes that he was continually exploring their totally opposed alternatives, asymmetry and syncopation.

These two terms need to be defined clearly, in view of their importance for this chapter. "Asymmetry" refers to those aspects of rhythm in which the time-signature (and therefore also the metrical structure of the music) is interrupted and displaced by changes in metre and accent. I have subdivided the general heading, "Asymmetry", into four different categories, as follows: (1) Time-signature displacement (including hemiola); (2) Beat displacement; (3) Accented beat anticipation; and (4) Unaccented beat anticipation.

For the purposes of this chapter, I have reserved the term "Syncopation" (which is often loosely used to cover all the subheadings under "Asymmetry") to refer strictly to two different aspects of rhythm: (5) Accented emphasis on a weak beat; and (6) Unaccented emphasis on a weak beat. In both types, one or all instruments may be concerned with the syncopation, but there is never any difficulty in feeling the main beat. Neither of these two types of strict syncopation actually disrupts the time-signature, but each occurs within the established metre.

In addition to "Asymmetry" and "Syncopation" there is a third term I shall need to employ here, which I have simply called (7) "Rhythmic Ornamentation": I intend this to cover the various ways in which Schumann attempts to decorate his rhythm, by means of triplets (in simple time), duplets (in compound time), dotted figures, dance metres, and any other persistently used rhythmic features (which may become obsessive, but which do not normally come uner

the twin headings of "asymmetry" and "syncopation", although they may be related to them).

I shall deal with each of these terms in turn, beginning with the various categories which fall within the scope of "Asymmetry", as I have defined it above.

(1) Time-Signature displacement

This occurs when the pulse is deliberately so much out of step that instead of losing a sense simply of the beat within the bar, the whole sense of the original number or nature of beats in a bar is lost. When this occurs it is not usually shown by an actual visual change in time-signature, except in one notable example from Op.41/3, near the end of the exposition of the first movement: the effect being that of a rather strangely delayed cadence.

8

There is a comparable passage in bars 192-200 at the end of the movement, where the same change is found.

The position of these examples is significant, in that they both occur at cumulative, cadential points in the movement; in other words, at important moments of structural tension. Most of the other examples of time-signature displacement also occur, significantly,

⁸Op.41, 3, i, 85-90.

at cadence points, although without any visual metre-change, and without so complete a feeling of "losing one's grip on time" as the above example shows. In the Second Piano Trio, for example, there is a change of time near the end of the movement involving no more than a shift from $\frac{6}{8}$ to $\frac{2}{4}$; but there nevertheless remain two beats in a bar. In this case, the occasion is dramatized by a semitonal key-change:

9

A few bars later the jump is more striking, from $\frac{2}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$, with an occasional interpolation of $\frac{3}{4}$ in the $\frac{3}{8}$ passage, just to confuse the issue:

10

And at the very end of the movement, despite an interim return to $\frac{6}{8}$ and a long V pedal, $\frac{2}{4}$ reasserts itself for the final cadence:

11

⁹F major Trio, i, 400-405, piano.

¹⁰Op.cit., 410-416, violin.

¹¹Op.cit., 448-456, violin and piano.

At such points, Schumann did not physically alter the time-signature, since his intention was to make the metre ambiguous, a device which works even better at the beginning of a movement when there is no established frame of reference:

12



These running quavers could almost as easily be grouped in $\frac{6}{8}$ as $\frac{3}{4}$. And Schumann exploits the even more striking rhythmic ambiguity of Ex.7, which in its "alter ego" $\frac{2}{4}$ form



becomes useful firstly as a means of achieving tension in the development,

13



¹²Piano Quartet, ii, 1-6, cello.

¹³Piano Quartet, iv, 81-86, piano.

then as a means for creating a stretto,

14

and finally at a point of tension, the beginning of the recapitulation:

15

Throughout the fugal coda of this movement (obviously modelled on the finale of the "Jupiter"), the emphasis of the beat subtly shifts again:

16

¹⁴Op.cit., 106-9.

¹⁵Op.cit., 140-143, violin and cello.

¹⁶Op.cit., 278-281, viola and cello.

This time the shift seems to be permanent, but Schumann subsequently launches into a long passage of $\frac{2}{4}$ (from bars 302-14) just before the final appearance of the second subject (which is manifestly an attempt to restore order to Schumann's deliberate metrical confusion.) However, the ambiguity remains, even in the last two bars:

17



Of course, all these examples are in differing degrees linked to the device of hemiola, the metrical division of two beats into three (or vice-versa). The Harvard Dictionary definition of hemiola states that in "treatises on mensural notation (15th, 16th centuries) the term is applied to time-values which are in the relationship of 3:2, or in modern terms, of three half-notes instead of two dotted half-notes: $\frac{6}{4}$ | d. d. | d d d | or $\frac{3}{4}$ d. | d. | d d d | ".¹⁸ However, the previous examples all differ radically from genuine hemiola, since they are concerned not simply with the shifting emphasis of two or three beats within one (or two) bars, but with the larger-scale shifting of the bar-line over an extended passage. The number of beats in a bar has been obscured over prolonged periods (as has the position of the bar-line) which involves more than simply the re-arrangement of beats inside the framework of one bar.

The time-honoured device of hemiola (revelled in by composers since the 15th century) was indeed a great favourite of Schumann's,

¹⁷ Op.cit., 321-324, violin.

¹⁸ W. Apel, Harvard Dictionary of Music, p.329.

and, through him, Brahms. Compare the opening of their respective Third Symphonies:

19

Although hemiolic rhythms are traditionally associated with cadence-points, Schumann is clearly fond of using them at the beginning of a movement; or, even more, in the opening bars of a work. He hints at rhythmic ambiguity through hemiola at the beginning of three works: his Violin Sonata no.1*;

21

his Second String Quartet* (which is in a kind of enlarged $\frac{6}{8}$, due to its speed);

22

¹⁹ Schumann, Symphony no.3, i, 1-9, violins.

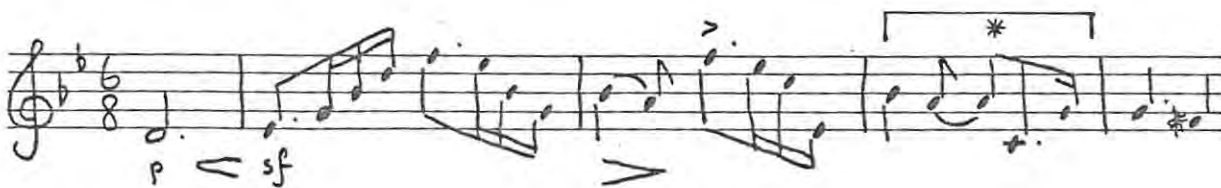
²⁰ Brahms, Symphony no.3, i, 1-4, violins.

²¹ Violin Sonata no.1, i, 1-5, violin.

²² Op.41, 2, i, 1-7, violin I.



and his Fourth Piano Trio^{*}:

23



As far as a cadential usage is concerned, one particular use of hemiola near the final cadence of the third movement of the Second Piano Trio has rather unusual complications:

24

Here the crotchet duplet obviously corresponds to , but one wonders why Schumann did not make it  as one would expect. The semiquavers in bars 172 and 176 fall on the ear in two groups, as in $\frac{6}{16}$ time, but this clashes curiously with the three quavers in bar 178. What Schumann seems to be dealing with here is what one might call a "double hemiola", or a hemiola within a hemiola: a subdivision of three beats into two, and then a further subdivision of those two beats into two groups of three. There is nothing

²³ G minor Piano Trio, i, 1-5, violin.

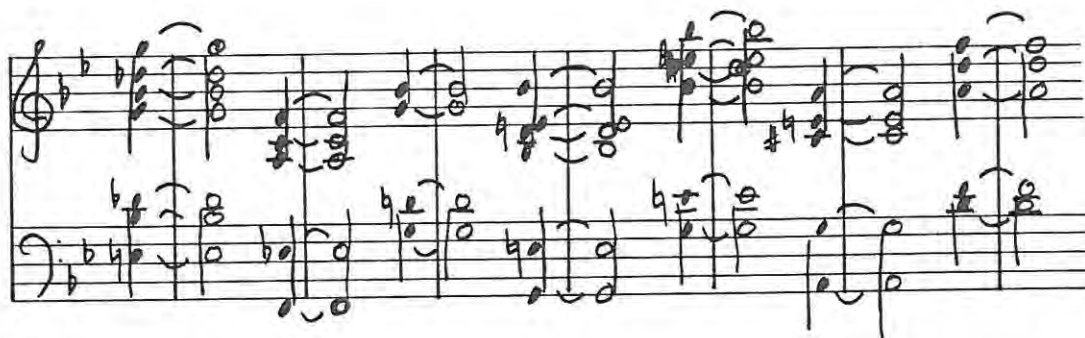
²⁴ F major Piano Trio, iii, 169-177, violin and piano.

unusual or strikingly new in Schumann's use of hemiola,²⁵ but it is not always recognised for what it is, in the above-mentioned works.

- (2) Displacement of the beat.

Numerous examples exist throughout the chamber works of the emphasis shifting (by the use of accents, dynamics or subtler implications) from the naturally strong first beat of the bar to a weak beat or beats. Presumably this is due to a desire to destroy the too symmetrical function of the relationship between strong and weak beats. An extreme example in $\frac{3}{4}$ time occurs throughout a large part of the second Trio in the Piano Quartet's "Scherzo" movement. Here the third beat of the bar very quickly becomes in effect the first, because of the consistent ties:

26



At the end of the first movement of Op.41/3, a similar succession of tied notes eventually make the last three bars sound "out of joint", although they are in the correct time:

²⁵ ...it was only natural that Romanticism at its peak, striving for freedom from patterns and rules, tried to break the strictures of rhythm as much as its bar-lined, baton-beaten scores permitted.

Much of this freedom was a time-honoured heritage from earlier generations and within the 'rules'. One device to ease the fetters of measures was...the hemiola.

C.Sachs, Rhythm and Tempo, p.344.

²⁶ Piano Quartet, ii, 137-143, piano.

The following extract, on the other hand, shows how the second beat can come to sound like the first, though in a less striking way:

28

Schumann clearly loves playing such tricks upon the ear, although examples in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, as above, are rare. Many of these "tricks" seem to have seriously annoyed more than one commentator on Schumann.

For example:

...Schumann's extensive use of syncopated and compound rhythmic figures [are] at times employed so ineptly that the formal lines are obscured. The slow movement of the F major Trio provides a case in point; sections of that piece are so written that the rhythmic beat is lost for measures at a time. The resultant effect is formless, or at best impressionistic...it was sometimes used to excess, and merely made the music unclear.²⁹

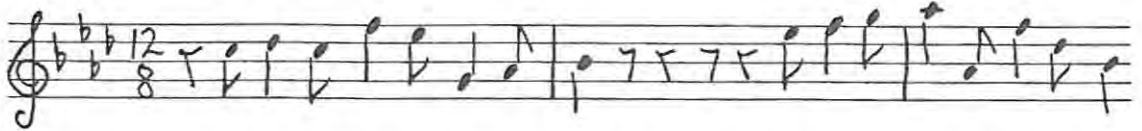
²⁷ Op.41, 3, i, 219-226, violin I and cello.

²⁸ Op.41, 3, i, 46-50, cello.

²⁹ Homer Ulrich, Chamber Music, p.313. Is it possible that Ulrich is confusing the example he gives with the slow movement of the D minor Trio?

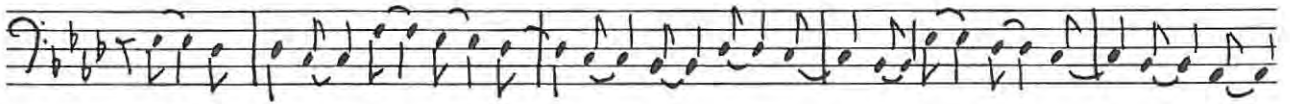
Op.41/2 furnishes us with several rather curious occurrences of beat displacement in its second movement, which are more loosely connected with triple time. This piece sets out as a flowing Theme and Variations in $12/8$ time:



30



but suddenly at the beginning of Var.I there is a change of rhythmic emphasis, and the whole variation thereafter looks out of alignment on the printed page:

31



After only a few beats these  patterns sound exactly like  on the beat, and in order to show where all this is leading, Schumann repeats the same theme in dotted crotchets in the next variation.

32



It may seem a fairly straightforward thing to shift the beat within $12/8$ time, but it cannot be an easy task to divide a $12/8$ bar into two patterns of $3/4$; this is exactly what Schumann does in Var.IV of the same movement,

³⁰Op.41, 2, ii, 1-3, violin I.

³¹Op.cit., 16-20, cello.

³²Op.cit., 32-36, violin I.



which provides relief from the potential monotony of the lilting $12/8$ rhythm. It is noteworthy that the cello "drone bass" helps to anchor this strange rhythmic passage, but also emphasises the crotchet divisions.

Examples of beat displacement occurring in duple or quadruple time are by far the most frequently encountered, although the form of the displacement naturally varies according to the relationship of the four (or two) beats available. The relationship between the two fairly solid, substantial minim beats of Alla Breve time is exploited to create a sense of mystery in these two identical transition passages from the Piano Quintet:³⁴



³³ Op.cit., 64-66, violin I and cello.

³⁴ The Piano Quintet is unusual in that three out of its four movements should be in Alla Breve time, and that each of the three has similar striking examples of minim beat-displacement.

³⁵ Piano Quintet, i, 116-125, piano.

and

36



And a similar translocation of beats in ♩ is emphatically introduced in the last movement of the same work -- this time at the beginning of theme 1b:

37



The symmetry of the normal 8- or 4-bar phrase-structure is disarranged by such beat-displacements, which is, no doubt, Schumann's underlying intention. This is particularly noticeable in several of his later chamber works, and occasionally the resulting asymmetry of phrase caused by beat-displacement is distinctive.

38



Schumann uses a similar method to create the special "folk-style" effect he needed in the Cello Folk-pieces; in the third movement the phrase-structure is $2\frac{1}{2} + 3\frac{1}{2}$ bars, so that the beat is automatically displaced by rhythmic changes of emphasis from one

³⁶ Piano Quintet, ii, 84-92, piano.

³⁷ Piano Quintet, iv, 21-25, piano.

³⁸ Clarinet Phantasiestücke, ii, 25-30, clarinet.

part of the bar to another:

39



One cannot help wondering which idea came first in Schumann's mind, the beat displacement or the asymmetrical phrasing. It would appear to be the latter, since examples of irregular "volkston" phrasing are fairly common throughout the five movements (as in, for example, the opening of the second, fourth and fifth movements) but they are not always accompanied by beat-displacement.

The quaint pre-emptive "echo" effect, which one can see in the example above, occurs again in the fourth movement:

40



In the last of the five movements, Schumann uses a similar method, but cleverly truncates the opening five-bar phrase:

41



into a "normal" four-bar one:

³⁹ Cello Folk-pieces, iii, 1-6, cello.

⁴⁰ Cello Folk-pieces, iv, 64-69, cello. There would be a natural tendency in performance to draw attention to the beat-displacement by playing the second phrase pianissimo.

⁴¹ Cello Folk-pieces, v, 1-5, cello.



As one can see from all these examples, Schumann tends to use similar rhythmic displacements several times in the same work, and whether the effect is intentional, or simply the result of unconscious memory whilst composing at speed, the result is the same: there is a feeling of familiarity about the displacements which helps to unify several diverse movements into an organic whole. Op.41/1 also shows this rhythmic unity, in its first movement. There are several examples here of themes which lay persistent stresses on the second \downarrow (in $\frac{6}{8}$), so that eventually it begins to sound more important than the first. The work begins with a contrapuntal slow introduction which leads into the Allegro first theme:

43



Bars three and four of this theme (x) although somewhat insipid and unremarkable at a first hearing, in fact bear, rhythmically, the seeds of nearly all the main motives of the movement. The second or transition theme carries the "leaning" second beat of x a stage further; so much so that it threatens to eclipse the first beat of the bar in importance.

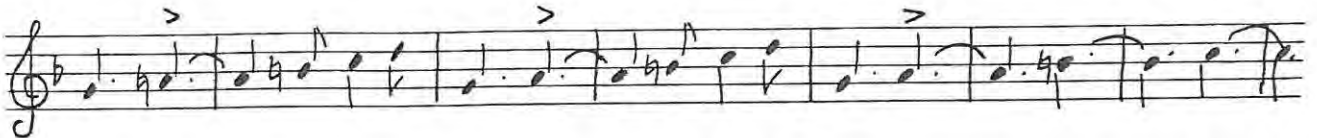
⁴²Op.cit., 49-52, cello.

⁴³Op.41, 1, i, 34-41, violin I.



And finally in the closing theme of the exposition the illusion that the first and second beats exchange places is almost complete.

45



The second and third movements also show this predilection for emphasis of the second beat, even though, through its extensive appearance in the first movement, its force is by now almost spent. The "Intermezzo" of the second movement moves by dynamic implication continually towards the second beat,

46



while the opening of the third movement is drawn to it like a magnet;

47



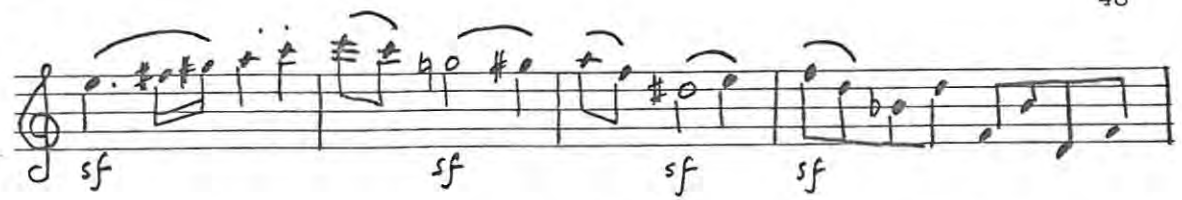
⁴⁴Op.cit., 76-79, viola.

⁴⁵Op.cit., 125-131, violin I.

⁴⁶Op.41, 1, ii, 79-84, violin I.

⁴⁷Op.41, 1, iii, 1-3, violin, viola and cello.

and there is a strong suggestion of second-beat emphasis in the finale, too:



The same characteristic pull towards the second beat is handled with rather more imagination and experience in the Second Piano Trio, even in the opening of which we find an obvious favouring of the second beat:



Later on in the same movement the beat displacement of the previous example is developed with greater subtlety:



The second subject of this movement contains a much less subtle accent on the second beat, which is nevertheless surprising in the middle of a very smooth phrase;

⁴⁸ Op. 41, 1, iv, 10-12, violin I.

⁴⁹ F major Trio, i, 1-5, violin.

⁵⁰ Op. cit., 29-43, piano. My phrasing.



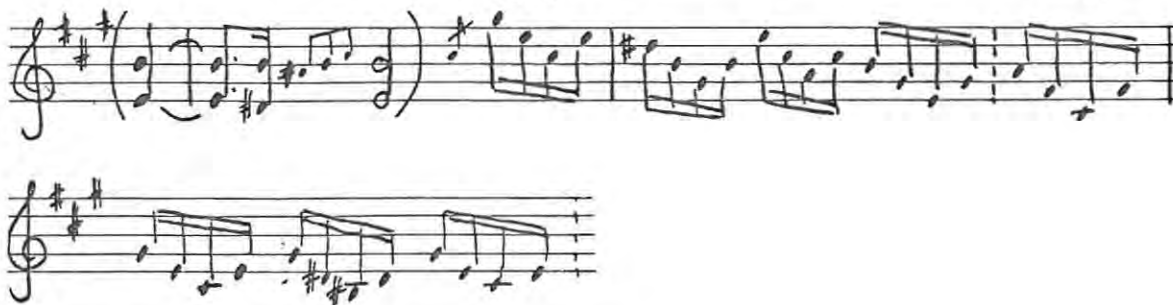
and is also (as in Ex.8) underlined by a dramatic key-change, this time to the mediant minor. A few bars later occurs a controversial modulation, again involving the mediant minor, together with the emphasised second beat, which deserves quotation in full.

(The overall key of the passage is C major.):

The obsession with the second beat is carried on into the second movement, where there are two passages which, as in the first movement, combine displacement of the beat with a mediant key-change. The first is quoted here:

⁵¹Op.cit., 51-58, piano.

⁵²Op.cit., 78-84, piano. Cf. John Gardner, "The Chamber Music", in Robert Schumann, ed. Alan Walker, pp.200-240, pp.217-8.




(3) Accented beat anticipation

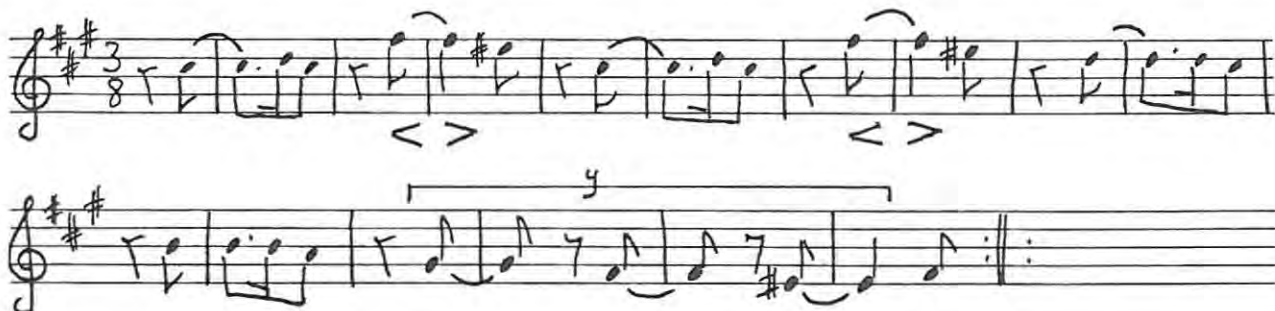
Whilst the preceding sections of this chapter have dealt with Schumann's ingenuity in making the position of the bar-line and the relationship of strong and weak beats ambiguous, this section will mainly be concerned with ways in which attention is drawn to the bar-line by means of emphasising the weak up-beat and tying it over on to the strong first beat of the bar. In the two following examples, the bar-line is treated as an invisible hurdle, the tied up-beat being a kind of "spring-board":

54



Schumann frequently used the same rhythmic device, though sometimes with  to emphasise the bar-line rather than *sfp*; as in the main theme of Op.41/3/ii:

55



⁵³ F major Trio, ii, 23-25, violin.

⁵⁴ Op.41, 1, ii, 27-28 and 35-36, violin I.

⁵⁵ Op.41, 3, ii, 1-16, violin I.

Only in the last four bars (y) is there a feeling of beat displacement and an obscuring of the bar-line. Elsewhere the tied quaver only draws attention to the bar-line and first strong beat of the next bar.

Much of the rhythmic pungency of the Scherzo from the Piano Quintet depends upon the same device,

56



which itself occurs within the framework of beat displacement. The second beat effectively sounds like the first throughout the whole Scherzo section, which ends with the following cadence:

57



A more substantial accented fourth crotchet tied to first crotchet occurs early in the D minor Piano Trio, where the fourth beat is also emphasised by a rapid ascending arpeggio figure,

58

⁵⁶ Piano Quintet, iii, 9-12, piano.

⁵⁷ Op.cit., 41-44, piano.

⁵⁸ D minor Trio, i, 14-17, piano.

and this almost results in beat-displacement a few bars later, when it is telescoped.

59



(4) Unaccented beat anticipation

The two examples above are obviously derived from the unaccented motive which begins the work, and which is a significant example of beat anticipation by means of a tie, but without an accent:

60



This type of beat anticipation draws less attention to the whereabouts of the bar-line and first beat than does the accented type, and results in a feeling of "creeping" across the bar-line rather than leaping across it (as in Exs. 48-53) so that it has a more veiled, mysterious quality. This seems to have suited Schumann's purpose (to achieve a feeling, however brief, of rhythmical asymmetry) even better than the more obvious accented beat anticipation. He first discovered the effect in a tiny little "urging" motif in Op.41 no.1, used as an accompanying figure;

61



⁵⁹ Op.cit., 18-22, violin.

⁶⁰ Op.cit., 1-4, violin.

⁶¹ Op.41, 1, iii, 4, viola.

and then found that the effect was strengthened by using several instruments:

62

In later works, he began to use the idea with greater freedom, transferring it out of the realm of accompanying figures and into important melodies, such as the opening of the slow movement of the Second Piano Trio,

63

pursuing the same idea in the openings of both subsequent movements.

64

65

⁶²Op.41, 2, iii, 1-2.

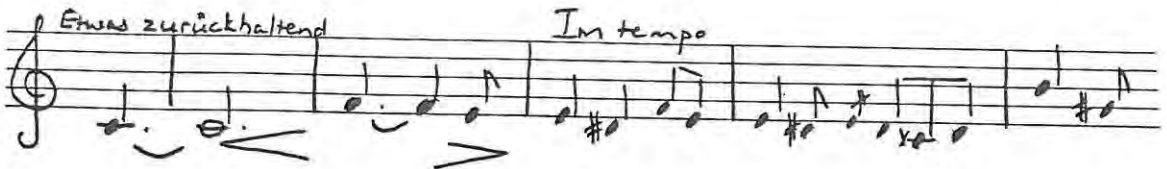
⁶³F major Trio, ii, 1-3, violin.

⁶⁴F major Trio, iii, 1-7, piano.

⁶⁵F major Trio, iv, 1-2, piano.

And finally, in two late works written within a short distance of each other in 1851 (the First Violin Sonata, and Fourth Piano Trio), he explored the possibility of stretching the anticipatory note so much that the resulting phraseology became asymmetrical:

66



In the above example, the tension mounting during the moments before the recapitulation is deliberately prolonged, by stretching the first few notes of the first subject. In the next example, in a similar move the end of one phrase overlaps into the beginning of the next by a prolonged anticipatory upbeat*:

67



Lastly, the opening of the Fourth Piano Trio shows how Schumann's original idea of anticipating the strong first beat of the bar with a tied quaver upbeat (in an attempt to blur the rigid effect of the bar line) has become stretched out of proportion, and grown into a whole bar's anticipation:

68



⁶⁶Violin Sonata no.1, i, 113-118, violin.

⁶⁷Violin Sonata no.1, ii, 16-21, violin.

⁶⁸G minor Trio, i, 1-5, violin.


So, in effect, the idea has come full circle, since far from blurring the bar-line the upbeat begins firmly on the first beat and so emphasises the position of the bar-line. However, the opening phrase is extended from four bars to five by the whole bar's anticipation, which results in a more interesting phrase-structure throughout the first movement. In addition, there is a rather clever ambivalence about the violin's opening note D, which seems to emerge mysteriously from part of a quasi-introductory bar of G minor tonality to become the first note of the first subject.

The G minor Piano Trio is exceptional in many ways, not least because of its rhythmic ambiguities: the fact that the first movement is in $\frac{6}{8}$ time gives Schumann scope for hemiolic possibilities -- explored even in bar four of the above example -- an idea extended further in the second subject:



One cannot help being reminded here of a very similar passage in the last movement of the Piano Concerto:



The rising and falling rhythmic phrase  seems to suggest strongly the image of flight and upward surging, so that it has a strong affinity with "Vogel als Prophet" (in the same key):

⁶⁹ Op.cit., 35-39, violin.

⁷⁰ Piano Concerto, iii, 97-103, piano.



I am not the only listener to be struck by the flight-like properties of this chamber work. The G minor Trio has, in fact, prompted the remark:

When one listens to some of the passages of Schumann, one seems to see a fabulous bird take wing and fly up into the sky.⁷²

The work also contains frequent use of duplets and quadruplets (in $\frac{6}{8}$ and $\frac{12}{8}$ time) triplets (in $\frac{4}{4}$ time) long passages of pizzicato string writing in the first movement (very rare in the chamber works) dramatic contrasts of mood, strange chromatic harmonies, and examples of Romantic chamber-music style which directly inspired both Brahms⁷³ and Smetana.⁷⁴

(5) Accented emphasis on a weak beat


The term "weak beat" refers to any part of the bar except the first beat, and also the third beat in $\frac{4}{4}$ time. Schumann's propensity for emphasising the weak part of the bar (either by accent or articulation) is well known, and varied examples of this particular kind of syncopation are to be found in nearly every movement of his chamber works, although they proliferate in the chamber compositions of the years 1851 and 1853.

⁷¹"Vogel als Prophet", Waldscenen, vii, 1-2.

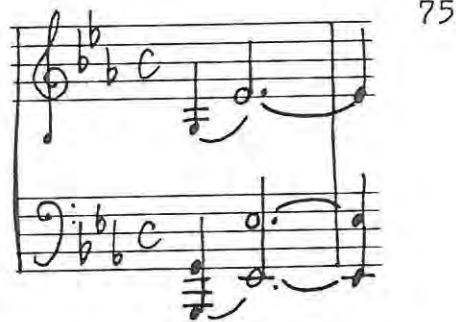
⁷²Marcel Brion, Schumann and the Romantic Age, p.279.

⁷³Cf. middle of Schumann's slow movement and Brahms' F minor Piano Quintet.

⁷⁴Cf. opening of Schumann's fourth movement and opening of Smetana's E minor String Quartet.

On closer observation, however, certain distinct patterns of syncopation begin to emerge, and it becomes clear that Schumann did not simply permit himself to distribute a random emphasis on any part of the bar, but that his attention was directed especially to certain key-points. Examples of these are: i) the second beat in $\frac{4}{4}$ time; ii) the second beat in $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{2}{2}$ or $\frac{6}{8}$ time; and more rarely, iii) the second beat in $\frac{3}{4}$ time; iv) the fourth beat in $\frac{4}{4}$ time; and finally v) the second part of any individual whole beat, usually in simple duple or quadruple time, or even the last  of a crotchet beat.

The category under (i) above is by far the largest, and is first encountered to a persistent degree in the Piano Quartet, whose slow introduction begins by placing a quiet and unobtrusive emphasis on the second beat:



This later on in the first movement turns into



⁷⁵ Piano Quartet, i, 1, piano.

⁷⁶ Op.cit., 69, violin, viola and cello.

and most of the other main themes of this movement dispense with the first note altogether and replace it by a rest, thus giving the greatest possible prominence to the second beat, either by articulation,

77



or by means of an accent:

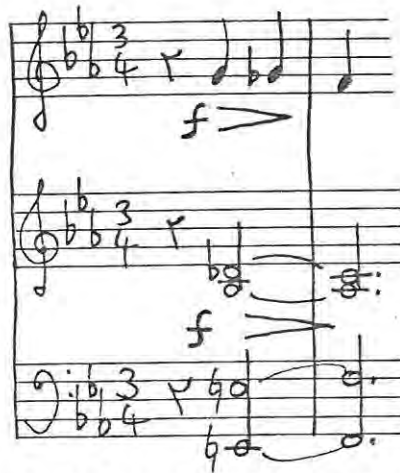
78



Similarly, a number of phrases in the third movement also begin in the second beat, such as the first theme, for example:

⁷⁷ Op.cit., 14-15, piano.

⁷⁸ Op.cit., 65-66, piano.



Further examples of the same kind are to be found in the G minor Trio, iv, bars 2-4, the Second Violin Sonata, i, bars 93-96, and in the Third Violin Sonata, i, bars 28-31. Both latter works owe the origins of these rhythmic figures to their slow introductions, which stress the second beat in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, thereby inevitably calling to mind a Baroque Sarabande:



80



81

Under category (ii) above, we must be careful to distinguish between accented second beats which are integral to the rhythmic structure of the main themes (as in the first movement of the Second Piano Trio, bars 1-5, 18-21, 51-58 and 270-276) and off-beat accents

⁷⁹Piano Quartet, iii, 1, violin and piano.

⁸⁰Violin Sonata no.2, i, 1-5, violin.

⁸¹Violin Sonata no.3, i, 1-3, violin.

which are more arbitrarily introduced, usually for some special effect. An illustration of the latter occurs in the Cello Folk-pieces, both at the beginning of the first movement,

82



and also at the end:

83

This type of accent conveys vividly the hand-clap or foot-stamp of folk-dancing and certainly enhances the folk-quality in these pieces. Something of the same atmosphere is momentarily achieved in another "quasi" folk-piece, the Second Fairy-tale, which positively bristles with accents, and which ends most emphatically on the second beat.

⁸² Cello Folk-pieces, i, 1-8, cello.

⁸³ Op.cit., 134-137, cello and piano.

84

A more "leaning" form of accent than the rather frenetic examples just given occurs in the Violin Sonatas, in movements in compound duple time; for example the first movement of no.1

85

and the second movement of no.2.

86


And again, the same kind of "leaning" accented note tied over from the fourth to first beat can be found in the third movement of the Piano

⁸⁴Fairy-tales, ii, 163-168.

⁸⁵Violin Sonata no.1, i, 42-47, violin.

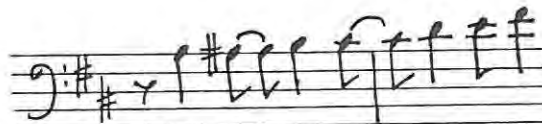
⁸⁶Violin Sonata no.2, ii, 208-216, violin.

Quartet (bars 64-72) and throughout the first movement of the D minor Trio (bars 1-2, 15-16, 19-21 et al). This last work might even be described as a monument to syncopation, such is the obsession with unaccented syncopated rhythms to be found in the string parts of each movement, features to be discussed in the next section.

As the last topic in this section I shall deal with the type of syncopation which falls under category (v) (cf. p. 316), namely that very Schumannesque syncopation which can involve the splitting up of the main beats in a bar and their regrouping with different emphases, such as $4/4$ . Such a pattern emerges in Op.41/1/iii (bars 29-30), the D minor Trio/i (bars 28-31) -- where there is the added complication of canonic treatment of this syncopated theme -- and the G minor Trio/iii and iv, in which the same thematic pattern recurs three times:



87



88

⁸⁷G minor Trio, iii, 51-58, violin.

⁸⁸G minor Trio, iv, 38-39, cello.



One of the most prominent syncopated figures in the late chamber works in the motif which begins in the first subject of Violin Sonata no.2,

90



becomes a prominent accompanying motif in nearly all the other main themes, and emerges briefly as a theme in its own right:

91



Its most complicated appearance is as a countersubject to a syncopated fugue-subject in the development:

⁸⁹Op.cit., 179-181.

⁹⁰Violin Sonata no.2, i, 21-23,

⁹¹Op.cit., 40-41, violin.

Clearly Schumann revelled in double syncopations of this kind which so effectively subvert the normal sense of rhythmic order within the bar.

(6) Unaccented emphasis on a weak beat

Examples have already been given of a fairly unobtrusive undermining of regular rhythm at the beginning of a work (cf D minor Trio and Piano Quartet) but both these and most of the other examples of the same thing are fairly short-lived; and even where they are not (as in the fourth movement of Phantasiestücke Trio, bars 101-6) there is at least a regularity of rhythm in one of the instrumental parts to counteract the irregularity in the other. Even when there is only one part involved, as in the Andante and Variations (bars 9-10) the rhythmic flow is barely affected, as in this work there is often a continual tendency to "lean" on the third beat:



⁹²Op.cit., 159-162.

-- even if this means bending the bar-line almost to breaking-point.

But in one particular instance, that of the slow movement of the D minor Trio, the syncopations are so persistent and continuous, and there is so little help from the "accompaniment" (i.e. the piano), that the result is somewhat chaotic, making the effect for which Schumann is striving here difficult to communicate in performance. A full quotation will make this clear, with some of the more obvious suspensions of rhythm marked with a cross (x):

93

The image shows a musical score for the slow movement of the D minor Trio. It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The score is marked with various dynamics and performance instructions. The first system has a *pp* marking. The second system has a *pp* marking. The third system has a *ritard.* marking. Several notes and rests are marked with a cross (x) to indicate suspensions of rhythm. The notation is complex, featuring syncopation, triplets, and semiquavers.

The most problematic parts of this movement are those where there is a transition from one section to another: for instance at bars 18-19, leading into the middle section, and bars 39-42, leading back to the Tempo I. The fact that these points either of transition or of change coincide with such complex rhythms, involving syncopation, triplets, semiquavers, tied notes and rests simultaneously, heightens their total

⁹³ D minor Trio, iii, 10-19.

effect and makes it almost symbolic.

The subjective, emotionally intoned nuances and differentiations of romantic thought are mirrored in Schumann's... frequent application of shifting and complicated rhythmic patterns. His technique is a reflection and expression of the inexplicability of cosmic phenomena. In the rationalistic eighteenth century, when philosophers believed they could explain the world completely, a more lucid type of music was composed than in the nineteenth century, when the mysteries of nature were shrouded in a veil of darkness and uncertainty.

Through shifting rhythms...Schumann is able to create this feeling of uncertainty.⁹⁴

The resulting musical style has a tendency towards unmetred speech, in many ways reminiscent of the accompanied recitatives in Bach's Passion music.

The syncopated figuration in the piano part in this movement is very characteristic of Schumann's writing for the piano in other media such as the lied and the piano solo, although it is less common in the chamber works, where it is mainly to be found in "reprise" situations where the syncopation is used as a kind of variation technique for a theme that is returning under a new guise,

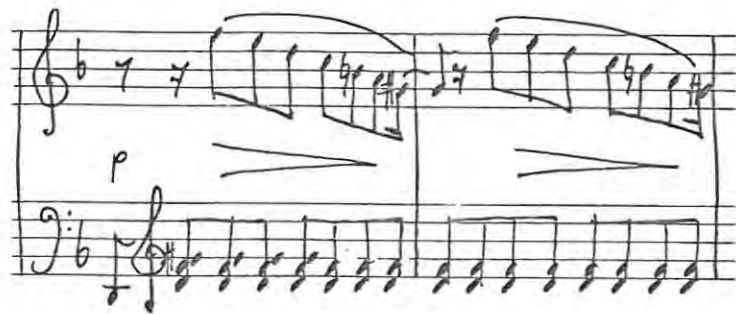
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⁹⁴ T.A. Brown, The Aesthetics of Robert Schumann, p.123.

⁹⁵ Piano Quartet, iii, 31-34, piano.

or for a transition figure,



96

rather than simply as an accompanying figure for a new theme:

97

(7) Rhythmic Ornamentation

i) Decorative triplets

There is nothing surprising in the fact of Schumann having used triplets, which always add a certain piquancy to the rhythmic drive of a musical composition. But in Schumann's chamber works there are two distinct applications of this everyday rhythmic phenomenon. The first is the more normal use of decorative triplets

⁹⁶Violin Sonata no.2, i, 45-46, piano.

⁹⁷G minor Trio, iv, 21-22, cello and piano.

which do not really add anything remarkable to the rhythmic subtlety of the writing. This means of ornamentation occurs irregularly in nearly all the works with piano, where it is indeed invariably confined to the piano part. Piano triplets often constitute simply an increased sense of piano sonority (rather like a string tremolo) and the rhythm itself may be unobtrusive. Two of the more interesting examples of such triplet accompaniments occur in the D minor Trio/i, where a totally new theme on cello harmonics -- in the middle of the development -- is accompanied by ethereal triplet chords high up on the piano:

98

Tempo I, nur ruhiger. Am Steg

ppp Am Steg bis zum Zeichen ♪ *ppp*

Tempo I, nur ruhiger.

ppp

Verschiebung bis zum Zeichen ♪

and in the Phantasiestücke Trio, which ends with a coda in which triplets shared by piano and violin help the rhythmic momentum to gather strength towards the final conclusion.

99

p

p

p₂

98 D minor Trio, i, 84-87, piano.

99 Phantasiestücke Trio, iv, 149-156, violin, cello and piano.

ii) Integral triplets

There are a number of occasions on which triplets are not simply "added" on as an afterthought, or introduced in order to vary the monotony of a piano accompaniment, but are in fact integral to the rhythmic structure of a whole movement, or, in one extreme case, a whole work. Such a work is the group of Clarinet Fantasy-pieces, in each of which there are almost ceaseless triplets in the piano part. This has led inevitably to such criticism as the following:

...In these three pieces, ...if there were only a little more contrast between them, they would be more often heard in public. But while the first is meditative, the second light, and the third fiery, all three have the same kind of treatment; the clarinet part is always in common time, and the piano accompaniment seldom breaks off its triplet figures.¹⁰⁰

In my opinion, it is not so much the monotony of tempo and rhythm which is at fault, as the fact of all three movements being in the same tonality, A/a. But perhaps both the triplets and the tonality lend the three pieces a feeling of unity which they might not otherwise possess.

The whole of the first piece depends on a rhythmic interplay of two against three quavers in the clarinet and piano parts, promoting a mood of elegaic tranquillity which I think is exactly what Schumann intended. The two different rhythms do not conflict -- indeed, the clarinet quavers have the effect of "soothing" the restless momentum of the triplets -- but rather complement each other: each rhythm is exactly suited to the timbres of the instruments (to reverse the rôles would be totally unidiomatic).

There are momentary coincidences of melodic material, which is otherwise shared equally between the two instruments and an occasional

¹⁰⁰ J.A. Fuller-Maitland, Schumann's Concerted Chamber Music, p.13.

melodic echo-effect which serves to underline the crucial differences between the two rhythms:

101

This difference is again marked in the opening of the second piece;

102

but to prevent any feeling of rhythmic monotony Schumann livens up the middle section with triplets in both instruments; and in the third piece the triplet configuration is interrupted by a more energetic clarinet line:

¹⁰¹ Clarinet Fantasy-pieces, i, 27-28, clarinet and piano.

¹⁰² Clarinet Fantasy-pieces, ii, 1-4, clarinet and piano.

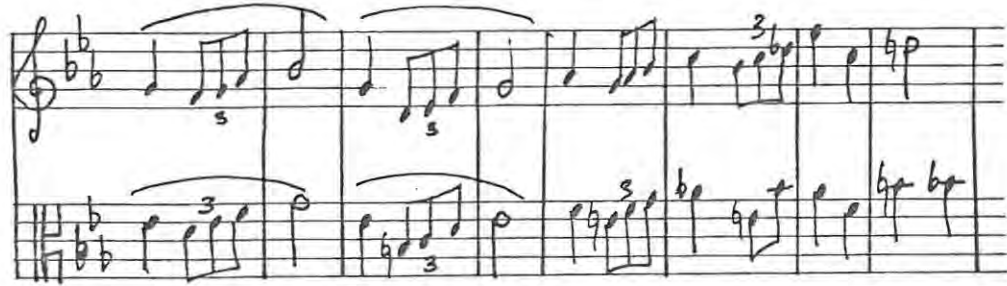
In addition, the effect of shifting the accent within the phrase and the subtle extensions and contractions of phrase-lengths and use of sequences, prevent the rhythms from falling into "mere repetitiousness" while at the same time contributing to the prevailing atmosphere.

In other short pieces seeking to exploit an obvious 'folk' idiom the triplets are integral to the style, as can be seen in the Fifth Cello Folk-piece,



and the Second Fairy-tale.

103 Clarinet Fantasy-pieces, iii, 1-4, clarinet and piano.

104 Cello Folk-pieces, v, 1-11, cello.



But in longer sonata movements triplets, when used, are integral for a rather different reason: they are necessary not for the sake of adding rhythmic delicacy and charm, but to intensify the already dramatic complexity of the rhythms at points of tension in the structure -- such as occur in the slow movement of the D minor Trio (bars 34-41) and the finale of the G minor Trio. Here the gradual increase in rhythmic excitement is caused by three different kinds of triplets:

; of which the first and second do not really interfere with the quadruple pulse, but the third does, giving a two-in-a-bar urgency towards the end of the development. Finally, the variety of triplet rhythms is further complicated in the coda by a syncopated version of the very fast  triplets.


Clearly the triplets become almost obsessional in this context, and lead on here to a brief consideration of other so-called 'obsessive' rhythms in the chamber works.





iii) Obsessive rhythms

Obsession with one particular rhythmic pattern is not such a great weakness in Schumann's writing as is generally supposed,¹⁰⁶

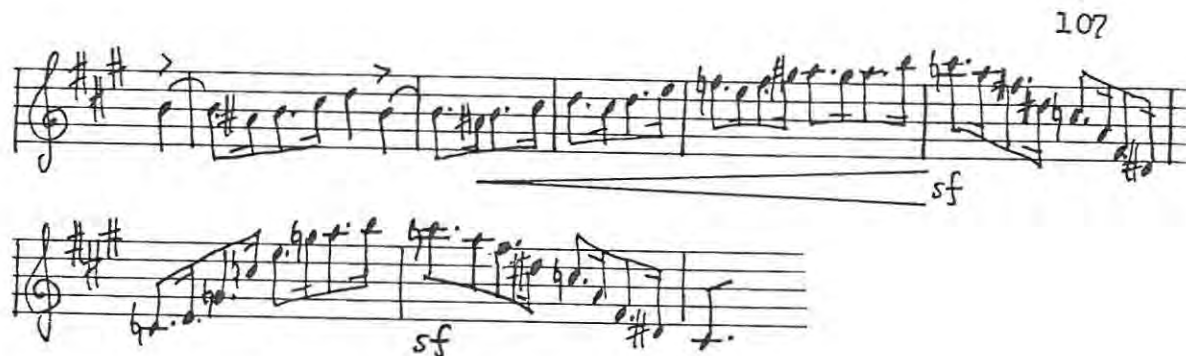
¹⁰⁵ Fairy-tales, ii, 61-68, clarinet and viola.

¹⁰⁶ The romantics were carried away by rhythm; seizing the natural emphases, they abandoned themselves to the pulsating alternation of certain patterns until, in the later works of Schumann...such patterns dominate whole compositions. (P.H. Lang, Music in Western Civilization, p.753.)

and when it does occur, it usually takes the form of some kind of persistent syncopation, a subject which has already been dealt with in this chapter: the obsession with the rhythm  pervades the whole of the first movement of Op.41/1, for example.

Other obsessive rhythms, all appearing in the solo string works, are the dotted rhythms  running throughout the second and fourth Märchenbilder, the three-note motif  of the second movement of the First Violin Sonata, and the dotted figure plus  or  upbeat throughout the fourth movement of the F.A.E. Sonata.

Very often a rhythmic pattern is apparently obsessive at the beginning of a movement (like the military dotted rhythms in the Finale of the Phantasiestücke Trio) but soon gives way to other rhythmic figures of a completely different type. However, the dotted rhythms which herald the Finale of Op.41/3 are obsessive, and reach quite a frantic level by the time the coda is arrived at.



As a rule, though, Schumann's persistent dotted rhythms rarely sound tedious to the ear; and one is always conscious of the fact that as far as possible he tries to separate sections devoted to certain rhythmic patterns, so that their effect is not cumulative but complementary.

¹⁰⁷ Op.41, 3, iv, 236-245, violin I.

Only rarely does he deliberately superimpose contrasting rhythms or metres: in the Second Violin Sonata/ii the $\frac{6}{8}$ of the piano is combined with an effective $\frac{2}{4}$ in the violin part in "Trio I",¹⁰⁸ and in "Trio II" there is an even sharper contrast between the two parts, which have $\frac{2}{4}$ and $\frac{6}{8}$ simultaneously:

109




In the next movement, the $\frac{6}{8}$ Scherzo theme in a new $\frac{9}{8}$ guise appears dramatically in the middle of the peaceful $\frac{3}{8}$ theme, but the two metres blend together, despite their potential rhythmic antagonism.¹¹⁰ The complex subdivisions of the beat which such polyrhythm necessitates reach a near reductio ad absurdum in the coda of the F.A.E. Sonata, where the violin part has the following astonishing patterns over a span of only 21 bars:

6	x		22 times
7	x		12 times
5	x		eight times
8	x		four times
9	x		once

¹⁰⁸Not so described by Schumann.

¹⁰⁹Violin Sonata no.2, ii, violin and piano.




¹¹⁰Cf. chapter on Tonal Structure, p.

10	x		once
11	x		once
3	x		four times

iv) Duplets

In some curious way, it seems as if Schumann was never wholly satisfied to remain within the limitations of whatever metre he had chosen for a particular movement. Thus, in all the metres used there are prolific examples of syncopation, asymmetry and obsessive patterns; in simple time-signatures there are frequent triplet passages ranging from the straightforward to the highly complex; and similarly, in compound time-signatures there are several striking instances where the beat is divided into patterns of two or four rather than three.

These cross-rhythms can conglomerate in an extraordinary way, producing

 ,  and  simultaneously;

111



or they may be restricted to isolated occurrences, where they highlight the entry of a new theme, which may be either vehement

112



or more peaceful;

113



Moreover it is significant to how great an extent both these examples foreshadow similar rhythmic patterns in Brahms' music. It is more rare to find duplets at the end of a movement, since they tend to retard the rhythmic momentum, the direct opposite to the impatient, hastening effect which triplets have in simple time. In fact they tend to give the last few bars of an already rather slow movement a feeling of "grinding to a halt":

114

112 G minor Trio, ii, 31-35, violin.

113 Cello Folk-pieces, iii, 17-24, cello.

114 F major Trio, iii, 169-179.

A characteristic of many of the rhythmic patterns and figurations mentioned in this chapter is the extent to which they are distinguished by the most pronounced emphasis or accent; so that one is impressed not simply by the unconventionality but also by the forcefulness of the rhythms. This characteristic increased during the later works, particularly those of 1851-53: the Märchenerzählungen and the First Violin Sonata being a strong case in point. However, the proliferation of accents in these works is inspired by the desire to reinforce the time-signature rather than to emphasise notes or chords indiscriminately. Niecks gives us several clues as to Schumann's increasing obsession with metrical regularity and precision in the last few years of his life. In Niecks' interpretation of some of Joachim's reminiscences, he states:

In later life he found all tempi too fast, and beat time with his foot, keeping back his wife's pace, for instance. In his last works the strong accentuation is striking, also a certain heaviness.¹¹⁵

And Niecks himself corroborates this somewhat eccentric habit in recalling a private performance of the Piano Quintet during which

the composer, to prevent the great pianist, his wife, from hurrying the tempi, beat time on her shoulders.¹¹⁶

Schumann's predilection for rhythmic piquancy, whether it took the form of stressing aspects of symmetry or asymmetry, is paralleled by his choices of time-signature, which show a marked preference for duple or quadruple time. Only seventeen movements or pieces are in triple time, and these generally contain features of relatively mild rhythmical or accentual interest, such as the syncopation and metrical displacements of the Piano Quartet (ii, iii and iv).

¹¹⁵F. Niecks, Robert Schumann, p.293.

¹¹⁶Op.cit., p.302.

For the rest, it seems clear that rhythm is not an afterthought but an essential thread in Schumann's creative process as evinced throughout the chamber works. His ingenious and original contributions to this sphere are legion, and are nearly always integral rather than merely picturesque, contributing not only to the rhythmic flamboyance of the music but, in addition, often causing extensive modification to the phrase-structure and metrical consistency.

VIII

COUNTERPOINT

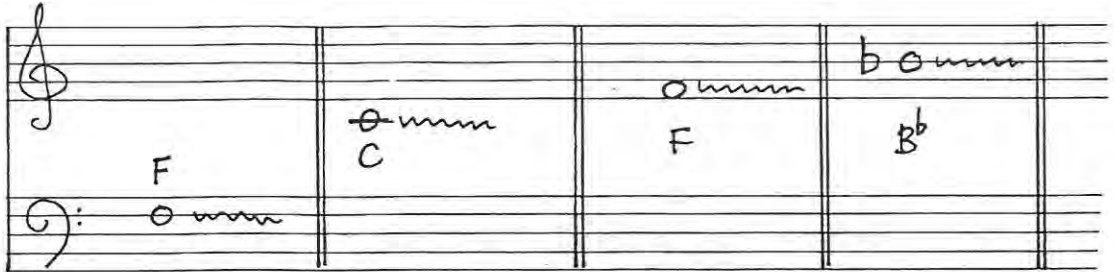
Schumann is not generally regarded as a writer of intricate and imposing counterpoint, and the epithet 'contrapuntist' does not normally spring to mind in an assessment of Schumann's attributes as a composer, as it would in connection with Beethoven, Mendelssohn or Brahms, for example. However, in the realm of chamber music the discipline imposed by the restriction of parts to a limited number (usually to two to five) necessitates a careful and rigorous attention to the rôle of the individual line; in other words, a greater concern for "linear integrity".¹ Thus, the string quartet presented the greatest contrapuntal challenge to Schumann and, indeed, the vulnerability of the four exposed string parts without the synthesising function of the piano exhorted Schumann towards the creation of his first chamber works, and prompted him to remark that "the severity of the form is itself its beauty".²

Nothing shows Schumann's curiosity or propensity for grappling with a problem more clearly than the thoroughness with which he set about learning what he needed to know on the score of counterpoint from the masters he revered, especially Beethoven and Bach. The progress of these studies can be gleaned from the use he made of these models in his own works during the eleven years 1842-53; but it is in the last seven years that the fruit of this process of self-education becomes evident. In the first works of 1842 counterpoint is handled by Schumann with an obvious measure of self-consciousness

¹Joseph Kerman, The Beethoven Quartets, p.12.

²Tr. Plantinga in Schumann as Critic, p. 187.

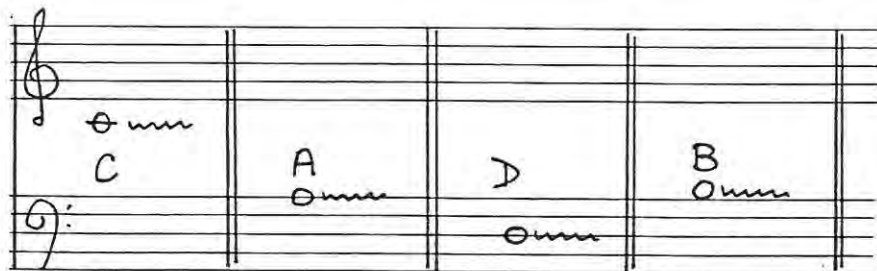
which heralds a complete four-part fugal exposition: subject, real answer in the V, subject and then real answer in the IV, each accompanied by an almost regular countersubject, enter in ascending order at strict four-bar intervals.



The subdominant key of the fourth entry is inconvenient as far as preparation for the second subject is concerned, but the subsequent short modulatory passage to C major via the secondary dominant serves as a necessary interlude between the fugal transition and the second subject, which again takes the form of a four-part fugal exposition. In this the subject is accompanied by a simultaneous countersubject,



but the subsequent entries are more unorthodox as to key:



⁵Op.cit., 101-105, violins I and II.

The wide-ranging modulations and contrapuntal intensity of this passage are ostensibly more appropriate to the development section than to the exposition, and, indeed, over half the development contains contrapuntal manoeuvres of a similar kind, based on the fugal second subject.

There are two main areas of the development concerned with complete or shortened entries of the second subject: the first moves through a sharpward succession of keys,

(i)

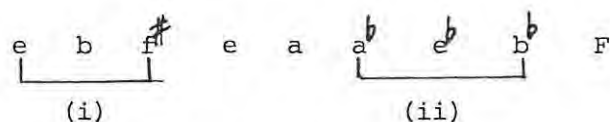
● = main entries

○ = shortened entries, sometimes overlapping in stretto style

and the second, after a linking passage of fourteen bars, again moves sharpward towards the home key.

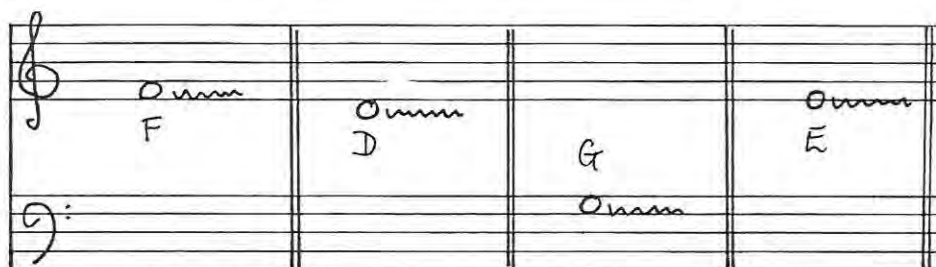
(ii)

The key-progressions mainly follow the cycle of fifths, the resulting key-sequence of the whole of this part of the development (bars 177-227) being as follows:



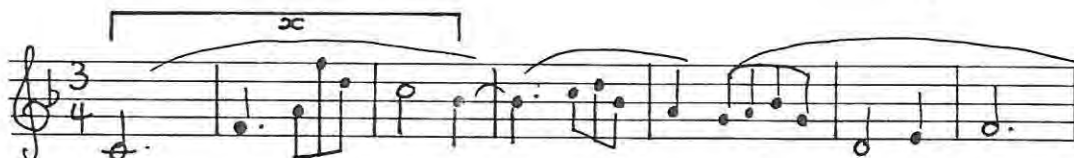
Schumann is thus ingeniously linking the traditional key-sequence of a classical development section with baroque-style fugal entries, and it is also interesting to note that most of the shortened entries and all the strictly fugal entries are allocated to the viola, whose rôle is of paramount importance in all the contrapuntal sections of this movement.

The final contrapuntal section is the return of the second subject in the recapitulation, now a fourth higher.



Similar quasi-fugal entries permeate the first movement of Op.41/2, but are mainly confined to the exposition. The opening subject, a flowing eight-bar phrase in F major, has a half-cadence on the subdominant in bars 3-4 which proves very useful for later fugal treatment:

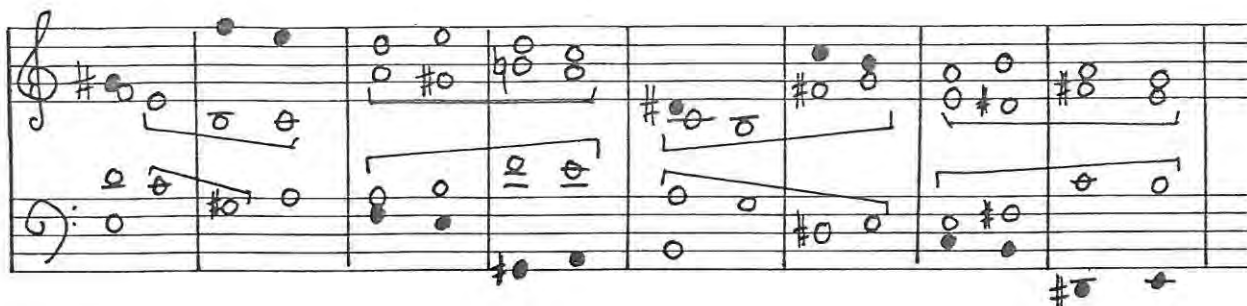
6



During bars 33-49 -- most of the long bridge passage from first to second subjects -- this abbreviated portion of the theme, x, is

⁶Op.41, 2, i, 1-7, violin I.

Phrase x is of some significance as the inspiration for a fairly rigorous contrapuntal section, the essence of which can be summarized as follows:



The retrograde statements and inversions of x in violin I and cello are combined with derivative motives in the inner parts, the whole passage bearing a striking resemblance to the opening of Beethoven's Op.132:

A handwritten musical score for a passage from Beethoven's Op.132. It consists of four staves, likely representing violin I, violin II, viola, and cello parts. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings. The music is characterized by intricate rhythmic patterns and melodic lines that are often mirrored or inverted between the staves. A small number '8' is written in the upper right corner of the score.

And the connection between the two works is even more clearly demonstrated in a short passage which occurs in the coda of the Schumann movement:

⁸Beethoven, Op.132, i, 1-7.

Imitative counterpoint of a less rigorous kind abounds in the finale of the same Quartet, where there are a number of themes or motives that seem to generate spontaneous contrapuntal treatment. As in the first movement, the transition from first to second subjects is a favourite area for such treatment:

⁹ Op. 41, 2, i, 264-272.

¹⁰ Op. 41, 2, iv, 18-32.

Op.41/3 continues in similar vein, including several passages such as the following, from the first movement:

Furthermore, the intervals of the fourth or fifth which characterize many of the main themes or motives throughout the work, lend themselves naturally to imitative treatment—a feature which is particularly noticeable in some of the Variations of the second movement—generated by the rising fourth (C# to F#) which originated at the beginning of the theme. In Variation II the rising fourth or fifth inaugurates an almost Handelian fugue subject;

¹¹Op.41, 3, i, 16-21.

¹²Op.41, 3, ii, 97-104, cello and viola.

and a further Baroque parallel can be found in Variation IV, where the cello part takes the form of an eight-bar ground bass.

13



The potential for further variation utilising this ground bass is not, rather surprisingly, realised in this movement; but the ground bass does occur again in the finale, in a passage which also incorporates the rising-fourth motif.

14

The confidence gained from experimentation with counterpoint in the String Quartets greatly benefited Schumann in the contrapuntal writing of the Piano Quartet and Quintet, both of which culminate in elaborate fugal codas. However, because the double fugue in the fourth movement of the Piano Quintet is such an obvious and striking example of Schumann's use of counterpoint, it is easy to overlook the numerous other contrapuntal passages in the Quintet, which all, in a sense, lead up to the final coda. There are three main types

¹³ Op.cit., 193-200, cello.

¹⁴ Op.41, 3, iv, 49-52, violin I and cello.

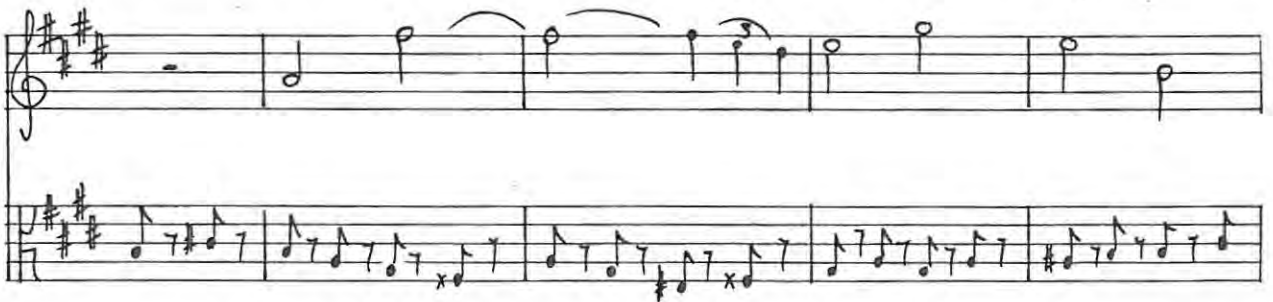


and then this new version (C) is then treated imitatively for nineteen bars.

The Piano Quintet also contains occasional use of strict canon: in the Scherzo movement the first violin and viola share the theme of Trio I at the octave, at a two-bar interval. But this is only a hint of the virtual obsession with canon that characterizes the chamber works of 1847 onwards.

The fugal coda at the end of the fourth movement is not simply an apotheosis of the work's main themes (like the last movement of Mozart's "Jupiter" Symphony or Mendelssohn's E^b String Quartet) although it does in part fulfil this function. But it is also a natural and logical outcome of the concern for contrapuntal combination of themes which characterizes the whole of the movement, of which the "second subject" or "D" theme gives a good example.

18



Between the two appearances of this theme there occurs the first of two strictly fugal passages: a compressed four-part double fugue based on themes A and C, consisting of an incomplete exposition

¹⁷ Op.cit., 51-53, viola.

¹⁸ Op.cit., 114-118, violin I and viola.

in which the second entries of subject and answer are reversed, overlapping with middle entries of the answer in stretto and reaching a premature perfect cadence in E^b in lieu of a final section. The following diagram will clarify the various entries of the subjects and their relation to the whole.

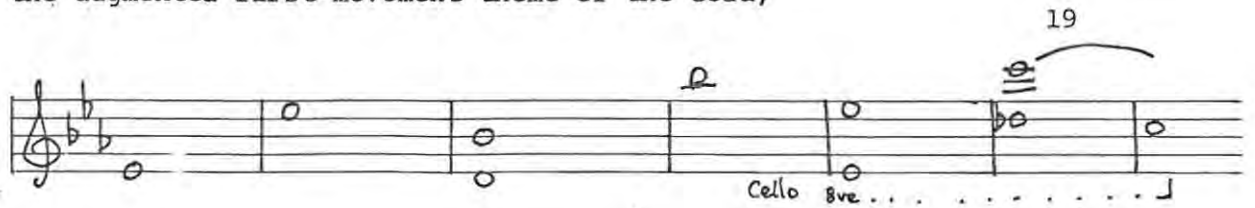
TABULATED ANALYSIS OF FUGAL PASSAGE (Bars 248-66)

No. of bars	4	4	2½	3½	4
Violin I		RAi	TAii	Sii	TAi
Violin II	Sii	CS			TAii
Viola			TAii	Sii	TAii
Cello			TAi	FC	CS
Piano { RH LH	Si	RAii	CS	Si	TAi CS
Keys	g	d	c	g	c..... E^b
	I	V	IV	I	IV

- Abbreviations:
- Si = Subject I (Theme A)
 - Sii = Subject II (Theme C, in diminution)
 - TA = Tonal Answer
 - RA = Real Answer
 - CS = Countersubject
 - FC = Free Counterpoint

This 18-bar miniature double fugue gives a foretaste of the much longer double fugue of 53 bars later, but before the latter stage is reached there is yet another very short quasi-fugal passage between bars 300-308 which continues the feeling of enormous "escalation" prior to the fugal Coda. This short episode anticipates

the augmented first-movement theme of the Coda,



and combines it with a descending-sixth motif from the end of the Scherzo.



One of the curious things about all these fugal passages is that the expositions are always for four voices, regardless of the fact that there are effectively six voices available in a Piano Quintet: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, Piano R.H. and Piano L.H. The final double-fugue is a further example of this rather anomalous four-voiced fugue. Its overall structure can be divided into the traditional three sections: exposition, middle and final sections. The demarcation between the end of the exposition and the first middle entry is clearly defined by the modulatory character of the latter, and although this gives the fugue the appearance of having only four voices, all six available parts contribute to the overall texture by means of doubling, as the following diagram demonstrates:

¹⁹Op.cit., 300-305, violin I.

²⁰Op.cit., 300-303, piano.

TABULATED ANALYSIS OF FUGAL PASSAGE (Bars 319-371)

	EXPOSITION				MIDDLE ENTRIES			FINAL SECTION						FINAL V-I	
No. of bars	6	6	6	6	4	4	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	CADENCE IN E ^b
								(Stretti)							
Violin I		TAi			Si	FC	Si							Si	
Violin II	Sii						Si		Si						Si
Viola			Si	TAii	FC							Si			
Cello		TAii		TAi	FC			Si		Si		Si			
Piano R.H.	Si			TAii	FC							Si		Si	
Piano L.H.	Sii	TAii	Sii	TAi	FC			V Pedal	→						I
Keys	E ^b	B ^b	E ^b	B ^b	A ^b ... g	... f	...	E ^b							E ^b
	I	V	I	V	I...iii	...ii	...	I							I

The three sections of the fugue are also clearly defined by their harmonic substructure, which can be summarized as follows:

<u>EXPOSITION</u>	<u>MIDDLE ENTRIES</u>	<u>FINAL SECTION</u>
25½ bars	12½ bars	16½ bars
E ^b /B ^b	A ^b , g, f, V of E ^b	V of E ^b

But this is not to suggest that the distinction between the three sections is totally rigid. The element of stretto which characterizes all three sections has suggested to at least one critic that the whole passage represents only the "closing stages"²¹ of a fugue, and not a complete fugue. But one is led on additionally to conclude from the arrangement of the entries of subjects and answers, together with the overall tonal plan and intensified stretto of the final section over a V pedal, that Schumann was aiming here to give, if not an absolutely strict fugue, at least the spirit and essence of a complete fugue. The three-sectioned tonal plan, incorporating I-V conflict followed by modulation and ending with I stability, also

²¹John Gardner, "The Chamber Music" in Alan Walker, ed., Robert Schumann, pp.200-240, p.238.

suggests that the fugal style of the whole is overlaid with a sonata principle of key; and both these elements -- the baroque fugue and the classical sonata -- are treated, characteristically, as sources of inspiration for Schumann rather than strict models.

A similar approach to fugue can be found in the Piano Quartet, which also has numerous contrapuntal passages comparable to those found in the Op.41 Quartets. The imitative counterpoint which pervades most of the Piano Quartet is likewise not confined to the development sections, the second subject of the first movement being an example of a theme that is subjected to strident imitative treatment on its first appearance:

22



The clear tonal shape of this theme, and its initial ascending fourth motif make it ideally suited to imitation, like the rising-fourth motif of Op.41/3. Similar treatment of the second subject in the recapitulation gives rise to fairly strenuous counterpoint, almost overshadowing the vigorous contrapuntal passages of the development.

Many similar passages in the Piano Quartet seem to arise naturally out of Schumann's penchant for melodic sequences, and nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in the slow movement. Here the imitative sequences engendered by the main theme occasionally result in rather striking harmonic dissonances:

Handwritten musical score for measures 23-24. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat, E-flat). The bottom staff is in bass clef with the same key signature. Measure 23 shows a melodic line in the piano and a more active line in the cello. Measure 24 continues the melodic development in the piano, with a fermata over the final notes.

Handwritten musical score for measures 24-25. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats. The bottom staff is in bass clef with the same key signature. Measure 24 shows a melodic line in the piano and a more active line in the viola. Measure 25 continues the melodic development in the piano, with a fermata over the final notes.

In a different context, that of the finale, imitative sequences are introduced at a point of low tension in the development; the tension gradually increases by the use of sequences rising through nearly two octaves from piano to forte dynamics, in two separate passages -- bars 93-106 and 112-125. The alternation of these with stretto imitation derived from the opening theme,

Handwritten musical score for measures 25-26. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats. The middle staff is in bass clef with the same key signature. The bottom staff is in bass clef with the same key signature. Measure 25 shows a melodic line in the piano, a more active line in the viola, and a more active line in the cello. Measure 26 continues the melodic development in the piano, with a fermata over the final notes.

²³ Piano Quartet, iii, 17-22, violin and cello.

²⁴ Op.cit., 31-35, piano and viola.

²⁵ Piano Quartet, iv, 73-76, violin, viola and piano.

results in one of the most rigorously contrapuntal development sections of these five early chamber works.

By 1847, the year of the D minor Trio, Schumann had arrived at the stage when most aspects of contrapuntal writing had become 'second nature' to him, and examples of canon, inversion and sequential imitation occur throughout the four Piano Trios. It was almost as if Schumann was now thinking contrapuntally, rather than contriving to write counterpoint, as he was to a certain extent in the Op.41 quartets. Sometimes, indeed, Schumann was not aware even in earlier years of his innate ability for contrapuntal thought.

In my latest compositions I often hear many things that I can hardly explain. It is most extraordinary how I write almost everything in canon, and then only detect the imitation afterwards and often find inversions, rhythms in contrary motion...²⁶

The period between 1842 and 1847, however, saw a particular intensification and crystallization of Schumann's concern for contrapuntal and fugal writing, evinced most clearly in the three strictly contrapuntal keyboard works written in 1845: the Six Studies in Canonic form for Pedal-Piano, Six Fugues on the name BACH for organ, and Four Fugues for Piano, op.72, all of which reflect Schumann's reverence for Bach. It is significant that all these works were for keyboard, since the inspiration behind them was undoubtedly Bach's "Well-tempered Clavier". It is nevertheless curious that, however much he introduced fugal devices into his chamber works (and he did, increasingly) the art of writing a complete fugue was something he felt was on the whole better suited to either piano or organ solo.

²⁶Early Letters, p.268.

By his middle years Schumann's attitudes towards fugue and towards Bach are virtually inseparable, although he came to revere Bach partly through his study of fugue in his early counterpoint lessons with Heinrich Dorn (1804-92). Dorn was Schumann's theory teacher between 1829 and 1832, in Leipzig, and was the first musician to introduce him to the study of counterpoint, though he met this with some initial resentment:

I shall never be able to amalgamate with Dorn; he wishes to get me to believe that music is fugue -- heavens! how different men are.²⁷

This somewhat lofty attitude gradually became modified, and in the late 1830's Schumann was admitting that

Dorn, my theory teacher, has advanced me inwardly a good deal. By dint of persevering study, I gained that beautiful clearness of which, indeed, I early had some idea, but which I often lacked.²⁸

Finally, the influence of Mendelssohn's performances of the Bach Passions and Schumann's discovery of the '48 took their effect, and by 1847 his favourable opinion of the fugue as a musical form was articulated with the greatest possible vehemence:

A certain hot-head (now in Paris)²⁹ likes to define the term 'fugue' as denoting 'a composition where one voice races away from the others -- and the listener from them all.' He himself, he would add, made it a point to talk loudly when such things were played in public, and to mutter insults... Those who can, of course, define a fugue differently -- choir directors, graduate music students, etc. According to them, 'Beethoven never wrote nor could have written a fugue; even Bach allowed himself liberties at which one can only shake one's head. The best instruction is to be found in Marpurg.' etc. How different again, is the

²⁷ Tr. Alan Walker in 'Register of Persons', Robert Schumann, pp.425-41, p.429.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Possibly Heinrich Heine; see Alan Walker, Robert Schumann, p.192.

view of still others, myself included, who can revel for hours in the fugues of Beethoven, Bach and Handel, and who have reached the conclusion that -- with the exception of diluted, tepid, miserable, patchwork stuff -- fugues can no longer be written.³⁰

This, then, was Schumann's attitude towards fugue, and by implication counterpoint as a whole, in 1847, the year of the D minor Trio. The above quotation also explains why Schumann so often emulates the spirit and many of the individual techniques of the fugue, rather than the sort of monumental fugal structures that appear in the works of Beethoven, Bach and Handel. The canon, on the other hand, did not represent such a challenge, and appears with greater frequency in the chamber works from 1847 onwards. Indeed, the D minor Trio certainly bears out Schumann's claim concerning the instinctive nature of his earlier approach to canon.³¹

The first canonic theme is the second subject of the first movement, in which a canon at two octaves is shared between violin and cello at a distance of half a bar.

32



Canons at such a wide interval are rare, though another one does appear at the very end of the fourth movement, albeit a modified, rather than strict, canon.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ See p.355.

³² D minor Trio, i, 31-34, violin and cello.

The image shows two systems of handwritten musical notation. Each system consists of two staves. The top staff of each system is in treble clef, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#), indicating D major. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, along with rests and accidentals. The first system spans 8 measures, and the second system spans 8 measures.

The other canonic passages in the D minor Trio are either at the octave or unison -- never the fifth or twelfth, as this would have given Schumann problems of tonality. The Trio of the second movement (Scherzo and Trio) is a continuous octave canon throughout, shared equally between the three instruments. Such a long and homogenous canon is comparatively rare and most of the canons in the last movement are, by contrast, rather short-lived. They all vary, too, in their instrumentation, and occasionally are for piano alone, as is the following example, which clearly foreshadows the canon in the finale of Césaire Franck's Violin Sonata:

³³ D minor Trio, iv, 353-362, violin and cello.

Schumann never again seemed to think quite so consistently in terms of short canonic themes, as he did throughout the last movement of this Trio, but reserved his later uses of canon for places where he could devote a whole movement (or section) to this technique, as in, for example, the third movement of the F major Trio and the third of the *Phantasiestücke*, op.88.

The F major Trio movement (which Schumann called an "Allegretto" and which anticipates the character of a Brahms' "Intermezzo") is in three sections, the first and third of which maintain a continuous canonic duet between two of the three instruments throughout. However, the second voice is more in the nature of an echo, owing to the extremely fragmentary nature of the theme.

35

³⁴ Op.cit., 103-109, piano.

³⁵ F major Trio, iii, 1-9, piano and cello.

This 'duet' or 'echo' effect is further exploited in the "Duett" movement of the Phantasiestücke Trio. Although not a particularly long movement it does depend on a canon between violin and cello throughout (the piano's role is totally subordinate) and moreover it is unusual in being a canon at the eleventh. However, Schumann avoids the rigours of writing strict counterpoint at this interval by ending one part as soon as the other comes in, so, in effect, his "canon" is not so much a strict canon as a series of "question-and-answer" sequences in quasi-canon form:

36

A few bars later, the same canon is inverted by mirror-inversion;

37

³⁶ Phantasiestücke Trio, iii, 1-8, violin and cello.

³⁷ Op.cit., 15-17.

movement, the entire sixteen-bar passage is certainly in keeping with the contrapuntal ambience of the whole work, and it may possibly have been derived from a fragment of counterpoint which occurs near the beginning of the first movement:



What all this amounts to is not a slavish attempt to reproduce eighteenth-century contrapuntal techniques to the letter, but more an attempt to recreate the inner spirit of a period style. As we have already seen in connection with the fugue, Schumann's aim is to absorb the essential melodic and rhythmic conflicts of a strict canon, or of invertible counterpoint, and recreate them in a way which gives us the essence of the conflict. In other words, Schumann offers here his Romantic interpretation of a Baroque idiom, rather than the Baroque idiom itself: the old techniques are interpreted with a new freedom.

As far as other contrapuntal techniques are concerned in the Piano Trios, we find that they are all closely allied to the fugue. Most striking are the numerous sequential imitations (often overlapping in stretto style) in the F major Trio: i, ii and iv; and the quasi-fugal entries and inversions of entries, in the Phantasiestücke Trio: i and ii.

⁴⁰ Phantasiestücke Trio, i, 15-17, piano.

There is one particularly noteworthy fugal passage in the development section of the G minor Trio, i, unusual in that it coincides with Schumann's rare use of pizzicato.

Exposition
(b b)

Middle
Entries

V Pedal - - - - -> (in g)

Other late chamber works (from 1850-53) continue to show strong affiliations with the fugue and the canon. For example, the opening of Violin Sonata no.1, iii, is quasi-canonic; theme 2b in Violin Sonata no.2, i, is an augmentation of theme Ia; and the development section of the same movement is full of stretto entries of Ia. This latter obsession with stretto in the early part of the development section culminates in the appearance of a fully-fledged fugal exposition -- a state of affairs towards which the whole movement had clearly been advancing. This is rather different from the early

fugal passages in the String Quartets and Piano Quartet, or the fugal Coda of the Piano Quintet. Firstly, it is based on an entirely new theme: syncopated, assertive, and slightly chromatic, foreshadowing the type of motif so characteristic of César Franck's chamber works.

41



Secondly, it consists of only a two-voiced fugal exposition in C minor, which is confined to the violin and one line of the piano part, and in which there is a regular countersubject derived from theme Id:

42



There are three modulating middle entries, the third of which gradually dissolves into sequences, allowing the countersubject to take over. This countersubject is then subjected to a stretto treatment, the latter part of which is accompanied by a V pedal in D minor, and leads back towards the recapitulation.

TABULATED ANALYSIS OF FUGAL PASSAGE (Bars 155-189)

	EXPOSITION			MIDDLE ENTRIES			
No. of bars	4	4	4	4	2	2 + 2 + (12)	(Stretti)
Violin		TA	CS	S	CS		
Piano R.H.	S	CS	S	CS		CS	CS CS CS
Piano L.H.	(Accompaniment)				S	sequences... (Accompaniment)	
Key	c	g	c	E ^b d	c	g	d d
	i	v	i	III ii	i	v	ii/i i

⁴¹Violin Sonata no.2, i, 154-157, piano.

⁴²Op.cit., 159-160, piano.

Apart from the features already mentioned, one of the main differences between this and the 1842 fugal sections is the fact the subject, answer and countersubject are throughout accompanied by an unobtrusive but nevertheless solid harmonic support from the keyboard: this is not to cover up weaknesses of contrapuntal invention but to fill out the harmonic and rhythmic implications of the counterpoint, much in the same way as Schumann 'realizes' the harmonic implications of Bach's solo violin suites in his piano accompaniments to these works.

Perhaps the most important use of the fugue occurs in the Third Violin Sonata, in the final movement of which the development section does not simply incorporate a fugue but is a fugue, and as such bears a closer relationship to a true 'fugue d'école' than any of the fugal passages hitherto discussed. The subject on which the fugue is based is derived from an earlier theme of the first subject group,



and the whole three-voiced fugue can be summarized as follows:

⁴³Violin Sonata no.3, iii, 3-4, violin.

⁴⁴Op.cit., 59-60, piano.

TABULATED ANALYSIS OF FUGUE (bars 59-80)

	EXPOSITION			MIDDLE ENTRIES				FINAL SECTION			(Recapitulation)
No. of bars	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	2	2	2	
Violin		TA	CS	Cod- etta	CS	S	Epis- odes		CS		
Piano R.H.		CS	S		S	CS	Epis- odes		TA		
Piano L.H.	S	FC						S			
Keys	F	C	F		C	F	B ^b	F	C	a	
	I	V	I		V	I	IV	I	V/III	i	

The absence of stretti and the perfect clarity and symmetry of the three sections of this fugue are somewhat uncharacteristic of Schumann, but the lack of intensity and complexity of this fugue enable it to fit more easily into the romantic sonata framework of the whole movement.

- - - - -

There is no doubt that Schumann's skill as a contrapuntist developed considerably during the eleven years from 1842-53, and that towards the end he greatly benefited from his own Advice to Young Musicians, published in 1850:

Industriously practise the fugues of good masters; above all those of J.S. Bach. Let the '48 be your daily meat. Then you will certainly become an able musician.⁴⁵

⁴⁵Tr. Alan Walker in Robert Schumann, p.189.

Do not be deterred by the words Theory, Thorough-bass, Counterpoint, etc. Approach them as a friend, and their response will be most cordial.⁴⁶

This is a far cry from the carefree Schumann of 1829 who boasted:

I know nothing whatever either of harmony, thorough-bass or counterpoint; but am Nature's pupil pure and simple.⁴⁷

But, as we have seen, Schumann's attitude towards counterpoint, and particularly towards the fugue, was never pedantic or pedagogical. He did not cultivate a contrapuntal style simply in order to be academic, except perhaps to a limited extent in the Op.41 Quartets. There, of course, he was faced with the problem of writing for a limited combination without piano, in which more contrapuntal, linear skill is required:

[A] musical conception for four string instruments demands more contrapuntal control than one for piano or for piano and instruments...piano music...can to some extent properly subordinate linearity in a 'wash' of sonority...

The four instruments of the quartet, on the other hand, are always individuals, always sensitive, always exposed. They are limited in coloristic or even dynamic variety, and feeble in grand vertical effects; all they have is their relentless mutual confrontation. If...they are to be used with any sense of their true potentiality, the problem of linear integrity has to be met head on.⁴⁸

Schumann deliberately avoided meeting the problem of 'linear integrity' head on, but instead approached it rather more obliquely; and even in the most contrapuntal passages of the Quartets and other works there is never the same sense of 'mutual confrontation' that we find, for instance, in the Grosse Fugue. Despite the models of contrapuntal ingenuity Schumann encountered in Bach and Beethoven he did not attempt to emulate their approach, but rather, in his

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Letters, vol. 1, p.12.

⁴⁸ Joseph Kerman, The Beethoven Quartets, p.12.

characteristic and original fashion, absorbed the elements of counterpoint he encountered in their works in a romantic, almost literary way. There is, indeed, some truth in his somewhat whimsical claim that he "learned more counterpoint from Jean Paul" than from any of his music-teachers.⁴⁹ It was with a certain amount of romantic freedom that Schumann interpreted the strict musical laws of counterpoint, as has been shown, and even such relatively "strict" pieces as the six fugues on the name of BACH have been described as a Romantic imitation of The Art of Fugue -- "Romantic, because free, expressive, even capricious."⁵⁰

Schumann's attitude to counterpoint, and particularly to fugue, is pinpointed in the following extract from a letter written in 1845, the same year as all the fugal keyboard works listed on p.356:

Do give the enclosed fugue to Herr Vermeulen...
I have been writing a good deal in this style lately,
especially for organ and pedal-piano.⁵¹

It is possibly dangerous to read too much into a single word, but the word "style" (stil) seems to me to encapsulate Schumann's attitude in this respect, and it is significant that he uses the word "style" rather than "form" as applied to the fugue. Schumann felt it incumbent on him as a musician to understand the laws governing fugal composition if for no other reason than that any musician ought "to cultivate every style. One thing leads to another, and in this way one remains fresh much longer."⁵²

⁴⁹Tr. Alan Walker, Robert Schumann, p.436.

⁵⁰A. Einstein, Music in the Romantic Era, p.77.

⁵¹Letters, vol.2, p.24.

⁵²Ibid.

Ultimately, perhaps, Schumann cultivated the fugue simply in order to strengthen and consolidate his technique in works which he knew depended on the energy and character of individual lines. It was in the self-same spirit that one of Wagner's teacher's had said:

Probably you will never write [strict] fugues or canons; but what you have mastered is independence: you can now ...rely upon having a fine technique at your fingers' ends if you should want it.⁵³

⁵³Tr. Alan Walker, Robert Schumann, p.440.

Conclusion

Looked at in the broadest possible terms, the results of this study of Schumann as a chamber composer show everywhere the existence of contradictions; contradictions which make themselves felt at a fundamental level in the music, and so imply certain paradoxical tendencies in the mind of the man who composed them. One might go so far as to say that in this group of works for smaller forces there are some of the clearest instances of such paradoxes to be found in Schumann's corpus: 'classic' and 'romantic', innovator and traditionalist, "man and musician".⁵⁴ It is at least true that the chamber works demonstrate as clearly as anywhere in this corpus the presence and importance of such apparent oppositions as one feature of the composer's style; but just as significant is the way in which the outcome of this interplay and tension of forces in Schumann was to have its implications for "a parting of the ways" in the attitudes of future composers to chamber music. We can see how the gradually unfolding ramifications of a tradition which passed through Schumann came to its point of crisis in him, largely because of the complex nature of the man concerned; and the results of all this were part of the legacy he transmitted to his musical successors, largely through his influence on Brahms.

Most composers, as most men, show sides to their nature that are seemingly in conflict. Thus to say that this was true of Schumann too is to say nothing essentially surprising. But what is worth noting is the extent and strength of the "opposed" tendencies in one man -- so much so that in one apparition they gained the distinct attributes and

⁵⁴ Schumann to Kossmaly, May 5 1843, Letters of Robert Schumann, p.241.

personalities of "Florestan" and "Eusebius" -- and the importance of the opposition in supplying the creative impetus for a large part of the most exciting work. That the continuing effort to resolve contradiction can be a mainspring for creative activity is a principle perhaps more readily acknowledged in literature than music: the case of Yeats, another artist employing subordinate "personalities" of his own, comes most readily to mind. It is at least possible that some sort of "literary" bent, even in a composer, is a precondition for the most fruitful utilisation of the energies and generative tensions of such divergent artistic tendencies as these artists share.

At any rate, it is certain that the old idea of Schumann as "the most romantic of composers" will not do. Despite all his romantic affinities and leanings, the central principle of imaginative freedom -- that revered, heroic, superhuman virtue -- is turned in Schumann to an intellectual delight in abounding mental play; but play within the exacting limits of a fixed and determined discipline. Frequently, we may see Schumann's studious researches into the past not as a search for formal inspiration but rather as an exacting quest to understand the possibilities and the limits of this discipline, seen always as the product of an evolving tradition. The freedom of his own creative fancy appears at its most fluent and tirelessly resourceful when working within bounds laid down by the past, building upon and extending, in unforeseen ways, possibilities inherent in the medium as it was handed on to him. This is in essence an intellectual delight: a delight in variety and versatility of a truly creative kind. Despite all he wrote in praise of the instinctive and the natural, some evidence for the intellectual and literary elements of Schumann's approach to the writing of chamber music may be found in every chapter of this study.

At this point it may be valuable to recall some of the central stylistic preoccupations that have so far come to light in this study, in an effort to assess more generally the relative places of traditional and innovative elements, of the literary and the formal, that together make up Schumann's special contribution to the genre. It is probably in the field of harmony that we have found him to be most rooted in the practice of the past, and particularly to be harking back to the harmonic conventions of the eighteenth century. Bach was clearly his inspiration also in the varied modes of contrapuntal writing that we see him employing; but here the lessons he learns from his masters lead him beyond their example. Schumann realised that the discipline needed for the successful combination of several instruments in a way which retained their independence and individual qualities could best be learnt from the masterly craftsmanship of Bach; but though Bach stands always in the background, Schumann interpreted his teaching in an entirely personal way. Schumann's new concept of fugal writing accepts the disciplines of the past, retaining the "linear integrity" of the part-writing, but dispenses with the rigidity of its practice. Schumann's counterpoint is lucid, lively and open-textured, arriving in short, concentrated bursts, with nothing of the lengthened intensity of a Grosse Fugue.

In his instrumentation, Schumann's originality was twofold: in the first place, he set out to write for a wide variety of combinations of instruments, both traditional and unusual, with a conscious desire to enrich the repertoire.⁵⁵ Secondly, his handling of the different

⁵⁵The piano quintet, always considered an original form of Schumann's devising, may not, after all, be his own invention; it is highly probable that Hummel anticipated him when he re-arranged his 1819 quintet (Op.25) removing the double bass part and adding an additional violin. Also Spohr, while in London in 1820, rewrote his harp quintet (Op.52) for piano and string quartet, for the benefit of his ailing wife who could no longer perform this work in its original form.

individual instruments within the ensemble broke new ground: his treatment of the piano, for example, was an advance in the way it liberated this instrument from its traditional rôle as an accompaniment, making it a controlling but not overpowering force. His treatment of other instruments was aimed at exploiting tone-colour rather than mere technical facility, as befitted his more romantic inclinations. In the matter of tonal structure, too, he invented a number of new forms based on the concept of contrasting or progressive tonality rather than on the traditional concept of conflicting tonality. The especial originality of his rhythms was owing in large part to his exploration of metrical and accentual displacements and syncopations. His constant endeavour was to interrupt the predictability of classical rhythm. But his melodies, perhaps, display the greatest degree of originality, largely because of his skilful fusion of elements of symmetry and asymmetry, which involved the linking together of old and new devices. Again, this fusion was principally a result of impetus from literary forms, which also inspired his application of motives and motto-themes. Literary stimulus was of paramount importance even as far as the contour of the melody was concerned. The use of motives inevitably led to melodies irregular and highly idiosyncratic, and therefore independent of any melodic tradition.

Thus it is especially true of the chamber works that they illustrate the combination of the innovative, improvisatory (in a general, not a musical sense) and restlessly fertile qualities of Schumann's imagination with the fruit of his studies of past composers. But perhaps in the chamber works more than in any other field his use of the past was a matter of assimilation rather than emulation. His letters reveal his preoccupation with the composition of large, public works which would establish his position as an heir of the great masters he revered; in the

same letters the small intimate chamber works, which reveal his gifts so directly, seem to take second place. Despite his claim to the contrary, Schumann longed for public, not private, acclaim: where he does recommend his chamber works to others, they are not dwelt on -- as in the following extract, where they are hurried over to enable Schumann to speak of his grandiose oratorio, Paradise and the Peri (now rarely heard):

The time since we met has been productive enough. Can you not arrange to have my three published quartets played over to you at Detmold? I particularly want you to hear them. A pianoforte quintet is to appear shortly, also a pianoforte quartet and a few other things. I am now engaged on a great work, the greatest I have attempted so far. It is not an opera, but, as I rather think, a new departure for the concert-room. I am putting all my energies into it, and hope to finish it in the course of the year.⁵⁶

Though this slightly offhand matter with regard to the more intimate works can be found among the letters, Schumann's deeper opinion of them is sometimes revealed when circumstances are made acute. His sense of personal involvement in their fate, amounting almost to a feeling of "propretorship" with regard to them, is illustrated by Niecks's reminiscence of the occasion when he left home rather than meet two visiting musicians who had performed his string quartets elsewhere without his knowledge and presence.⁵⁷ We can assume that these works were of great personal, even if not professional, significance to him.

In spite of -- or perhaps because of -- the promptings he felt to wide popular acclaim, Schumann became one of the first composers to realise the problem inherent in reconciling the public outlet for works

⁵⁶ Letters, p.241. However, in 1847 he does say of them: "I know this - in the new and modern departure in this class of music, these quartets are significant and characteristic." Life in Letters, vol.II, p.230.

⁵⁷ Niecks, Robert Schumann, p.292.

with their sometimes private nature. As we have seen, the chamber works became to an extent the repository of a genuinely personal musical vision, a function for which their more intimate nature was in any case ideally suited.

His chief successors (Brahms, Dvorak and the French and Russian "Schools") were often tempted into one of the pitfalls he had -- whether through circumstance or by design -- avoided: they wrote, like him, works which were the expression of private, intimate emotions and ideas; but they involved themselves in the truly contradictory situation of planning these works for large-scale concert-hall performance. This in itself may often have worked to limit, rather than enlarge, the range of communication possible.

We are in a position now to see Schumann as a representative of two opposed strains in musical romanticism. After his death they were to emerge as distinct and opposed "camps" in music, but he himself embodied both these trends. Though evidence of both are to be discovered in any single work, in some genres -- the symphonies, for example -- the outward, exhibitionistic style predominated. Here he is often fellow of Berlioz and the precursor of Liszt, Wagner and Strauss. Deriving, in their way, from their own conception of Beethoven, these composers as a group are especially distinguished for rarely writing chamber music. The piano fantasia, the programme piece of whatever length, or that new invention the tone poem, served -- to some extent -- in its stead. These artists represent the more obviously "advanced" and "revolutionary" school, being more concerned to develop and renew the "external" aspects of music, to experiment with orchestration and with form; even -- if necessary -- to impose new forms of their own. Indeed they often find their formal stimulus in the plastic arts and

drama than in past musical developments. We find in them an urge towards explicit depiction, whether of emotions, moods or scenes. As romantics, they seem always to be looking, like Faust, "outward and upward".

On the other hand we have the group in which Schumann is more usually placed in which his fellows are Spohr, Chopin and Mendelssohn, his successors Brahms -- and later Dvorak and César Franck. The roots of these composers are of a deeper kind, extending back as far as the Baroque: they were in the main conservative in musical outlook, favouring the slow expansion of traditional forms and methods as their means. The tenor of their works is often one of introspective, subjective and highly personal emotionalism; however, this remains inexplicit in essence: purely descriptive music is, indeed, very rare among composers in this grouping.⁵⁸

It should be clear at least from the evidence of the chamber music that the conventional view of Schumann's position in relation to his contemporaries and successors is perhaps inadequate to do justice to the diversity of his genius. Though he maintains and explores all his links with major figures of the past, and there is, by his own admission,⁵⁹ sufficient of the intimate and personal in his music, irrepressible formal originality and fluent innovation are the essence of his craft in these quartets, quintets, trios and solo pieces. Thus he belongs, at different places and in different ways, with both the

⁵⁸ Perhaps the best illustration of the difference between the two schools may be seen by comparing Berlioz's interpretation of Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony (Quoted by Barzun in The Pleasures of Music, p.213) with that of Schumann in Pleasants, The Musical World of Robert Schumann, p.52.

⁵⁹ Cf. Letter to Kossmaly quoted from above, passim.

streams of nineteenth-century music. It may have been the contradictions in Schumann the man -- shown musically in the combination of tradition and originality, of discipline and innovation -- which, as far as the chamber music is concerned, account for the distinctive strengths of all these works. And, in spite of everything he learned from the past, these are probably among the works in which he was in some sense "most himself".

- Kottlitz, A.D. 1820-60
 Kreutzer, J.N.A. 1781-1832
 Kreutzer, C.L.F. 1817-68
 Krug, Gustav 1821- ?
 Krüger, E. 1807-85
 Kudelski, K.M. 1805-77
 Leidgebél, A.L. 1816- ?
 Leonhard, J.E. 1810-83
 Lobe, J.C. 1797-1881
 Loeschhorn, A. 1819-1905
 Löffler, J.H. 1833-1903
 Mangold, W. 1796- ?
 Mangold, K.L.A. 1813-89
 Hühlonfeldt, C. 1797- ?
 Muhling, A. 1786-1847
 Neithardt, A.H. 1793-1861
 Neumann, H. fl. 1840
 Nicola, C. 1797-1875
 Nohr, C.F. 1800-75
 Oechoner, A.J.L. 1815- ?
 Pape, Ludewig 1809-55
 Rebling, G. 1821-1902
 Reichel, A. 1817-96
 Reinhard, A. 1831-1912
 Riehl, W.H. 1823-97
 Riem, W.F. 1779-1857
 Riotte, P.J. 1776-1856
 Ritter, A.G. 1811-85
 Roda, F. von 1815-76
 Rohde, E. 1828-83
 Saint-Julien, H.F. von 1801- ?
 Schlesinger, D. 1802- ?
 Schliébner, G.A. 1820- ?
 Dchneider, J.C.F. 1736-1853
 Schwencke, J.F. 1792-1852
 Schwencke, K. 1797-1870
 Seyler, C. 1815- ?
 Soergel, F.W. fl. 1825
 Späth, A. 1792-1876
 Stadtfeldt, A. 1826-53
 Stahlknecht 1813-87
 Starke, F. 1774-1835
 Steinfeld, A.J. 1757-1824
 Steinkühler, E. 1824-72
 Stockhausen, F. 1792-1868
 Stössel, N. 1793-1839
 Thurner, F.E. 1785-1827
 Uhlig, T. 1822-53
 Volckmar, W.V. 1812-87
 Volkert, F. 1767-1845
 Wagner, E.D. 1806-83
 Wassermann, H.J. 1791-1838
 Winneberger, P.A. 1758-1821
 Wolff, H. 1813-98
 Wollanck, F. 17832-1831
 Zillmann, E. 1834-1909
 Zopff, H. 1826-83

APPENDIX TO INTRODUCTION

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|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| H. van den Abeelen fl. 1851 | Fröhlich, J.F. 1780-1862 |
| Abeltshauser fl. 1825 | Gobler, C.A. 1767-1839 |
| Aigner, E. 1798-1851 | Ganz, M. 1806-68 |
| Apell, J.D. von 1754-1833 | Gerke, O. 1807- ? |
| Arnold, Carl 1794-1873 | Geyer, F. 1811-72 |
| Bachmaunn, Gottlob 1763-1840 | Gleissner, F. 1760- ? |
| Backoffen, J.G.H. 1768-1839 | Goetze, J.N.C. 1791-c.1860 |
| Baldenecker, J.B. ?-1849 | Gollnick, Adolf 1825-83 |
| Baldenecker, J.B. Jun. 1791-1855 | Gottwald, H. 1821-76 |
| Baur, C.A. 1789- ? | Götze, J.F. c.1841 |
| Becker, V.E. 1814-90 | Grund, F.W. 1791-1874 |
| Bergson, Michael 1820-98 | Hamel, E. 1814- ? |
| Bergt, C.G.A. 1772-1837 | Hartknock, E. c.1775-1834 |
| Berwald, J.F. 1787-1861 | Hasslinger von H.J. 1822-98 |
| Bessens, A. 1809-63 | Hauff, J.C. 1811-91 |
| Beyer, Rudolf 1828-53 | Hecht, E. 1832-87 |
| Bezdeck, F.W. 1804- ? | Heinze, G.A. 1820-1904 |
| Birnbach, J.B.H. 1793-1879 | Henkel, M. 1780-1851 |
| Bliesener, J. c.1765-1842 | Henkel, H. Jun. 1822-99 |
| Blumenthal, H. de 1782-1850 | Henning, C.W. 1784-1867 |
| Bohmer, C. 1802- ? | Hermann, G. 1808-78 |
| Barnhardt, J.H.C. 1774-1840 | Herz, H. 1806-88 |
| Brah-Müller, G. 1839-78 | Hesse, A.F. 1809-63 |
| Cornelius, P. 1824-74 | Hetoch, L. 1806-72 |
| Dolmetsch, F. fl. 1858 | Hille, E. 1822-91 |
| Ebell, H.C. 1775-1824 | Hoffmann, H.A. 1770-1842 |
| Ebers, C.F. 1770-1836 | Hönnstock, K. 1828- ? |
| Eberwein 1786-1868 | Holten, K. von 1836-1912 |
| Eschmann J.K. 1826-82 | Hornstein, R. von 1833-90 |
| Fischer, F. 1823- ? | Kelz, J.F. 1786-1862 |
| Flügel, G. 1812-1900 | Klass, Carl 1792-1853 |
| Fritze, W. 1842-81 | Kocher, C. 1786-1872 |

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