Comparative Analyses of Different Musical Settings of the Same Text in the Genre of German Lieder

by

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Introduction

German Lieder refers to the genre of songs composed to pre-existing German poems. Realizing that different composers may have fundamental differences in their musical presentations of the same poem, I am interested in analyzing and comparing different musical settings of the same text and investigating the musical intentions behind them. In this thesis, I analyze musical settings of two poems by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wandrers Nachtlied II* and *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt*. Chapter 1 will be a comparative analysis of *Wandrers Nachtlied II* settings by Franz Schubert, Fanny Hensel, Franz Liszt and Charles Ives, while Chapter 2 will be a comparative analysis of *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt* settings by Robert Schumann, Pyotr Tchaikovsky and Hugo Wolf. The methodology of analysis adopted in this thesis is based on Edward Cone’s article on the composer’s approach to text.¹ In the Coda section of my thesis, I will present my personal experience as a performer in relation to the comparative analyses in the two chapters.

Although Lieder had been written for many centuries, the concept of spontaneous expression of Volkseele (soul of the folk) arose only with the pre-Romantic theories of the eighteenth century.² Johann Wolfgang von Goethe played an important role in the development of Lieder. Romantic poetry derives its fundamental driving force from the vast and varied poetic achievement of Goethe, whose

musically-inspired lyricism served as the wellspring of German Romantic poetry. Lieder composers often used Goethe’s poems as texts for their Lieder. Goethe’s seemingly simple lyric stanzas explore new depths in human emotion expressed as poetry. There are three factors that may explain this. The first is the timeless “structural” lyricism of Goethe itself. The second is the emerging awareness of individuality, which evolves into the self-consciousness of Romantic poetry. The third is a reverence for nature found in Romantic poetry.

Both *Wandrers Nachtlied II* and *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt* by Goethe exemplify the Romantic themes; the former illustrates man’s reverence for nature and his self-awareness while the latter demonstrates emotional intensity and self-consciousness.³ The two poems contrast each other as do their musical settings. On one hand, the four different musical settings of *Wandrers Nachtlied II* all attempt to reflect the tense anticipation and final emotional release. The difference between them lies in the fact that each setting responds to a different element of the poem. On the other hand, Schumann, Tchaikovsky and Wolf do not have a common way of reading *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt*. They exhibit divergences not only in their music, but also in their interpretation of the poem, leading to different musical approaches to the poem. I will explore these differences in the comparative analyses of the following chapters.

³ Ibid., 9-10.
Chapter 1: Wandrers Nachtlied II

Wandrers Nachtlied II is a poem written by Goethe in 1780 and is “probably the most praised poem in German language.”\(^4\) It stands in the first volume of Goethe’s collection, *Ausgabe letzter Hand*, and was written by Goethe after he moved to Weimar, during which his poetry became quieter and asserted a greater objectivity.\(^5\) Many composers have set music to the text of *Wandrers Nachtlied II*. In this chapter, I will analyze and compare the settings by Franz Schubert, Fanny Hensel, Franz Liszt and Charles Ives. These four composers came from very different backgrounds and had very different experiences as composers. Schubert is regarded as the father of Lieder; Hensel as a female composer in a male-dominated era; Liszt as a Hungarian piano virtuoso-turned-composer; and Ives as a contemporary American composer.

The poem, which I shall examine in detail below, reflects the metamorphoses from nature to animal to man. The beginning of the poem reflects the considerable distance between the poet and the subject and is filled with a sense of anticipation—the poet is waiting for peace and rest but is initially tense. All four musical settings are trying to reflect both the progression and the tense anticipation and final emotional release. However, there are fundamental differences between them because each setting responds to a different element of the poem. Schubert pays attention to the “rest” and the release of tension at the end while Hensel addresses the rhyme

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scheme and creates tension using rapid harmonic rhythm. Liszt focuses on the “waiting” by having an extended dramatization of the phrase. In contrast, Ives builds an overall musical contour that peaks at the “rest” to illustrate the process from anticipation to release.

1. Background on the composers and their significance in the genre of Lied

Franz Schubert’s setting of *Wandrers Nachtlied II* was composed in 1823 and is the most renowned musical setting of the poem. Schubert undoubtedly had a great impact on the genre of Lied and has always been considered as the giant in Lieder. Although he composed an ample number of Lieder—about 600 Lieder within his short life—he was mainly credited for the quality of his music and his influences on the transformation of the genre. He explored the genre’s potential and expanded its possibilities, elevating the Lied to the rank of a major genre. He modernized the Lied, diverging from the folk-like strophic style of the Berlin Lieder School to Lieder that were beyond average technical demand of his days. He often incorporated shifts in texture and tonality, contrasting parallel major and minor keys, operatic elements, chromaticism and his famous Schubertian third progression. There is usually a close poetico-musical correlation in his Lieder, which reflects Schubert’s interpretation of the poet’s verse through both the larger musical landscape and the smaller details.

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel was one of the few female composers of the nineteenth century. As the female child in the Mendelssohn’s family, she had the

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7 This overview of Hensel is based on Jürgen Thym, “Crosscurrents in Song: Five Distinctive Voices,” in *German Lieder in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996); Marcia J. Citron,
opportunity to receive musical education with her brother Felix Mendelssohn from Friedrich Zelter and Ludwig Berger, the core educators of the Berlin Lieder School. Even though Hensel displayed vibrant musical talent just like her brother, her family prohibited her from pursuing music as a profession. Since she was a woman, she was expected to prepare for her duties as a housewife and reserve her music-making for social and personal realms only. Thym asserts that Hensel’s limited exposure to the vast musical community hindered her growth as a composer. Despite the lack of encouragement from her family, she still managed to write approximately 250 Lieder—the most extensively-explored genre among all her compositions. Hensel also frequently used Goethe’s texts for her settings.

In 1835, she composed “Über allen Gipfeln ist Ruh,” (setting Goethe’s Wanders Nachtlied II). Although her impact on the history of the Lied was limited due to her isolation from the broader music community, her songs reflect her participation in the development of the genre, which changed from striving actively for simplicity at the beginning of the nineteenth century towards attempting to construct more complex structures and greater variety of texture. More importantly, Hensel provides a different perspective in the approach to Lied composition as a female musician who faced the challenges and obstacles of being a woman at that time.

Franz Liszt was a Hungarian composer who, during his own time, was more famous as a piano virtuoso.\textsuperscript{8} However, his contribution to the history of Lied composition should not be neglected. He first encountered Lieder in the 1830s when he started transcribing Lieder by Beethoven and Schubert into piano pieces—these transcriptions brought the Lieder repertoire to a larger audience and to the international sphere in the form of piano music. He started composing his own Lieder in 1839 and wrote 87 Lieder for voice and piano and 16 for voice and orchestra throughout his life. Because of his international and wide exposure to various types of music, Liszt managed to incorporate elements from different styles and genres into his Lied compositions. He brought the rich pianistic textures of his keyboard music to his Lieder and approached the form and tonal palette of Lieder in a more flexible manner. As a result, Lieder no longer only cultivate internal emotion through simplicity but also act as a medium of emotional expression to the outside audience. When Liszt was about 50 years old, a number of unfortunate events occurred in his life and his setting of \textit{Wandrers Nachtlied II} (1848) was composed during this difficult period.

Charles Ives is an early twentieth-century American composer renowned for his experimentations in music emulation and innovation.\textsuperscript{9} His music anticipated many important developments of the century. In addition to his innovative work, Ives also worked in European genres in the romantic tradition. In particular, Ives wrote an

\textsuperscript{8} The following summary of Liszt’s career is based on Rena Charnin Mueller, “The Lieder of Liszt,” in \textit{The Cambridge Companion to the Lied} (Cambridge University Press, 2004); Thym, “Crosscurrents in Song: Five Distinctive Voices.”

astounding series of 185 solo songs. He wrote different types of songs, from traditional style to popular music of the time. Ives chose texts from major and minor poets written in English and in other languages, and composed for both prose and verse. His approaches and exposure to musical styles were much more variegated than the other three composers. Therefore, his setting of the *Wandrers Nachtlid II*, “Ilmenau” (1901), which was written when Ives was a student at Yale University, provides a contrast to the other settings by the three European composers.

2. The Poem

*Wandrers’ Nachtlid II* is about the transitory nature of life and the search for peace and rest. The poem is provided below with a translation (Table 1.1). It is eight lines in length and has a rhyme scheme of ababcdcd that may be divided into quatrains (abab/cddc). However, the four syntactic phrases of the poem, which are numbered in the first column from the left, are not in line with the division.\(^\text{10}\) The first two lines form a complete statement, which describes the inanimate mountain-tops in the distance. Lines 3 and 4 are parallel with the first two—they repeat many of the same phonemes; however, the second statement is not complete until the end of line 5, thus creating an enjambment to “Kaum einen Hauch”. The poem moves to the nearer tree-tops that are of an animate, vegetable nature. Even though this enjambment may hinder the rhyme effect, it advances the pace of the poem and demonstrates the Wanderer’s unsettled nature, suggesting that he is still in search of peace. The third statement, which illustrates the quiet birds of the animate, animal portion of nature, is the only complete sentence, which occurs in a single poetic line

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\(^{10}\) The following poetic analysis is based on Johnson, “‘Wandrers Nachtlied’.”
and therefore creates a stabilizing effect. The last statement of the poem consists of
the last two poetic lines, finally arriving at the Wanderer himself. “Warte nur balde”
in line 7 rhymes with “Walde” in the previous line, while “Hauch” at the end of line 5
does not get a rhyme until “Ruhest du auch” in the last poetic line, creating a sense of
anticipation and tension right up until the end of the poem. The long vowels (“nur, ruhest, du, auch”) in the last statement allow the poem to end in tranquility,
symbolizing the arrival of “rest”.

| 1) | Über allen Gipfeln ist Ruh, |
| 2) | In allen Wipfeln Spürest du Kaum einen Hauch; |
| 3) | Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde. |
| 4) | Warte nur, balde Ruhest du auch. |
| a | Over all summits |
| b | Is peace, |
| c | You feel |
| d | The birds are silent in the woods. |
| c | Only wait, soon |
| c | You too shall rest. |

Table 1.1 The original and the translation of the poem

According to L.P. Johnson, there are two views of the progression of the poem: “optical” and “organic”.
The “Optical” reading suggests a progression according to a physical observation of the changing of the distances from far to near. The “Organic” reading sees the perspective move from the objects to the Wanderer, based on the remoteness of the character from nature to animal to human. The three natural phenomena presented in the poem—the mountain-tops, the tree-tops, and the birds—evoke a sense of rest and peace either figuratively or literally in both the Wanderer and the reader.

From either view of progression, the evocation is achieved by the meaning of the statements and enhanced by the structure of the poem acoustically and rhythmically.

13 Ibid., 42.
3. Comparative Analysis

Even though the composers interpret the poem in the same way, their takes on the musical presentation of the ideas are different. While the piano prelude and postlude play important roles in Schubert’s setting, Hensel’s setting does not have either, but focuses on the rhyme scheme and the rapid harmonic progression. Liszt pays more attention to the piano texture. While Liszt’s setting has a much longer dramatization of “Warte nur, balde,” Ives builds up to the climax by creating an overall musical contour that spans the whole song.

Musical form and the build-up of the sense of unity

All four musical settings break the poem down into three main sections, responding to the progression from nature to animal to human. The following outlines the differences in the structure and the build-up of the sense of unity of the four settings.

1. While the other three settings make use of modulation to differentiate the sections, Schubert’s setting remains in Bb major throughout the piece. Schubert employs different piano textures to characterize each section.

2. Putting lines 6 and 7 in the same section, Hensel chose to respect the rhyme scheme of the poem, which is not what other composers chose to do.

3. All four composers adopt through-composed form but Liszt adds a reprise at the end that concludes the song with the musical material from the beginning, aiming to create a sense of unity, and Ives repeats the piano prelude as an
accompaniment at the end. Ives connects the different sections using a rhythmic motive as well.

4. In Ives’ setting, there is an overall musical contour that progresses from one section to another, which is defined according to the pitch levels and harmony. The four composers all strive to create a distinction between sections, yet ensuring the overall bonding within the piece.

The rest of this subsection describes and analyzes each of the four distinctions in details.

Although there are four syntactic phrases in the poem, the four different musical settings break the poem down into three main sections as shown in tables 1.2-1.5: The first section (“section A”) consists of the first two statements (lines 1 to 5); the second section (“section B”) usually contains only the third statement (line 6); and the third section (“section C”) is the last statement (lines 7 to 8). This division breaks the poem down into its organic components—after combining the inanimate and animate nature, the division facilitates the process of making a clear distinction between nature, animal and human, and creates a progression between the three different characters. Modulation is a common technique used in the settings to define the sections. In these modulations, the music usually shifts between relative or parallel major and minor keys to maintain a connection between the sections even though a different mood is built up. Lastly, the piano accompaniment also tends to change according to the form of the music as it proceeds from one section to another.
Throughout Schubert’s setting, the key remains in Bb major. Instead of making use of modulation, Schubert changes the piano texture to mark off the different sections. The piano begins the song with a prelude consisting of homophonic choral movement, which is subsequently repeated when the voice enters. In contrast with the previous section, the piano part intensifies in sections B with the
use of syncopation and broken chords, representing a shift from inanimate nature to a lively and less predictable animal. Finally, it returns to a homophonic style in the last section, denoting the “rest” that the Wanderer will find. In addition to the three sections, there is a piano postlude at the end of the song that lengthens the anticipation to the feeling of release.

In Hensel’s setting, the division of the text is slightly different from the other three settings. Instead of having only line 6 in section B, she also includes line 7 deliberately. Hensel attempts to emphasize the rhyme scheme in lines 6 and 7, thus showing her respect for Goethe’s original poetic setting. The second phrase in section B is a variation of the first phrase in the section, acoustically highlighting the close relationship between the two poetic lines in addition to the rhyme. Also, in order to evoke a stronger sense of continuity and connection between section A and B, section A ends with a half cadence at an open interval, which creates the impression of a “question mark” that anticipates for the next section. Even though there is a moment of silence at the fermata, the effect here is prominent both musically and emotionally. The consistent rhythmic figure in the piano accompaniment also helps to hold the sections together.

While the three other settings are through-composed, Liszt included a return of section A at the end of the song after section C. The reprise of section A repeats the text of section C from lines 7 to 8, creating a sense of unity where the ending echoes the beginning of the song. In comparison to the first section A, the piano part in the return of section A plays fuller chords and spans an even larger range, and it ends with extreme quiet (pppp). Instead of ending with a G# major chord just like the
first section A, the last section A ends with a E major chord—the original key, representing the arrival of the “rest”. Finally, with the same musical material but expressing a different message, the reprise of section A connects nature and the Wanederer, symbolizing an intimacy between nature and the human.

“Ilmenau” employs a different manner in connecting the sections. Ives builds the vocal line using the same rhythmic motive, which is a dotted-rhythm figure, throughout the song to link the sections together. This motive is retained even though the tonality and meter change between the different sections, highlighting it as an important element of the song that creates unity and bonding within the music. Moreover, distinct from the other settings, “Ilmenau” has an overall musical contour that spans the whole song. Beginning at E, the melody moves to a higher pitch as the music proceeds to the next section until it reaches the climax at high F at measure 22. Since all phrases build up to the climax together, there is a sense of direction and flow that connects the different sections. Moreover, using the piano prelude as the piano accompaniment at the end also creates a sense of unity as it responds to the beginning of the piece.

**Role of the piano**

In the genre of Lied, the piano accompaniment is no longer just a bolster to the voice. It also plays an important role in the interpretation of the text and the dramatization of the emotions within the piece. The piano plays a different role in each setting. Schubert uses the piano prelude and postlude to demonstrate the independence of the piano. The piano in Liszt’s setting introduces new melodic
materials and displays a wide variety of piano texture, acting as both an accompaniment and an independent entity. On the other hand, without a prelude or postlude, Hensel’s setting has a piano part that provides harmonic support with fast harmonic rhythm and a consistent rhythmic motive throughout the piece. Similarly, the piano in Ives’ setting plays a supporting role but the harmonies change much slower than those in Hensel’s setting. It also plays fuller and richer harmonies to increase the intensity at the zenith, which is not observed in Hensel’s setting.

In Schubert’s setting, the piano begins the song with a two-measure piano prelude, which sets up the mood and creates the ambience of the song. The voice then enters with a melody that is a variation of the piano prelude, showing the intimate relationship between the voice and the piano—the piano is not just an accompaniment but of equal importance with the voice. In section B, the piano becomes a pure accompaniment, supporting the voice with broken chords. In the last section, the piano part becomes homophonic. The voice and the piano play the same rhythm, while the piano figures often moves in contrary motion against the voice melodically. The piano part here emphasizes the vocal melody and also creates a sense of unity by syncing with the voice rhythmically. Finally, the song ends with a one-measure piano postlude. The piano postlude shows that not only the voice, but also the piano, is part of the Wanderer because the Wanderer will not find “rest” until the end of the song.

Liszt’s setting begins with a piano prelude that consists of a chordal movement in half notes. While the left hand descends with chordal roots, the right hand moves in contrary motion to reveal the aura and to open the space, making room for the voice to enter. In section A, the vocal lines resemble a recitative while the
piano accompanies the voice with sustained chords. In section B, the piano alternates with the voice and echoes the melody of the voice. As a result, they create silence together, which corresponds to the “schweigen’ in line 6 of the text. This interaction symbolizes the close relationship between the voice and the piano and displays the piano as an independent entity. In section C, the piano part intensifies with fuller chords and a thicker texture until the climax is reached at measure 28. A new counter melody is introduced there in the piano to dramatize the emotions evoked in the section. Throughout the piece, either the vocal melody is embedded in the piano, or a counter melody is developed in the piano, showing the importance of the piano as both an accompaniment and an independent entity. Through the use of different variations in piano texture, the piano plays an important role in illustrating the idea of the poem.

The piano parts in both Hensel’s and Ives’ settings are relatively simple compared to those of Liszt’s and Schubert’s in terms of technical demand, piano texture and overall intensity. The piano in Hensel’s setting provides harmonic support and is merely an accompaniment. However, the harmonies change in almost every measure. Even though the piano is just an accompaniment, this fast harmonic rhythm in the piano makes use of the tonal quality of different chords to create tension and different moods in the music. On the other hand, the rhythmic motive in the piano, which is a triplet figure, generates a strong sense of direction in the music. The piano part in Hensel’s setting is an important component in the overall musical presentation, even though it does not stand out as a soloist.
Similarly, the piano in Ives’ setting is solely an accompaniment. Unlike that in Hensel’s setting, the harmonic rhythm here is much slower—the harmonies change every section, as opposed to every measure in Hensel’s setting. After the piano prelude, the piano repeats the same figure from an E major chord to an A major seventh chord for eight measures until the measure before section B, where the E major chord here is replaced by an E augmented chord, hinting that something different is forthcoming. From measure 20, in order to build up to the climax at measure 23, the harmonic rhythm speeds up and the piano texture is thickened, in contrast to the monotonous piano accompaniment in the earlier sections. Even though there is not much variation in the piano part, the repeating figure interacts with the vocal melody effectively and evokes a sense of continuity.

*Dramatization of emotional state*

In the genre of Lied, different musical techniques are used to dramatize the emotional states already evoked through the use of literary devices in poetry. With regards to the enjambment between lines 4 and 5 and the last statement in the poem, the composers use different musical techniques to demonstrate the same feelings of tension and release. All four composers use the repetition of text as a tool for dramatization. In addition, Schubert adds a piano postlude to delay the release of the tension while Hensel makes use of the fast harmonic rhythm together with innovative chord progressions to increase the tension. Liszt builds up the tension by intensifying the piano accompaniment and fragmenting the vocal line to generate the anticipatory feeling. Ives creates the tension by changing the meter to increase the pace of the music and utilizes the overall musical contour to prepare for the climax.
The enjambment between lines 4 and 5, “Spürest du / Kaum einen Hauch,” illustrates the unsettled feeling of the Wanderer, whose desire for peace is not yet fulfilled. Schubert uses a change in piano texture and tonality while Hensel employs a metric conflict to illustrate this emotion. In Schubert’s setting, the feeling of uncertainty is illustrated by the intensified syncopated piano accompaniment, which starts in line 4 and continues through line 6. This is in contrast to Hensel’s use of rhythmic irregularity. Hensel uses eighth notes in the voice line while using triplets in the piano accompaniment. This distinction evokes a feeling of unease because the metric center becomes ambiguous.

The last statement of the poem, “Warte nur, balde / Ruhest du auch,” describes a longing for rest, which is finally fulfilled at the end, but only after waiting for a long time. To emphasize this statement, Schubert repeats the whole statement with an extra “Warte nur” twice using the same music material. In order to illustrate the sense of waiting, he uses a fermata at the end of line 7 at measures 10 and 12 to create space for “longing” before peace is found at line 8. He also adds a piano postlude to further lengthen the “longing,” delaying the release of the tension.

On the other hand, Hensel does not begin to create tension until line 8 at measure 23, where “Ruh” starts and which then proceeds to last for five measures. In addition, Hensel here uses unconventional and wandering chord progressions in the piano accompaniment to illustrate the search for peace. When line 8 is repeated for the second time, the left hand of the piano accompaniment moves down in stepwise

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14 Cone, Music: A View from Delft - Selected Essays, 118.
motion until it reaches E at the end, which is the original key of the song, showing that peace and stability have finally arrived.

Liszt probably illustrates this emotion most extensively. He uses nineteen measures to dramatize the anticipation to peace. Beginning from section C at measure 16, the piano accompaniment intensifies, modulates and moves in sequence until the climax is reached at measure 28, at which a counter melody of ascending stepwise movement is introduced to increase the tension. On the other hand, the vocal melody is fragmented to build up the tension and the anticipation—"Warte nur" is repeated twice with three measures of agitated piano accompaniment between them so that the vocalist literally has to wait, yet sustain the momentum at the same time. The first appearance of "balde", presented in forte at measure 24, and the repeat of "balde" further magnify the urge and desire to find rest. The rest is eventually found at measure 34 when the cadence finally resolves to tonic. The last statement is repeated under the musical material from section A at the end to further stabilize the emotion and illustrates the sense of peace.

Markedly different from the other settings, Ives, in addition to repeating lines 7 to 8, uses similar melodic material from section to section but intensifies the emotional charge by changing the meter at "balde," which increases the pace of the music before the climax at measure 22. This setting starts building the tension from the beginning of the piece and reaches its maximum at "Ruh" at measure 22, the highest note of the piece. This is achieved by using the same rhythmic motive throughout the song and changing the pitch level progressively in constructing the
overall musical contour. Finally, Ives stabilizes the emotional tension by reusing the material from the piano prelude with the repetition of the word “du auch”.

4. Conclusion

Goethe’s poem *Wandrers Nachtlied II* expresses the transitory nature of life and the search for peace and rest. As the poem progresses, it transitions across three states of being: from nature to animal to man. At the beginning of the poem, the poet is distant, waiting for peace and rest; yet paradoxically, his tense feeling is subtly expressed in juxtaposition with, or rather, enveloped in his anticipation for quietude. The four musical settings analyzed in this chapter seek to reflect both the sense of directionality of the poem in the progress across different states of being, as well as the tense anticipatory sense of the Wanderer which culminates towards the end of the poem as a form of final release of feeling. As the comparative analysis in this chapter shows, the four settings respond to different elements of the poems in their interpretations, leading to the nuanced yet fundamental differences in their compositions. Schubert addresses the final release of tension and the arrival of “Ruh” more thoroughly. Hensel creates the tension through rapid harmonic rhythm and pays attention to the rhyme scheme of the poem. Liszt plays around with the piano texture and the dramatization of the anticipation to rest, while Ives focuses on the overall musical contour that builds to “Ruh” and uses a rhythmic motive to create a sense of continuity in the music.
Chapter 2: Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt

*Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt* is one of the four Mignon’s songs in *Wilhelm Meister Lehrjahre*, one of the major works of Goethe written in 1795. It appears at the end of book four in chapter 11. The songs in *Wilhelm Meister Lehrjahre* are symbolic because they are sung, not recited, by the main characters; thus, both author and composer must remember that the melodies provided must be suited to the characters and their contexts.¹⁵ The episode of Mignon and the Harper forms a distinct entity within the larger work and has inspired the musical settings by many composers—according to Jack Stein, there are eighty-four settings of *Kennst du das Land*, fifty-six of *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt*, forty of *Wer nie sein Brot mit Traenen aß*, and all of the other lyrics have fifteen settings or more.¹⁶ From the fifty-six settings of *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt*, the settings by Robert Schumann, Pyotr Tchaikovsky and Hugo Wolf will be analyzed in this chapter. Schumann spent a fair amount of time at different points of his life on the composition of Lieder. While Tchaikovsky is almost a pure instrumental music writer, Wolf devoted most of his life to vocal music, especially Lieder. Due to the different degrees of their musical involvement in the genre, comparing the Lieder of the three composers would provide us various interesting perspectives on the genre.

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Schumann, Tchaikovsky and Wolf do not have a common way of reading *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt*, unlike the musical settings in the previous chapter on *Wandrers Nachtlied II*. They exhibit divergences not only in their music, but also in their interpretation of the poem. Schumann focuses on the idea of longing in the poem with the use of motivic recurrences whereas Tchaikovsky pays attention to the loneliness evoked in the poem by creating a dramatic moment for the word, “allein” (alone). Wolf attempts to express the overall feeling of unsettledness through a naturalistic approach.

**1. Background on the composers and their significance in the genre of Lied**

Robert Schumann is best remembered for his piano music and Lieder.\(^1\) During his creative career, which lasted for more than twenty-five years, he embarked on the composition of Lieder at three different times: first in 1827 when he composed Lieder for the first time, second in 1840 (the *Liederjahr*) when he wrote a large number of Lieder, and last after 1847 when he developed a new style in the composition of this genre.\(^2\) Unlike Franz Schubert, who usually chose texts to which he felt sympathetic, Schumann could select a poem that did not completely fit his sensibility and give his own interpretation to it; thus, in a sense, he became the poet singing “his poem.”\(^3\) Schumann’s setting of *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt* was written in 1849, which placed it in the time period during which Schumann’s Lieder was no longer based on musical periodicity and poetic regularity. During this period, he

developed a much broader and more varied range for setting texts and transformed Lieder from a lyric to a dramatic genre, a musical style invoked in response to his metaphorical interpretation of text.\textsuperscript{20}

Pyotr Tchaikovsky's setting of \textit{Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt} is the most famous setting and has a Russian version as well. It was composed in 1869 and is one of the songs in \textit{Shest' romansov} (Six Romances) op. 6. Being more of an instrumental music writer, Tchaikovsky also composed 103 songs in different languages.\textsuperscript{21} He believed that people sing in a different way than they talk and therefore, occasional misplaced accents should be allowed in songs. In addition, he believed that it was the composer's musical discretion to change the presentation of the poem and that substantial lyric components are not always necessary in the music. Tchaikovsky is famous for combining Western and Russian styles in his music and this can be seen in the genre of art song as well: in this case, the Western influence came from the songs by Robert Schumann. In particular, the prominent piano engagement in the expression of a song was extended by Tchaikovsky though rich textures and passionate outbursts during the vocal parts. Russian elements, such as the urban romance of Glinka and other Russian composers, can be found in his songs as well.

Hugo Wolf is the only well-known European composer of the nineteenth century whose reputation is entirely based on his Lieder.\(^{22}\) He was born into an environment where Lieder already had a rich history and a massive repertoire. He believed in originality of the poem—an important aspect of late-Romanticism—and his songs attempt to represent the poems in the form of music. He extended the vocabulary of Lieder through extended tonality.\(^{23}\) He also focused his songs on the flexible Wagnerian-style declamation, the symphonic piano parts, and the synthesis of poetry and music. In Wolf’s Lieder, a regular rhythm in the piano part serves as the background underneath the flexible rhythm and the syncopation in the vocal lines, presenting a sense that is speech-like.\(^{24}\) Wolf attempted to assimilate the music of Schumann, Schubert, Wagner and Liszt to create his own compositional voice.\(^{25}\) His setting of *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt* was composed in 1888.

2. The Poem

In the *Meisters Wilhelm Lehrjahr*, *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt* is a duet sung by Mignon and the Harper that expresses the nostalgic sentiments held by both characters in the story as well as *Meister Wilhelm*. The lyrics in the poem also express Goethe’s own longing for Italy and the indefinable search for a better world that gave the Romantic movement its unique mode of expression.\(^{26}\) Goethe described Mignon’s


\(^{24}\) Yonatan Malin, *Songs in Motion: Rhythm and Meter in the German Lied* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 179.


performance of this Mignon Lied as an “irregular duet sung with the most heartfelt expression.”

The poem is provided below with a translation (Table 2.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Original in German</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt, Weiβ, was ich leide!</td>
<td>Only one who knows longing understands what I suffer!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td>Allein und abgetrennt Von aller Freude, Seh’ ich ans Firmament Nach jener Seite.</td>
<td>Alone and cut off from all joy, I gaze at the firmament in that direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3)</td>
<td>Ach! Der mich liebt und kennt, Ist in der Weite.</td>
<td>Ah, he who loves and knows me, is far away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4)</td>
<td>Es schwindelt mir, es brennt Mein Eingeweide.</td>
<td>My head reels, my innards are burning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5)</td>
<td>Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt Weiβ, was ich leide!</td>
<td>Only one who knows longing understands what I suffer!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1 The original and the translation of the poem

_Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt_ is twelve lines long and as shown in the middle column of Table 2.1, has an overall rhyme scheme of ababacacabab that can be divided into three quatrains (abab/acac/abab). The exact repetition of the first two poetic lines in the closing lines is a framing device, to which the repetition of “abab” in the rhyme scheme corresponds. According to the rhyme scheme, the four lines in the center function as a group, but the poem is printed in one extended stanza.

The poem can be divided by the three states of mind present in speaker. The identical opening and closing phrases serve as a framework and provide both an introduction and conclusion. Lines 3 to 4 and lines 9 to 10 describe the introspection of the speaker. In contrast, lines 5 to 8 points to a direction away from the speaker and events much farther away.

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27 McClain, “Goethe and Music,” 204.
28 The translation is adapted from Seelig, “The Literary Context: Goethe as Source and Catalyst,” 9, and edited by myself.
There is a strong sense of circularity in the poem, which is demonstrated by both the rhyme scheme and the content of the poem. In addition to the repetition of the opening and closing phrase, the rhyme scheme has an overall ternary form as well. Even the meaning of the text demonstrates a sense of circularity—there is a progression from first, a general statement about the emotion of longing to second, a statement about the specific inner state of the speaker to third, a place remote from the speaker and then finally, back to the speaker himself.

Conversely, the five syntactic phrases in the poem, which are numbered in the first column from the left, are not circular. All syntactic phrases consist of two poetic lines, which correspond to the two-line cell of the rhyme pattern, except the second phrase. The second phrase, comprised of four lines, spans both rhyme patterns (ab and ac), creating an irregularity that goes against the consistency of the rhyme scheme. Enjambment ties lines 3 to 4 and 5 to 6. This long sentence connects the speaker to his far away beloved, which builds up tension and forms a sense of direction in portraying the idea of “longing.”

Even though the poem seems to have two rhyme patterns, abab and acac, these two are extremely similar and the difference between them is very subtle. There is an obsessive use of “a” and the sentence structure of the poetic lines is monotonous throughout the poem. However, the “Ach!” at line 7 creates irregularity as it breaks the line and the poem abruptly. In the middle of the poem, this “Ach!” creates a point of interest and a surprise for the reader both syntactically and acoustically, which also facilitates the reader’s understanding of the speaker’s feelings.
The poem is circular and repetitive yet possesses some irregularities. The three musical settings analyzed here address the different aspects of the poem such as its structure, rhyme scheme and emotions in their own ways.

3. Comparative Analysis

Each musical setting has its own unique interpretation and presentation of the text. Schumann focuses on the circularity of the poem but Tchaikovsky looks into the rhyme scheme. Tchaikovsky makes good use of the different roles of the piano accompaniment, while the role of the piano is mostly an accompaniment in the settings by Schumann and Wolf. Repetition of text is an important tool for Tchaikovsky in creating contrast in the music. On the other hand, the text is only sung through once in Wolf’s setting because Wolf respects the original form of the poem and focuses on the overall musical presentation in evoking emotions. The chromaticism and fluidity in Wolf’s setting do not appear in either Schumann’s or Tchaikovsky’s settings.

Musical form and use of repetition in text

Among the three musical settings analyzed, no two composers choose a common way to divide the text into sections; Schumann simply divides the text in half, Tchaikovsky sets the musical sections according to the rhyme scheme, and Wolf phrases the melody according to the syntactic phrases. In addition, the composers use the repetition of the text differently, which then significantly impacts the musical form: Tchaikovsky repeats lines 3 to 4 three times throughout the song; Schumann goes through almost the whole poem twice, and Wolf only goes through the whole
poem once. Tables 2.2-2.4 show the song forms in relation to the poetic lines and their repetition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Key Scheme</th>
<th>Poetic Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-11</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Gm→Eb Major</td>
<td>1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-21</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Eb major→Gm</td>
<td>7-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-30</td>
<td>A’</td>
<td>Gm → Eb major</td>
<td>1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-41</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Eb major→Gm</td>
<td>7-8, 11-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 Outline of Schumann’s setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Key Scheme</th>
<th>Poetic Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>Piano Prelude</td>
<td>Db Major→Ebm→Db Major</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-16</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Db Major→Ebm</td>
<td>1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-29</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Ebm→Fm→Bbm/Db Major</td>
<td>5-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-43</td>
<td>A’</td>
<td>Db Major→Ebm</td>
<td>1-4, 3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44-54</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Db major→Ebm→Db major</td>
<td>9-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3 Outline of Tchaikovsky’s setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Poetic Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>Piano Prelude</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>Melody 1</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-16</td>
<td>Melody 2</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Piano Interlude</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-21</td>
<td>Melody 3</td>
<td>5-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-25</td>
<td>Piano Interlude</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-29</td>
<td>Melody 4</td>
<td>7-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-32</td>
<td>Piano Interlude</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32-36</td>
<td>Melody 5</td>
<td>9-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37-48</td>
<td>Piano Interlude</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49-53</td>
<td>Melody 6</td>
<td>11-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54-57</td>
<td>Piano Postlude</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.4 Outline of Wolf’s setting

Schumann’s setting, without a piano prelude, is similar to a strophic variation form with the same text sung twice. Section A begins at measure 1 and goes on to
measure 11, incorporating the first two syntactic phrases or six lines of the poem, which together make up the first half of the poem. Section B, which ends at measure 21, follows and includes the remaining three syntactic phrases. The whole poem is then repeated with slightly different melodic material, but without lines 9 to 10. This omission emphasizes the importance of those specific lines, “Es schwindelt mir / es brennt mein Eingeweide,” which formed the climax when they first appeared but are no longer present the second time around. The musical phrase for the setting of "Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt / weiss was ich leide" at the end of the first iteration of the poem (mm. 18-21) also begins the next section of the song. (See the overlap of section B and A’ in the formal outline, Table 2.2) This creates a form of circularity and continuity that matches the poem's own circular nature.

Tchaikovsky’s setting is in through-composed form with the repetition of certain melodic material. The poem is divided into three musical sections and these divisions correspond to the three quatrains in the rhyme structure of the poem. The piano prelude begins the piece and is followed by section A, which consists of lines 1 to 4. After a change from Eb major to F minor, which corresponds to a change in rhyme scheme in the poem, section B begins at measure 17 and is comprised of lines 5 to 8. Within section B, there are modulations to show the remoteness of the beloved. After section B, instead of moving to a new section, section A is repeated with an extension: lines 3 to 4 are sung twice, and this forms the climax of the piece. The repetition of these lines, “Allein und abgetrennt / von aller Freude,” reflects their importance and portrays the loneliness evoked in the poem through its isolation. The last section begins at measure 44 and acts like the epilogue to the piece. A new
melody is introduced here and the section then ends with a short, peaceful piano postlude. The overall structure here has a clear contour with section A’ being the zenith of the music—section A and B set up the tension towards the extension in section A’, emphasizing “Allein,” and followed by a relief in section C. The through-composed form in Tchaikovsky’s setting contributes to the building up of this continuous contour with one substantial climax, which is different from the circularity demonstrated in Schumann’s setting.

Unlike Schumann and Tchaikovsky, Wolf wrote a through-composed musical setting with no repetition of text or music, thus following the original poetic structure exactly. Wolf is famous for his naturalistic approach to texts and Mignon II is a good example of such. Without distinct sections, the music has new melodic phrases set to every two poetic lines and occurs in four-bar phrases, adding regularity to the musical expression within the piece. The piano solo sections in this setting act as an important role in breaking up the text as well. As shown in table 2.4, in addition to the piano introduction and postlude, there is almost always a piano interlude between the melodies, which either acts as an introduction or an ending of a melody. As a result, the piece still manages to become very sectional, but a consistent rhythmic motive in the piano accompaniment throughout helps connect the different phrases together.

**Role of the piano**

The piano plays an important role in all three settings but in three different ways. While the piano of Schumann’s setting acts more as a harmonic support, the piano in Wolf’s setting creates a sense of continuity and is an important carrier of
energy between the poetic lines. Finally, the piano in Tchaikovsky’s setting acts as both an accompaniment and an independent entity.

Throughout Schumann’s setting, the piano accompaniment provides support and gives contrast to the vocal melody, but does not stand out as an independent element. In addition, the piano accompaniment has a consistent rhythmic figure. While the first five measures are almost entirely made up of eighth notes, the accompaniment changes to triplets afterwards and stays this way until the end of the piece. This provides fluidity in the music and contrasts with the relatively static vocal melody. The octaves in the left hand expand the range of the piece in opposition to the narrow-ranged vocal line. In addition to this, the octaves thicken the overall texture. Since the dynamics in the piano duplicates that in the vocal melody, the dramatic effect is magnified and intensified with the support of the piano. The only piano solo section throughout the piece, the piano postlude, proceeds downwards to the lower-register in stepwise motion, adding weight to the music and showing the heavy emotion of “Sehnsucht” (longing) that the speaker is suffering.

The piano part in Tchaikovsky’s setting has two roles: accompaniment to the voice and its identity as a piano solo. The piece begins with a piano prelude, which introduces the first line of the vocal melody. Syncopated chords are played throughout the piece as an accompaniment and they create a driving force behind the lyrical melody. In the interlude of measures 17 to 20, the piano again introduces the vocal melody before the vocalist takes it up. This cements the piano’s important role in connecting the different sections of the piece. In section B, instead of playing simply chords, the piano starts to develop its own line with large interval movements
in half notes. The piano then becomes a major participant in the music at measure 38—it introduces new melodic material and intensifies with ascending octaves in quarter notes to build up to the climax, which carries energy until a measure after the end of the vocal line in that section. In the last section, accompanying the new melody in the voice, the piano presents the material from the introduction again, showing its independent yet supporting role in the music. With the piano playing a counter melody, the separation between the vocal line and piano accompaniment further demonstrates the loneliness evoked in the speaker.

Since Wolf approaches the text naturalistically and keeps the text in its original form, he can only depend on other methods, such as the piano accompaniment, to realize his musical vision of the text. However, instead of writing an elaborate piano part, Wolf gives the piano a simple part with the same rhythmic motive throughout. While the musical form is segmented, the motive builds a sense of continuity and carries the energy throughout the piece. Conversely, the piano not only acts as an accompaniment; its interludes play an important role in connecting different melodic phrases together. Wolf also makes good use of the piano part in terms of harmonic rhythm and progression. For example, from measures 9 to 10, when the vocal line moves downwards chromatically, the chords in the piano accompaniment shift dramatically: from C minor to Ab major to A major to C# minor to C# diminished. Given the chromatic vocal line, the fast harmonic rhythm and shift in chord quality in the piano not only support the voice well, but also keep the intensity of and add color to the music. Therefore, even though there is neither
repetition of the text nor fancy piano accompaniment, Wolf’s setting is full of
variation and is given a distinct color.

Dramatization of emotional state

The three composers have different interpretations of the poem and therefore
the climaxes of the music are at different points in the poem. They use various
techniques to emphasize the climax differently. Schumann makes use of rhythmic
motivic recurrence in expressing the emotion of longing while Tchaikovsky uses the
repetition of text to emphasize the loneliness that is present in the poem. Wolf
attempts to demonstrate the overall sense of unsettledness in the text through
chromaticism and fluid tempo in the music.

Schumann makes use of the same rhythmic pattern for each occurrence of
“Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt” to emphasize its significance. This recurring rhythm
creates a point of reference for the emotion of longing; not only syntactically but also
musically, thus demonstrating the circularity of the poem and the music. This
rhythmic motive appears throughout the music. On the other hand, Schumann
dramatizes lines 9 to 10 by presenting them only once rather than twice. Since the
sentence, “es brennt Mein Eingeweide,” visualizes vividly the speaker’s pain in
longing, this one time musical display of the sentence is an important moment of the
piece; at measure 16, not only do both the voice and piano reach the highest note, but
the contrary motion between the two parts also creates a momentum that illustrates
the twirling “burning” in the speaker’s insides. Schumann attempts to display a sense
of direction in the music in response to the transitive nature of longing by using
anticipation. He also makes use of a long piano postlude, the only piano solo section of the piece, allowing time for both the vocalist and listener to experience the feeling of longing in a musical sense.

Repetition of text is a distinctive feature of Tchaikovsky’s setting as he uses repetition to dramatize the text. The first four lines are repeated at measure 30 and lines 3 to 4, “Allein und abgetrennt von aller Freude,” are repeated once more afterwards, showing the importance of the sentence to the composer and creating a focal point at “Allein.” This obsessive repetition of the line simultaneously isolates it, creating correspondingly the feeling of loneliness. A new melody is introduced in the voice to make it stand out from the rest of the section. Supported by the intensifying piano accompaniment with ascending octaves and fuller chords, the voice reaches its highest note and expresses the speaker’s frustration at being alone and away from happiness. The overall structure of the piece, which is a progression to the climax followed by an epilogue, also helps build a contour in dramatizing the “loneliness” evoked in the poem. The epilogue creates a contrast to the exposed emotion demonstrated in the previous section by displaying a peaceful melody that subtly expresses the inner sadness of the speaker coming from loneliness.

Wolf approaches dramatization in a different manner from Schumann and Tchaikovsky: instead of placing his focus on the specific moments when the text is sung, the length of the piano interlude reflects the time needed to come down from a moment of melodic and emotional tension. After the burning in the speaker at measure 35, the piano interlude lasts for twelve measures, taking a much longer time than the previous ones to reflect and prepare for the next lines. Another feature of
Wolf’s setting is its all-inclusive way of portraying the speaker’s feeling of unsettledness—Wolf looks at the entire poem without focus on specific lines. He also makes use of shifting chord quality and chromatic relationship throughout. For example, in the first four measures, not only do the harmonies shift between minor and major and land on a diminished chord, but the notes in the chord also move chromatically, i.e. C to Db to D and Eb to E to F. This creates an ambiguous tonality and ambience that is similar to the situation and emotional state of the speaker. The elaborated musical expression contributes to this ambiguity and the dramatization of emotion as well, especially through the sudden, frequent changes in tempo.

4. Conclusion

In the previous chapter on settings of *Wandrers Nachtlied II*, all four composers extrapolated the same basic meaning from the poem and diverged only in their musical expression of the meaning. By contrast, the three settings of *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt* considered here interpret the text differently. For Schumann, the core element of the poem is “Sehnsucht,” meaning longing. To convey this emotion, he makes use of motivic recurrence and circularity. For Tchaikovsky, the core element of the poem is loneliness. The repetition of text and overall contour of the music are building up the climax towards “allein” (alone), which forms the heart of the music. On the other hand, Wolf focuses on no specific element of the text but tries to approach it like a musical reading of the text. He makes use of chromaticism and tempo fluidity to address the overall unsettling feeling of Mignon.
Coda

After analyzing the different settings of the two poems, *Wandrers Nachtlied II* and *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt*, I shall conclude this thesis with a description of my experiential perspective as a vocalist. I performed all seven songs in my senior recital as part of this thesis project.30

All four settings of *Wandrers Nachtlied II* have a clear structure and evoke a sense of direction—from the tense anticipation to the final emotional release. In Schubert’s setting, the repetition of “Warte nur, balde / Ruhest du auch” and the fermata at “balde” create tension not only musically, but also physically. From my experience of singing that passage, bodily tension builds up as I sing the long note at the fermata, assisting me in expressing the tense feeling. The piano postlude also escalates the longing for emotional release because I have to hold my breath and stay still until the piano finishes, which represents the true release emotionally and physically.

Without a piano prelude, Hensel’s setting stands out because the voice and piano enter simultaneously and as the vocalist, I have to get into the mood before the music begins, which is different from the other three settings. Also, I can feel the tension generated by the rapid harmonic rhythm in the piano accompaniment even when I am singing a static long note at “Ruh,” which intensifies the anticipation of the eventual.

30 The following first person experiential perspective will be narrated in present tense, instead of the conventional past tense. This is to emphasize the point that the experiential perspective is not merely a singular occurrence, but an *atemporal* feature of the relevant musical settings.
With the fragmented vocal melody for “Warte nur, balde” in Liszt’s setting, as the vocalist, I feel that I am always singing some unfinished phrases, which creates the sense of anticipation—it also gives me no room to breathe and hence generates physical tension in me. In response to the thickening piano texture, I have to sing with more volume and weight, which escalates the feeling of tension.

The tense feeling in Ives’ setting is the subtlest among the four settings. Each individual phrase is easily sung and there is not much build-up of bodily tension. However, the building up of the tension spans the entire song. As the pitch goes up with each phrase, tension slowly increases in a manner similar to the musical contour, aiding me in the expression of the musical intention.

The three settings of *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt* are more emotional and expressive than those of *Wandrers Nachtlied II* due to the nature of the poem. They all try to express different aspects of the poem using different musical techniques.

The feeling of “longing” is the important element that Schumann evokes in his musical setting. Throughout the piece, as the vocalist, I have no rest at all, not even before the second iteration of the text, to take a deep breath. The restlessness in the song keeps me longing for a rest, which mirrors Mignon’s longing for her beloved. However, even when I finish singing, I have to wait until the long piano postlude finishes so that I can release my tension, truly reflecting and making me understand the feeling of longing.

Tchaikovsky, on the other hand, focuses on “loneliness.” Having sung the line, “Allein und abgetrennt von aller Freude,” three times, from the repetitive
reflection of the lyrical meaning, I can feel the alienation, and thus understand the sense of “loneliness” more. This helps me express the emotion better in the last section of the piece because I can relate the feeling of dizziness and burning insides in the text with “loneliness.” The on-going syncopated chords in the piano also accentuate my sense of loneliness because the out-of-sync piano seems to emphasize the seeming isolation and forlornness of my voice.

Wolf attempts to express the overall unsettling emotion evoked in the poem. With the agitated, emotional piano accompaniment, I feel insecure because I cannot even grasp the beat of the music. The combination of unconventional harmonic progression and chromatic vocal line makes it difficult for me to sing accurately, creating uncertainty both in musical expression and in actual performance. The abrupt ending of each vocal phrase also adds to my experience of unease of the piece.

Through the experience of singing the Lieder, I come to understand the musical intention of each setting more and realize the validity of some of the claims I made in the analyses. I believe the performance is thus a good conclusion to my thesis project—a comparative analysis of different musical settings of the same text in the genre of German Lieder.
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