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LOVE, LOSS, AND MEMORY: AN ANALYTIC AND HERMENEUTIC DISCUSSION OF
CLARA SCHUMANN'S *DREI ROMANZEN*, OP. 21

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KRISTINA GRAY
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A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

Dr. Sarah Ellis, Chair

Dr. Michael Lee

Dr. Vivian Luong

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Abstract

One of Clara Wieck-Schumann's last compositions, *Drei Romanzen*, Op. 21 is a set of three romances composed in 1853. The analysis which follows discusses the three romances of Op. 21 through the lens of large-scale ternary form and hermeneutic implications. This thesis begins with analytical discussions of each romance, discussing form, harmonic and phrase structure, and key motivic elements. After my discussion of the individual pieces, I will look at the set as a whole through the lens of large-scale ternary form and the pastoral as an expressive genre which situates their structures, topical, and intertextual hermeneutics.

Following my analysis, I discuss how the topical references to the pastoral, coupled with themes written by Robert Schumann, evoke a sense of retrospectivity and idealization of the past. The ways in which these references are paired with recurring melodic motifs indicates continual return to a memory. Considering Wieck-Schumann's diary entry about feelings of sadness while visiting Robert Schumann in the sanitarium on the day she wrote the first romance, I also interpret elements of Op. 21 as representing her sadness. The interpretation of these elements, combined with introversive and extroversive signifiers culminates in a narrative of lingering romance with Robert Schumann and his works.

Intro & Discussion

History

Clara Schumann, née Wieck, was born on September 13, 1819 to Friedrich Wieck and Marianne Tromlitz¹. Both of her parents were musicians in their own right, with established music careers in Leipzig, where the family resided. Friedrich Wieck was trained in theology and spent his early years as a tutor, but started a music shop and a career as a piano teacher in 1815.² Wieck's marriage to Tromlitz helped his credibility in musical circles since her father was a musician and flute-maker and her grandfather was the Kantor of Plauen.³ Tromlitz also had an active career in music as a soprano soloist and was a skilled pianist, teaching students in both piano and voice. Following Tromlitz and Wieck's divorce, Wieck allowed Clara to live with Tromlitz until her fifth birthday, when she would be returned to him and began piano lessons.⁴

Much of Clara Wieck-Schumann's musical giftedness can be credited to her mother, her training should be largely credited to her father, although it is clear that he should also be credited for creating as much pain in her life as success. He was one of the more prominent teachers in Germany at the time, and gave her a lesson for one hour each day and required her to practice for at least two more hours.⁵ Wieck used his daughter to gain recognition for himself and prove his talent as a teacher. She learned eagerly, becoming a virtuoso and garnering much attention, for which he took credit.

¹ From this point on I will use "Wieck-Schumann" in reference to Clara so as to avoid confusion with her father, Friedrich Wieck, and her husband, Robert Schumann.

² Nancy Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 5-7.

³ Monica Steegmann, *Clara Schumann* (London: Haus Publishing, 2004).

⁴ Litzmann, Berthold, 1857-1926. *Clara Schumann: An Artist's Life, Based on Material Found in Diaries and Letters*. England: England: Macmillan, 1913, 2.

⁵ *Ibid*, 4.

Nancy Reich connects Wieck-Schumann's attachment to music to her tumultuous upbringing and her father's difficult character. He was documented to have behaved abusively towards her brothers, so it can easily be assumed that he behaved in a similar manner towards Marianne before their split.⁶ As will be seen in later years, Clara did not escape being treated in a similar manner by her father. As Reich puts it, her connection to music "was to be a solace from which she could gain relief from pain and tragedy."⁷ Perhaps the clearest evidence of this is seen in his strict supervision of her diary, in which he would freely write whatever he wanted, add notes in the margins, or edit her entries. Reich points out the controlling aspect of this behavior, saying that "...he seemed to be taking over her personal identity."⁸

Friedrich Wieck was initially not exposed to much symphonic literature, mostly consuming music through religious services, choirs, and visiting performers until entering Leipzig's active musical tradition.⁹ Reich notes that this can be traced back to records of music in the city in the thirteenth century, music festivals and events as early as the fifteenth century, the formation of a *collegium musicum* in the seventeenth century, and Bach's employment by the town council in 1723.¹⁰ Clara was exposed to various types of music by her father, who frequently took her to local theater and opera performances.

Improvisational skills greatly aided Clara Wieck-Schumann as a composer. Having been trained with Czerny's "Guide to the Art of Improvisation," she impressed audiences with her ability to extemporize on given themes.¹¹ After seeing how Clara's skills gained her favor with

⁶ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 15.

⁷ *Ibid*, 15.

⁸ *Ibid*, 20.

⁹ *Ibid*, 5-6.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 7.

¹¹ Chissell, *Clara Schumann, A Dedicated Spirit: A Study of Her Life and Work*, 10-11.

audiences and after reaching the limit of his ability to help her with counterpoint and harmony, her father sought out a composition teacher for her. He turned to Christian Theodor Weinlig, who held the same Cantor position at St Thomas's Church once occupied by Bach.¹² Richard Wagner later studied with Weinlig in his teens and praised the increased "clarity and fluency in his own musical reasoning" as a result of the time he spent studying with Weinlig. Clara Wieck-Schumann also benefited greatly from her time with Weinlig. She wrote numerous chorales, miniature fugues, and sets of variations.¹³ Wieck-Schumann had earlier composed a Polonaise in E-flat, and under the tutelage of Weinlig she composed three more. Though generally attractive and neat, they do not show a developed sense of harmonic or melodic invention.

Clara Wieck-Schumann's first solo concert took place on November 8, 1830 at Gewandhaus and was well received by audiences and critics alike.¹⁴ This marks the beginning of her career as a concert pianist, as she would go on to perform for the majority of her life. By performing original works at nearly every concert she gave beginning in 1830, she developed her style as a composer and her writing matured. Her father managed her career for nearly the next decade, until the fracturing of their relationship during the 1839-40 concert season, when she began programming her own performances.¹⁵

Her own compositions were described as possessing qualities of new romanticism, connecting her to young composers such as Chopin, Mendelssohn, and Schumann. Even in pieces composed in her teen years, romanticism could be clearly heard in her works: experimental rhythms, loosening of regular phrase structure, and lyrical middle sections.¹⁶ Wieck

¹² Chissell, *Clara Schumann*, 11.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁴ Steegmann, *Clara Schumann*, 12-3.

¹⁵ David Ferris, "Public Performance and Private Understanding: Clara Wieck's Concerts in Berlin," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 56, no. 2 (August 1, 2003): 351-408.

¹⁶ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 212-14.

was most strongly influenced by Robert Schumann, and their relationship included the exchange of musical ideas which appear in many of their respective works. After her marriage to Robert, Clara followed many of his conventions in her compositions and in the genres she selected, but her musical voice remained unique and her quotations of his works were intentional.¹⁷

Clara's relationship with Robert Schumann began in 1828 when he came to Leipzig to briefly study piano with Wieck, returning more permanently in 1830, when he moved into their house for the next two years.¹⁸ During a period of a few months during which Clara was away for lessons, Robert became engaged to another one of Wieck's students. Clara later admitted in her letters with Robert that this time was hard for her, and she was hurt by his relationship while it lasted. Robert and Clara's relationship began in 1835 and the two endured five years of torment from her father leading up to their marriage in 1840. Clara spent much of those years stuck with her father as he managed her touring career, enduring his frequent criticism of Robert. Due to her father's control of her personal diary and written correspondence with Robert, much of her communication with him was through playing his music, something to which her father did not object.¹⁹

Clara Wieck-Schumann used this time touring with her father to build her career and credibility as a concert pianist, but also found ways to bolster Robert's compositional career. By performing his music, which was often viewed by audiences as too dense, she used her credibility as an interpreter to give audiences insight into his works. She was successful at this because audiences and critics alike viewed her as especially adept at conveying to them Robert's

¹⁷ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 213-14.

¹⁸ Steegmann, *Clara Schumann*, 29.

¹⁹ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 49.

otherwise inaccessible material.²⁰ Reich shows correspondence between Clara and Robert about her choice of pieces to play on concerts and about her choices to play his works, which he trusted to her as a “seasoned performer.”²¹

The majority of Clara Wieck-Schumann’s works are single-movement pieces composed for solo piano, though she also wrote many songs and some chamber works, most notably her Trio, Op. 17. In the first decade of her compositional career, she wrote almost exclusively character pieces and sets of variations for solo piano, with the exception of her Piano Concerto, Op. 7. Beginning in 1840, she began to experiment in more genres, such as lieder and instrumental chamber works in order to separate herself from the image of her youth.²² After Clara’s marriage to Robert Schumann, the two of them spent significant amounts of time studying Bach fugues and string quartets by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, which led to the composition of her Preludes and Fugues.²³

Wieck-Schumann’s last compositional period occurred in May and June of 1853 and includes Op. 20 and 21. In the words of Nancy Reich, these two compositions “bear the imprint of her friendship” with Johannes Brahms.²⁴ Wieck-Schumann’s Op. 20 is a variation on Robert Schumann’s first “Albumblatt” theme from his Op. 99, and Brahms also wrote his own variation on this theme.²⁵ Clara composed the first romance of Op. 21 in 1853 but replaced it with one

²⁰ David Ferris, “Public Performance and Private Understanding,” 351–408.

²¹ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 264.

²² Alexander Stefaniak, “Clara Schumann’s 1840s Compositions and Her Midcentury Persona,” in *Becoming Clara Schumann*, Performance Strategies and Aesthetics in the Culture of the Musical Canon (Indiana University Press, 2021), 148-9.

²³ *Ibid*, 149.

²⁴ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 232.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 232.

composed in 1855. Her friendship with Brahms was influential, and she ultimately dedicated the work to him.²⁶

In her day, Wieck-Schumann's compositions were well regarded by esteemed composers such as Robert Schumann, Mendelssohn, Brahms, and Chopin.²⁷ Even with this respect, Wieck-Schumann was not able to escape the criticism stemming from the expectation that women would remain modest and relegate their music activities to the home, which led her to feeling "less than fully satisfied" about her compositional prowess.²⁸ The differing expectations for male and female composers and performers and pressure of working in a male-dominated space no doubt had an effect on Wieck-Schumann's image of herself and her abilities. Female musicians in the nineteenth century faced significantly harsher critiques than their male counterparts because of societal misogyny, and while the composer-virtuoso environment created a space for male concert pianists to garner fame from virtuosic performances of their own compositions, female pianists were limited to smaller musical forms and limited repertoire which had been gendered as feminine, such as character pieces and other small solo works.²⁹ Wieck-Schumann's primary goal with her compositions was that they satisfied the public so that she could continue to perform them, even if she herself found fault with them.³⁰

Clara Wieck-Schumann, like other female musicians in the nineteenth century, endured critiques of her compositional and performance abilities as well as navigated the ever-changing sociocultural expectations for women. One way in which Wieck-Schumann was able to elicit

²⁶ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 233.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 211.

²⁸ Claudia Macdonald, "Critical Perception and the Woman Composer: The Early Reception of Piano Concertos by Clara Wieck Schumann and Amy Beach," *Current Musicology* 55, no. 55 (1993), 37.

²⁹ Katharine Ellis, "Female Pianists and Their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 50, no. 2/3 (1997): 353–85.

³⁰ Macdonald, "Critical Perception and the Woman Composer," 35-6.

positive reviews of her compositions from critics was through her close adherence to established Classical forms, even while traversing more progressive harmonic territory. *Drei Romanzen*, Op. 21 is one of her last works, and excellently encapsulates the balance between her use of modern techniques of the Romantic Period within the bounds of formal conservatism.

Literature Review

Analytical writing on Clara Wieck-Schumann's piano works is extremely limited. However, though limited, the writings of Julie Pedneault-Deslauriers and Diane Selmon are a beneficial resource for analytical discussion of Wieck-Schumann. Pedneault-Deslauriers has published two articles, one about instrumental works and one about vocal works. In her article, "Bass-Line Melodies and Form in Four Piano and Chamber Works by Clara Wieck-Schumann," Pedneault-Deslauriers examines bass-line structures in several of Wieck-Schumann's instrumental works, noting their consistent descending nature, the frequent use of sequences, and pedal points. Her discussion of pedal points was particularly informative to discussions of Op. 21, as I found direct correlations between her findings about pedal points as an immobilizing factor, creating a dissonant relationship with surrounding voices and my own findings in Op. 21.

Another article by Pedneault-Deslauriers, titled "Beyond Vierhebigkeit: Phrase structure and poetic meaning in three lieder by Clara Schumann," is useful for understanding complexities in Wieck-Schumann's music, despite the "squareness" associated with her phrasing. Pedneault-Deslauriers argues in her article that Wieck-Schumann often staggers the beginnings of the piano and vocal parts, citing a difference in the "intrinsic makeup" of their phrase types, an idea which was useful in my understanding of harmonic and melodic disjunction between the right and left hand in Op. 21 no. 3. In her discussion of the implications of complicating the phrase structure,

Pedneault-Deslauriers argues that “...below the surface, ambiguity simmers,”³¹ a concept which is clearly at work in the three romances of Op. 21.

A dissertation by Diane Selmon, submitted to the Queensland Conservatory at Griffith University in Australia, has been an invaluable resource for my discussion of Wieck-Schumann’s melodies. In her dissertation, Selmon traces many thematic and motivic ideas frequently found in Wieck-Schumann’s compositions, discussing everything from compositional processes to the implications of specific intervals and key schemes. Selmon often supplies information about the context in which certain themes often occur, sometimes supplying interpretive discussion about their meaning based on their context. Her discussion of themes is more descriptive than analytic,³² but it provides a thorough framework for understanding Wieck-Schumann’s recurrent motifs and general musical language.

Much of my interpretive framework is based on the writings of Kofi Agawu, Robert Hatten, and Michael Klein. Agawu’s book, *Playing With Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classical Music* provided me with terminology for discussing the different attributes of music through two types of semiosis: introversive and extroversive. Agawu explores each type of semiosis in detail, providing examples of the “pure” signs of introversive semiosis which are internal to a musical work, as well as discussing topics as examples of extroversive semiosis. Particularly helpful is Agawu’s explanation about the listeners’ involvement in topical analysis. As he describes, when the listener is assumed to be competent in understanding the language of musical discourse, the composer is able to enter into a contract with them.

³¹ Julie Pedneault-Deslauriers, “Beyond Vierhebigkeit: Phrase Structure and Poetic Meaning in Three Lieder by Clara Schumann,” *Music Theory and Analysis* 8, no. 2 (2021): 308.

³² While her discussion of thematic formulae is not extremely analytic, Selmon does provide various case studies which explore certain works in closer analytic detail.

Similar to Agawu's discussion of extroversive semiosis are Michael Klein and Robert Hatten's discussions of intertextuality and levels of discourse, respectively. Klein's book, *Intertextuality in Western Art Music* provides a basis for understanding intertextual elements in music and draws on ideas by Umberto Eco about how codes generate signs. Klein asserts that codes are incomplete on their own, as they are situated within a certain ideology or cultural perspective. This is what Agawu means in his discussion of competence; such a listener is situated in a culture which understands the signs or codes employed by the composer in their work. Klein's discussion of intertextuality as a sign of the uncanny and a repetition compulsion informed my reading of quoted material used by Wieck-Schumann in Op. 21 and its connection to recurring melodic themes.

Hatten's book, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* is also useful for discussing intertextuality, but frames it differently from both Agawu and Klein. Hatten's concept of levels of discourse, which he defines as a sudden shift in the deliberate flow of musical ideas within a specific work, is useful for understanding sudden changes in musical character, often cued by intertextual references. Hatten argues that a quotation of or reference to another work can signal a shift in discourse level, and that using different works, topics, or musical styles to enrich a musical work is an example of intertextuality.

As noted earlier, the *Drei Romanzen*, Op. 21 is a set of three romances composed in 1853 and are one of Wieck-Schumann's last compositional works. In what follows, I look at the three romances of Op. 21 through the lens of large-scale ternary form and hermeneutic implications. I will begin with analytical discussions of each romance, discussing form, harmonic and phrase structure, and key motivic elements. After my discussion of the individual pieces, I will look at

the set as a whole through the lens of large-scale ternary form and the pastoral as an expressive genre which situates their structures, topical, and intertextual hermeneutics.

Op. 21 No. 1

Structural

The first romance in Op. 21 fits what is defined by William Caplin as large ternary form, which consists of three sections, functioning as an exposition, development or contrasting middle section, and recapitulation, as seen in Table 1.³³ As explained by Caplin, this form is often misunderstood as analogous to small ternary form, but there are key differences. The first difference is the return to the home key at the end of the A section. While small ternary forms may modulate to a subordinate key at the end of the A section, large ternary forms always return to the home key, even if they have modulated somewhere during the A section. The A section of Op. 21 no. 1 modulates to the relative major in the second phrase and then features an unstable interior section which does not clearly cadence in any key. However, the return of the opening material immediately returns to the home key and ends with a PAC, situating it as large-ternary form.

Table 1. Form of Op. 21 No. 1

Section		Measures	Key
A	a	1–8	a
	b	9–18	C? d?
	a	18–26	a
B		27–72	F
A'	a	73–80	a
	b	81–90	C? d?
	a	90–104	a
Coda		105–112	a

³³ William Earl Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 211.

The B section of Op. 21 No. 1 adheres to many of the expected norms laid out by Caplin. A secondary theme, which is referred to by Caplin as the “interior theme,” introduces new motivic material as well as changes the accompaniment and texture.³⁴ The interior theme generally changes mode, most commonly to the parallel key, but often to a related key such as the submediant or subdominant. The B section of Op. 21 No. 2 is set in the submediant key, and following a PAC in m. 61, prepares for the return of the main theme with a retransition. A postcadential standing on the dominant begins in m. 64, creating expectation for resolution to the home key in the return of the A section. In a typical postcadential standing on the dominant, Caplin notes that the texture becomes gradually reduced and motives from the main theme or basic idea are reintroduced.³⁵ This occurs in mm. 66-72 of the retransition. After introducing the dominant pedal in m. 64, the left hand disappears completely for almost two measures, seen in fig. 1. This thins out the texture considerably since the left hand has featured either octaves or chords on nearly every beat of the B section up to that point. A transposed version of the main theme occurs twice, in m. 70 and m. 72, seen in fig. 2. The triplet accompaniment pattern from the B section is still present during these measures, but stops during the first statement of the main theme, only to begin again in m. 71. These two processes, textural reduction and reintroduction of the main theme, help the transition initiate the return of the A section.

³⁴ Caplin, *Classical Form*, 213.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 78-79.

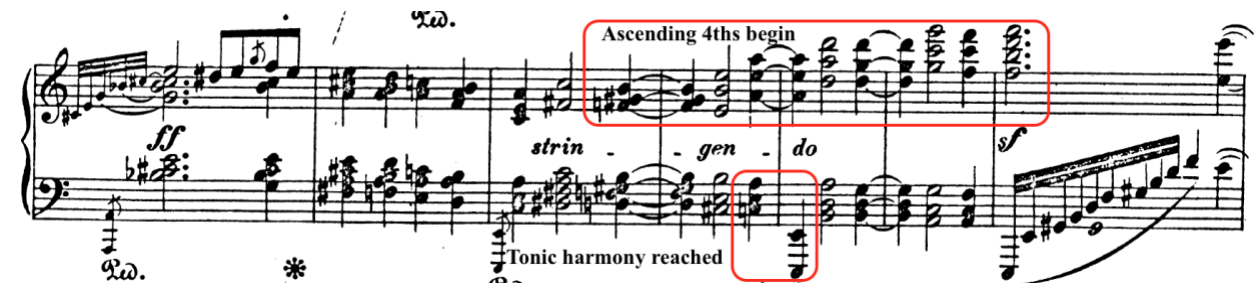
Figure 1. Op. 21, no. 1: Textural reduction, mm. 66-67.



Figure 2. Op. 21, no. 1: Return of main theme, m. 70 & 72.



Figure 3. Op. 21, no. 1: Thematic expansion undermining tonic arrival, mm. 95-101.



Because the A section ended in the tonic key, there is no structural need for any parts of the theme to be transposed to A minor in the A' section. However, at the end of the A' section, the main theme is altered and expanded, leading to a coda. The theme ends on tonic harmony in m. 99, but with a dominant pedal. By the time this occurs, the theme is already being expanded through a series of ascending fourths, seen in fig. 3. Following the eight-measure expansion, the piece concludes with a coda. The coda reiterates material from the theme used throughout the B

section, featuring the same triplet rhythm and similar ascending left hand melodic material.

Wieck-Schumann also includes motivic material from the main theme, creating unity between the two sections.

Harmonic Content

While Wieck-Schumann generally adheres to the established large-ternary structure, she demonstrates compositional finesse in the ways she manipulates harmonic structure. Sections and phrases often begin with somewhat traditional harmonic progressions, but then begin to devolve, often relying on fully-diminished seventh chords for their harmonic makeup. The harmonic dissolve and frequent diminished chords often lead to destabilization of the established mode. Despite the breakdown of harmonic content, the phrase structure throughout the first romance is regular, and the melodic content is cohesive. In addition to the harmonic and phrase structure, the tertiary relationship of the key centers and lack of global dominants suggests circular direction and a mulling over of lingering topic which will be explored in more detail later.

One way Wieck-Schumann creates instability underneath the cohesive melodic structure is through her destabilization of key centers and treatment of cadences. The phrase structure of the A section is somewhat regular, but the undermining of cadential structure creates instability beneath the seemingly neat surface-level structure. While the first two phrases created a standard structure, the adherence to defined norms outlined in the opening period does not last. Wieck-Schumann begins to pull apart the harmonic fabric of the romance throughout the b section. Beginning in m. 9, the tonicization of C major is immediately destabilized with an F minor triad, which undermines the shift to the major mode since it is borrowed from the parallel minor key. The iv is followed by a ii^{o6}₅, again borrowed from the parallel minor key, but it resolves to a

first-inversion C major chord instead of a dominant harmony. Though the tonal center remains C, the mode is ambiguous.

As if the shift to C minor was not successful, Wieck-Schumann next suggests D minor with C#'s resolving to D's. However, the cadential evidence is weak as D minor is confirmed through a contrapuntal cadence. There is no 5-1 bass motion in mm. 11-12, which features a first inversion A⁷ chord resolving to a root position D minor triad. The main theme also returns in m. 11, now in D minor. Just as the C major key did not remain, Wieck-Schumann quickly shifts away from D minor following the cadence. The D minor triad transforms into a B half-diminished seventh chord through the addition of the B, and this harmony is prolonged for the next two measures, which is the longest any one harmony has been prolonged so far in the piece. Another contrapuntal cadence occurs from m. 16 to the first beat of m. 17, but again, this is immediately destabilized by the bass moving from D to B on b. 2, suggesting the B half-diminished harmony heard earlier. This section toggles between C and D key centers through the presence of B half-diminished, a dominant-function chord in C, and A major, a dominant-function chord in D, creating uncertainty about the key center in a similar manner to the aforementioned modal destabilization.

A particularly interesting example of Wieck-Schumann's cadential treatment occurs in mm. 17-18, shown in fig. 4. Especially in retrospect, this sounds like a cadence, but not because of its harmonic closure. As the b section reaches its end, the tonal center and the key in which it cadences is unclear. As noted, contrapuntal cadences from A⁶₅ to D minor, first in mm. 11-12 and again in mm. 16-17 suggest D as tonic, but that does not account for how the entire section closes in mm. 17-18. The bass motion is not 5-1, and the harmonies are hard to parse. While m. 17 begins with D minor, the bass note changes to B, creating a B half-diminished chord which

does not resolve to C, but to G#. The quarter notes in the left hand could be seen as outlining a ii⁷-V⁶-i progression in A minor, but the right hand eighth notes destabilize those harmonies. The end of m. 17 clearly references the opening theme in the right hand; the same D#-E eighth notes occur on the third beat, but the G-F-E descent from m. 1 is replaced by G# and F#. This figure blurs the harmonies implied in the left hand, creating an untidy end to the phrase. The placement of this motif within the bar is consistent with its earlier uses, but its occurrence at the end of a phrase is unusual, and the G#-B-F# chord in m.18 fails to indicate where this section has led harmonically.

Figure 4. Op. 21, no. 1, cadence, mm. 17-18.

Despite the missing harmonic content of this cadence, the rhetorical content remains. In his discussion on cadential gestures in Beethoven piano sonatas, Patrick McCreless describes how Beethoven's cadential gestures often end softly with decrescendos marked over descending arpeggios, with the music disappearing into the depths.³⁶ Wieck-Schumann uses a similar tactic

³⁶ Patrick McCreless, "Anatomy of a Gesture: From Davidovsky to Chopin and Back," in *Approaches to Meaning in Music* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2006), 17-9.

in the formation of this cadence. The drop in register of the altered opening motif in m. 17 suggests the music is moving towards a cadence point. In addition to the drop in register, the *dim.* marking and the rolled chord gesture provide a signal of closure. Thus, despite the lack of harmonic content, the rhetorical content of the cadence remains. Especially in retrospect, this sounds like a cadence because of the return of the main theme directly following the rolled chord on the downbeat of m. 18, but the cadence is rhetorical rather than harmonic. Despite the ambiguity of harmonic content, I argue that the gesture of a cadence is evident in 17-18.

The b section's failure to successfully cadence and the return of the opening theme is particularly interesting, especially considering the ways in which Wieck-Schumann alters the return of material from the opening section. The restatement of the opening theme begins in m. 19 and exactly repeats mm. 1-2, but then she expands the chords to span octaves and tenths by lowering the bass notes an octave. The necessity for many pianists to roll the tenths in m. 21 places more emphasis on these chords suggesting that she wanted to highlight this moment in the work, which I will argue later conveys the sorrowful love associated with the fourth motif in minor keys.

The B section does not adhere to the same ternary structure as the A section, and features melodic content based on Robert Schumann's *Kinderszenen*, Op. 15, which will be discussed in detail later. The first eight measures twice present its theme. After the theme devolves, it becomes increasingly fragmented over the next 16 measures. The theme completely restarts in m. 51, but its second occurrence is truncated. Wieck-Schumann then abandons the *Kinderszenen* motif for much of the second half of the B section, instead using descending chromatic material to lead to its first cadence in m. 51. The B section does not reach a clear point of closure. The first attempt at the theme devolves until it is completely restarted, and then the second attempt at

the theme begins to disintegrate with chromatic material in m. 56-57. This dissolution of the theme makes space for the first cadence of the B section in m. 60-61, followed by a standing on the dominant.

The devolving nature of the B section can be understood through the structural lens of expanded sentence structure. This idea is discussed by Julie Pedneault-Deslauriers in her articles on phrase construction in Wieck-Schumann's lieder. Pedneault-Deslauriers examines the apparent regularity in Wieck-Schumann's phrases, noting times when she uses compound theme types and expansions of compound themes to create ambiguity in intrathematic structure.³⁷ In the B section of op. 21 no. 1, Wieck-Schumann maintains a regular phrase structure by expanding a compound sentence structure, but the surface deterioration of the theme and harmonic instability undercuts the stability of the sentence structure.

The compound sentence structure begins with two regular, four-bar phrases which comprise the compound basic idea and its repetition. The basic idea is the Kinderszenen motif seen in mm. 27–28 and again in 31–32, which are each followed by the contrasting idea, not derived from the Kinderszenen motif. The Kinderszenen motif begins to fragment in m. 35, where it is reduced to only the rising sixth without completing the descent heard earlier. The two-measure units of fragmentation continue until what should be the end of the compound sentence, but instead of cadencing, the fragmented theme repeats again, now with the ascent following the lower-neighbor figure inverted. The inverted fragments of the theme begin an eight-measure expansion of the compound sentence and lead to a series of ascending dominant seventh chords, which function as a transition to the restart of the theme.

³⁷ Pedneault-Deslauriers, "Beyond Vierhebigkeit," 307–27.

The B section is perhaps the best example of the instability found in Op. 21 no. 1. The phrase structure begins with regular, four-bar phrases, but after the first two phrases breaks down into smaller units paired with fragmented portions of the melody. Wieck-Schumann also destabilizes the rhythm in the B section by pairing eighth-note triplets in the right hand with quarter-note triplets and quintuplets, creating disjunction between the hands. The mode and key is constantly in flux due to enharmonically spelled chords which alternate resolving to F major and D minor. In addition, the majority of the B section does not contain any clear cadences. Though it fragments, the melodic content is unified, which creates a sense of surface stability despite the breakdown of harmonic content, cadences, and rhythm.

Underneath the surface of smooth voice leading in the B section, the tonic is unclear, but the melodic content is consistent, even as it devolves. This constant alternation between minor and major creates a sense of unease, but despite frequently destabilizing the key centers, Wieck-Schumann maintains a somewhat tight-knit melodic structure. Even as the theme devolves, its fragments are still recognizable portions and inversions of the Kinderszenen motif and its combination with the lower-neighbor figure. This structure allows for a sense of motivic stability and unity above an increasingly unstable harmonic landscape.

While the B section clearly begins in F major, Wieck-Schumann consistently destabilizes the mode by suggesting its relative minor. The first phrase ends with a half cadence in F and then the theme restarts, but the second phrase modulates to D minor, the submediant of the newly-established F major home key. This toggling between modes is facilitated through enharmonic spelling of pitches. In the first phrase, D-flats appear and resolve down to C. This does not initially seem indicative of a modulation to D minor, but then the D-flats are respelled as C#'s in the following phrase and resolve up to D. The addition of the potential leading tone to the

relative minor creates uncertainty from the beginning regarding the stability of both mode and key.

In many ways, the cadential structure of the B section is even more unstable than the A section. After one cadence at the end of the first phrase in m. 30, the theme continues on for 20 measures with no clear cadences. The theme becomes increasingly fragmented, and Wieck-Schumann uses a series of dominant–seventh chords to lead to a restart of the theme in m. 51. As I will discuss later, even this arrival point is destabilized, and the second statement of the theme is shortened compared to the first. After quickly wrapping up the second attempt of this theme with a PAC in F, a lengthy standing on the dominant leads back to the return of the A section.

Much like seen in the structure of the A section, the theme restarts in the B section following a loss of harmonic stability, but when the theme restarts, the harmonies supporting it remain unstable. The theme is supported by a first-inversion tonic chord in m. 51 rather than the root position tonic used at the beginning of the B section. The subsequent harmonies are also less stable than the first statement of the theme. The tonic pedal heard in the first statement of the *Kinderzsenen* motif is replaced by an ascending chromatic bassline, and the rising left-hand arpeggio is no longer present and is replaced with weightier octaves and tenths. This parallels the scheme used in the return of opening material in the A section, which features similar treatment of the left hand.

In addition to using unstable harmonies in the B section, Wieck-Schumann creates unease through the rhythm. As shown in fig. 5, the groups of four eighth-note triplets in the right hand are paired with five ascending notes, causing only the first beat to align. The sense of beat is also dislocated in m. 41-42, where half note triplets in the left hand and tied eighth-note triplets create a brief triple pulse.

Figure 5. Op. 21 no. 1, left hand rhythms, mm. 39-41.



To summarize, the structural elements of Op. 21 no. 1 contribute to an overall sense of instability while adhering to many formal norms. Wieck-Schumann manipulates harmonic formulas and strips cadences of harmonic content, all while maintaining the rhetoric of normal phrase and melodic structure. Sections and phrases have clear beginning points, but especially in the B section, the next section or phrase restarts without the previous one reaching a point of closure or cadence.

Melodic Content

Many elements of the melodic content of the first romance should be discussed in detail because of their recurrence in the two pieces that follow and due to their interpretive potential. Diane Selmon has discussed many of Wieck-Schumann's melodic tendencies, both in her lieder and also in her instrumental works, and many of those recurring figures and tendencies occur throughout Op. 21. Two melodic ideas are most important: the lower-neighbor 5-#4-5 motif, seen in fig. 6, and the rising sixth motif. These two motifs recur in all three romances, and form the basis for much of the interpretation I will provide later. The lower-neighbor figure occurs throughout the romance, even in the contrasting B section, while the rising sixth Kinderszenen motif is relegated to the B section.

Figure 6. Op. 21 no. 1, primary theme.



The second theme in Op. 21 no. 1, shown in fig. 7, is based on a theme by Robert Schumann, and will be referred to here as the “Kinderszenen” motif. Selmon asserts that this motif was favored by Robert Schumann and appeared in many of his works relating to childhood, most notably Op. 15, *Kinderszenen (Scenes of Childhood)*.³⁸ The motif consists of a rising major or minor sixth which is followed by two or three descending pitches.³⁹ In Schumann’s *Kinderszenen*, Op. 15, the motif appears frequently, see fig. 7, and because of its name and connection to themes of childhood, the theme suggests a recollection of the past or desire for childlike wonder in current circumstances. Wieck-Schumann uses this theme throughout the B section of Op. 21 No. 1, and pairs it with her own lower-neighbor theme introduced earlier in the piece.

³⁸ Selmon, “The ‘Inner Voice,’” 103.

³⁹ Ibid.

Figure 7. Robert Schumann, Op. 15 no. 1 and Op. 15 no. 4, ‘Kinderszenen’ motifs compared to Wieck-Schumann’s Op. 21 no. 1.



At the beginning of the B section, Wieck-Schumann overlaps the lower-neighbor and rising sixth motifs mentioned earlier. The initial 5–#4–5 figure, now transposed to F major, overlaps with the first statement of the rising sixth or “Kinderszenen” motif. The final C of the lower-neighbor figure is the first note of the ascending sixth of the “Kinderszenen” motif. A portion of these combined motifs are repeated in m. 35, there transposed to D minor. Following the ascending sixth in m. 35, the melody fails to descend in the same way it did earlier. It stays on the same pitch and then the theme repeats again in mm. 37-38, transposed up a semitone. This restatement also fails to descend following the initial ascending sixth.

After establishing a key other than F, Wieck-Schumann attempts the Kinderszenen motif three times, supported by D minor, E-flat major, and C minor harmonies, but each one fails to descend following the rising sixth gesture, and the last one only manages to ascend a fifth. The ascending major sixth from m. 27 is inverted to a descending minor third in m. 43, which is then followed by a descending step for the first time since m. 32. Following the inversion of the Kinderszenen motif, the melodic content becomes more and more fragmented, and Wieck-Schumann uses an ascending stepwise series of dominant seventh chords to lead to a restart of the theme in m. 51.

The return of the A section exactly repeats the opening A section until m. 90. Here, the ambiguous cadence ends with a *sforzando* rather than diminuendo, and when the primary theme returns, the dynamic marking is *forte*. Wieck-Schumann uses two quarter-note pickups instead of

one half note. The reason for this seems to be twofold. The first is that they are a conscious rhetorical device used to add emphasis. The second is that writing two quarter notes enables the pianist to crescendo through the pickup notes into the next bar, arriving at a *forte* dynamic marking on the downbeat of m. 90 more musically than would be possible with one half note. This same idea can be applied to the thirty-second-note run leading to the downbeat of m. 95.

The coda begins with the same melody from the opening of the piece, which has been slightly altered to prolong tonic harmony and remain more static than it did in the opening measures of the piece. The lower-neighbor figure remains, but Wieck-Schumann removed the descent to the G#-B which begs for resolution and replaced it with a descending tonic arpeggiation. To this melody, Wieck-Schumann adds right-hand arpeggiated triplet figures. This recalls the texture of the B section, now combined with melodic material from the initial theme. The ascending quarter-note quintuplet figures, seen in an inner voice in the opening few phrases of the B section, are referenced in m. 106 and m. 108. This figure outlines F⁷ harmony in m. 108, but the E-flat is respelled as a D# and resolves up to the E4 in the right hand. Though aurally the D# creates the dominant-seventh chord, its resolution ensures its connection to the 5-#4-5 figure. This figure, which began in the upper voice in the first three measures of the coda, continues to switch voices and move down an octave every two measures. In the final statement of the figure, the resolution of the D# is delayed by a quarter rest between it and the E. This is the longest duration the #4 has been left unresolved for the entire piece, lingering on the instability of the tritone created between it and the A in the bass.

In summary, Op. 21 no. 1 adheres to Caplin's definition of large-ternary form, but Wieck-Schumann manipulates the standard form through manipulation of harmonic structure and cadences. The mode is constantly in flux, shifting between key centers with fully-diminished

seventh chords and clear cadences are rare. Throughout the romance, sections have clear starting points, but they often fail to reach conclusion and new sections restart suddenly after a previous section devolves. However, to maintain a sense of surface unity, Wieck-Schumann maintains consistent phrase structure and uses cohesive melodic content to unify the piece, much of which is based on the same 5-#4-5 figure and Kinderszenen motif.

Op. 21 No. 2

Structural

While the first and third romances share similar formal structures, key relationships, and thematic content, the second romance stands out as different. Rather than following the ternary form outlined in the other romances, Wieck-Schumann wrote Op. 21 No. 2 as what can be described as a continuous variation. Though not a true continuous variation form, this romance features thematic recurrence which is reminiscent of variation forms. Viewing this romance through the lens of continuous variation form helps give structure to the relatively through-composed work. The winding linear passages of the first and third romances are nonexistent and the texture relies on vertical sixteenth-note chords, which are used throughout. The melodic content is based on one motivic idea which undergoes various transpositions, features imitation, and breaks down into smaller cells to extend phrases, shown in table 2. As I argue later, one could discuss the entirety of Op. 21 as a large-scale ternary form, of which this would be the contrasting middle section.

Table 2. Statements of *Wiegenliedchen* theme in Op. 21 no. 2

Sections	Measures	Key
Theme	1–9	F
Theme	9–13	d
Link	14–20	d? C?
Theme	20–24	C
Fragmentation	25–47	g? c?
Cadential Progression	48–53	F
Coda	54–64	F

The unusual form of Op. 21 no. 2 leads to irregular phrase lengths, which contrasts the neat structure of the first romance. These irregular phrases are joined with unstable harmonies and statements of the theme in various keys, which make the key center and mode ambiguous for much of the middle section of the piece. The rhythm and harmonies break down throughout mm. 25-47, but the use of a pedal point, which is initially incongruous with the surrounding harmonies, leads back to F major by force, not through functional tonality.

Harmonic Content

The harmonic content of Op. 21 no. 2 which supports complete statements of the theme is somewhat stable. The first three key areas are clearly defined, and each contain complete statements of the theme in the tonic, submediant, and dominant keys areas. In what follows, Wieck-Schumann breaks down the variation form through melodic fragmentation, irregular phrase lengths, non-functional harmonies, and rhythmic destabilization. After a return to the tonic key, the coda restates the complete theme and references melodic material from the coda of the first romance.

The reference to continuous variation form, coupled with irregular phrase lengths and a consistent, unbroken rhythmic pulse, helps the music maintain an unrelenting quality. The key centers are somewhat stable throughout the first third of the piece, moving to the submediant and the dominant, but the latter parts are noticeably less functional. The first two phrases complete the theme in F major, but then modulate to the submediant. The submediant modulates to the dominant and a complete statement of the theme occurs, but then the harmonies become harder to parse. The eighth-sixteenth note figure used to extend phrases leads to a circle of fifths sequence, but that sequence does not lead to or establish a clear key center. The remainder of the

variations fail to clearly establish a tonal center before the coda begins and the theme restarts in F major.

The first two phrases begin almost identically and conclude by alternating scale-degrees four and three in the melody before beginning to resolve. After moving down from scale degree four to two, the theme again restarts before it can return to the tonic, seen in fig. 8. In m. 9, a statement of the theme begins in D minor. The third measure of each of the previous phrases has featured prolongation of the subdominant, and this phrase does the same. The prolongation of the subdominant, G minor, lasts for an extra bar, completing a four-bar phrase. After these three opening phrases which are all a normal length, the phrase length begins to vary, first initiated by an eighth-sixteenth rhythmic figure which is to extend phrases throughout the rest of the romance.

Figure 8. Op. 21 no. 2, phrase endings.



After the three regular, four-bar phrases, Wieck-Schumann inserts a seven-bar link which modulates to C major. This link introduces a new rhythmic figure, an accented eighth-sixteenth figure, shown in fig. 9. This occurs twice in the first four bars of the link, but then occurs on the downbeat of the last three measures in a row. This rhythmic figure is also used to extend the following phrase. After the initial seven bar link, the opening theme restarts in C major. This time, the left hand holds an octave G instead of matching the rhythm of the right hand as seen in

the opening measures. The phrase is extended with the aforementioned eighth-sixteenth figure, creating another seven-bar phrase.

Figure 9. Op. 21 no. 2, accented eighth note phrase-extending figure.



The harmonic content remains relatively stable and key areas are relatively discernable until the end of the fourth complete statement of the theme which occurs in C major in mm. 20–24. After this, another three-bar link creates a seven-bar phrase which leads to a circle of fifths sequence and melodic imitation between the right and left hands. This passage is the first extended period of harmonic ambiguity and after this passage, the harmonies continue to devolve until the cadential progression in the phrase before the coda. This passage alternates third inversion dominant seventh chords and first inversion triads transposed down in an alternating pattern of half and whole steps. The melodic content is a five-note figure which arpeggiates each dominant seventh chord and then descends two steps. This melody starts in the right hand and is then passed between to the left hand. This figure appears four times, moving down Ab–G–F–E, shown in fig. 10. The five-note figure starts on D in m. 31 but is extended to seven notes. The original arpeggiated motif shifts to begin on the downbeat and two pickup notes are inserted in the previous bar. The left hand repeats the same figure, also starting on D, but the pickup notes overlap with the last three notes of the right hand.

Figure 10. Op. 21 no. 2, mm. 28-35. melodic imitation and circle of fifths sequence.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Op. 21 no. 2, mm. 28-35. The first system (mm. 28-31) shows a melodic imitation between the right and left hands. Red boxes highlight the original melody in the right hand and its imitations in the left hand. The second system (mm. 32-35) features a circle of fifths sequence in the right hand, with red boxes highlighting the descending line of chords. The left hand continues with a melodic line, and a *cresc.* marking is present above the staff.

Following the passage of melodic imitation in mm. 28-34, Wieck-Schumann destabilizes both the harmonic and rhythmic structure. The original melody also becomes increasingly fragmented beginning in m. 34, and the most complete statement of the theme only uses six of the original eight pitches. It seems as though the music is moving towards a possible cadence in D minor in m. 36, but the A^7 resolves to B-flat major. Then an $F\#\text{m}^7$ chord suggests an attempt at a G minor cadence, and the right hand does resolve to a G minor chord, but the bass motion moves from C–D, which distorts the feeling of arrival. The second half of m. 38 becomes a D major chord, and in the following measure the bass resolves from D–G indicating cadential motion, but an accented passing tone C in the melody and $F\#$ in the left hand undermine the cadence. Another reason this does not function as a point of arrival is due to the accented eighth-sixteenth rhythmic figure. This figure was used as a tool for extending phrases earlier in the piece, so its recurrence here warrants a similar interpretation.

Pedal

A left-hand pedal begins in m. 40 on C and continues until m. 44, seen in fig. 11. The key center has not been clearly defined since a statement of the theme occurred in C major at m. 20, so the function of this pedal is initially unclear. Since pedals are historically I or V and the next cadence that occurs is a PAC in F, this C can retrospectively be interpreted as a dominant pedal, yet the harmonies occurring above the C pedal do not indicate a return to F major, but continue to emphasize G minor as the previous measures did. Wieck-Schumann destabilizes the rhythm in mm. 41-44 by syncopation across the bar line. This is the first time that there has been no note sounding in either hand on a downbeat. In addition to this rhythmic instability, the D–Gm figure is transposed up a step to E⁷–Am, initially sounding as if it will continue to ascend by step sequentially. However, the repeated ascending figure does not lead to any arrival point and the dominant pedal is abandoned in m. 44.

Figure 11. Op. 21 no. 2, mm. 40-47: pedal point and rhythmic destabilization.

The image displays a musical score for Op. 21 no. 2, measures 40-47. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems of staves. The first system covers measures 40-43, and the second system covers measures 44-47. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or G minor). The time signature is 3/4. The left hand features a prominent pedal point on the C note (middle C) starting in measure 40 and continuing through measure 44. The right hand plays a melodic line with syncopated rhythms, often crossing bar lines. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is present in measure 40. The score illustrates the transition from a dominant pedal point to a more complex harmonic and rhythmic structure, culminating in the abandonment of the pedal point in measure 44.

The use of the C pedal is interesting in this context because of its lack of clear function. Pedals are typically a technique used for harmonic prolongation, but the harmonies occurring over this pedal are not indicative of that. Retrospectively, this can be heard as a dominant pedal to the upcoming reestablishment of the F major tonic, but in the moment this function is unclear. The pedal is used more to counter the impression of open-endedness that the brief ascending sequence and syncopated rhythm creates. In addition to being a point of stasis, the pedal creates tension with the local harmonies occurring above it.⁴⁰ Thus this pedal provides the typical syntactic element of stability assumed of pedals and counters the rhythmic and harmonic destabilization happening above it, but also rubs against the local harmonic progressions.

Melodic Content

Robert Schumann Theme

The theme for Wieck-Schumann's Romance Op. 21 No. 2 is based on a quotation of the melody from one of Robert Schumann's works. Selmon argues the theme from Schumann's *Wiegenliedchen* (the little cradle song) Op. 124 No. 6 is the same theme Wieck-Schumann uses, transposed down a step, see fig. 12a and 12b.⁴¹ This is the second reference to themes of childhood in Op. 21; the first was the use of the "Kinderszenen" motif in the first romance. The *Wiegenliedchen* theme bears resemblance to the "Kinderszenen" motif. The rising sixth seen in that motif is outlined by this theme, with an additional pitch inserted between the outer notes of the sixth, creating a first inversion tonic triad.

⁴⁰Pedneault-Deslauriers, "Bass-Line Melodies and Form in Four Piano and Chamber Works by Clara Wieck-Schumann," 146.

⁴¹Selmon, *The 'Inner Voice'*, 310–11.

Figure 12a. Op. 21 no. 2, *Wiegenliedchen* quotation.

Allegretto. Sehr zart zu spielen.

p

pp

Red.

*

Figure 12b. Schumann op. 124 no. 6, *Wiegenliedchen* theme.

Nicht schnell.

p

Wieck-Schumann alters the *Wiegenliedchen* motif in two ways. First, she shifts the start of the theme to the middle of the bar, causing the first two notes to lead to the highest pitch of the phrase. This moves the arrival of the ascending sixth to the downbeat of the second bar rather than the middle of the first. Second, she alters the end of the motif to avoid a clear phrase ending and cadence point. This manipulation of the motif is crucial to the continuous variation form. The first phrase ends with a half cadence in the downbeat of m. 5. Since the theme which follows begins supported by tonic harmony, the V⁷ chord could be heard as resolving to the tonic in the second beat of m. 5, but the restart of the theme halfway through the bar undermines this. In other words, the harmonic content sounds as if it resolves, but the melody restarts at the point of harmonic resolution, creating elision.

b6–5 Theme

A seven-bar coda begins on the fourth eighth note of m. 57, and features a motif which also occurred in the coda of the first romance. In this romance, the coda begins with the same C which was seen leading from m. 55 into m. 56, but the melody descends chromatically instead of alternating as the ends of previous phrases have done. After the two-bar chromatic descent, Wieck-Schumann alternates I and vii^{o7} harmonies. This is not an uncommon practice for a coda, but the interesting part is the use of b6–5 in the left hand. As Selmon points out, “One of the most favoured motifs from her earliest works onwards is the b6–5 scale-degree motif, found in both major and minor keys.”⁴² While the b6–5 could have been placed somewhere in the right hand chords, Wieck-Schumann chose to expose it by writing it as a single moving note in the upper part of the left hand, see fig. 13. This motif also traverses three octaves as the left hand crosses over the right hand. The final iteration of this motif is higher than the chords in the right

⁴² Selmon, ‘The inner voice,’ 68.

these elements create instability, the consistent vertical texture, sixteenth-note rhythms occurring on each beat of every measure, and melodic content all based on the same theme create the perception of overall unity.

Op. 21 No. 3

Form

The third romance, like the first, is a large-ternary form. As is the norm of the large-ternary form, the opening section concludes in the same key in which it began, even though it modulates in the middle of the section. Similar to the first romance, the b section modulates to the relative major, but then cannot maintain the major mode and slips to the subdominant. The B section initially modulates to the parallel major, but then also cannot maintain the major mode and modulates to its mediant key, B minor. The return of the A section is nearly identical to the opening, with the only difference being the final eight measures. These measures at the end of the A section prolonged dominant function harmonies, while in the A' section they prolong the tonic.

Table 3. Form of Op. 21 no. 3

Section		Measures	Key
A	a	1–28	g
	b	29–72	B ^b d
	a	73–108	g
B		110–162	G? b
A'	a'	163–191	g
	b	192–233	B ^b d
	a''	234–282	g

Modal collapse is a consistent feature of Op. 21 no. 3. The first modulation is to the mediant, but the ^bIII key center does not last and fails to maintain the major mode. The following modulation to the minor dominant occurring after the modulation to ^bIII presents the possibility

of interpreting a stronger tertiary relationship between B^b major and D minor than between G and D minor. These two key centers, B^b major and D minor are connected via nearly identical melodic and harmonic content, whereas the original G minor section is only connected to D minor through texture. Another instance of modal collapse occurs in the B section, which begins in G minor but destabilizes the mode in the second measure by tonicizing E minor, followed by a modulation to the mediant by the beginning of the third phrase.

Harmonic Content

Throughout the opening section, recurring devices which Wieck-Schumann uses to create instability are evident. Wieck-Schumann's pulling apart of cadences, originally heard in the first romance, has evolved to the point of complete avoidance of cadences altogether. In addition to avoiding clear cadences, the implied cadences often have harmonies which are unrelated, further blurring the lines of the already unclear cadence points. The harmonic content is not the only factor destabilizing the cadences; the completion of melodic material is often out of sync with the harmonic motion. The final destabilizing factor is the rhythm, which continues with sixteenth notes from the very beginning, creating a sense of perpetual motion, even at moments of harmonic or melodic completion.

The weakened cadences occur when dominant harmonies seemingly resolve to tonic ones, but one or both harmonies are often inverted. This can be seen in the first phrase, which ends with a V⁶ chord resolving to a root position tonic, but the melodic content restarts with the D–D octave pickups to m. 5 before the V⁶ is heard as leading to i. Thus, the second phrase begins melodically without the tonic being heard as an arrival point for the previous phrase. The second phrase repeats the first, and the V⁶ at its end also does not resolve. The third phrase briefly tonicizes the subdominant, followed by an exact repeat in the tonic key.

Figure 15. Op. 21 no. 3, mm. 1-5.

The image shows a musical score for the first five measures of Op. 21 no. 3. The tempo is marked 'Agitato.' and the dynamic is 'p'. The score is in 3/8 time. The right hand part features a melodic line with a 'Melodic Restart' circled in red. The left hand part provides harmonic support with chords labeled V⁶ and i.

While the opening phrases feature cadential instability, they remain tonally stable on a broader scale. It is not until m. 21 that Wieck-Schumann begins to harmonically and metrically destabilize the a section, as she sets up the move to the b section. The introduction of a hemiola pattern and descending fifths sequence begins to break down the harmonic and metric integrity, enabling the modulation. Although the descending fifths sequence ends on an F⁷ harmony and the next theme begins in B^b, these two chords are separated by three measures of chromatic transitional material, avoiding a clear cadence in B^b.

While Wieck-Schumann uses a B^b pedal in the first ten measures of the b section to suggest a mediant key relationship and create a sense of stability, there is a lack of clear harmonic function. The B^b key center is implied through the pedal, but it supports a series of fully-diminished seventh chords which fail to clearly suggest B^b as tonic on their own. The theme begins in m. 37 the same way it did in m. 29, but after the first two measures, the B^b pedal ends and A^{o7} is replaced with A⁷ to modulate to D minor. Similar to the a section, melodic and harmonic completion is out of sync. While the end of each of these eight-measure sections contains a vii^{o7} resolving to their respective tonic chords, the melody is not completed at the point of harmonic resolution, as seen in fig. 16. This undermines the sense of cadence since the melody has yet to descend when the tonic chord is reached. The melody descends, unsupported by the left hand before restarting.

Figure 16. Op. 21, no. 3, mm. 42-44, harmonic cadence and melodic resolution disjunction.

The image shows a musical score for three staves. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with a long slur over it. The middle staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with a slur and fingerings 1, 2, 3. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line. Below the bottom staff, the chord symbols $vii^{\circ 7}$ and i are written. The score illustrates a harmonic cadence and melodic resolution disjunction.

The tonality remains in D minor upon the return of material of the a section in m. 45. Despite the return to D minor, the instability of cadences and disjunct between melodic and harmonic completion remains. The consistent sixteenths return to the right hand, but the melody is not the same as the opening phrases. This altered melody features two repeated four-measure units, transposed by a step. The harmonies in each phrase are repeated, but the first phrase ends on a C augmented triad where A minor is expected. After the bass note of the E^4_2 moves up a step to C, the $G\#$ from the previous chord remains, creating an augmented triad instead of the expected first-inversion A minor triad. The $G\#$ resolves up to A in the next measure, creating the anticipated i^6 , but by then, the melody has already restarted in G minor, creating elision between the harmonic content of the first phrase and the melodic content of the second, see mm. 49-50 in fig. 17.

Figure 17. Op. 21 no. 3, mm. 42-53.

Wieck-Schumann uses the final two chords from each of the aforementioned two phrases to create the harmonic content of mm. 54-57. The $V^4_2-i^6$ progression from the end of the earlier 2-5-1 progressions is repeated in A^b minor and A minor. A similar progression of $V^4_2-i^6$ chords occurred in the second romance during the circle of fifths sequence in mm. 27-34, which initiated a lengthy section of harmonic instability. In the third romance, the last phrase before the transition back to the primary theme is extended with a failed attempt at a cadence. In a similar manner to mm. 49-50, the bass note from the $C\#^{o7}$ chord in m. 58 resolves to D, but with the other pitches it creates a second-inversion G minor triad instead of D major. The $C\#^{o7}$ is repeated in m. 60 and this time resolves to D major.

The A section does not end with a PAC, but rather with a prolongation of dominant-function harmonies, much like heard at the end of the b section. Wieck-Schumann does not convincingly resolve the dominant-seventh arpeggiation, shown in fig. 18, but after the lengthy prolongation of the dominant suddenly begins the parallel sixths which will continue in the B section. The first D-B sixth suggests G major harmony because of the B-natural, but the root of

the chord is missing, which hinders this being heard as a clear cadence. Even though the first beat of m. 109 could be understood as the resolution point of what comes before, I argue that this reading does not accurately assess the change in rhetoric between m. 108 and m. 109. The extreme drop in register, slowing of the rhythm, and change of texture suggests a shift in discourse. This is confirmed by the start of the next section, which contains the same texture in the right hand as m. 109. Thus, the final measure of the A section functions more as an anacrusis to the next section than as tonal closure for the former due to the lack of cadential bass motion and the extreme shift in discourse.⁴³

Figure 18. Op. 21 no. 3, mm. 106-109.



Following a three-measure prolongation of D⁷, the B section begins in the parallel major. Throughout this section, Wieck-Schumann destabilizes the key centers as she has throughout all three romances. The B section follows a ternary structure; the first 16 measures modulate to the mediant, B minor, which remains for 16 measures, and then the theme returns in G major for the

⁴³ Robert S Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994) 196-7, 289.

remainder of the section. Throughout the B section, Wieck-Schumann often briefly tonicizes E minor and D minor, but doesn't clearly confirm them through a cadence. While the harmonies often destabilize, rhythmic and melodic unity help maintain a cohesive section.

As mentioned in the discussion of the second romance, Wieck-Schumann often turns to pedal points as a way to maintain some level of surface stability when she undermines sensical harmonic direction or unity. Despite the chromatic nature of this section and the applied harmonies, pedals are frequent in each of the eight measure units, often emphasizing the local tonic or dominant. The first example of this in mm. 110-116, illustrated in fig. 19, where the G octave in the left hand is the exclusive note played in that register. Even though there are breaks in its duration, its sonic presence is still heard, even underneath borrowed harmonies. After the modulation to B minor, the pedal moves from G to the local tonic. The second phrase of B minor features the most pervasive pedal of the entire B section. The F# pedal begins in m. 133 and continues to sound throughout the next six measures without any durational breaks, unlike the previous pedals, shown in fig. 20.

Figure 19. Op. 21 no. 3, G pedal in mm 110-116.

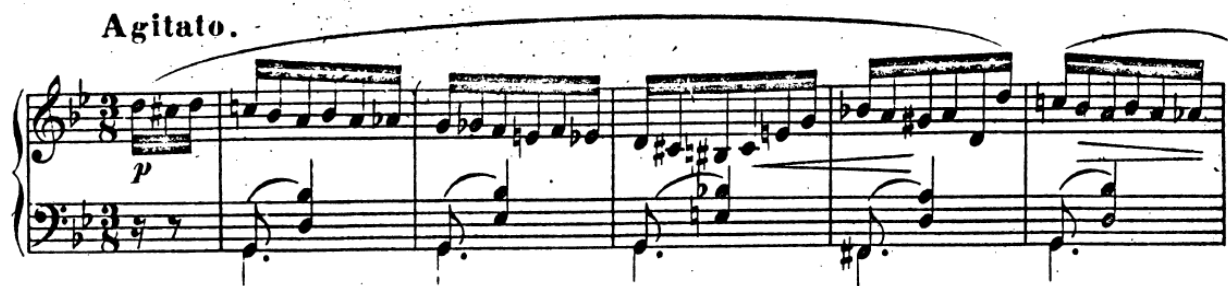
The image shows a musical score for the first system of Op. 21 no. 3, measures 110-116. The score is written for piano and consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The left hand (bass clef) features a prominent G pedal point, indicated by a horizontal line with a vertical stem and a 'Ped.' marking below it. The right hand (treble clef) contains a melodic line with various ornaments and dynamics, including a 'p' (piano) marking. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Figure 20. Op. 21 no. 3, F# pedal in mm. 133-138.



Motivic Return from Op. 21 No. 1

Figure 21. Op. 21 no. 3 opening theme.



The third romance shares elements of its motivic construction with the first romance. In this piece, the primary theme begins with the same 5-#4-5 lower-neighbor motif seen in the opening measures of the first romance, but much of the similarity ends there. While the first romance contains a fairly regular phrase structure on the surface, this melody features unceasing, chromatic sixteenth notes, creating an unclear melodic structure and blurring the beginnings and ends of phrases. Despite the winding nature of this melody, it maintains a loose symmetrical structure, see fig. 21. Each of the first three phrases begin on the same pitch, and after descending, the end of each phrase returns back to the same register in which it began. This symmetrical bias is explained by Selmon, who also notes that Wieck-Schumann tends to follow

the traditional counterpoint rule of large leaps being followed by a step in the opposite direction.⁴⁴

The theme in the b section is notably placid compared to the *agitato* primary theme. The first three notes of this melody are the same three different pitch classes used in the opening melody, D–C#/D^b–C. The next three notes of the opening melody, C–B^b–A are inverted in the second theme to C–D–E^b. While its pitch contents are reminiscent of the opening melody, the rhythms are augmented considerably, shown in fig. 22. The left hand continues the flow of consistent sixteenth notes, creating cohesion between the two sections rhythmically, but the elongated rhythms of this melody make it easier to recall and more tuneful than the primary theme.

Figure 22. Op. 21 no. 3, b section theme.

The image displays a musical score for the b section theme of Op. 21 no. 3. It consists of two systems of music. The top system is for piano, with a treble clef and a bass clef. The right hand plays a melody with a series of eighth notes, while the left hand plays a consistent sixteenth-note accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as *dim.* and *p*, and a section label 'b section:'. The bottom system is for violin, with a treble clef and a bass clef. It features a similar sixteenth-note accompaniment in the left hand and a melodic line in the right hand. The score is signed 'V. A. 27.' at the bottom.

⁴⁴ Selmon, 'The inner voice,' 81.

The melodic content of the B section is markedly different from that of the A section, but shares similarities with the first romance, just as the A section's theme did. The rising sixth motif seen in the B section of the first romance is alluded to here, along with the 5-#4-5 figure seen throughout the first and third romances. The initial occurrence of the allusion to the first romance comes in mm. 121-123. In the first romance, the last note of the neighbor figure was the first note of the ascending sixth motif, and here the same is true. In this case, the neighbor figure is inverted to #4-5-#4, but the rising sixth still begins on the final tone of the neighbor figure. By inverting the neighbor figure, Wieck-Schumann is able to initiate the modulation to B minor. The sixth motif has typically consisted of an ascent from scale-degree five to three, but by beginning on the raised fourth scale-degree, the figure ends on the raised second scale-degree, which is used to modulate to the mediant. This inverted version of the linked neighbor and rising sixth appears again in mm. 129-131 in the key of B minor, but the ascending major sixth is enharmonically spelled as a diminished seventh.

Figure 23. Inversion of lower-neighbor motif linked with rising-sixth motif.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system features a treble and bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It includes markings for 'Ped.' (pedal), 'cresc.' (crescendo), and an asterisk (*). A red box highlights a melodic motif in the treble clef, consisting of a sequence of notes: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The second system continues the piece, marked 'rit.' (ritardando) and 'a tempo'. A red box highlights a similar melodic motif in the treble clef, consisting of notes: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The bass clef in both systems contains accompaniment with various rhythmic patterns and chords.

To briefly summarize, similar to the first romance, Op. 21 no. 3 is an example of large-scale ternary form, but is manipulated by Wieck-Schumann to create overall instability. There is consistent disjunction between points of harmonic and melodic completion and cadences are either weakened through inverted harmonies or avoided completely. The mode is frequently destabilized, and the key centers are tertiary. While the unrelenting rhythm of the right-hand melody creates perpetual motion, failing to indicate surface stability, the thematic return from the first romance creates a sense of overall recapitulation.

Conclusion

Large-Scale Ternary Form

While clearly published as three separate works, investigating the three Romances of Op. 21 as creating a large-scale ternary form reveals interesting results. The most obvious argument against reading Op. 21 as a large-scale ternary structure is that the third romance does not return to A minor, the same key as the first romance, rather it is in G minor. While the failure of the original key area to return counters the reading of op. 21 as a large-scale ternary form, I argue that there are other elements which justify it. To use Roger Graybill's terminology from his discussion of form in the second movement of Dmitri Shostakovich's Eighth String Quartet, established form models can "serve as a useful prism" for viewing pieces which demonstrate similarities with formal types.⁴⁵ The large-ternary form provides a prism through which op. 21 can be viewed, and its deviations from the established formal structure provide hermeneutic windows through which we can create meaning.

As noted earlier, the first romance is in large-scale ternary form, and its presentation of melodic and harmonic content is paralleled in the harmonic and melodic content of the second and third romances. Just as the A and A' sections of the first romance share melodic content, the first and third romance share melodic content based on the same 5-#4-5 figure, from the first romance. Even though this figure is expanded in different ways in each romance, its inception is the same, seen in fig. 24a and 24b. The B section of the first romance can be understood as an expanded sentence structure which gradually devolves. In a similar way, the second romance is

⁴⁵ Roger Graybill, "Formal and Expressive Intensification in Shostakovich's String Quartet No. 8, Second Movement" in *Engaging Music: Essays in Music Analysis*, ed. Deborah Stein, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 191-201.

formally-ambiguous. It can be understood through the lens of a continuous-variation form, and it also devolves before the theme restarts in the coda.

Table 4. Formal, Harmonic, and Melodic Connections in Op. 21

	Melodic Content	Key Area	Form
Op. 21 No. 1	5-#4-5 figure	a	Ternary
Op. 21 No. 2	<i>Wiegenliedchen</i> theme	F	Through-composed, loose continuous-variation form
Op. 21 No. 3	5-#4-5 figure	g	Ternary

Table 5. Op. 21 No. 1: Encapsulation of Overall Large-scale Ternary Form

	Melodic Content	Key Area	Form
A (no. 1)	5-#4-5 figure	a	Ternary
B (no. 2)	Kinderszenen theme	F	Expanded sentence structure
A' (no. 3)	5-#4-5 figure	a	Ternary
Coda	5-#4-5 figure, Kinderszenen theme	a	

Figure 24a. 5-#4-5 figure in Op. 21 no. 1.



Figure 24b. 5–#4–5 figure in Op. 21 no. 3.



The second romance seems to reference the B section of the first romance through its melodic references and association with Robert Schumann, key center, and form. The quotation of Schumann's *Kinderszenen* motif used extensively in the B section of the first romance is clearly connected to the second romance, which is based on his *Wiegenliedchen* theme. The *Wiegenliedchen* theme outlines the same rising sixth as the *Kinderszenen* theme, and both melodies descend immediately following landing on the upper note of the sixth. The first romance modulates to the submediant, F major, and the second romance is also in F major. The B section of the first romance slips from F major to D minor in its second phrase, and the same occurs in the first two phrases of the second romance. In addition to its melodic parallels and F major key center, the second romance is also the only one of the three romances not in a clear ternary form. Its continuous variation form is reminiscent of the B section of the first romance, which maintains a consistent texture around a devolving melodic structure.

While the key area is not the same in the first and third romances, the large-ternary form returns to the minor mode for the final section and features thematic return from the first romance. The thematic return is seen in the return of the 5–#4–5 figure in the opening of the third romance, which is the cell upon which much of the melodic content of the first romance is based. Each of these two pieces modulate to the mediant key within their A sections, and contain

a secondary theme. The B section of the third romance modulates to the parallel major, which then fails to maintain the major mode and slips to its own submediant. Though the first and third romances are not identical in their key relationships with their respective B sections, the thematic and formal return in the A' sections is similar. In addition, even though the key area from the first romance does not return in the third romance, the formal and motivic return create a sense of recapitulation.

Hermeneutics

There are two layers of hermeneutics through which Op. 21 can be interpreted. These two layers can be discussed based on the concept of introversive and extroversive semiosis. In his book, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classical Music*, he examines works to uncover their “meaning and significance as communicated through two channels, describable as ‘structural’ and ‘expressive’ attributes.”⁴⁶ The structural attributes, or elements in the music which are concerned with their relation to other musical elements, represent introversive semiosis. Signs or topical references which create links with the exterior world represent extroversive semiosis.⁴⁷

Basing my interpretation of Op. 21 on the introversive and extroversive themes which arose during my analysis yields interesting results. The introversive elements consist of dissolving of harmonic stability through toggling between the major and minor modes, cadences stripped of their harmonic content, and circular key areas. The extroversive elements are intertextual references to works by Robert Schumann and references to topics, such as the pastoral and obsession. I argue that the interaction of these introversive elements with

⁴⁶ V. Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs : A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music*. (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2014), 4.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 23.

intertextuality and topical references, understood in context of Wieck-Schumann's admission of sadness on the day she composed the first romance, creates a narrative of sentimental remembrance, continual memory, and yearning.

It is clear that in Op. 21, both introversive and extroversive signs contribute to the overall sense of instability. Key introversive signs of this are the devolving nature of harmonic content and the inability to maintain the major mode. The modulation to the major mode in the B section of the first romance quickly begins to unravel and Wieck-Schumann toggles between F major and D minor, undercutting the contrast provided by the shift of mode. The second romance also begins in F major, but by the third phrase clearly establishes D minor. Both of these attempts at the major mode are paired with melodic content alluding to Robert Schumann, yet both are formally and harmonically unstable. Another introversive sign of instability is the cadences, which devolve throughout the three romances. The A section of the first romance has somewhat regular phrases and cadences, but by the third romance Wieck-Schumann avoids cadences altogether.

Topical Signs and Intertextuality

The extroversive elements contributing to an interpretation of Op. 21 are significant, and three themes emerge as crucial: pastoral, obsession, and Robert Schumann. The pastoral and Robert Schumann's themes are connected, first seen in Op. 21 no 1. There, the B section modulates to F major, features flowing linear lines which contrast the verticality of the A section, and pedal points, all of which are defined by Hatten as tendencies of the pastoral.⁴⁸ Topics alone can cue a shift in narrative discourse, as can quoting or referencing another work.⁴⁹ In Op. 21,

⁴⁸ Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 82–4.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 196.

Wieck-Schumann combines topical references with intertextual references to Robert Schumann's *Kinderszenen* Op. 15 and *Wiegenliedchen* theme, both works associated with childhood. Wieck-Schumann situates Robert's works within the topic of the pastoral, which is often representative of something idealized or a sentimental retreat into a past time.⁵⁰ This sentimentality and retrospectivity in association with Robert and his past works is especially interesting considering that the original first romance was composed in 1853, but Wieck-Schumann replaced it with one that she wrote in 1855.⁵¹ Reich explains that Brahms came to visit Robert Schumann in the sanatorium in 1855 and on that particular day she wrote in her diary that she was "feeling so sad."⁵² Wieck-Schumann's diary entry on the day she composed the work creates a hermeneutic window through which we can glean meaning about its connection to her relationship with Robert Schumann. Her rewriting the first romance, which includes material from the second and third romances suggests that she intended it to be understood in connection with them.

In addition to supporting Op. 21 being interpreted as a large-ternary form, the recurrence of the 5-#4-5 figures throughout all three sections of the first romance and again in the third romance brings up the topic of obsession. The obsession *topos* finds its roots both in Freudian thought and the division of the mind, and also in the rise of psychoanalysis which occurred in the nineteenth century. As summarized by Blake Howe, obsession was noted in early medical accounts as being an opposition of thoughts, which war against each other trying to gain control of the mind.⁵³ Once a shift in how the mind and neuroses were viewed began to occur, the idea of the divided mind led to obsession being modeled as a fracturing of subjective thought versus a

⁵⁰ Michael L. Klein, *Intertextuality in Western Art Music* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 68.

⁵¹ In addition to retrospectivity in referencing Robert Schumann's works, Wieck-Schumann draws on ideas from her Romance for Piano, Op. 5 No. 3, published in 1836.

⁵² Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 233.

⁵³ Howe, "Music and the Agents of Obsession," 219.

complete obsessive state of lunacy.⁵⁴ The obsession *topos* in music often refers to musical motives which remain stuck or fixated on a certain pitch or series of pitches. When music fails to produce forward motion or variance of melodic design and become stuck, they can be seen as “participating in *obsessive musical spaces*.”⁵⁵ A counterargument to referencing the topic obsession in discussing Op. 21 is that the musical agency of the work is not having a psychotic episode, so the recurrence of themes may be better discussed as representative of general fixation or a constant memory. However, the terminology associated with the topic of obsession provides a useful lens through which the first three tones of the melody, a 5–#4–5 lower neighbor figure, can be discussed since they permeate the entire piece.

In the A section of the first romance, the motive first appears in m. 1 and is exactly repeated at the beginning of the second phrase in m. 5. This motive appears again in the interior section, transposed to the subdominant in m. 11 and m. 15, and an octave lower in m. 13. Once the piece moves to the B section and modulates to F major, the neighbor motif continues to appear, shown in figure 25 below, now coupled with the Kinderszenen theme. It first appears in a noticeably similar way to how it was used in the A section. In m. 27, it is transposed to scale degree five in F major, and is written in the same parallel thirds as in m. 1. The motif repeats seven times in the first half of the B section, before the Kinderszenen theme restarts in m. 51. The rate at which it occurs begins to increase in m. 35, when it appears every two bars, transposed a half step and whole step higher, respectively. The way that the lower-neighbor motif appears throughout the piece, even after a new theme was introduced in the B section indicates that on some level, it is “stuck” or unable to fully work itself out. Whether or not this is

⁵⁴ Howe, “Music and the Agents of Obsession,” 220.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 219.

viewed as an element of obsession, the fact remains that this motif permeates much of Op. 21, indicating some kind of mulling over, obsession, or meditation on it.

Figure 25. Recurrence of 5-#4-5 motif in Op. 21 no. 1 B section, mm. 27-49.

Sehr innig bewegt. 53

animato.

p *cresc.* *Red.* *

cresc. *Red.*

p *cresc.* *

calando. *pp* *Red.*

ritenuto. *p* *Red.*

a tempo. *cresc.*

Though not as structurally-crucial as the lower-neighbor motif and Kinderszenen theme, the A section of the first romance features two brief motifs which have intriguing hermeneutic implications. The first of these, occurring in the opening phrase, is what Selmon labels the “rising fourth motif-theme.”⁵⁶ This motif, which she describes as “the most significant of the motivic-cell melodies in Wieck-Schumann’s compositions,”⁵⁷ is frequently found in expressive passages of her works. It most often begins on scale-degree five and then after an upward leap to the tonic, features a stepwise descent back to the starting pitch. One way that Schumann alters the aforementioned rising fourth theme is through inversion. The inversion of the motif-theme first occurs in m. 3 and features a descending fourth followed by a stepwise ascent.⁵⁸

Selmon illustrates how Wieck-Schumann used the rising fourth motive in her lieder when the text is trying to convey topics of love, and also that E^b major is the key Schumann most often associated with love.⁵⁹ In Op. 21 No. 1, the theme is set in A minor, a diminished fifth from E^b, which as mentioned earlier is the key most frequently associated with topics of love in Schumann’s works. Beginning the theme in A minor might not initially be striking, but the tritone relationship between the most typical key associated with love in her works and the key chosen for this piece should not be ignored. Perhaps Schumann intentionally situated this romance as far away from the places of love seen in past works, so as to foreshadow the tumult by which the theme will be engulfed throughout all three pieces. In addition to the tritone A–E^b relationship, the theme is in the minor mode. According to Selmon, this theme appears most often in major keys, but “when the motif occurs in a minor key it represents love in sorrowful,

⁵⁶ Selmon, “The ‘Inner Voice,’” 89.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 89.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 90. This variation is Selmon’s “type 1a,” which is an inversion of her “type 1,” the most typical manifestation of the motif, which was discussed earlier.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 89.

ill-omened or stressful situations.”⁶⁰ By beginning this romance in a key which is distant from that of her most typical love themes and by utilizing the minor mode, Schumann effectively communicates a sense of uncertainty in what the future of the theme might hold.

Another motif worth mentioning is the *appoggiatura* figure in m. 25. On the surface, this may seem like a generic melodic device, but in this context warrants further interpretation. This motif, consisting of an ascending third followed by a whole step descent, has frequent romantic associations. Selmon argues that in works containing text, “words set to the motif are significant ones like ‘love,’ ‘tears,’ ‘yearning,’ ‘dreams,’ or ‘heart.’” In this case, the descent following the upward third is a half step rather than a whole step, but the affect remains. This figure occurs at the end of the A section, and its associations with yearning and tears in *Wieck-Schumann’s* lied support the interpretation that her self-proclaimed sadness on the day she wrote the first romance influenced her composition.

To summarize, the topical references to the pastoral, coupled with themes written by Robert Schumann, evoke a sense of retrospectivity and idealization of the past. These references are paired with a lower-neighbor motif which is constantly recurring, indicative of a continual return to a memory. In addition, even the melodic motifs which are not as crucial structurally convey topics of love and yearning. These elements, along with the introverted elements of harmonic instability, lingering of motives, and circular key areas create an overall narrative of feelings of love and sorrow which are in some ways inescapable, but are also linked to a fond remembering of years gone by.

The three pieces that create Op. 21 are brimming with hermeneutic signifiers. The question is how we interpret them. By combining the elements of harmonic and cadential

⁶⁰ Selmon, “The ‘Inner Voice,’” 91.

instability with continual return to themes written by Robert, we can begin to trace Wieck-Schumann's lingering romance with him and his works. Considering Wieck-Schumann's diary entry about feelings of sadness while visiting Robert Schumann in the sanitarium on the day she wrote the first romance, we can also interpret elements of Op. 21 as representing her sadness. The dissolution of Robert's mental health and loss of the person she knew him as no doubt had a direct effect on her psyche. By losing a significant person from your life, you lose not only them as an individual, but the promise of a future with them. Even though the person she knew was no longer accessible, his presence appears in Op. 21 through continual lack of resolution, like a memory continuing while reality is lost. The confrontation Clara Wieck-Schumann had with the memories of perhaps the most significant person in her life manifests in Op. 21 as a sophisticated meditation on love, loss, and memory.

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