

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

Graduate Recital Works
By Robert Schumann and Ludwig van Beethoven

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Music in Music, Collaborative Piano Performance

By

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Abstract

GRADUATE RECITAL WORKS BY
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN AND ROBERT SCHUMANN

By

Jinying Wu

Master of Music in Music, Collaborative Piano Performance

This paper will discuss repertoire played by Jinying Wu on her Master's recital in Collaborative Piano. The performance consisted of pieces by Robert Schumann and Ludwig van Beethoven. This paper aims to introduce the historical background, compositional techniques, and performance interpretations. In these piano works, Wu uses various techniques to interpret the composer's compositional ideas.

Section 1: Dichterliebe for Voice and Piano, Op. 48 by Robert Schumann

In the 19th century, the German folksongs developed into an art form that musical ideas suggested by texts were realized through the art form of voice and piano. This art form is called the Lied (art song) and became one of the most leading genres in the Romanticism. As one of the greatest composers of art songs, Schumann wrote about 150 songs. He liked to write love songs in groups and cycles arranged by poet, often with tonal unity. In the year he married Clara, 1840 (also called the “Liederjahr”), Schumann wrote at least 138 songs. *Dichterliebe* was composed in the Liederjahr and is the most-known song cycle in the entire repertoire of lieder.¹

For *Dichterliebe*, Schumann selected 16 poems from Heinrich Heine’s collection, *Lyrisches Intermezzo* (*Lyrical Intermezzo*), which has 65 poems. This collection first appeared in Heine’s book *Tragödien: nebst einem lyrischen Intermezzo* (Tragedies along with a Lyrical Intermezzo) in 1823 and was placed between the two historical tragedies, which referred to autobiographical contents with unhappy love affair. When it becomes *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, the “Intermezzo” was retained, even though without its function. This collection was published in 1827 in the *Buch der Lieder* (*The Book of Songs*).² The 16 songs of Schumann’s *Dichterliebe* also tells a sad love story. The narrative of Schumann’s *Dichterliebe* is complex, and at times not straightforward or offering a linear progression of feelings. His song cycle traces a range of emotions in the protagonist, from tenderness to excitement, to frustration and bitterness at the rejection by his beloved—and finally to a kind of defiant acceptance, when in the last song, he

¹ Eric Sams, “The Romantic Lied”(rev. by Graham Johnson), sec. IV of “Lied,” Grove Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> (accessed 13 July 2021)

² Graham Johnson, “Dichterliebe, Op. 28,” *Hyperion-Records*, <https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/tw.asp?w=W3127> (accessed 13 July 2021)

metaphorically puts his pieces in a coffin and tosses them into the Rhine River, thus burying his “love and pain.” Yet, the listener learns that moving on is not so easy: In Schumann’s *Dichterliebe*, musical material from the beginning can return at the end, and there are other motivic, thematic and structural connections among the pieces, reflecting the complexity of human emotion³.

Although *Dichterliebe* was originally scored for soprano or tenor, it is still possible to be sung by a mezzosoprano or baritone. The challenge for pianists to play in a lower key is that the fingerings are so different that pianists might have to relearn the entire piece. However, certain songs remain in the original key, such as “Ich Grolle Nich.” All in all, the keys and harmonic analysis in this thesis pertain to the baritone key, as is on my recital.

³ Frisch, Walter, Music in *The Nineteenth Century (Western Music in Context: A Norton History)* 1st Edition. W.W. Norton & Company, 110.

Poem I, “In the Wonderfully Fair Month of May”

In the wonderfully fair month of May,

When all the flower-buds burst,

then in my heart

love arose.

In the wonderfully fair month of May,

as all the birds were singing,

then I confessed to her ,

my yearning and longing.

The text of Schumann’s first song is also the first poem in Heine’s collection. The love and beauty of the spring season reflect optimism.

In this piece, the piano leads and the ending seems to hint e minor, as they both stay on the dominant chord in e minor (although it is never resolved), while the vocal part is clearly on the main chord in G major from the beginning. This tonal contrast seems to suggest that the piano and the singer are doing different things, emphasizing how Schumann creates a musical language of longing.

Schumann sets the final words to a melodic line that climbs upward but drops at the end, without reaching to the tonic of e minor. At the end, a dominant seventh chord remains unresolved and unfulfilled, hovers between remembrance and anticipation. Interestingly, the next

song begins in G major, which provides a surprising resolution to the previous dissonant chord⁴.

⁴ Frisch. Walter, Music in *The Nineteenth Century (Western Music in Context: A Norton History)* 1st Edition. W.W. Norton & Company, 20.

Poem II, "In My Tears"

From my tears spring
many blooming flowers forth,
and my sighs become
a nightingale choir,
and if you have a love for me, child,
I'll give you all the flowers,
and before your window shall sound
the song of the nightingale.

This poem sets the second song of the cycle. When the speaker's love is coming, he could not restrain his excitement.

In this slower work, the connection of long notes is vital. The repetition in the right-hand must move forward, getting more robust to the second bar of the subordinate chord. In the last phrase of this piece, the vocal part ends in the extended B. At this time, the pianist's inner urge must not end but continue to the last two notes to make the piece complete..

Poem III, “Roses, Lilies, Doves, and Sun”

The rose, the lily, the dove, the sun,

I once loved them all in love's bliss.

I love them no more,

I love only the small, the fine, the pure, the one;

source of all love,

She is rose and lily and dove and sun.

I love only

the small, the fine, the pure, the one!

This is the third song of the cycle, which expresses deep and poetic love.

This song is relatively short. The piano part is staccato in fast 16th notes. The touch area of the fingertips should be as small as possible to create more focus to the sound. When playing staccato, the pianist should keep their fingers to the keys as close as possible to make preparations for the next notes.

In addition to breathe together with the vocalist, the pianist should also control the speed for the entire piece to create room for the vocalist to breathe.

Poem IV, “When I Look into Your Eyes”

When I look into your eyes,
then vanish all my sorrow and pain!
But when I kiss your mouth,
then I become wholly and completely healthy.
When I lean on your breast,
Heaven's delight comes over me,
but when you say, "I love you!" ,
then must I weep bitterly.

Throughout this song, Schumann uses a recitation tone in the voice. In piano performance, we should pay attention to the long duration of the first chord. In this adagio tempo, the sound of the piano itself will inevitably gradually decrease. At this time, the pianist must maintain the inner tension, store the strength, and prepare for the gradual strengthening words through repeated chords. After the eighth note, we should also pay attention to the 16th note (the second and seventh bars) and avoid neglecting the singing because of its frequency. In bar 13, pianists should pay attention to the color treatment of changing sounds.

Poem V, “I Would Have Drunk My Soul”

I want to plunge my soul
into the chalice of the lily,
the lily shall resoundingly exhale
a song of my beloved.

The song shall quiver and tremble ,
like the kiss from her mouth,
that she once gave me
in a wonderfully sweet hour!

This is the fifth song of the cycle. The poet's soul seems to be intoxicated by the intense love.

The piano part plays the fast 32nd note continuously. In performance, the right-hand melody should not be hidden by the 32nd notes. It needs to be brought out through using wrist movement to create a horizontal sound, while softly playing the 32nd notes beneath. The song is composed of two sections with a piano coda. The pianist should not ignore the lyricism of the accompaniment despite the fast tempo.

Poem VI, “The Rhine, the Holy River”

In the Rhine, in the holy stream ,
there is mirrored in the waves,
with its great cathedral
great holy Cologne.

In the cathedral, there stands an image
on golden leather painted ,
Into my life's wilderness,
it has shined in amicably.

There hover flowers and little angels
around our beloved Lady,
the eyes, the lips, the little cheeks,
they match my beloved's exactly.

This is the sixth song of the cycle. It expresses the sacred and lofty love experience and also represents the speaker's yearning for the lover.

This song depicts a tremendous church. The young people compare their lovers to the holy and beautiful Virgin Mary. When playing this piece, the pianist should play the keys as deeply as possible and use the arm weight for a full voice.

The piano accompaniment is in a French-overture style, which is typically represents royalty.

Poem VII, "I Bear No Grudge."

I bear no grudge, even when my heart is breaking,

eternally lost love! I hold no grudge.

Even though you shine in diamond splendor,

there falls no light into your heart's night that I've known for a long time.

I bear no grudge, even when my heart is breaking. I saw you, truly, in my dreams,

and saw the night in your heart's space,

and saw the serpent that feeds on your heart,

I saw, my love, how very miserable you are.

I bear no grudge.

This is the seventh song of the cycle. It describes the speaker's anger and bitterness when he learns of his lover's betrayal.

The chords of the piano form the melody line. The youths have lost their love; the piano part plays uninterrupted chord columns, and the effect is like a hammer in the youths' heart. In order to help with balance, the pianist's hand should remain still on the keyboard as much as possible with relaxed wrists. While playing, pianists must continue to pay attention to the longer melodic lines that are shaped by the repeated chords.

Poem VIII, “If the Blooms Knew it.”

And if they knew it, the blooms, the little ones,

how deeply wounded my heart is,

they would weep with me ,

to heal my pain.

And if they knew it, the nightingales

how I am so sad and sick,

they would lose the merry sound

of the refreshing song.

And if they knew my pain,

the golden little stars,

they would descend from their heights

and would comfort me.

All of them cannot know it,

only one understands my pain,

she has indeed torn

torn up my heart.

This is the eighth song of the cycle. It depicts brokenhearted helplessness and depression.

The single notes of the top part of the piano constitute the melody line. The song is fast from the very beginning with 32nd notes in the piano. As the vocalists enters almost together with the pianist, the pianist often uses his/her breath in order to signal the beginning of the song. The

fast 32nd notes depict the young people's trembling hearts.

Poem IX, “Flute and Piano”

There are fluting and fiddling,
and trumpets blasting in.

Surely, there dancing the wedding dance ,
is my dearest beloved.

There are a ringing and roaring
of drums and shawms,
amidst it sobbing and moaning
are dear little angels.

This is the ninth song of the cycle. It describes the scene that the speaker saw his love getting married to someone else. The noisy wedding scene is in sharp contrast to the speaker's mood. In the end, the piano part shows the poet's unquiet heart incisively and vividly.

The right-hand part of the piano is to imitate the violin and flute. While playing, it should be rhythmically articulated and coherent. Wrist motions should be used to drive the fingers while the sound fluctuates and falls. When the 16th notes are continuing, the pianist should not forget the phrasing of the musical sentences. Otherwise, it would suffocate the vocalist and the audience. Meanwhile, the left-hand part mimics gongs and drums. The pianist should control the volume to not bury the melody in the right hand.

Poem X, "I Heard the Song"

I hear the little song sounding
that my beloved once sang,
and my heart wants to shatter ,
from savage pain's pressure.
A dark longing drives me
up to the wooded heights,
there is dissolved in tears
my supremely great pain.

This is the tenth song of the cycle. It is a song sung by someone who once was loved, which reminds the author of that time in his life and he was moved to tears.

The single notes of the top part of the piano constitute the melody line. The middle part is set off again, like a drop of tears, which vividly describes the poet's sad emotion when he hears the past songs. In this work, the piano part adopts the technique of descending arpeggios. The melody and the accompaniment should be clearly distinguished from each other. It is important to show the color change among these two voices. The coherence of the melody of the top line in the right hand refers to the mellow and soft beauty.

Poem XI, “A Young Man Falls in Love with a Girl”

A young man loves a girl,
who has chosen another man,
the other loves yet another ,
and has gotten married to that other.

The girl takes out of anger the first best man ,
who crosses her path;
the young man is worse off.

It is an old story ,
but remains eternally new,
and for him to whom it has just happened ,
it breaks his heart in two.

This is the eleventh song of the cycle, a self-deprecating narrative song.

This work is composed of four sections. Although this music sounds joyful and jumpy in major, the words tell us a tragic story. Thus, there is a conflict between what the music sounds like and what the words are expressing. Also, this irony is expressed by Schumann in the constant syncopation in the piano. The sudden and emphasized syncopations over large intervals text-paint the breaking of the hearts.

Poem XII, "It's a Bright Summer Morning"

On a radiant summer morning ,

I go about in the garden.

There the flowers whisper and speak,

I, however, wonder silently.

There the flowers whisper and speak,

and look sympathetically at me:

"Do not be angry with our sister,

you sad, pale man."

This is the twelfth song of the cycle.

The piano part of this piece is somewhat reminiscent of the tenth song and was quoted exactly once again in the last song in a different key. It adopts the technique of descending arpeggios. The second downbeat in the first measure is missed, which creates rhythmic and meter ambiguity to the audience. This song has a relatively longer postlude.

Poem XIII, “I Cried in My Dreams”

I have in my dreams wept.

I dreamed you lay in your grave.

I woke up, and the tears still flowed down from my cheeks.

I have in my dreams wept.

I dreamed you forsook me.

I woke up, and I wept

very long and bitterly.

I have in my dreams cried,

I dreamed you still were good to me.

I woke up and still now

streams my flood of tears.

This is the thirteenth song of the cycle, which is about the dreams the poet has.

Whether he dreams his past love lies in her grave or that she treats him with fondness, the result is the same—he wakes up, and realizing it was all a dream, which left him sorrow with tears. The song begins with the voice, and the piano part imitates the vocal melody. These chords that punctuate the recitative can represent a broken heart, or it could represent reality, or the darkness of these nightmares. There are relatively fewer notes in the piano part of this piece, but the pianist should not relax and rest. On the contrary, the pianist should feel the music going on in the pause and integrate with the recitative singing. While playing, the mood and effect should be prepared in advance, and the fingers should stay close to the keys to prepare for the intense touch

and proper timbre. Using a little wrist-motion to convey the sound is necessary. The pianist may try to use *una corda* pedal for each chord, which will increase the lonely and nightmarish effect for the work. At last, it is essential for the pianist not to use any pedal for these chords, as they are short and marked staccato.

Poem XIV, “Every Night in a Dream”

Every night in my dreams, I see you,
and see your friendly greeting,
and loudly crying out, I throw myself ,
to your sweet feet.

You look at me wistfully
and shake your little blond head;
from your eyes steal forth the little pearly teardrops.

You say to me secretly a soft word
and give me a garland of cypress.

I wake up, and the bouquet is gone,
and the word I have forgotten.

This is the fourteenth song of the cycle. This song is about the poet's love becoming a sad love song.

There is no introduction to the song, and the whole work is relatively slow, starting with an eighth-note pickup in the voice and piano simultaneously. In performance, the pianist has to wait for the singer to adjust his or her breathing. When the same interlude appears twice, the piano part changes from a melancholy dream to a playful and hopeful mood.

Poem XV, "Old Tales"

From old fairy-tales, it beckons ,
to me with a white hand,
there it sings, and there it resounds
of a magic land.

where colorful flowers bloom in the golden twilight,
and sweetly, fragrantly glow with bride-like faces.

And green trees sing primeval melodies,
the breezes secretly sound ,
and birds chirp in them.

And misty images rise indeed forth from the earth,
and airy dance reels in fantastic chorus.

And blue sparks burn on every leaf and twig,
and red lights run in crazy, hazy rings.

And loud springs burst ,
out of wild marble stone,
and oddly in the brooks ,
shine forth the reflections.

Ah! If I could enter there ,
and there gladden my heart,
and all anguish has taken away,

and be free and blessed!
Oh, that land of bliss,
I see it often in dreams,
but come the morning sun,
and it melts away like mere froth.

This is the fifteenth song of the cycle.

Young people have gradually come out of the feeling of lovelorn. This cheerful work in D major brings us to the fantasy world. For the chords in the piano part, playing light staccato will fit the mood. In addition to the need for both hands to play strictly together, timely placement of the pedal is crucial. The pianist shall bring out voices in different hands depending on when the singer is singing and when s/he is playing an interlude. Because the fast speed, the hand position changes frequently, which increases the difficulty to play accurately. In my experience, it is best to memorize this piece. Also, it is essential to control the rhythm and do not accelerate involuntarily.

Poem XVI, “Old and Evil Song”

The old, angry songs,
the dreams sore and wicked,
let us now bury them,
fetch a great coffin.

In it, I will lay very many things,
though I shall not yet say what;

The coffin must be even more significant than the Heidelberg Tun.

And fetch a death-bier of boards firm and thick,
they also must be even longer than Mainz's great bridge.

And bring me also twelve giants,
who must be yet mightier than mighty St. Christopher in the Cathedral of Cologne on the Rhine.

They shall carry the coffin away
and sink it into the sea,
for such a great coffin deserves a great grave.
How could the coffin be so large and heavy?
I would also sink my love with my pain in it.

This is the sixteenth and final song of the cycle.

The youth buried all his love and sorrow deeply. The first three chords of the piano part are marked *marcato* and shall be played with the weight all the way from the shoulders through the arms and to the fingertips. Starting from the fourth bar, the pianist needs to bring out the

contrasting ascending and descending intervals in the right hand. This piece has constant changes in tonality. Towards the end of the vocal part, the pianist needs to experience the delicate changes of harmony and unify the seemingly peaceful and straightforward octaves with their passionate nature. In the last four bars of the vocal part, the music is pushed to the climax again and then gradually calms down, staying on the main chord, leaving people with an infinite reverie.

This song is unique with a very long postlude, which extends and transfigures the song and the entire cycle poetically. Interestingly, Schumann takes the postlude of #12, and extends it to the point that it has even more profound emotion. The pianist needs the utmost of sensitivity because this postlude suggests a transcendence and acceptance of the poet's lost love. Schumann left the final say to the pianist perhaps because he thinks that pure music can suggest deeper emotions beyond words and also to suggest that the poet is finally at peace. With such epic meaning behind the notes, this is one of the great endings of all lieder repertoire. The pianist shall keep this in mind and express these poetic emotions that even words cannot express.

Section 2: Cello Sonata No. 3 in A Major, Op. 69 by Ludwig van Beethoven

As one of the greatest composers of all time, Beethoven and his music has influenced generations of musicians and shaped the following development of Western art music. He has revolutionized many genres in the aspects of formal structure, tonal design, and various elements that broke the Viennese Classical tradition. Beethoven has written five cello sonatas. The first two were written during his first period, and the third was written in 1808 during the second period. This period was led on by his suicide attempt due to gradual loss of hearing, which resulted in a major change in his musical style and personality.⁵ Also, the third cello sonata was regarded as the first one in the history to have given the two instruments equal importance according to contemporary cellist Steven Isserlis.⁶

Movement 1: Allegro ma non tanto

This movement is in sonata form in A major. The cello opens the piece with a perfect fifth ascending from the tonic to dominant in the first bar, which provides a bright and open feeling. The second theme is presented by both instruments with counter-melodies, and the two instruments are independent themselves. The development begins with a variation of the first theme. After the recapitulation, a coda concludes the piece. Throughout the movement, the two instruments constantly have dialogues, which helps to move the music forward. Interestingly for the harmony, the first theme ends on the dominant chord, and it was not resolved until the coda. In this way, the composer has left the audience hanging with “a question mark” until the final

⁵ J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 10th ed., New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2019, 557.

⁶ Isserlis, Steven (12 January 2007), "How I fell in love with Ludwig", *The Guardian*, retrieved 25 August 2015.

resolution at the very end.

Movement 2: Scherzo. Allegro molto

In a three-movement sonata, the second movement should have been a slow movement, but this is a scherzo and trio instead. Being in A minor, this movement opens with a witty theme played by the piano in syncopation, then the cello melody joins. The trio section is in its parallel major, A major, and the music is firm and robust. After the return of the scherzo, the coda ends with the repeating motive from the beginning, and the cello's pizzicato combined with pianissimo fade the music away.

Movement 3: Adagio cantabile - Allegro vivace

This movement begins with an adagio introduction in E major. As this three-movement sonata does not have a slow movement, it is possible that Beethoven has the slow introduction to take the place of an otherwise slow, lyrical second movement.

In this introduction, the theme appears as the counterpoint between the two instruments, that the right-hand part of the piano and the cello part are responsible for the beautiful melody. Both instruments end on a dominant seventh chord in A major, and the atmosphere shifts sharply going into allegro vivace in A major, with the cello playing a playful theme. After the phrase in the cello, the piano plays the theme, similar to the design in the first movement. It is also in sonata form, In the exposition, the cello starts both the first and second theme. The development mainly has first-theme materials. The coda of this movement is relatively lyrical, until a two-bar crescendo leads it to a very strong ending.

In this piece, Beethoven was not only innovative in terms of the order of movement, but also brought the importance of the piano to the cello repertoire. The piano and cello parts are very skillfully integrated, and the piece is technically and musically demanding for the pianist.

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Appendix: Program

California State University, Northridge

Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication Department of Music Presents

Jinying Wu, Piano

A Collaborative Piano Student of Dr. Tali Tadmor

Dichterliebe for Voice and Piano, Op. 48

Robert Schumann

(1810-1856)

Intermission

Cello Sonata No.3 Sonata in A Major, Op. 69

Ludwig van Beethoven

(1770-1827)

I. Allegro ma non tanto
II. Scherzo. Allegro molto
III. Adagio cantabile - Allegro vivace

Yang Li, Baritone

Gege Helin, Cello

Thursday, April 22, 2021, at 12:30 pm

Beijing Chaoyang