MUSIC IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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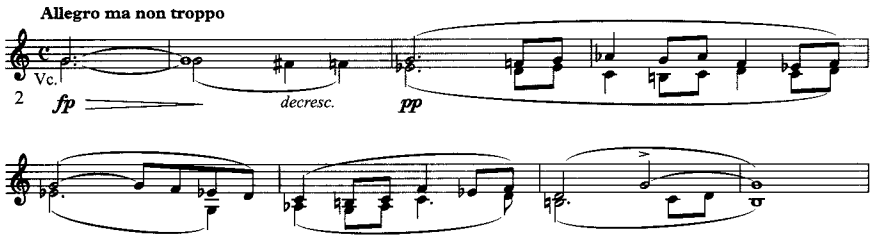
Schubert did not neglect the traditional large-scale instrumental forms. In the years from 1821 on, he produced ambitious and original piano sonatas (especially the last three, in C minor, A major, and B♭ major [D. 958–60]), string quartets (in A minor, D minor, and G major [D. 804, 810, and 887]), a string quintet (D. 956 in C major), and symphonies (the *Unfinished* and *Great* C-Major [D. 759 and 944]). Schubert builds expansive forms not from short motives, as in Beethoven, but from lyrical melodies that seem to have come naturally to him as a great composer of lieder. The association between song and instrumental music is especially strong in Schubert. Several works, like the A-Major Piano Quintet (D. 667, *The Trout*) and the D-Minor String Quartet (D. 810, *Death and the Maiden*), use themes from his own lieder as the basis for variation movements.

Schubert's harmonic procedures are no less adventurous than, but very different from, Beethoven's. Where Beethoven might move to a remote key in an abrupt, quirky manner (as between the first two movements of the Op. 131 Quartet discussed above), Schubert will often pause and then pivot on a note common to two keys, thereby lifting us as if by magic from one to the other. In the first movement of the C-Major String Quintet, the exposition comes to a halt on a dominant chord, G major, whose main note is sustained by two cellos playing high in their range (Ex. 3.4). We expect that a second theme will unfold in that key, as in a conventional sonata form. Instead, as one of the cellos traces a chromatic descent, the G held by the other is recast as the third degree of an E♭-major harmony. The two cellos linger in this exotic, unexpected key, singing a duet in parallel thirds and sixths, before turning back to the dominant. With such harmonic shifts and seductive melodies, Schubert transports us momentarily to a distant land—or perhaps to a happier, more remote past. In the String Quintet and other late works of Schubert, the beauty and comfort of the Biedermeier world, as embodied in the E♭ theme, become tinged with bittersweet nostalgia.

Example 3.4: *Schubert, String Quintet in C Major, Op. 163 (D. 956), movement I, mm. 59–65*



VIRTUOSITY, VIRTUOSOS

Schubert's career and reputation developed primarily through the publication of his songs and piano pieces, and through the private network of the Schubertiads.

Schubert was the exception among the prominent composers of the era after the Congress of Vienna, most of whom followed the professional path of the performing virtuoso, to which Schubert himself was neither technically nor emotionally suited. Virtuoso performers had been prominent on the European musical scene since the Baroque period, which is indelibly marked by figures like the singer Farinelli and the violinist Pietro Locatelli. The composer-virtuoso flourished anew in the first decades of the nineteenth century, with the growing middle-class appetite for music, the spread of public concerts, and the increasing prominence of instrumental genres.

As noted above, Beethoven began his career in Vienna in the 1790s as a keyboard virtuoso, performing first in private salons and then in more public venues. His playing was fiery and powerful, as revealed in the story of his renowned piano duel with Josef Wölffl at the home of a Viennese aristocrat in 1797. An eyewitness described the very different styles of the two virtuosos—which we might describe as Romantic and Classical, respectively—as they improvised in alternation:

> [Beethoven] was transported . . . above all earthly things;—his spirit had burst all restricting bonds, shaken off the yoke of servitude, and soared triumphantly and jubilantly into the luminous spaces of the higher aether. Now his playing tore along like a wildly foaming cataract, and the conjurer constrained his instrument to an utterance so forceful that the stoutest structure was scarcely able to withstand it; and anon he sank down, exhausted, exhaling gentle plaints, dissolving in melancholy.

His rival was much more restrained in his gestures and musical ideas:

> Wölffl, on the contrary, trained in the school of Mozart, was always equable; never superficial but always clear and thus more accessible to the multitude. He used art only as a means to an end, never to exhibit his acquirements. He always enlisted the interest of his hearers and inevitably compelled them to follow the progression of his well-ordered ideas. Whoever has heard Hummel will know what is meant by this.

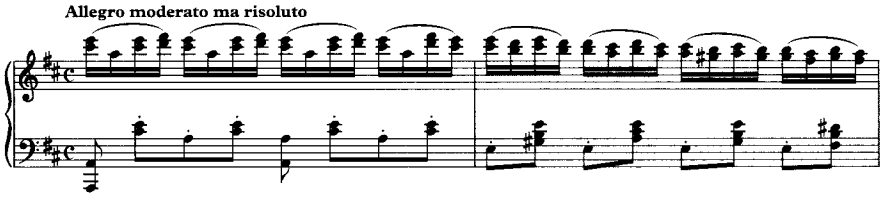
The mention of Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778–1837) is significant because his style as pianist and composer also contrasted strongly with that of Beethoven. Hummel deserves a place in this chapter as one of the leading figures in musical culture of the Metternich era. A child prodigy, he was a prized pupil of Mozart, who so admired his talent that he taught Hummel for free. Hummel's prominent career as composer and pianist in Vienna was in part eclipsed by Beethoven's arrival on the scene. Schubert greatly admired Hummel's music and planned to dedicate his final three piano sonatas to him, but

died before arranging for their publication. Robert Schumann wanted to study with Hummel, another project that remained unrealized.

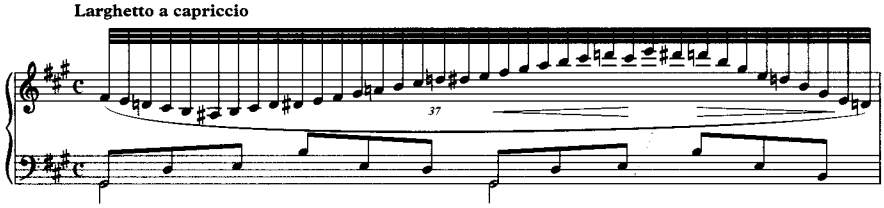
Hummel's music joins elements of what we think of as Classicism and Romanticism. He makes connections between musical structure and virtuosity in very different ways from Beethoven and Schubert. His two greatest piano sonatas, in F♯ minor, Op. 81 (1819) and D major, Op. 106 (1825), show a mastery of large-scale structure and of counterpoint, and at the same time a new style of piano writing combining florid virtuosity and chromaticism. The D-Major Sonata features a range of keyboard styles that look back to Bach and Mozart and forward to Chopin and Liszt. The closing group of the first movement, with its demanding right-hand pattern in thirds, shows how the newer virtuosic style could be incorporated into traditional formal structures (Ex. 3.5a). The right hand of the slow movement dissolves into filigree ornamentation that sometimes surpasses even the most elaborate passages in Chopin (Ex. 3.5b).

Example 3.5: *Hummel, Piano Sonata in D Major, Op. 106*

(a) First movement, mm. 83–84



(b) Third movement, m. 49



Nowhere are the role and stature of the virtuoso in the Metternich era more vivid than in the career of Nicolò Paganini (1782–1840). Born in Genoa, Paganini became first violinist of the court orchestra in Lucca in 1801 (Lucca was then under French control as part of Napoleon's empire). By 1808 the Lucca orchestra had been disbanded and Paganini turned his attention and his talents to public concerts. He transformed himself quickly from court musician to public virtuoso, a shift symptomatic of the changing musical culture of the period from one based on patronage to one based on a musician's need to make a living independently. Paganini's reputation spread quickly, especially because of the almost hypnotic power he held over his audiences. A reviewer in Milan in 1813 commented:

> Herr P. is without a doubt, in a certain respect, the foremost and greatest violinist in the world. His playing is genuinely *incomprehensible*. He performs certain runs, leaps, and double stops that have never been heard before from *any* violinist . . . in short, he is . . . one of the most artful violinists that the world has ever known.

Paganini's image grew larger than life. Stories about him began to circulate: he had sold his soul to the devil in exchange for supernatural virtuosity; he had murdered a rival in love and had strung his violin with the intestines of the victim; he had spent eight years in prison, practicing the violin. Clearly appreciating the publicity they created, Paganini sought to neither deny nor confirm the stories. He began to act the part of the mad virtuoso, somewhat like Hoffmann's Kreisler discussed in Chapter 2 (see Fig. 3.4). In a restaurant in the city of Trieste, according to a contemporary report, Paganini once

> stood up suddenly, shouting desperately: "Save me, save me, from that ghost that has followed me here. Look at it there, threatening me with the same bloody dagger that I used to take her life . . . and she loved me . . . and she was innocent. . . . Oh no, two years of prison are not enough; my blood should run to the last drop . . ." and he picked up a knife that was lying on the table. It is easy to imagine how quickly someone seized his hand. Meanwhile everyone was left stupefied and astonished; but they soon recovered from their amazement. . . . Most of them understood that he had intended to ridicule those who were spreading falsehoods about him. The fact is that on the following evening the theater proved too small to hold everyone who wanted to get in, and more than a thousand people had to wait for the next concert.

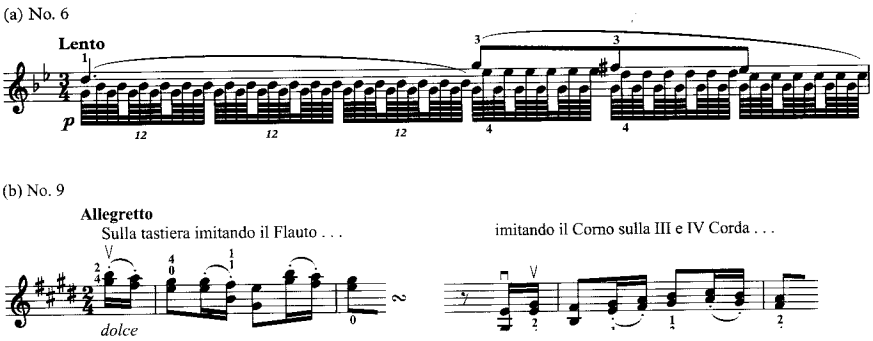
Figure 3.4: *Silhouette of Paganini playing the violin. The disheveled hair and broken strings exaggerate the frenetic virtuosity for which he was famous.*

As the commentator notes, scenes like this one sell tickets.

Paganini's compositions, primarily for solo violin and for violin and orchestra, were written for his own performance and are among the most demanding ever conceived for the instrument. Early on he was renowned for composing pieces using only the lowest string (the G string) of the violin. The 24 Caprices for Solo Violin, which became a technical encyclopedia (or bible) for generations of violinists, were largely composed in Paganini's Lucca period, in 1805, then published in Milan in 1820 as his Op. 1. The performer is required to play—often in quick succession— rapid passages in octaves and in double and triple stops, wide-ranging arpeggios, and extended runs in small note values. Among other special effects called for by Paganini are a ricochet bowing across four strings (No. 1) and tremolos played underneath a melody (No. 6, Example 3.6a). Paganini sometimes turns the violin into a one-man orchestra: in Caprice No. 9, nicknamed *The Hunt*, the composer directs the violin's top two strings to imitate flutes, while the bottom two imitate horns (Ex. 3.6b).

Perhaps the greatest testimony to Paganini's influence is how the final caprice, No. 24, a set of variations on a theme in A minor, inspired piano variations by Liszt, Schumann, Brahms, Sergei Rachmaninoff, and other composers well into the twentieth century. What motivated them was not the quality of the theme itself, which they adapted note for note, but the virtuosity called for in Paganini's own variations. The later composers sought not to imitate Paganini's style but—in what is an even more flattering form of homage—to re-create his virtuoso effects in terms of their own instrument, the piano.

Example 3.6: *Paganini, Caprices for Solo Violin, Op. 1*



Paganini represents the musical culture of the Metternich era as much as Beethoven, Schubert, Hummel, or Diabelli. It was a culture that embodied, even embraced, contradictions. Middle-class residents of Vienna, Paris, London, and other major cities thronged concerts at which Paganini would play as if possessed by a demon; it was a kind of illicit thrill. But they also enjoyed performing duets at their parlor piano. They loved dancing at great balls and sewing quietly at home. They could admire the complexity of Beethoven's late quartets, the tunefulness of Schubert's folklike lieder, and the elaborate style of Hummel's sonatas. Public versus private, large versus small, highbrow versus popular—these were just some of the polarities that sustained the musical world in the years after 1815. Opera, as we will see in the next chapter, manifests many of these same values and priorities.

FOR FURTHER READING

The Cambridge Companion to Schubert, ed. Christopher Gibbs (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Hanson, Alice M., *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985)

Metzner, Paul, *Crescendo of the Virtuoso: Spectacle, Skill, and Self-Promotion in Paris during the Age of Revolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998)

Rumph, Stephen, *Beethoven after Napoleon: Political Romanticism in the Late Works* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004)

Schubert's Vienna, ed. Raymond Erickson (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997)

Scott, Derek B., *Sounds of the Metropolis: The 19th-Century Popular Music Revolution in London, New York, Paris, and Vienna* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Solie, Ruth, *Music in Other Words: Victorian Conversations* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2004)

Solomon, Maynard, *Late Beethoven: Music, Thought, Imagination* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003)

by Beethoven, such as *Egmont* and *Coriolan*. But there is nothing *intrinsic* to music that allows it to narrate or to represent concepts. Those concepts can never be the "content" of music. Hanslick explains:

> No instrumental composition can describe the ideas of love, wrath, or fear, since there is no causal nexus between these ideas and certain combinations of sound. Which of the elements inherent in these ideas, then, does music turn to account so effectually? Only the element of motion. . . . This is the element which music has in common with our emotions, and which, with creative power, it contrives to exhibit in an endless variety of forms and contrasts.

By "motion" Hanslick is referring to the entire temporal or horizontal dimension of music—its rhythmic, metrical, and even dynamic properties. Ultimately, for Hanslick, the ideas expressed by a composer are "purely musical." He thus comes down firmly on the side of "absolute" music, although he does not use that term. In his most renowned formulation Hanslick says, "The essence of music is *sound and motion*" (literally, in the original German, "forms moved in sounding").

Thus, as we learn from these discussions, Liszt and his circle saw program music as a way to move beyond styles and forms that in their view had dried up after Beethoven. For the other side, programs were crutches used by composers who could not master what (in Hanslick's mind) were self-standing musical techniques and structures.

ROMANTIC PIANO MUSIC: THE CHARACTER PIECE

Like orchestral music, piano music composed by the generation of the 1830s ranged widely along the spectrum between the absolute and the referential or programmatic. It was often linked to poetic or literary sources, or had associations that went well beyond what Hanslick would call the "purely musical." After about 1830, the multimovement piano sonata—until then the most prestigious genre for the instrument, as exemplified in Beethoven's 32 sonatas—tended to retreat behind what was called the "character" piece, a term likely related to the eighteenth-century designation of "characteristic" music discussed above. Character pieces are shorter works for piano that, normally without any accompanying text, seek to convey a mood, atmosphere, or scene. The association is accomplished by means of the title, and perhaps a short inscription.

As with program music, the trend toward character pieces had begun well before the 1830s. Contemporary with Vivaldi, the French composer François Couperin (1668–1733) published many short harpsichord pieces with evocative titles like "The Little Windmills" or "The Nightingale in Love." Baroque

dance movements by Couperin and Bach, such as the gigue or allemande, were "character" pieces in the sense of capturing a single mood. The idea of associating keyboard pieces with specific dance types would carry forward into the nineteenth century. As we saw in Chapters 1 and 3, composers and publishers began to make handsome profits with collections of waltzes, ländler, écossaises, and other dances. Character pieces also began to appear with a variety of titles, including impromptu, nocturne, romance, bagatelle, and eclogue. Such pieces were often in a simple ternary form and playable by amateurs. More important for the present chapter, these character pieces also served to "poeticize" music, to help make it speak.

Václav Tomášek (1774–1850), a Czech composer working in Prague, noted in his autobiography that he had long felt "an inexplicable indifference towards the piano sonata" and that he began to "take refuge in poetics and to try to render different poetic forms in music." With his character pieces called "Eclogues" (in the tradition of pastoral poetry by Theocritus and Virgil), which began to appear in 1807, Tomášek said he "imagined shepherds who live a simple life that, as with all humans, is subject to fate. The attempt to render in music their moods during the different phases of their lives was the task I set myself." In emphasizing the expression of feeling rather than tone painting or imitation, Tomášek's comment shows the underlying affinity between character pieces and program music.

The character piece became elevated to the status of a major compositional genre by the generation of the 1830s. Schumann, Liszt, Chopin, and Mendelssohn, who published barely a dozen piano sonatas among them, each wrote many character pieces, often arranged into collections or cycles that rival sonatas in large-scale structural complexity. Each of these composers had a different approach to the character piece. Broadly speaking, we might say that Liszt's musical imagination was more visual, Schumann's more literary, and Chopin's and Mendelssohn's more purely musical in the sense articulated by Hanslick.

FRANZ LISZT

Among Liszt's greatest collections of piano pieces were the three volumes of *Années de pèlerinage* (Years of Pilgrimage), inspired by places, literary works, and ideas he had encountered in his wide travels as a virtuoso. Composed, revised, and published over a period of almost fifty years, from 1835 to 1883, they form a musical counterpart to some of the letters discussed in the Chapter 5. Many of the pieces in the *Années de pèlerinage* are landscape images translated into musical terms. As such they partake in the appeal to visual culture that we examined in connection with French grand opera in Chapter 4. They also show Liszt engaging with music's sister arts of landscape poetry and painting.

While both Liszt and Schumann organize their piano pieces into groups, Schumann's pieces tend to be briefer, more fragmentary in nature than Liszt's. They are intended to be played not on their own, but as a sequence. Schumann's sets are cycles rather than collections, in that, as with the cyclic form of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* discussed earlier, and as in Schumann's song cycle *Dichterliebe* (to be discussed below), musical material from the beginning can return at the end, and there are other motivic or thematic connections among the pieces. Throughout the piano cycles, especially the earlier ones, Schumann makes much use of the shorter binary forms characteristic of the waltzes and other dances of Schubert, a composer he much admired. All but one of the pieces in *Papillons* are in triple time.

FELIX MENDELSSOHN AND FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

Of the piano music of the generation of the 1830s, that of Mendelssohn and Chopin is falls closest to the "absolute" end of the spectrum. Mendelssohn's efforts in the character piece were focused on what he called *Lieder ohne Worte* (Songs without Words). Throughout his career, from 1830 to 1845, he composed 48 such pieces, which were published in eight volumes. Only five of the *Songs without Words* carry original titles provided by Mendelssohn. Three of them are called *Venetianisches Gondellied* (Venetian Gondolier's Song), and are in a rocking $\frac{6}{8}$ meter characteristic of the genre associated with such songs, the barcarolle. The other two are called simply *Duet* and *Folk Song*. The rest of the pieces have no inscriptions, and Mendelssohn seems to have conceived them without extramusical associations. When a friend wrote to Mendelssohn in 1842 wanting to know the specific meanings of pieces in the *Songs without Words* (and suggesting his own interpretations), Mendelssohn refused to provide any. He responded:

> What the music I love expresses to me are thoughts not too *indefinite* for words, but rather too *definite*. . . . And if I happen to have had a specific word or specific words in mind for one or another of these songs, I can never divulge them to anyone, because the same word means one thing to one person and something else to another, because only the song alone can say the same thing, can arouse the same feelings in one person as in another—a feeling which is not, however, expressed by the same words. (SR 161:1201; SR 6/14:159)

For Mendelssohn, music can communicate feelings more successfully without words or any extramusical assistance. It has a kind of universality that verbal language lacks. Mendelssohn's position might seem to put him in line with Hanslick, whom we discussed above. But Hanslick felt music was not capable of expressing feelings, only of arousing them in individual listeners. Nor are those feelings necessarily the same in each case. Mendelssohn believed that music can

actually manage to arouse the same feeling in each listener, which suggests that he believed there is something intrinsic in the music—definite but not capable of being put into words—that can accomplish that goal.

Chopin was, like Mendelssohn, reticent about associating words with his music. Chopin is distinctive among the generation of the 1830s in that almost his entire output as a composer is for solo piano, and mostly in the realm of the character piece. Arranged roughly in order from the briefest to the most expansive, Chopin's major solo piano works include 26 preludes, 58 mazurkas, 20 waltzes, 21 nocturnes, 27 études, 12 polonaises, four impromptus, four scherzos, four ballades, one fantasy, one berceuse, and one barcarolle, as well as two mature piano sonatas. A short list can scarcely begin to suggest the variety of technique, structure, and expression across this body of over 200 pieces in Chopin's oeuvre. The shortest preludes last less than thirty seconds, the longest Polonaise or the Fantasy about twelve minutes. Chopin uniquely captures the "character" of each genre. The mazurkas evoke a Polish dance in triple meter, in which the accent is shifted from the downbeat to the weaker second and third beats of the measure. The polonaises each feature in some way the specific rhythmic pattern of this other Polish dance. Chopin's waltzes often share the elegant rhythm and swirling figuration associated with that Viennese dance from earlier in the century.

Chopin composed his Preludes, Op. 24, as a kind of homage to J. S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* (1722, 1742). As in Bach, there are pieces in each of the 12 major and 12 minor keys. But Chopin transformed the model in important ways that reflect his Romantic imagination. Bach pairs every prelude with a fugue in the same key; in Chopin, each prelude stands alone and leads only to the next prelude. The twentieth-century writer André Gide claimed to be puzzled by this design:

> I admit that I do not understand the title that Chopin liked to give to these short *pieces*: Preludes. Preludes to what? Each of Bach's preludes is followed by its fugue; it is an integral part of it. But I find it hardly easier to imagine any one of these Preludes of Chopin followed by any other piece in the same key, be it by the same author, than all of these Preludes of Chopin played immediately one after the other. Each one of them is a prelude to a meditation.

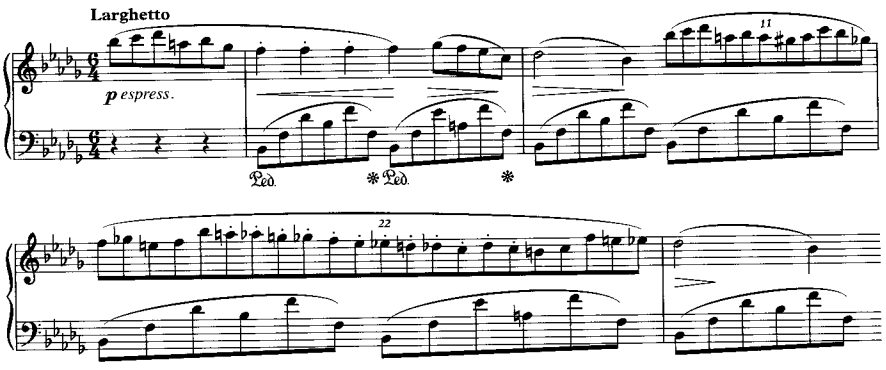
Indeed, Chopin's preludes unfold as a series of fragments in a constant state of becoming. The set is thus genuinely Romantic in the sense discussed in Chapter 2.

Chopin provided no program or inscription for his works, only a generic name. This is true even for the four ballades, whose titles might imply the narrative form of the poetic ballad, like Goethe's renowned *Erlkönig* (Erlking), set to music by Schubert in 1815. Chopin was the first composer to

write instrumental ballades. In his lifetime it was often claimed—by no less a critic than Schumann—that his ballades were directly inspired by the poetry of Adam Mickiewicz, a Polish compatriot and fellow exile in Paris. Chopin's Second Ballade, for example, was said to depict Mickiewicz's ballad *Switez*, in which Lithuanian women, whose village is being attacked by Russian soldiers of the tsar, are saved by being transformed into water lilies. There is no evidence from Chopin to support this association with the poem. Even though Chopin's ballade could be fitted to the larger plot outline of *Switez*, there are more "purely musical" ways (to use Hanslick's phrase) to explain the piece's broad narrative design of confrontation–mediation–transformation. These musical features involve strong contrasts of musical style and an opposition between two key areas, somewhat as in a sonata form. Like Mendelssohn, Chopin seemed to believe that instrumental music can be most expressive, and can even narrate, without any words or stories.

Many of Chopin's pieces are "songs without words," but in a sense different from Mendelssohn's. In the case of his nocturnes, the music often sings in the manner of Italian opera. Chopin was passionate about Bellini, especially the limpid, long-breathed, and highly ornamented melodies like that of the aria *Casta diva* from the opera *Norma* (see Chapter 4 and Anthology 3). One can almost imagine the theme of Chopin's early Nocturne in B♭ Minor, Op. 9, No. 1 (1830–32), emanating from the throat of a Bellini heroine. As in Bellini, the elaborate ornamentation is not incidental, but central to the melodic shape and dramatic effect (Ex. 6.4; see Anthology 9). This work has the basic nocturne texture of a theme draped over an arpeggiated accompaniment. Like most of Chopin's nocturnes, and like so many character pieces of the nineteenth century, the B♭-Minor Nocturne has a broad ABA' form. The contrasting middle section abandons the decorative melodic style for a simpler, more direct theme played in octaves.

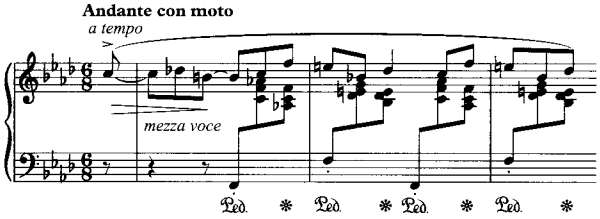
Example 6.4: *Chopin, Nocturne in B♭ Minor, Op. 9, No. 1, mm. 1–4*



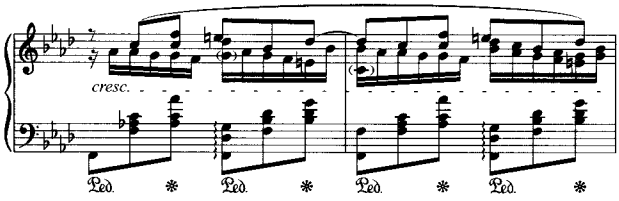
In Chopin's later works the chromaticism is more pervasive, occurring at several structural levels (theme, individual chord, larger tonal areas). The piano writing is often highly contrapuntal. We can consider briefly one example of Chopin's late style in the Fourth Ballade in F Minor, Op. 52, composed in 1842. A sonata-form model is recognizable (exposition with two contrasting themes, development, and recapitulation) but radically transformed by the unusual proportional relationships among the segments, blurred structural boundaries, and harmonic ambiguities. The piece has a distinctive "modular" structure in which musical components are reshuffled and juxtaposed rather than linked by logical progression. Despite thematic-formal returns, there is a continuous forward trajectory, as manifested in the increasingly contrapuntal texture of the main theme at each appearance (Ex. 6.5). When it is first heard the theme is given a simple bass-and-chord accompaniment (Ex. 6.5a). At the next presentation Chopin adds an inner voice moving urgently in sixteenth notes (Ex. 6.5b). The third appearance, at the beginning of the recapitulation, is still more radical. The theme begins away from the tonic key. Emerging almost imperceptibly out of the end of a cadenza-like passage, it is presented in spare imitative counterpoint, with no chordal accompaniment at all (Ex. 6.5c).

Example 6.5: *Chopin, Ballade No. 4 in F Minor, Op. 52*

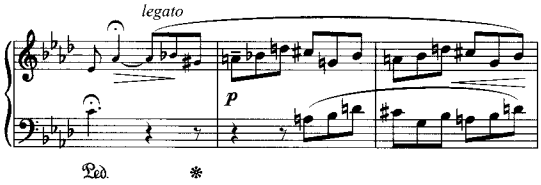
(a) mm. 8–10



(b) mm. 58–59



(c) mm. 135–137



There is no explicit story behind Chopin's Fourth Ballade, and the transformations of his main theme are very different from the explicitly program-driven modifications to which Berlioz subjects his *idée fixe* in the *Symphonie fantastique*. Yet Chopin's music "speaks" as powerfully as that of any of his contemporaries. It is as if with the increasingly polyphonic versions of the main theme Chopin is telling us that musical structures can become as complex as life itself, without ever losing their appeal or comprehensibility.

ROBERT SCHUMANN AND THE LIED

Finally in this chapter we turn to another way in which the generation of the 1830s made music speak—through song. As we saw in Chapters 2 and 3, the lied emerged as an important genre in Romanticism because of the strong affinity of some composers for high-quality lyric poetry. In the hands of Schubert, the lied developed into something more than the sum of its parts, words and music. The poet set most often by Schubert was Goethe, the leading figure of late Classicism. At the very end of his life Schubert turned to poems by the early Romantic Heinrich Heine, who would become the preferred poet of Schumann and also popular among other composers. As suggested in Chapter 2, Heine's poetry captured a new subjectivity, a more personal style that appealed to a younger generation.

Many Romantic composers contributed to the lied. Mendelssohn wrote about 70 solo songs, drawing on a wide range of poets including Goethe, Schiller, and Heine. Liszt composed about the same number, in a variety of languages including German, French, Italian, and Hungarian. Chopin did not show much interest in the genre, leaving only about 15 songs, set to Polish texts. In France, Berlioz created a small number of important *mélodies* (the analogue to lieder), including the first orchestral song cycle, *Les nuits d'été* (The Nights of Summer, 1841).

Among his contemporaries, Schumann emerged as the greatest and most prolific composer of lieder, one who lifted the genre to new levels. Schumann wrote almost 250 solo songs, over half of them within his so-called *Liederjahr* (Year of Song), 1840. This was the year in which he was finally able to marry Clara Wieck, overcoming a long process of obstruction by Clara's father. The happy event released a flood of creativity in Schumann, mainly in the form of songs.

Among the works of 1840 are several song cycles analogous in scope and ambition to Schumann's piano cycles of the 1830s, and also worthy as successors to Schubert's song cycles *Die schöne Müllerin* and *Winterreise*, discussed briefly in Chapter 3. Schumann wrote two cycles on poems of Heine: the *Liederkreis* (Song Cycle), Op. 24, and *Dichterliebe* (Poet's Love), Op. 48. Two other important song cycles of 1840 are the *Liederkreis*, Op. 39, set to the poetry of Joseph Eichendorff; and *Frauenliebe und -leben* (A Woman's Love and Life), Op. 42, which sets the poems of Adalbert von Chamisso.