The Musical *Bildungsroman*:

The Wanderer Motif in Robert Schumann's Piano Compositions

by

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Contents

Introduction

This thesis examines the connection between the concept of the Romantic Wanderer and the formal and harmonic structures of Schumann's piano compositions. The two interlocking parts comprise the study. Part I provides a comprehensive background for Schumann's mature musical style, and starts with the genesis of the Wanderer in its social and cultural context, followed by an overview of Schubert's incorporation of the Wanderer in his musical works. The subsequent section offers a biography of Schumann between 1810 and 1840, and crystallizes into the central argument of my thesis: the concept of the Wanderer in Schumann's music derives from the Romantic ideal of *Bildung*, which facilitates a process of reflection that mediates between the listener and the composer.

Part II of my thesis analyzes Schumann's wanderer motif through a musico-literary lens. It focuses on the literary styles and techniques of E.T.A. Hoffmann and Jean Paul, two of Schumann's favorite authors, and examines how Schumann uses these literary techniques in a musical context. *Kreisleriana* serves as the primary example of the section, but I also incorporate other compositions in the analysis. The first two chapters of the section discusses the motif of the circle and its connection to irony. The following chapter analyzes Romantic fragments as an aesthetic ideal and as a compositional technique. By approaching Schumann's music as a literary *Bildungsroman*, I aim to reveal that his Wanderer has an extramusical presence.

On a cautionary note, this interpretation does not imply that Schumann's music is programmatic in nature. In a famous review of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*, Schumann himself criticized programmatic music for "leading the imagination of the audience too 'explicitly,' and therefore 'the music had no life.'"[1] Hence, my goal in the next section is not to

[1] John MacAuslan, *Schumann's Music and E.T.A. Hoffmann's Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 79.

offer a literal reading of Schumann's music but rather to discuss musico-literary associations based on my own understanding of his piano compositions and my experience as a performer. Schumann's music suggests rather than tells. In his own words, "it is erroneous to suppose that composers avail themselves of pen and paper with none other than the ignoble intention of describing or painting this or that…When music-related elements contain within themselves thoughts and images tonally produced, the expressive character of the composition will be the more poetic or the more plastic as the case may be."[2]

Part I—The Making of Schumann's Wanderer

The Wanderer in Nineteenth-Century Germany

With the popularization of Romanticism in the early nineteenth century, the activity of *wandern* became a national pastime.[3] Nomadism, previously considered a lowly form of existence, became a chosen lifestyle among members of the German bourgeois class.[4] By midcentury, the wanderer archetype had pervaded contemporary literary and artistic scenes. In the meantime, the musical symbol of the wanderer took shape in the German lieder.[5] Between 1815 and 1824, Schubert set eighty-two Goethe poems to music, which includes five *Wanderlieder*—songs that feature dispossessed, alienated wandering protagonists. These song

[2] In the same review, Schumann criticizes Berlioz for providing a program for his instrumental masterpiece: "There is something unseemly and charlatan-like about such guideposts…One prefers to be spared the intimacies of the genius' workshop—the origin of creation, the tools and the secrets. After all, even nature betrays a certain delicacy by covering roots with earth." *The Musical World of Robert Schumann: A Selection from His Own Writings*, ed. and trans. Henry Pleasants (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), 85.
[3] Theodore Gish, " 'Wanderlust' and 'Wanderleid': The Motif of the Wandering Hero in German Romanticism," *Studies in Romanticism* 3, no. 4 (Summer 1964): 226.
[4] Lorraine Byrne Bodley, "Challenging the Context: Reception and Transformation in 'Der Musensohn,'" in *Rethinking Schubert*, ed. Lorraine Byrne Bodley and Julian Horton (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 439.
[5] Gish, "Wanderlust and Wanderleid," 226.

settings marked the transformation of German society and highlighted the important role of the wanderer motif in Romantic culture.[6]

The wanderer motif was closely associated with the ethical ideal of *Bildung* (self-realization). Characterized by Friedrich Schlegel as "the highest good, and the source of everything useful,"[7] the term *Bildung* connotes the "development of something potential, inchoate, and implicit into something actual, organized, and explicit."[8] In practice, it entailed educational reform. The goal of *Bildung* was to cultivate one's sensibility, especially the power to perceive the beauty of the world. Such education would allow individuals to unite themselves, others, and nature into a cohesive whole, the highest good and the ultimate goal of self-realization.[9]

To nineteenth-century academics, traveling was the key to self-education. Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister Lehrjahre* (1795–96) is the best-known example of *Bildungsroman*, a literary genre that grows from the ideal of *Bildung* and relates the educational process of a young man and his psychological and moral development. The novel tells the story of Wilhelm Meister, an idealistic youth and theater enthusiast who, against his father's wishes, undertakes an unpremeditated journey in pursuit of a theatrical career after a failed romance with the actress Mariane. Over the course of his wandering, he joins a nomadic acting troupe, performing feats such as playing the title role in a production of *Hamlet*. Through much strife and strange encounters, Wilhelm is finally enlisted as a member of the Society of Tower, where he discovers the true nature of his journey and subsequently completes his "apprenticeship."

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[6] Bodley, "Challenging the Context," 438.
[7] Frederick C. Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 88.
[8] Ibid., 26.
[9] Ibid., 92.

The publication of *Wilhelm Meister* inspired numerous other novels of similar genres, such as Ludwig Tieck's 1798 *Künstlerroman* titled *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen*, and Novalis's 1802 novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. Furthermore, *Wilhelm Meister*'s influence was not confined to literature alone; in the same year of its publication, Goethe's *Bildungsroman* immediately caught the attention of composer Friedrich Zelter, who set five of its poems to music.[10] Later on, Beethoven composed two *Wilhelm Meister* settings in 1808 and 1810 respectively. In 1826, Schubert published a song cycle, *Gesänge aus* "*Wilhelm Meister*," which sets the Harper and Mignon poems in the novel to music. The influence of Goethe's masterpiece extended to the mid-nineteenth century; in 1849, Robert Schumann fashioned all the poems into a unified song cycle in the style of a miniature opera.[11] Musical treatments of the wanderer archetype thus first appeared with the German lieder.

The prevalence of the wanderer motif in contemporary music, art and literature was also a result of social disillusionment. In particular, advancements in natural science during the nineteenth century led to an increased sense of existential isolation.[12] Reactions against a modern, scientific view of nature constituted the theme for Caspar David Friedrich's 1818 painting *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*, which captured the society's fascination with primordial mysticism and celebrated nature as the unfathomable. Friedrich's wanderer confronted the limits of a human's point of view, and made visible the sublimity of a natural force that human judgement could not measure.[13]

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[10] Jack M. Stein, "Musical Settings of the Songs from Wilhelm Meister," *Comparative Literature* 22, no. 2 (1970): 125–46.
[11] John Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a New Poetic Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 428.
[12] William Kinderman, "Wandering Archetypes in Schubert's Instrumental Music," *19th-Century Music* 21, no. 2 (Autumn 1997): 208.
[13] Julian Jason Haladyn, "Friedrich's Wanderer: Paradox of the Modern Subject," *Canadian Art Review* 41, no. 1 (2016): 47.

Thus, the early German Romantics believed in the sovereignty of art. Through aesthetic experience, observers of art become Friedrich's wanderer, who perceives the infinite in the finite.[14] The century of Romantic art was also the age of subjectivity. Art cultivates one's senses and romanticizes one's experiences "through the inspiring power of love," thus allowing its practitioner to realize the concept of *Bildung*.[15] The artistic experience detaches itself from its sources in the real world and creates a coherent fictional universe that runs parallel to reality. Hence, Romantic music, art and literature assumed an autonomous status.[16] The notion of artistic independence, in the meantime, gave rise to the sentiment of nostalgia and alienation; within its imaginary world, the piece of art itself becomes the Romantic Wanderer, distancing itself from reality yet longing to be reconciled with the past.

Therefore, the essence of Romantic art, music, and literature lies in the juxtaposition of conflicting emotions. In particular, a fear of existential isolation accompanies the desire for individual autonomy, and the yearning for liberation clashes with the hope for a sense of belonging. Often in Goethe's and Hoffmann's literature, the wandering protagonist is tortured by these irreconcilable desires, and embarks on a journey of solitude with the sweet but painful memory of a lost home or a distant beloved. The Romantic paradox manifests itself in the musical practices of two composers—Franz Schubert (1797–1828) and Robert Schumann (1810–1856). Schubert was a Romantic with deep Classical roots; while his earlier compositions and smaller-scale character pieces encapsulate the essence of Classical symmetry, his later instrumental works deviate from his earlier practices and are expansive in scale. His music depicts the wanderer's duality of experience by juxtaposing contrasting themes and linking them

[14] Beiser, *Romantic Imperative*, 73.
[15] Ibid., 30.
[16] Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 78.

with abrupt modulations.[17] Schumann's music, on the other hand, portrays the conflict between the wanderer's internal and external worlds by challenging the Classical practice of temporal linearity.[18] His early piano cycles break traditional musical units into fragments and rearrange them through poetic means. Therefore, these pieces have a distinct pedagogical nature, compelling their listeners to take part in a process of self-reflection, allowing their subjective experiences to take shape independently from the composer's subjective world.

Schubert's Wanderer

Absolute music of the early nineteenth century embodies the concept of *Bildung* in concrete form. E.T.A. Hoffmann considered pure instrumental music to be "the most romantic of all arts… one might almost say the only that is genuinely romantic, since its only subject-matter is infinity."[19] A successor to Beethoven's Romantic spirit, Schubert was the first to introduce the wanderer motif to the instrumental genre. His genius lies in the ability to mold dissimilar musical materials into an organic whole. A piece by Schubert often consists of several complete and self-contained thematic ideas linked by abrupt modulation, their keys often presenting chromatic-third relationships. In conventional forms such as sonatas, rondos, and theme-and-variations, restatement of the primary thematic material in flat-side keys unifies a piece through cyclic organization.[20] This compositional technique allows Schubert to create music of substantial scale, as typical in his late instrumental works.

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[17] Kinderman, "Franz Schubert's 'New Style' and the Legacy of Beethoven," in *Rethinking Schubert*, 41.
[18] Discussed further in the next chapter.
[19] *Kreisleriana,* in *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings: Kreisleriana, The Poet and the Composer, Music Criticism,* ed. David Charlton, trans. Martyn Clarke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 96.
[20] Charles Fisk, *Returning Cycles: Contexts for the Interpretation of Schubert's Impromptus and Last Sonatas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 12.

Because of their expansive cyclic structures, Schubert's instrumental works are musical representations of the wanderer archetype. The 1822 Fantasie in C Major for Solo Piano (D. 760) offers an excellent initial example, because it famously incorporates the wanderer motif by combining the vocal and instrumental genres. The theme of the second movement is adapted from the melody of the third stanza from his 1816 song "*Der Wanderer*," which is based on the following lyrics by Georg Philipp Schmidt von Lübeck (1766–1849):

> *Die Sonne dünkt mich hier so kalt,*
> *Die Blüte welk, das Leben alt,*
> *Und was sie reden, leerer Schall;*
> *Ich bin ein Fremdling überall.*
>
> The sun seems to me here so cold,
> The flowers withered, the life old,
> And what they say is hollow sound;
> Because I am a stranger all-around.

The dotted rhythms in the song melody, which also appear in the themes of each individual movement of the fantasy, vividly portray the wanderer's relentless footsteps. The abrupt modulations and unpredicted progressions can be interpreted as frequent changes of scenery and paths. The clash of C-major and C-sharp-minor themes in the first two movements seems to express the conflict between the wanderer's inner and outer worlds. Finally, the music's tendency to linger in flat-keyed sections can be understood as the wanderer's reluctance to leave his dream world and confront the external reality.[21] Thus, pure musical elements of the fantasy create a wanderer's narrative in the absence of text.

Schubert's penchant for the genre of fantasy characterizes the last two years of his compositional activities. Defined by Nicholas Marston as "a single movement containing a

[21] Kinderman, "Franz Schubert's 'New Style,'" 41.

number of discrete and often radically contrasting sections,"[22] fantasy is a musical analogue of the literary *Bildungsroman*.[23] Composed in 1827 and 1828 respectively, both the Fantasie in C for Violin and Piano (D. 934) and the Fantasia in F minor for Piano Four Hands (D. 940) link separate movements with musical transitions. The former piece, in particular, employs many compositional techniques described in the last paragraph, including juxtaposition of the "wanderer" keys (C major and C sharp minor) and quotation of a previously composed lied. In the climactic build-up at the end of the second movement, a sequence of ascending fifths breaks the C-major tonal center of the first two movements. The following section modulates to G sharp minor, the minor dominant of C sharp minor. When respelled as A flat minor, the key foreshadows the A-flat-major tonal center of the third movement. The subsequent variation theme is a recomposition of the lied *Sei mir gegrüsst*, which, again, generates the melodic and harmonic motives that appear in the themes of each movement, though in a subtler fashion.[24] In addition, the violin fantasy expresses the conflict between the wanderer's inner and external worlds by juxtaposing tragic and ironic sentiments. The serious, lyrical construction of the fantasy is paired with an ostentatiously virtuosic style that is against "the subjectivity of Schubert the song composer," whose approach to musical composition is usually anti-virtuosic.[25] As a result, the piece as a whole evokes a sense of alienation.

In pieces of other genres, Schubert also employs the compositional techniques that he uses for the Fantasies. The 1827 E-flat Major Piano Trio (D. 929), for instance, establishes an

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[22] Nicholas Marston, *Cambridge Music Handbooks: Schumann Fantasie, Op. 17* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 26.
[23] Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 239.
[24] Patrick McCreless, "A Candidate for the Canon? A New Look at Schubert's Fantasie in C Major for Violin and Piano," *19-Century Music* 20, no. 3 (Spring 1997): 230.
[25] McCreless argues that "whatever the subjectivity is present [in the fantasy] far removed from the subjectivity of Schubert the song composer… The subject experiencing that alienation is the lonely virtuoso in the glitter of the concert hall, not the wandering minstrel looking into bourgeois society from the outside," idem.

expansive musical structure with an "isorhythmic" variation technique, forming a wide array of melodic phrases by joining variants of a single rhythmic pattern.[26] This technique is applied to the opening theme of the first movement, which consists of rhythmic variations of a four-note gesture in which two longer notes are followed by two shorter ones (fig. 1). Four of such groups are illustrated in the Appendix below. In groups C and D, the same rhythmic motif appears with slightly altered instrumentation. These two groups consist of a reversed rhythmic pattern, in which the eighth notes are followed by two quarter notes. While measures 1–4 comprise a melodic phrase of conventional structure, the melodic gestures in measures 5–10 are incomplete fragments. Thus, the overall phrase in measures 1–12 is asymmetrical. The same variation technique is used to construct the entire piece, creating an elaborate yet coherent musical narrative.

Current music scholarship considers Schubert's aesthetic of asymmetry to be quintessentially Romantic.[27] Since his compositions occupied a transitional period of music history, they bear traits of both Classical objectivity and Romantic subjectivity. Schubert's music speaks the language of the wanderer, and his unique compositional style made an immediate, profound, and enduring effect on the next generation of Romantic composers. The concepts of asymmetry, alienation and subjectivity would soon become crucial themes in the music of Schumann, Chopin, and Brahms. Sadly, Schubert never enjoyed the fruit of his musical achievements during his lifetime; on November 19, 1828, the then-thirty-one-year-old composer passed away in relative obscurity. Nevertheless, the news of his death devastated an eighteen-year-old law student at University of Leipzig. A most fervent admirer of the late composer, the

[26] John Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann and Brahms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002),19–23.
[27] Personal conversations with pianist Andrew Harley, summer 2018.

student would soon play a pivotal role in the history of Western music, as the wanderer's spirit passed on to him.

Schumann's Self-Education

Schumann was representative of the Romantic ideal largely because he was, "of all composers of his generation, the least professional."[28] In contrast to Bach, Mozart, Schubert and Mendelssohn, Schumann was not a child prodigy, nor did he belong to a family of music practitioners. Born to a middle-class household on June 10, 1810, Schumann was perhaps the first great composer after Handel who gained his place in the elite music circle of the day by his own efforts. In his childhood home, the practice of music was merely a bourgeois indulgence, an activity in accordance with the public conception that musical education was a beneficial, yet nonessential component in the life of a learned man.[29] Hence, Schumann's later ascendency to prominence in the contemporary music scene was a most successful example of *Bildung* in practice.

At the age of seven, Schumann started piano lessons with Johann Gottfried Kuntsch, a local organist who was himself only an amateur player.[30] Schumann's formal musical training did not start until 1828, the year in which he quit law for music and subsequently studied under Friedrich Wieck in Leipzig. These piano lessons, however, proved to be short-lived, as Schumann permanently injured his right thumb merely three years later and thus gave up the hope of becoming a concert pianist. Determined to pursue a musical career regardless, Schumann began his first and only formal training in composition with Heinrich Dorn in 1831. Although

[28] Leon Botstein, "History, Rhetoric, and the Self: Robert Schumann and Music Making in German-Speaking Europe, 1800–1860," in *Schumann and His World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 6.
[29] Idem.
[30] Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 21.

these lessons came to a total halt in less than a year, the then-twenty-one-year-old youth nevertheless embarked on a lifelong journey in pursuit of an artistic profession.

Fortunately, Schumann's remarkable gift for self-education compensated for a lack of systematic musical training. He inherited his passion for literature from his father, August Schumann, a book dealer, lexicographer, and writer of chivalric romances who firmly believed in "the positive force of Enlightenment, *Bildung*, and the liberal spirit."[31] Already a precocious reader in 1825, the then-fifteen-year-old Schumann founded a *Literarischer Verein*, a literary club devoted to the study of German poetry, prose, and biographies of distinguished men.[32] Jean Paul, one of the authors explored by the group, became the subject of Schumann's self-designed study in 1827. The bizarre, fantastic, and disorienting quality of Jean Paul's prose made a lasting impression on the budding young musician. In a diary entry for August 4, 1828, Schumann expressed his immense fascination with the eccentric author: "Jean Paul has seldom appeased but always enchanted me; and although an element of dissatisfaction, like an eternal melancholy, resides in this enchantment, I feel afterward a sense of inner well-being comparable to that of a rainbow arching over the heavens in the wake of a storm."[33]

Around this time, Schumann was also reveling in the compositions of Schubert, whom he believed to be the musical counterpart of Jean Paul. In a letter to Friedrich Wieck, Schumann writes: "Schubert is still my 'one and only' Schubert, especially since he has everything in common with my 'one and only' Jean Paul; when I play Schubert, it's as if I were reading a novel 'composed' by Jean Paul."[34] Schumann's commitment to this comparison never

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[31] Ibid., 20.
[32] Ibid., 24.
[33] *Tagebücher, Band 1: 1827–1838*, ed. George Eismann (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag fur Musik, 1971), quoted in Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 25.
[34] Letter of November 6, 1829, in *Jugendbriefe von Robert Schumann*, ed. Clara Schumann (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1886), quoted in Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 24.

diminished. In his famous 1840 review of Schubert's C-major Symphony, he celebrated the piece as "a fat novel in four volumes by Jean Paul—never-ending, and if only that the reader may go on creating in the same vein afterwards. How refreshing is their sense of inexhaustible wealth where with others one always fears the ending, troubled by a presentiment of ultimate disappointment."[35]

Inspired by Schubert and Jean Paul, Schumann tried his hand at his first serious literary projects—*Hottentottiana*, a diary that he kept from May 1828 to April 1830, and "Die Tonwelt," an essay written in late summer 1828. These pages marked Schumann's earliest attempt at music criticism. Though conceived as a diary, *Hottentottiana* has a peculiar semi-public character, its content ranging from autobiographical sketches to aesthetic ruminations on music and literature. Similarly, "Die Tonwelt" consists of a systematic formulation of Schumann's musical ideology, which centers on the notion that "music is the most nearly autonomous of the arts, the freest from material constraints."[36] Schumann's early literary efforts motivated his lifelong goal to unite the roles of artist and critic. The musical aesthetic delineated in these early pages shaped the foundation of Schumann's mature compositional style and his later critical activity. Thus, as Liszt claimed, Schumann "played a dual role in the musical art… his talents could converse in two languages—words and tones—with the same clarity, if not intensity… in him the two arts were fused into one… and their powers were doubled."[37]

1828 also marked the year of Schumann's debut as a composer. His first piece, the *VIII Polonaises* for piano four hands, directly grew out of Schubert's variations and polonaises for piano four hands (D. 824, 599).[38] In the midst of his literary activities, Schumann started

[35] "Schubert's Symphony in C," in *Musical World of Robert Schumann*, 166.
[36] Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 39–44.
[37] Franz Liszt, "Robert Schumann (1855)," trans. Christopher Anderson, in *Schumann and His World*, 341.
[38] Daverio, *Crossing Paths*, 15.

working on a C-minor piano quartet in imitation of Schubert merely days before the latter's untimely death. The musical language of the quartet recalls that of Schubert's E-flat-major Piano Trio, a piece first heard by Schumann on November 30, 1828.[39] In fact, many of Schumann's mature compositional outputs bear signs of Schubertian influence. The Piano Trio, for example, served as the model for two of Schumann's compositions in the same key—namely, the popular piano quintet (op. 44) and its close relative, the piano quartet (op. 47). In addition, Schumann's poignant Fantasie in C (op. 17) is influenced by Schubert's "Wanderer" Fantasy. Finally, echoes of Schubert's C-major Symphony are audible in Schumann's symphony in the same key (op. 61).[40]

Owing to the influence of the late composer, Schumann finally found his place in the contemporary musical world. In the next decade, he developed a unique musical voice of his own. Schumann's lack of formal musical training freed him from the constraints of traditional compositional practices. Equipped with a talent for self-education, an inextinguishable passion for the literary art and immense fascination with the Romantic spirit of Schubert and Jean Paul, he felt compelled to innovate. In a way, Schumann's individuality as a composer is a direct consequence of his approach to musical art from an outsider's perspective. Despite his tremendous respect for Schubert and Jean Paul, the budding young composer eventually found his best mentor in himself.

Thus, it comes as no surprise that the mature musical styles of Schubert and Schumann are fundamentally different. Despite Schubert's historical status as an early Romantic, most of his works retain the Classical ideal of balance and clarity in terms of melody, harmonic

[39] Ibid., 19–31.
[40] Ibid., 18.

language, texture, and usage of traditional phrase structures.[41] While commenting on Schubert's dependence on the Mozartian tradition, Charles Rosen accurately claims that Schubert's late instrumental works are essentially based on conventional Viennese models in expanded form.[42] By contrast, Schumann's music bears a purely Romantic character. Likened to "narratives or cycles of interconnected lyrical poems" by the nineteenth-century critic Franz Brendel, Schumann's compositions link collages of fragmented ideas with poetic threads.[43] His earliest published works strive for "characteristic" expression of independent ideas and emotional states, demonstrating complete rejection of Classical unity and integration.[44]

Further, Brendel's description hints at a most important element of Schumann's compositional technique—the treatment of music as a literary art. Schumann's extravagant and almost indecipherable musical language, which later became a subject of much contemporary criticism, reminds us of Jean Paul's long-winded prose, which, according to Thomas Carlyle, "groans with indescribable metaphors… flowing onward not like a river, but an inundation, circling in complex eddies, chafing and gurgling now this way, now that, [until] the proper current sinks out of view amid the boundless uproar."[45] In an 1838 letter to his fiance Clara Wieck, Schumann himself acknowledged the esoteric nature of his music as a result of his interdisciplinary approach to composition: "Everything that goes on in the world affects me, politics, literature, people—I think about everything in my own way, and I have to express my feelings, and then I find an outlet in music. That's why many of my compositions are so difficult

[41] Botstein, "Schubert in History," in *Franz Schubert and His World*, ed. Christopher H. Gibbs and Morten Solvik (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 306.
[42] Rosen, "Schubert and the Example of Mozart," in *Schubert the Progressive: History, Performance Practice, Analysis*, ed. Brian Newbould (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2003), 5.
[43] Franz Brendel, "Robert Schumann with Reference to Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and the Development of Modern Music in General (1845)," trans. Jürgen Thym, in *Schumann and His World*, 320.
[44] Idem.
[45] Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 36.

to understand; they relate to distant, often significant concerns because all the strange things in this age touch me, and I must then express them musically."[46] To summarize, Schumann's music is a most honest representation of Romantic subjectivity. It fuses an artist's inward sensibility with "the most abundant fantasy,"[47] resulting in an outpouring of fragmented musical ideas in a seemingly arbitrary sequence. In the end, Schumann's music profoundly challenged the aesthetic ideal of Classical objectivity.

The Wanderer's Educational Journey

In his 2007 essay on the origins of musical modernity, Karol Berger defines the Classical style by the linear construction of musical time, and observes that the meaning of a work depends on the temporal order in which musical events occur.[48] Following Berger's observation, I propose that the understanding of the wanderer motif in Schubert's late instrumental works likewise relies on the concept of "time's arrow." The wanderer motif persists in these works because of its specific musical associations. In particular, restatements of themes allegorize the wanderer's many returns;[49] submediant tonal areas represent the wanderer's internal experiences; musical quotations evoke a sense of nostalgia; modulations to distant keys create the impression of alienation. The temporal locations of these specific musical events allow Schubert to convey the wanderer's narrative through purely musical means. If the submediant area of a sonata movement is introduced before the tonic area, for instance, the wanderer's narrative would

[46] Letter of April 15, 1838, in *The Complete Correspondence of Clara and Robert Schumann,* vol. 1, ed. Eva Weissweiler, trans. Hildegard Fritsch and Ronald L. Crawford (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 150.
[47] Brendel, "Robert Schumann," 323.
[48] Karol Berger, *Bach's Cycle, Mozart's Arrow: An Essay on the Origins of Musical Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 7.
[49] Jeffrey Perry, "The Wanderer's Many Returns: Schubert's Variations Reconsidered," *The Journal of Musicology* 19, no. 2 (2002): 374–416.

inevitably fall apart. As a consequence of the linear temporal structure of Schubert's music, the listeners can, to a certain degree, anticipate the wanderer's musical and psychological development. Classical syntax thus contributes to a teleological narrative that predetermines the fate of the wandering protagonist. Therefore, Schubert's wanderer is a passive journeyman.

In contrast, Schumann's approach to portraying the wanderer does not rely on the temporal organization of musical events to the same extent. The fragmentary construction of his early piano cycles breaks the linear trajectory of time's arrow. Rather, his wanderer manifests itself through extramusical means. In order to decipher the wanderer's narrative in Schumann's early piano cycles, one must consider the literary nature of these character pieces. His music takes part in a larger cultural movement aimed at the emancipation of the subjective self. The role of the aesthetic "was to inspire the reader, the observer, the draftsman, the player, the listener, the writer to recognize their interior freedom of the individual."[50] Thus, to impart the spirit of *Bildung* to his audience, Schumann refuses to dictate a definite path for the wanderer's journey.

Carl Koßmaly, one of the original members of the *Davidsbund*, once claimed that Schumann's music inspires "several different interpretations of the same work, each one eminently sensible, appropriate, intelligent, and capable, as it were, of opening some new door to understanding and providing the key to hitherto hidden secrets the spirit."[51] In Schumann's music, *Bildung* is the key to the unveiling of the wanderer's path. The role of the wandering protagonist is played by an actively engaging audience. Through the act of listening, one becomes the hero of a literary *Bildungsroman*, exercising his or her free will in Schumann's

[50] Botstein, "History, Rhetoric, and the Self," 13.
[51] Carl Koßmaly, "On Robert Schumann's Piano Compositions (1844)," trans. Susan Gillespie, in *Schumann and His World,* 313.

musico-poetic world. The spirit of the wanderer derives from a process of reflection that mediates between one's internal world and the external universe that surrounds it.

Part II—*Kreisleriana* and Schumann's Musico-Poetic World

The Motif of the Circle

Composers of a newer generation, when stirred by a desire for innovation, often seek to revive musical styles from the past. From an early stage of his career, Schumann's compositional practice had been closely linked to that of the Baroque style. In March 1838, Schumann committed to serious contrapuntal study of Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier; a month later, the material for *Kreisleriana* (op. 16) took shape in merely four days. In the following decade, Schumann regarded *Kreisleriana* as his best composition. In a letter from 1839 to Simonin de Sire, he identified the literary source of the masterpiece: "The title can only be understood by Germans. Kreisler is an eccentric, wild and gifted Kapellmeister, a character created by E.T.A. Hoffmann."[52]

Schumann's title comes directly from Hoffmann's *Kreisleriana* section of *Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier*, a collection of novellas, short stories, satirical essays and musical criticism. The thirteen essays in *Kreisleriana* establish many beliefs still held today, including the idea of Bach as the father of modern music, the idea of Beethoven as the first Romantic composer, the notion that music as the highest art form must express the inexpressible, and that empty virtuosity betrays the nature of true art.[53] Johannes Kreisler, Hoffmann's literary *Doppelgänger*, supposedly scribbled some of these humorous essays in pencil "on the plain reverse-side of

[52] Quoted from John C. Tippetts, *Schumann: A Chorus of Voices* (Bradford: Amadeus Press, 2010), 196.
[53] David Charlton, ed., *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, 1.

several sheets of music" before his unexplained disappearance.[54] Hence, it is plausible that Schumann found his own image in the ingenious Kapellmeister, and the Doppelgänger nature of Kreisler motivated him to construct the pair of alter egos Florestan and Eusebius.[55]

With Kreisler's name and character, Hoffmann establishes the motif of the circle.[56] Of his name, the Kapellmeister himself explains:

> It will make you think of the wonderful circles in which our whole being moves and from which we cannot escape no matter how we try. The circler circles in these circles, and it may well be that, exhausted by the St. Vitus dance which he is forced to perform, disputing with the dark, unfathomable power which circumscribes these circles, having a constitutionally weak stomach, he longs to escape.[57]

Kreisler's experience with the philistine society conflicts with his utopian dream for an artistic existence. More importantly, the symbolic circularity of Kreisler's narrative may have shaped the musical-temporal circularity of Schumann's *Kreisleriana*. The design of the title page to the first edition arranges the letters K-R-E-I-S-L-E-R-I-A-N-A in a circular fashion, which directly calls Berger's concept of "time's cycle" to mind (fig. 2). The collection of character pieces itself could be construed as a Baroque suite. For instance, the monophonic triplet figurations in the middle of movement 1 create a prelude-like texture; dance forms comprise the second half of the piece; movements 5 and 7 directly employ contrapuntal techniques such as fugato and imitation; finally, the dotted figures in 6/8 in movement 8 are primary features of the Baroque gigue.[58]

The last movement of *Kreisleriana* exemplifies the shaping of a circular musical time. The movement is in sonata-rondo form. The primary thematic material appears three times and

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[54] *Kreisleriana*, 80.
[55] Susanne Hoy-Draheim, "Robert Schumann und E.T.A. Hoffmann," in *Schumann Forschungen, Band 4: Schumann und seine Dichter* (Mainz: Schott, 1991), 62.
[56] The literal translation of *Kreis* is "circle."
[57] *The Life and Opinions of Kater Murr,* vol. 2 of *Selected Writings of Hoffmann*, trans. Leonard J. Kent and Elizabeth C. Knight (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 59.
[58] Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 167.

are interspersed with two interludes, which are built upon the same rhythmic motif. However, there is no clearly perceptible transition between disparate sections, nor is there a sense of finality at the end of each section. The movement's compositional technique thus deviates from conventional Classical practices, which identify closure as the single most important factor in articulating musical form.[59] In traditional constructions, the endings of a teleological musical structure serve to clarify the relationships between temporal phases and to integrate these phases into a cohesive whole.[60] Hence, the movement's lack of defined cadences results in *Kreisleriana*'s fragmented narrative.

To distort the linear construction of the sonata-rondo structure, Schumann incorporates a static harmonic scheme featuring series of unresolved dissonances in the bass. For instance, the statement of the first theme (mm. 1–24) consists of three phrases; the first and the last end with perfect authentic cadences in measure 7 and measure 24 respectively; the middle ends with a proper cadential gesture in measure 16, which resolves to tonic in the next measure (fig. 3). Following this relatively idiomatic exposition, each reprise of the theme features slightly misplaced chords in the left hand. For instance, the F-major octave in measure 13 appears beneath the passing E-flat-major chord in the right hand, thus augmenting the suspended dissonance in the previous measure. In measure 60, the same octave is placed half-a-measure early, beneath the leading tone of the F-major chord on the downbeat of measure 61, thus creating the effect of anticipation instead (fig. 4). Finally, the same octave appears with an accent in measure 127 and augments the effect of the anticipation with a vengeance (fig. 5). Though an average listener may hardly notice the chord's relocation, such metric displacement would surely induce audible changes in the melodic flow.

[59] Berger, *Bach's Cycle, Mozart's Arrow*, 181.
[60] Idem.

Similarly, Schumann disrupts the linear narrative by depriving cadences of their teleological function. In measure 55, a suspended pedal tone on D replaces the expected perfect authentic cadence. Nevertheless, the pedal tone could be interpreted as either a G-minor triad in second inversion or a D-major triad, therefore allowing the first phrase to end on the tonic and the subsequent phrase to start in the dominant key (fig. 4). In measure 124, a full bar of rest in the bass accompanies the same phrase ending. Still, the right hand melody in measures 124-25, which comprises notes from the G-minor and D-major triads, implies the transition from tonic to dominant even when the bass is absent (fig. 5). Therefore, Schumann is able to preserve the original harmonic scheme despite subtle changes in the bass line. As a result, harmony loses its teleological function. Because cadences and resolutions no longer serve as landmarks of phrasal segments, the listener cannot rely on harmonic tendencies to predict how the musical narrative unfolds. Schumann thus establishes a cyclic structure in which moments of the ending of a given segment are not anticipated by preceding music events. The theme of the movement may proceed indefinitely in repeat loops, forever engulfing the listener in its cyclic returns.

The Rhetoric of Irony

Schumann's compositional technique in the last movement of *Kreisleriana* promotes a kind of "experimental education" in line with Goethe's philosophy of circuitous approach to self-realization. By setting up the illusion of sonata-rondo form within a quasi-Baroque structure, *Kreisleriana* compels the audience to reassess their musical intuition. This technique is the musical counterpart of irony as a literary device, since it allows Schumann to confirm and negate a conventional musical form simultaneously.[61] In the following paragraphs, I will outline the use

[61] For a technical definition of irony as a literary technique, see Marika Finley, *The Romantic Irony of Semiotics: Friedrich Schlegel and the Crisis of Representation* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1988), 17.

of irony as a rhetorical device in a literary context, and then analyze its musical effect in *Kreisleriana* and other works.

Friedrich Schlegel, one of the leading Jena Romantics studied by Schumann's *Literarischer Verein*, provided a poetic characterization of irony in his famous collection of aphorisms:

> Irony is the form of paradox. Paradox is everything simultaneously good and great. Irony is the clear consciousness of eternal agility, of an infinitely teeming chaos.[62]

These characterizations express two crucial ideas. Firstly, the systems of the world are in a state of constant flux, and the role of irony is to resist the confinement brought by one's desire for "unequivocal closure."[63] Secondly, by allowing one to recognize the positive force of chaos, irony facilitates the process of *Bildung*. Schlegel's definitions justifiably influenced Jean Paul's later conception of *Witz*, which represents the "universal characteristic of the poetic mind."[64] A concrete explanation of *Witz* was offered in the *Vorschule der Ästhetik*, Jean Paul's well-known aesthetic treatise:

> If man, like the old theology, regards our mortal world from the celestial one: it passes by in its orbit, small and vain; but if, like humor, he measures the infinite world by the humble one: then that laughter is born, which yet contains greatness and pain.[65]

Like Schlegel's aphorisms, the above excerpt portrays "humor"—or Romantic irony[66]—as a product of the juxtaposition of two opposite perspectives: the subjective illusion of order and the objective reality of chaos. In the context of German Romanticism, I propose that this pair of

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[62] Friedrich Schlegel, "Critical Fragment 48" and "Idea 69," in *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 6, 100.
[63] Frederick Garber, "Sterne: Arabesques and Fictionality," in *Romantic Irony*, ed. Frederick Garber (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 1988), 37.
[64] Ernst Behler, "The Theory of Irony in German Romanticism," in *Romantic Irony*, 68.
[65] *Jean Paul: A Reader*, ed. Timothy J. Casey, trans. Erika Casey (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 253.
[66] Jean Paul's conception of humor agrees with Schlegel and other Romantics' conception of irony. Behler, "Theory of Irony," 68.

opposites represents the conflict between the wanderer's internal and external worlds. One could resolve this conflict by assuming the perspective of an ironist—an outsider who observes the wanderer's circle of constraint from a distance. The goal of *Bildung* is thus to be able to maintain a "clear consciousness" in the midst of an "infinitely teeming chaos." A concrete example of this process could be found in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*; the Society of Towers initially acts as the force of an ironist, intervening in the journey of a Romantic hero trapped in the circle of blind idealism; after Wilhelm Meister discovers the truth of the secret society, he becomes the ironist himself and steps out of the circle. By practicing *Bildung,* Wilhelm Meister becomes a "transcendental knower of ironic reversal" and subsequently completes his apprenticeship.[67]

Thus, Romantic irony is the gesture of a circler,[68] one who strives to disrupt the finite circle of confinement and acquires the "clear consciousness of eternal agility." The motif of the circle is present in most of Hoffmann's and Jean Paul's *Bildungsroman*. For instance, Hoffmann's Kreisler is a circler by name; Jean Paul's *Titan* and *Hesperus* use the image of the island as an ironic device. Physically, islands are areas of land of finite magnitude entirely surrounded by water; their physical characteristics thus provide basis for literary manifestations of irony. In *Hesperus*, the supposed narrator of the novel lives on the island of St. John in the East Indian waters and compiles a biography of the hero Viktor based on daily posts of secret governmental intelligence brought by a dog. The biographer deliberately presents a limited point of view, and in the end, both him and his characters turn out to be victims of a conspiracy. The four main characters of the biography enter the "island of union" and discover that they are four of the five sons of a monarch, while Jean Paul the narrator is revealed to be the fifth son. A similar situation also takes place in *Titan*, in which the hero Albano becomes acquainted with his

[67] Berel Lang, "The Limits of Irony," *New Literary History* 7, no. 3 (Summer 1996): 574–75.
[68] Garber, *Self, Text, and Romantic Irony: The Example of Byron* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 200.

mysterious past on the island *Isola Bella*. It is later revealed that Albano is actually a prince and was brought to the island as part of a political conspiracy of his supposed father, Gaspard, a powerful nobleman who seeks to unite his own house with that of the monarch. In each novel, the geographic separation of the island from the mainland prevents the characters from sharing a common perspective, thus encouraging chaotic scenarios to take place. The heroes in these novels eventually learn to be aware of the limitations of their worlds before discovering the truth of the greater world.

In addition to the image of the island, dance scenes are also frequently linked to the motif of the circle in Hoffmann's and Jean Paul's literature. For instance, Johannes Kreisler likens himself to a St. Vitus dancer, one who revels in the graceful circles of footsteps yet at the same time must endure an upset stomach.[69] In Jean Paul's *Flegeljahre*, the events of the novel culminate in a masked ball, during which the protagonists Walt and Vult exchange their disguises. Vult, a better dancer than his twin brother, is Walt's rival for Wina. However, when he dances with Wina under Walt's disguise, he succeeds only in confirming Wina's sole affection for Walt. Both the island and the dance scene are used to express the irony of confused identities. Just as dancers are confined to their choreography, Jean Paul's twin heroes are confined to their mutual misunderstanding. The dancers' cyclic footsteps emerge as a symbol for the wanderer's subjective desire for order and closure.

Through the dance scene, Schumann converts the literary device of irony to musical form. The final two chapters of *Flegeljahre* gave birth to Schumann's 1831 piano cycle *Papillons* (op. 2), the composer's only overtly programmatic instrumental work.[70] Consisting of

[69] See n. 58.
[70] Erika Reiman, *Schumann's Piano Cycles and the Novels of Jean Paul* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2004), 37.

twelve waltz numbers, the piece features mature dance styles first developed in *VIII Polonaises* and *Abegg Variations* (op. 1). Its compositional design reveals that Schumann's peculiar fondness for dance forms could be partially attributed to his fascination with *Flegeljahre*. Among his piano pieces of the 1830s, *Papillons*, *Intermezzo* (op. 4), *Davidsbündlertänze* (op. 6), and *Carnaval* (op. 9) qualify as waltz-series; *Novelletten* (op. 21), and *Faschingsschwank aus Wien* (op. 26) contain several dance movements; finally, *Gross Sonate No. 1* (op. 11) and *Kreisleriana* intersperse dance fragments within other musical structures.

Dance forms allow Schumann to employ irony as a musical device, particularly in pieces of higher genres. The incorporation of dance elements in sonatas and other conventional structures is itself an ironic gesture. For instance, the third movement of *Gross Sonate No. 1* comprises a scherzo and an intermezzo, which, bearing the indication *alla burla, ma pomposo*, is in fact an "absurdly heavy-handed" polonaise.[71] Although the burlesque employs conventional four-bar phrases from the outset, its performance indications are contrary to the performer's intuition. When approaching a typical four-bar phrase, an experienced pianist would manage to communicate expressiveness by prolonging or shortening certain note values to serve the flow of the music, and allowing for a natural decrescendo at the end of the phrase. Schumann, however, plays against one's desire for "expressiveness" by reversing the player's tendency for natural phrasing. The hairpins and the accents above E in measures 147–48 require the performer to drop sound in the middle of a slur and to execute a crescendo into the following measure (fig. 6). In measures 149–50 and 153–54, the three strong beats within each measure are accented. If a player wishes to put on a convincing performance while observing Schumann's notations faithfully, he or she ought to compress the first beats of measures 147 and 148 and prolong the

[71] Misha Donat, liner notes to "Piano Sonata in F Sharp Minor, Op. 11," Angela Hewitt, Hyperion Records, 1996. Since polonaise is considered a royal dance, Schumann's indication here is doubly ironic.

second and third beats. Likewise, in measures 149 and 150, he or she must prolong the quarter notes and compress the sixteenth notes within each beat to intensify the effect of the accents. These rubatos, which must be enacted to serve the dynamic indications, break the eight-bar period in measures 147–54 into smaller fragments, thus undermining the supposed stately quality of the polonaise.

Subsequently, these fragmentary phrases conclude with total disintegration at the end of the section. Bearing the marking *ad libitum scherzando*, measure 167 features a recitative-parody in which an operatic character temporarily steps out of the story and reflects upon the absurdity of the preceding dance scene. Even though the recitative lacks conventional metric structure, its execution requires rhythmic precision in the left hand, as implied by the meticulousness of Schumann's notations in this section (fig. 6). To heighten the absurdity, "instrumental" chords—considered subsidiary to the vocal line in a recitative and serving merely to provide basic harmony—are emphasized by accents, playing havoc with an already chaotic narrative. Further, the recitative is meant to function as a transition that connects the polonaise's disordered narrative with the reprise of the scherzo at measure 170. The effect of irony is thus twofold. The insertion of the dance segment in a conventional structure marks an explicit effort to break with the tradition of linearity, and moreover, the incorporation of the polonaise-parody conforms to Jean Paul's conception of *Witz*. The dancer of the polonaise at first revels in the buffoonish act and then, fearing a perpetual state of entrapment, breaks out of the dance circle and observes it from a distance. Thus, to both the dancer and the listening audience, irony is a circuitous approach to truth.

Digressive Fragments

The burlesque sequence in the third movement of Schumann's *Gross Sonate* is a piece of fragment within the sonata. The philosophical and aesthetic concept of fragment rose to prominence during the early Romantic movement and was for a while the principle form of expression of the Jena Romantics.[72] Schlegel gave the term a formal definition in *Athenaeum*:

> A fragment is like a miniature work of art, has to be entirely isolated from the surrounding world and be complete in itself like a porcupine.[73]

In other words, a fragment does not emphasize incompletion but rather draws attention to the complete whole of which it is a part. The concept of fragment is similar to that of the circle; both are closed and self-sufficient entities separate from the rest of the world. Therefore, Romantic fragment also suggests distant perspectives.[74] Within the world of "infinitely teeming chaos," the ironist's circle constitutes a fragment.

From the perspective of the Jena Romantics, fragment serves as a cipher for the human experience.[75] In particular, it characterizes an individual's process of self-education. As Jean Paul explains in *Titan*, the wanderer's journey is composed of individual moments of human experience; likewise, these discrete fragments of human experience constitute a complete life:

> Our greatest and most lasting error is, that we look for life, that is, its happiness, as the materialists look for the soul, in the combination of parts, as if the whole or the relation of its component parts could give us anything which each individual part had not already… The century casts the flower-seeds of thy joy only from the porous sowing-machine of minutes, or rather, to the blest eternity itself there is no other handle than the instant. It is not that life consists of seventy years, but the seventy years consist of a continuous life, and one has lived, at all events, and lived enough, die when one may.[76]

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[72] Rosen, *Romantic Generation*, 48.
[73] Schlegel, "Athenaeum Fragment 206," in *Philosophical Fragments*, 45.
[74] Rosen, *Romantic Generation*, 48.
[75] Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 87.
[76] Jean Paul, *Titan: A Romance*, trans. Charles T. Brooks (Boston: James R. Osgood and Co., 1876), 17.

In such a *Bildungsroman*, the fragments of human experience are manifested through elaborate digressions. These digressions can be either literal or figurative, encompassing all storylines that temporarily depart from the main subject in writing, as well as any literary element that has the potential effect of disorienting the reader. For instance, the above excerpt in *Titan* is itself a digressive episode because it does not play a role in plot development. A more radical example appears in Jean Paul's *Siebenkäs*, in which over a hundred footnotes, mostly consisting of trivial facts, accompany the already long-winded narrative. Alternatively titled *Flower-, Fruit-, and Thornpieces*, the novel is filled with plant metaphors and irrelevant botanical information. For instance, when Siebenkäs receives a letter from Nathalie lamenting her loveless marriage, his mental state is vividly described as follows:

> Oh! the ice-floes of the glacier of death spread wider and wider, and filled up one warm Tempè valley after another. The only bond by which our solitary Firmian now held to humanity was the cord of his death-bell and coffin—his bed was but a broader bier—and every joy seemed a theft from the withered, leaf-stripped heart of another. And thus the stem of his life, like that of many flowers, went deeper and deeper down [108], its top becoming its hidden root.
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> [108] In the ranunculus, brown wort, the lower part of the stalk sinks deeper into the ground every year, to replace the root as it rots away.[77]

The footnote inevitably draws the reader's attention to the bottom of the page, even though it contains nothing more than anticlimactic trivia.[78] In these circumstances, digression facilitates a sense of alienation, preventing the reader from being lost in the realm of fiction. By leading one astray, these literary fragments allow the reader to distance oneself from the confinement of one's subjective world.

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[77] Chapter 23 of *Flower, Fruit and Thorn Pieces; Or, the Wedded Life, Death, nd Marriage of Firmian Stanislaus Siebenkäs, Parish Advocate in the Burgh of Kuhschnappel*, trans. Alexander Ewing, Project Gutenberg, released May 19, 2011, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/36164/36164-h/36164-h.htm#div2Ref_108.
[78] Reiman, *Schumann's Piano Cycles*, 30–31.

In Schumann's compositions, digressions reflect the aesthetic of fragment in a musical context. For instance, the dance forms in movements 5–8 of *Kreisleriana* are musical analogues to Jean Paul's digressive style of narrative.[79] Movement 5 features two interlocking waltzes interspersed between the primary thematic material. Movement 6 contains a disquieting siciliana inserted between a peaceful lullaby. Movement 7 incorporates polka elements in the wild circles of fifths, which serve as the second thematic material in conventional sonata form.[80] Movement 8, as mentioned in the previous chapters, is a Baroque gigue. These dance episodes share the characteristics of Romantic fragment; none of them possesses a clear beginning or well-defined ending, yet they are complete, self-sufficient entities separate from the main narratives of their respective movements. Even though they are digressive in nature, these fragments are essential components of *Kreisleriana*'s cohesive construction because of their formal functions within conventional structures.

This idea is most explicitly illustrated in movement 5, which employs a symmetrical ABCBA structure. Located at the center is a stepwise ascending sequence in duple meter, which is the most rhythmically and harmonically irregular section of the movement (fig. 9). Two waltzes of triple meter surround the central sequence in a symmetrical fashion. The first waltz (mm. 14–37, mm. 123–47) invites a type of rubato that delays the third beat of each measure, because the intervals between the notes on the second and the third beats are usually the largest (fig. 7). The second waltz (mm. 51–80, mm. 93–103) requires an opposite type of rubato that compresses the eighth-note groups in the melody and prolongs the note value of the quarter-note chords (fig. 8). Both the waltzes and the central sequence are repetitions of single motivic gestures; each of them has a distinct rhythmic pattern. As a result, their melodic motions are

[79] These movements are similar to the role of the polonaise in *Gross Sonate No. 1*.
[80] Reiman argues that this movement employs the structure of a sonata. *Schumann's Piano Cycles*, 138–41.

unstoppable. Each fragment thus symbolizes a different destabilizing force that could not stand on its own; however, when these forces are combined in symmetrical form, they complement each other and represent interlocking parts of a balanced whole.

Compared to the dance fragments in movement 5, the siciliana in movement 6 resembles a digression to a greater extent. The movement as a whole is loosely in ABACA form, in which the siciliana occupies section C. However, the 6/8 dance fragment hardly fits in the main narrative in 12/8. Because of its obtrusive metrical difference, the siciliana is a separate entity by itself. On the other hand, because of its placement in the conventional rondo structure, it functions as an essential component of the movement. Schumann's strategy in merging the siciliana with the main narrative further illustrates the paradoxical role of the dance fragment. In measures 17–18, a seamless transition connects the movement's A section with the subsequent siciliana. During the transition, a slightly misplaced F in the soprano voice allows the suspension of the dominant seventh chord on the last beat of measure 18 to be interpreted as the downbeat of the new section (fig. 10). Likewise, at measure 34, the siciliana transitions back into the theme by allowing the last note in the left hand to be interpreted as the anacrusis of the melody to come. The siciliana thus becomes a digressive moment without which the movement would be incomplete. Its paradoxical nature thus resembles the conflicting worlds that the wanderer must overcome through the act of *Bildung*.

Schumann's Musical *Bildungsroman*

In a musico-literary context, each individual force of destabilization represents a particular phase of human experience. These forces, representing the conflicts between idealism and reality, between order and chaos, and between confinement and freedom, achieve balance

through the implementation of conventional structures. On a larger scale, the digressions approximate the wanderer's circuitous experience portrayed in Jean Paul's and Hoffmann's novels. While acknowledging Goethe's literary genius, these authors also expressed dissent against the idealistic nature of his *Bildungsroman*, in which every event contributes to the hero's mental and moral development. Jean Paul and Hoffmann challenged Goethe's linear narrative by creating the genre of *Bildungsroman-Parodie*,[81] depicting characters whose educational journeys are either inconsistent or fruitless. Jean Paul's *Flegeljahre* features a profound exchange between protagonists Walt and Vult after the latter realizes that his nature has not changed at all during the course of his adventure:

> I leave you, as I found you—and go, as I came… We were both, to each other, wholly open, and yet wholly unintelligible; we were as transparent as a glass door; but, brother, in vain I wrote with legible characters, my own upon the outside of thine… Thou, as a loving poet, or a poetical lover, will bear thy future fortune as easily as the winter landscape bears the hailstorm… Fare thee well—thou canst not be altered—I not improved… And yet, Walt, you alone are to blame.[82]

In response, Walt elaborates on an irrelevant but artistically arranged dream, which only confirms Vult's prior judgment. *Flegeljahre* thus presents an example in which the conflict between opposites could not be resolved and the wandering protagonists fail to complete their apprenticeship.

Aware of these critiques against Goethe, Schumann incorporated the essence of *Bildungsroman-Parodie* in his piano cycles, which rarely end with resolution. The last four measures of *Papillon*, for example, play with the irony of the absent melody. In these measures, Schumann introduces a dominant seventh chord and subsequently takes the notes away one by one (fig. 11). The concluding melody of *Papillons* is thus created by the release of successive

[81] Ibid., 134.
[82] *Flegeljahre,* vol. 2, trans. Eliza Lee (Boston: James Monroe and Co., 1846), 302.

notes from the bass to the top.[83] The gradual decline of the melody suggests increasing distance between the wanderer and his desire for reconciliation, and, in the context of *Flegeljahre*, the dwindling sound of A in the soprano voice seems to reflect Vult's parting flute tones, with which he flies from Walt's subjective world.

Papillons's lack of resolution implies that the story of Vult and Walt continues beyond the realm of notated music. Thus, the entire cycle is a part of a larger narrative. This idea plays an even more significant role in *Kreisleriana*, which, I believe, is not only composed of fragments but also a fragment itself. My argument is based on a critical study of Hoffmann's *Lebensansichten des Kater Murr*, which, according to Charles Rosen, was the blueprint of Schumann's *Kreisleriana*.[84] The novel features a chronological yet cyclic narrative in which the conclusion precedes the opening plotline. Likewise, I argue that *Kreisleriana* is an ironist's circle in which the musical storyline is simultaneously complete and incomplete. The narrative of *Kreisleriana* thus manifests authentic human experience and motivates its listeners to take part in the process of *Bildung.*

Hoffmann's eccentric novel is an atypical *Bildungsroman-Parodie*. It features two parallel storylines in which Kater Murr's autobiography and excerpts from Johanne Kreisler's biography play off against each other. The rationale for this unusual construction appears in the humorous preface; Kater Murr is Kreisler's literate tomcat who, while writing an autobiography, rips a printed book that happens to contain his master's biography and uses its leaves as underpad and blotting paper. Later, these papers remain in the manuscript, and a careless editor publishes the strange interpolations.[85] In the published version, fragments of Kreisler's

[83] A similar example can be found in the "Abegg" variations. Rosen, *Romantic Generation,* 10.
[84] Ibid., 677.
[85] Hoffmann, "Editor's Preface," in *Kater Murr*, 3–4.

biography cut off segments of Murr's autobiography in the middle of sentences; when a particular fragment ends, the cat's narrative continues, beginning with the rest of the sentence that was cut off.

The irony of the novel is threefold. Firstly, Murr's narrative is forcibly broken into discontinuous segments. Nevertheless, his narrative always resumes after each disruption. The double-novel structure thus takes away the suspense that fragments usually create. In this sense, Kreisler's disruptive moments rather magnify the stubborn linearity of Murr's story. Secondly, Murr's autobiography is a *Bildungsroman-Parodie* because his educational journey does not result in any moral development. In the end, he remains a cultural philistine. The satirical plot of the novel thus serves as a criticism against Goethe's literary design, in which digressions of all kind lead to the wanderer's successful completion of his apprenticeship. Finally, the stories in Kreisler's biography are external to Murr's experience and therefore serve as digressions for the reader. Nevertheless, the reader gains a holistic perspective on both narratives by flipping the pages back and forth. Therefore, even though Murr's educational journey ends in failure, his interpolated narratives ultimately facilitate the reader's process of *Bildung*.

Furthermore, the fragments of Kreisler's biography are pieces of a half-finished puzzle, which, though incomplete, allows the reader to envision the finished product based on the existing pieces. The first fragment starts with a conversion between Kreisler and Meister Abraham, who recounts the mysterious events that took place during the birthday celebration of Kreisler's love interest. Subsequently, the reader is introduced to Murr's story from the point of view of Meister Abraham, who rescued a drowning kitten after leaving the birthday celebration. At the time of the conversation, he gives Murr to Kreisler. The reader later finds out that this conversation takes place after all the events in Murr's autobiography. The subsequent fragments

recount Kreisler's life in chronological order. After Murr's storyline is complete, the last fragment of Kreisler's biography ends with Meister Abraham's letter inviting Kreisler to a birthday celebration, which is the very event described in the first fragment.[86] The indeterminate ending therefore encloses Kreisler's disjointed narrative within a self-contained circle, and Hoffmann's novel is thus presented as a fragment itself.

Likewise, Schumann's musical design of *Kreisleriana* is analogous to Hoffmann's literary design of *Kater Murr*. The final movement of the piece features an anticlimactic gigue. On the other hand, the preceding movement ends with a chorale containing frequent cadences and eight bars of consistent ritardando (fig. 12). To a classically trained ear, the seventh movement seems to be the proper ending of *Kreisleriana*, whereas the capricious gigue remains an afterthought. Because of its overall repetitiveness, the gigue has a timeless quality that prevents the listener from foreseeing the ending of the movement. Towards the last measures of the piece, the right-hand melody drops from the upper register to a low G in pianississimo while maintaining the same rhythmic figure (fig. 13). Just like Vult's parting melody and Kreisler's unexplained disappearance, these last measures deny the comfort of closure to the listener.

The gigue functions as a moment of transition within *Kreisleriana*'s cyclic structure. Like the last fragment of Kreisler's biography, this movement may serve as a prelude to the very first movement of *Kreisleriana*. If the performer begins the D-minor first movement anew immediately after the ending, then the G-minor cadence of the final movement would serve a predominant function. Since the first movement hardly qualifies as a beginning itself,[87] the transition between the last movement and the first movement is natural to a classically trained

[86] Garber, *Self, Text, and Romantic Irony*, 197–98.
[87] The syncopated rhythms at the beginning of the first movement create the impressions that the piece starts in the middle of a larger piece. See Rosen's chapter on fragments, *Romantic Generation*, 41–115, and his analysis of *Kreisleriana*, 669–98.

ear. Hence, the structure of *Kreisleriana* echoes that of *Kater Murr*. Schumann's masterpiece thus implies that the wanderer's journey is not only composed of fragments but also a fragment itself; furthermore, its fragmentary nature could only be perceived by those who are external to the fictional narrative. In a musical context, the role of the outsider is played by the listener, and the true protagonist of the musical *Bildungsroman* is an actively participating audience.

The Temple of Isis

Irony, fragments, circles, and digressions all contribute to the portrayal of authentic human experience. These musical and literary practices are used to exhibit the conflict between the wanderer's internal and external worlds. Furthermore, they juxtapose the fictional world with the real world in which the reader and the listener reside. Just as Kreisler's fragments in *Kater Murr* are digressions for the reader rather than for the fictional characters, Schumann's *Kreisleriana* represents an educational journey for the listener. The blurred boundary between the two worlds leads to the concept of Romantic irony; the wanderer's fruitless journey leads the audience to embark on a fruitful educational adventure.

On many occasions, Romantic irony manifests itself through the concept of dual identities. In a literary context, an author's dual identities may serve as a bridge between the fictional world and the real world. Both Hoffmann and Jean Paul project their own images onto their most beloved literary characters; Kreisler is the supposed author of a majority of musical essays in *Kreisleriana*, and Jean Paul frequently appears as a fictional character in his own stories. The truth-seeking journeys of fictional protagonists are therefore journeys of self-discovery. The merging of one's fictional self and the real self resonates with the reconciliation of the wanderer's internal and external worlds.

Hoffmann's *Kreisleriana* exemplifies an educational journey in which the wanderer reconciles his dual identities. His collection of musical essays contains an interior *Bildungsroman*;[88] each essay is a pedagogical piece that aims to "justify music's proper position a Romantic art."[89] The last essay, "Johannes Kreisler's Certificate of Apprenticeship," alludes to the allegorical Temple of Isis, a fictional utopia in Novalis's *Die Lehrlinge zu Sais*.[90] Part of the novel tells the story of Hyazinth, a young man who leaves his beloved in order to seek the Temple of Isis. Nevertheless, when he finally reaches the destination, he finds his beloved underneath the temple veil. In the end, Hyazinth's pursuit of truth is a journey within the self.[91] By alluding to Novalis's fable, Hoffmann concludes Kreisler's journey in *Kreisleriana* with the merging of his real and fictional identities. In the lower right corner of the page, Hofmann signs Kreisler's name instead of his own. This final piece of writing thus resolves the conflict between idealism and reality, and subsequently, between the wanderer's dual worlds.

Furthermore, the final essay of *Kreisleriana* presents music as a thread linking the fictional world with the real world. Hoffmann regards music as a "universal language of nature" and musicians as those "in whom music becomes a condition of total awareness."[92] Thus, music is Romantic irony in art form, and it embodies the "clear consciousness of eternal agility" with which the ironist navigates through the "infinitely teeming chaos." In the fourth and central movement of Schumann's *Kreisleriana*,[93] Hoffmann's conception of music converges with Schumann's musical representation of the Temple of Isis. Similar to Novalis's utopia, the

[88] Charlton, *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings,* 28.
[89] Ibid., 7.
[90] Ibid., 71–72.
[91] Ibid., 28.
[92] *Kreisleriana*, 164–65.
[93] Rosen considers this movement the "lyrical center of the whole piece." *Romantic Generation*, 674.

movement serves as a milestone rather than a destination. Its music represents a moment of revelation in which the wanderer's conflicting worlds achieve a level of harmony.

Like the wanderer's confused identities prior to his arrival at the Temple of Isis, the tonality of the movement is initially ambiguous. The melody in the first eight bars traverses B flat major, C minor, F major, and a sequence of diminished sevenths. While the melody is expected to return to B flat major in measure 9, an omnibus progression in the second half of the measure breaks the pattern by introducing a dominant seventh in the key of G minor (fig. 14). Finally, the phrase ends on a low B-flat, which functions as both a B-flat-major chord in root position and a G-minor chord in first inversion.

The second half of the movement proceeds to establish G minor as the tonal center of movements 5–8 of *Kreisleriana*. Initially, the chorale prelude in measures 12–22 oscillates between B flat major and G minor. Its first phrase starts with a B-flat-major chord and reaches a half cadence in the key of G minor in measure 13. Rather than resolving the D-major triad, the subsequent phrase reprises the key of B flat major. In measure 17, however, a deceptive resolution again breaks the illusion of a B-flat-major tonal center. Subsequently, the reprise of the original melody proceeds into a new phrase in C minor, which is more closely related to G minor than to B flat major. In measure 21, a secondary dominant chord in D major leads to a half cadence, which highlights that G minor is both the subdominant and the minor dominant of C minor. The repetitive D-major half cadence finally resolves at the beginning of the next movement, establishing G minor as the tonal center.

In the context of the piece as a whole, the fourth movement serves as the transition from the predominant to the dominant in a conventional T–PD–D–T structure. Both movement 3 and movement 5 are in G minor, while the central movement wanders through a variety of closely

related keys. The initial tonal ambiguity of the fourth movement represents the chaotic state of existence of dual identities, and the second half of the movement symbolizes the unveiling of the Temple of Isis. The fourth movement could therefore be interpreted as both a destination and a digression; in Schumann's musical-poetic world, the path to the destination is a digression itself, and the Temple of Isis is a milestone that marks the wanderer's continuous, endless pursuit of *Bildung*. Once the final D-major chord is struck, the wanderer once again engages in the cyclic footsteps of the St. Vitus dance, resuming his journey to an endless future.

Reflections of a Modern Wanderer

Through a combination of musical and literary analyses, I have argued that the Wanderer in Schumann's piano compositions is closely associated with the Romantic ideal of *Bildung*. The role of Schumann's musical protagonist is played by an actively participating audience, who, through the act of listening, complete their educational apprenticeship. Music and literature are two common artistic mediums for the Romantic wanderer because of their transient yet timeless nature. Since Schumann's death in 1856, his music and text have lived on to the present day, even as their meanings and affective powers have changed dramatically. The society in which the modern wanderer lives is drastically different from that of the Romantic period, during which access to education was extremely limited. Today, the bourgeoisie are not the sole wanderers. Members from a variety of cultures and social classes have the means to undertake educational journeys for two major reasons. Firstly, the activity of traveling has become a commodity within a global market accessible to the general public. Tourist agencies are spread around the world, and the cost of traveling has lowered considerably because of technological advancement and improved infrastructure. Secondly, most governmental and educational institutions facilitate the

activity of traveling, both by enacting policies that promote tourism and by establishing cultural exchange programs. Thus, political, cultural and technological evolutions in the past two centuries enabled the modern wanderer to become a contemporary, global, and cross-cultural icon.

Because of the prevalence of the activity in modern society, wandering is no longer closely associated with the Romantic notion of the sublime. Nineteenth-century philosophers celebrated *Bildung* as a universal ideal, yet in contemporary society, the concept is largely culturally specific. The idea of the universal resembles that of the fundamental, the primordial, and the innate. It is important to note that prevalence does not equate universality; in particular, the ideals of German Romanticism may be well known and widely understood, but they are not shared by everyone in the world. Hence, Hoffmann's rhetoric of "universality" in the last chapter of *Kreisleriana* is problematic from a modern perspective. Within a world comprised by a kaleidoscopic range of sounds, Romantic music is merely one of the numerous cultural and historical products known to a modern audience.

Since its creation, Schumann's music has often been deemed the exact opposite of the "universal." Almost every music critic ever existed has commented on the esoteric quality of Schumann's compositions. His music defies the formal and harmonic rules of Western art music, and many classical musicians throughout the past two centuries have cautiously excluded his music from their standard concert repertoire. Thus, it comes as no surprise that Schumann's music generates even less appeal from the general public in the present day. Indeed, the category of German Romantic music as a whole belongs to the esoteric and elitist tradition of "Western classical music," the very opposite of popular music. Just as Schumann himself claimed that

Kreisleriana was "only to be understood by Germans," his compositions seem to be frozen in a particular space and time in history.

Hence, the key to fitting Schumann's musical narrative in the contemporary musico-poetic world lies in the idea of copresence. Just as anthropologist Johannes Fabian fervently argued, historical ideals bear new social and cultural significance once they are allowed access to the spatial-temporal reference frame of the twenty-first century.[94] As a member of the new generation of classical musicians, I believe that it is our responsibility to embrace the copresence of the old and the new, the traditional and the multicultural. In the end, this essay demonstrates that Schumann's music is still meaningful outside of its original nineteenth-century German reference frame. The paradox between universality and specificity is the conflict within a modern wanderer, and likewise, the solution to the conflict is to step out of the ironist's circle. Through my close reading of Schumann's early piano compositions, I have shown that Romantic music and its representation of nineteenth-century ideals are still accessible and meaningful today. By embracing the diverse wonders of the external world, the modern Hyacinth will once again find his Temple of Isis.

[94] Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 20–35.

Appendix: Figures

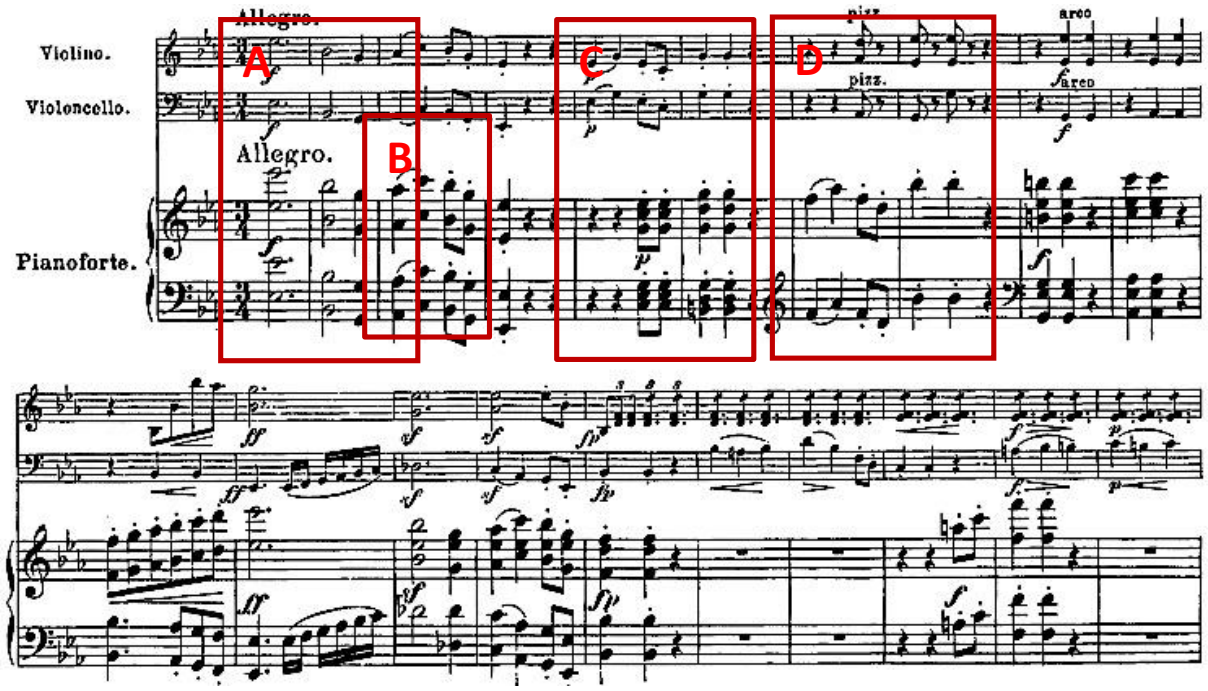

Figure 1: Schubert, *Piano Trio in E-Flat Major,* D. 929, I, mm. 1–20.

Figure 2: Jack cover to the first edition of *Kreisleriana*.

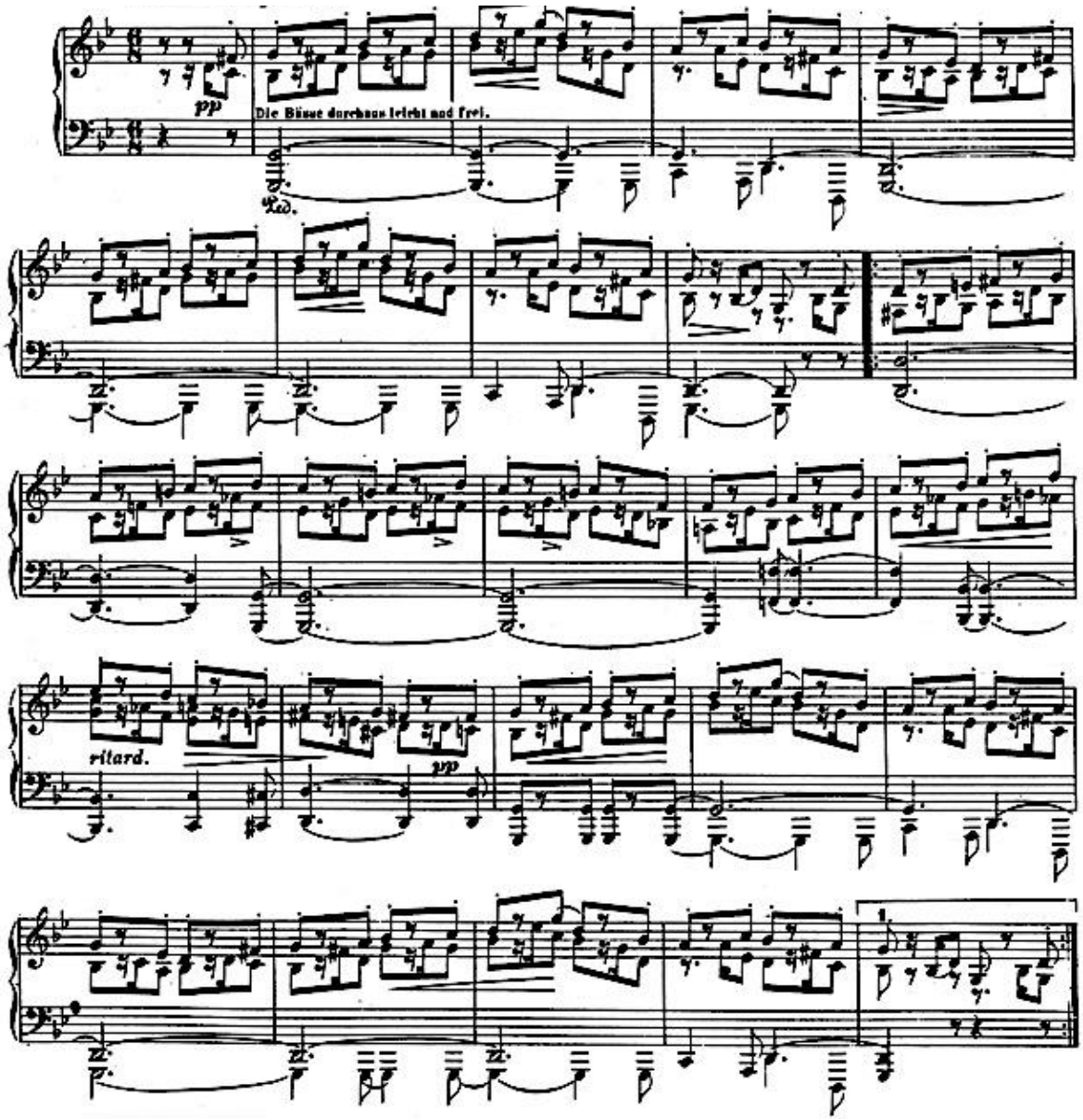

Figure 3: Schumann, *Kreisleriana*, VIII, mm. 1–24.

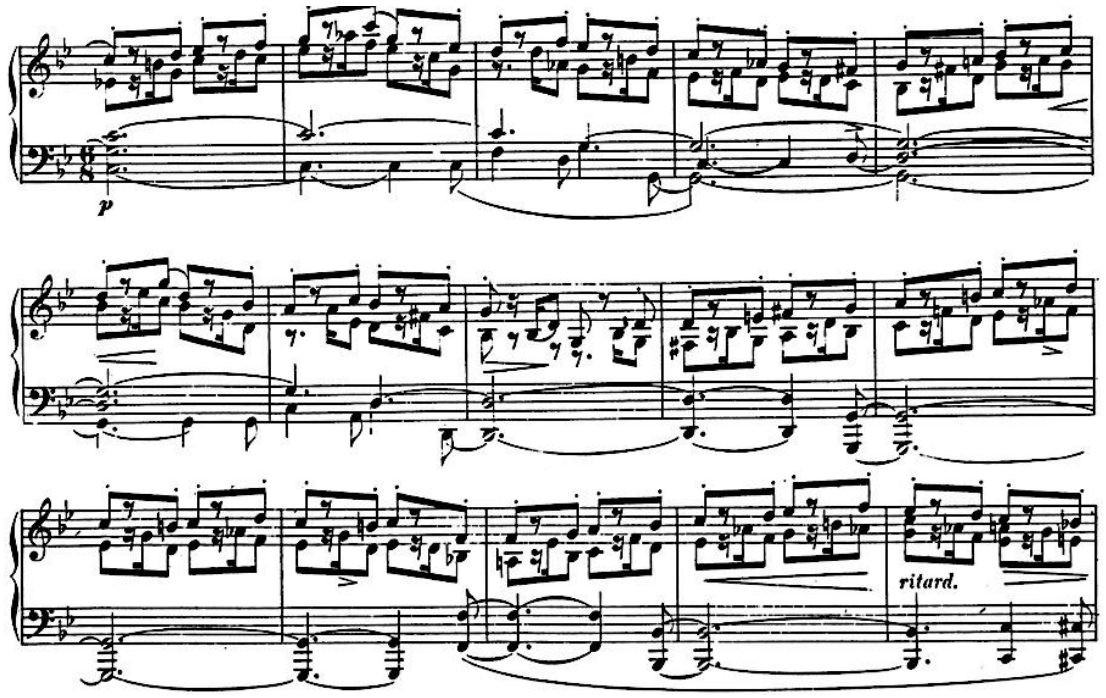

Figure 4: Schumann, *Kreisleriana*, VIII, mm. 50–64.

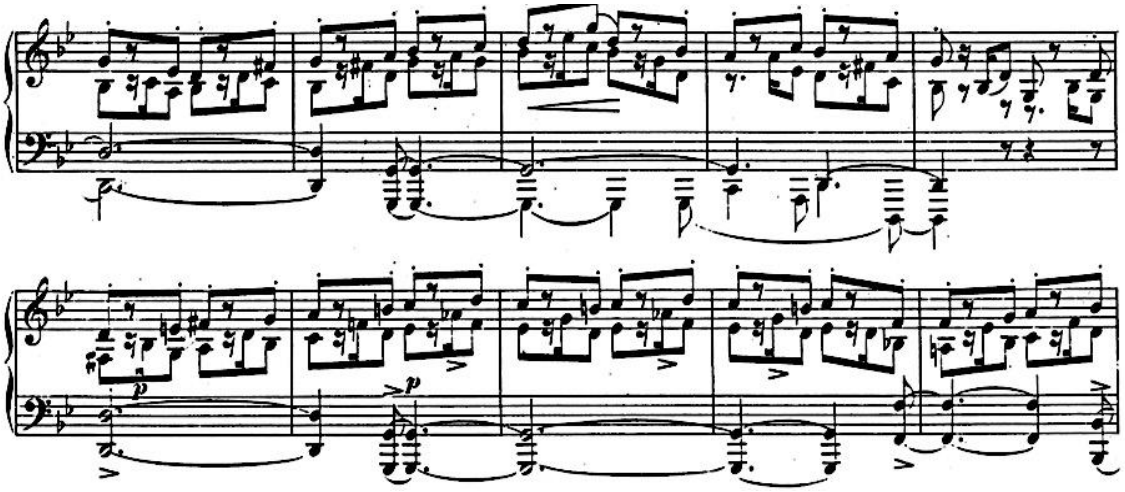

Figure 5: Schumann, *Kreisleriana*, VIII, mm. 120–29.

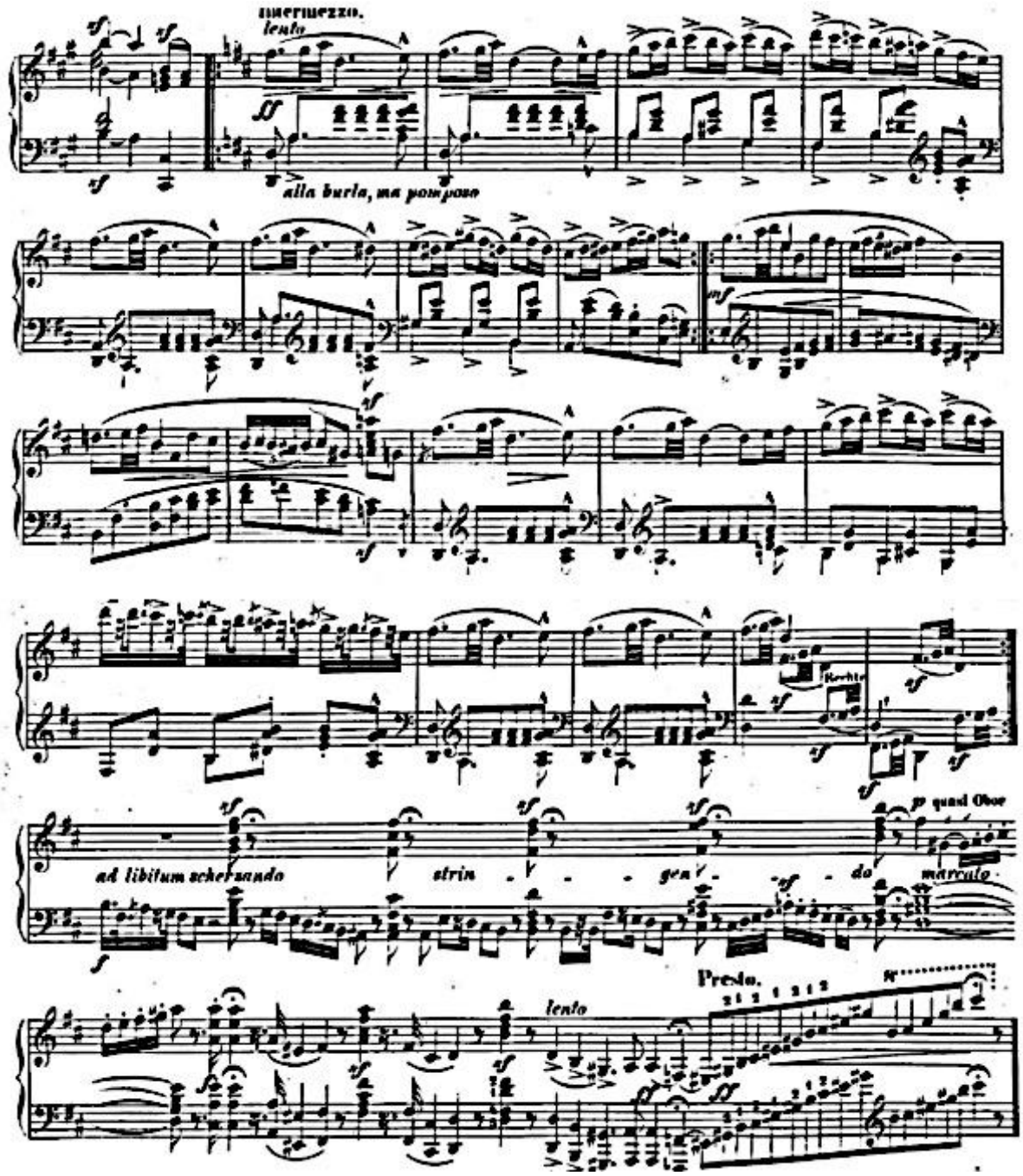

Figure 6: Schumann, *Gross Sonate No. 1*, III, mm. 146–67.

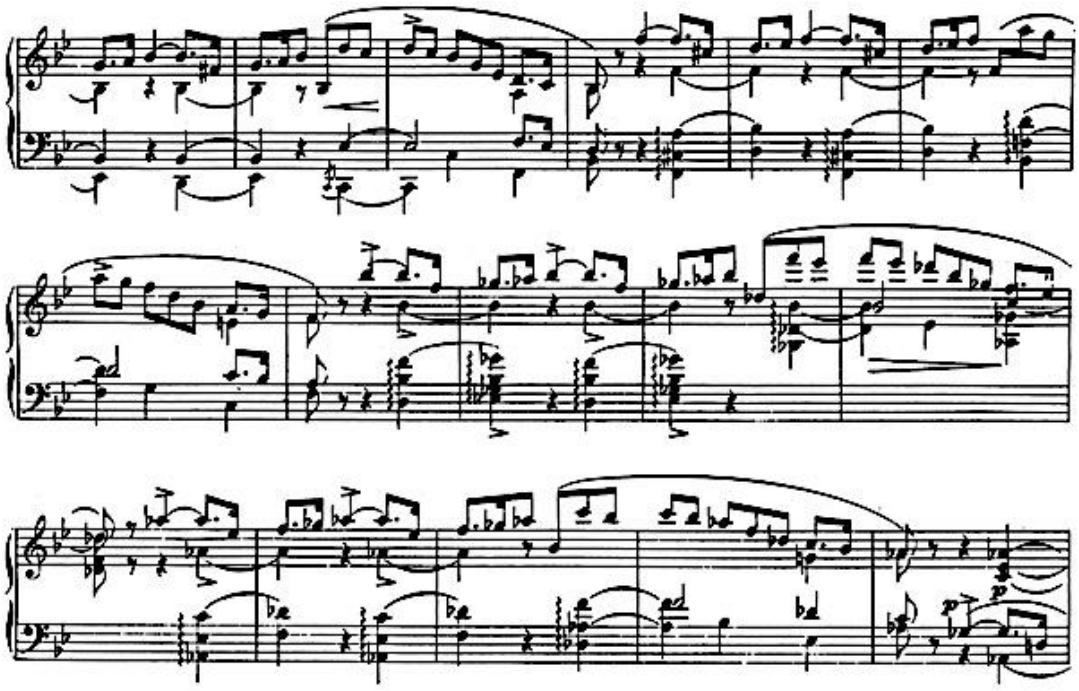

Figure 7: Schumann, *Kreisleriana*, V, mm. 15–30.

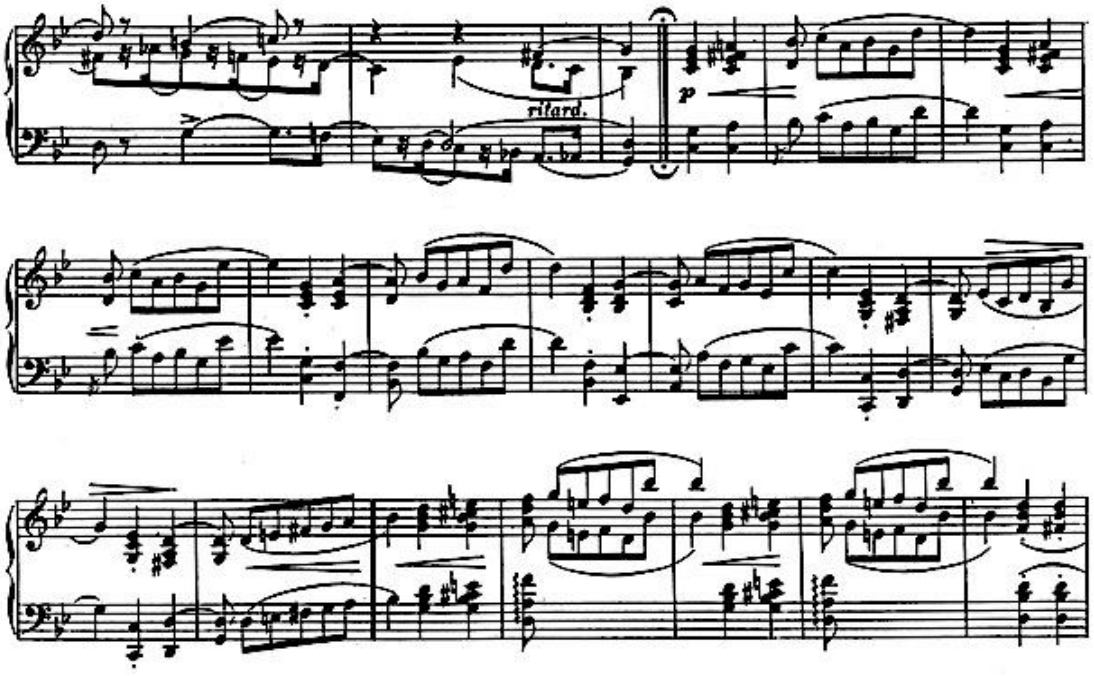

Figure 8: Schumann, *Kreisleriana,* V, mm. 49–67.

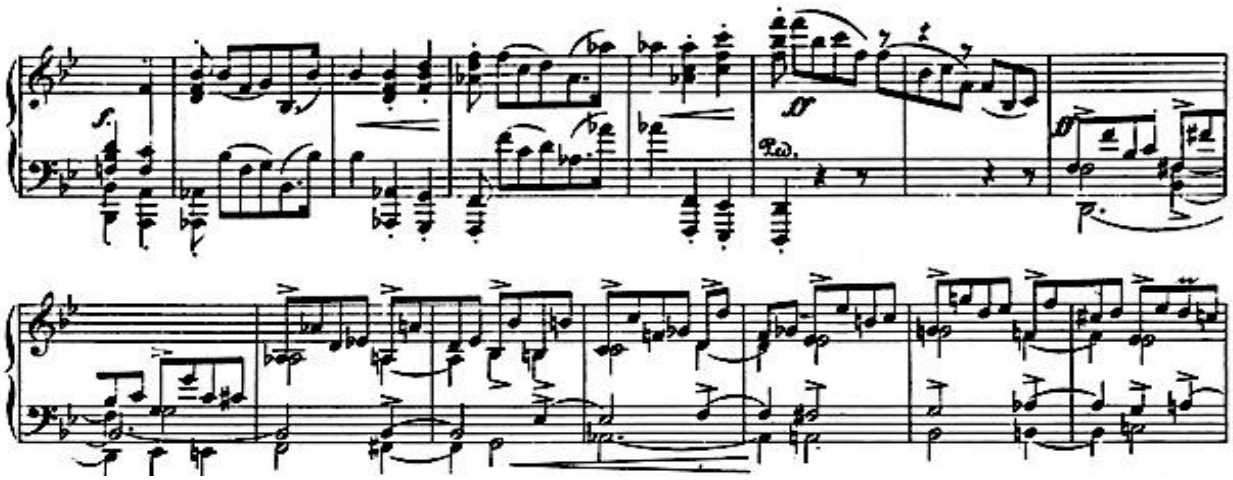

Figure 9: Schumann, *Kreisleriana*, V, mm. 81–95

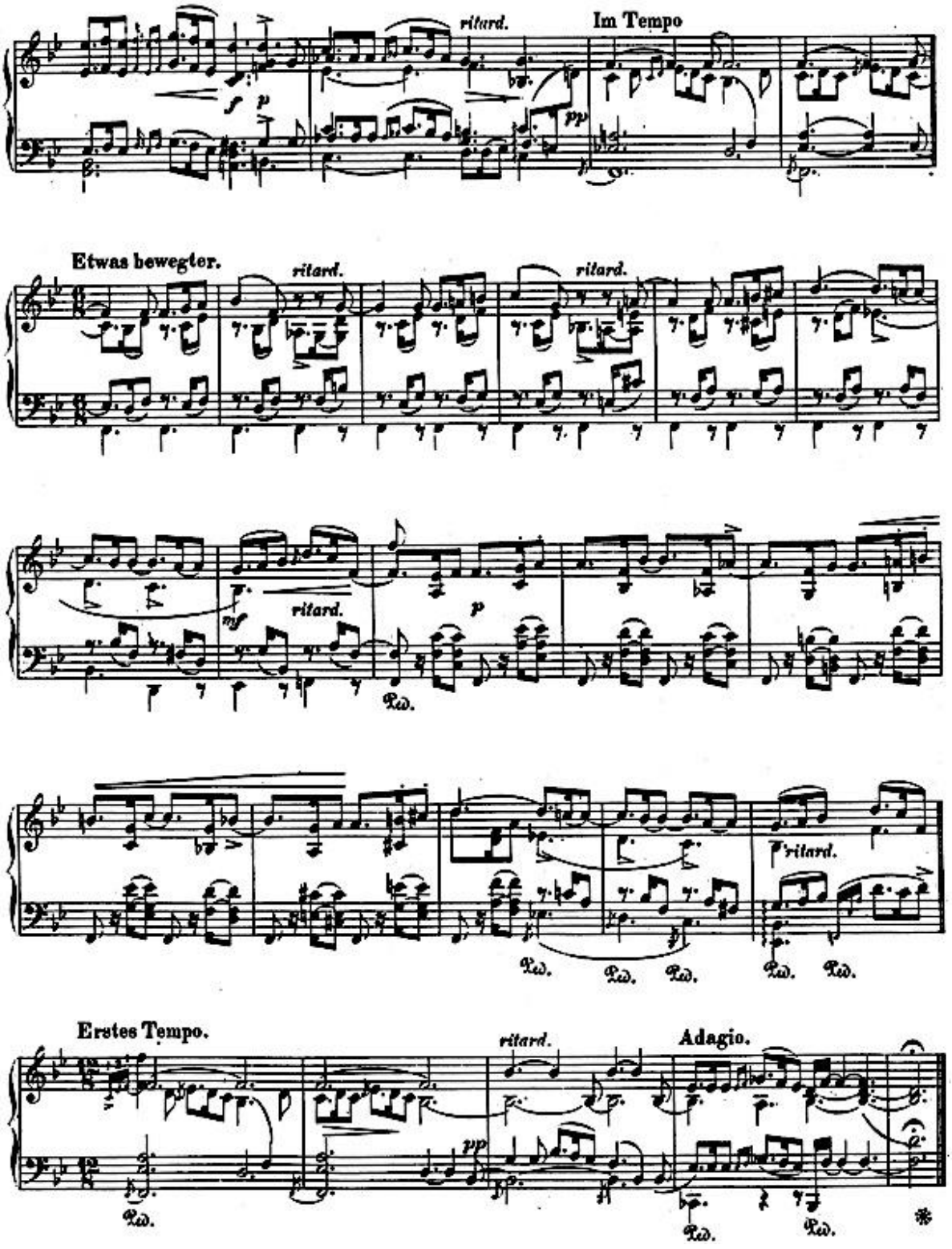

Figure 10: Schumann, *Kreisleriana*, VI, mm. 15–39.

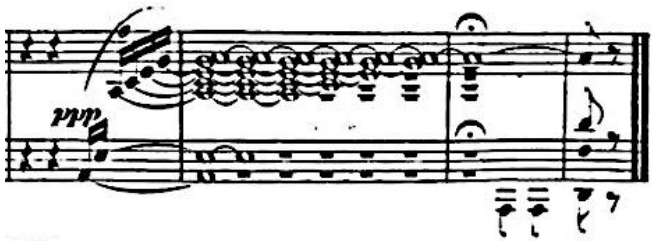

Figure 11: Schumann, *Papillons*, XII, mm. 85–88.

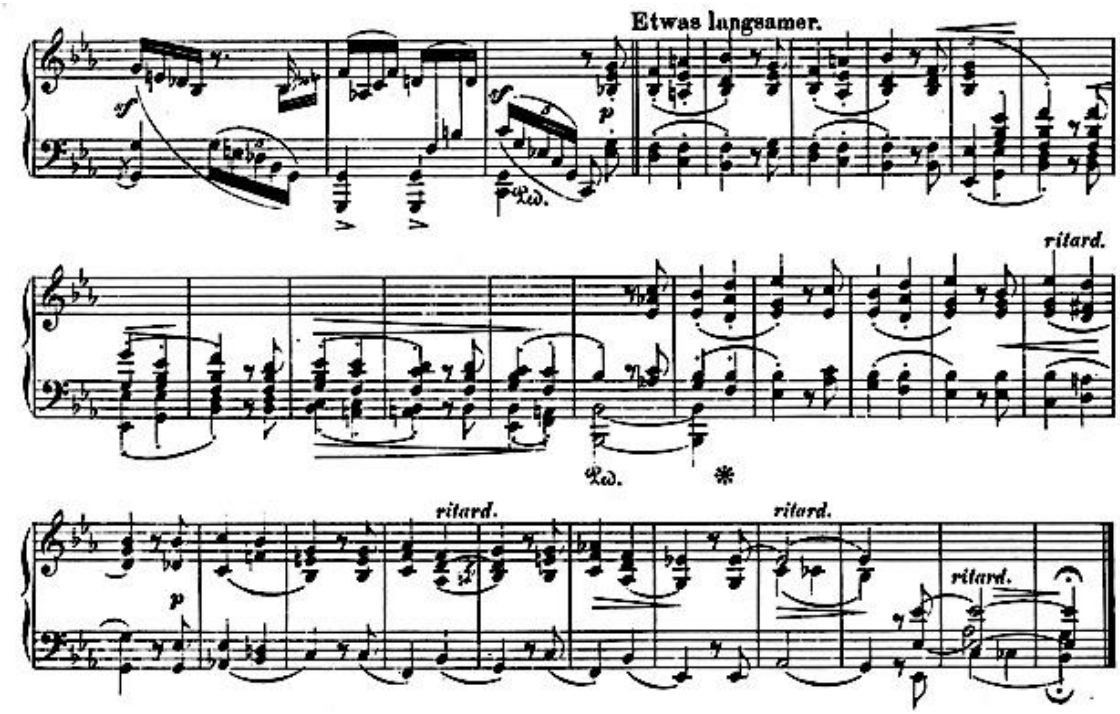

Figure 12: Schumann, *Kreisleriana*, VII, mm. 86–116.

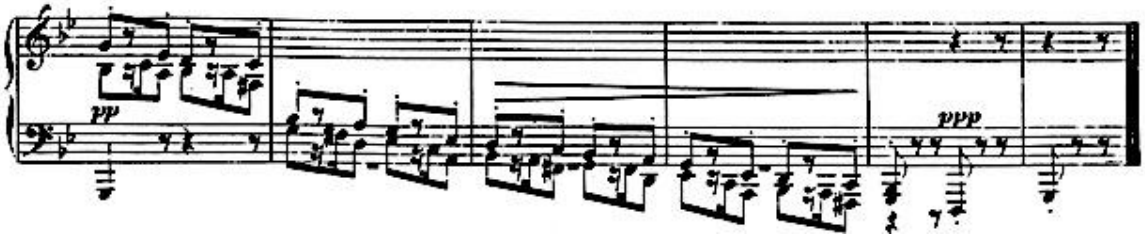

Figure 13: Schumann, *Kreisleriana*, VIII, mm. 140–45.

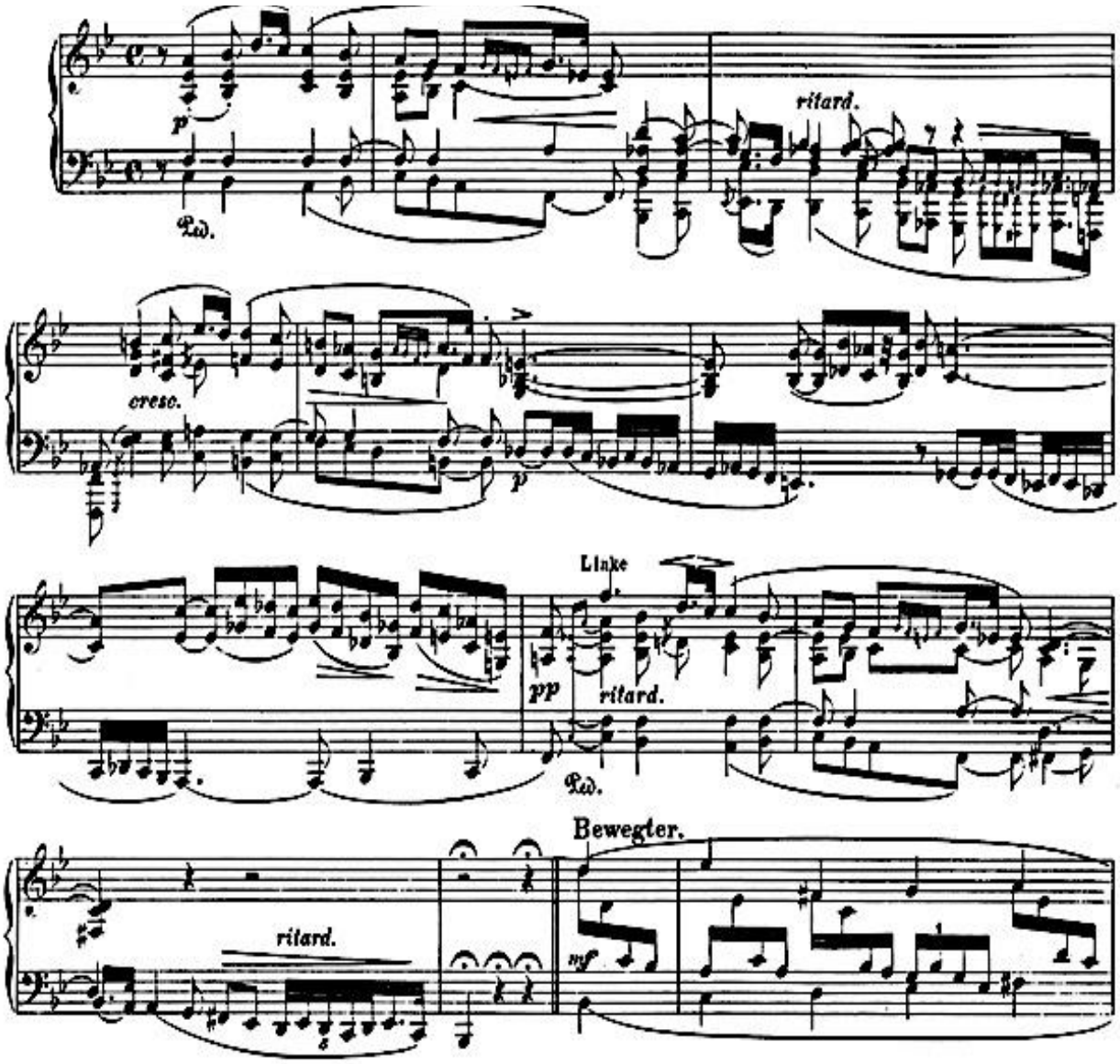

Figure 14: Schumann, *Kreisleriana*, IV, mm. 1–12.

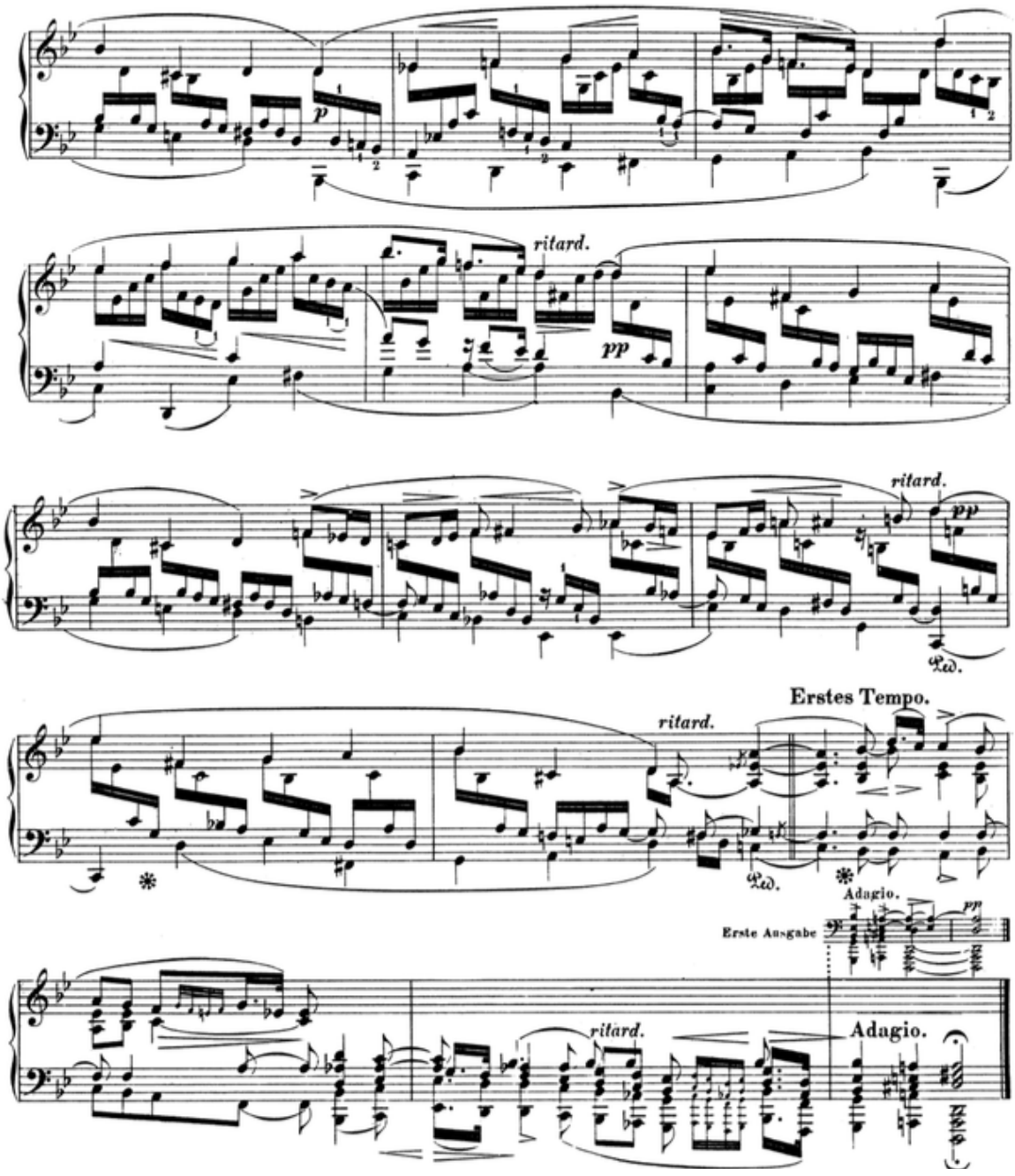

Figure 15: Schumann, *Kreisleriana*, IV, mm. 13–27.

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Figures

Fig. 1: Schubert, Franz. *Piano Trio in E-Flat Major,* D. 929. *Franz Schubert's Werke,* Series VII, No. 2. Edited by Ignaz Brüll. Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1886.

Fig. 2: Deahl, Lora. "Robert Schumann's "Kreisleriana" and Double Novel Structure." *International Journal of Musicology* 5 (1996): 135.

Figs. 3–5, 7–10, 12–15: Schumann, Robert. *Kreisleriana,* Op. 16. *Robert Schumanns Werke*, Series VII: *Für Pianoforte zu zwei Händen*. Edited by Clara Schumann. Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1885.

Fig. 6: Schumann, *Gross Sonate No. 1*, Op. 11. *Robert Schumanns Werke,* Series VII: *Für Pianoforte zu zwei Händen.* Edited by Clara Schumann. Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1887.

Fig. 11: Schumann, *Papillons*, Op. 2. *Robert Schumanns Werke,* Series VII: *Für Pianoforte zu zwei Händen.* Edited by Clara Schumann. Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1887.