

BRAHMS'S VIOLIN SONATA IN G MAJOR, OP. 78
AS THE SUMMATION OF THE *REGENLIED* TETRALOGY

by

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To my Theodore with love and gratitude

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The present study on Brahms's Violin Sonata in G Major, Op. 78 launches with a shift of observational focus from the outer movements to its core movement, the central *Adagio*. Obviously, the most well-known feature of this sonata would be the raindrop motive originating from two songs in Brahms's Op. 59, *Regenlied* and *Nachklang*, which appears most prominently in the 1st and 3rd movements of the sonata. The sharing of the identical theme between the last movement of Op. 78 and the two songs in Op. 59 has provoked a great deal of scholarly discussion. When we carefully dissect this famous theme and bring it closer to a discernable examination involving the biographical circumstances of its composition, however, one provocative question comes to mind: through which part of this theme does Brahms's emotion resonate most strongly? Is it the famous raindrop head-motive, or could it be the immediately following tail-motive?

Margaret Notley's insightful notion on the significance of the adagio movement in Brahms's music¹ also gravitates the initial focal point toward the 2nd movement, where the inverted version of this tail-motive of the *Regenlied* theme (See Example 1.1), the step-and-leap motive, becomes the primary theme material. (See Example 1.2.a) Not only the undeniable cyclic return of this theme in the final movement (See Example 1.2.b), but also the fact that a rearrangement of this inverted tail-motive comprises the primary theme of the 1st movement along with the raindrop head-motive (see Example 1.3), pushes the magnifying glass ever closer to this step-and-leap-motive.

¹ Margaret Notley, *Lateness and Brahms: Music and Culture in the Twilight of Viennese Liberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 146; 169-172.

Example 1.1. Brahms's Op. 78, 3rd movement, mm. 1-2.



Example 1.2. The primary theme of the 2nd movement and its reappearance in the 3rd movement of Brahms's Op. 78.

(a) 2nd movement, m. 1.



(b) 3rd movement, m. 89.



Example 1.3. Brahms's Op. 78, 1st movement, m. 1.



Furthermore, as David Brodbeck unveils the resemblance between Schumann's 'last musical idea' and the primary theme of the 2nd movement of Brahms's Op. 78² (see Example 1.4), it becomes inescapable to take a serious look at Brahms's aspirations behind the usage of this specific motive as well as its evolution, highlighted in the 2nd movement, and then throughout the entire sonata. Brodbeck explains that Brahms was very well aware of the motive used in the beginning of the 2nd movement in Schumann's Violin Concerto (1853). (See Example 1.5) This thematic fragment was what Schumann himself had beautifully set in the unfolding violin solo in the beginning of his 2nd movement; on February 7th, 1854, however, after a hallucination, Schumann insisted that "Beethoven and Schubert had appeared before the unfortunate composer to 'dictate' it to him."³ Also, the syncopated accompaniment figure in the cello (which the solo violin takes over later), as well as the stepwise motion in the bassoon (unfolding a high degree of organic thematic integrity), find noticeable resemblances in the 2nd movement of Op. 78 of Brahms.

Example 1.4. David Brodbeck, Schumann's 'last musical idea' and the primary theme of the 2nd movement of Brahms's Op. 78.⁴

(a) Schumann, 'Last musical idea'
 (b) Brahms, Violin Sonata in G Op. 78, movement 2

The image displays two musical excerpts side-by-side. Excerpt (a) is titled 'Lese, innig' and is in 2/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It features a piano (p) dynamic and a melodic line in the right hand with a slur over the first four measures. Excerpt (b) is titled 'Adagio' and is in 2/4 time with the same key signature. It features a 'poco f' (poco forte) dynamic and an 'espressivo' marking. The melodic line in the right hand also has a slur over the first four measures, mirroring the structure of excerpt (a). Both excerpts show a strong thematic resemblance in their initial phrases.

² David Brodbeck, "Medium and Meaning: New Aspects of the Chamber Music," in *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms*, ed. by Michael Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 117-118.

³ Brodbeck, 117. Brodbeck notes that Clara Schumann, Joachim and Brahms "jointly decreed" that this late violin concerto of Robert Schumann was "to remain unpublished," and it did remain unpublished until 1937.

⁴ Brodbeck, 118, Example 5.6.

Example 1.5. Schumann's Violin Concerto WoO 23, 2nd movement, mm. 1-7.

About two decades later, Brahms's and Clara Schumann's correspondence in February and July 1879 also indicates such an emotional depth lying behind the composition of Op. 78. Brahms's sympathy toward his godson Felix Schumann's fatal illness⁵ that eventually led to his tragic early death on February 16th, 1879, is well expressed in Brahms's letter to Clara in February 1879.⁶ Michael Struck, in his "New Evidence on the Genesis of Brahms's G major Violin Sonata, Op. 78," also focuses on the 2nd movement as the initial conception of the emotional inspiration of the entire sonata, as he carefully reviews the

⁵ Felix Schumann (1854-1879), Clara and Robert Schumann's youngest son,

born only after his father's committal to the sanatorium of Endenich, was named after their departed friend Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, at the request of his parents. Felix was the artistically most talented Schumann child, but his hopes in the fields of music and literature were opposed not only by his mother's scepticism but also by his poor state of health that prevented him from completing his law studies. His godfather, Johannes Brahms, who was a good friend of all the Schumann children, set some of his poems to music. Felix Schumann deceased at the age of only 25 in Frankfurt where he, critically ill with tuberculosis, spent the last weeks of his life with his mother.

See "Felix Schumann," Schumann Netzwerk, accessed 7 August 2016, <http://www.schumann-portal.com/felix-schumann-1169.html>. See also Styra Avins and Josef Eisinger, trans., *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 549-550. Avins annotated Brahms's letter to Joachim on 22 June 1879:

The recreational 'little sonata' was Brahms's Op. 78 in G major. He began it in the previous summer after visiting Felix Schumann in Palermo, where the youth had been sent in the vain hope that his health would improve. Felix had studied the violin seriously before his health failed, using Joachim's Guarnerius violin. The slow movement of the sonata was written with Felix and his violin in mind, just before the young man's death.

⁶ Michael Struck, "New Evidence on the Genesis of Brahms's G major Violin Sonata, Op. 78," *The American Brahms Society Newsletter* 9, no. 1 (Spring 1991), 5-6.

letters between Brahms and Clara in 1879. It is also implied in the letters that the 2nd movement came to its final shape prior to the completion of the other two movements of Op. 78:

The manuscript consists of a single undated leaf of ornamental music paper, on one side of which Brahms wrote bars 1-24 of the slow movement of the Violin Sonata. Departing slightly from the published version, the fragment bears the designation *Adagio espressivo*. The document gains in importance from a letter to Clara Schumann written by Brahms on the reverse side of the leaf. ... The contents of the letter, with its clear reference to Clara Schumann's previous letter of 2 February 1879 (No. 379 in the published correspondence), permit a fairly accurate dating of the document. ... The document demonstrates that at the very least Brahms made use of and possibly also understood the slow movement of the Violin Sonata as an explicit sign of his sympathy to Felix (who in earlier years had played the violin seriously) as well as for Clara Schumann.⁷

In this letter to Clara Schumann, written approximately between February 3rd-18th, 1879, Brahms writes:

If you play what is on the reverse side quite slowly, it will tell you, perhaps more clearly than I otherwise could myself, how sincerely I think of you and Felix--even about his violin, which however surely is at rest.

I thank you from my heart for your letter; I simply don't want to or like to inquire, but I always feel a need to hear about Felix.⁸

Struck explains,

The letter shows that Clara Schumann was apparently the first to come into contact with the new work, in whose inspiration she played an important role. Most likely this connection was not entirely clear to her. Her reaction to this excerpt of the work is not available; it would only have been contained in the missing letter by which she informed Brahms of the death of her son. (Brahms's reply is dated "second half of February 1879"; *Schumann-Brahms Briefe*, 2:166f.) Brahms could have told her more about the sonata during his visit to Frankfurt in March-April 1879. When he sent her the completed composition in manuscript at the end of June, he used language which indicates that she already knew of its existence ("... I am sending herewith in addition to the sonata..." and "the sonata--yes, it is also included, and look at it closely"; 2:174). However, before receiving the complete sonata she had no knowledge that the last movement would draw directly upon the *Regenlieder*; this sequence of events corresponds with Brahms's own remarks about the genesis of the work.⁹

⁷ Struck, 5.

⁸ Struck, 5.

⁹ Struck, 6. Also, see Avins, 551. On July 10, 1879, Clara writes to Brahms,

I must send you word to tell you how deeply affected I am by your sonata. I received it today and naturally I played through it right away and afterwards, out of joy, had a really good cry over it. After the first fine, enchanting movement, and the second, you can imagine my delight when in the third, I rediscovered *my* so ardently beloved melody with its delightful eighth-note rhythm! I say *my*, because I don't believe there is a *single* person who perceives this melody as joyously and as wistfully as I. After all that wonderful delight, then the last movement as well!

Struck admits the limitation of assuming the compositional motivation of this movement in relation to the death of Brahms's godson.¹⁰ However, considering the provided biographical background, one cannot ignore the relevance of these personal events and relationships to the creation of the 2nd movement of Op. 78.

Regardless of its real connection to the background, it is my view that the funeral march section is where Brahms's most condensed emotion resides. This section is the only place where both main motives, the raindrop head-motive and the step-and-leap tail-motive, are heard simultaneously by being stacked vertically. Usually when these two motives are combined, they are arranged horizontally to form longer melodic flows in the other movements. However, in the funeral march section, these two motives rather create a distinct polyphonic unit, vertically linked through rhythmic unison. Both elements filling up the exact same rhythmic duration, the step-and-leap motive moves beneath the steady appearance of the raindrop motive on the surface. (See Example 1.6)

Example 1.6. The 2nd movement of Brahms's Op. 78, mm. 24-27.



¹⁰ Struck, 5.

Even though it is now undisputed that the slow movement existed, at least partially, in February 1879, shortly before Felix Schumann's death, it remains open to question whether Brahms's intellectual and emotional grappling with the anticipated death of Felix could have provided the stimulus that prompted him to compose the *Adagio espressivo*. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the funeral march components and consequences, which are rooted in the germinal rhythm of the sonata, were already integrated into the conception of the movement at this time.

In the very middle of the 2nd movement, this most tightly integrated thematic alloy, the dotted-rhythm of the raindrop motive vertically welded with the step-and-leap motive, synchronously transfigures into the funeral march. As the outer sections (whose thematic materials strongly imply the employment of Robert Schumann's last musical idea) envelope the aching core section which reminisces about Felix Schumann's death, the emotional weight born in this *Adagio* of Op. 78 once again assures Margaret Notley's outlook toward Brahms's adagios: "Because ideally it conveyed an atmosphere of intense significance, the adagio could become a symbol of artistic or spiritual quality or, by further extension, an expression of a national essence, as the opening quotation from the young Brahms suggests."¹¹

"As a type, adagios could serve as a touchstone for the spiritual condition of the milieu in which they had been composed."¹²

Notley's quote of Louis Ehlert's definition of adagio in comparison to andante also reinforces that one should never overlook the 2nd movement of Op. 78, even though it may appear quite distant to the famous song allusion on the surface level, as this study continues the further investigation on its relationship to the anteceding songs of Op. 59 and WoO 23:

Just as we demand from tragedy different proportions, different actions, and a different scope than from comedy, so do we require of an adagio greater depth, grander proportions, and a broader outlook than of an andante. This, it must be said, does not call forth and resolve a conflict, but rather is simply a "Lied," and instrumental song.¹³

¹¹ Notley, 170. The opening quotation from the young Brahms is from a letter Brahms wrote to Clara Schumann in 1855, a comment on the *Adagio espressivo* of Robert Schumann's Symphony in C Major: "Only a German can compose such an adagio." *Clara Schumann-Johannes Brahms Briefe aus den Jahren 1853-1896*, ed. Berthold Litzmann, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1927), I:170, 8 December 1855.

¹² Notley, 169.

¹³ Notley, 170. Notley quotes here Louis Ehlert's "Robert Volkmann: Ein Portrait," *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 56 (1868): 308-309.

Chapter 2: Sonata, Song, and Song Cycle: Interrelationships

Thematic Sharing in Brahms's Op. 59 and Op. 78, in the context of the 19th-Century Song Reference Tradition

On the surface level of the music, it is obvious that the G Major Violin Sonata Op. 78 (1878-9) is closely related to two Brahms songs, Op. 59 no. 3 *Regenlied* and no. 4 *Nachklang* (1873), as these three works share identical thematic material. (See Example 2.1) Multiple scholars, including David Brodbeck, Michael Musgrave, Dillon Parmer, and Inge Van Rij, have previously discussed this explicit thematic sharing between the vocal and instrumental genres in Brahms.¹⁴

Exemplifying the last movement of Op. 78 as the “most famous song allusion” of Brahms, Parmer lists abundant examples of Brahms's instrumental works based on his songs as “antecedents.”¹⁵ Also, Parmer's statement that this was a widespread common practice in 19th-century music is firmly supported by several other examples from the major composers of this era, including more by Brahms himself.¹⁶ For example, Schubert on many occasions famously used his own songs for providing the basis of his instrumental music, such as *Die Forelle* in the 4th movement of the Piano Quintet in A Major,

¹⁴ David Brodbeck, “Medium and Meaning: New Aspects of the Chamber Music,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms*, ed. by Michael Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 117-121; Michael Musgrave, “Words for Music: the songs for solo voice and piano,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms*, ed. by Michael Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 214-217; Dillon Parmer, “Brahms, Song Quotation, and Secret Programs,” *19th-Century Music* 19, no. 2 (Autumn 1995): 167-177; Inge Van Rij, *Brahms's Song Collections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

¹⁵ Parmer, 167; 162-163. Selected additional Brahms examples include the Andante from the C Major Piano Sonata, op. 1, and the Variations on a Hungarian Theme, op. 21, both of which use actual songs as their basis. Parmer reports that,

according to Paul Mies, the ‘Edward’ Ballade, op. 10, no. 1, may have originated as a song, while documentary evidence betrays a vocal conception for the Andante from the F# minor Piano Sonata, op. 2, as well as the Drei Intermezzi, op. 117. Chorales anchor both a set of variations, op. 56, and--as they ought to--the twelve organ preludes, WoO 7 and op. 122. (162)

Several further examples are also provided on these pages as well as throughout the rest of the article, including *Wiegenlied*, op. 49, no. 4 in the 1st movement of Brahms's Second Symphony op. 73; and *Todessehnen*, op. 86, no. 6, mm. 27-30 (1878), appearing in the Andante of the Second Piano Concerto, op. 83, mm. 59-62 (1881; both works were published in 1882).

¹⁶ Parmer, 163. Parmer also points out that “In Brahms's instrumental music, a reliance on vocal antecedents might be attributed to his alleged belief that only song, especially folk song, can serve as a suitable source for melodic inspiration.”

D.667; *Der Tod und das Mädchen* in the 2nd movement of the String Quartet in D minor, D. 810; *Trockne Blumen* in the Introduction and Variations for Flute and Piano, D. 802; and *Der Wanderer* in the Wanderer Fantasy.¹⁷ Schumann's early song *An Anna* resurfaces as the 2nd movement of his Piano Sonata in F# Minor Op. 11.¹⁸ Perhaps the earliest significant example is Mozart borrowing the melody of *Sehnsucht nach dem Frühlinge* K. 596 for the rondo finale of his last Piano Concerto in Bb Major, K. 595, completed in 1791.¹⁹

Example 2.1. Thematic sharing between Op. 78 and the two songs of Op. 59.

(a) Op. 78, 3rd movement

The image shows a musical score for the 3rd movement of Op. 78. It is in F# minor, 3/4 time, and is marked 'Allegro molto moderato*')'. The score is written for piano and includes a piano introduction with a 'p dolce' marking. The main theme is a melody in the right hand, with a corresponding bass line in the left hand. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and fingerings.

¹⁷ Parmer, 163.

¹⁸ Gustav Jenner, "Johannes Brahms as Man, Teacher, and Artist," trans. Susan Gillespie, in *Brahms and His World*, ed. Walter Frisch (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 192-193. Jenner, Brahms's only regular composition student, relates a story regarding this song:

He [Brahms] stood up and fetched a few loose yellowed sheets. It was the manuscript of those songs by Robert Schumann which Brahms would later publish himself in the supplemental volume of Schumann's works. Then he sat down at the piano, played and sang them for me, especially that touching song *An Anna* whose melody Schumann used in the F-sharp-Minor Sonata, op. 11, with such enthusiastic sentiment that he could not forbear to weep tears of emotion, which came easily to him. 'Yes,' he said, standing up, 'Schumann wrote that when he was eighteen; talent is what you need, nothing else will get you anywhere.'

¹⁹ Maynard Solomon, *Mozart: A Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 473-474. Mozart entered the Concerto into his personal thematic catalog on January 5 and the song *Sehnsucht nach dem Frühlinge* on January 14, 1791, hence their appearance in Köchel's catalog as K. 595 and K. 596, respectively. Solomon explains, however, that the timeline of the Concerto's composition is still unclear, and that in the Concerto "Mozart used the first of the spring songs [*Sehnsucht*] in its rondo finale," strongly implying that the song came first.

(b) Op. 59, no. 3

In mäßiger, ruhiger Bewegung.
Andante con moto tranquillo. Op. 59 № 3.

Wal - le, Re - - gen,
Drops of rain, for -

wal - le nie - - der, wck - ke mir die
ev - er fall - - ing, wake my dreams be -

Träu - - me wie - der, die ich in der
yond re - call - ing, dreams I dreamt in

(c) Op. 59, no. 4

Sanft bewegt.
Dolce con moto. Op. 59 № 4.

Re - gen-trop - - fen aus - den Bäu - - - men
Drops of rain on wea - - ried flow - - - ers

fal - - len in das grü - - - ne Gras,
lay them low and pale to view,

Trä - - nen mei - - - ner trü - - - ben Au - - - gen
tears that fall in hours of sor - - - row

Song references were not only limited to the composer's own work, but also included numerous quotations taken from contemporary and older pieces by other composers.²⁰ Although Brahms replaced them with new material in his revised Op. 8 Piano Trio, due to a shift in his compositional perspectives over the course of 37 years (1854-1891), he once had placed noticeable allusions to Schubert's *Am Meer* from *Schwanengesang*, D. 957, and Beethoven's *Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder* from *An die ferne Geliebte*, Op. 98, in the original version of the Trio.²¹ Schumann also based the 1st movement of his C Major Fantasy for Piano Op. 17 on Beethoven's *Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder* (the Fantasy being Schumann's overt personal statement of devotion to Clara Wieck before their 1840 marriage--at that time, she was his literal *ferne Geliebte*). Brahms's quote of the same Beethoven song in the original Op. 8 was widely interpreted as his own "intimate" statement of youthful affection for Clara, and this is likely the foremost reason for its removal from Brahms's late revision of the Trio.²²

Although Beethoven undoubtedly served as Brahms's musical hero, nobody can deny that Brahms also possessed a deep and sincere admiration towards Schubert's music.²³ Robert Pascall describes Brahms's affection for Schubert like this:

Brahms's response to influence was always selective, and he came late to Schubert, who was the last great source of influence he discovered. But, as he told a friend in the early 1860's, his love for Schubert was lasting and intense, and in a real sense Brahms celebrated Schubert for the rest of his life.²⁴

Brahms collected Schubert's manuscripts, owning songs, 113 dances and some instrumental works; he copied other manuscripts, including that of *Lazarus*; and he owned early editions of the songs, many of which he corrected carefully. Thus Brahms, the productive composer of genius, found space to perform, edit, and collect Schubert's music. Of his many editing focusses, Schubert was the most lasting and extensive; his orchestral arrangements of Schubert songs, too, are a tribute he brought to no other composer.²⁵

²⁰ Parmer 163.

²¹ Roger Moseley, "Reforming Johannes: Brahms, Kreisler Junior and the Piano Trio in B, Op. 8," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 132, no. 2 (2007): 275-278; Parmer, 177-178; 182-185.

²² Moseley, "Reforming Johannes," 276.

²³ Moseley, 275. Moseley here quotes Kretzschmar's evaluation, mentioning that it would have been a flattering compliment for Brahms in 1854: "Without a doubt, Beethoven's late style had a great influence on the forms as well as the spirit of Brahms's first period. Indeed, the young Brahms seems to have orbited around Beethoven's genius as if it were a sun, conditioning all his thoughts and feelings."

²⁴ Robert Pascall, "Brahms and Schubert," *The Musical Times* 124, no. 1683 (May 1983), 286.

²⁵ Pascall, 291.

James Webster thoroughly explores Brahms's devoted admiration to Schubert in his two articles, placing an emphasis on formal similarities between the two composers.²⁶ Webster reports how Brahms preserved and promoted Schubert's legacy with such enthusiasm and thoroughness.²⁷ Brahms brought them under the new light of appreciation by collecting primary documents from Schubert's surviving relatives, as well as establishing connections between the publishers who owned Schubert's music with his own publisher. As a musicologist and editor himself, Brahms assisted in the complete edition of Schubert's music by preparing (and correcting) the scores of Schubert's early symphonies.²⁸

Charles Rosen argues that the frequent borrowing of vocal works in Romantic instrumental music represents a major stylistic change that took place after the end of the Classical period. Classical sonata form, Rosen contends, depends primarily on a clear polarity between tonic and dominant harmonies. Classical composers such as Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven would routinely establish a firm tonic at the beginning, build up dramatic energy through the exposition, and finally cadence on the dominant. Early Romantic composers such as Hummel, Weber, and John Field, however, cultivated "a more lyric and less dramatic conception of form." The tonic-dominant relationship was "loosened and weakened" by these composers, who made the home key more ambiguous through "a new and pervasive chromaticism." The emphasis shifted to melody. Schubert in particular pioneered "the first large development of a truly melodic form, one in which the classical harmonic tension is replaced by a relaxed and expansive succession of melodies."²⁹ Rosen crowns Schubert as "the most significant originator of the new Romantic style," whose sonata-form compositions operate "within the late loosely organized post-classical style, in which the melodic flow is essentially more important than the dramatic structure."³⁰ In other words, the formal structure of Schubert's instrumental works depended on the succession of melodic ideas, placing them in the same lyrical category as his vocal works. Therefore the rich repertoire

²⁶ James Webster, "Schubert's Sonata Form and Brahms's First Maturity," *19th-Century Music* 2, no. 1 (July 1979): 18-35; James Webster, "Schubert's Sonata Form and Brahms's First Maturity (II)," *19th-Century Music* 3, no. 1 (July 1979): 52-63.

²⁷ Webster, "Schubert's Sonata Form and Brahms's First Maturity (II)," 55.

²⁸ Pascall, 289.

²⁹ Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), 384

³⁰ Rosen, 516-517

of 19th-century *Lieder* became a stylistically appropriate source of thematic material for Romantic instrumental composition.³¹

Considering this context, as well as many other evidences of strong musical references found in their scores, it is not at all surprising that there is also a hidden but distinct trace of Schubert in Brahms's Op. 59. Known for its raindrop and tear analogies, the text of *Regenlied*, Op. 59 no.3, naturally reminds us of Schubert's famous song from *Winterreise* D. 911, *Gefror'ne Thränen* ("Frozen Tears"). As for the musical connection between the two songs, the opening measures of *Regenlied* unfold through a piano prelude featuring a step-and-leap motive, E#-F#-A, followed by its inverted version, B-A-F#. (See Example 2.2) The identical gesture also appears in the piano part of *Gefror'ne Thränen*, here an insistently dominating motive (G-Ab-C) throughout the entire song in which the same textual theme of a "tear" is present.³² (See Example 2.3)

Example 2.2. *Regenlied*, Op. 59 no.3, mm. 1-4.



³¹ Webster's thorough two-part study on "Schubert's Sonata Form and Brahms's First Maturity" (see note 26) also confirms this stylistic evolution from the Classical period to the Romantic era. Comparing the sonata form models of the two specific composers in the 19th century, Webster's defined observations make it undeniable that Brahms not only respectfully succeeded Schubertian formal construction and key relationships in sonata form, but also Brahms could not help rectifying this highly Romantic approach in order to revive the finest integrated ideal of the previous era. Although the Op. 78 Violin Sonata is chronologically well apart from Brahms's first maturity (generally agreed to be around 1859-1865), it still displays a bountiful degree of Schubert's songful nature, namely in its A-B-A primary theme zone and the quasi-three-theme design of the exposition in the 1st movement. Meanwhile, the loose structure and weakened formal boundaries lack the revival of the Classical model and place this sonata far away from the Op. 34 Piano Quintet, perhaps the greatest example of strict three-key sonata form and Schubertian heritage during Brahms's first maturity.

³² Another "motivic homage" similar to this could be found between Brahms's Piano Quintet in f minor, Op. 34, and Schubert's String Quintet in C Major, D. 956. Most notably, the Phrygian final cadence of Schubert's quintet (Db-C) is employed by Brahms at the end of the Scherzo (3rd movement) of Op. 34, and the Db-C half-step motive generates melodic ideas and key relationships throughout all four movements of Op. 34.

Example 2.3. *Winterreise* D. 911, no. 3, *Gefror'ne Thränen*.

The musical score for 'Gefror'ne Thränen' consists of three systems. The first system shows the vocal line (Singstimme) and the piano accompaniment (Pianoforte). The tempo is marked 'Nicht zu langsam.' The piano part begins with a piano (pp) dynamic and a three-note motive in the right hand. The vocal line enters in the second measure. The piano part includes dynamics like pp, fp, and decresc. The lyrics are: 'Ge - fror'ne Tropfen fal - len von mei - nen Wangen ab: ob es mirdennent - gan - gen, dass ich ge - weinet hab? dass ich ge - weinet hab?'

Both composers place the three-note motive in the same syncopated metric arrangement, beginning with an upbeat and placing the second pitch of the motive on a downbeat. Both harmonizations are also similar: the first note of the motive supports dominant harmony, while the final two notes trace out the tonic chord. The downward melodic gesture in measure 4 of *Regenlied* echoes the downward motion to C4 in m. 2 of *Gefror'ne Thränen*. In this way, Brahms fully adopted the style of Schubert, while providing his own sophisticated twist: in *Regenlied*, Brahms interlaces the step-and-leap gesture with the raindrop motive (the three opening C# octaves in dotted rhythm), an idea which takes on great importance in Op. 59 and Op. 78. As Pascall confirms, “the instrumental and vocal inputs from Schubert’s style were quickly assimilated.”³³ This particular Schubert-Brahms reference, while one of many, adds one more compelling dimension of context to our further examination of Op. 59.

³³ Pascall, 287.

***Regenlied* and Organic Unity in Brahms's Conception of the 'Song Bouquet'**

This chapter will focus on measuring the weight of the *Regenlied* theme, clearly beloved enough to be used repeatedly in the two songs in Op. 59 and Op. 78, over a span of roughly ten years. Moreover, there is another interesting fact about the text related to this theme: the Klaus Groth poem used for *Nachklang*, the other Op. 59 song which shares the *Regenlied* theme, was set once again by Brahms in WoO 23 *Regenlied* (date uncertain, 1866-1872). This was the only poem chosen twice by Brahms for two different song settings.³⁴ (See Table 2.1) By understanding Brahms's perspective on the chosen text and its interrelation with his vocal and instrumental music, this study also proposes to fulfill Parmer's attempt to "undermine the canonical barrier separating vocal from instrumental music by asserting that song texts may be necessary for understanding works for instruments alone."³⁵

Table 2.1. Text and English Translation of Op. 59 no. 3, no. 4, and WoO 23³⁶

(a) *Regenlied*, op. 59 no. 3

Regenlied	Rain Song	[Translation]
<i>Walle, Regen, walle nieder, Wecke mir die Träume weider, Die ich in der Kindheit träumte, Wenn das Naß im Sande schäumte!</i>	Pour, pour down, rain; reawaken in me the dreams that I dreamt in childhood when the moisture foamed in the sand!	
<i>Wenn die matte Sommerschwüle Lässig stritt mit frischer Kühle, Und die blanken Blätter tauten, Und die Saaten dunkler blauten.</i>	When the weary summer sultriness fought indolently against the fresh coolness, and the gleaming leaves dripped dew, and the fields of grain took on a deeper blue.	
<i>Welche Wonne, in dem Fließen Dann zu stehn mit nackten Füßen, An dem Grase hin zu streifen Und den Schaum mit Händen greifen,</i>	What bliss to stand in the downpour at such times with bare feet, to brush against the grass and reach out and touch the foam,	
<i>Oden mit den heißen Wangen Kalte Tropfen aufzufangen,</i>	or else to catch cool drops on one's flushed face and to open one's childlike heart	

³⁴ Lucien Stark, *A Guide to the Solo Songs of Johannes Brahms* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 180.

³⁵ Parmer, 162.

³⁶ Stark, 177-178; 179-180; 353.

*Und den neuerwachten Düften
Seine Kinderbrust zu lüften!*

*Wie die Kelche, die da troffen,
Stand die Seele atmend offen,
Wie die Blumen, düftetrunken,
In dem Himmelstau versunken.*

*Schauernd kühlte jeder Tropfen,
Tief bis an des Herzens Klopfen,
Und der Schöpfung heiling Weben
Drang bis in 's verborg'ne Leben.*

*Walle, Regen, walle nieder,
Wecke meine alten Lieder,
Die wir in der Türe sangen,
Wenn die Tropfen draußen klangen!*

*Möchte ihnen wieder lauschen,
Ihrem süßen, feuchten Rauschen,
Meine Seele sanft betauen,
Mit dem frommen Kindergrauen.*

to the newly awakened scents!

Like the calyxes that were dripping
there, one's soul was wide open and breathing,
like the flowers intoxicated with fragrances,
sunk in the heavenly dew.

Each drop gave a thrill of pleasure and
cooled you down to your beating heart, and the
holy weaving of Creation penetrated the hidden
sources of life.

Pour, pour down, rain; awaken my old
songs, which we sang in the doorway when the
drops fell noisily outside!

I would like to listen to them again, to
their sweet, moist murmuring; I would like to
bedew my soul gently with that holy childlike
awe.

(b) Nachklang, op. 59 no. 4

Nachklang

*Regentropfen aus den Bäumen
Fallen in das grüne Gras,
Tränen meiner trüben Augen
Machen mir die Wange naß.*

*Wenn die Sonne wieder scheint,
Wird der Rasen doppelt grün:
Doppelt wird auf meinen Wangen
Mir die heiße Träne glühn.*

Lingering Sound

[Translation]

Raindrops are falling from the trees
into the green grass; tears from my dulled eyes
are moistening my cheeks.

When the sun shines again, the lawn
becomes twice as green; my hot tears will burn
twice as fiercely on my cheeks.

(c) Regenlied, WoO posth. 23

Regenlied

*Regentropfen aus den Bäumen
Fallen in das grüne Gras,
Tränen meiner trüben Augen*

Rain Song

[Translation]

Raindrops are falling from the trees into
the green grass; tears from my dulled eyes are
moistening my cheeks.

Machen mir die Wange naß.

*Scheint die Sonne wieder helle,
Wird der Rasen doppelt grün:
Doppelt wird auf meinen Wangen
Mir die heiße Träne glühn.*

When the sun shines brightly again, the
lawn becomes twice as green; my hot tears will
burn twice as fiercely on my cheeks.

First of all, within this context of the song reference tradition in the 19th century, it is crucial that we understand the characteristics of Brahms's song writing procedure, as well as his intention behind the groupings of the songs. Considering the popularity of the concept of the song cycle in 19th-century vocal music, it is undeniable that Brahms's song collections must have been influenced by his musical ancestors' achievements in some significant ways. To understand these influences, Inge Van Rij proposes that we examine song cycle models by three preceding composers: Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann.³⁷

Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte* (1816) is rare in that its conception of the song cycle format is most strict. The six songs in this collection are based on texts by a single poet, Alois Isidor Jeitteles, and one single male voice as a protagonist provides narrative integrity throughout the entire collection. This textual unity is musically represented by piano interludes that interweave the songs and generate smooth transitions between varying keys and tempos. According to Rosen, "at several points Beethoven has tried to blend the rhythms of one [song] with those of the next song and make the transition almost imperceptible."³⁸ Van Rij also points out that "the sequence of keys is symmetrical, and the final song not only returns to the key of the first but also recalls thematic material from the opening song; the six songs are thus bound into a circle--a song *cycle*."³⁹ Rosen remarks that the cycle's "last phrase is also the opening phrase of the cycle," and asserts that Beethoven, in this circular design, "goes even beyond Schubert."⁴⁰ Regardless of its unique formal conception, *An die ferne Geliebte* exerted great influence on future composers as "the first example of what was the most original and perhaps the most important of

³⁷ Van Rij, 5-6.

³⁸ Rosen, 402.

³⁹ Van Rij, 5-6.

⁴⁰ Rosen, 402.

Romantic forms.”⁴¹ As previously mentioned, both Brahms and Schumann quoted this song cycle in their own instrumental works, demonstrating the in-depth awareness and fondness of the following generations towards the immaculate model of Beethoven.

Beethoven’s strict model, however, was not always rigorously followed by his successors.⁴² As Van Rij continues, Schubert’s song cycles *Winterreise* (1828) and *Die schöne Müllerin* (1823) are based on the works of a single author, Wilhelm Müller, but the songs are arranged in the order of Schubert’s own design to fit the dramatic arc that the composer wanted to create in the song cycle. There are no interconnecting piano parts between songs, but rather a clear emphasis on the evolved role of the piano part. While the piano interludes in *An Die ferne Geliebte* were merely transitional, the preludes and postludes in Schubert’s songs teem with implications and foreshadowings, establish the mood, depict the atmosphere, and project perfect closure through thoughtfully crafted aftertastes. Schubert is not concerned with creating any large-scale tonal or thematic return in these song cycles, as the materials at the very beginning and end do not match or create a rounded unity. Rosen confirms, “Schubert’s large cycles are sets of independent songs, each one of which makes sense by itself and can stand alone, even if it gains in depth from being placed in context.”⁴³

A similar tendency is found in Schumann’s *Myrthen* and Op. 39 *Liederkreis*. Composed in 1840, these song cycles take even further freedom in the selection of their texts. In *Myrthen*, the poems are from the works of multiple authors. Op. 39 *Liederkreis* uses Schumann’s own selection of Joseph Eichendorff’s works, also specifically arranged in Schumann’s order. In the same manner as Schubert, Schumann used neither interweaving piano parts between songs in these two song cycles, nor the idea of returning thematic material connecting the very beginning and end. In his cycles, Schumann employs a “set of related keys, none of which is felt as more important than the others.”⁴⁴ Even though Van Rij

⁴¹ Rosen, 403.

⁴² Van Rij, 5-6. “If we accept the assumption that the particular combination of features presented by *An die ferne Geliebte* makes it the ultimate song cycle then we must also accept that it is the ‘ultimate’ cycle in a sense that Dommer doubtless did not intend--it is not only the first, but also the last song cycle.”

⁴³ Rosen, 402.

⁴⁴ Rosen, 516.

acknowledges other song collections by Schumann based on a lyric cycle in which ‘thematic recall’ fits the text and efficiently provides a great deal of coherence to the collection, she makes her point clear that this should not be the only factor that allows the song cycle to exist as a coherent grouping in its entirety.⁴⁵

Finally, Brahms joins these mischievously unfaithful followers of Beethoven. At least on the surface level, which Van Rij refers to as a ‘cursory glance,’ Brahms’s song collection Op. 105 appears to lack most elements of a strict song cycle.⁴⁶ In fact, among all the collections of Brahms’s songs, only *Magelone Romanzen* Op. 33 is considered a song cycle in a strict sense, as its text is based on a single lyric cycle.⁴⁷ In most of his song collections including Op. 105, the sources of the selected texts vary as they were written by different authors, in different languages but translated into German, and even originating from different generations and time periods. The main voice is often inconsistent throughout this collection in its gender orientation and narrative point of view. Even the musical style Brahms selected for each song ranges from folk style to ballad in Op. 105.⁴⁸

Despite the lack of strict thematic and tonal return in his song sets, and the variant textual sources and musical styles, Brahms wanted his ordering of the songs to be faithfully preserved, as the result of understanding his intended meanings.⁴⁹ When he submitted the Op. 59 collection for publication, Brahms wrote to the publisher Rieter-Biedermann, saying, “The two volumes differ in size, but I wish the order, which you will call a disorder, to be kept.”⁵⁰ Op. 59, a collection of eight solo song settings, was published in two booklets. Four out of the eight songs in this collection, no. 3 *Regenlied*, no. 4 *Nachklang*, no. 7 *Mein wundes Herz*, and no. 8 *Dein blaues Auge*, use poems of Klaus Groth (1819-1899), Brahms’s contemporary⁵¹ and close friend.⁵² The first two Groth songs conclude the first half of

⁴⁵ Van Rij, 25.

⁴⁶ Van Rij, 3-4.

⁴⁷ Van Rij, 9.

⁴⁸ Van Rij, 3-4

⁴⁹ Van Rij, 2; Stark 173

⁵⁰ Stark, 173.

⁵¹ The texts of the other four songs are the poems by Goethe (no. 1 *Dämmerung senkte sich von oben*), Karl Simrock (no. 2 *Auf dem See*), Mörike (no. 5 *Agnes*), and Daumer (no. 6 *Eine gute, gute Nacht*). Except for Goethe,

the Op. 59, and the other two wrap up the entire collection.⁵³ To supplement the lack of narrative unity in Op. 59 due to its nature of employing texts based on multiple poems by multiple poets, Brahms arranged the songs in a way so that the recurring images and the flow of the words in the text could establish one logical progression of meaning throughout the collection.⁵⁴

What underlies Brahms's insistent attempt to keep the textual and musical coherence could be traced back to 19th-century organicist theories of art. Starting in the late 18th century, scientific models of organicism began to be applied to theories of art (although the basis for this application can be found even in Plato and Aristotle). Two prevailing 19th-century versions of organicist theory were "Goethe's concept of *Urpflanze*," in which "all plant species are seen to derive from a single prototypical plant that itself contains every constituent element of every species," as well as Jean-Baptiste Robinet's idea of the "cell that has a natural tendency towards self-development."⁵⁵ While the scientific contents of these theories were severely challenged and discredited by the middle of the 19th century, the concept of an organic unity had already exerted a significant impact on "everything from history to literature, the visual arts and music."⁵⁶ An evidence of Brahms's keen awareness of this 19th-century organic conception and his advocacy for the idea is found in his 'Schatzkästlein': "Without connectedness, without the deepest connection between each and every part, the music becomes a trivial sandcastle capable of no lasting impression; only connectedness turns it into marble in which the hand of the artist can be immortalised."⁵⁷

all of the writers represented in this set were Brahms's contemporaries. Karl Simrock was the uncle of Fritz Simrock, Brahms's publisher, financial manager, and close friend.

⁵² Stark, 358. Brahms and Groth first met in Düsseldorf in 1856 and they "remained close friends." Groth was originally from the city of Heide, the birthplace of Brahms's father. Groth's book *Quickborn* (1853) broke ground for its use of Plattdeutsch (Low German), the dialect of Hamburg (Brahms's hometown) and surrounding areas.

⁵³ Stark, 173.

⁵⁴ Van Rij, 23.

⁵⁵ Van Rij, 6-8. Both conceptions being broadly influential throughout the 19th century, Van Rij remarks that the Schenkerian *Ursatz* is influenced by Goethe's *Urpflanze*, whereas Robinet's 'cell development' theory could be the inspiration for Schoenberg's 'developing variation.' Brahms's music was considered as the most ideal example of 'organic conception of unity,' by both Schenker and Schoenberg in supporting their own theories.

⁵⁶ Van Rij, 7.

⁵⁷ Van Rij, 7. The original may be found in Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, quoted in Brahms, 'Schatzkästlein', ed. Krebs, pp. 112-13, no. 412. (See Van Rij's note 11 in 'Context')

Van Rij's thoughtful observation about the connectedness throughout the eight songs of Op. 59 reveals three dimensions of coherent flow in the text. Firstly, the four songs in the first booklet depict the nature and surrounding atmosphere, while the narrative voice in the following four songs in the second booklet moves on to describing a personal relationship. Secondly, regardless of the assortment of the poems he chose, Brahms successfully arranged them in such a way that the overlapping linkage between the keywords of the poems clearly shows an integrated progression in the entire textual plot. Finally, the return of the lake analogy in the last poem matches the first two poems in a cyclic sense (See Table 2.2):

The natural setting of the lake surrounded by mist unites the first two poems; the reproduction of the beauty of nature through song occurs in the second and third; rain unites the third and fourth poems; and the following poems continue the chain with successive images of weeping, unfaithful love, and soothing new love. In the final poem, the blue eyes of the beloved are compared to a lake, thus taking us back to the lake setting that dominates the first two poems, and giving a sense of cyclic closure.⁵⁸

Table 2.2. Inge Van Rij's "Linear and cyclic progressions in the text of Op. 59"⁵⁹

Volume 1				Volume 2			
nature				relationship			
No.1 Goethe	No. 2 Simrock	No. 3 Groth	No.4 Groth	No.5 Mörike	No. 6 Daumer	No.7 Groth	No. 8 Groth
lake mist	lake mist song	song rain	rain weeping	weeping unfaithful love	unfaithful love	sore heart (unfaithful love?) soothing new love	lake soothing new love

According to Van Rij's "Linear and cyclic progressions in the text of Op. 59," the two Groth poems of the final two songs of Op. 59, *Mein wundes Herz* (My sore Heart) and *Dein blaues Auge* (Your Blue Eyes), could be considered as the bearer of the textual seed which is to grow into a fully expanded

⁵⁸ Van Rij, 122-123.

⁵⁹ Van Rij, 124.

plot. This is also a fulfilling example of Van Rij's 'Textual *Ursatz*: sorrow to comfort' model.⁶⁰ Derived from Brahms's *Deutsches Requiem* as well as "identified in Schubert's song settings by Michael Hall,"⁶¹ this "plot archetype" is favored in many of Brahms's song collections including Op. 59 as another device that provides coherent progression in the text, just like Goethe's idea of *Urpflanze*, which provides textual coherence in a lyric cycle.

As Brahms integratively chose his musical devices to support the textual flow of the poems he assembled into a group, the thematic congruity between *Regenlied* and *Nachklang* seems to even surpass their textual cohesiveness:

The thematic pairing of the third and fourth songs in op. 59 (with texts by Groth) functions in a similar way, although here, unusually, the musical pairing does not reflect a pairing created by the poet (Groth wrote the second of the texts by hand onto one of the opening pages of Brahms's copy of *Hundert Blätter*, without signalling any connection to the poem 'Regenlied', which is printed elsewhere in the volume). The shared theme in the music of the third and fourth of op. 59 emphasizes the obvious shared image of their texts-- the raindrops that stimulate the narrator to melancholy reflection. This creates an 'echo' in both text and music (indeed, Brahms titles the fourth song 'Nachklang').⁶²

In 'Regenlied' the raindrops transport the narrator back to fond memories of childhood (and, in Brahms's setting, to sections in the relative major and submediant major), but in 'Nachklang' the raindrops are compared to the narrator's bitter tears (and Brahms thus remains in the minor for a modified strophic repetition of the theme).⁶³

In fact, the four songs of Op. 59 employing Groth's poems were first sent to Groth and his wife Doris in March 1873, prior to their publication as a part of Op. 59 with the rearrangement and the later addition of four other songs.⁶⁴

The manuscript (found in Groth's estate in Heide) reveals that the songs were arranged in the order 'Regenlied'--'Dein blaues Auge'--'Mein wundes Herz'--'Nachklang' (although the latter

⁶⁰ Van Rij, 122; 78-79.

Most of the *Requiem*'s seven movements represent a progression from sorrow to comfort. This progression is echoed on a larger scale across the *Requiem* as a whole. The first movement begins, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted' (a microcosmic 'sorrow to comfort' progression in itself), while the final movement concludes, 'Blessed are they that die in the Lord'--the sorrowing mourners are now themselves reconciled to their own deaths and receive the ultimate comfort.

⁶¹ Van Rij, 78-79. "Michael Hall identifies a similar basic progression from sorrow to comfort in a number of Schubert's song sets, and it is of course in the nature of an archetype that it is widely used and generally understood." See Van Rij note 9 in 'Arrangement': Hall, *Schubert's Song Sets*, p. 11.

⁶² Van Rij, 52-53.

⁶³ Van Rij, 53-54.

⁶⁴ Van Rij, 56.

title had not yet been given).⁶⁵ ... This order differs to that in which the songs appear in op. 59. ... In his initial placement of the pair of ‘Regenlieder’, with their shared musical theme, at either end of the cycle, Brahms creates in this Groth grouping a frame and sense of cyclic return, upon which Doris Groth commented: ‘How delicately, how sensitively you have chosen the order of the four songs! ... how deeply felt they are, these songs, and at the end the last song returns to the first, transporting us back into the past, just as does life itself.’⁶⁶ (See Table 2.3)

Table 2.3. Extraction of the inner “Groth cycle” based on the diagram of Van Rij⁶⁷

Groth Cycle			
No. 3 F# minor	No.8 Eb Major	No. 7 E minor	No.4 F# minor
nature	Sorrow and comfort		nature/emotion
song rain	sore heart (unfaithful love?) soothing new love	soothing new love	rain weeping

Why did Brahms split up this small group of the four Groth songs perfectly nested in the ideal cyclic frame with the tonal and thematic returns, and expand it by adding four other songs of completely different authors? In light of his knowledge of pre-existing song cycles such as Beethoven’s *An die ferne Geliebte*, the final grouping of Op. 59 stoutly refuses to join these well ‘rounded’ models. Van Rij raises exactly the same question:

In opp. 59, 85 and 96 Brahms appears to have begun with a conception that implied cyclicality. He grouped up to four songs with texts by the same poet and, in opp. 59 and 85, enhanced textual cohesion with thematic repetition. However, at the time of publication Brahms retracted his original conception to create what might be considered less coherent groupings.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Van Rij, 56. See Van Rij note 17 in ‘Conception to Publication.’ Van Rij adds: “The manuscript was not found until the last decade of the twentieth century, and an edition of this ‘Groth cycle’ was published in 1997: *Johannes Brahms: Vier Lieder nach Gedichten von Klaus Groth. Regenlied-Zyklus*, ed. Michael Struck (Munich: Henle, 1997).”

⁶⁶ Van Rij, 56. See Van Rij note 18 in ‘Conception to Publication’: Doris Groth to Brahms, 27 April 1873. Quoted in the preface to *Regenlied-Zyklus*, ed. Struck.

⁶⁷ Van Rij, 56; 124.

⁶⁸ Van Rij, 56.

Van Rij finds the answer to this question in the ‘song bouquets [Blumensträußen]’ metaphor used in conversation between Brahms and his publishers:⁶⁹ Brahms regarded his songs as flowers which comprise a bouquet, and the flowers could be rearranged into a different bouquet. These flowers, moreover, are not necessarily cultivated from the same soil.⁷⁰ Needless to say, coherence in a grouping is inevitable as it binds the bouquet of songs as a whole; Brahms, however, preferred this bond to be rather loose and subtle.⁷¹ The binding tools suggested by Van Rij definitely fit the description of Brahms’s coherence and subtleness: the coherent progression of text and of thematic and motivic recurrence in the music. But are these tools sufficient to explain the blueprint of this Op. 59 collection, to which Brahms certainly appears to project his fondness toward the texts and thematic material, when he even feels compelled to utilize these whole ideas into another creation of Op. 78? As Van Rij quotes Groth’s poem ‘*Wie Melodien*’ (the text of Brahms’s Op. 105, no. 1), I insist that there should be more of “‘the well concealed’ meaning” which can “best be discerned by the ‘moist eye’ of the more subjective recipient.”⁷²

Also, Van Rij still notes that the thematic recall in the complete version of Op. 59 happens between the two neighboring songs in the middle of the collection, while the final songs in Schumann’s *Frauenliebe und -leben* and Beethoven’s *An die ferne Geliebte* share the thematic materials from the first

⁶⁹ Van Rij, 2. Brahms’s conversation with Alwin Beckerath in 1883:

Brahms complained to me that most singers, male and females, grouped the songs together completely arbitrarily, according to how they suited their voices, and totally ignored the trouble he would take to group his songs together like a bouquet [Bouquet]. In fact, he was very justified in this complaint. ... With what fine tactfulness and poetic sensitivity he has bound his song bouquets [Liedersträußen] together. ... He spoke of floral bouquets [Blumensträußen] that Ophlüs had plucked apart, and added that ‘he is happy when he finds earthworms.’ The individual songs profit immeasurably from their groupings.

⁷⁰ Van Rij, 72-75.

⁷¹ Van Rij, 4. Two of Brahms’s quotations tell us that “Brahms valued the loose connection that is discernible only with careful study”: “What is holy? That which binds many souls together, even if only gently, as the rush binds the wreath.”; “You are not to penetrate the artwork at first glance. Where it appears dim to you, probe with cheerful diligence.” See note 9 and 10 in ‘Introduction’: Brahms, *Des jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein*, ed. Carl Krebs (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1909), p. 43, no. 164; p. 155, no. 525.

⁷² Van Rij, 4. Van Rij offers an English translation of *Wie Melodien* here and remarks in her notes that this translation is assisted by Peter Russell:

Like melodies it is moving softly through my mind. It blossoms like spring flowers and wafts away like fragrance. But when words come and capture it and bring it before my eye, it grows pale like grey mist and vanishes like a breath. And yet there rests in rhyme a well-concealed fragrance, which is gently called forth from the silent bud by a moist eye.

song, granting these collections a clear sense of cyclic unity.⁷³ My study, nevertheless, rather considers this absence of cyclic device in Op. 59 as a justification and motivation for how Op. 78 came to a fuller and more coherent unity. In other words, the apparent lack of large-scale thematic and tonal coherence⁷⁴ in the entirety of Op. 59 (especially when compared with Beethoven) perhaps drove Brahms to revisit his “raindrop” materials in the completely cohesive, motivically economical, cyclical format of the Op. 78 Sonata. The intensely cyclic qualities of Op. 78 will be examined in detail later in this study.

Furthermore, even though Van Rij certainly acknowledges the tonal scheme and thematic returns in Op. 59 as well as their relation to Op. 78, her focal point on this subject is too limited to the most obvious features on the surface, such as the dotted rhythm of the raindrop motive and the subtleness of the half-step tonal relation between G minor and F# minor.⁷⁵ Indeed the G-F# relation surely represents the very distant tonal scheme⁷⁶ between the last song of the first booklet and the first song of the second booklet of Op. 59. If we broaden our scope, however, the tonal progression throughout Op. 59 traces a much more compelling trajectory: the tonal path of the first booklet starts from G minor and ends in F# minor (more specifically the ending is in F# Major). The second booklet starts over from G minor, and then the last song concludes in Eb Major, generating a G-F#-G-Eb progression overall.⁷⁷ If Beethoven and Schumann design the tonal relation of the first and last songs in their respective cycles, intending to match them with an emphasis on tonal recall, why should we not expect the same intentionality from Brahms? I contend that Brahms thoughtfully selected the tonal centers of the first and the last songs of each booklet of Op. 59, in order to have them reveal a key idea: the step-and-leap motive. This tonal arc of G-F#-G-Eb penetrating through Op. 59 is Brahms’s rather subtle way of obtaining an integrated organism throughout the entire collection, constituting another pertinent usage of step-and-leap motion in

⁷³ Van Rij, 54.

⁷⁴ no. 1 of Op. 59 starts in G minor and ends in G Major; no. 2 is in E Major; no. 3 is in F# minor ending in F# Major; no. 4 also in F# minor ending in F# Major; no. 5 in G minor; no. 6 in A minor ending in A Major; no. 7 in E minor ending in E Major; no. 8 in Eb Major.

⁷⁵ Van Rij, 123.

⁷⁶ Van Rij 123; 25-29. Van Rij adapts Gottfried Weber’s classification of key relationships, and according to this system, G minor and F# minor are the farthest relationship, classified as a fourth-degree relationship.

⁷⁷ See note 74.

the structural foundation of this particular song collection.⁷⁸ As mentioned once in the previous discussion of the step-and-leap motion shared in both Schubert's *Gefror'ne Thränen* and Brahms's *Regenlied*, Op. 59 no.3, I firmly believe that this intervallic motive is a much stronger common denominator than the raindrop motive (the repeated three-note motive over a dotted rhythm) when it comes to a deeper apprehension of the relationship between Op. 59 and Op. 78. While Van Rij's examination of the raindrop motive as one of the most important unifying agents within the song collection itself (as well as its external relationship to the later violin sonata) is absolutely valid--and many other scholarly figures agree--I must say that there is definitely more to be revealed when considering the entire structure and carefully excavating relatively less conspicuous elements in the music. For my study, in order to get closer to the crux of the *Regenlied*-related work, one must undertake another thoughtful observation of the other *Regenlied*, WoO 23, the lone flower which could not join the 'bouquet' of the other flowers.

Op. 59 and WoO 23 foreshadowing Op. 78

Even considering that WoO 23 *Regenlied* vaguely dates from 1866 to 1872, all three songs (*Regenlied* and *Nachklang* in Op. 59 as well as WoO 23 *Regenlied*) adequately predate the Violin Sonata in G Major, Op. 78. Among those, WoO 23 *Regenlied* is the only work that does not share the dotted-rhythm "raindrop theme." Although its text is almost identical to the text of *Nachklang*, this version of *Regenlied* seems to lack this most crucial musical element belonging to this '*Regenlied*' tetralogy,⁷⁹ unlike the song sharing the same title in Op. 59.⁸⁰ While the dotted-rhythm raindrop motive no longer exists in this song, Brahms instead chose the step-and-leap motive as the key material in the piano part,

⁷⁸ Recall that Brahms's original version of Op. 59 began with *Regenlied* and ended with *Nachklang*, both of these Groth songs sharing the key of f# minor. Such a cycle would have possessed the same start-to-finish tonal unity as *An die ferne Geliebte*. This means that Brahms intentionally disrupted the tonal unity of this initially proposed cycle and substituted it with the far more complex key structure of G-F#-G-Eb, to incorporate the step-and-leap motion.

⁷⁹ This tetralogy (my terminology) includes the four rather simultaneous rain-themed works by Brahms: *Regenlied* (WoO 23), *Regenlied and Nachklang* from Op. 59, and the Op. 78 Violin Sonata in G Major.

⁸⁰ The only difference in the text between *Nachklang* and WoO 23 *Regenlied* is the word order and addition of one word, "helle [bright]": 'Wenn die Sonne wieder scheint' in *Nachklang* became 'Scheint die Sonne wieder helle' in *Regenlied* WoO 23. See Table 2.1.

and utilizes it to highlight the emotionally climactic word in each stanza: mir [my] die Wange [face/cheek] in mm. 13-14, and heiße [hot] Träne [tear] in mm. 30-31. (See Example 2.4)

Example 2.4. Integration between the step-and-leap motive and highlighted words in WoO 23 *Regenlied*.

(a) mm. 13-14



(b) mm. 30-31



Whereas the raindrop motive in the other songs is most noticeable to the ear, this step-and-leap motive is relatively less prominent, but nonetheless provides a more sophisticated layer of coherence to the tetralogy. It evolves into many versions throughout all three movements of Op. 78, and appears persistently right at the beginning of Op. 59 no. 3, m. 6 and Op. 59 no. 4, m. 4, immediately following the dotted-rhythm motive. (See Example 2.5) In fact, this is the very material that provides a consistent thread throughout the entire tetralogy. This combination of raindrop motive and step-and-leap motive appears even in the fifth song of Op. 59, *Agnes*. Although this song, based on Mörike's poem, neither belongs to the "Groth Cycle" nor could be a part of the "rain motive" tetralogy (as its text no longer uses the rain and tear analogies), however, it successfully establishes a convincing transition to the next songs by taking over the 'weeping' idea from *Nachklang*. The new combination of the raindrop motive followed by the step-and-leap motive in mm. 3-4 of *Agnes* musically reinforces this textual coherence.

This four-note-structure step-and-leap motion found in all the examples above corresponds to Schubert's three-note tear motive at the opening of *Gefrör'ne Tränen*, as previously mentioned. (See Example 2.3) These are all good examples of developing variation, or Brahms's fluid compositional

method of constantly drawing new and varied material from a very basic motivic source; this Brahmsian technique will be examined in detail later.

Charles Rosen discusses the primacy of step-and-leap motives in Beethoven, particularly in the Piano Sonata in Ab Major Op. 110. According to Rosen, the elemental duality of step and leap generates “alternating and contrasting patterns” and that this “alternation guarantees a richness of motivic forms.”⁸¹ Rosen also devotes a detailed analysis to Beethoven’s *Hammerklavier* Piano Sonata Op. 106, which is based on two central motives: descending thirds, and a half-step relationship between B-flat and B-natural.⁸² Beethoven’s preferred method is “stripping” the music down to its “underlying skeleton,” so that he can then work with its most basic elements.⁸³ Both Schubert and Brahms appear to have been profoundly impacted by Beethoven’s core step-and-leap motivic technique.

Example 2.5. The step-and-leap motion and the *Regenlied* Tetralogy.

(a) WoO 23, mm. 10-14

The musical score for Example 2.5(a) shows a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The lyrics are: "Trä-nen mei-ner trü-ben Au-gen ma-chen mir die Wan-ge". The piano accompaniment features a "poco f" marking and a crescendo hairpin. The piano part consists of a series of chords and arpeggiated figures in the right hand, and a more active bass line in the left hand.

⁸¹ Rosen, 498.

⁸² Rosen, 404-434.

⁸³ Rosen, 482.

(b) Op. 59 no. 3

In mäßiger, ruhiger Bewegung.
Andante con moto tranquillo. Op. 59 № 3.

Wal - le, Re - gen,
Drops of rain, for -

wal - le nie - der, wek - ke mir die
ev - er fall - ing, wake my dreams be -

m. g.

(c) Op. 59 no. 4

Sanft bewegt.
Dolce con moto.

Re - gen - trop - fen aus - den Bäu -
Drops of rain on wea - ried flow -

(d) Op. 59 no. 5

Con moto *poco f*

Ro - senzeit, wie schnell vor bei,

poco f

(e) Op. 78, 1st movement, mm. 1-2

p mezza voce

(f) Op. 78, 2nd movement, mm. 1-2(g) Op. 78, 3rd movement, mm. 1-2

Returning again to Brahms's *Regenlied* WoO 23, the motive used in the beginning of each stanza, "Regen tropfen" and "Scheint die Sonne" (mm. 4-5 and mm. 21-22), is another rearrangement based on the step-and-leap motive. (See Example 2.6) The slight but significant difference between these two phrases is the diminished 3rd used in "Regen tropfen" in the gloomy, depressive context of G minor, in contrast to the minor 3rd coloring "Scheint die Sonne" in the brighter G Major. This coloration in a major key results in a perfect correspondence with the words "Scheint die Sonne." Although the B-natural in the inner voice of piano part of m. 20 implies the possible transition to major tonality, it is quickly denied by the identical return of the beginning melody in G minor as the second stanza starts out. However, a striking E-natural appoggiatura falls on the downbeat of m. 22 and confirms the major tonality. The placement of the word Sonne [sun] on that E-natural, at the peak of the melodic contour, perfectly justifies the need of the alteration that had to happen in the text. Through the dominant role of the pivotal D Major, the key finally goes back to the original G minor, as the text resumes the rain and tear analogies.

It is obvious that Brahms intends to place great stress on these words in mm. 13-14 and 30-31 in WoO 23, due to the abrupt rhythmic augmentation happening here in the voice part. Preceding m. 13, Brahms sets a consistent eighth-note pulse by distributing an eighth-note to each syllable of the text. In m. 13, however, the rhythmic value suddenly triples in length to a dotted quarter, successfully allowing the singer an opportunity to emphasize the words. The dynamic increase also justifies this moment of emotional outburst vertically juxtaposed with the step-and-leap motive in the piano left hand. The *Poco f* marking in m. 10 is sudden (*subito*), following the seemingly calming dynamic after a short swell in mm. 8-9, endowing the left hand of the piano part with a great deal of substance as a persuasive countermelody. The vocal line, the bass line, and the top notes of the piano right hand in mm. 13-14 all contain clear elements of the step-and-leap motive.

Example 2.6. Thematic rearrangement based on the step-and-leap motive in WoO 23.

(a) mm. 4-5

Andantino (Veröffentlicht 1908)

Singstimme

Pianoforte

p dolce

Re-gen.

tropfen aus den Bäumen fallen in das grüne Gras.

(b) mm. 21-22

Scheint die Sonne wieder

In *Nachklang*, where Brahms uses the same text--and the only text Brahms chose for two different songs--the same words, mir [my] die Wange [cheek], heiße [hot] Träne [tear], are highlighted by dramatic contouring of the melody in mm. 13-14, and lengthening of the melody in mm. 40-43. (See Example 2.7) The first appearance of the perfect fourth leap between the syllables “die” and “Wan” in mm. 13-14 accentuates the word “Wange” as the same word that was illuminated by rhythmic

augmentation in WoO 23. The large leaping melodic contour is scarce throughout *Nachklang* as most of the melodic line consists of stepwise motion or triadic motion. Therefore, it clearly sticks out as an obvious emphasis when the soaring leap of a minor 6th interval happens on the first syllable of “heiße.” Not only by repeating the phrase of “heiße Träne” once again but also by the extreme augmentation of rhythmic values assigned to each syllable of “heiße Träne,” especially by suspending the first syllables of both words over a measure each in mm. 40-43, Brahms boldly displays where his expression resonates most strongly within the text he chose.

Another subtle but unmissable motivic relation between WoO 23 *Regenlied* and Op. 78 also requires our attention. In mm. 13-14 of WoO 23 (as well as in its identical match in mm. 30-31), the step-and-leap motive we previously explored reveals a great deal of resemblance to the melodic figure in the first episode (m. 29) of the 3rd movement in rondo form of Op. 78. (See Example 2.8) Considering how thoroughly and meticulously Brahms assigns this motive to specific words in WoO 23, so that the core meaning of the text receives the musical affirmation it deserves, this thematic sharing with Op. 78 is not merely a coincidence, but another layer of meaningful design. We must be careful not to allow recurrences of the famous “raindrop” motive to overshadow Brahms’s powerful usage of the step-and-leap idea.

Example 2.7. Musical highlighting of specific words in Op. 59 no. 4 *Nachklang*.

(a) Dramatic contouring of the melody in mm. 13-14, not much change in rhythmic value



- (b) Dramatic lengthening of the melody in mm. 40-43, with more intensified emphasis with repetition

71

glühn, mir die hei - - - - -
way, tell of sor - - - - -

- Be Trä - - - - -
row far - ne a - - - -

glühn.
way.

m.g.

p

f

Example 2.8. Shared step-and-leap motive between WoO 23 and Op. 78.

- (a) WoO 23 Regenlied mm. 13-14

mir die Wan - - ge

- (b) Op. 78 3rd movement, m. 29

29

leggiero

p

Conclusion: Op. 78 as Fulfillment of the Limitations of Op. 59

As discussed throughout this chapter, despite the certain degree of coherence implied by the shared theme and motives as well as Brahms's purposeful arrangement of the eight songs in Op. 59, it is undeniable that this collection lacks the thematic and tonal returns to qualify as a strict form of song cycle. However, insofar as Brahms still creates a subtle but persuasive streamline weaving through the divergent nature of the songs in Op. 59, the unsatisfied cyclic requirement in this particular 'song bouquet' eventually fulfills its complete realization later in 1879. Brahms chooses the form of the instrumental sonata, and here ultimately grants the totally developed, proper and fully cohesive musical structure that his beloved *Regenlied* theme deserves.⁸⁴ Song is such a beautiful but limited medium, however, its own rhetorical nature and the destined duty to be bound to the given text inevitably confining the composer's full capability of musical eloquence (in Brahms's case, his masterful techniques for motive and form). Finally in Op. 78, Brahms allows himself the opportunity to demonstrate his craftsmanship as a master of musical coherence, free from symbolized words by other people, and creates a more proficient cyclic model. In the 3rd movement of Op. 78, *Rondo*, the reappearance of the principal theme of the *Adagio* fulfills the cyclic return, and the key structure of the Sonata also provides the proper tonal round within the polarity of G Major between the 1st movement and the last movement, which actually starts out in G minor but eventually reconciles with G Major in the coda. Whereas in Op. 59, Brahms was more inclined to create his own way of organizing the group of songs, in Op. 78, he finally corresponds to the Beethovenian ideal of the "Cycle."

If we could interpret Brahms's reassignment of the same material in different works as a parameter of his significant fondness to it, it is endlessly fascinating to discover the interrelationships between all the recycled materials in the *Regenlied* Tetralogy: Groth's text of *Nachklang* was set in two different songs, Op. 59 no. 4 and WoO 23; the melody of *Regenlied* was used in two songs, Op. 59 no. 3 and 4, as well as the 3rd movement of the Op. 78 violin sonata; and eventually, the primary theme of the

⁸⁴ Avins, 550. Brahms sent Op. 78 to Clara "apologetically, almost diffidently. In contrast, it was received with much emotion. Clara was particularly taken with the inclusion of the 'Regenlied', one of her favourite songs."

2nd movement of Op. 78 was derived from the tail-motive of the *Regenlied* theme, returning as a whole in the 3rd movement (m. 84).

The recurring step-and-leap motive from the 2nd movement remains the most vital motivic element, bearing the layers of context previously mentioned: the possible connection to Schumann's last musical idea and the shared motive as in the other '*Tränenlied*' of Schubert, and most importantly, its present role in endowing a great sense of connectivity throughout the entire *Regenlied* tetralogy.

While in Op. 59, the emotional seed, the emotional *Ursatz*, starts from the inner Groth Cycle and the other songs enrich and broaden the textual context, in Op. 78, the core emotion is captured in the thematic material in the 2nd movement. As we move on to the next chapter, we will witness the chromatic harmony, more specifically the Neapolitan complex, adding one more layer of intensification to the 2nd movement, as well as further motivic coherence involved with the tonal scheme. Also, we will examine how the surrounding outer movements provide a fully elaborated thematic integrity adapting Schoenberg's concept of 'developing variation.' It will lead us to a more detailed observation of Brahms's cohesive large-scale construction emanating from the step-and-leap motive.

Chapter 3: Chromatic Harmony

Brahms adds another layer of substance to the *Adagio* of Op. 78 as he assigns the multi-dimensional integration of chromatic harmony and a half-step melodic motive to this movement. Brahms displays aspects of Romanticism and extends traditional musical language in this movement by preserving the traditional idea of tonal design, while at the same time exploring new tonal relationships among more foreign keys through the Neapolitan relationship. The Neapolitan tonal scheme is briefly adapted in the 1st and the 3rd movements as well; however, it is most extensively used in the 2nd movement as the integrating agent for both vertical and horizontal structure. The half-step shift between the tonal centers established by the Neapolitan relationship is reinforced by the semi-tone melodic motive, and this integration between the vertical harmonic pillars and the linear motivic idea credits this central movement with a great coherent organic structure.

As Wintle describes in his article quoting Schoenberg's "Brahms the Progressive," the tonal scheme of the Neapolitan relationship and the duality between the tonic major/minor alternation creating semi-tone movement has been a common tendency in the structural design of Brahms's music writing.⁸⁵ Wintle details, quoting Musgrave,⁸⁶ how the thematic key relationship⁸⁷ makes a strong case when "significant key relationships" emanate "from themes which exploit particular intervals or are characterized by one individual interval, significantly placed." Along with Wintle's article, Notley's study on Brahms's F Major cello sonata Op. 99⁸⁸ and Smith's article on the 1st movement of the F minor

⁸⁵ Christopher Wintle, "The 'Sceptred Pall': Brahms's progressive harmony," In *Brahms 2: Biographical, Documentary, and Analytical Studies*, ed. by Michael Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 199.

⁸⁶ Michael Musgrave, "Schoenberg and Brahms: A Study of Schoenbergs's response to Brahms's music as revealed in his didactic writings and selected early compositions," unpublished PhD dissertations, University of London, 1980, 203-4.

⁸⁷ Musgrave clarifies that 'thematic key relationship' is Rudolph Réti's term.

⁸⁸ Margaret Notley, "Brahms's Cello Sonata in F Major and its Genesis: A Study in Half-step Relations," in *Brahms Studies*, ed. David Brodbeck and David Lee (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press in affiliation with the American Brahms Society, 1994), 1:139-60.

clarinet sonata, Op. 120,⁸⁹ which both examine Neapolitan relationships, provided the initial inspiration for my analysis of the 2nd movement of Op. 78.

The 2nd movement of Op.78 is written in an extended ternary form: **A [(a) (b) (a)] - B [(c) (d) (c) (d) + (e) (f)] - A [(a) (b) (a)] - C [Coda: (c) (d) (a)]**. (See Table 3.1) Traditionally, one of the basic concepts in ternary form is a contrasting two-part tonal structure. While Brahms respects this conservative idea of contrast within the tonal scheme, he explores progressive ways of drawing upon a specific group of key relationships: (1) tonic major/minor; (2) dominant major/minor; (3) the (flat) submediant (b)VI; (4) Neapolitan major/minor.

Although it differs in degree, the Neapolitan harmony appears consistently through all three movements of Op. 78. While the outer movements are in G Major/G minor, the main tonality of the 2nd movement is Eb Major. This tonal scheme between the central 2nd movement and the outer two movements also displays the Neapolitan relation, as Eb Major serves as the Neapolitan to the dominant of the G tonalities. In the 1st movement, Brahms clearly emphasizes the Neapolitan harmony as he brings back the principal theme twice in the development section in G Major (mm. 82-90) and in Ab Major (mm. 99-102). The cyclic reappearance of the 2nd movement theme in its original key of Eb Major in the 3rd movement (m. 84) and the arrival on a perfect authentic cadence (PAC) in Eb Major (mm. 112-113), followed by the chromatic sequences leading back to the rondo theme in G minor, also prominently demonstrate the Neapolitan relation to the dominant of G minor.

⁸⁹ Peter Smith, "Brahms and the Neapolitan Complex: bII, bVI, and their Multiple Functions in the First Movement of the F-minor Clarinet Sonata," in *Brahms Studies*, Vol. 2, ed. David Brodbeck and David Lee (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press in affiliation with the American Brahms Society, 1998), 169–208.

Table 3.1. Local tonal centers in the 2nd movement of Op. 78

A	(a)	mm. 1-9	Eb Major: I-V = Bb Major: IV-V7-I = V of Eb minor
	(b)	mm. 9-17	Eb minor-Bb Major-Db Major-Gb-Eb Major
	(a)	mm. 17-24	Eb Major-Ab-F minor-G minor-C minor-Eb Major
B più andante	(c)	mm. 24-31	Eb minor-Cb Major = B Major (enharmonic bVI of Eb minor=V/N of Eb minor)
	(d)	mm. 32-36	F# Major-B Major
	(c)	mm. 37-43	B minor-G minor-D minor-A Major
	(d)	mm. 44-48	A Major-D minor
	(e)	mm. 49-57	Eb minor-E minor-F-D minor (semi-tone motion = Neapolitan relationship)
	(f)	mm. 58-67	D-Eb-E (semi-tone motion = Neapolitan relationship)
A	(a)	mm. 68-76	Eb Major: I-V= Bb Major: IV-V7-I=V of Eb minor
	(b)	mm. 77-84	Eb minor-Bb Major-Db Major-Gb-Eb Major
	(a)	mm. 85-91	Eb Major-Ab-F minor-G minor-C minor-Bb Major-Eb Major
B (Coda)	(c)	mm. 92-95	Eb Major
	(d)	mm. 96-110	Eb-Ab-Bb-Eb minor-Eb Major-Eb minor
	(a)	mm. 111-122	Gb-Eb Major-F minor-C-Bb Major-Eb Major

*Tonal centers without Major/minor indication mean that those tonalities were implied by their respective V or vii° chords without achieving actual tonicization

Table 3.2. Key relations in the 2nd movement of Op. 78

I	Tonic	Eb Major/minor
bII	Neapolitan	Fb Major/minor = E Major/minor (enharmonic)
bVI	Submediant	Cb = B Major/minor = V of E Major/minor = N of Dominant
V	Dominant	Bb Major/minor

The chart above (Table 3.2) shows the Neapolitan key relations in the second movement. Half-step melodic motions can be related to the Neapolitan harmonic relationship, since the Neapolitan relationship connects two different keys or harmonies creating half-step voice leading. In Eb Major, its Neapolitan (bII) is an Fb Major chord, which is enharmonic to E Major harmony (See Example 3.1), and bVI also performs an important role since it serves as the dominant of the Neapolitan chord, as well as the Neapolitan of the dominant. Both the Neapolitan (bII) and its dominant (bVI) are essential harmonies in this sonata movement by Brahms, as he uses these chromatic progressions both in melodic lines and between these key areas throughout the piece.

Example 3.1. Half-step voice-leading in Neapolitan relationship.

The diagram illustrates a half-step melodic line on a treble clef staff. It shows three chords: Eb: I (E-flat major), bII N (Neapolitan chord, F-flat major), and E: I (E major). A curved line above the staff connects the first and third chords, labeled 'half-step melodic line'. Below the staff, an arrow points from Eb: I to E: I, with 'bII N' written above the arrow and '(enharmonic)' written below it.

The first section [A] is a small ternary form by itself, divided by three small fragments of (a)-(b)-(a). The main tonality of Eb Major is established in the first fragment of this section, (a), mm. 1-5. The main thematic material of the step-and-leap motion is introduced in the solo piano introduction (mm.1-2). As the arpeggiated 16th notes in the left hand liquidate the rhythmic pulse into the new grouping with syncopation (mm. 2-7), the tonal center modulates to Bb Major (mm. 6-9), which eventually acts as the dominant of Eb Major and arrives back to Eb tonality in m. 9.

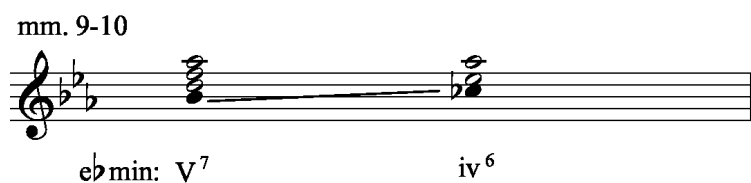
In the second fragment, (b), mm. 9-17, the secondary motive of a melodic semi-tone is introduced. (See Example 3.2) The tonal center is still Eb, but now appears in the minor mode. The chord progression V^7-iv^6 in Eb minor creates the half-step melodic line in mm. 9-10. (See Example 3.3) The key of Eb minor modulates to Bb Major again by using a pivot chord: bVI of Eb minor, which is bII (Cb major), enharmonic to the Neapolitan chord in Bb Major. (See Example 3.4) This Neapolitan harmony

also creates semi-tone melodic lines within the progressions $bII-vii^{\circ}6/5$ in mm. 12-13, and $I\ 4/2-bII6/4-ii^{\circ}6/5$ in measure 14 (See Example 3.5), as the harmony heads back to the tonic of E_b Major with the return of (a), at m. 17.

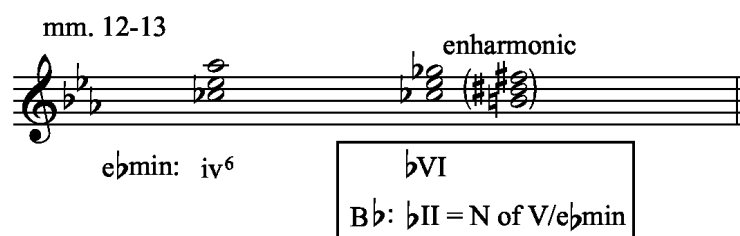
Example 3.2. The secondary motive of a melodic semi-tone, mm. 9-11.



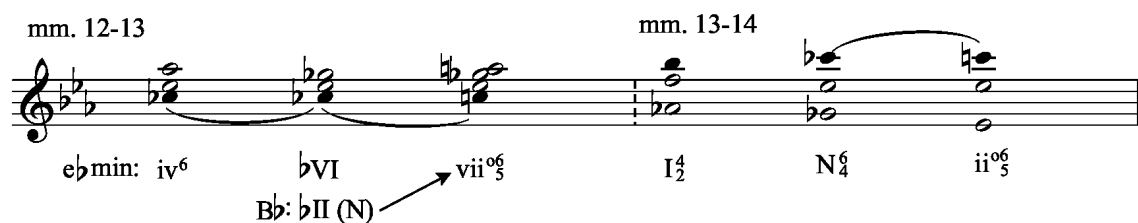
Example 3.3. The half-step melodic line created by the chord progression $V7-iv^6$ in E_b minor.



Example 3.4. Modulation between the keys of E_b minor and Bb Major using a pivot chord: bVI .



Example 3.5. The half-step melodic line created by the chord progression through Neapolitan chord.



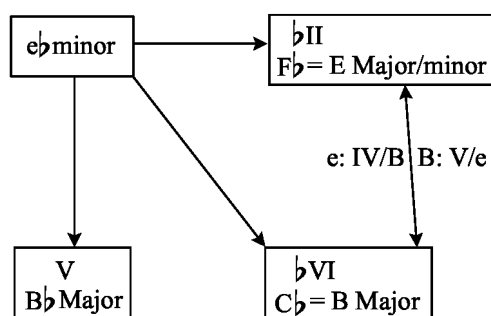
Example 3.6. Modulation between Eb minor and B Major using bVI as pivot chord.

mm. 28-29

e♭min: i

bVI
B: I = N of B♭

Neapolitan Key Relationships



The middle section of this movement, [B], is a development section which can be divided by two parts: [mm.24-48: (c) (d) (c) (d)] and [mm.48-67: (e) (f)]. The funeral march marked *più andante* unfolds the first section of [B] in the key of the tonic minor (Eb minor). After new thematic material⁹⁰ is introduced (mm. 24-28), the key abruptly moves to the B Major (mm. 28-30). This is an unusual key relationship from the traditional point of view. In fact, B Major is the Neapolitan of Bb Major, which is the dominant in the key of Eb minor. The pivot chord for this modulation is bVI of Eb minor (Cb Major) in measure 28-29. (See Example 3.6) Brahms used the same pivot chord of bVI previously in mm. 12-13. (See Example 3.4)

⁹⁰ The thematic material of the [B] section combines with the altered thematic materials from the previous section, [A]. The dotted-rhythm motive of fragment (a) in the [A] section now provides the rhythmic basis for the fragment (c), and the melodic semi-tone motive of fragment (b) is used in the fragment (d). The cohesive thematic arrangement in this movement will be further discussed in the following chapter.

The second part of the [B] section is a transition using highly chromatic modulations. There is no tonicization in this section, but only a continuous series of the dominant chords of Eb-E-F-d-Eb-E-Eb (mm. 49-66). The implied key areas of this section (D, Eb, E, F) are all related by semi-tone. In mm. 49-51, the dominant of Eb shifts to the dominant of E. As observed before, this half-step movement is based on the Neapolitan relation. Without being resolved, it proceeds to the dominant of F in measure 53. In the same way, the tonal centers of this progression return to Eb and E in mm. 59 and 61. Fragment (f) ends in mm. 66-67, where vii^o7 of E is enharmonically connected to the tonic of Eb as a common-tone diminished seventh chord, instead of being resolved to E. This marks the highpoint of tension by chromatic motion, and displays a direct and dramatic resolution into the original key through the Neapolitan relation. (See Example 3.7)

Example 3.7. Highly chromatic progression through the half-step tonal shift of Eb-E-Eb.

mm. 49 50 52 54 55 56

Eb: V⁶ 7 i E: V⁶ → bVI F: V d min: VII⁷ → vii^o7 Ger.⁺⁶

59 61

d min: V₅⁶ VI⁶ → bVI enharmonic E: V vii^o7 → enharmonic CT^o7 I

Eb: V⁶ → bVI Eb: bVI

Following the remarkable arrival on Eb major at m. 91, the returning *Adagio* of the [A] section, mm. 67-91 contains the same material as the first time. It again shows the symmetrical structure of traditional ternary form. The coda, beginning in measure 91, consists of the three fragments from both the [A] and [B] sections: (c), (d) and (a). A strong pedal tone on the tonic (mm. 91-109) confirms Eb and

results in tension throughout fragments (c) and (d). Fragment (d) is rhythmically augmented here, and tonal ambiguity appears again in its half-step melodic line. Brahms avoids the arrival of tonic harmony in the chromatic progression in mm. 105-110. When fragment (a) finally enters in mm. 111-114, the harmonic progression rapidly changes by half-step motions in the bass line. The proceeding dominant chords change tonal centers each measure, until Eb Major is finally established by a V^7 -I progression in mm. 115-116.

Brahms retains a traditional approach through the symmetry of this movement's formal structure and the clear establishment of tonal polarity. However, he boldly displays a progressive harmonic language, fluently synthesizing major/minor alteration, enharmonic modulation, and Neapolitan key relations, within which he tightly amalgamates both vertical and horizontal elements.

Chapter 4: Thematic Transformation and Motivic Coherence

Each movement of Op. 78 shares common motivic ideas or thematic materials from Brahms's two op. 59 songs, *Regenlied* and *Nachklang*, which predominate throughout all three movements of the sonata and allow them to hold a certain structural cohesiveness. Also, the recurrences of the main theme of the *Adagio* in the third movement (at m. 84, m. 142, and m. 149) permit this sonata to serve as a textbook example of cyclic form in the 19th century.⁹¹

Brahms employs the *Regenlied* theme as the refrain of the Rondo, the 3rd movement of Op. 78. It consists of the two contrasting motivic elements: the dotted-rhythm raindrop motive, [A], and combinations of the step-and-leap motions, [B]. (Example 4.1) Even though it is undeniable that the dotted-rhythm motive provides a homogeneous rhythmic foundation in all three movements, its limitation resides in its repetition of the same pitch. Meanwhile, in a contrasting manner, the motivic material [B] presents the melodic materials with which Brahms could fully display his mastery of motivic usage. Without hardly adding any more motivic ideas these two elements, Brahms spins out all the thematic variants needed to build up this monumental three-movement structure by manipulating the given materials.

The main themes of the other two movements are also closely related to the *Regenlied* theme. The 1st theme of the 1st movement is the more direct correspondence to the *Regenlied* refrain of the 3rd movement, as it keeps the dotted-rhythm upbeat falling to the first downbeat. Only the rhythmic ratio of the upbeat is modified from a quarter note in the 3rd movement to a half note in the 1st movement, and

⁹¹ Hugh Macdonald. "Cyclic form." *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed August 24, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/07001>:

Music in which a later movement reintroduces thematic material of an earlier movement is said to be in 'cyclic form'. ... Beethoven (*An die ferne Geliebte*, Piano Sonata in A op.101), Schubert (Piano Trio in Eb; *Fantasie* in C for violin and piano) and Berlioz (*Symphonie fantastique*) laid the foundations on which Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt and Franck elevated cyclic principles to great importance, associated with the widespread application of thematic transformation and the desire for greater continuity between separate movements, all methods of establishing a tighter cohesion in multi-movement forms. Since the 19th century cyclic form has been adopted as a regular stock-in-trade of musical structure.

the following dotted rhythm connecting through the M2 descent is common to both movements. In the 1st movement, the M2 and M3 intervals consisting of the step-and-leap motion agree in their melodic descent, whereas in the 3rd movement they alternate between descending and ascending. (See Example 4.2) In the 3rd movement, Brahms creates a longer thematic unit by overlapping two step-and-leap modules, step-and-leap α and its contour inversion β . (See Example 4.1) The identical motivic assembly happens in mm. 10-11 of the 1st movement. (See Example 4.2.b) In contrast, however, using exactly the same intervallic motives of M2 and M3, Brahms assembles a more compact figure in the 1st movement, from which the outer contour of the P5 interval is derived. (Example 4.2.a)

Example 4.1. Rhythmic and intervallic motives in *Regenlied* theme, Op. 78, 3rd movement, m. 1.

Example 4.1 shows the first measure of the *Regenlied* theme in 4/4 time. The notation is in G major. The first measure contains the 'Raindrop motive' (A), which is a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note. The second measure contains a sequence of intervals: M2 (Major 2nd), m3 (minor 3rd), M3 (Major 3rd), M2 (Major 2nd), and M2 (Major 2nd). This sequence is labeled as 'combination of step-and-leap motions' (B). The third measure contains a 'step-and-leap α ' (a step up followed by a leap up) and a 'step-and-leap β ' (a step down followed by a leap down).

Example 4.2. Motivic design of the 1st movement, Op. 78.

(a) m. 1

Example 4.2(a) shows the first measure of the 1st movement in G major. The notation is in 4/4 time. The first measure contains the 'Raindrop motive' (A), which is a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note. The second measure contains a sequence of intervals: M2 (Major 2nd), m3 (minor 3rd), M3 (Major 3rd), and P4 (Perfect 4th). This sequence is labeled as 'step-and-leap γ ' (B). The third measure contains a 'P5' (Perfect 5th) interval.

(b) mm. 10-11

Example 4.2(b) shows measures 10-11 of the 1st movement in G major. The notation is in 4/4 time. Measure 10 contains a 'step-and-leap α ' (a step up followed by a leap up) and a 'step-and-leap β ' (a step down followed by a leap down). Measure 11 contains a 'step-and-leap α ' (a step up followed by a leap up) and a 'step-and-leap β ' (a step down followed by a leap down).

In the 1st movement, Brahms extensively utilizes the inversions of the given intervallic motives to generate new thematic units from the previous material. All the thematic materials sprout from the very first measure of the piece through inversions. (See Example 4.3) In mm. 11-20, the piano accompaniment figures reinforce the exclusive employment of the inverted intervals. (See Example 4.4) Therefore, all the theme areas and transitional materials are derived from the same basic idea and evolve from it. Even the voice-leading created by the chromatic 3rd relationship between G Major and B Major in mm. 10-11 contains the melodic material from the first theme. (See Example 4.5)

Example 4.3. Motivic evolution through inversion in the 1st movement, Op. 78.

mm. 1-5

m3

m2

M6

M3

m6

m3

m. 6

m6

P4

P5

m. 11

step-and-leap

mm. 18-20

M6

M2

m3

m2

step-and-leap

mm. 36-38

m3

M2

P5

P4

step-and-leap

step-and-leap

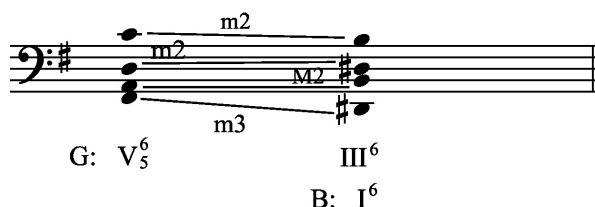
P4

Example 4.4. Exclusive employment of inverted intervals, mm. 11-20, 1st movement, Op 78.

11

sempre p e tranquillo

Example 4.5. Voice-leading from G Major to B Major in mm. 10-11, 1st movement, Op. 78.



In this movement, another remarkable display of Brahms's method of creating thematic variants is the linkage technique. Walter Frisch quotes Schenker's definition of *knüpftechnik*, "The technique, by which a 'new' idea evolves spontaneously from a preceding one, is a distinctly Brahmsian fingerprint."⁹² Brahms takes the basic idea of the 1st theme and transforms it into the much more expansive and songful 2nd theme (mm. 36-39). By pronouncing the downbeat with a quarter note and shifting the dotted rhythm to the next two beats, the 2nd theme gains a dramatically different character without changing the material. Later in the 2nd theme group, Brahms presents a soaring half note-quarter note rhythm (mm. 51-52), which he cleverly combines with the dotted rhythm in the subsequent transitional zone (mm. 60-62). This zone continues to employ the dotted rhythm in combination with longer note values (mm. 66-69). The same motivic element persists as Brahms once again metamorphoses the previously lyrical material into now a completely different *grazioso e teneramente* section, mm. 70-71. (See Example 4.6.a) Also in the development section, Brahms converts the tapering material of the previous phrase (m. 117) into a hammering downbeat figure in *più forte* section, mm. 121-126. (See Example 4.6.b) Through the linkage technique, Brahms manipulates a few rhythmic and melodic ideas with enough flexibility to express widely different moods and accommodate several formal sections of the sonata structure.

⁹² Walter Frisch, "Brahms, Developing Variation, and the Schoenberg Critical Tradition," *19th-Century Music* 5, no. 3 (Spring 1982): 224.

Example 4.6. Linkage technique (*knüpftechnik*) in the 1st movement, Op. 78.

(a) mm. 36-71

The image displays a musical score for 'The Swan' by Camille Saint-Saëns, focusing on the first four staves. The notation is in treble and bass clefs, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score is annotated with various melodic and rhythmic patterns, including intervals, leaps, and specific melodic motifs.

Staff 1 (Treble Clef):

- m. 36:** Annotated with *m2* (minor second) and *m3* (minor third).
- mm. 38-39:** Annotated with *step-and-leap* and *rhythm*.
- mm. 51-52:** Annotated with *M2* (major second), *m3* (minor third), and *step-and-leap*.

Staff 2 (Bass Clef):

- mm. 60-62:** Annotated with *step-and-leap* and *rhythm*.

Staff 3 (Treble Clef):

- mm. 66-67:** Annotated with *M2* (major second).
- mm. 68-69:** Annotated with *m2* (minor second), *m2* (minor second), and *m3* (minor third).

Staff 4 (Treble Clef):

- mm. 70-71:** Annotated with *step-and-leap* and *rhythm*.

The annotations highlight specific melodic and rhythmic patterns across the staves, such as *step-and-leap*, *rhythm*, *m2* (minor second), *m3* (minor third), and *M2* (major second).

*Arrows connect the motives sharing the same rhythm

(b) mm. 117-124

m. 117, violin

step-and-leap

mm. 121-122, piano

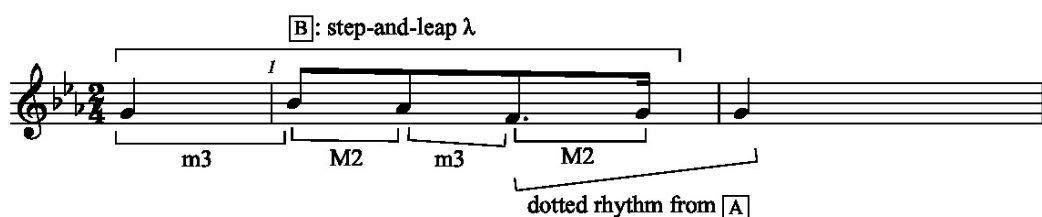
step-and-leap

mm. 123-124, violin

step-and-leap

In the 2nd movement, the raindrop motive [A] is removed from the very entrance of the theme. The step-and-leap motive [B] truly becomes the dominating material as the motivic elements of the main theme of this movement fully rely on the step-and-leap motive. (See Example 4.7) However, the beginning of this movement still opens with an upbeat motion (albeit not the raindrop motive), just as it did in the other two movements. Also, the delayed appearance of the dotted rhythm finally concludes the theme and at the same time ignites the thematic liquidation, filling up the rest of the piano introduction of the *Adagio* (mm. 3-9). The dotted-rhythm motive becomes the prominent figure much later in the middle funeral march section, as discussed in a previous chapter.

Example 4.7. Motivic design of the 2nd movement of Op. 78, m. 1.



There is one more substantial motive which makes a persistent appearance throughout the all the movements of Op. 78, most significantly in the 2nd movement. Introduced with the solo violin appearance in m. 9 of the 2nd movement, the half-step motive, [C], serves as the main thematic material of the secondary theme section (mm. 9-17). (See Example 4.8) This half-step motive is not only a strong foreshadowing of the upcoming tonal shift, but also becomes a flourishing motivic element, creating a wealth of thematic material throughout the movement, as in mm. 17-24. (See Example 4.9)

Example 4.8. The first appearance of the half-step motive in the 2nd movement, Op. 78, mm. 9-17.

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system (mm. 9-17) shows the piano introduction. The piano part (left hand) features a descending melodic line with various intervals and half-step motives. The vocal part (right hand) enters in m. 9 with a half-step motive. The piano part is marked with several labels: [C]: half step, descending M2 from [B], [C]: half step, [B] material γ, [B] material β'' (inverted from β'), [B] material α, [B] material β, [B] material β', and [C]. The second system (mm. 14-17) shows the vocal line. The vocal part is marked with [C], [B] γ residue (fragments), [B] material γ, and [B]. The piano part continues with various intervals and half-step motives.

Example 4.9. Development of the half-step motive and its horizontal and vertical amalgamation with the step-and-leap elements.

(a) mm. 17-24.

The musical score for Example 4.9, measures 17-24, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 17-21, and the second system covers measures 22-24. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats), and the time signature is 2/4. The score is written for a piano, with a treble and bass staff. The half-step motive (B-C-B) is a central element, appearing in various positions and intervals (M2, M2+M3). The score includes a treble and bass staff with various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first system (measures 17-21) shows the motive in various positions and intervals (M2, M2+M3). The second system (measures 22-24) is marked 'più andante' and shows the motive in a more complex, overlapping form. The score includes a treble and bass staff with various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

(b) mm. 24-36.

The musical score for measures 24-36 is presented in two systems. The first system (mm. 24-30) features a piano accompaniment in the lower staves and a violin part in the upper staff. The tempo is marked 'più andante'. The piano part includes annotations such as 'p mezza voce', 'B step-and-leap m2 + m3', and 'f'. The violin part includes a 'C' annotation. The second system (mm. 31-36) continues the piano accompaniment and violin part. The piano part includes annotations such as 'p', 'espress.', 'B M2 + M3', 'C', 'B m2 + m3', 'C', 'B m3 + m2', 'M2', 'C', 'B m2 + m6 (M3 inversion)', and 'f'. The violin part includes annotations such as 'espress.', 'C', 'B m2 + m3', 'C', 'B m3 + m2', 'M2', 'C', 'B m2 + m6 (M3 inversion)', and 'f'.

The half-step motive is often combined with step-and-leap motion both horizontally and vertically to create larger motivic units. In mm. 9-17, the step-and-leap motive, the main thematic material of the previous section, is now artfully transformed into the piano accompaniment figure supporting the half-step secondary theme introduced in the violin part. In mm. 17-24, where the violin takes over the step-and-leap main theme, Brahms alternately applies the half-step motive in the piano accompaniment here in mm. 17-18. In mm. 19-24, the extended half-step ascending lines in both the violin and piano parts are blended with a variant fragment from the [B] material. As seen in these examples, Brahms executes a high degree of motivic economy simultaneously on multiple levels, especially in the 2nd movement.

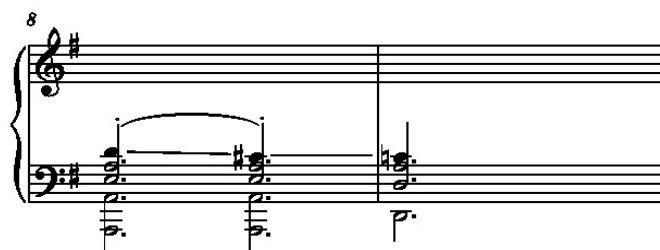
The transition to the *più andante* in m. 24 is established through the descending half-step motion from the note G to G \flat in the piano right hand, along with major-minor tonal alternation from E \flat Major to

Eb minor. This idea of major/minor alternation is once again highlighted later at the very end of the 3rd movement, as the final transition to the coda is set on G Major tonality (m. 139), instead of G minor. Not only does this fulfill a cyclic return to the tonality of the 1st movement, but also it corresponds to the endings of the songs in Op. 59,⁹³ the thematic origin of Op. 78. The *più andante* section begins with the strong statement of the [B] material in the piano left hand. As soon as the violin joins with the abrupt tonal shift to the dominant of B tonality, however, the half-step motions occurring both in the violin melody line and the piano once again mingle with step-and-leap gestures in 16th notes, as well as in the chromatic line blended into the 16th-note accompaniment figure in the piano part.

The thematic evolution of the half-step motive is also clearly pronounced in the 1st and the 3rd movements. The half-step motive first appears in the 1st movement as the melodic consequence of the harmonic progression at the half cadence in m. 9, and then evolves into the other thematic materials. Due to its intervallic similarity, the half-step motive often replaces the M2 in the step-and-leap motives and freely blends in the process of the thematic transformation. (See Example 4.10) Early in the 3rd movement, Brahms also combines the half-step idea with both the raindrop and step-and-leap motives (mm. 3-4); the half step remains a crucial element of the melody and bass line throughout the final movement. (See Example 4.11)

Example 4.10. Thematic evolution of the half-step motive in the 1st movement of Op. 78.

(a) 1st movement, mm. 8-9.



⁹³ In Op. 59, No. 1 starts in g minor and ends in G Major; no. 3 is in F# minor ending in F# Major; no. 4 also in F# minor ending in F# major; no. 6 in A minor ending in A Major; no. 7 in E minor ending in E Major.

(b) 1st movement, mm. 48-51, half-step motive and omnibus progression.

48

D: vii^{♯5}/V V⁶ V⁶₄ V⁴₃ Ger.^{♯6} V

(B[♯] Major)

The score shows a half-step motive in the upper voice, with notes G[♯], A, B, C, D, E, F[♯], G[♯]. The lower voice features a complex harmonic progression with various chords and accidentals, including a B[♯] Major chord.

(c) 1st movement, mm. 70-71, half-step neighboring motion.

70

pp grazioso e teneramente

pp grazioso e teneramente

The score shows a half-step neighboring motion in the upper voice, with notes G[♯], A, B, C, D, E, F[♯], G[♯]. The lower voice features a complex harmonic progression with various chords and accidentals, including a B[♯] Major chord.

Example 4.11. Thematic evolution of the half-step motive in the 3rd movement of Op. 78.

(a) 3rd movement, m. 3-4

3

A

The score shows a half-step motive in the upper voice, with notes G[♯], A, B, C, D, E, F[♯], G[♯]. The lower voice features a complex harmonic progression with various chords and accidentals, including a B[♯] Major chord.

(b) 3rd movement, mm. 7-8.

(c) 3rd movement, mm. 10-13.

(d) 3rd movement, mm. 36-40.

(e) 3rd movement, mm. 141-160.

In addition to the half-step idea, Brahms's usage of the step-and-leap motive continues in full force in the 3rd movement, perhaps reaching its summit. Brahms here focuses on a three-note step-and-leap gesture (which here for clarity I will call step-and-leap α) and step-and-leap β (a four-note idea with one or two leaps of a 3rd, the rest being stepwise). Within these two motives, Brahms achieves considerable flexibility of contour (ascending, descending, or mixed motion) and ordering (the gestures may begin with step or leap). The motives are combined, linked, overlapped, and elided in an endless variety of ways. (See Example 4.12) Brahms's motivic transformation and its arrangement display how thoroughly he prepared the most coherent and logical anticipation for the cyclic return of the 2nd movement theme in the middle of the 3rd movement (m. 84) in the key of bVI, which has abruptly shifted from the G minor PAC of the previous section.

It is true that motive α here is a subset of motive β , but that does not mean that they always appear together with equal regularity. In many cases they are linked, for example in mm. 1, 36-40, and 162 of the 3rd movement. In other places, however, Brahms emphasizes one motive over the other. Step-and-leap α is highlighted in m. 3 and in mm. 29-32; in particular, m. 31 isolates the three-note idea using the familiar dotted rhythm, set off at the end by the large downward leap of a P5. On the other hand, motive β is featured wherever four-note surface groupings are pronounced, as in mm. 130-131 and m. 162 (in the violin). Through manipulations of register, contour, articulation, and rhythm, Brahms shifts the listener's attention from one gesture to another.

And lastly, it may seem obvious that a tonal composer such as Brahms creates his pitch material out of steps and leaps--after all, these are the building blocks of the tonal system. But the present analysis aims to show that Brahms consistently selects the leap of a 3rd over other possible leaps (4ths, 5ths, and so on), and features these leaps in tidy and focused step-and-leap gestures of three or four notes. These motivic gestures are not hidden or obscure, but routinely showcased in all of the main themes and formal areas of the entire sonata. These themes are all united by a few small and powerful ideas.

Example 4.12. Transformation of the step-and-leap motive throughout the 2nd and 3rd movements, Op. 78.

The musical score illustrates the transformation of the step-and-leap motive throughout the 2nd and 3rd movements of Op. 78. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of eight staves of music, each with specific measures and dynamic markings (alpha and beta) indicating the transformation of the step-and-leap motive.

- Staff 1:** 2nd mvt. m. 1 (alpha, beta), 3rd mvt. m. 1 (alpha, beta), m. 3 (alpha, beta).
- Staff 2:** m. 24 (alpha, beta), mm. 27-28 (alpha, beta).
- Staff 3:** mm. 29-32 (alpha, beta).
- Staff 4:** mm. 36-40 (alpha, beta), m. 59 (alpha, beta).
- Staff 5:** m. 86 (alpha, beta), mm. 87-89 (same dotted rhythm as 29, 31) (alpha, beta).
- Staff 6:** mm. 90-91 (alpha, beta), mm. 96-97 (alpha, beta).
- Staff 7:** mm. 101-102 (alpha, beta), mm. 130-131 (alpha, beta), CODA: mm. 140-141 (alpha, beta).
- Staff 8:** mm. 146-148 (alpha, beta), m. 162 (alpha, beta).

Arnold Schoenberg, in his famous essay “Brahms the Progressive,” states:

I wish to join ideas with ideas. No matter what the purpose or meaning of an idea in the aggregate may be, no matter whether its function be introductory, establishing, varying, preparing, elaborating, deviating, developing, concluding, subdividing, subordinate, or basic, it must be an idea which had to take this place even if it were not to serve for this purpose or meaning or function; and this idea must look in construction and in thematic content as if it were not there to fulfill a structural task. In other words, a transition, a codetta, an elaboration, etc., should not be considered as a thing in its own end. It should not appear at all if it does not develop, modify, intensify, clarify, or throw light or colour on the idea of the piece.⁹⁴

As vastly examined in this chapter, by limiting the motivic materials strictly to a very small number of basic ideas, one rhythmic and one melodic, persistently throughout the entire sonata but ceaselessly evolving and transfiguring the given elements over and over, Brahms masterfully establishes both a clear distinction among the movements and their thematic areas and transitions, as well as an unbreakable unity which enfolds the entire contents of Op. 78 at the same time. Schoenberg, one of the most celebrated admirers of Brahms, defines this compositional approach with his own term, “developing variation,” and I would like to conclude this chapter by once again quoting him who was the initial inspiration for this analysis, but now as the final closer:

Music of the homophonic melodic style of composition, that is, music with a main theme, accompanied by and based on harmony, produces its material by, as I call it, *developing variation*. This means that variation of the features of a basic unit produces all the thematic formulations which provide for fluency, contrasts, variety, logic and unity on the one hand, and character, mood, expression, and every needed differentiation, on the other hand--thus elaborating the *idea* of the piece.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Arnold Schoenberg, “Brahms the Progressive,” in *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. Leonard Stein, trans. Leo Black (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 407.

⁹⁵ Unlike the previous Schoenberg excerpt, this quotation is found in *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. Leonard Stein, trans. by Leo Black (New York, 1975), 397.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Emanating from the step-and-leap motive of the *Regenlied* theme and its evolution, this study grasps the full scope encompassing all the works thematically and textually associated with Brahms's Violin Sonata Op. 78, including the reminiscence of the second movement of Schumann's Violin Concerto and the allusion to Schubert's *Gefror'ne Thränen*. This particular motivic element, closely shared among all three movements, reaches the ultimate summit of thematic integrity as the final movement of the sonata accomplishes the manifest cyclic return of the 2nd movement's primary theme.

The step-and-leap motive buds from WoO 23 *Regenlied*, which is presumably the earliest compositional attempt on the text partially employing Groth's *Nachklang*. In the two songs, no. 3 and no. 4 of Op. 59, the motive gains much greater context both in the fully figured *Regenlied* theme and in the paired setting of Groth's poems *Regenlied* and *Nachklang*. The present study terms these three "rain" songs, together with the Violin Sonata Op. 78, Brahms's "*Regenlied* Tetralogy."

Brahms endeavors to grant a coherent structure to his song collection Op. 59, engaging his own way of organizing the poems according to his own interpretation of the text, not necessarily surrendering to the ownership of the authors of the text. It is undeniable that Brahms was well aware of the German song cycle tradition in the 19th century. Nonetheless, he intentionally chose to be a trailblazer in his own song collection by seeking a more organic and innate method of grouping his songs, without the more overt Beethovenian signs of cyclic unity such as tonal unification.

Ironically, when Brahms transfigures these Op. 59 songs into the highly elaborated instrumental sonata, the whole concept of the song cycle finally comes to the fullest realization of its ideal. Brahms's melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic ideas, all interrelated, stem from the central *Adagio* and branch out into the outer movements. As the cyclic idea meets the tremendous metamorphosis of the motives, tightly bound to each and every musical aspect, at last the music comes to speak for itself, free from the text.

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