

The Ascent and Arpeggiation in  
*Die Stadt, Der Doppelgaenger,*  
 and *Der Atlas* by Franz Schubert

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The songs of Schwanengesang were published in Vienna in December 1828 by Haslinger. They comprise 14 songs on texts of: Rellstab (7) Heinrich Heine (6) and Seidel (1).<sup>1</sup>

Schubert chose six poems from the beginning of Heine's cycle Die Heimkehr to set to music. Before discussing the music and ways in which it reflects and interprets the text, I will first discuss the nature of the form and content of the poems.

Almost all of the poems in the cycle have very regular rhyme schemes and meter. The quatrains are rhymed abab or xaxa, and the meter is usually iambic trimeter. The content is governed by a single narrative thread: the lover/artist is rejected by the beloved and wanders home recounting to himself the agonies he has experienced. The lover's attitude toward himself ranges from pride (see poem 13) to self-contempt (see poem 7), as his feelings toward the beloved involve utter adoration, on the one hand, and dis-

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<sup>1</sup>O. E. Deutsch, Franz Schubert: Thematisches Verzeichnis seiner Werke, (Kassel, Basel, Tours, London:Baerenreiter, 1978), p. 616. The Rellstab and Heine settings were composed in August 1828; the final song "Die Taubenpost" was written in October 1828, and was added to the collection by the publisher.

gust, on the other (see poem 19).

Schubert picked six poems which express an ambivalence toward the self as artist, and toward the beloved, as opposed to those poems above which involve a clear sense of adoration or contempt. I think Schubert's settings exploit this ambivalence, as an examination of voice leading procedures, harmony, and texture of the songs will reveal.

I would like to focus my attention in this paper on two ways in which initial ascent and arpeggiation work in these songs: 1) as a stepwise ascent or arpeggiation to the head-tone of the fundamental line, and 2) as an ascent or arpeggiation to a note which is not the head tone of the fundamental line.

"Die Stadt" involves the former type of ascent.<sup>2</sup> The poem develops the image of the rejected lover rowing away from a city in which he has been rejected by his beloved. The power of the poem derives from the way in which this fact breaks upon the consciousness of the lover in the final line.

The poem is about memory and recognition as suggested by the words "erscheint" "leuchtend" "zeigt." The memory of what has happened is faint at the outset of the poem. This is described by the way in which the contours of the city are both recognizable and hidden. The vivid, sensuous description of water in the second stanza "Ein feuchter Windzug krauselt/Die graue Wasserbahn..." leads to the shock in the final stanza in which the lover suddenly remembers his rejection--suggested by the overwhelming clarity of the sun.

The structure of the song is A B A', corresponding to the structure of the text. Schubert's setting of the first stanza involves one version of what could be the complete fundamental structure (see Example 1).

Example 1 reveals some problems in terms of the relationship between ascent and counterpoint. First, the C<sup>2</sup> on the downbeat of m. 12 is a suspension which resolves to the B $\flat$  which follows. And yet through mm. 11-12, I hear C<sup>2</sup> being prolonged with upper and lower neighbors. In addition, though B $\flat$ <sup>1</sup> in m. 9 is a seventh which resolves down to the A<sup>1</sup> on the downbeat of m. 10, I hear it as part of an ascent to the headtone Eb<sup>2</sup> in m. 13 (see Example 2).

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<sup>2</sup>Heines Saemtliche Werke Band 1. (Leipzig: Im Insel Verlag, 1911.) The texts are given at the end of this paper.

Example 1. Schubert: "Die Stadt" mm. 6-14.

C minor: i V i iv <sup>6</sup> V i V i

Example 2. Schubert: "Die Stadt" mm. 7-14.

$C^2$  and  $E_b^2$  are taken over in the setting of the second stanza, with a composing-out of the diminished seventh chord of the opening measures (see Example 3.)

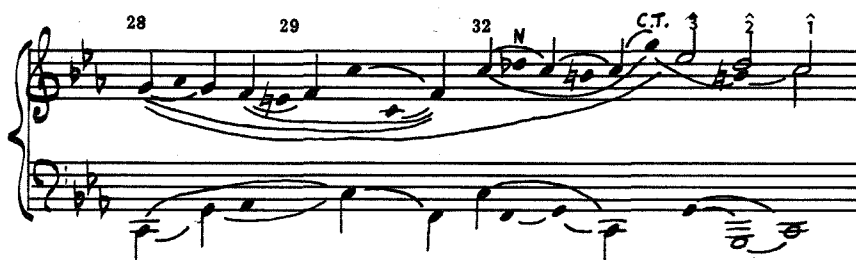
In Example 3, the third  $E_b/C$  is motivic. It both initiates and concludes this section, incorporating the span of an octave--an essential feature of the opening measure of the piece.

Example 3. Schubert: "Die Stadt" mm. 17-25.

The setting of the final stanza repeats the fundamental structure, but what had been an ascent becomes an arpeggiation to the headtone. These leaps, the more spread-out texture in the accompaniment, and the  $b^2/l/7/l$  gesture reflect the power of the text's revelation. But this is even

more poignantly rendered by the fact that at the climax of the song, the fundamental line is carried in the accompaniment, and the vocal line leaps dramatically to the cover tone  $G^2$  on the word "Liebste"<sup>3</sup> (see Example 4.)

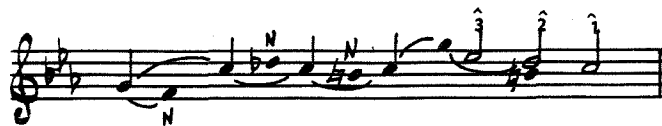
Example 4. Schubert: "Die Stadt" mm. 28-35.



The idea of arpeggiation developing out of a stepwise motion is also characteristic of the unfolding of the diminished seventh chord of mm. 17-25. Notice that the thirds  $Eb^2/C^2$  of mm. 18-19 and  $C^2/A^1$  of mm. 19-21 are filled in by step, while the thirds  $A^1/F\#^1$  in m. 23 and  $Eb^1/C^1$  in mm. 24-25 are left open (see Example 3).

The way in which the ascent of the setting of the first stanza becomes an arpeggiation in the setting of stanza three to the structural  $\hat{3}$ , is a musical description of the psychological development of the poem. The significance of the vision of the fog-enveloped city is only partially clear in the first stanza; Thus--the tentative ascent. As the significance becomes clear in the third stanza, the notes of the ascent  $G^1/Eb^2$  come into focus either as members of the tonic triad or upper and lower neighbors (see Example 5).

Example 5. Schubert: "Die Stadt" mm. 28-35.



<sup>3</sup>The facsimile edition reveals that this was a change Schubert made in the composition. He had had the voice

"Der Doppelgaenger" reveals an ascent which leads to a note other than the head tone of the fundamental line. While most of the drama seems to involve this ascent, I would like to show, in fact, that though less spectacular than the ascent, the final descent is just as important in realizing the psychological development of the text.

The text of "Die Stadt" involved the emergence of a painful memory. "Der Doppelgaenger" takes this a step further, and comments on the rejected lover's attitude toward his own memory and the suffering it evokes.

The way the poem moves back and forth between dream and reality is reflected in the grammatical alternation of present and past tenses:

"Der Doppelgaenger" (First stanza.)

Still ist die Nacht, es ruhen die Gassen  
 In diesem Hause wohnte mein Schatz;  
 Sie hat schon laengst die Stadt verlassen,  
 Doch steht noch das Haus auf demselben Platz.

The "Doppelgaenger" which the lover sees in the second stanza and recognizes as himself is the self of the first stanza. Thus I think that the second stanza involves the lover/artist stepping back from his suffering, so to speak, to see himself in the memory of the beloved. The split is thus an internal one. One part of the rejected lover suffers; the other sees the suffering. The verbs in this stanza are all in the present tense as an expression of this immediacy.

Not only the form of address, but also the lover's attitude toward his memory change in the final stanza. The lover had taken his own suffering very seriously in the second stanza. In the third, he feels contempt for memory as expressed in the word "aeffst." This had already been pre-figured in the second stanza with the phrase "Mir graust es" with its connotations of fear mingled with disgust. The lover/artist resents the discrepancy between the experience of pain and the memory of it. The experience brought suffering, but memory only renews the suffering. The apparent imperative form of "aeffst" changes into a question at the end of the poem. In a numb calm, the lover's ambivalence between the need for memory and the fear of the pain it brings remain unresolved.

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double the fundamental line in the accompaniment, but scratched it out in favor of the present version. Franz Schubert, Schwanengesang (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1978.)

In Schubert's through-composed setting, F#<sup>1</sup> with its upper neighbor is prolonged for the first stanza (see Example 6).

Example 6. Schubert: "Der Doppelgaenger" mm. 1-22.

The setting of the second stanza involves two versions of a coupling of F#<sup>1</sup> to F#<sup>2</sup> with the upper neighbor G (see Example 7.)

Notice in Example 7 that the ascent from F#<sup>1</sup> to F#<sup>2</sup> from mm. 25-31 is essentially identical to that of mm. 34-40. But I also hear the D<sup>2</sup> and E<sup>2</sup> of m. 38 leading directly to the F# in m. 40. Thus Schubert gives us the D<sup>1</sup>/E<sup>1</sup>/F#<sup>1</sup> figure, which introduced the F#<sup>1</sup> of the coupling, an octave higher just before the climax of the piece.

Example 7. Schubert: "Der Doppelgaenger" mm. 25-41.

Schubert gives the G<sup>2</sup> in m. 41 enormous power through its gradual emergence in the song: the 32nd note of m. 9 becomes a 16th in m. 11. Metrically accented quarter notes in mm. 16 and 35 then lead to the dotted half note in m. 41 at the

climax of the song, where the lover perceives the split within himself.<sup>4</sup>

But the real ascent begins in the setting of the third stanza with the change in mode of address (see Example 8).

Example 8. Schubert: "Der Doppelgaenger" mm 43-56.



What becomes clear, though, is that the ascent coupling F#<sup>1</sup> to F#<sup>2</sup> does not lead directly to the head tone. The significance of this is that the sudden release of dramatic tension of the poem in its final line is reflected in the music through the arrival of D<sup>2</sup> and the final descent, after the working-out of the agonized, repeated ascents to F#<sup>2</sup>. Notice, too, that the G<sup>2</sup> in m. 41 is also brought down to converge with the descent of the fundamental line (see Example 9).

Example 9. Schubert: "Der Doppelgaenger" mm. 41-56.



A curious detail in the song is the way in which the passacaglia-like accompaniment changes harmony at the end. It has clearly expressed B minor throughout, with the ascent from B in m. 43 to D#<sup>1</sup> in m. 47 as a composing-out and

<sup>4</sup>Here again, the G<sup>2</sup> is an afterthought. The facsimile shows that Schubert had composed the measure with an F-sharp<sup>2</sup> on the word "Gestalt." He scratched it out in favor of the present version.

extension of the third B/D<sup>1</sup> of the opening measures. But mm. 59-61 clearly suggest E minor. This key has been hinted at by the augmented 6th chords in mm. 32 and 41. In terms of its significance as a detail of text setting, the change of harmony suggests a pointing away from the experience of pain depicted in the poem. It suggests, no matter how faintly, the possibility of escaping the unresolved ambivalence of the experience described in the text.

Schubert uses another kind of ascent in "Der Atlas," a song which deals explicitly with the artist's attitude toward the memory of pain.

In the poem there is no subtle ambivalence as to the relationship between experience and memory. The poem openly laments the pain of the artist in the first stanza. The second adds the detail that the artist has asked for it himself, with the curious equation of the opposites of "gluecklich" and "elend."

In light of the way in which Schubert set "Die Stadt" and "Der Doppelgaenger" with no repetition (though he uses repetition of words and phrases often in the other Heine settings), it is interesting that Schubert re-worked the initial couplet into a final quatrain:

Ich unglueckselger Atlas, ich unglueckselger  
Atlas  
die ganze Welt der Schmerzen muss ich tragen,  
die ganze Welt muss ich tragen,  
dir ganze Welt der Schmerzen muss ich tragen.

Schubert informs this extraordinarily monotonous repetition with a powerful dramatic significance, as I will show below.

The first 14 measures involve a prolongation of Bb<sup>1</sup> as  $\hat{3}$  of the fundamental structure. The D<sup>2</sup> of m. 7 begins a large-scale ascent which will determine a dramatic event in the setting quite apart from the fundamental structure. The D<sup>2</sup> mentioned above connects with the Eb<sup>2</sup> of m. 10, and is brought up to F#<sup>2</sup> in m. 19 (see Example 10).

Example 10. Schubert: "Der Atlas" mm. 7-19.





The sudden shift in harmony in the middle section of the piece changes the headtone to  $B\flat_1$  in m. 20. While this pitch is prolonged throughout the entire B section, an ascent from  $B\flat_1$  to  $E^2$  complements the ascent from  $D^2$  to  $F\sharp^2$ . With the bitter realization of present suffering ("jetzo bist du elend") the  $G^2$  in m. 37 takes the ascent a half step further, resolving the  $F\sharp^2$  of m. 19 (see Example 11).

Example 11. Schubert: "Der Atlas" mm. 17-37.



The A' section could lead to a final descent at mm. 41, 43, or, more likely 46 or 48. Instead Schubert repeats the second line of the poem, with the climactic and rather unexpected  $Ab^2$  on "Schmerzen" in m. 50. The arpeggiation in m. 49 stands for the sudden ascent in mm. 16-19. The large-scale ascent from  $Bb^1$  to  $G^2$  is extended here; the  $Ab^2/G^2/F\sharp^2/G^2$  figure serves the same function as the  $Db/C/B\flat/C$  figure in mm. 32-33 of "Die Stadt."

What appears on the surface of the song to be monotonous repetition thus becomes a building of tension to the climactic  $Ab^2$  of m. 50. The dramatic significance of this is that the pain evoked through memory is made even more intense through the awareness that one has brought it on oneself-- ("Du hast es ja gewollt.") The increase in anger and exasperation is not reflected in the poem, but Schubert adds it through the repetition of the text and the extension of the large-scale ascent described above which reaches its apex as a result of the tension developed in the setting of the second stanza.

In conclusion, I will point out, but not attempt to resolve, an issue concerning the unity of Schubert's Heine settings. In his forward to the facsimile edition of Schwanengesang, Walther Duerr states that Schubert wrote out the songs in "einem Zuge" in the order in which they are normally published.<sup>5</sup> Schubert's order is thus: "Der Atlas" "Ihr Bild" "Das Fischermaedchen" "Die Stadt" "Am Meer"

<sup>5</sup>Walther Duerr. Einleitung: Franz Schubert. Schwanengesang. (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1978.) p. 2.

and "Der Doppelgaenger." As such it is difficult to see large-scale narrative, musical, motivic connections and cross-references among the songs. Though the Heine settings are clearly written with a similar kind of lean simplicity which differentiates them from the Rellstab settings, Duerr points out that Schubert intended the seven Rellstab and six Heine settings to be conceived of as a whole.<sup>6</sup>

One possible way in which the songs (as published) form a unit or a sequence can be seen from the key scheme below:

"Der Atlas"	G minor/B major
"Ihr Bild"	Bb minor/Gb major
"Das Fischermaedchen"	Ab major/Cb major
"Der Stadt"	C minor
"Am Meer"	C major/minor
"Der Doppelgaenger"	B minor

This progression of keys suggest several things. First, the initial three songs have middle sections with contrasting keys, while the final three do not. Also, the first and third have B major as the second key area. With the subsequent oscillation of C major/minor, we might hear the B minor of "Der Doppelgaenger" as a cross reference to the B major sections earlier. Particularly the B major section of "Der Atlas," with the brief tonicization of E minor on the words "unendlich elend" may be reflected in the final bars of "Der Doppelgaenger" with its faint evocation of E minor.

But it is interesting to consider the possibility of Schubert conceiving of the order of the songs in terms of the order in which Heine wrote them: "Das Fischermaedchen", "Am Meer", "Die Stadt", "Der Doppelgaenger", "Ihr Bild", and "Der Atlas."<sup>7</sup> First, although Duerr dismisses the possibility of earlier versions of the songs of Schwanengesang, there were sketches of the vocal lines of the first, third and fourth songs.<sup>8</sup> This at least leaves open the possibility that sketches were also made for other of the songs in Schwanengesang, and that another ordering is possible. Also, in a letter to Probst in the fall of 1828, Schubert refers to the Heine settings as a discrete unit:

...auch habe ich mehrere Lieder von Heine aus

<sup>6</sup>Duerr, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup>In his introduction to the facsimile edition, Duerr refers to an article written in the 1974 edition of the Deutsches Jahrbuch der Musikwissenschaft by Harry Goldschmidt, in which this idea is explored in detail.

<sup>8</sup>Deutsch, p. 616.

Hamburg [*italics Schubert's*] gesetzt, welche hier ausserordentlich gefielen...<sup>9</sup>

Arranged in Heine's order, the poems and Schubert's setting mesh to suggest a narrative:

"Das Fischermaedchen"	Ab major/Cb major
"Am Meer"	C major/minor
"Die Stadt"	C minor
"Der Doppelgaenger"	B minor
"Ihr Bild"	Bb minor/Gb major
"Der Atlas"	G minor/B major

In terms of climactic notes, a long line is suggested by the Gb<sup>2</sup> of "Das Fischermaedchen" connecting to the G<sup>2</sup> of "Die Stadt." This is repeated within "Der Doppelgaenger" with F#<sup>2</sup>/G<sup>2</sup> described above, and extended to Ab<sup>2</sup> in "Der Atlas." The keys also form an interesting sequence: the opening song in Ab major/Cb major, is followed by settings which descend in half steps. The Bb minor/Gb polarity of "Ihr Bild" is then completed by the G minor/B major of "Der Atlas."

In addition, the poems form a narrative which is prototypical for the romantic vision of the relationships among nature, man and art. "Das Fischermaedchen" and "Am Meer" deal with the experience of falling in love and being rejected. Both deal, as well, with the sea. Poems of the suffering lover follow, with a movement from the sea (nature) to land (civilization: "Die Stadt" and "Der Doppelgaenger"). In the final poems, "Ihr Bild" and "Der Atlas," frustrated love is then sublimated into art. This is particularly vivid in "Ihr Bild" in which the artist's image of the beloved comes alive through an act of sheer will.

But since these considerations lie outside the scope of this paper, and are almost entirely speculative, I will leave the issue open.

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<sup>9</sup>O. E. Deutsch. Schubert: Die Dokumente seines Lebens. (Kasel: Baerenreiter, 1964.) p. 540.

Die Stadt

Am fernen Horizonte  
Erscheint, wie ein  
Nebelbild,  
Die Stadt mit ihren  
Tuermen,  
In Abenddaemmerung  
gehuehlt.

Ein feuchter Windzug  
kraeuselt  
Die graue Wasserbahn;  
Mit traurigem Takte  
rudert  
Der Schiffer in meinem  
Kahn.

Die Sonne hebt sich noch  
einmal  
Leuchtend vom Boden empor,  
Und zeigt mir jene Stelle,  
Wo ich das Liebste verlor.

Der Doppelgaenger

Still ist die Nacht, es  
ruhen die Gassen,  
In diesem Hause wohnte  
mein Schatz;  
Sie hat schon laengst die  
Stadt verlassen,  
Doch steht noch das Haus  
auf demselben Platz.

Da steht auch ein Mensch  
und starrt in die Hoehe,  
Und ringt die Haende, vor  
Schmerzensgewalt;  
Mir graust es, wenn ich  
sein Antlitz sehe--  
Der Mond zeigt mir meine  
eigne Gestalt.

Du Doppelgaenger! du  
bleicher Geselle!  
Was aeffst du nach mein  
Liebesleid,

The City

Upon the far horizon  
Like a misty ghost, I see  
The town and towers mantled  
In twilight's mystery.

A damp breeze blows and  
wrinkles  
The seaway gray and dark;  
With sad and measured rhythm  
The boatman rows my bark.

The sun sinks into the ocean,  
A last ray flashes above,  
And points with a golden  
finger  
To where I lost my love.

The Phantom Twin

The night is still, the  
streets are dumb,  
This is the house where  
dwelt my dear;  
Long since she's left the  
city's hum  
But the house stands in the  
same place here.

Another man stands where the  
moonbeams lace,  
He wrings his hands, eyes  
turned to the sky.  
A shudder runs through me--  
I see his face:  
The man who stands in the  
moonlight is I.

Pale ghost, twin phantom,  
hell-begot!  
Why do you ape the pain and  
woe

Das mich gequaelt auf  
dieser Stelle,  
So manche Nacht in alter  
Zeit?

That racked my heart on this  
same spot  
So many nights, so long ago?

Der Atlas

Ich unglueckselger Atlas!  
eine Welt,  
Die ganze Welt der  
Schmerzen, muss ich  
tragen,  
Ich trage Unertraegliches,  
und brechen  
Will mir das Herz im  
Leibe.

Atlas

I, unfortunate, Atlas! all  
the world,  
The whole wide world of  
sorrow must I carry,  
Endure the Unendurable: it  
shatters  
The very heart within me.

Du stolzes Herz! du hast  
es ja gewollt!  
Du wolltest gluecklich  
sein, unendlich gluecklich  
Oder unendlich elend,  
stolzes Herz,  
Und jetzo bist du elend.

O you proud heart, you now  
have won your wish!  
You would be happy,  
infinitely happy  
Or infinitely wretched, you  
proud heart,  
And now indeed you're  
wretched.

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German texts were taken from Heines Saemtlicher Werke I (Leipzig: Im Insel Verlag, 1911); "Die Stadt" = XVI, "Der Doppelgaenger" = XX, and "Der Atlas" = XXIV. The English translations (the numbers correspond to those of the German) are from The Complete Poems of Heinrich Heine (Boston: Suhrkamp/Insel, 1982), translated by Hal Draper.