A CRITICAL COMPARISON OF THREE SETTINGS OF THE UNDINE MYTH IN WORKS BY HOFFMANN, LORTZING AND REINECKE

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ABSTRACT

As a work of literature that has inspired numerous musical settings, Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué's fairy tale Undine is an ideal entry into an examination of the interaction of literature with music in the works of nineteenth-century composers. This thesis examines three major works inspired by the tale, operas by E.T.A. Hoffmann and Albert Lortzing, and a flute sonata by Carl Reinecke. The varied responses of the three composers to the literary material are set against the context of their social and historical positions and in relation to the genres of opera and programme music.

Two introductory chapters present a history of the musical settings of Undine and define parameters for studying the influence of literature on music. Chapter Three analyzes the fairy tale itself and identifies its sources.

Each of the three central chapters examines one of the musical works, studying the ways in which each composer reinterpreted Fouqué's fairy tale according to the demands of his time and place. Chapters Four and Five compare Hoffmann's and Lortzing's operatic treatments of the story as two diametrically opposed responses to the literary

source. Chapter Six, an analysis of Reinecke's Sonata "Undine", deals with the problem of narration in instrumental music.

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CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION

It has long been recognized that one of the primary characteristics of the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century is strengthened relationships and alliances among the arts. The development of programme music, the rise of the Lied and of the Wagnerian Gesamtkunstwerk all attest to the desire of nineteenth-century composers to respond to the influences of the other arts and to integrate them in their creations.

The greatest influence on the music of the Romantics was literature. The prevailing aesthetic attitude of the century was that music was supreme among the arts and could express anything that could be said in words and much that could not. This may have fuelled attempts by composers to express very specific philosophical and literary ideas in their compositions.

As a model for examining musical attempts to represent literary source material throughout the nineteenth century, this thesis will study and compare three musical treatments of one literary source, Baron Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué's fairy tale, Undine, written in 1811. Through

analysis and comparison of three works--E.T.A. Hoffmann's and Albert Lortzing's operas Undine and Carl Reinecke's Sonata for flute and piano, "Undine"--several questions of Romantic style will be addressed.

The three works represent three distinct phases of musical Romanticism and two genres, opera and programme music; but all three works spring from the same tradition of German Romanticism that took as its models the music of Mozart and Beethoven. Comparison of these three very different responses to the literary source material of Undine reveals much about the specifically musical context of each work and about its larger societal context.

In an attempt to determine how the choice of the fairy tale Undine influenced the final form of the three compositions, stylistically and semantically, the following issues will be addressed:

1) The first level of the study will examine how the literary material is depicted musically, identifying the specific techniques of musical characterization and narration used by each composer and examining how these techniques differ from one another. This aspect of the study is, of course, particularly relevant with regard to programme music, which must rely purely on these devices for the exposition of its programme, but it is also of great

importance in opera, in that it reveals the composer's attitude to the literary subject.

2) The style of each work will be studied with relation to the stylistic conventions of the time and the genre, and the possibilities of direct influence of the literary source material on each musical composition will be discussed and evaluated. It will be argued, particularly in the case of the Hoffmann opera, but also to a lesser degree in the works by Lortzing and Reinecke, that stylistic conventions were challenged or reinterpreted as a result of the composers' attempts to communicate more completely in music the meanings of the literary source.

3) The changes made by each composer in the plot, structure and settings of the fairy tale will be examined, as indications of the interpretation of the literary material that each composer exercised on the source. These outward changes, combined with the purely stylistic ways in which the composer commented on the literary material, will be enumerated and explained as manifestations of the composer's attitude to his material. In each case this attitude, or "tone", to use the generally accepted literary term, will be shown to be substantially different from the attitude of Fouqué to his own material, and to be a product of the composer's historical and philosophical environment.

The interpretations offered by the three composers might in traditional terms be regarded as infidelities to the original fairy tale; but they are in fact creative "misreadings", which simultaneously reveal new facets of the source material and aspects of each composer's individual style.[1] The power of music to offer such a commentary on a literary source and the ways in which it achieves this will be one of the major focal points of this thesis.

UNDINE: A UNIVERSALLY POPULAR FAIRY TALE

Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué's only enduring literary success, the novella Undine, was published in the literary periodical Die Jahreszeiten in 1811. The story, which combines Fouqué's characteristic sentimentality with a remarkably vivid portrait of the title character and a great deal of mythical resonance, immediately achieved immense popularity.

The novella tells of Undine, a water nymph or elemental spirit, who chooses to live as a human woman, in order to gain an immortal soul. When she wins the love of the knight Huldbrand, her desire is fulfilled. She travels with her new husband to the city, where she meets his former

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[1] This use of the term "misreading" was coined by literary critic Harold Bloom in A Map of Misreading (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

fiancée, Bertalda. When Huldbrand and Undine go to live at his castle at Ringstetten, Bertalda accompanies them. Eventually Huldbrand is drawn back to the simpler, fully human Bertalda, and treats Undine unkindly. Her uncle Kühleborn, ruler of the water spirits, decrees that Undine must return to the water kingdom. When Huldbrand agrees to marry Bertalda, thereby violating his still-binding marriage to Undine, Undine returns from the waters to give him the kiss that brings him death.

Almost immediately upon its publication, Undine began to inspire a rash of adaptations in opera and ballet. (For a complete listing of the works inspired by Fouqué's story, see chart, pages 6 and 7.) The first of many operatic versions of the tale was by the writer and composer E.T.A. Hoffmann, with a libretto by Fouqué. The opera was premiered in Berlin in 1816. Fouqué also contributed the libretto for two other early opera settings of his tale. Following soon after the Hoffmann opera was the opera Undine, die Braut aus dem Wasserreiche by Ignaz Ritter von Seyfried, performed at the Theater an der Wien in August 1817. The last opera to use a Fouqué libretto was Christian Friedrich Johann Girschner's Undine, premiered in Berlin in 1830. The score to Girschner's opera is no longer extant, but contemporary reports indicate that it was a moderate success. Fouqué is

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF MUSICAL WORKS INSPIRED BY FOUQUÉ'S UNDINE

Date	Composer	Title	Genre	Sources, Place of Premiere etc.
1816	Hoffmann	Undine	opera	Fouqué libretto, Berlin
1817	Ignaz von Seyfried	Undine, die Braut aus dem Wasserreiche	opera	Fouqué libretto, Vienna
1825	Adalbert Gyrowetz	Undine	ballet	Vienna
1830	C.F.J. Girschner	Undine	opera	Fouqué, Vienna
1841	Darghomīzhsky	Rusalka	opera	Sollohub libretto
1842	Johan Peter Emilius Hartmann	Undine	opera	libretto by Borgaard, Copenhagen
1843	Cesare Pugni	Ondine ou la naïade	ballet	London
1845	Albert Lortzing	Undine	opera	Lortzing libretto, Berlin
1848	A.F. Lvov	Undina, fille des vagues	opera	Sollohub libretto, St. Petersburg
1862	François Péan de la Roche-Jagu	Ondine, la reine de l'onde	opera	Carré and Barbier libretto, Paris
1863	Théodore Semet	Ondine	opera	Lockroy and Mestépès libretto, Paris
1865	Charles Lecocq	Ondines au champagne	operetta	Lefebvre and Pélissié libretto, Paris
1869	Cost. dall'Argine	Ondina	ballet	Milan
1869	Tchaikowsky	Undine	opera	Sollohub libretto, fragments extant
1883	Théodore Müller-Reutter	Ondolina	opera	Erbach libretto, Strassburg
1886	Carl Reinecke	Sonata, "Undine"	flute and piano sonata	

Date	Composer	Title	Genre	Sources, Place of Premiere etc.
1901	Dvořák	Rusalka	opera	libretto by J. Kvapil, based on Fouqué and Slavic folklore
1909	Ravel	Ondine	character piece for piano	from Gaspard de la Nuit, based on poem by Aloysius Bertrand
1911	E. Lévêque	Ondine	waltz for solo violin	from a set of six études-caprices
1913	Debussy	Ondine	prelude for piano	from Préludes, Book II
1913	Ernest Moret	Ondine	song	based on poem by Tristan Klingsor
1939	Henri Sauguet	Ondine	incidental music	for play by Jean Giraudoux, based on Fouqué, Paris
1939	Maurice Desrez	Ondine	incidental music	for play by Jean Bonnerot, based on Fouqué
1954	Virgil Thomson	Ondine	incidental music	for Giraudoux's play
1958	Hans Werner Henze	Undine	ballet	based on Giraudoux
1982	Daniel Lesur	Ondine	opera	Lesur libretto, Paris

said to have preferred Girschner's setting of his story to Hoffmann's, because of its "grössere Gemütlichkeit".[2]

The operatic version of Undine which has achieved the greatest and most enduring popularity is certainly Albert Lortzing's 1845 setting. Lortzing combines the comic devices of the Singspiel style with the magical and romantic aspects of the story to produce an opera that was immediately comprehensible and enjoyable for its Biedermeier audience. Dramatically, Lortzing's effort is generally considered to be superior to Hoffmann's, mainly because Lortzing's ruthless tightening of the plot makes the story more unified and easier to understand.[3]

Two other nineteenth century operatic settings of Undine should be mentioned, although they fall outside the mainstream of the German Romantic tradition, and are therefore beyond the realm of this thesis. These are settings by Russian composers Alexis Feodorovich Lvov (1798-1870), produced in St, Petersburg in 1848, and Tchaikovsky, written in 1869.

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[2] Riemann Musik Lexikon, (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1956), s.v. "Girschner, Christian Friedrich Johann".

[3] On the dramatic qualities of Lortzing's opera, see Jürgen Schläder, Undine auf dem Musiktheater (Bonn/Bad Godesberg: Verlag für systematische Musikwissenschaft, 1979) and Hans Hoffmann, Albert Lortzing: Libretto eines Komponisten (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1987).

Both Russian Undines are based on a libretto by Count F.A. Sollohub, a translation of a French text by Vernoy de Saint-Georges.[4] Saint-Georges' libretto makes significant changes to Fouqué's story. The character of Kühleborn is excised and Undine is portrayed as a vengeful character, spitefully revealing the secret of Bertalda's low birth at the birthday feast, then leaping into the Danube.[5]

Tchaikovsky's setting of Undine was written in a burst of enthusiasm in a few months of 1869. When the opera was rejected for production by the Imperial Theatre, Tchaikovsky burned the score. However, five numbers from the first act survived and are preserved in the Bolshoi Theatre archives.

An interesting case of complex lines of influence is offered by Antonín Dvořák's 1901 opera Rusalka, which is based partly on the Slavonic folk tale of the water spirit Rusalka and partly on Fouqué's tale. The original story of Rusalka has little in common with Undine except its use of a water spirit as its central character, but Dvořák's librettist J. Kvapil melded the two stories, resulting in a plot that bears a very strong resemblance to Undine.

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[4] Gerald Abraham, Slavonic and Romantic Music: Essays and Studies (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1968), 126.

[5] Myrna Brown, "Undine: A Romantic Subject", unpublished paper, North Texas State University, 1981, 7.

A number of other nineteenth-century operas on the theme of Undine have been documented, although little information survives about any of them. They include a production in Copenhagen in 1842 by J.P.E. Hartmann, an 1883 version by Théodore Müller-Reutter and an astonishing three new Undine operas premiered in Paris between 1862 and 1865.

Undine has also inspired several attempts at representation in purely instrumental or programme music. Carl Reinecke's 1886 Sonata for flute and piano, "Undine" is a conventional four- movement sonata whose only explicit reference to its programme is its subtitle. The music combines evocation of the mood of the subject with narration in an unusual fusion of classical and romantic structures.

Two later programmatic works, both for solo piano, are based on a poem that was itself inspired by Fouqué's Undine. Both the second movement of Maurice Ravel's Gaspard de la Nuit (1909) and Debussy's "Ondine" from Préludes Book II (1913) are based on the poem "Ondine" by Aloysius Bertrand, from his 1842 collection Gaspard de la Nuit.[6] Bertrand's poem evocatively depicts of Undine's capricious character, without placing her in the narrative context of

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[6] Louis Bertrand, called Aloysius, Gaspard de la Nuit: fantaisies à la manière de Callot et Rembrandt (Paris: La Colombe, 1962).

Fouqué's tale. The Debussy and Ravel works alike are short character pieces, full of rippling water imagery.

Another French literary descendant of Fouqué's Undine which deserves a mention in the genealogy of the story is Jean Giraudoux's play Ondine, written in 1939.[7] Giraudoux retains most of the original characters and events of the story, but treats them in a tone that is alternately ironic and profound. The original production of the play was accompanied by incidental music by Henri Sauguet.[8]

In 1958, Giraudoux's play inspired Sir Frederick Ashton to choreograph a ballet, for which music was composed by Hans Werner Henze. The Henze/Ashton collaboration is the most recent in a long line of ballets based on this material, which began in 1825 with the ballet Undine with music composed by Adalbert Gyrowetz. The Henze and Sauguet scores must be numbered among the ranks of nearly forgotten Undine works, where they are joined by Virgil Thomson's incidental music to Giraudoux's play, composed in 1954.[9]

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[7] Jean Giraudoux, Ondine in Four Plays, adapted by Maurice Valency (New York: Hill and Wang, 1958), 172-255.

[8] Françoise Ferlan, Le thème d'Ondine dans la littérature et l'opéra allemands au XIXième siècle (Berne: Peter Lang, 1987), 308.

[9] Kathleen Hoover and John Cage, Virgil Thomson: His Life and Music (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1959).

CONCLUSION

Fouqué's modest fairy tale has obviously had a powerful resonance, not only for the nineteenth century, but reaching up nearly to the present.[10] There is much about Undine that makes it a representative expression of its period and place; there is also much that is universal. Of particular interest to this study are the aspects of the tale that suit it especially well to musical settings, in fact almost cause it to demand musical treatment.

This thesis will deal with the three extant musical settings of Undine from nineteenth century Germany. Comparison and contrast of the three works will reveal which aspects of the plot are typically Romantic and which elements are strengthened or played down by composers at different stages of the Romantic era.

The elements of the tale which have universal appeal are the archetypal quality of the characters and situations, the allegorical richness of the theme, expressing the conflict between nature and society, and last, by no means the least important, the vividness with which the character of Undine is depicted by Fouqué. The character of the water nymph almost jumps off the page, achieving such a vivid

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[10] The most recent musical response to the material is Daniel Lesur's opera Ondine, after Giraudoux, premiered in Paris in 1982.

existence that in 1826 Fouqué added a dedication to the fourth edition of the story addressed directly to Undine herself.[11]

The specifically Romantic aspects of the story are the medieval, chivalrous setting, the strongly expressed duality between man and nature, and the importance of the supernatural. The specific aspects upon which each composer focuses are symptomatic of his place in the development of Romanticism.

The character of Undine must also be counted among the Romantic elements of the tale. As portrayed by Fouqué, Undine possesses many of the qualities valued by the Romantics: freedom from the constraints of society (and with it alienation and homelessness), a capricious, individualistic temperament, a tragic fate, and a capacity for self expression. When Fouqué has Undine accompany herself on a zither and sing a ballad at Bertalda's birthday feast, he casts her unequivocally in the role of the romantic artist, isolated and expressive.

Strengthening this metaphor is Undine's position straddling the water kingdom and the human world, unable to feel at home in either. This is an effective metaphor for

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[11] Brown, "Undine: A Romantic Subject", 14.

the position of the Romantic artist, torn between returning to nature and embracing society.

The proliferation of musical settings of Undine suggests another metaphorical level. The conflict between human and water worlds is not only an allegory for the struggle between man and nature, but also for the long-standing conflict between literature and music.

Undine's irresistible but doomed attraction for the human world suggests the repeated attempts of musicians to integrate their art with literature, whether in opera, Lieder or programme music. Fouqué makes this implied allegory explicit in one scene, in which Undine appears as a singer and composer who tells her own history in music. The fluid flexibility of the water kingdom is a suitable symbol for music, in which no meaning is fixed; while the human world, like literature perhaps, is more rigid but at the same time more powerful.

If these themes, on a subconscious level, may have attracted composers to this story, what is their prognosis for the potential union of the two worlds, water and earth, music and literature?

All three works discussed here offer hope for such a union. The combination of musical and narrative coherence in the Reinecke sonata and the response to both musical and dramatic demands, as well as the altered happy ending in

Lortzing, suggest hope. But it is in Hoffmann's opera that a resolution of all the dualities is most closely approached. Hoffmann, with his talent and experience as both writer and composer, also alters the ending of the tale to offer resolution on a narrative level; but more importantly he forges a successful new musical style in response to the demands of the literature, concrete evidence that Undine is not doomed to fail in uniting her two worlds.

CHAPTER 2- PARAMETERS FOR ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

A comparative study of three musical works based on one literary source is a study of the reciprocal paths of influence between the two arts. The original direction of influence is from the literary material to the musical product; but equally important is the reverse flow of influence, which occurs when a composer "misreads" or interprets the literary source, reshaping it according to his own concerns.

The purpose of this thesis is to study both these channels of influence, to examine specific ways in which music and literature may affect one another. It is necessary to identify certain parameters for determining this influence. These devices operate on two levels:

1) methods by which a composer depicts the literary material, its characters, situations and meanings.

2) methods by which a composer interprets or comments on the literary material depicted.

These two levels of representation are by no means mutually exclusive; most musical devices will overlap these

categories, partially filling both functions. This chapter will attempt to enumerate the most important musical techniques by which literary material can be represented and interpreted.

At stake here, to rephrase slightly, are the means by which music, instrumental or vocal, can communicate semantic meaning.[1] This thesis proceeds from the proposition (demonstrated by examples in later chapters) that music can communicate certain ideas that are universally comprehensible within the language of Western art music.

To take such a position is, of course, to sidestep entirely the eternal debate about whether music can express anything at all. This thesis will argue that, within the framework of the universally accepted conventions of musical language, music can communicate and depict. The argument is not that a musical theme can represent a specific landscape or event; but rather that music and literature deal with similar ideas. In the words of Jacques Barzun, "the meaning of literature resides in the same motions of the spirit as

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[1] The term "semantic meaning" with reference to music must be defined in contrast with its counterpart `syntactic meaning'. Semantic meaning refers to ideas and associations communicated and represented by music, as opposed to syntactic meaning, which resides in the relationships and dynamics that exist within the structure of the music itself.

those aroused by music; only the means differ."[2] It is the specific means of representation of these "motions of the spirit", then, with which we are concerned.

Calvin Brown has pointed out that the attempt to draw close analogies between the two arts ignores their widely differing structures.[3] For example, because music has always had a tighter, more defined structure than literature, it is all but impossible to detect the influence of literary structures on music, except in the loosening of form that resulted from the literary influence on the symphonic poem. On the other hand, because literature has a much more highly developed ability to communicate specific meanings than music, it is in the realm of meaning that literature has had an influence on music.

This leads to the conclusion that a study of the influence of literature on music should search primarily for the impact that specific literary content has had on musical substance and style. In such a pursuit, adaptations of certain recent movements of literary criticism are helpful, particularly semiotics and structuralism.

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[2] Jacques Barzun, "The Meaning of Meaning in Music: Berlioz Once More" Musical Quarterly 66 (1980), 20.

[3] Calvin S. Brown, Music and Literature: A Comparison of the Arts (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1948), 219-222.

LARGE-SCALE STRUCTURE

Several theories have been advanced by musicologists and literary critics which compare music to literature on the level of large-scale structure, demonstrating that harmonic structure, key symbolism and large-scale formal organization can be used to represent literary ideas and oppositions.

Anthropologist and structuralist literary critic Claude Lévi-Strauss has identified a connection between the structure of myths and musical structure. Lévi-Strauss uses the format of an orchestral score as a framework for his analysis of the structure of myths. In a discussion of Wagner he writes:

> it is highly relevant that the analysis [of mythic structure] was first made in music. When we suggested, then, that the analysis of myths was comparable with that of a full score, we were only drawing the logical consequence of the Wagnerian discovery that the structure of myths is revealed by means of a score.[4]

Lévi-Strauss decomposes each myth into its component parts and places them on a chart which consists of a horizontal axis to denote the chronological progression of the tale and a vertical axis to organize events according to

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[4] Claude Levi-Strauss, The Raw and the Cooked (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 23.

their category of meaning or their function in the plot.[5] According to Harold S. Powers, Lévi-Strauss' famous chart deconstructing the Oedipus myth "has become a point of reference in the music-as-language metaphor".[6] Lévi-Strauss himself applied this method to musical analysis, in a treatment of Ravel's Boléro, unfortunately with less than sophisticated musical results.[7] Powers proposes that scholars with a deeper musical understanding could use the Lévi-Strauss model to develop what he calls a "metaphoric score". The use of letters of the alphabet to denote plot events in literature has a parallel in the use of Roman numerals to represent key areas in music, which fulfill very much the same function as the plot events. Symbols representing musical and literary functions can be arranged on the "score" in patterns which illustrate the oppositions and connections between the elements of the work.

The creation of the metaphoric score advocated by Lévi-Strauss and Powers was actually anticipated by the German musicologist Alfred Lorenz, who used a circular graph to represent the dramatic and musical events of the opera,

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[5] Ibid., 25.

[6] Harold S. Powers, "Language Models for Musical Analysis" Ethnomusicology 24:1 (1980), 16.

[7] Claude Levi-Strauss, The Naked Man (London: Jonathan Cape, 1981).

in which the circle itself represents the chronological progression of the opera.[8]

Lorenz's use of a graph to analyze Wagner's Tristan und Isolde demonstrates how a metaphoric score can be profitably used to analyze the connection between the musical and literary components of opera. Contrasting or opposing dramatic and harmonic relationships are placed across from each other on the circle. For example, the dramatic motives of "violent death and redeeming death" or "affirmation and denial" are directly opposite each other on the circle. The full title of the graph, "Opposition of tonal functions as correlated with the opposition of dramatic content" reveals the thrust of Lorenz' analysis.

Although not generally accepted by musicologists in the study of opera, this method is eminently suitable, in that it does not try to draw direct analogies between musical and literary content, but studies instead the relationships between the parts of an opera on both levels. Ronald Taylor, a stern critic of most music/literature comparison, has pointed out that, while there are certainly relationships between the arts, they are likely to be found

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[8] Alfred Lorenz, Das Geheimnis der Form bei Richard Wagner: Der musikalische Aufbau von Richard Wagner's Tristan und Isolde. (Berlin: M. Hesse, 1926), 178.

in the abstract, ideal content of the art works, and not in small-scale formal similarities.[9]

A broader approach to the structuralist search for comparable relationships in music and literature has been taken by Robert Wallace. Taking as his starting point the theoretical concept of binary oppositions originated by Lévi-Strauss, Wallace identifies a large number of possible oppositions and illustrates their potential musical representations.[10]

Wallace's list of comparable terms, tendencies and themes in the two arts includes balance vs. lack of equilibrium, conventional language vs. non-conventional, symmetry and proportion vs. irregularity of form, home vs. away, sanity vs. madness, and life vs. death. The "motions of the spirit" defined by such terms could be prosaically described as the basic philosophical and aesthetic underpinnings of works of art. It is these elements that comparative criticism aims to illuminate.

More specifically, binary relations usually consist of dialectical oppositions presented in a work of art, for example, between diametrically opposed characters or

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[9] Ronald Taylor, "Formal Parallels in Music and Literature" German Life and Letters 19 (1965), 10-18.

[10] Robert K. Wallace, Jane Austen and Mozart (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1983).

locales. In music, the opposition between tonic and dominant areas in sonata form is a perfect example of a binary relation. It creates a balance while allowing contrast. Other musical binary oppositions may exist between themes, tempi, timbres or formal sections. The particular value of studying systems of binary relations in music and literature is that binary relations allow us to examine sets of musical and literary contrasts, which, while appearing different and independent on the surface, function according to the same dynamic of contrast.

Binary oppositions reflect connections as well as oppositions between their parts. For example, in Fouqué's story, an opposition is constructed between the characters Undine and Bertalda. While this contrast emphasizes the differences between the two characters, their relationship also serves to demonstrate their similarities; in fact, they are two projections of the same woman.

The study of binary relations allows the critic to study the contrasts within each work of art as it stands. It is possible that in some cases, a binary opposition between two characters will be represented in music by contrasting themes; but rather than setting up the equation "character=theme", which will not hold true for every part of the work, the relations between the themes and the characters themselves can be analyzed.

The areas of music to which the study of binary relations might apply includes harmonic structure, use of key symbolism, motivic connection, and large-scale form. The way in which the parts of the composition relate to one another on all these levels are evidence of the representation in music of literary content.

SMALL-SCALE STRUCTURE

On the level of phrase structure, disturbances in the patterns of expectation established by stylistic convention can communicate an unrest or a loosening of structural bonds that may have its origins in the literary source material. All three composers discussed here have, to some extent, loosened the restrictions of periodic phrase structure in their portrayals of Undine and often of the entire magical element as compared with human society.

Leonard Meyer has presented an antecedent for the study of this type of disturbance in his Emotion and Meaning in Music.[11] Meyer asserts that meaning in music is communicated when the listener's expectations (of closure, for example) are confounded or when the fulfillment of the expectation is delayed.

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[11] Leonard Meyer, Emotion and Meaning in Music (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).

An almost identical definition of musical meaning, also depending on small-scale structures, has been postulated by semiotician Nicolas Ruwet.[12] Ruwet has shown how a traditional periodic structure in classical music can suggest a meaning that is applicable to the reality of everyday life. He shows, for example, that a succession of two phrases, A and A', in which A ends with a deceptive cadence and A' with a perfect cadence, `means' a feeling of suspended movement, followed by a satisfactory resolution. It is easy to imagine how a similar feeling could be set up in a work of literature. Perhaps even more important than such a common musical structure would be the case in which the expected resolution did not come. Study of such deviations or disruptions of expectation would reveal more about the works of art concerned.

It is these deviations from the formal norm that have been studied by David Hertz an his book on the Symbolist movement in music and literature.[13] Hertz takes his theoretical basis from an examination of the works as part of their historical context, concentrating on ways in which they diverge from the conventional path.

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[12] Nicolas Ruwet, Langue, musique, poésie (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1972).

[13] David Hertz, The Tuning of the Word (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987).

Similar attitudes to the conventions of the day in each art, whether rebellion against them or total acceptance of the "rules", can reveal a similar mindset in independent works of art. A composer's attitude to closed, tightly organized forms or conventional tonal language may stem from certain aesthetic attitudes which are likely to be made explicit in the influential work of literature, given literature's greater ability to express specific ideas.

Hertz has shown that the changes in the use of periodic structures in poetry and music from the mid- to the late nineteenth century are symptoms of the parallel development and mutual influence of the two arts. A similar development could perhaps be traced through the breakdown of linear narration in literature and the loosening of the bonds of the number opera form.

A far more common case than this parallel stylistic development, though, and one more relevant to the works at hand, is the situation in which the simple desire to communicate the content, not the style, of a literary work more explicitly and concretely causes a composer to write against stylistic convention. This is the case in parts of all the works discussed here: some of the most evocative representations of characters and emotions are passages that step outside stylistic convention.

For this reason, contrasts between traditional and iconoclastic language within the same work are an important area of study. For example, Hoffmann portrays the human, society-conscious Bertalda in traditional tonal language and strict forms, while reserving a freer, more associative treatment for the other-worldly Undine. It is on this level, concerned with characterization and representation, that disturbances in small-scale structure are particularly revealing of the literary influence.

THEMATIC TREATMENT

Assuming that music can communicate semantic meaning, its most powerful device for doing so is probably thematic: specifically, the use of motivic connections and leitmotivic systems to represent and comment on characters and ideas. The most complete manifestation of this semantic power exists in the music dramas of Richard Wagner.[14]

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[14] The term "leitmotiv" is used so frequently to refer to such different systems of musical motive that its specific use in this essay requires some clarification. Two categories of semantic motives will be identified for the purpose of this discussion: associative or reminiscence motives and leitmotivs. The first type of motive functions on a purely symbolic level, representing a character, situation or idea without changing or developing with the course of the drama. The second type, the true leitmotiv, is more dynamic. It develops as the drama unfolds, changing with the dramatic idea it represents and hence offering a musical comment on the dramatic action, as well as a symbolic representation of a specific element of that drama.

When used as a complete system of signification, as by Wagner, leitmotivs function on two levels:

1) depiction of the object or idea with which the motive is associated and

2) musical comment on the development of the associated idea by means of thematic transformation.

First, a motive must represent the object, person or idea with which it is associated in an unmistakable one-to-one correspondence. The connections between motives and their correlates must be quickly perceptible. Of course, in opera, much of the recognition is visual, but part of it is musical as well, and this musical part is also at work in the signification of programme music.

The ways in which a certain musical figure can be recognized as representing an idea depend largely on universally understood conventions, which decree, for example, that slow ascending arpeggios played by French horns mean a sunrise. The most exhaustive early codification of such musical/emotional effects was achieved by Johann Mattheson in Der vollkommene Kapellmeister (1739). Mattheson purported to be giving advice on text-setting to composers; but what he actually achieved was a catalogue of musical devices depicting various emotional and physical states.

Later attempts to understand the operation of this system of signification were carried out by Albert Schweitzer, in his work on J.S. Bach, and by Deryck Cooke.[15] Cooke's attempts to define a "language of music" involved listing musical figures which were understood according to a universal, intrinsic musical understanding to represent certain emotions. While the inherent expressive value of these codified effects is debatable, there can be no question, as Cooke realizes, that if accepted by an entire society of composers and listeners, they can indeed constitute a universally comprehensible musical language. Whether the system of musical communication is inborn, as Cooke believes, or learned, as are the conventions of musical rhetoric, the existence of such patterns is a powerful tool in the representation of literary meaning in music. An understanding of this language by the audience is crucial for the symbolic aspect of leitmotivic signification to function.

Beyond this straightforward, symbolic level of leitmotivs lies the system of thematic transformation and interplay between orchestra and singers, which allows the composer to comment on the action even as he is unfolding it

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[15] Albert Schweitzer, J.S. Bach, trans. Ernest Newman (New York: Dover, 1966) and Deryck Cooke, The Language of Music (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).

on the stage. The rich texture created by this technique allows for a psychological depth previously unavailable in opera, bringing the operatic art up to the level of the literature of the time in its complexity in probing the subconscious motivations of the characters.

Peter Conrad has suggested that the term "music drama" applied to Wagner is a misnomer, in that what Wagner achieves is really more closely allied to the novel than to drama.[16] Conrad cites Schopenhauer's distinction between the genres: that the novel deals with inner life and the drama with outer life, with the implication that the best novel is one in which there is no action at all. An opera like Tristan und Isolde does virtually substitute inner action for outer life, using the system of leitmotivs to offer an ongoing commentary on what is happening behind the stage action.

This level of leitmotivic commentary is approached in E.T.A. Hoffmann's treatment of Undine, but is completely eschewed by Lortzing. In Hoffmann's opera development of motives and thematic connections between related motives are one of the composer's major techniques for communicating his reinterpretation of the Undine tale.

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[16] Peter Conrad, Romantic Opera and Literary Form (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

CONCLUSION

The techniques enumerated in the above three categories are the basic tools for the discovery and understanding of musical meaning. These meanings are generally intuitively comprehensible; the analysis is an aid in understanding how these devices function.

The idea that recurs in the discussion of each category of musical meaning is that of the importance of historical context in communicating and deciphering meaning. The ways in which Hoffmann's, Lortzing's and Reinecke's musical language accedes to or challenges the stylistic conventions of their era is the single most important factor in those composers' communication of their literary meanings.

Examination of the parameters outlined above leads to two conclusions. First, that by these methods music clearly can communicate meaning; and second, that at least as important as the influence of literature on music represented by the musical depiction of the events of the fairy tale, is the reverse flow of influence, in which the composer interprets the literary material and puts his individual stamp on it through techniques of musical signification.

CHAPTER 3- UNDINE AS LEGEND AND FAIRY TALE

To begin a study of the various musical manifestations of the Undine story, one must first have a comprehensive understanding of the literary source, Baron Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué's short novel, Undine. In order to approach the music it inspired, it is necessary to understand how Undine functions independently as literature. The sources of the tale, the novel's themes and contrasts and its historical context: all are relevant as background to a study of the music.

Undine is generally regarded to be Fouqué's strongest work, avoiding the excesses of flowery, archaic language and sentimentality that characterize most of his output. The tale had a wide sphere of influence, impressing writers such as Sir Walter Scott, Coleridge, Thomas Carlyle, Joseph Eichendorff and Edgar Allan Poe.[1] Poe in particular was influenced by Undine, and traces of the tale appear in several of his fantastic stories.

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[1] See Works of Walter Scott, ed. Andrew Lang (Boston, 1892-4), 14 xiv and xxix; Specimens of the Table Talk of Samuel Coleridge (London, 1851), 88; Nineteenth Century Literary Criticism, Vol. 2, ed. Laurie Lanzen Harris (Detroit, 1982); Robert D. Jacobs, Poe: Journalist and Critic (Baton Rouge, 1969), 223-226, 238-40; and Margaret Alterton, E.A. Poe: Representative Selections (New York, 1962), 530.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

Undine is a water nymph who has been exchanged as an infant with the daughter of a humble and pious fisherman and his wife. The parents have no idea that Undine is a water spirit whose real parents have entrusted her to them in order that she may gain a human soul.

As Undine later explains, water spirits look like humans; the only difference is that they do not possess a soul. The female spirits are known generically as undines. The only way an undine can receive a soul is by earning the love of a mortal, who then is bound to be faithful to her, or else she is required to return to the world of the water nymphs.

The mortal who falls in love with Undine during her eighteenth year is Huldbrand, a knight who penetrates the haunted forest that encloses the peninsula inhabited by Undine and her foster parents. Huldbrand is stranded there for a period of weeks by inclement weather. He had been on a quest in the forest with the object of gaining the love of the noble and beautiful Bertalda, but he quickly forgets Bertalda in the face of Undine's remarkable beauty and her determination to win Huldbrand for herself. Undine is spoiled and has a mercurial temperament. One of her methods

of courting Huldbrand is to bite his hand whenever he speaks of Bertalda.

The floods and storms that ensure Huldbrand's presence on the peninsula are engineered by Undine's uncle, Kühleborn, who alternately takes the form of a brook that runs by the house and that of an old man with a long white beard. Kühleborn also arranges for a priest, Father Heilmann, to be marooned on the peninsula, just in time for him to wed the couple.

The day after the wedding, Undine is transformed. Her friends wait for an outburst of temper, but "she stayed that way all day, calm, friendly and considerate, a little housewife and a tender, modest, maidenly creature".[2] She finally tells her husband of her true nature, saying that she does not want to hold onto him through deception. Huldbrand is shocked and frightened, but he loves Undine too deeply to reject her. Undine and Huldbrand leave the peninsula together for Huldbrand's castle at Ringstetten, at the source of the Danube.

En route they stop in an unnamed city, where Bertalda is informed that Huldbrand is still alive and married to someone else. Improbably, Undine and Bertalda

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[2] Baron Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, Undine (Berlin: Grote'sche Verlagbuchhandlung, 1873), 34. Translations are my own.

become close friends, with such a strong bond that they feel that "we must have known each other before... or there must be some kind of remarkable relationship between us".[3]

This proves indeed to be the case. Kühleborn, who has followed the couple to the city against their wishes and now inhabits the well in the marketplace, informs Undine that Bertalda is, in fact, the real daughter of the fisherman and his wife. Stolen away by the water nymphs, who left Undine in her place, she was adopted by a nobleman who found her by the water's edge.

In her childlike goodness, Undine feels that this news will cement the friendship between the two. With a strong but misguided sense of drama, she arranges to disclose Bertalda's true background at Bertalda's birthday feast. The party is attended by all Bertalda's friends, including her foster parents and Huldbrand. Undine invites the fisherman and his wife to meet their daughter, and at the height of the party, takes her zither and sings of Bertalda's origin. After piquing the curiosity of the company, she ushers in the humble couple. Not surprisingly, Bertalda's reaction is far from enthusiastic. She is distressed to learn that she was not born to wealth and nobility, and the irritation is compounded by the fact that

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[3] Ibid., 44.

this is revealed at a public gathering. The scene ends with Bertalda sweeping out of the hall and Undine collapsing in Huldbrand's arms in tears of disappointment.

This episode merits the detailed description given it here because it introduces many crucial aspects of the tale. The tie between Undine and Bertalda is introduced, as are their principal character traits: good faith and innocence on the part of Undine and Bertalda's overweening pride.

The dramatic management of these events is also noteworthy. Undine's sense of dramatic tension seems hardly commensurate with her naive, childlike qualities. The scene is so carefully blocked out that it almost demands staging as opera or play.

Finally, this scene is important for its use of inserted song. The manner in which Undine sings her presumably self-composed ballads of the past is precisely in keeping with the nineteenth-century use of self-conscious or inserted song in opera.

There is no mention anywhere else in the tale of Undine's musical abilities, although in the poetic dedication the author writes "how often you soothed my heart with your song".[4] It would seem unlikely that Undine

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[4] Ibid., Zueignung.

studied singing or learned to play an instrument in her humble, isolated home; but Fouqué overlooks this detail and uses the moment to create the dramatic situation that he needs. The organization of this scene suggests that Fouqué may have had a musical setting for the story in mind and certainly that he associates Undine and the world of the water spirits with music.

This incident results in a momentary rupture in the friendship between the two women, but it is soon repaired. Bertalda begs to be taken to Ringstetten with the lovers, since she is now friendless, having been abandoned by both sets of parents after her demonstration of bad character. Undine welcomes her friend back and they live in peace at Ringstetten.

At this point, Fouqué's narrator interrupts to skip over a long period of uneventful time, in which Huldbrand's affections begin to stray from his wife, whom he now regards as "a strange creature, more to be feared than to be pitied".[5] The crisis in this state of affairs is sparked by Undine's decision to close off the castle well, so that Kühleborn, who has again followed Undine, can not emerge to harm Huldbrand. Bertalda protests this vigorously, since she uses the well water to treat her freckles. In an

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[5] Ibid., 55.

excursion by boat to Vienna, although Undine knows that, on the Danube, they will again be in Kühleborn's power. Indeed, Kühleborn does torment the trio with stormy waters. When Bertalda loses a gold necklace that was a gift from Huldbrand and Undine reaches into the river to get a coral necklace as a replacement, Huldbrand loses his temper. Although he has been warned never to speak to Undine in anger near water, he cries "In the names of all the gods stay with them, with all your gifts, and leave us men in peace, you deceiver!"[6] Undine disappears into the Danube, snatched back by her water people.

Huldbrand is inconsolable. He mourns Undine faithfully, until he finally decides to marry Bertalda, largely to do away with the impropriety of their living together. Both the fisherman and Father Heilmann, who has been asked by Undine in a dream to save Huldbrand, counsel against the marriage, arguing that there is no way to be sure that Undine is actually dead. Huldbrand too dreams of Undine crying under the sea because she now has to bear all the suffering that goes with having a soul back in the kingdom of the water nymphs.

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[6] Ibid., 71.

Nevertheless, the pair decide to go ahead with the wedding. After the bridal feast, Bertalda has the well opened again for her skin treatment. A veiled Undine emerges, watched by the entire household, and ascends to Huldbrand's chamber. She has been sent by the water spirits to kill him in punishment for his faithlessness. Undine merely kisses Huldbrand once: "She kissed him with a heavenly kiss, but she never let him go again"[7], and he drowns in the stream of her tears.

The tale ends with Huldbrand's funeral procession, which is accompanied by songs of mourning. Undine appears in the procession as a shadowy white form. As the mourners kneel in a circle around the grave, Undine is transformed into a spring which winds around the grave mound. Fouqué tells us that in later times, the villagers say that this was Undine's way of reuniting herself with Huldbrand, that "this way she could forever embrace her beloved with friendly arms."[8]

Jürgen Schläder has clearly outlined the principal motives of the story. The central motive is the quest for a soul; secondary motives are the rivalry between the women, the pact or promise between Undine and Huldbrand and its

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[7] Ibid., 82.

[8] Ibid., 85.

transgression, and the conflict between the worlds of the water spirits and the humans.[9]

These motives correspond in part to the functions which, according to Vladimir Propp, can be identified in all fairy tales.[10] Restricting ourselves to the events that actually occur within the story, the functions of Undine could be listed as: marriage (incorporating a pact of fidelity) between a human and a water spirit, the transgression of this pact by Huldbrand, the return of the spirit to her realm, and the vengeful murder of the human.

SOURCES

Although Undine is the first telling of this particular tale, it relies on a number of historical sources. As a prelude to a study of the various musical manifestations of the story, greater light can be shed on the characteristics of the story by examining some of the tale's antecedents and relations. As in the numerous musical settings of the tale, different aspects of the plot have appealed more or less to the literary imagination in different eras. The one constant element in all settings is

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[9] Schläder, 66-79.

[10] Vladimir Propp, Morphologie du Conte (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1970).

the vivid and tragic central figure of the water spirit torn between two worlds.

Fouqué himself acknowledged his debt to Paracelsus' treatise on the appearance and nature of the elemental spirits, of water, earth, fire and air.[11] Paracelsus originated the descriptions and names of the spirits, as well as the notion that water spirits can gain a soul through the love of a human.

The plot also draws material from three antecedent tales about water spirits or mermaids, but much of the essential material of Undine has no other source than Fouqué's imagination. The most famous mermaid saga is the medieval legend of Melusine.[12] This fourteenth-century tale, first recorded by Jean d'Arras after a long oral history, tells of a woman who is half human and half fish. She marries a mortal man, but must conceal her fishtail and thereby her true nature from him, so she insists on a pact promising that he will never see her on Saturday, the day on which she takes her bath. In the tradition of all fairy tales, the husband's curiosity eventually gets the better of him and he discovers Melusine's secret. He severs his

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[11] Theophrastus von Hohenheim, called Paracelsus, Liber de nymphis, sylphis, pygmaeis et salamandris et de caeteris spiritibus, ed. Robert Blaser (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1960).

[12] Jean d'Arras, Melusine: roman du XIVième siècle (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1974).

connection with her, throwing her out into the wilds, from which she continues to haunt the region.[13]

Only the ideas of the marriage between a human and a water spirit, of a pact or promise between husband and wife and of revenge are common to Melusine and Undine. The two most important themes of the Undine story, the quest for a soul and the rivalry between two women, do not appear in Melusine.

The difference between Melusine's roots in the ballad tradition and Undine's ties to the Romantic literary tradition is pointed out by Jürgen Schläder:

> The Melusine story remains primarily tied to song and serves as the basis for an underlying moral. The Undine story is clearly of a literary nature and is created as an individual product with specific authorial ambitions[14]

Part of the nineteenth-century flavour of Fouqué's tale comes from its humanity and its focus on the female protagonist. The character of Undine is portrayed vividly and in detail. In fact, she is the only character whose reactions and motivations are made clear. Even though it is Huldbrand who must make the moral decision which determines

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[13] This story has been updated a number of times, most recently in the 1984 movie Splash, in which the mermaid takes the name Madison, similar enough to Melusine to make the connection explicit.

[14] Schläder, 94.

Undine's fate, Fouqué gives us little insight into his thought processes. The focus is on Undine and her suffering.

The rivalry motif appears in another medieval story, the tale of the knight Peter von Staufenberg.[15] In this story, a fairy protects the knight Peter, in return for his promise of fidelity. When he marries another woman, she has him killed. Here we see the man-between-two-women theme that is central to Undine, the pact of fidelity, and the revenge motive. It should be noted that unlike Melusine and the nameless fairy in this tale, Undine does not seek revenge herself; rather she is forced to it by the law of her people.

A final and most important antecedent for Undine is the anonymous novel Das Donauweibchen, which appeared in Vienna in 1799. This work, in turn, owes a great deal to its predecessor by three years, Der Saal-Nixe by Christian August Vulpius.[16] Das Donauweibchen was adapted as a Singspiel libretto by Karl Friedrich Hensler, with music by Ferdinand Kauer, in the year it appeared. The Singspiel is a comic/dramatic tale which focuses on and multiplies the

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[15] Ibid., 66.

[16] See Jürgen Schläder's detailed analysis of the connection between these two novels in Undine auf dem Musiktheater, 99-105.

instances of rivalry and infidelity between the Huldbrand character and his wife. There is no sense of breach of trust or morality in this version of the story, and the soul motive is absent.

In general, in spite of its sentimentality, Undine is more profound and gives a greater importance to the free will of the characters than any of its antecedents. Fouqué's tale is actually more strongly influenced by the psychological tradition of the German novella that was being established at the turn of the century by writers such as Tieck and Novalis. Although much of the thematic material originates in medieval sources, Fouqué's fascination with the ancient aspects of the story remains superficial, and his treatment of his material is always firmly rooted in the nineteenth century.

Also of interest are certain "cousins" of Undine, tales that have much in common with Undine, but do not qualify as sources. One of these is the story of Rusalka, from Slavic folklore, and known primarily in an unfinished drama by Alexander Pushkin dating from 1841.[17]

Pushkin's story is of a miller's daughter who is betrayed by the nobleman she loves, and who throws herself into a river in despair. She becomes the queen of the water

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[17] There is also a contemporaneous poetic treatment of Rusalka by Mikhail Lermontov.

spirits and returns to take revenge on the lover who spurned her. The central motive is revenge; the important motives of the soul and the union between a human and a spirit do not occur in Rusalka.

Another popular nineteenth-century theme that recalls Undine is the story of the Lorelei.[18] Like Undine, the Lorelei saga is a product of the Romantic era and shares the philosophical and allegorical concerns of Fouqué's work. However, the central theme of the Lorelei, that of the demonic, seducing woman, clearly related to the Sirens of Greek mythology, is only tangentially related to Undine. Although versions differ, the basic substance of the Lorelei story is the situation of a woman (sometimes a water spirit) who has been betrayed in love. She takes revenge on all men by luring their ships onto her rock on the shore of the Rhine. In the Lorelei saga also, the central motif is revenge, to the exclusion of the redemption and rivalry themes which define Undine.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TALE

In order to understand the changes and adjustments made to Undine by the composers who set the story to music,

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[18] As told first by Clemens Brentano in 1801. Later versions are by Nicolas Vogt (1811), Eichendorff (1815), Heinrich von Loeben (1821) and Heinrich Heine (1823).

it is necessary to understand all the implications of Fouqué's original. Beyond the surface narration of the plot, Fouqué provides a tight symmetrical structure, using contrasts between settings and characters, and gives the tale an allegorical level that was of particular importance to the Romantics. Each composer's setting of Undine delves below the surface in different ways, emphasizing specific aspects of the material.

In keeping with its roots in myth and legend, Undine embodies a great many clearly defined binary relations between characters and locales, giving the tale a symmetrical balance typical of myth. The locales of the story are strongly differentiated. The fisherman's hut on the peninsula is given a particularly vivid description. The sense of isolation there is strong, especially after the peninsula becomes an island in the flood. This is the only locale where humans and spirits can exist more or less in harmony, and it is here, apart from society, that Huldbrand and Undine are happiest.

In contrast, the other locales, the city, the castle, the Schwarztal, scene of Bertalda's flight, and the Danube, are less lovingly described. The emphasis in these scenes is on people: general society in the city, and the conflict between Undine and Bertalda at the castle. It is interesting that the castle is almost as isolated as the

peninsula; but here the isolation is a negative attribute. The only ways out of Ringstetten are through the dangerous Schwarztal and by water. When Undine expresses reservations about the trip on the Danube, Huldbrand protests violently that he will not be held prisoner in his own castle, even though earlier isolation in far less comfortable quarters had been agreeable to him.

The structure of the tale can be defined by reference to its major locales. The parallelism between the peninsula and the castle is underlined by the fact that the segments of the story that take place in them are almost exactly comparable in length. The first portrays the rise of the relationship between Huldbrand and Undine, culminating in Undine's confession of her origin, followed immediately by their departure. After a short pivotal section in the city, which deals with the tie between Undine and Bertalda, the decline of the couple's love is documented in the second major section, at the castle. Almost at the exact physical centre of the story is the revelation of the true identity of Bertalda, revealing her close connection with Undine. The climax of the last section of the story is the trip on the Danube and Undine's disappearance.

One element of Fouqué's tale that places it in a close relationship with its mythical antecedents is the archetypal nature of the characters. Undine and Bertalda

taken together form an almost perfectly complete woman. If their close companionship and rivalry weren't enough to suggest that they are two aspects of the same woman, their exchange at birth affirms it beyond doubt.

In fact, the two change places twice. When Undine receives a soul and with it a sweet and sunny nature, Fouqué's attitude to Bertalda also shifts. She begins to demonstrate the pride which is her greatest character flaw. The scene which shows Bertalda at her worst, as her true identity is revealed, follows closely upon Undine's acquisition of a soul. In fact, W.J. Lillyman has proposed that Undine wins not only the man away from Bertalda, but her soul as well.[19] This view is supported by Undine's question to Bertalda after her rejection of her real parents, "Do you really have a soul, Bertalda?"[20] Alternately, then, Undine and Bertalda represent the seducing femme fatale and the angelic nurturing woman.

The father figures in the story are also presented as interchangeable. Kühleborn, a rather ambiguous figure, since he frequently does harm in order to protect Undine, often takes the form of a ghostly white man. At one point

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[19] W.J. Lillyman, "Fouqué's Undine" Studies in Romanticism 10 (1971), 94.

[20] Fouqué, Undine, 49.

in the story Huldbrand mistakes the fisherman for Kühleborn; later he is confused with Father Heilmann. All three of these characters originate in the archetypal father figure identified by Carl Jung, a character who represents the spiritual element.

> Mostly... it is the figure of a "wise old man" who symbolizes the spiritual factor... It can never be established with one-hundred-percent certainty whether spirit-figures in dreams are morally good. Very often they show all the signs of duplicity, if not of outright malice.[21]

According to Jung, this figure provides the spiritual insight which aids the protagonist in marshalling all her strength. Kühleborn and Father Heilmann represent opposing pagan and Christian sides of the spiritual, which are shown not to be entirely opposing when the two appear to have made a secret pact in the forest, in order to prevent Huldbrand's union with Bertalda. The fisherman, who is repeatedly shown to be a model of piety and is the only mortal who can control the spirits in the haunted forest, is the human manifestation of this Gestalt.[22] Undine has

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[21] Carl Jung, "The Phenomenology of the Spirit in Fairy Tales" in The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious 2nd ed., trans. and ed. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 227.

[22] A more modern attribute of the story is that Fouqué is conscious of his use of archetypes. The deliberate confusion of Kühleborn, Father Heilmann and the fisherman suggests that Fouqué conceived the three men as different

often been read as an allegory dealing with human society's inability to live in peace and respect with nature. Undine, so closely allied to water and so capricious and untamable, symbolizes nature. Huldbrand's faithlessness is in keeping with the abuse of nature by humans that was beginning to be perceptible in the early nineteenth century. To carry the allegory one step further, Bertalda, the rival who brings about the destruction of both Huldbrand and Undine, or man and nature, could be interpreted as technology or industry. Jürgen Schläder has documented Fouqué's close ties to the "nature philosophers" of the time through his correspondence, a fact which makes this interpretation all the more convincing.[23]

The constant intrusions of the narrator to comment upon the action give the tale an aspect of moralizing unreality. Of course, this was a common technique in early nineteenth-century literature. The comments make the reader aware that the author does exist and maintains a separate reality. This prevents sentimental involvement from taking over completely and allows a story to be more didactic. The narrative intrusions provide a frame for the plot events, placing them in a context and opening them up to analysis.

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facets of the same person.

[23] Schläder, 42-55.

This clear narrative voice is something that also exists in music. The separation between the author and the action can be imitated in vocal music through the use of instrumental accompaniment to comment on or amplify the action of the characters.[24]

The other strikingly operatic aspect of the Undine tale is its use of music. The Dedication, a traditional iambic tetrameter poem of seven four-line stanzas added to the fourth edition of the tale in 1826, suggests that the whole story that follows is a song sung by the narrator for Undine. The narrator describes himself as a knight who pays court to women with his zither.[25] This and the fact that Undine sings at one of the tale's dramatic peaks make the story naturally suitable for musical setting. Such use of her song revealing the past is a classic technique in opera.

This scene and the dedication also draw a direct connection between Undine and music, one which is likely to have attracted nineteenth-century composers. Her fragile and temperamental being produces the only music in the story. This creator is too delicate to survive in the world of mortals. A metaphor can be drawn in which Undine represents the spirit of music, which tries in vain to

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[24] See Edward Cone, The Composer's Voice (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

[25] Fouqué, Undine, Zueignung.

become accustomed to the human world of literature, tied to reality and meaning as it is. She can live among mortals only for a brief period, with only partial success, after which she must return to the shadowy, suggestive world of music.

One of the most striking characteristics of the tale is its fervent affirmation of Christianity. The quest for a soul can be read as a quest for eternal life. The suggestion is that the only thing water nymphs don't have that humans do is the potential for life after death. However, the outcome is debatable. It is difficult to interpret Undine's tragic fate as eternal redemption. It is not Fouqué's style to leave the reader in doubt about such things, or to leave a moral point unspoken; but he gives no indication as to the state of her soul at the end of the tale.

It seems that Fouqué loses the thread of the religious theme about three-quarters of the way through the book. This is also the point at which the pious exclamations of Huldbrand and the fisherman cease to serve as protection against Kühleborn. The final undermining of the traditional view of religion occurs when Huldbrand finds Father Heilmann in the forest, apparently for some kind of appointment with Kühleborn. Heilmann speaks cryptically of

Huldbrand's imminent death, which he may have planned in league with Kühleborn.

Fouqué's ambivalent attitude to the redemption motive of his story is symptomatic of the duality that underlies every aspect of Undine. The intriguing split between the tale's origins in medieval mythology and its treatment by Fouqué as a Romantic novella may be partly responsible for the great popularity of Undine.

The tale has a symmetry and a moral conviction that are typical of its folkloristic origins, but the hand of Fouqué is always present. His emphasis on the allegorical aspect of the story and his loving portrayal of Undine as a creative figure who tries in vain to unite her two worlds give the tale a resonance that was felt throughout the nineteenth-century and reaches into the present.

CHAPTER 4 - A GHOSTLY WATER WORLD: E.T.A. HOFFMANN'S Undine

INTRODUCTION

E.T.A. Hoffmann's last opera, Undine, has traditionally been regarded as an important step in the development of German Romantic opera. Written in 1813, Undine begins the process of integrating opera, forming a continuous musical fabric to replace the sectional alternation of aria and recitative. Hoffmann's use of a highly developed system of leimotifs creates greater musical unity and a tighter connection between music and plot. These developments continue in the later operas of Weber and culminate in Wagner.

In Undine, Hoffmann continues the loosening of the bonds of Classical number opera that was begun by Mozart. Hoffmann's formal innovations can be divided into three categories: 1) Where Mozart began to link many small, closed forms together to build larger units at points of dramatic intensity, this type of extended scene becomes Hoffmann`s typical formal unit. 2) Hoffmann`s violent antipathy to the virtuosic display of the solo aria led him to replace arias with ensembles or arioso-like passages wherever possible. 3) In Undine, Hoffmann developed an

effective and complex system of leitmotifs to give the opera unity and cohesion, and to replace the security lost in the rejection of closed forms.

The formal advances of Hoffmann's style are especially noticeable in his depiction of the supernatural elements in Undine. Only magical characters are assigned leitmotifs, and, throughout the opera, the music associated with the supernatural is more adventurous.

This development of a new, Romantic style to represent the supernatural is generally credited to Weber's Der Freischütz. In fact, Weber acknowledged his admiration for and his debt to Hoffmann in his review of Undine and in his letters. The close ten-year friendship between the two composers, which lasted until Hoffmann published a negative review of Der Freischütz in 1821, allowed generous opportunities for mutual influence.

It is surprising to find a work that explores so much new compositional territory coming from the pen of a man who is known today as a writer of fantastic tales and a dilettante composer, all the more surprising because in none of his other compositions was Hoffmann a musical pioneer. He idolized Mozart and, in his piano sonatas and chamber music, strove to duplicate Mozartean unity, symmetry and proportion.

It is the literary subject matter of Undine that caused Hoffmann to experiment. The themes of Fouqué's fairy tale were also Hoffmann's own concerns. The inspiration of Fouqué's Undine caused Hoffmann to develop a new musical style that was worthy of the material; what that turned out to be was a literary, even novelistic form based on Hoffmann's own literary techniques. This desire to break with the traditions of the past in order to express more accurately his individual, philosophical concerns is typical of Hoffmann's position in history, on the cusp of Romanticism, where the demands of the individual and the breaking of forms were part of a great revolution in the arts.

The aesthetic principles that underlie the new style of Undine are outlined in Hoffmann's essay, "Der Dichter und der Komponist", published in 1813 in the Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung.[1] In the form of a dialogue between two friends, a poet and a composer, the essay discusses what is suitable subject matter for an opera, what comprises a good libretto, and how music should interact with the libretto in opera. Ludwig, the composer and obviously Hoffmann's mouthpiece, argues that the only proper subject

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[1] Translated as "The Poet and the Composer" in Oliver Strunk, Source Readings in Music History: The Romantic Era (New York: Norton, 1965), 42-57.

matter for opera is the world of romance - fairies, spirits and such, because "only in the land of romance is music at home".[2]

Further, Ludwig argues that "only the opera in which the music arises directly from the poem as its inevitable offspring is a genuine opera".[3] The central argument of the essay is the great importance of a deep poetic connection between the music and the libretto, which in most operas, Hoffmann claims, run parallel without intersecting. According to Hoffmann, "such an opera is a concert, given on a stage, with costumes and scenery".[4]

This ideal of a new, symbiotic relationship between text and music led Hoffmann to write an opera that took its form primarily from its literary basis, with only a few nods in the direction of the conventions of traditional number opera. Paul Greef points out the role that Fouqué's literary material had in the emergence of the "through-composed" opera:

> The composer interprets the romance of the material romantically... Out of the material itself, he discovers a new style which, built as it is from the character of

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[2] Strunk, 48.

[3] Ibid., 47.

[4] Ibid., 50.

> the popular romanticism, was to lead the way to a new era.[5]

It is easy to see why, when he read Undine in 1812, Hoffmann immediately felt that it was ideal material for an opera. First, the romantic, mystical nature of the tale suited it for musical treatment. The central theme of elemental spirits was one that had a strong attraction for Hoffmann: he later dealt with it in his 1821 story Der Elementärgeist.

The symmetries and reflections between characters such as Undine and Bertalda, which seem to be placed in the fairy tale naively by Fouqué, as a traditional element of legend, are conscious and resonant throughout Hoffmann's literary output. All of his stories are informed by a fascination for doubles (Doppelgänger) and reflections.

The popular contemporary interpretation of Undine as an allegory of man's ambivalent relationship with nature also appealed deeply to Hoffmann. He came from the same intellectual patrilineage as Fouqué, and was deeply influenced by the views of the German Romantic philosophers. This movement, led by Friedrich Wilhelm Schlegel, held a pantheistic view of the universe, in which all aspects of nature were manifestations of God or the Absolute. The

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[5] Paul Greef, Hoffmann als Musiker und Musikschriftsteller (Cologne: Staufer Verlag, 1948), 247.

fullest expression of the Absolute was art and all nature was believed to aspire to the condition of art. This movement gave rise to much of the animistic art and literature of the early nineteenth century, in which various elements of nature are personified.

It is not surprising, then, that this is the aspect of the Undine story upon which Hoffmann chose to concentrate. The major difference between the fairy tale and Hoffmann's opera is that the opera almost completely dismisses the redemption motive that is so important in the story. There is one mention in the opera of the fact that Undine has gained a soul through her marriage to Huldbrand, but the idea is given no prominence, musically or verbally.

The choice Hoffmann makes to de-emphasize the Christian redemption motive of the tale can be attributed in part to Hoffmann's own ambivalent religious feelings, but it is also an artistic decision since it leaves Hoffmann free to concentrate on the allegorical aspect of the plot.[6] His musical treatment emphasizes the split between nature and society, as represented by Undine and Huldbrand. The structure of the opera, the motives and phrase structures

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[6] See Harvey W. Hewett-Thayer, Hoffmann: Author of the Tales (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948) on Hoffmann's lack of religious fervour.

assigned to each character, all serve to communicate this conflict.

Hoffmann's view, like Fouqué's, is ultimately pessimistic: the attempted union between nature and society must fail. Hoffmann adds the dimension of art to this allegory. His musical treatment presents Undine as the figure of the artist, outcast from society but not satisfied with the world of spirits. Undine is one in the pantheon of isolated, failed artists who populate Hoffmann's works. Chief among them is Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler, Hoffmann's favourite alter ego, and subject of the "Kreisleriana" and Die Lebensansichten von Kater Murr.[7] Undine's inability to fit into to the human world is, for Hoffmann, a bitter condemnation of the society that had no place for him.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In his initial flush of enthusiasm over Undine in 1812, Hoffmann wrote to his friend Julius Eduard Hitzig in Berlin, asking if he could suggest anyone to write a libretto for an operatic version of the fairy tale. Hitzig actually managed to convince Fouqué himself to write a

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[7] E.T.A. Hoffmann, "Kreisleriana" in Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier and Lebensansichten des Kater Murr, E.T.A. Hoffmann Werke, Vol. 1 and 3 (Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1967).

libretto. There was no hesitation about the project: the first communication between Hoffmann and Fouqué took place in July, 1812; Fouqué had the libretto ready by the beginning of November, and Hoffmann had finished composing the music by the following September.

The relationship between Hoffmann and Fouqué in the emergence of the libretto seems to have been one in which Fouqué made most of the decisions, but Hoffmann had a right to make suggestions. Fouqué himself made no major changes to the story in his construction of a libretto; his contribution consisted largely in giving the story a dramatic format and reducing the number of scenes and settings to make the project viable on stage. The only major difference between the original story and the libretto originated with Hoffmann, who asked Fouqué to replace the original ending with a "Liebestod" scene in which both Huldbrand and Undine expire and are elevated to the heavens.[8] This suggestion seems to have met with no resistance from Fouqué, although Hoffmann himself later modified and scaled down the "Liebestod" scene.

The one delay in the emergence of the opera was in securing a premiere. After extended negotiations with the director of Berlin's Königliches Theater, Undine was

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[8] Linda Siegel, "Wagner and the Romanticism of E.T.A, Hoffmann", Musical Quarterly LI/4 (October, 1965), 605.

premiered there on August 3, 1816. The run of the production was unluckily cut short after only fourteen performances by a fire at the theatre in July, 1817, which destroyed all the sets and costumes for the production.[9]

Among the reviews of the opera's premiere production was Carl Maria von Weber's enthusiastic and philosophical notice in the Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung.[10] Weber uses Undine as a platform on which to build his conception of the ideal German Romantic opera, applauding particularly the continuous nature of the music, as opposed to the conventional division into arias, ensembles and recitatives, and the opera's few concessions to virtuosic vocal display. Weber's conclusion could hardly be more favourable: "The whole work is one of the most ingenious that our day has given us."[11]

The more specific observations of the review demonstrate a deep understanding of the style and Weber's few gentle criticisms continue to ring true today. He

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[9] There is some confusion about the number of performances that actually took place. Several sources set the number at twenty-three. Hoffmann biographer Harvey Hewett-Thayer attributes this to the fact that Hoffmann frequently exaggerated the number of performances the opera was receiving in his letters to friends. See Hewett-Thayer, Hoffmann: Author of the Tales.

[10] Translated in Strunk, Source Readings in Music History: The Romantic Era, 62-67.

[11] Strunk, 66.

identifies certain mannerisms, which he hopes Hoffmann will be able to control in future compositions, such as "the partiality for little, short figures which not only tend to become monotonous. but easily oppress and obscure the melody"[12] and too great an affection for violas and cellos, diminished seventh chords, and abrupt endings.

HOFFMANN'S MUSICAL TREATMENT OF FOUQUE'S TALE

Although Fouqué wrote the libretto for Hoffmann's opera and was essentially faithful to his original story, the vision that permeates the opera is Hoffmann's, not Fouqué's.

Hoffmann shifts the focus of the fairy tale away from the redemption motive, in order to concentrate on the contrast between the human world and the world of the water spirits. His vivid and detailed portrayal of the two worlds through leitmotivs, orchestration, phrase structure and key symbolism emphasizes the allegorical aspect of the story, the conflict between nature and society, with the artist caught between the two.

Through study of the three general levels of music/literature comparison as outlined in Chapter 2--large-scale structure, small-scale structure and thematic

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[12] Ibid., 67.

treatment-- Hoffmann's attitude to his material and to the operatic conventions of his time become clear.

In order to depict more vividly Fouqué's characters and situations, Hoffmann evolves a new approach to structure and to thematic organization. This is most evident on the level of small-scale structure, on which Hoffmann frequently replaces regular periodic phrases with a more continuous narrative flow, in order to differentiate Undine and the magical water world from the norms of society. This development is echoed in the opera's large-scale structure, which becomes a more continuous texture of musical comment, rather than the more typical alternation of aria and recitative. Finally, Hoffmann's elaborate system of leitmotivs, a significant advance over the common practice of the time, allows him to communicate some of the binary oppositions encoded in Fouqué's tale, such as the deliberate confusion between the two father figures, Kühleborn and Heilmann. A more detailed discussion of each of these aspects will demonstrate that Hoffmann used musical means to strengthen certain aspects of the story, concentrating largely on the allegory of nature and society.

STRUCTURE AND FORM

One indication that it was the magic of Fouqué's book that inspired Hoffmann to such heights of innovation is the novelty of form and language evident in Undine in comparison with Hoffmann's other compositions.

Formally, Hoffmann's opera represents a link between the developments wrought by Mozart on the established structure of number opera and the continuous, psychologial narrative operas of the later German Romantics. Hoffmann expanded on many of the unifying techniques used by Mozart, particularly the extended ensemble finale consisting of several connected closed forms. Hoffmann took this formal continuity further by harmonically linking even shorter closed numbers and constructing longer, more complicated scenes, in one case even enfolding a scene change in the continuous musical texture.

Weber's criticism that the opera makes too liberal a use of short motives was certainly accurate, but perhaps misguided. Hoffmann very often uses a series of overlapping short motives, as in the opening trio of the opera. This type of layering of motivic fragments seems to replace periodic structures as a principle of organization in much of the opera. Strictly traditional periodic structures are heard only in the three romances, which all look to the past, while modified periods appear in the duets to create

special symmetrical effects.[13] The predominating use of short motives allows Hoffmann to tread a middle path between aria and recitative. The plot is advanced without the repetition of text and music necessary in periodic arias, and the musical commentary continues without the interruption of recitative. This is a style that is truly narrative and continuous, in fact more literary than traditionally operatic.

On the large scale as well, Hoffmann forges new formal units from the demands of the libretto. The opera contains few solo arias (the one for Bertalda was apparently included against Hoffmann's will, only to satisfy the Philistine public) and few passages of recitative.[14] Most of the action proceeds in a melodic style that is not quite recitative, nor quite aria, perhaps closest to the arioso style of early Baroque opera.

Although the opera is nominally divided into twenty "numbers", the narrative and the music are in fact almost continuous. Numbers rarely end on perfect cadences, but more often on the dominant of the key of the following section, even when there is a considerable amount of

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[13] For example, in the duet of Huldbrand and Bertalda in Act III, Bertalda begins each phrase uncertainly wandering to V, while Huldbrand stamps his way back to the tonic.

[14] Letter to Julius Eduard Hitzig, quoted in Hewett-Thayer, 123.

dialogue between the two. Occasionally, numbers flow directly into each other, as between the fisherman's romance and the great forest scene of Act I, which even includes a scene change as the music continues. The finales and "scenas" consist of large, through-composed passages made up of short arias, ensembles and choruses. The advance toward the continuous melody of late Romantic opera is considerable.

ROMANCES

The only occasions in the opera in which traditional melodic structures are retained are the Undine/Bertalda duet, intended to represent society, and three reminiscent romances. Each romance represents a "flashback" in the narration of the plot. The first, sung by the fisherman in Act 1, recounts the circumstances of Undine's arrival at the hut. Undine's romance in Act II tells the story of the exchange of the children, Undine and Bertalda, by the water spirits. This aria is exactly as Fouqué conceived it in the book, even using the same ballad style poetry. As in the original tale, Undine accompanies herself on the lute as she sings. In Act III the fisherman sings a final romance which serves as a reminiscence of Undine, but, unlike the first two, does not give the audience any new plot information.

Rather, it functions as an evocation of the ghostly world to which Undine has been recalled, and the fisherman succeeds in summoning Undine's voice from the water world.

All three romances are strophic and use the most conventional tonal language and phrase structures in the opera. The melodies are suggestive of folk songs, although they are much more artful. The romance serves not only as a reminiscence of a past just prior to the beginning of the opera, but also as an evocation of a much more distant past, the magical and medieval setting of the tale.[15]

Undine's romance in Act II, "Morgen so hell", is at both the chronological and the psychological centre of the opera. It is in this scene that Undine appears indisputably as the artist. Perhaps the only occasion in the opera when a character is conscious of singing, the romance presents Undine as a deliberate creator and conjurer of theatrical effects. Here Hoffmann's identification of Undine as the artist figure is clearest.

This romance, sung at Bertalda's birthday feast, is Undine's most valiant attempt to use her magical and artistic powers to knit together her two worlds. Using

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[15] Eero Tarasti has suggested that this type of allusion to an antique musical style can be used to situate a musical composition within the realm of mythology. Myth and Music: A Semiotic Approach to the Aesthetics of Myth in Music (The Hague: Mouton, 1979).

information communicated to her by the ghostly Kühleborn. Undine hopes to delight Bertalda by revealing her true parentage. All of Undine's conjuring goes as planned until she comes up against the inexplicable human vanity, which causes Bertalda to be appalled rather than pleased at the revelation that her parents are humble fishermen. There can be no more vivid statement of the incompatibility of the two worlds and the inability of art to resolve their differences.

SETTING

One of the pragmatic changes made to the tale in turning it into a libretto was to condense the plot and reduce the number of settings required. Far from being merely a practical compromise, this revision sharpened the contrast between locales. In Hoffmann's opera, the settings are reduced to four: the fisherman's hut, the capital city, a riverside setting, and Huldbrand's castle. Act I takes place entirely at the isolated hut, Act II in the city and by the river (the location to which Hoffmann transposes the scene of Undine's disappearance), and Act III at the castle. The effect of this simplification is to strengthen the contrast between peninsula and city, but to weaken the parallelism between the peninsula and castle settings.

The contrast between the first two acts is particularly strong. Act I concentrates on portraying Undine as a free, soulless spirit, at one with the nature and the water that are so present on the fisherman's peninsula. Act II, following the marriage of Undine and Huldbrand, deals with Undine's assimilation into the society of the city.

Although Hoffmann's opera naturally dispenses with Fouqué's evocative descriptions of his settings, the sense of place in the opera is no less intense. Even without the visual element of stage sets, the opposition between the settings is communicated musically.[16] Much of the contrast between the two acts is communicated by the music's phrase structure. The music of Act I is rife with short, breathless melodic fragments and irregular phrase lengths, while Act II's music is more conventionally symmetrical. For example, the opening number of Act II, Undine's duet with Bertalda, is built from strictly measured periodic phrases, sung in delicately harmonious thirds. This could hardly differ more from the sighing, overlapping four-note motives that characterize the opening trio of Act I. This

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[16] The original sets for Undine, designed by Karl Friedrich Schinkel, must have contributed much to the evocation of settings. Two of the designs are reproduced in Hermann Ziller's monograph Schinkel (Leipzig: Velhagen and Klasing, 1897).

contrast suggests an opposition between the spontaneity of life in isolation and the somewhat restrictive patterns of life in a social setting.

Key symbolism is also an element of contrast. Act I begins in c minor, later moving towards the sharp keys, while Act II lounges comfortably around F major and Ab major.

CHARACTERIZATION

The level on which Hoffmann most completely communicates his vision of the nature/society conflict is in his musical representation of the characters. Through leitmotivs, phrase structure, key and distribution of parts, Hoffmann strengthens the pairings and oppositions of characters already present in Fouqué's story.

The somewhat unusual distribution of voice parts among the principal characters is the first clue to Hoffmann's concepts of character. Undine and Bertalda are both sopranos, but Undine is cast as a lyric soprano, while Bertalda is her dramatic foil. This allows for an equality between the two rivals which would not have been possible had Hoffmann followed common practice and made Bertalda a mezzo-soprano villain.

It may be an operatic convention to have two contrasting soprano roles, dramatic and lyric, but in this

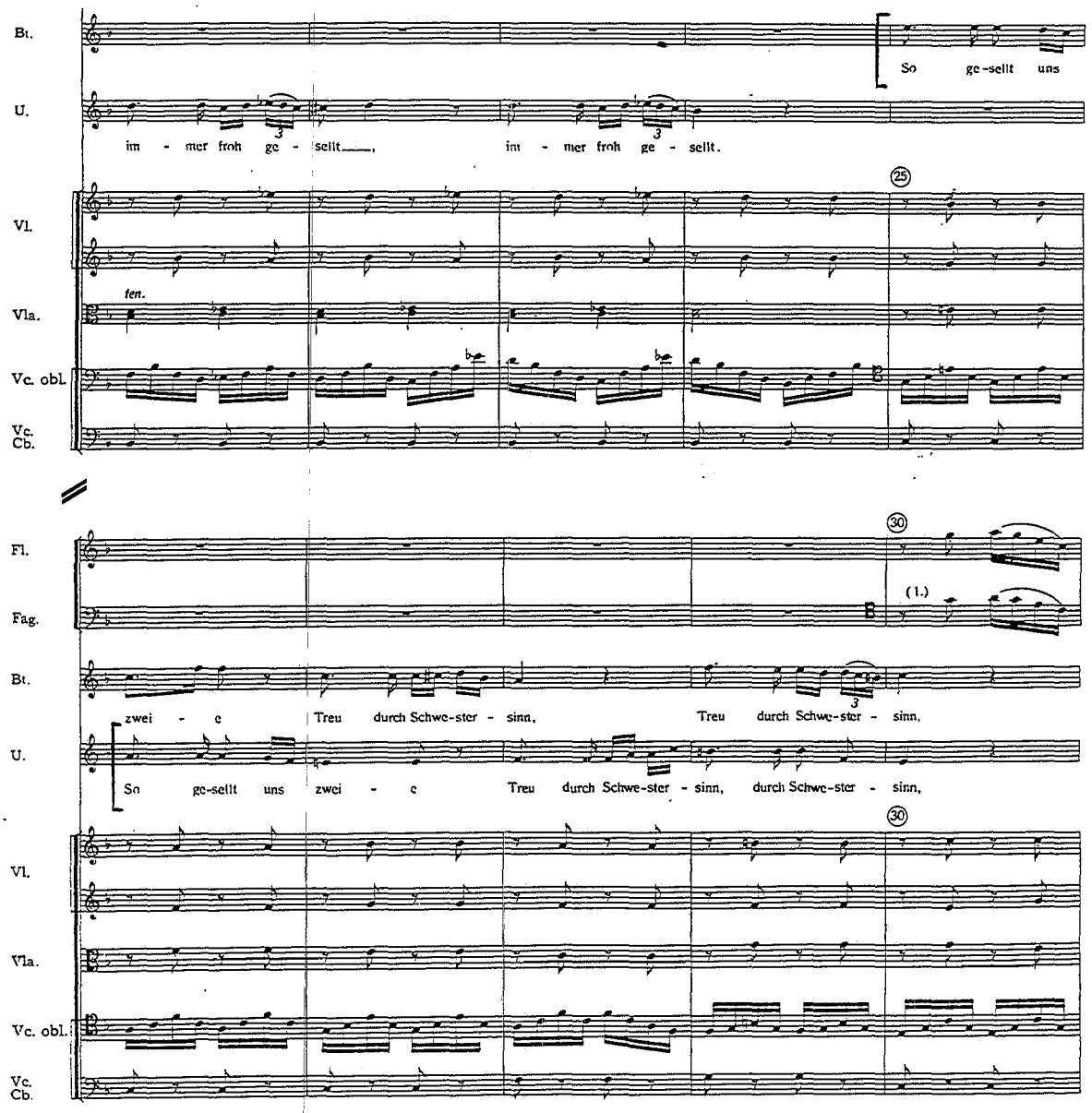
case it serves a very clear dramatic purpose. As the representative of society, Bertalda's music is always the more assertive. She sings all the pyro-technical music in the opera and leads all her ensembles. This is even true of her love duet with Huldbrand, in which all the imitative passages are initiated by Bertalda, while Huldbrand follows meekly two or four beats later.

Throughout the opera Undine's music is more introspective and more irregular than Bertalda's. She rarely sings in neatly tailored periods, except when under the influence of Bertalda or Huldbrand. Undine's solo aria in Act II, "Wer traut des launigen Glückes Flügeln", full of rapid changes of mood, tempo and key, is a perfect reflection of her capricious nature.

The sense of Undine as a wild and different creature is much stronger in the opera than in Fouqué's tale. From the outset, Hoffmann presents her in opposition to the human characters. She is first seen in a wild forest scene, perched on a rock and surrounded by the chorus of water spirits, who sing their strange, elemental music.

Undine's Act II duet with Bertalda shows Undine attempting to conform to society. She is given the lower part in the duet and follows Bertalda subserviently through the paces of the charmingly mundane and regular phrases (Example 1).

Example 1: Act II, No. 8 Duet



Heard in contrast with her solo aria and her spontaneous outbursts in Act I, this music suggests that life in formal society is having an oppressive effect on Undine.

With regard to Huldbrand, it is his lack of character that is noteworthy. In making him a baritone instead of the traditional romantic tenor, Hoffmann effectively emasculates Huldbrand, taking away his ability to think and act for himself. As Jürgen Schläder points out, Huldbrand is throughout the opera an object, never a subject.[17] He has no solo aria and no personal identifying motive. The figure most closely associated with Huldbrand is a rather handsome, but characterless little motive, descending in stepwise motion through a major sixth.

The moment in Act III when Huldbrand must decide between being faithful to Undine and marrying Bertalda, aware that the latter will bring death, illustrates his weakness. Revealingly, Huldbrand is given no music to sing as he reflects. He is still the object, buffeted first by snatches of the aggressive theme of his duet with Bertalda, then by Undine's motive. Huldbrand's final decision in favour of Bertalda is announced in dialogue. At this crucial point, as in the opera in general, the voices of the opposing women dominate.

This underplaying of Huldbrand's character serves to throw the emphasis on the rivalry between the two women, but it also leaves room for another, very strong male character,

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[17] Schläder, 213.

Kühleborn, Undine's uncle and protector. Many critics have considered Kühleborn to be the most strongly painted character in the opera.[18] Kühleborn is given several identifying motives which clearly announce each of his frequent appearances. Hoffmann also allots him a solo aria, the "revenge" aria in Act III, which is permeated by the dotted rhythms that are his signature.

One final aspect of Hoffmann's skilful characterization is the careful differentiation between the human world and the water kingdom. The music that symbolizes the earthly world features regular phrases, fairly predictable harmony and unremarkable instrumentation. The music of the water world is often tonally and rhythmically ambiguous, using idiosyncratic turns of phrase and woodwind accompaniment. A beautiful evocation of the water kingdom is contained in the last two strophes of the fisherman's romance in Act I. The second last verse especially, in which he sings of the "Kristalgewölbe" and "goldene Bäume" of Undine's world (Example 2), is a dramatic departure from the repeating melody of the strophic song (Example 3).

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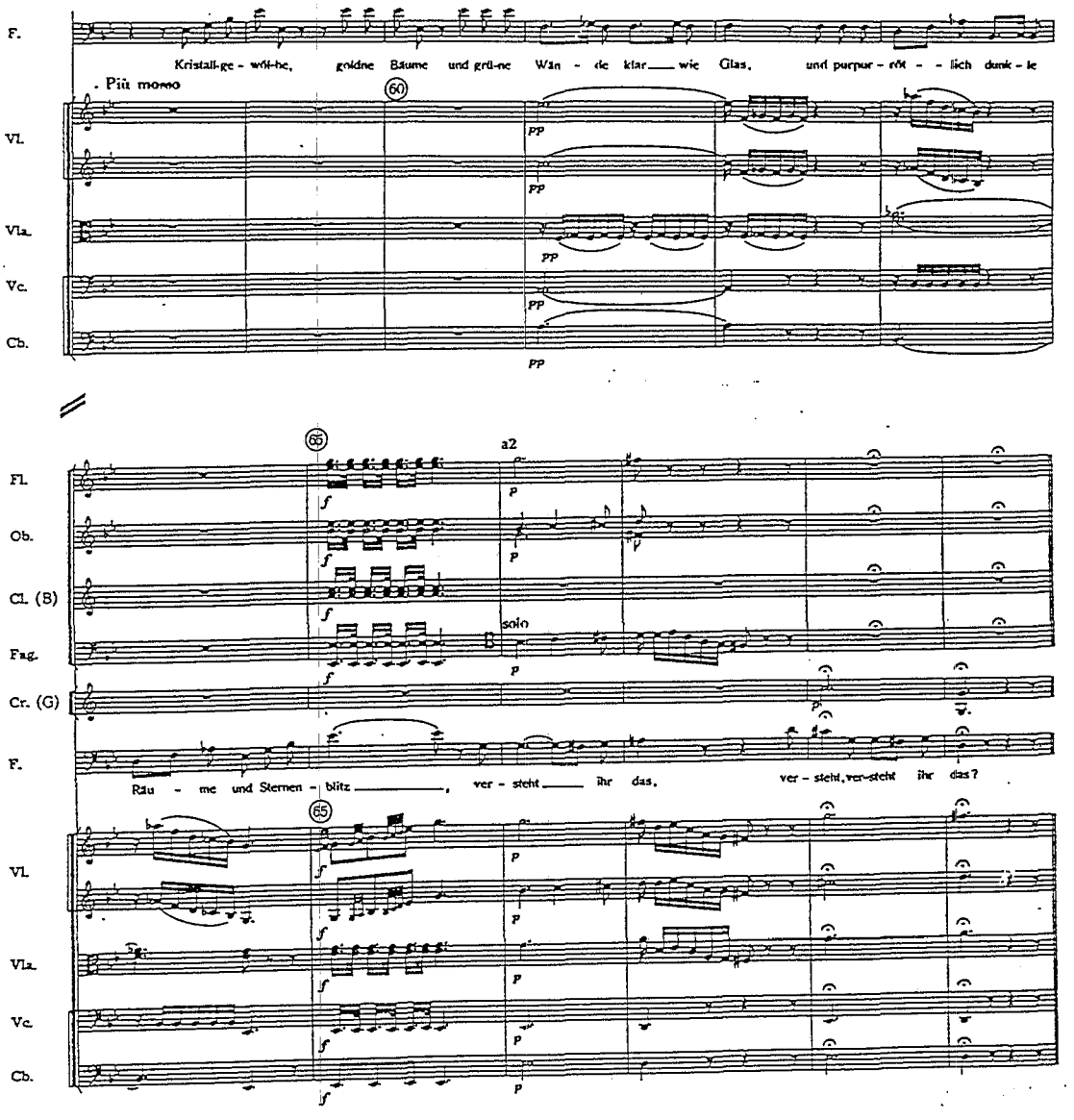
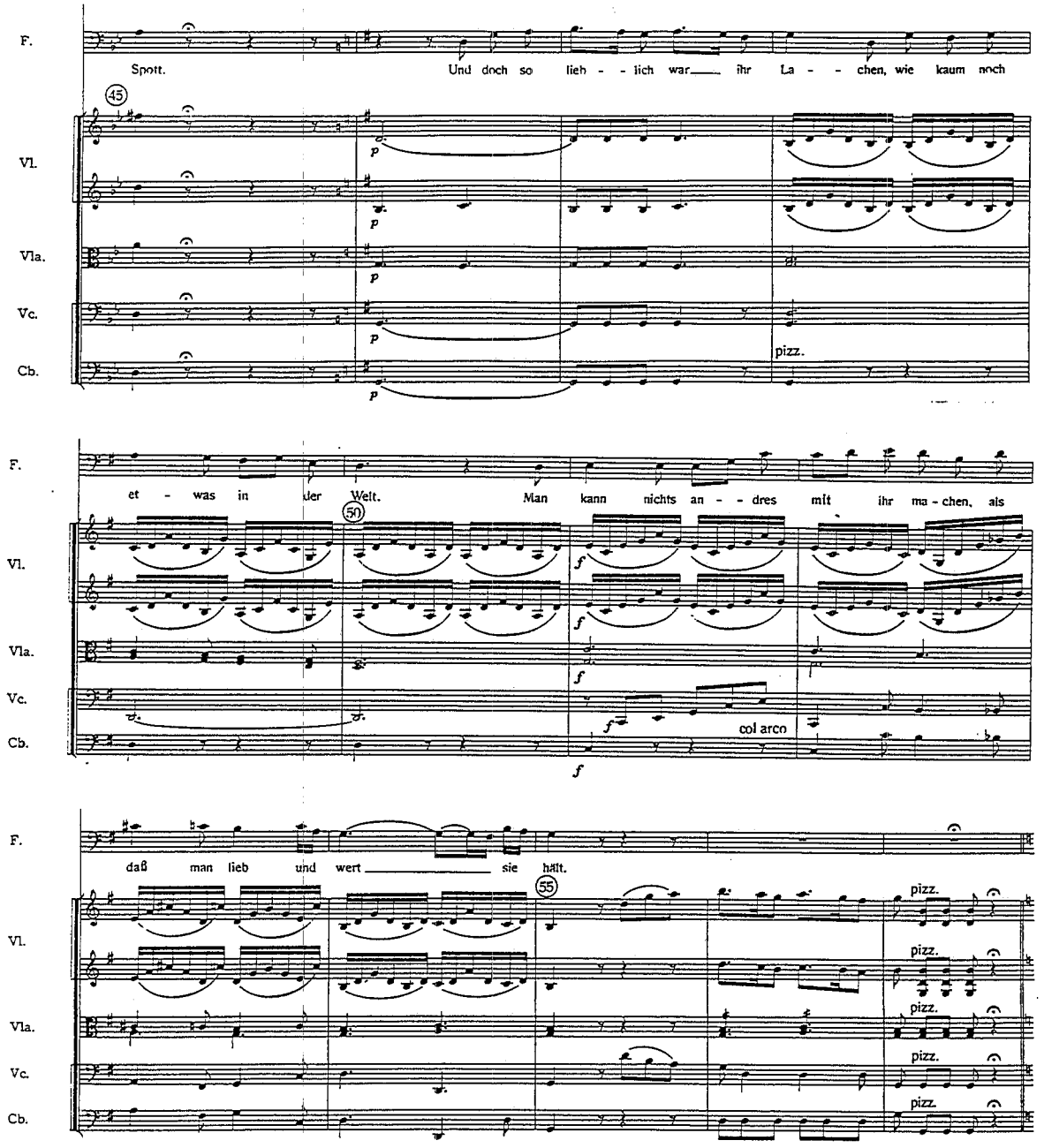
[18] Weber drew attention to the strong melodic and timbral portrayal of Kühleborn, saying, "he appears if not as Destiny herself, then as the immediate agent of her will" (Strunk, 65).

Example 2: Act I, No. 2 Fisherman's Romance



Example 3: Act I, No. 2 Fisherman's Romance



The contrast between the two worlds can be heard most persuasively in the choruses. The opera uses three choruses, one of humans, one of water spirits and one of earth spirits, all of which can be sung by the same choir. The human choruses all occur in social situations and represent groups of guests who comment on the action in a superficially cheerful way. The deployment of the human choruses and their musical style corresponds closely to the conventional writing for the chorus of Hoffmann's time, but the spirit choruses transcend these tradiions, singing exclusively non-melodic, rhythmically pulsating music that is always scored in thick chords. The one exception to this dichotomy of styles is the music of the human chorus in Act III as Undine emerges from the well, which approaches the pulsing, elemental urgency that has characterized the other-worldly choruses throughout the opera.

Besides adding all the colour and excitement that operatic choruses generally supply, the human choruses in Acts II and III function like the chorus in classical Greek drama. Given chiefly repetitive rhythmic and triadic figures of little musical interest, these groups of party and wedding guests comment as ordinary people on the high points of dramatic action that they witness. In Act II they express the confusion of the principals and, probably, of the audience, when Undine reveals the story of Bertalda's

origins ("Mir schwindelt's"). In the finale of Act III, the chorus of wedding guests expresses a feeling of general doom when it sings "Wir sind-- er ist verloren." Why should the chorus sing "we are lost", unless they are acting as spokespeople for society in general and are revealing the universal meaning of the story? This reinforces the idea of the opera as an allegory in which the demise of Undine must lead to the destruction of society as embodied by Huldbrand.

LEIMOTIVS

Undine was one of the first operas to use an exhaustive and developed system of leitmotivs.[19] Hoffmann has been hailed even by Wagnerians as a harbinger of the more complex Wagnerian use of the motives.[20] The motives in Undine fulfill a number of different functions dramatically. They are used as aids for the portrayal of characters and

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[19] In his article "Notes on Dramatic Motives in Opera: Hoffmann's Undine", Aubrey Garlington has pointed out that the majority of the motives used in Undine are more accurately described as "reminiscence" or "associative" music than as leitmotivs. I shall retain the term "leitmotiv", however, both for simplicity and because the most of the particular motives discussed here do qualify as leitmotifs in the Wagnerian sense. Aubrey S. Garlington, "Notes on Dramatic Motives in Opera: Hoffmann's Undine" Music Review 31 (1971), 136-145.

[20] See Hans von Wolzogen, E.T.A. Hoffmann und Richard Wagner: Harmonien und Parallelen (Berlin, n.d.), "E.T.A. Hoffmann, der deutsche Geisterseher" Bayreuther Blätter XVI:11-22, XVII:62-70, XVIII:11-29.

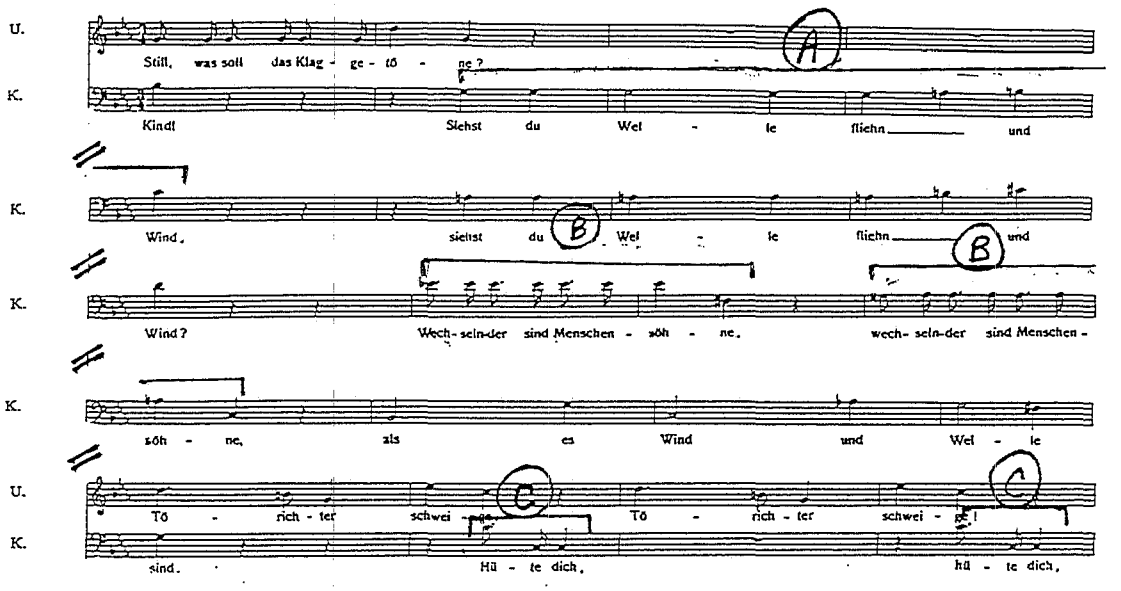
situations, as a method of foreshadowing, and as a comment on the action.

On the most basic level of signification, Hoffmann's leitmotivs function as identifying tags for the characters, heard whenever a particular character appears on the stage or is mentioned. A more complicated semantic function of the system of leitmotivs is to offer a musical comment on the dramatic action of the opera, for example to point out connections between characters and situations that would not be otherwise obvious, or to give clues about the characters' unstated thoughts and motivations.

The use of leitmotivs as a method of characterization is seen most clearly in the series of motives associated with Kühleborn, the king of the water world. Although he is protective of Undine, Kühleborn is violent and threatening to humans. His frequent outbursts against humans show that he is diametrically opposed to any attempt to unite the two worlds and he contributes to Undine's failure to integrate herself into the world of mortals.

Each of Kühleborn's appearances is foreshadowed or accompanied by one of his three motives as can be seen in Example 4: a scale fragment (A), various permutations of the diminished seventh chord (B), and a descending octave leap (C).

Example 4: Act I, No. 3 Scena



Each of these motives is usually set to Kühleborn's characteristic dotted rhythm. The power of these motives is such that every time a dotted rhythm or a diminished seventh chord is heard, it either announces Kühleborn's entrance or summons up the feelings of terror and revenge that are his trademarks.

It is interesting that Hoffmann chooses to permeate Kühleborn's music so completely with the diminished seventh chord. He had a highly developed theory of key and chord symbolism, which he expounds in his semi-autobiographical writings in the persona of Johannes Kreisler. The diminished seventh chord for Kreisler and perhaps also for Hoffmann represented "a huge serpent with a grotesque

tongue", a fitting association for the terrifying Kühleborn.[21]

There is only one moment in the opera where a figure with a strong dotted rhythm is used without direct reference to Kühleborn, and that moment is very carefully chosen. It is in Father Heilmann's duet with Huldbrand in Act III, which is as strongly steeped in the dotted figure as any of Kühleborn's music (Example 5). The musical identification between the priest and the water spirit occurs at the place in the plot where the interests of the two begin to coincide in their attempt to prevent Huldbrand's remarriage. In the book, the common nature of these two spiritual presences is expressed by the suggestion that they have a secret meeting. Hoffmann makes this convolution of the plot unnecessary by his manipulation of the leitmotivs.

The use of the leitmotiv in association with Kühleborn is a fairly clear case of motif as identification. These motifs undergo change but do not evolve with the drama. The motif associated with Undine is a true leitmotiv and has a more dramatic function, changing and evolving as Undine does. It does not simply represent Undine's person,

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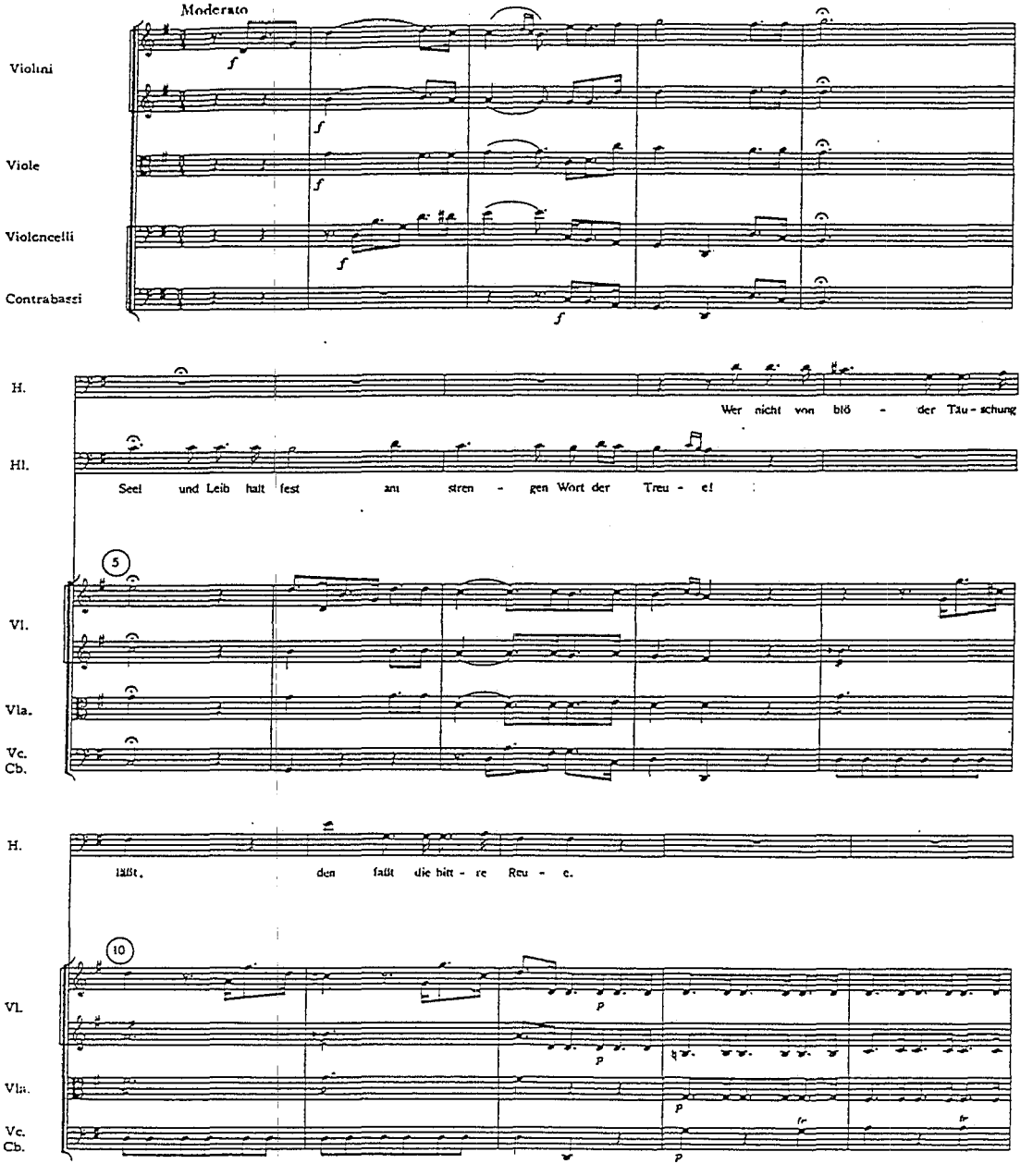
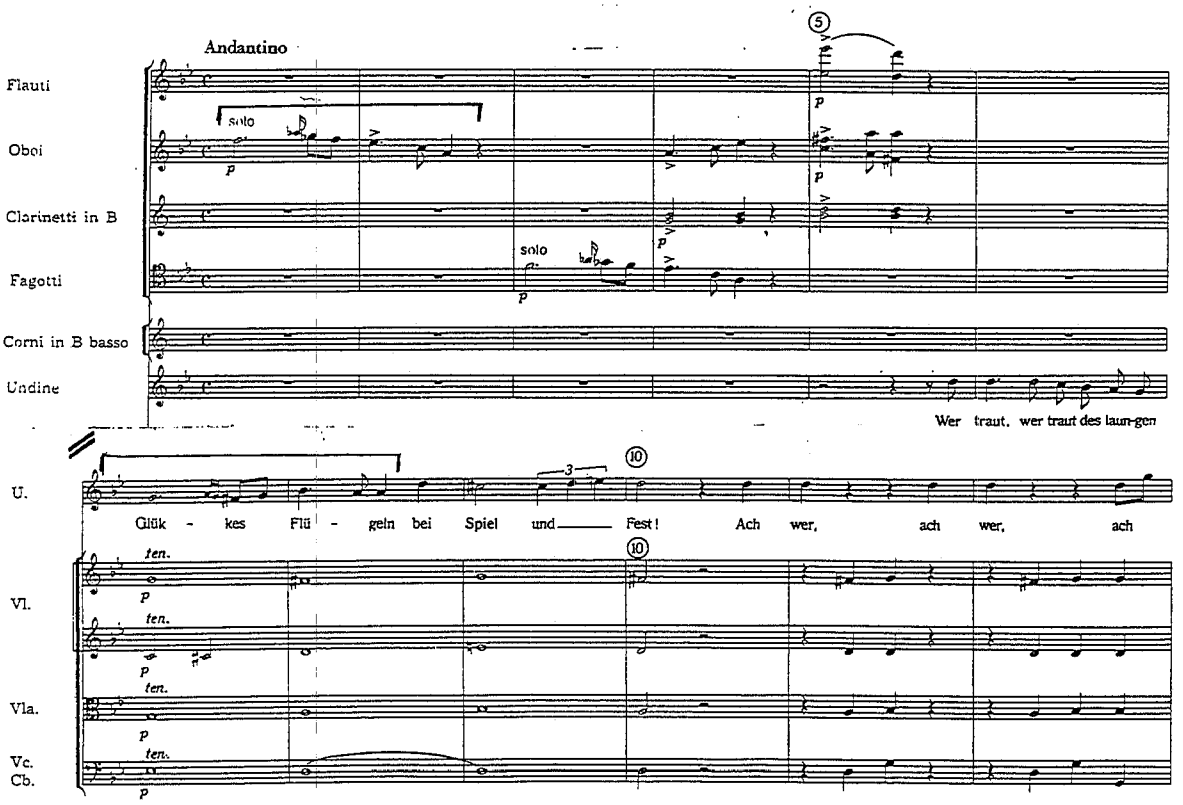
[21] Quoted in Linda Siegel, The Influence of Romantic Literature on Romantic Music in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century, (Ph.D. Diss., Boston University, 1964), 170.

Example 5: Act II, No. 15 Duet



as Kühleborn's motif does, but rather an idea about Undine, that of her tragic destiny. Statements of this motif always foreshadow or recall Undine's betrayal. The leitmotiv is heard in its most fully-developed form in Undine's solo aria in Act II (Example 6).

Example 6: Undine's leitmotiv Act II, No. 10 Aria



The characteristic unit of the motive, a stepwise descent through a third with a grace note, is heard in various forms in almost every scene. In the cheerful finale to Act I, the motive is reduced to a falling second with grace note, adding an element of tragic foreshadowing to the cheerful departure scene. It is heard in Act III, when Huldbrand

decisively tells Heilmann that he will marry Bertalda, meanwhile recalling Undine. And as Jürgen Schläder points out, the motive is heard as Bertalda asks that the well be re-opened, placing the ensuing "Liebestod" scene against the background of Undine's love and betrayal, rather than against Kühleborn's revenge motive.[22]

Probably the most memorable music in the entire opera is the reminiscence motive associated with Undine's transformation and return to the water world (Example 7). Heard only three times, in the prelude to Act II, at the actual transformation in the Finale of Act II and at Undine's return in Act III, this short passage in Ab major recurs in exact repetition each time. Hoffmann's choice of Ab major for this haunting music was no accident. If we can take Kreisler's views as symptomatic of Hoffmann's, the key had a very special meaning for the composer:

> What then rustles so wondrously, so strangely about me? Invisible wings sweep up and down. I float in fragrant aether. But the fragrance gleams in flaming circles, mysteriously intertwined. They are fair spirits who move their golden wings in rapturously glorious melodies and chords.[23]

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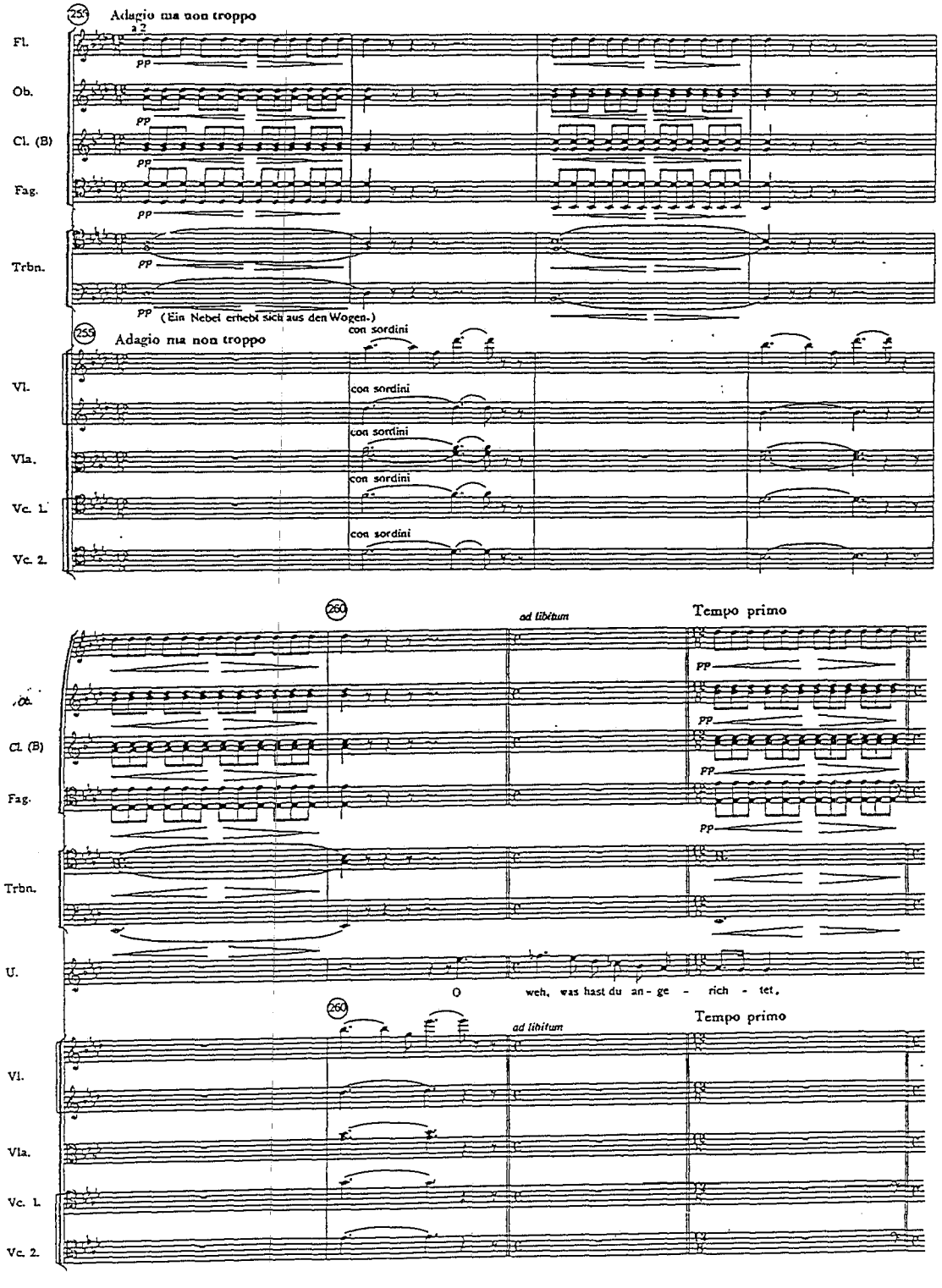
[22] Schläder, 337. See Schläder, 318-338, for an exhaustive discussion of the use of the leitmotif in the opera.

[23] Translated by Hewett-Thayer in Hoffmann: Author of the Tales, 284.

This synaesthetic rhapsody is Kreisler's reaction to the tonic chord in the key of Ab major, played pianissimo.

Example 7: Transformation motive Act II, No. 12 Finale



The transformation motive, with its repeated eighth notes and its delicate inverted arpeggios in the high woodwinds, represents the central idea of the opera, the moment of Undine's transition. Motivically and architecturally Hoffmann makes this transition and the contrast between the two worlds the central theme of the opera.

The way that the transformation motive appears fully formed in Act II and reappears complete and unchanged, each time in the same key, gives the motive a strong associative function. The transformation motive becomes firmly connected to the atmosphere that accompanies the moment of transformation between human and water worlds. Besides its associative function, Hoffmann gives the motive great structural importance by stating it only at the dramatic peaks of the opera, and always in the key that is remote from the opera's governing tonality of C major.

KEY SYMBOLISM

Hoffmann's extreme sensitivity to the programmatic associations of keys and chords causes him to evolve a fairly developed system of key-symbolism in Undine. The contrasts between these programmatically defined key areas becomes another element of the vivid contrast between the earth and water worlds.

Some key associations function on a purely symbolic level. The love between Huldbrand and Undine is always represented in A major, the world of the water spirits in C minor, Bertalda and the society she represents in F or Bb major, and Undine's transformation in Ab major. The opera is framed by neutral passages in C major, which is also the key of most of the choruses.

On a structural level the harmonic plan is more sophisticated. Upon examination of the tonalities of the longest and most dramatically important parts of the opera, the following large-scale plan emerges:

Act I - C-G-A-D

Act II - Ab-f-(F-Bb)-A-Eb-Ab-f

Act III - C-e-E-(A)-Ab-C[24]

This outlines a basic harmonic movement in the course of the opera from I to bVI and back to I. This progression encapsulates the whole action of the opera and represents the transition from the values of the natural human world to the ghostly water world. The first act of the opera, in the bright major keys, represents Undine's cheerful striving for full admission to the human world and her oneness with her environment in the fisherman's cottage. Of course the progression also implies a return to the natural world, but

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[24] Parentheses indicate a tonality of intermediate importance.

it is far from a simple return to an innocent state. The twisted eight-part harmony of the final chorus ("Reines Minnen") is a deepened and complicated version of the opening melody of the overture.

This essential progression, C-Ab, is a harmonic symbol for the central idea of Hoffmann's opera, the transition from one world to another and the contrast between the two worlds. Unlike Fouqué's original, which places at its centre the theme of the quest for a soul and hence for redemption, Hoffmann concentrates almost exclusively on the confrontation of the two worlds.

CONCLUSION

Through his manipulation of a wide array of musical and dramatic effects, Hoffmann forges a strong and unified work of art and takes a significant step in the development of the new German operatic style. It is clear that the major catalyst in Hoffmann's development of this new style was his desire to create a new language to represent the magical spirit world of Fouqué's text. In "Der Dichter und der Komponist" he argues that the only subject matter suitable to the elusive and suggestive nature of music is that of magic and romance.[25] In order to achieve a perfect

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[25] Strunk, 48.

unity with his material, Hoffmann had to expand the limits of operatic convention. Hence it is in the representations of the spirit world that Hoffmann is most adventurous and most convincing. The choruses of the water spirits, which largely eschew melody and harmony, the transformation motif, and especially, the music of Undine, all transcend the limitations of traditional opera.

In addition to evolving a new style from the demands of Fouqué's text, Hoffmann's other achievement is in giving greater definition to certain thematic aspects of Fouqué's tale. The allegorical conflict between nature and society, and the position of the artist, Undine, as an unsuccessful mediator in this conflict were elements that were present, but latent, in the original text. It was Fouqué, not Hoffmann, who presented Undine as a troubadour-like artist in Act II, but Hoffmann's music gives greater vibrancy to her role and to the two worlds between which she is torn.

Thus, beyond achieving his goal, as stated in "Der Dichter und der Komponist", of a complete union between music and text, Hoffmann succeeds in composing music that communicates his personal interpretation of the text. Through a close connection with a work of literature and with Hoffmann's artistic consciousness as a writer, music, the notoriously non-expressive and non-representational art, deepens and concretizes Fouqué's text.

CHAPTER 5- UNDINE AS HAUSFRAU AND REVOLUTIONARY: ALBERT LORTZING'S UNDINE

INTRODUCTION

By 1845, the year Albert Lortzing composed his opera Undine, much of the lustre and urgency of the Romantic movement had dissipated and the struggles against economic hardship and state censorship had come to mean more to most German artists than the troubled relationship of the individual to nature that was so central to Hoffmann. Albert Lortzing was no exception. Although he was probably more of a comfortable democrat than a political firebrand, Lortzing was sympathetic to the revolutionaries of the Vormärz and his music reflects their concern with class barriers and the struggle for freedom. Even in Undine, Lortzing's most supernatural and Romantic opera, the cares of the real people who comprised Lortzing's audience are never forgotten.

The strong populism that permeates Lortzing's operas is probanly the reason for their remarkable longevity. Although even Lortzing's most popular works are relatively unknown in North America, his operas continue to be performed regularly in Germany, both East and West. Surveys of the repertoire of German opera houses over the last

century have established that Lortzing is among the five most performed composers in Germany.[1] An survey of the schedules of East German opera houses between 1972 and 1975 revealed that Lortzing came second only to Mozart in total number performances.[2]

Although Lortzing's ability to gauge the level of his audience and satisfy its tastes is a matter of general agreement, there is some dispute about what this populist approach means for Lortzing's position, historically and politically. Ilse Koban sums up the controversy:

> Lortzing's political position is ambiguous; even music history has not yet come to terms with it; we label Lortzing's attitude as Biedermeier, liberal, petit bougeois-democratic, radical...[3]

The two poles of the debate are represented by two conflicting interpretations of Lortzing's style-- as a revolutionary of the Vormärz, or as a complacent

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[1] F. Hommel, "Lortzing and German Opera", Opera 14 (November, 1963): 731-6.

[2] Karl-Heinz Viertel, "Biedermeier oder Demokrat?: Zum 125. Todestag Albert Lortzings" Musik und Gesellschaft XXVI/1 (1976), 26-28.

[3] Ilse Koban, "Magnet Lortzing. Werkprobleme und Inszenierungsversuche" in Theater der Zeit 3/72, quoted in Heinz Schirmag, Das musiktheatralische Schaffen Albert Lortzings als progressive Erbe der deutschen Opernliteratur der Zeit des Vormärz und der deutschen bürgerlich-demokratischen Revolution von 1848/49 (Phil. Diss., Martin-Luther-Universität, Halle, 1976), 17.

representative of musical Biedermeier.[4] In her excellent dissertation on Lortzing, Rose Rosengard Subotnik argues that Lortzing was a product of the Biedermeier era and that he had complete command of the musical idioms that would appeal to the middle-class theatre audience of the day.[5]

There is considerable evidence for both views. Lortzing's struggles with the state censors are well-documented, as is his service on the ramparts of Vienna during the revolution.[6] The subject matter of Lortzing's operas was often political-- Karl-Heinz Viertel claims that Lortzing was the first composer ever to put striking workers on the operatic stage, in the opening scene of his 1848 opera Regina.[7]

The statements of belief that Lortzing has recorded for our perusal, however, indicate a much greater concern with stagecraft and the value of entertaining his audience

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[4] Not surprisingly, among German scholars this discussion tends to split down the border between East and West Germany. Hence the foremost advocate of the revolutionary interpretation is Heinz Schirmag of Martin Luther University of Halle, while the other approach is represented by Jürgen Lodemann of the University of Freiburg.

[5] Rose Rosengard Subotnik, Popularity and Art in Lortzing's Operas: The Effects of Social Change on a National Operatic Genre (Ph.D. Diss., Columbia University, 1973).

[6] Viertel, 28.

[7] Ibid.

than with social justice.[8] In a lifetime spent on the stage and behind the scenes, beginning with his first acting role at age 5, Lortzing had ample opportunity to discover what worked on stage and to learn how to achieve it.

The true estimate of Lortzing's position is probably that social and biographical influences left him poised between the revolutionary and Biedermeier movements, simultaneously reflecting both in his music. In a study of Lortzing's Undine, the point of greatest interest is the way in which these influences came into conflict with the utterly Romantic and individualistic character of Fouqué's fairy tale, resulting in a work that is supremely successful, but which contradicts Fouqué's intention in several important ways.

THE GENESIS OF THE OPERA

The popular bias of Lortzing's style is clearly manifested throughout Undine, although the magical subject matter inspired Lortzing to write a more serious, more Romantic opera than was his custom. While Lortzing makes the material accessible to a wide audience, at the same time

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[8] Primarily Johann Christian Lobe, "Ein Gespräch mit Lortzing", Konsonanzen und Dissonanzen (Leipzig: Baumgartner's Buchhandlung, 1869), 300-313. See also two letters from Lortzing to Gollmick, November 30, 1843 and March 21, 1844, in the Gesammelte Briefe, Georg Kruse ed. (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1913).

he undermines the essence of the tale as Fouqué conceived it.[9]

It was Lortzing's practice throughout his career to write or adapt his own libretti. He did not hesitate to make major changes and additions to Fouqué's story; it is perhaps significant that Lortzing began work on his Undine in 1844, one year after Fouqué's death.

The two major changes to the plot-- the addition of two comic characters and the new happy ending, and the preponderance of short, closed forms and uncomplicated harmonies that characterize Lortzing's musical style, serve to bring Undine into the realm of the everyday, to defuse its mysterious and threatening elements and to undermine much of the symbolic and allegorical power of the material.

The Romantic character of the Undine story was a departure for Lortzing, who preferred to set comic texts. Undine is one of only three Lortzing operas on Romantic subjects.[10] Lortzing was quite aware that this subject

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[9] It is generally accepted that Lortzing was aware of Hoffmann's opera on the same subject, but unfamiliar with the music. It was thought until early in the twentieth century that the score and parts to Hoffmann's Undine had burned in the fire at Berlin's Königliches Theater in 1817. Hans Hoffmann, Albert Lortzing: Libretto eines Komponisten (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1987), 233.

[10] The others are the revolutionary opera Regina of 1848 and Hans Sachs, 1840.

matter lay outside his realm of expertise. In June 1843 he wrote to his friend and biographer Philipp Düringer that " I have now the Fouqué Undine under my poetic pen and am trying to make it into a Romantic opera. Unfortunately my powers are not sufficient for the task, and I must capture a serious poet, so that the text becomes tragic..."[11]

In the end, though, Lortzing seems to have managed the libretto largely unaided. Düringer contributed the verses for only one song, Veit's aria "Vater, Mutter, Schwestern, Brüder", an inserted song that has almost no relation to the plot.[12]

The opera was intended for a premiere at the Hoftheater in Hamburg in early 1845, with set designs by the famous scenic designer Mühldorfer. Delays in the construction of the sets and illnesses of the singers in

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[11] Quoted in Georg Kruse, preface to piano-vocal score of Undine by Albert Lortzing, ed. Kruse and Kurt Soldan (Leipzig: Peters, n.d.), v.

[12] The general consensus is that Düringer contributed only the text for Veit's song, but Rose Subotnick argues that Düringer did in fact have significant input into the overall shape of the libretto. "Lortzing and the German Romantics: a Dialectical Reassessmant" Musical Quarterly 51 (1976), 255. Subotnick writes, "Because he was ill at ease with serious subjects, Lortzing did obtain substantial help with the wording of Undine, for example, from his friend Philipp Düringer, an actor." (255) However, Hermann Killer argues that it is impossible to be sure whether Düringer had any input into the libretto: the only certainty is that he wrote the text for "Vater, Mutter...". Killer, Albert Lortzing, (Potsdam: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1938), 76-77.

Hamburg meant that Undine was actually premiered in Magdeburg on April 25, four days before the Hamburg production opened.

There is no question, though, that it was the Hamburg performance that mattered to Lortzing. He even allowed Mühldorfer and the theatre's director, Julius Cornet, to have significant input into the creation of the libretto. Most importantly, Lortzing altered his original tragic ending to a happy one at the suggestion of Mühldorfer, who felt that a tragic ending would not fit well with his set design for the final act. Lortzing asked another friend, Philipp Reger, for advice on this question, writing that Mühldorfer "wishes that Kühleborn would change his decree, and, for the good of Undine, who is after all completely innocent, recall her beloved to life. He feels that the impression would be more soothing (wohltuender), and the last, glittering decoration would harmonize badly with Hugo's death. He is right--from the point of view of theatricality, even though the poetic justice would be harmed."[13]

It is in keeping with Lortzing's scrupulous concern for dramatic effect that he did not hesitate to sacrifice the tragic ending that he felt was poetically more correct.

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[13] Kruse, Preface to Undine, vi.

In fact the ending that Lortzing adopted is exactly the one suggested by Mühldorfer. After Undine's return to Ringstetten to deliver the death-kiss to Hugo, Kühleborn appears and decrees that the lovers have suffered enough and deserve to be reunited in the world of the water-spirits.

In spite of the enthusiastic reception of Undine by both public and critics alike in Magdeburg and Hamburg, Lortzing made extensive revisions to the score before the work's Vienna premiere in 1848, hoping to win over the reputedly difficult Vienna audiences by playing down the more typically German aspects of the opera. It is the Vienna version that is now accepted as the definitive version of Undine. The most important change is the deletion of the ballet music that was originally intended as part of the Finale to Act II.

LORTZING'S DRAMATIC TRAINING

The compromises Lortzing made so readily for his audience need not suggest that Lortzing's Undine is unsuccessful as an opera. In fact, it is generally considered to be more effective dramatically than Hoffmann's opera.[14] Lortzing's retelling of the tale is more readily

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[14] See Jürgen Schläder, 430-431; and especially Hellmuth Laue, quoted in Hans Hoffmann, Albert Lortzing: Libretto eines Komponisten, 234.

comprehensible than Hoffmann's, and his division of the opera into four acts rather than three is more closer to the structural divisions of Fouqué's original.

In order to examine the dramatic qualities of Lortzing's opera, it is relevant to know something about his life. The composer's acute awareness of the dramatic requirements of opera were a result of a life spent in the theatre in various capacities. As the child of two itinerant singer-actors, Lortzing grew up in the theatre and began acting himself at a very early age. As a child and a young man he appeared in a wide repertoire of plays and operas, he married an actress, and was a member of permanent troupes at Detmold, Vienna and Leipzig.

In his early twenties Lortzing began to construct his own scripts and scores. The early efforts were not original: they generally consisted of snippets of well-known compositions cobbled together with rather derivative scripts. Mozart was a favourite source for these orgies of borrowing.

It is not surprising that in a life spent almost entirely in the theatre, Lortzing developed a sense of dramatic pacing and audience response. The changes that Lortzing made in Fouqué's text were directed toward this end. The plot is considerably simplified and shortened. Instead of Hoffmann's four locales, Lortzing uses only

three, transferring Undine's disappearance to the castle at Ringstetten, where the final act also takes place.

Lortzing's four acts are better balanced and more unified than Hoffmann's three. Each of the four acts is centered around one pivotal event: the marriage of Undine and Huldbrand (renamed Hugo by Lortzing), the revelation of Bertalda's birth, Undine's return to the water world, and her return to claim Hugo's life.

Thematically the plot is considerably simplified, focussing on the love triangle, almost to the exclusion of the redemption theme. To allow clearer rivalry between Undine and Bertalda, their friendship is downplayed: the two sopranos have no duet, only contrasting arias.

Another aspect of Lortzing's clearer focussing of the plot is the change in the character of Kühleborn. The ruler of the water spirits is given a much smaller role, and his magical and musical power is considerably diminished.

AESTHETIC POSITION

It would be a mistake to regard the changes Lortzing made in his libretto for Undine as motivated merely by opportunism, by the desire to achieve popular success. It is clear from examining Lortzing's letters that his populism was a strongly- held aesthetic position, ethically, not financially based.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, who embraced the role of composer-critic, turning out manifestos outlining their aesthetic position, Lortzing had little time for such things. What little is known of his aesthetic beliefs is mainly to be found in an interview Lortzing granted to the music critic Johann Christian Lobe.[15]

Lobe asks Lortzing to justify and explain his consistent use of spoken dialogue as opposed to recitative in his operas, with specific reference to Undine, whose serious subject matter would seem to call for recitative. Lortzing is adamant in his defence of spoken dialogue, arguing that no one enjoys recitative, that it is totally lacking in musical charm and interest, and that it merely bores the audience. This flippant tone suggests that his conviction that opera should primarily entertain applies also to the aesthetic discussion of opera.

> tell me once--in confidence--in jest he looked fearfully around-we are alone, the aesthetic police aren't listening to what we say,--tell me frankly, do you find recitative so especially enjoyable?[16]

Lortzing defends himself against the charge that it is unrealistic to mix singing and speaking by arguing that

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[15] Lobe, "Ein Gespräch mit Lortzing".

[16] Ibid., 302.

nothing about opera or any other work of art is realistic to begin with, nor should be.

Lortzing also expressed to Lobe his firm belief in the primacy of music over text in opera:

> In the end everything that constitutes poetry, deep (and) great thoughts, flowery metaphors, purity of rhyme, polish and flow of speech, etc., must all be burned to ashes by the composer so that the phoenix music can arise from them.[17]

The free hand with which Lortzing adapts and popularizes Fouqué's tale can probably be traced to this clearly articulated belief that music is supreme over text in opera, since such an aesthetic position could serve as an excuse or justification for numerous alterations to the original literary material.

On the subject of suitable opera texts, Lortzing explains that he prefers to adapt existing works because he has not the talent to write his own texts, and that a composer should stay away from well-known classical plays because, in spite of their great dramatic worth, they do not offer the one essential quality of great opera: roles. For Lortzing, "role is the magic word, that, for the dramatic poet as well as for the composer, opens the doors to the

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[17] Lobe, "Ein Gespräch mit Lortzing", translated in Subotnik, Popularity and Art, 293.

stage"[18]. By roles it is clear that Lortzing means stereotyped roles, roles that offer a place for virtuosic display by the performers. Lortzing's rather pragmatic reason for this claim is that good singer-actors will not be attracted by operas that do not offer good roles.

DEPICTION OF LITERARY MATERIAL

Lortzing's musical setting of the Undine story is influenced both by the composer's dramatic consciousness and by his politically motivated populism. In Undine Lortzing is not interested in challenging convention, but in adapting the conventions of the genre to create a dramatic unity whose function is above all to entertain.

Lortzing's methods of depicting the material of the libretto are more straightforward than Hoffmann's. Portrayal of characters and settings depends on expert use of thematic representation and evocative orchestration, avoiding contrasts of harmony and phrasing such as Hoffmann uses.

Lortzing does not challenge or develop the operatic conventions of his time as does Hoffmann, but this is not to say that Lortzing uses convention thoughtlessly or without regard for its suitability. Lortzing's goal in Undine is to

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[18] Lobe, 311.

create an opera on a Romantic subject that entertains his bourgeois audience, without being foreign to its experience. In the service of this objective, Lortzing makes use of two streams of genre-based convention: the German Singspiel and the Italian grand opera tradition.

Within the Singspiel tradition fall all the comic scenes of the opera, mainly the scenes involving Hans and Veit, while the supernatural moments rely heavily on the aria and even recitative style of Italian opera. The result is that the supernatural aspect is just as effectively portrayed as in Hoffmann's opera, but the world of the supernatural characters is one that is already familiar to Lortzing's audience, since the difference is class- and nationality-based.

Beyond the interesting way in which Lortzing merges two streams of operatic convention, he expands the limits of his genre in two significant ways. First, his use of leitmotivs as aids to characterization places the work slightly closer to the realm of Romantic opera. Second, and more significant, Lortzing's use of direct address to the audience in several scenes is almost a harbinger of modern techniques, and shows a delightful sense of irony.

This last point is also crucial in determining Lortzing's attitude to the literary material. His chief concern is making these magical events comprehensible and

real, rooting Undine in the everday life of Biedermeier Germany. Veit's opening aria and subsequent comic scenes suggest that Lortzing is gently making fun of the story's chivalric grandiosity, and asking the audience to laugh with him. The effect is a charming, "gemütlich" opera, which dispenses with all the symbolism and tragedy of Fouqué's tale.

CHARACTERIZATION

It is on the level of musical characterization that Lortzing's attitude to the Undine material is most immediately evident. There is much less musical differentiation between human and supernatural figures in Lortzing's score. All the characters, whether noble or humble, human or spirit, sing in the same controlled and conventional musical language.

The method by which Lortzing differentiates the supernatural characters from the humans is through his use of leitmotivs. All the important leitmotivs in the opera are associated with the supernatural characters: Undine, Kühleborn and the chorus of water spirits. In this sense the supernatural characters in Undine fill the function of aristocratic characters in Lortzing's other operas.[19] In

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[19] See Subotnik, Popularity and Art, 338 and 395.

addition, Lortzing places the characters on different levels structurally by allowing only the noble characters to sing arias, while the lower class comic characters sing volkstümliche Lieder.

The essential homogeneity of Lortzing's language, though, is evident in the comparison of the music sung by the two added comic characters, Hans and Veit, with that of Hugo. Veit, Hugo's manservant, sings three solo songs and two duets with his friend Hans, a cellar master. The numbers sung by Veit and Hans are usually strophic, in bright 2/4 or 6/8 time, with short phrases and primarily syllabic text setting. The subjects of this music are the joys of drinking or the joys of returning home after a long absence.

Lortzing's heroic tenor, Hugo, replacing Hoffmann's baritone, sings two solo arias, a romance in Act I which tells the story of his love for Bertalda and the quest he undertook at her command, and the dramatically pivotal aria that begins Act IV, in which Hugo banishes a dream of Undine and chooses Bertalda as his new bride. Although he is one of the major characters of Undine, Hugo is clearly identified as being of less importance and having less power than Undine and Kühleborn by the fact that Hugo has no personal identifying motive. The simple syllabic setting and strophic structure of Hugo's romance closely resembles

the folk-song style of Veit's music, although Lortzing does grant Hugo a clearly military figure, based on a dotted eighth and sixteenth-note rhythm.

Very similar in conception to Hoffmann's representation of the same scene, Hugo's Act IV aria is permeated with motives representing the two women. After a recitative recounting the dream, Hugo is buffeted by the "Schwanengesang" motive, representing the world of the water spirits, which leads him into a rather "volkstümlich" reminiscence of Undine. Like Huldbrand in Hoffmann's opera, though, Hugo is not permitted to make a decision. His thoughts of Undine are broken off by the intrusion of the music associated with the wedding feast, the "Celebration" motive. The sudden invasion of the full orchestra with this theme forces Hugo to his decision, without even the moments of deliberation that Hoffmann's knight is allowed.

Even more striking than this weakening of Hugo, especially in comparison with Hoffmann's treatment, is Lortzing's characterization of Kühleborn. Rather than having Kühleborn appear repeatedly and unexpectedly as a mysterious "schnee-weisser Mann", as Fouqué and Hoffmann do, Lortzing has Kühleborn assume a series of non-threatening bourgeois disguises. Thus, in Act I he appears to Veit as a travelling wine merchant and later as Father Heilmann, and

in Act II he poses as the envoy from Bertalda's suitor, the King of Naples.

Hans Christoph Worbs has written that Lortzing effectively disenfranchises Kühleborn, dramatically, making him merely an unsuccessful initiator of a dramatic conflict, rather than the incarnation of the world principle of demon against man that he was in Fouqué's tale.[20]

Kühleborn's musical presence is much less powerful in Lortzing's opera than in Hoffmann's. It is interesting to note that both composers choose to represent Kühleborn with some of the same musical figures, specifically, descending octaves and dotted rhythms. However Lortzing's use of these figures is far from systematic and Kühleborn's music is often randomly interchangeable with Hugo's or Veit's.

This is especially true of Kühleborn's romance and of his fatherly duet with Undine, both in Act II. In the Finale to Act II, Kühleborn takes over what for Fouqué was Undine's role, in unveiling the truth about Bertalda's origins. He sings a strophic romance, accompanying himself on a zither. This is the most static music in the opera, melodically and harmonically. The romance is in A minor,

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[20] Hans Christoph Worbs, Albert Lortzing in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1980), 78.

with brief excursions to C and A major, but Kühleborn's melody lingers stubbornly at a near- monotone on E, creating an effect of hovering and lack of commitment.

In their duet in Act II, Kühleborn asks Undine why she wants to continue to be human, when she is already suffering from having a soul. The music is evenly-balanced, with the two singing harmoniously in thirds for much of the duet and Kühleborn even sharing some of Undine's joyous coloratura. In contrast with Hoffmann's duet for the two, it is Undine who is in control here.

This duet also demonstrates a major difference in Lortzing's overall conception of the opera's plot. Kühleborn reveals that the reason he exchanged Undine and Bertalda at birth was not, as Fouqué has it, to gain for Undine the advantage of a human soul and everlasting life, but rather simple curiosity. Kühleborn wanted to prove that water spirits were happier without souls than humans could be with them.[21]

As would be expected from Lortzing's one dimensional assertion of the importance of "roles" in opera, his characters are rarely complex. Nowhere is his predilection

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[21] Lortzing, Piano-vocal score, 174:
I wanted to learn how much better off
the humans are, possessing souls,
therefore I stole Bertalda from the
fisherhut and placed you there, my dear
child.

for simple, immediately identifiable types more obvious than in his portrayal of Bertalda. She is painted as arrogant and grasping throughout, certainly a foil for Undine, but not her double as in Fouqué's conception.

Bertalda's music is in the expected coloratura vein, with few occasions for reflection. Her first appearance in the opera, in the hunting aria of Act II, offers a complete musical picture of this unattractive character. The first words Bertalda sings are aggressive, even violent, and this powerful image of the active huntress remains when she is seen trying to ensnare the helpless Hugo.

> "Ah! What pleasure to swing the spear with a light hand, to penetrate the forest thickets boldly... I follow the path of the wild... It not a man's pleasure alone, the woman can also enjoy it."[22]

The image of a dangerous woman is even more strongly stated by the musical context of the hunting aria. This is some of the most harmonically adventurous music in the opera. Although Bertalda's entrance is prepared by the solid establishment of F major by the male chorus that accompanies her, she modulates immediately to the rather remote key of Db major, and within the mere 32 measures of her first statement, moves through B major to Eb minor.

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[22] Ibid., 96-97.

If any doubt was left after Bertalda's proud and threatening music that she is a scheming temptress, Lortzing banishes it in one stroke in the duet of Bertalda and Hugo in Act III. The duet begins as a dialogue, in which Bertalda tries to convince Hugo that she should leave Ringstetten for his and Undine's happiness. When Hugo finally says firmly that he will break with Undine, Lortzing has Bertalda sing "to herself", "Triumph! The victory is mine!" at the top of her range.

Undine's music differs far less from Bertalda's in Lortzing's opera then it does in Hoffmann's. Both are represented as sopranos and both sing a good deal of coloratura. There is no musical representation of the friendship or of the spiritual connection between the two women. They sing no duets and there are no motivic connections between their music.

Undine's music before she receives a soul does have some of the caprice and skittishness of Hoffmann's, but in general Undine is less of a presence in Lortzing's conception. Lortzing weakens Undine by removing her most important moment of self-determination in Fouqué's tale, the romance in which she sings of Bertalda's birth. In Lortzing's libretto, Bertalda asks Undine to begin the celebrations with a song, to which Undine replies "I know none", so that the responsibility falls to Kühleborn.

In this way Lortzing denies Undine the knowledge and the power to create that her watery antecedents guaranteed her in Fouqué's story. This allows Lortzing to root his opera solidly in the human world, with little of the fascination with the spirit world that informed the Romantic works of Hoffmann and Fouqué.

Undine's most important solo aria, "So wisse" in Act II, in which she discloses the secret of her origin to Hugo, is extremely vivid in its portrayal of the spirit world but discloses little of Undine's character. Lortzing uses some evocative orchestral tone-painting to accompany the opening recitative, in which Undine describes the different types of elemental spirits. The aria ends with a triumphant coloratura passage in B major (the key of Hugo and Bertalda's love duet), which resembles the music sung by Bertalda throughout the opera.

The final parameter to be considered in a discussion of the characterization of the Undine story is the representation of the human and spirit worlds. This is the area in which Lortzing's treatment differs most from Hoffmann's.

Lortzing's changes to the story and his music fundamentally change the focus of Fouqué's fairy tale, neutralizing both the threat and the power of the spirit world, instead making the opera an assertion of the power of

the everyday. The addition of the characters Hans and Veit and the changes to Kühleborn's role are both important elements in this change of focus. Lortzing's music gives little life to the world of the water spirits, representing it with the attractive but tame "Schwanensang" motive.

The first section of the tale, which takes place on the isolated peninsula before Undine receives a soul, is the time when the power of the water world was most strongly felt in Fouqué. Lortzing's opening act brings the supernatural aspect of the tale into the realm of the real in several ways.

There is no eerie chorus of water spirits in Lortzing's first act. Father Heilmann is presented as an old friend of the family, who has come at the fisherman's request to marry Hugo and Undine. There is no mention of a storm or a shipwreck. Furthermore, Heilmann turns out to be an old friend of Hugo's as well, showing that the group is not really cut off from society at all.

Lortzing gives the fisherman and his wife names, again bringing them into the scope of the real and the human, as opposed to the nameless archetypes that they are for Fouqué. As well he places them in a fishing village, not in total isolation, which allows a chorus of young people from the village to accompany the nuptial procession of Undine and Hugo. The addition of this celebration chorus

makes the Act I wedding a virtual mirror image of the projected wedding in Act IV between Hugo and Bertalda.

In his analysis of Lortzing's opera, Jürgen Schläder concentrates on the two parallel dramatic levels established by Lortzing, and the ways in which the two are combined.[23] Schläder identifies the two levels as the comic/societal, based on the scenes involving Veit and Hans; and the supernatural, incorporating most of the action of the opera. The addition of a wedding chorus in Act I is one of the ways in which Lortzing unifies the two levels. Even more striking in Act I is the fortuitous appearance on the seashore of a keg of wine just before the wedding, courtesy of Kühleborn, which naturally delights Veit.

It is in Act IV that the two levels are finally and masterfully united. With a sure sense of both the popular and dramatic demands of the moment, Lortzing introduces the deus ex machina of the opening of the castle well through a drinking bout of Hans and Veit. In their inebriated state, and feeling nostalgic affection for Undine, the two friends decide to remove the stone that has blocked the well since her disappearance, making possible her return from the water world to claim revenge on Hugo.

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[23] Schläder, 387-88.

Although the mixture of comic and tragic elements throughout the opera clearly adulterates the Romantic nature of the material and reduces the power of the spirit world as envisaged by Fouqué, Lortzing's treatment is successful in a different way. As Rose Subotnik argues, Lortzing had an unerring sense for the tastes of his public, and in Undine he found a way to bring the foreign and the supernatural into contact with the lived experience of the bourgeoisie of the Biedermeier era.[24]

MOTIVIC STRUCTURE

The motives used by Lortzing to identify characters and ideas function as reminiscence motives, rather than as a full-fledged system of leitmotivs.[25] Each of the five

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[24] Subotnik, Popularity and Art, 348.

[25] See definitions of reminiscence and leitmotivs in Chapter 4. See also Jürgen Schläder's discussion of the reminiscence motives in Lortzing's opera, 408-9:

> Although the significant motives of this opera are given names, one cannot speak of leitmotivs in Lortzing's Undine. Various characteristic motives, which appear frequently in the opera are associated with one of the dramatic characters or with specific locales and, in the unfolding of the musico-dramatic treatment, are never given new semantic functions. Their functional usage alternates between characterizing personal motives and simple reminiscence motives with a prominent associative character. Never does one of these personal motives alter its relationship to the dramatic events, never

primary motives is a complete melody of two to eight measures which reappears in its entirety, usually substantially unchanged. The function of the motives, then, is to recall the associated idea, not to reflect changes or developments in these ideas through musical development.

Subotnik has observed that the most audible leitmotivs in Undine are associated with the characters from the sea kingdom.[26] Of the five main motives in the opera, all but the "Celebration" motive of Act IV represent water spirits or their world. This suggests a similarity in motivic construction between Lortzing's and Hoffmann's operas. Although Hoffmann also restricted use of leitmotivs to the supernatural characters, he went further in his differentiation of the two worlds by using through-composed scenas as well as leitmotivs to signify the water world, while retaining more traditional forms for the human world. Lortzing, on the other hand, allows the semantic resonance of the recurring motives to suggest the depth and mysterious nature of the spirit world, without significantly changing the conventional musical structures.

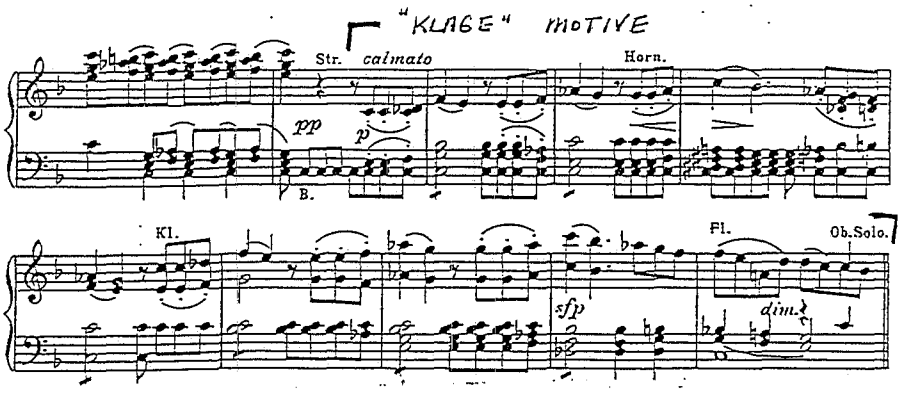
> is the realm of meaning of a motive expanded through new events of the action or the dialogue--two significant charcteristics of the leitmotiv. (408)

[26] Subotnik, Popularity and Art, 564.

Two of the opera's main motives are associated with Undine. The "Klage" motive, first heard in the Overture, represents Undine's unhappy love for Hugo.[27] The "Soul" motive appears first in Undine's Act II aria.

The "Klage" motive is somewhat of an exception, in that its characteristic falling appoggiatura figure is often separated from the context of the entire melody and used as a fragment.

Example 8: Overture, page 3



The first sung appearance of the motive occurs in the Act I ensemble when Undine admits that she possesses no soul. The words she sings to a version of the motive are "There must be something lovely, but also something frightening about a soul!" The next time the motive is heard, in a form more

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[27] The names assigned to the motives in Undine are generally accepted by all commentators upon the opera. The labels probably originated with Kruse's analysis of the opera in his Albert Lortzing: Leben und Werke (Leipzig, 1947).

similar to that heard in the Overture, is as Undine asks Hugo about Bertalda. The "Klage" motive is heard at some point in all of Undine's arias or ensembles, recalling or restating her unhappiness.

As Jürgen Schläder has noted, there are also numerous reminiscences of the "Klage" motive that have little or nothing to do with Undine's fate.[28] The falling appoggiatura figure that forms the core of the "Klage" motive permeates the opera to the extent that it becomes a generic trademark of Lortzing's melodic style and largely loses its semantic power as a reminiscence motive. Lortzing is particularly fond of using this figure to begin recitatives. It is even sung once by Veit, beginning the recitative following his drinking song in Act I, in a context that has no relation to the plot of Undine's fate.[29]

Undine's "Soul" motive, on the other hand, reappears only in its complete, unaltered form. The motive, characterized by its stepwise motion and its rather melancholy rhythmic profile, is first heard at the opening of Undine's aria "So wisse", played by horns and woodwinds.

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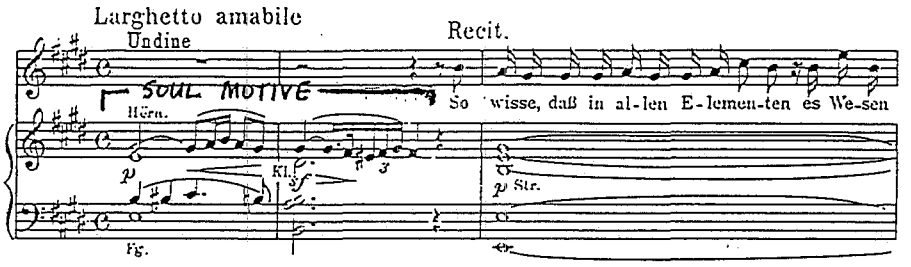
[28] Schläder, 411-12.

[29] Schläder cites 11 instances of the Klage motive, 411-12.

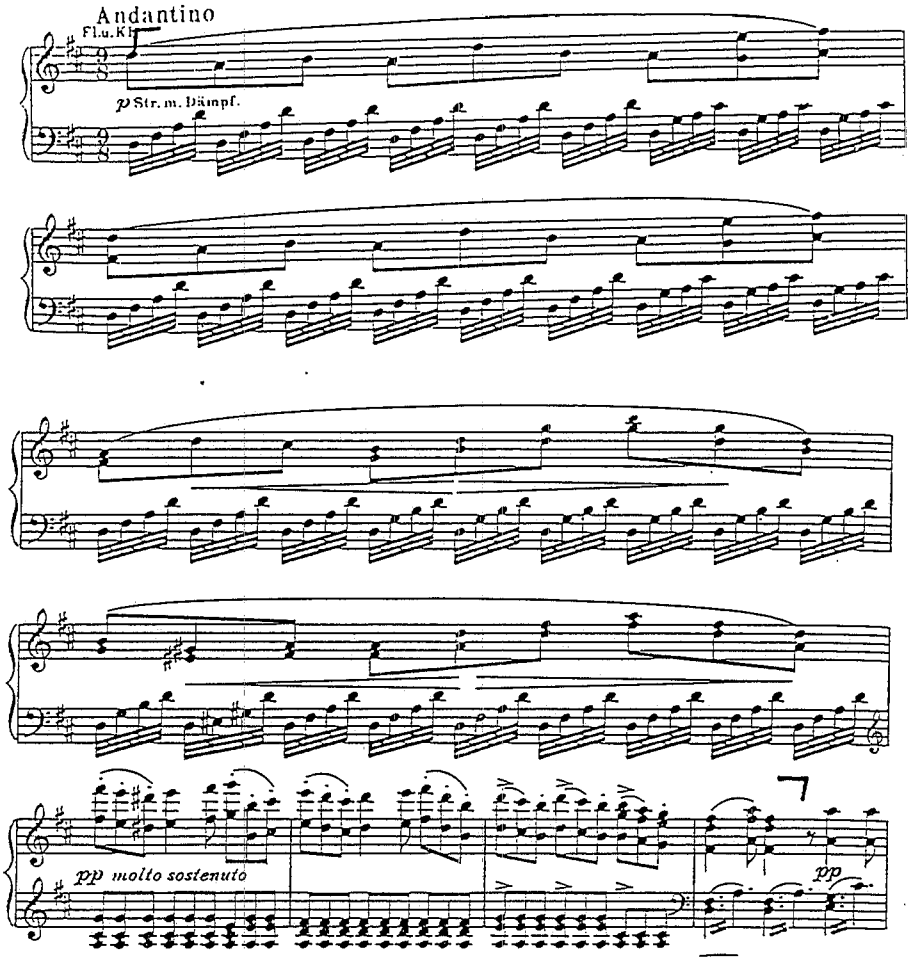
Example 9: Act II, No. 8 Recitative and Aria



It reappears, essentially unchanged, to accompany Undine's two transformations, her return to the water world in the Finale of Act III and her emergence from the castle well in Act IV.

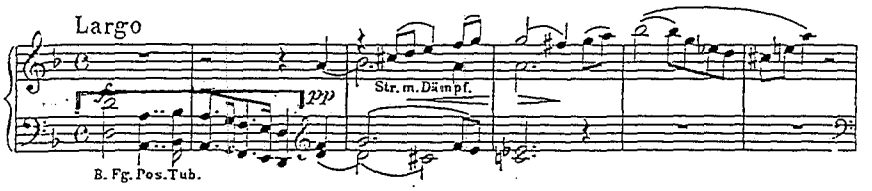
Besides these two motives specifically associated with Undine, Lortzing uses the so-called "Schwanensang" motive to represent the world of the water spirits. This is an eight-measure theme, introduced in the Overture, in which the head is orchestral and the tail is usually choral.

Example 10: Overture, page 5-6



The "Schwanensang" motive is derived from Kühleborn's personal motive, with which it shares its first four notes.

Example 11: Overture, page 1



Subotnik suggests that the whole tone of the opera is defined by the popular lilt of the "Schwanensang" theme, with its rippling chordal accompaniment and its comforting harmonies. The character of this motive is more popular than that of much of the music that surrounds it.[80]

The "Schwanensang" motive recurs most frequently of all Lortzing's motives. It is heard in Undine's aria "So wisse", in the Act II scene where Undine and Bertalda meet, in Act IV as Hugo remembers his dream of Undine, and in the same act as Undine emerges from the well. Most importantly, the motive permeates the Finale of Act III, Undine's return to the water kingdom. In none of these contexts is there any significant change in the motive. It is heard in many

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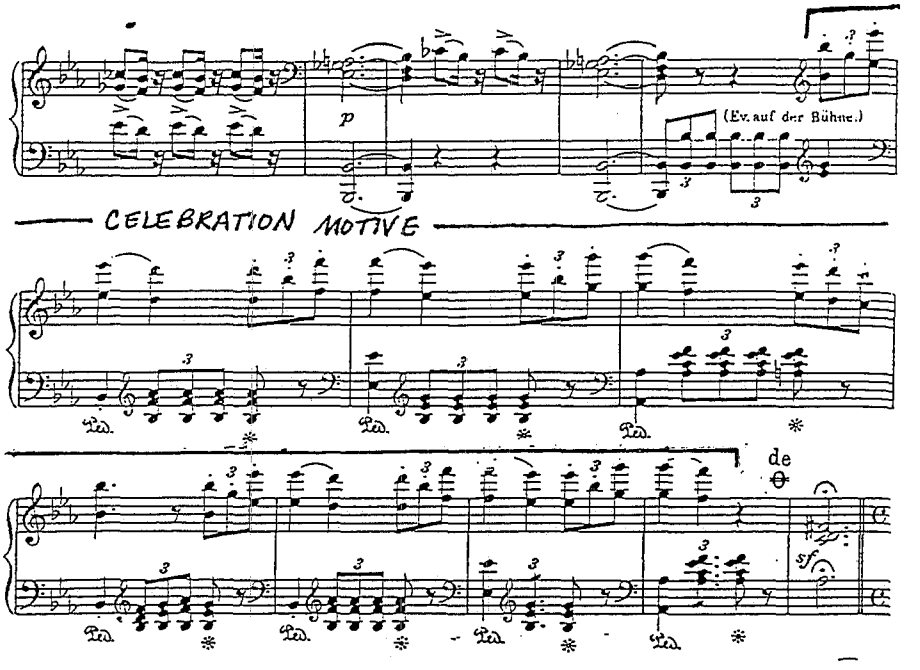
[80] Subotnik, Popularity and Art, 565.

keys and is sometimes fragmented or expanded, but the essential symmetrical, non-rhythmic nature of the theme remains intact.

The last of the motives associated with the water world is Kühleborn's motive. (Example 11) This motive begins the Overture and recurs in most of Kühleborn's arias and ensembles, but unlike the corresponding motives in Hoffmann, it is never heard when Kühleborn is not actually on the stage. The most common form of this theme is as a four-bar melody, based on the perfect fourth interval, the descending minor scale, and the dotted rhythm. Like the "Klage" motive, Kühleborn's motive appears also in fragmented forms, often limited to some form of the first three notes.

The one motive associated with human society has very limited semantic importance. The "Celebration" motive is heard only in Act IV, and although it recurs several times during the Finale, it does not develop.

Example 12: Act IV, No. 16 Entr'act



The one reason for treating the "Celebration" motive as a musical signifier is its place in Hugo's dream sequence. The orchestra and chorus have set the scene with the "Celebration" motive when Hugo appears to recount his dream of Undine. As he is swayed by musical memories of her and thoughts of Bertalda, the "Celebration" motive intrudes at full volume, reminding Hugo of the demands and rewards of human society, and causing him to affirm his choice of Bertalda.

The system of motives used by Lortzing in Undine functions purely on the level of musical structure, contributing little to the literary depth of the opera.

Hermann Killer has said that Undine represents an advance in the techniques of motivic construction over the German operas of the time, in that its motives are no longer merely reminiscence motives, but embody a complete musico-dramatic structural principle.[31]

While it is true that on a musical level, Lortzing's motives contribute to the organization and structural unity of the opera, they have little significance on a psychological level. Each motive exists in a relationship of simple symbolism to the concept it represents. There is little development or transformation of motives and the musical changes that do occur have no relationship to changes in the associated ideas.

The straightforward motivic technique is further illustrated by the undeveloped relationship between voice and orchestra. Lortzing never uses the orchestra as a vehicle to reinforce or comment upon an idea stated in a vocal part, in the way that Hoffmann does.

The function of Lortzing's reminiscence motives amounts to a shorthand system of musical signification, with a simple, unchanging one-to-one relationship between musical motive and associated idea. It is a technique that allows Lortzing to convey the essentials of the plot with the

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[31] Hermann Killer, Albert Lortzing, 82.

utmost economy and clarity and to create a tightly unified dramatic narrative; but this use of motives precludes significant interaction between music and text. The two elements are not permitted to comment on each other, but rather are kept on separate planes. The effect is an opera which is effective musically and dramatically, but is lacking in true musico-literary unity.

STRUCTURE

The musical structure of Undine is very similar to that of Lortzing's other operas. John Warrack has encapsulated Lortzing's typical structural practice neatly:

> an overture, an opening chorus setting the scene, then a series of short numbers building, especially in the second act, towards a finale of some structural fluency[32]

This is very much the case in Undine, although, in keeping with the Romantic nature of the subject, there are fewer short numbers broken up by dialogue, and more through-composed scenes using recitative, especially for Undine and Kühleborn.

The real organization of the opera is dramatic rather than musical. The division into four acts, each

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[32] John Warrack, "Albert Lortzing" in New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, (London: Macmillan, 1980), 240.

centring on one setting and one pivotal scene, is strong and dramatically effective. This readily comprehensible dramatic organization replaces the tonal organization used by Hoffmann. Lortzing's opera shows no evidence of either large-scale tonal structure or of small-scale key symbolism.

Compared to the long passages of continuous music constructed by Hoffmann, which recreate the unitary narrative of the nineteenth century psychological novel recounted from a single point of view, the structure of Lortzing's opera concentrates on representing the action and events of the story in a fairly objective and lively fashion. Where Hoffmann privileges a single point of view, that is, the position and reactions of Undine the artist, Lortzing's point of view is identical with that of his audience. The dramatic organization of the opera, based on pivotal events rather than psychological factors, is emblematic of the objective, action-oriented position taken by Lortzing.

An interesting structural device used by Lortzing to strengthen his connection with his audience is the self-conscious framing of the events of the opera created by Veit's opening aria. In his discussion with Lobe, Lortzing made it clear that he considered opera to be an unrealistic art and that he had no interest in making it seem more

natural.[33] In the same conversation, Lortzing stated what really amounts to his artistic creed: "Art is only there to enter into a relationship with man."[34]

These two aesthetic views place the opening aria of Undine in a revealing context. Lortzing has Veit, Hugo's manservant, address the audience directly as he puts away his gun, commenting that he is not likely to need it after their imminent return to the city. In the guise of answering the questions that will be posed by his friends upon his return, Veit recounts the events leading up to his and Hugo's arrival at the fisherman's cottage:

> because people do not know where we have been... To still your curiosity, I shall begin to tell my tale[35]

This direct address to the audience does away with any sense of naturalism that might have been possible, reminding the audience immediately that they are witnessing a theatrical production. This slight degree of audience alienation is perfectly in keeping with Lortzing's stated desire to entertain above all and to connect directly with his audience. It is representative of Lortzing's approach

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[33] Lobe, 310.

[34] Ibid., 304.

[35] Lortzing, Undine, piano-vocal score, 11.

to the entire opera, which is diametrically oppposed to Hoffmann's attitude of Romantic naturalism.

CONCLUSION

It has been argued that the strength of Lortzing's Undine, particularly in comparison to Hoffmann's opera, is that Lortzing accepts the predilections and limitations of his audience, producing an opera that is more comprehensible, more entertaining and more dramatically effective than Hoffmann's.[86] It is true that Lortzing's opera is unified and musically successful, but a certain amount of Lortzing's entertainment value is achieved at the expense of Fouqué's Undine.

In his effort to satisfy the demands of his Biedermeier audience, Lortzing ignores the demands of the Undine story itself. The treatment of the tale is greatly simplified thematically, reducing it to another story about a love triangle, while the redemption theme is virtually ignored. The allegorical level of the tale, the aspect that was most important to the Romantics Hoffmann and Fouqué, is completely absent from Lortzing's representation. The emphasis of the plot instead is thrown on the very human

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[86] See Subotnik, Popularity and Art, 633-34; and Heinz Schirmag, Albert Lortzing (Berlin: Henschelverlag Kunst und Gesellschaft, 1982), 196-97.

love triangle, an issue that may have been easy for his audience to relate to.

Through the popularization of the originally threatening character of Kühleborn, the removal of Undine's power as an artist to tell her own story in music, and the extensive use of the middle-class stereotypical characters Hans and Veit as intermediaries to the audience, Lortzing denies the magical elements of the tale, in favour of an assertion of middle-class, human values. Musically, the preponderance of small, closed forms, conservative harmonic usage and stereotyped vocal writing reinforces the assertion of the bourgeois and the everyday, keeping the work within the realm of the familiar, while injecting a sense of drama and humour.

Unity between music and text is not a consideration of Lortzing's: the two elements function, each quite effectively, on the parallel, non-intersecting planes described by Hoffmann in "Der Dichter und der Komponist".[37] Although Hoffmann censured such a relationship as being little more than a staged concert, he admitted that by far the majority of operatic works fall into this category.

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[37] E.T.A. Hoffmann, "Der Dichter und der Komponist" in Oliver Strunk, Source Readings in Music History: The Romantic Era (New York: Norton,1965), 42-55.

The thematic and allegorical demands of Fouqué's original have little impact on Lortzing's treatment. In Lortzing's opera, Undine fails spectacularly in her bid to unite the two worlds of earth and water, music and literature. There is none of the hope associated with the figure of the artist-conjurer that is so important in Hoffmann's version.

If Hoffmann created a complete fusion of text and music in a typically Romantic tragedy, full of allegorical and symbolic weight, Lortzing comes very close to freeing Undine from the burden of Romantic significance and reclaiming the popular tale for his Biedermeier audience. The philosophical differences in the two approaches are perfectly encapsulated in the operas' different endings, both cathartic in their own ways. For Hoffmann, the only possible outcome is a union of the two lovers in death, an ascension to a higher plane, while Lortzing insists that his lovers (like his audience, perhaps) are fully entitled to happiness on this earth. It is an approach that might enrage devotees of the original, tragic tale, but it is one that is ideally suited to Lortzing's position in a world where material comfort and social justice were beginning to seem more important than heavenly rewards.

Ironically it seems that Lortzing's Undine belongs in the human, prosaic world of words from the beginning, yet

she is comdemned by Lortzing to an eternity in the indefinite musical world of the water spirits.

CHAPTER 6 - INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AS NARRATIVE: CARL REINECKE'S SONATA "UNDINE" FOR FLUTE AND PIANO

INTRODUCTION

When Carl Reinecke composed his Sonata for Flute and Piano, "Undine" in 1885, the course of musical Romanticism had split into two distinct streams, one progressive and one conservative. The major issue in this aesthetic split was the validity of programme music. Stylistically, Reinecke was firmly in the conservative camp; his admiration for and friendship with Mendelssohn, Schumann and Brahms had ensured this.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the debate over the aesthetics of programme music was at its most intense pitch. From the adherents of Eduard Hanslick's position that music cannot represent extra-musical ideas and should under no circumstances be attached to them, to the broader, but more ambiguous stands of composer-critics such as Schumann and Liszt, the question remained: How much can and should music represent?

Liszt argued that programme music should be constructed on entirely different principles than absolute music, that the main principle of organization in a work of

programme music should be the narrative thread of the programme:

> the return, change, modification and modulation of the motifs are conditioned by their relationship to a poetic idea... All exclusively musical considerations, though they should not be neglected, have to be subordinated to the action of the given subject[1].

In practice, it is rare to find a work of programme music that does not also function according to the principles of traditional form.

The formal design of Reinecke's music generally remains well within the bounds of conservative late-Romantic trends and the flute sonata is in most ways typical of duo sonata form at this stage of its development. However, the programmatic titles which Reinecke added to this work and to many of his other compositions reveal that he was not content to remain within the conservative, absolutist camp that was his milieu in Leipzig during the last part of the century. The tension between these two paths and the balance between Classical form and Romantic programmaticism that Reinecke achieves in his flute sonata makes the "Undine" sonata an absorbing object of study.

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[1] Franz Liszt, "Berlioz und seine Harold Symphonie" Gesammelte Schriften iv (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1978), 69.

The questions that must be addressed with regard to Reinecke's sonata are 1) what kind of programme music it is and 2) what significance the title has in the overall construction of the work. Is the title merely the suggestion of an abstract image to be evoked by the music's wavelike motives, as in the impressionistic works on the theme of Undine by Ravel and Debussy, or does the title imply a full-fledged narration of Fouqué's fairy tale within the framework of traditional sonata forms? Another, more problematic question will also be approached, that of whether it is possible to detect in Reinecke's flute sonata an attitude to, or interpretation of, Fouqué's literary material, as it was in the discussion of the two operatic works.

METHODOLOGY

Any discussion of a purely instrumental work in terms of extra-musical significance will by necessity involve a certain amount of conjecture, unless it is backed by substantial evidence of intent in the composer's writings. Unfortunately, in the case of Reinecke, no such evidence exists. The information surrounding the creation of the flute sonata is so sketchy that we have no way of knowing when the composer came into contact with Fouqué's story, for whom and for what occasion the sonata was

composed, or which specific events of the plot, if any, Reinecke was trying to portray.

There are, however, certain precedents for tracing the programmatic course of a work in the absence of such evidence. The most thorough and convincing attempts of this type in recent years are analyses of works by Schubert and Schumann which trace the formal structure of the work, concentrating on the ways in which a fairly traditional piece of music diverges from its expected path.[2]

The approach that I will take in analyzing Reinecke's sonata for flute and piano draws much from these efforts. The "clues" that some degree of narrative structure exists in the Reinecke work, parallel to the sonata's classical structure, lie in the moments at which the music resists its formal paradigm, where the outlines of the form are momentarily obscured or displaced.

In addition to formal considerations, motivic connection is an important aspect in the depiction of a programme. Themes have often been described as characters in a drama, changing and developing as the drama unfolds.

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[2] Edward T. Cone, "Schubert's Promissory Note" Nineteenth Century Music V/3 (1982), 233-246; and Anthony Newcomb, "Once More `Between Absolute and Program Music': Schumann's Second Symphony", Nineteenth Century Music, VII/3, (3 April, 1984), 237-260. Another pioneering effort in this area is Owen Jander's "Beethoven's "Orpheus in Hades": The Andante con moto of the Fourth Piano Concerto", Nineteenth-Century Music VIII/3 (Spring, 1985), 195-212.

Anthony Newcomb sees the transformation of themes as the most inherently literary aspect of instrumental music:

> We do well to think of thematic units partly as characters in a narrative, transformed by the requirements of various different contexts, while remaining recognizably related to their previous selves. They interact with each other, with the plot archetypes, with their own past guises, and with the conventions of musical grammar and formal schemes, and analogously to the way the characters in a novel interact with each other and with the moral and legal conventions that shape their situations.[3]

This analysis of Reinecke's "Undine" sonata, then, will study the techniques of programmatic representation on two distinct levels:

1) The simpler level of signification involves a one-to-one system of symbolic associations, similar to the system of leitmotives used by Lortzing in his Undine. This method of representation associates a specific theme, key or instrumental timbre with a character, idea or event in the programme. The association can be made explicit either by structural placement and repetition, or, more often, by the use of musical conventions that are universally understood to represent a certain idea or emotion.[4] In Reinecke's sonata, themes representing Undine, Huldbrand, magical

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[3] Newcomb, 237.

[4] See Deryck Cooke, The Language of Music, for a detailed exposition of this function of musical language.

power, love and water can be identified with some certainty. This method of signification can tell a story by symbolism, and can suggest a sequence of events through the juxtaposition of themes, but it cannot truly narrate a programme.

2) Much greater narrative possibilities exist in the second technique of representation, which is structurally based. Here also it is essential to know the conventions of the genre and the style, in order to focus on the places in the music where traditional formal structures are displaced or disturbed. The impetus for this way of studying programme music comes from Liszt's assertion that programme music must have another logic than that of usual musical forms. It is in the tension between the requirements of traditional form and the requirements of the programme that the narrative thread can be detected.

In the analysis that follows, these two levels of musical signification will be applied to the Reinecke sonata, in order to demonstrate that the sonata operates simultaneously on two levels, that of traditional form and that of programmatic narrative.

BIOGRAPHY

In dealing with a relatively little-known composer such as Reinecke, it is helpful to fill in a certain amount

of biographical background as an aid to interpreting the compositions. In the case of Reinecke, the most important biographical and stylistic feature is his very strong ties to the music of the past, particularly the Classical style of Mozart.

Carl Reinecke was born in Altona in 1824. His early training took place at home under the direction of his father, under whose tutelage he developed into a virtuoso pianist, a very competent violinist and a well-regarded composer. The most important influences on Reinecke's early development were Mendelssohn and Schumann, both of whom he met on a visit to Leipzig in 1845. Both composers examined Reinecke's scores at his request and gave encouragingly supportive responses. After holding a series of conducting and teaching positions in various locations, including a short stint teaching Liszt's two daughters in Paris, Reinecke was invited in 1860 to become the conductor of the famed Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig. He held this position until his retirement in 1895, after which he continued to teach and to compose until his death in 1910. Reinecke's major achievements are generally regarded to be pedagogical rather than creative. As the director of the Leipzig Conservatory, from 1897 to 1910, he built a strong teaching staff and produced a large number of illustrious graduates.

An equally important contribution was Reinecke's effort to retrieve and safeguard the music of the past, in his capacity as conductor of the Gewandhaus. He saw the Gewandhaus as the guardian of tradition and felt that it was his responsibility to defend only the best music. Reinecke compared the orchestra's programmes to "a museum that can be revisited time and again because its value never decreases. The concerts should educate each generation in the beauties of the past, and add only a few items of lasting value from the present."[5]

The composers from the past championed by Reinecke included Bach, Palestrina and, of course, Mozart, while the contemporary programming of the orchestra favoured Schumann, Mendelssohn and Brahms over the "progressives", Liszt and Wagner.

Probably Reinecke's most lasting impact on the musical tradition was his composition of sets of somewhat stylistically eccentric cadenzas for all the Mozart piano concertos. Reinecke was known as one of the foremost interpreters of Mozart of his day, even writing a widely-

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[5] Myrna W. Brown, Programmaticism in Carl Reinecke's Sonata, Opus 167, "Undine". (D.M.A. Project, North Texas State University, 1981), 9-10.

read monograph on the proper performance practice of the Mozart concertos.[6]

In all aspects of his musical career, then, Reinecke was considered a classicist.[7] At the same time, however, he was strongly attracted by the Romantic climate in which he lived. He wrote large quantities of programme music on folk and literary subjects, including a programme symphony and a cantata, both entitled "Hakon Jarl", and several works based on fairy tales.[8] This attraction to the Romantic depiction of a tale in music places Reinecke firmly in his own generation. The Undine Sonata is the archetypal representation of these two opposing trends in Reinecke's development, presenting a Romantic programme within the framework of a strictly organized Classical form.

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[6] Carl Reinecke, Zur Wiederbelebung der Mozartschen Klavierkonzerte" (Leipzig, 1891).

[7] For a complete consideration of Reinecke's classical influences, see Otto Victor Maeckel, "Carl Reinecke und der klassische Stil" Neue Zeitschrift für Musik LXXXI/10 (March 5, 1914), 145-7.

[8] These include a Märchenoper for children Der Teufelchen auf der Himmelswiese, a Zauberoper Glückskind und Pechvogel, the suite for piano duet Nussknacker und Mausekönig, and five chamber cantatas based on popular fairy tales. For a complete listing of Reinecke's works to Opus 284, see Franz Padzirek, Universalhandbuch der Musikliteratur aller Zeiten und Völker, 14 vols. (Vienna: Padzirek, 1904-1910), IX, 135-159.

STRUCTURE OF THE SONATA

To begin a discussion of the Romantic and programmatic elements in the Reinecke sonata, it is necessary to first define the aspects of the work that are traditionally composed.

The work follows in most respects the expected pattern of a nineteenth-century sonata. It is in four movements, of which the first and the last are composed in sonata form. The second movement is a scherzo, with two trio-like interludes, assuming the overall form ABACA, while the third movement is a lyrical Andante incorporating one tempestuous interlude, giving the movement an ABA form. In keeping with a Romantic rather than a Classical model, most of the emotional weight of the sonata is placed in the last movement, which is also formally the most adventurous of the four.

The sonata follows a conventional key structure, centring around the tonic key, E minor, and its relative major, with excursions to B major and minor. The opening movement is in E minor, the Scherzo in B minor, the Andante in G major, and the final movement again in E minor, with a coda in E major. Phillip Moll has suggested an explanation of the sonata based on the symbolism of the opposing keys E minor and G major, representing the water and human worlds,

which is temptingly evocative, if difficult to justify fully.[9]

The tonal and formal outlines of the sonata are outwardly representative of the conventions of the contemporary sonata form. The tonal plan, order of movements and the internal forms of the movements themselves, all are typical of the late Romantic sonata.[10] However, each movement includes significant departures from its traditional form, which may be interpreted as narrative gestures. These will be discussed in a separate section, after the question of symbolic representation of themes and characters is addressed.

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[9] Phillip Moll, notes to recording of Reinecke, Sonata "Undine", James Galway and Phillip Moll, RCA ATC1-4034 (New York, 1981).

[10] William S. Newman's statistical survey of the late Romantic sonata confirms that Reinecke's work corresponds to the norms of the genre. The Sonata Since Beethoven (New York: Norton, 1983).

MUSICAL DEPICTION OF THE PROGRAMME

In attempting to identify depictions of specific characters or situations in a work of instrumental music, the question of musical convention becomes an important one. Deryck Cooke has demonstrated exhaustively that certain purely musical figures come to represent specific, universally (within the tradition of Western art music) comprehensible ideas and emotions.[11]

It is on this universal level that the discussion of programmaticism in the Reinecke sonata must begin. In common with Hoffmann, Lortzing, and many other composers who have attempted to portray water themes in music, Reinecke relies on rippling, arpeggiated figures, particularly in the piano, to set the watery scene throughout the sonata. The extensive use of these patterns to denote water in the sonata demonstrates that Reinecke was simultaneously able to make use of the musical conventions of his time for their universal communicative power and to depart from convention to construct a musical narrative.

The most important instances of this general water symbolism occur in the sonata's opening movement, most notably in the piano accompaniment to the second theme (Example 13) and in the running scale figures traded between

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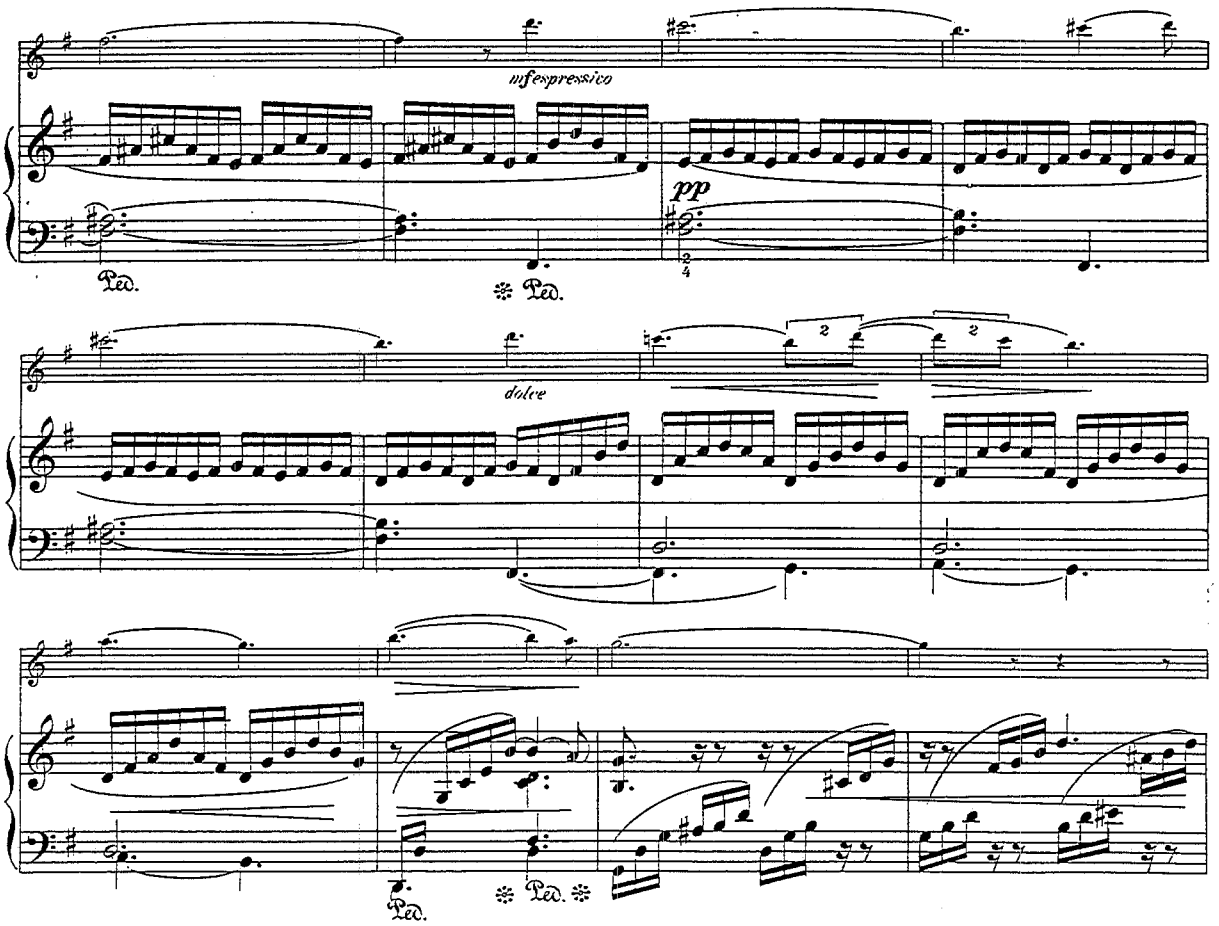
[11] Cooke, The Language of Music.

flute and piano in the development section. The arpeggiated accompaniment in the piano part is a constant throughout the sonata's four movements, also becoming prominent in the second trio of the scherzo movement and throughout the final movement.

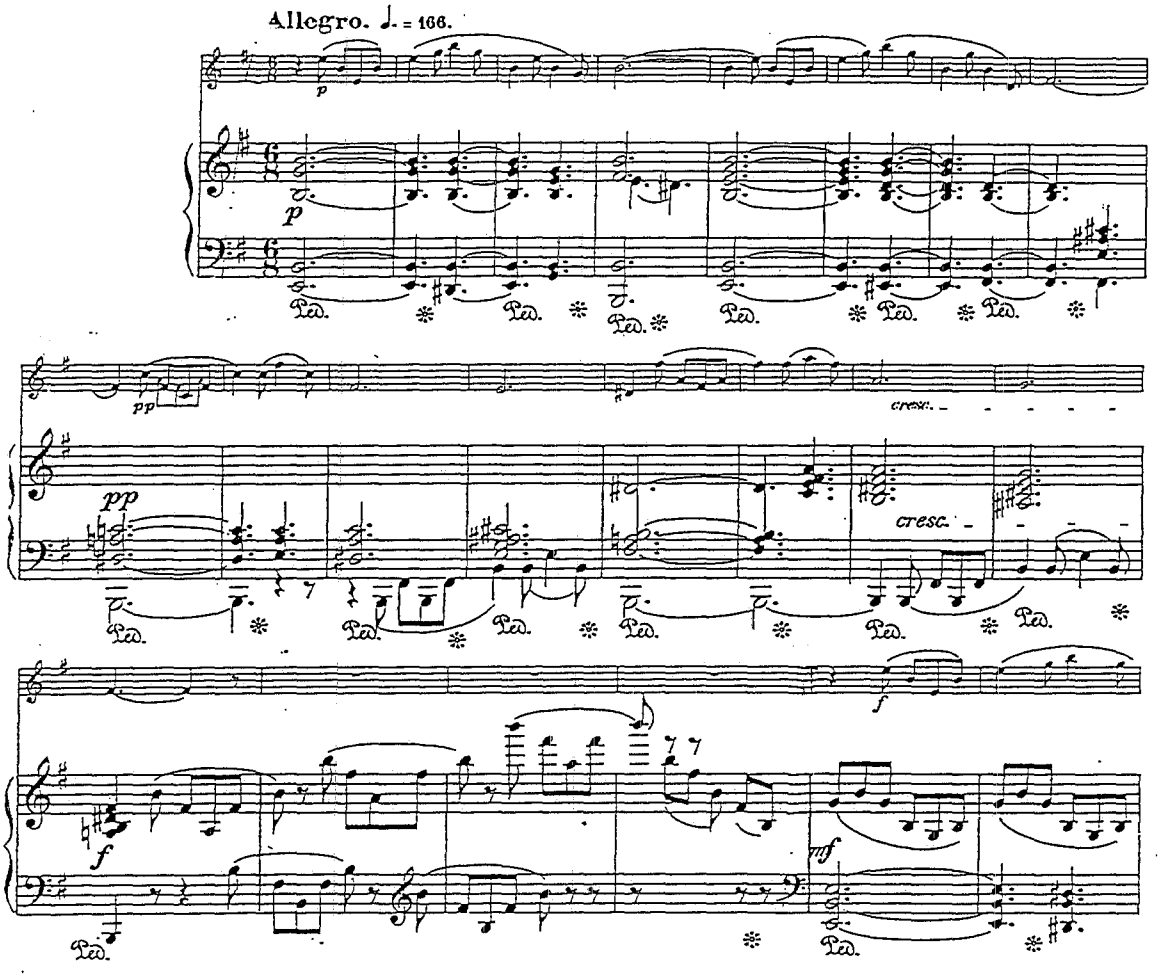
Example 13: First movement, mm 39-50



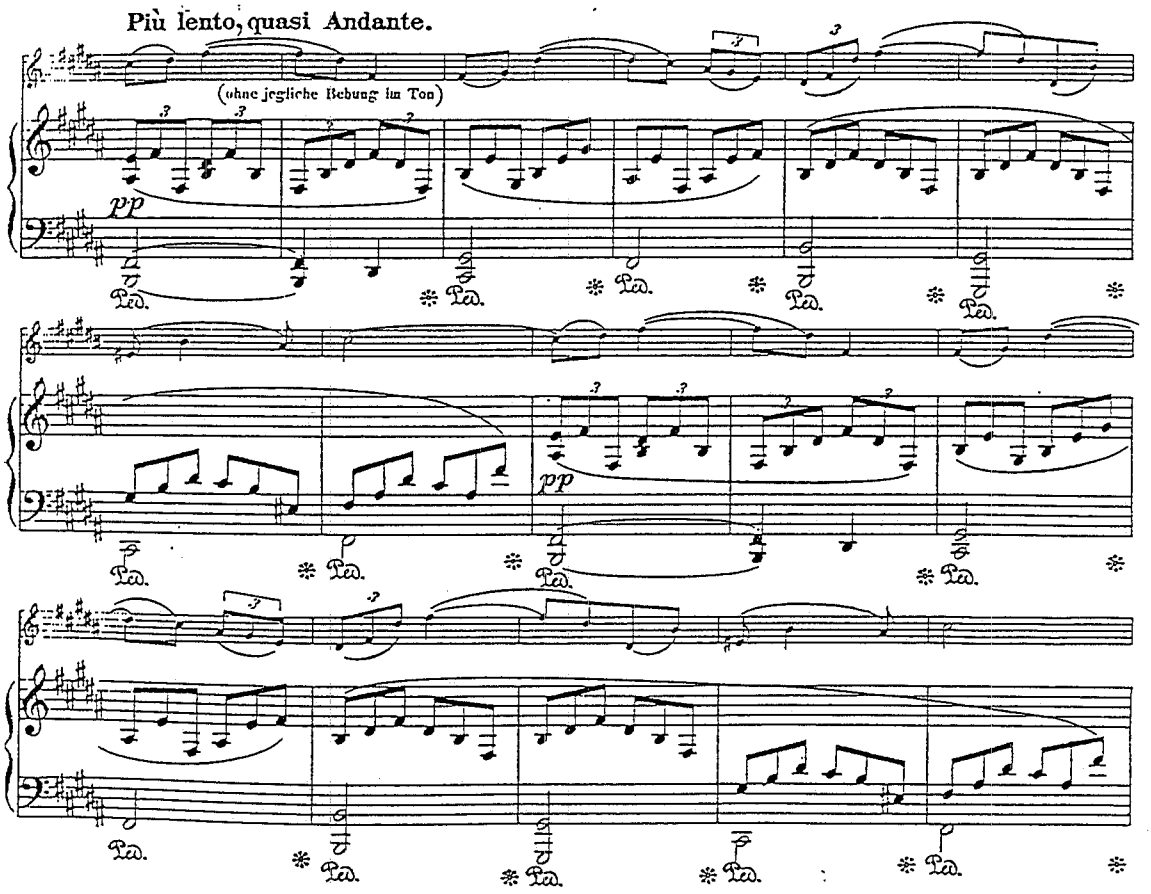
Reinecke also uses another type of universally recognizable water symbolism, one that is more specific to his style than the arpeggiated accompanimmoents. In the first theme of the opening movement (Example 14) arpeggios featuring the open intervals of the perfect fifth and fourth are used melodically rather than in an accompanying capacity.

Open intervals, particularly the octave on F#, are also emphasized in the skeleton of the second interlude of the second movement, in the theme associated with Undine (Example 15). This Undine theme achieves a similar indefinite, watery character through a melodic concentration on C#, the most open, timbrally empty note on the flute and a melodic skeleton based on the open interval C#-F#, filled in by wide leaps.

Example 14: First movement, mm. 1-22



Example 15: Second movement, mm. 98-131



The somewhat hollow, wandering sound of these themes may be taken to represent Undine, perhaps in her "hollow", soulless state. The Undine theme of the second movement is particularly important in the structure of the sonata, since it recurs twice in the final movement. Interpretations of the sonata's programme which differ on almost every count are unanimous in their agreement that this theme represents the character of Undine.[12] In addition to the wide intervals, which give the theme a mysterious and other-worldly quality, especially since this interval pattern appears nowhere else in the sonata, the rhythmic profile of this "Undine" theme sets it apart as unusual and significant. The use of ties over the bar line and the persistent tension between duplets and triplets stand out from the texture of the sonata as a whole.

The most dramatic way in which this theme is set apart from the style of sonata's other material is in the direction in the flute part to play without any vibrato ("ohne jegliche Bebung im Ton"), a musical instruction that is exceedingly unusual for the time and the style of the piece. It is logical to conclude that these stylistic features deliberately represent Undine, the ghostly intruder from another world.

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[12] Brown, Programmaticism in Carl Reinecke's Sonata, Opus 167, "Undine"; and Moll, notes to RCA ATC1-4034.

Other themes in the sonata can be identified on this level of musical convention. The first movement's second theme fits well into Cooke's model for the musical sigh, the manifestation of grief, with its falling chain of seconds.[13] The opening theme of the third movement is easily identifiable as a love duet, more for its relationship of strict dialogue between flute and piano than for its thematic shape.

Finally, on the level of pure symbolic association, it is fairly easy to identify the theme of the first interlude in the second movement as representing the knight Huldbrand. This section is in the relative major key of G, which Phillip Moll sees as symbolizing the human world throughout the sonata[14], and uses the dotted rhythms, often traditionally associated with nobility and grandeur, and regular, periodically organized four-bar phrases.[15]

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[13] Cooke, 146-150.

[14] Moll, notes to RCA ATC1-4034.

[15] The connection between dotted rhythms and nobility or exalted social position probably originated with the French overture of the Baroque suite, which was conventionally used to accompany the entrance of the king or other noble patron.

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

In recent years, two significant attempts have been made to detail the representation of the programme in Reinecke's sonata. Both the efforts of Phillip Moll and Myrna Brown are subjectively based, and are intended more as guides for listening to or performing the sonata than as investigations of Reinecke's compositional techniques.[16]

In a slightly contradictory essay on the sonata, Moll argues against a narrative interpretation of the music, before proceeding to detail very convincingly many narrative elements of the sonata:

> In no way can the flute sonata be described as a point-for-point retelling of the events... Formally straightforward, it is not programme music; its relation to the story is allusive rather than narrative... it does seem evident that Reinecke, apart from the particulars of the plot, saw in the story certain polarities of which he could make use in generating musical contrasts.[17]

Some of the polarities which Moll suggests are active in the sonata are the underwater kingdom versus the world of men, the magical versus the natural, and Undine's unwavering loyalty as opposed to the transience of human emotions.

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[16] Moll, notes to RCA ATC1-4034, and Myrna Brown, Programmaticism, 1981, and "Programmatic Elements in Carl Reinecke's Sonata, Opus 167, "Undine" National Flute Association Newsletter VII/2 (Winter, 1982), 9-13.

[17] Moll, notes to RCA ATC1-4034.

Although he rejects a narrative interpretation of the sonata, Moll makes some enlightened observations about possible programmatic aspects of the work, in particular the last movement:

> In the final movement the drama is unleashed, and Reinecke, despite his classical predilections, acknowledges his allegiance to the era in which he lived...Even in Mozart's most tragic music, finales strive not for dramatic complexity but for reconciliation and resolution. Here the greatest drama is in the last movement.[18]

Moll points to one of the moments of the last movement that is richest in semantic importance as an instance in which the sonata does become true programme music.

> Nearing the conclusion, with the tempo quickening and the harmony becoming still more unsettled, a distorted, barely recognizable form of Undine's theme from the second movement is heard in the piano beneath impassioned protestations, played "with full force" by the flute. [see Example 16] Cannot Huldbrand be heard here, cursing his wife as a witch?[19]

This interpretation of the last movement clearly depends on a recognition of motivic connections within the sonata as a whole.

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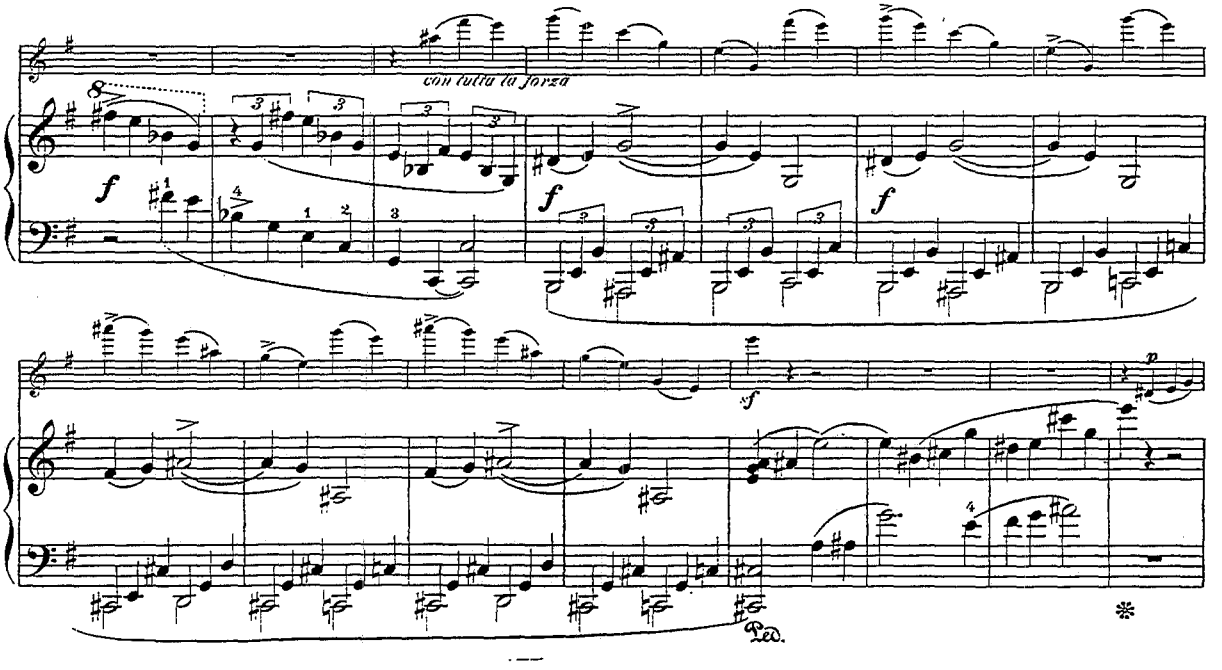
[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

Example 16: Fourth movement, mm. 206-220



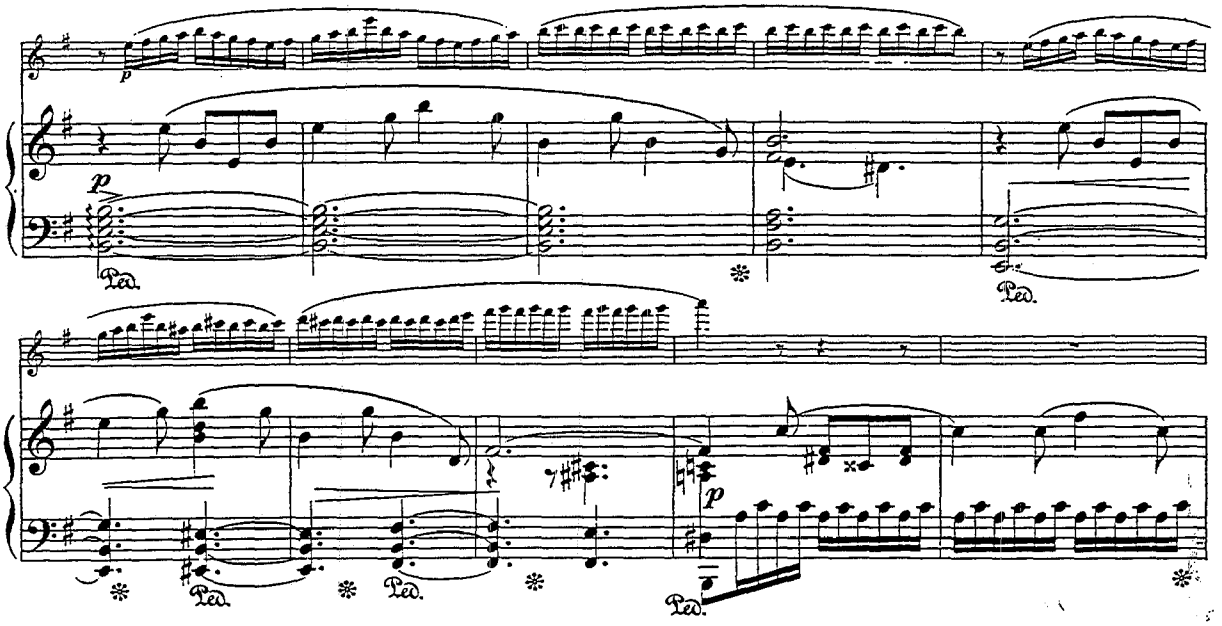
Taking this example as a model, I would suggest that the Reinecke sonata is a truly programmatic and narrative work, in the terms defined by Moll. There are several other moments of equal structural and motivic importance which support a narrative interpretation of the music. The sonata's first movement follows, for the most part, conventional sonata form. A few unusual elements which may or may not have narrative significance are the extreme prominence of the movement's closing theme, in G major, compared to the rather undefined character of the actual second theme. If Phillip Moll's suggestion of the structure of key symbolism in the work is correct, the importance of

the lyrical G major theme may suggest that Undine is already living with her step-parents in the human world, and that the prospect of attaining a human soul already has a strong attraction for her. The movement's exposition initially presents Undine's "hollow" theme (Example 14) alone, then repeats it against a background of watery, arpeggiated figures.

The development concentrates almost exclusively on fragmention and modulation based on this first theme, while introducing capricious scale passages traded back and forth by flute and piano. The G major theme makes no appearance in the development section.

The most interesting moment of the first movement is the beginning of the recapitulation, which is almost completely obscured by the running passages played by the flute (Example 17).

Example 17: First movement, mm. 111-120



Although thematically and tonally the recapitulation occurs in the piano part at this point, the real feeling of return is postponed until the second statement of the first theme, 20 measures later. This unusual recapitulation was likely intended by Reinecke to communicate some programmatic idea, perhaps the element of secrecy surrounding Undine's origins, and her concealment of her true nature from both Huldbrand and her stepparents.

The first movement's coda, ending on a gentle plagal cadence, reinforces the movement's concentration on the Undine theme, expanding on an E minor arpeggio in a spare and simple texture.

If the sonata's second movement has narrative significance, it is communicated on a purely symbolic,

rather than a structural level, through juxtaposition of the movement's three themes. Structurally, the movement is a perfectly conventional scherzo with two trios, containing no unusual elements of proportion or repetition. The theme of the recurring A section could easily be interpreted as representing magical powers and Undine's capricious nature.[20] As stated above, the first interlude represents Huldbrand, and the second Undine. The juxtaposition of these clearly symbolic themes, then, suggests that the second movement is analogous to the moment in the tale when Huldbrand and Undine meet, before she has received her human soul and lost her capricious and magical nature.

The interplay between flute and piano in the third movement is structured as a love duet, with the instruments questioning and answering each other, then switching roles, with perfect symmetry. It seems that in the third movement, Reinecke is consciously equating the flute with Undine and the right hand of the piano with Huldbrand. To use Edward Cone's terminology, the flute and the piano right hand become temporary "virtual agents" for the two main characters of the drama.[21] The relationship between the two

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Cone uses the term "virtual agent" to describe an instrumental voice that assumes the role of a specific character in a musical drama, for example, the oboe and the English horn in the third movement of Berlioz' Symphonie

parts, developing from harmony in thirds and sixths to unisons and octaves, is symbolic of the relationship between the characters at this point in the narrative. This is the first of several passages in the last part of the sonata in which Reinecke uses the differing ranges of the flute and piano as virtual agents corresponding to the voice ranges of the characters they represent.

The unusual formal aspect of the movement is the sudden interruption of the sentimental duet by a tempestuous interlude, molto vivace. This short section uses the turbulent triplet figures that, throughout the sonata, represent the dark, threatening side of the water kingdom.

The programmatic interpretations of Brown and Moll agree that this section corresponds to the appearance of Kühleborn from the depths, but there is no internal musical evidence to support this assertion.[22] In fact, since the flute plays the melodic role in these few measures, against the purely atmospheric support of the piano, it seems more that the impassioned exclamations come from Undine, a soprano voice, rather than Kühleborn, who would more logically be portrayed by the bass.

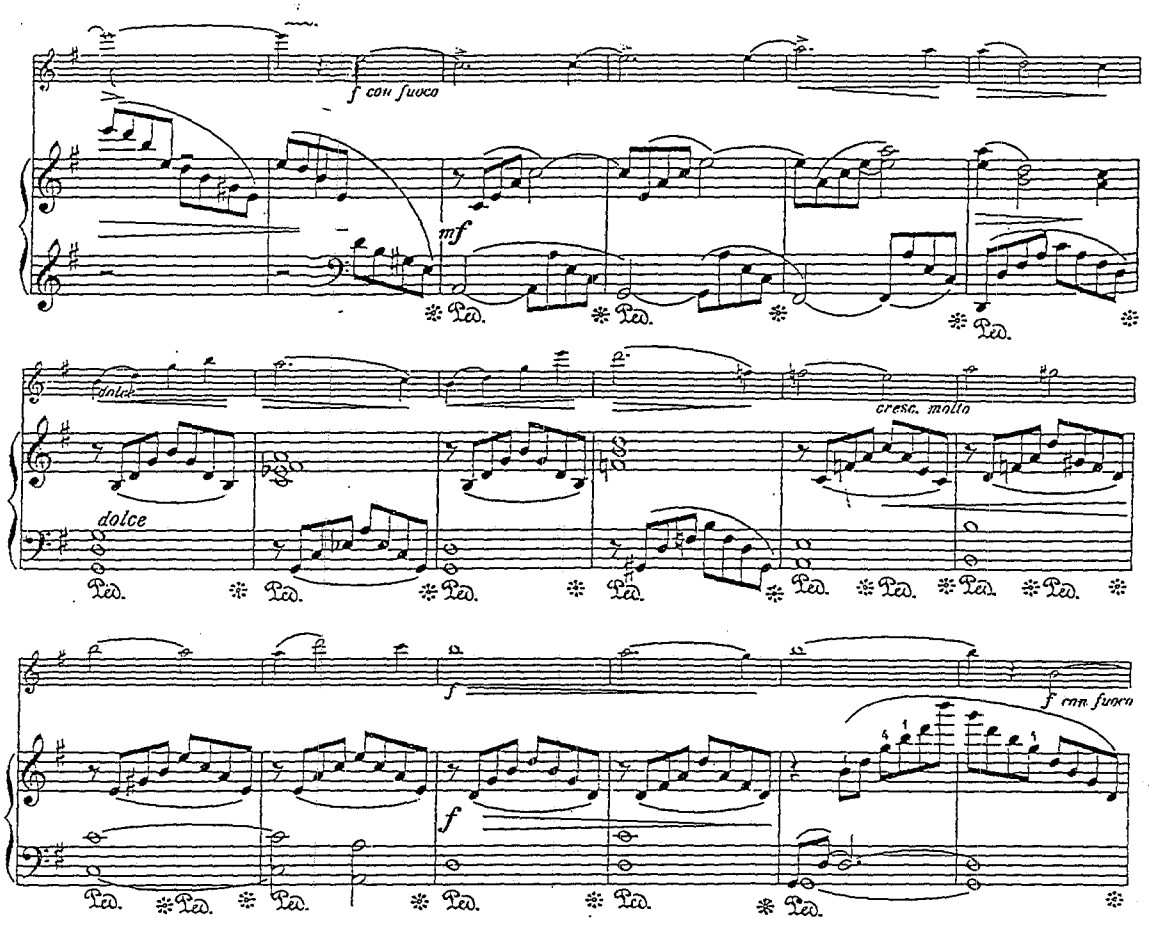
Fantastique. Edward T. Cone, The Composer's Voice, 87-88.

[22] Brown, Programmaticism, 28; and Moll, notes to RCA ATC1-4034.

One episode of Fouqué's story that would fit the three-part form of this movement is the scene in which Undine discloses her true origins to Huldbrand. In this movement, as in the fairy tale, a moment of extreme agitation is followed by an even more secure and unified duet, relying more heavily on unison between the two upper voices, possibly representing Huldbrand's reassertion of his love for Undine and his continuing fidelity to her.

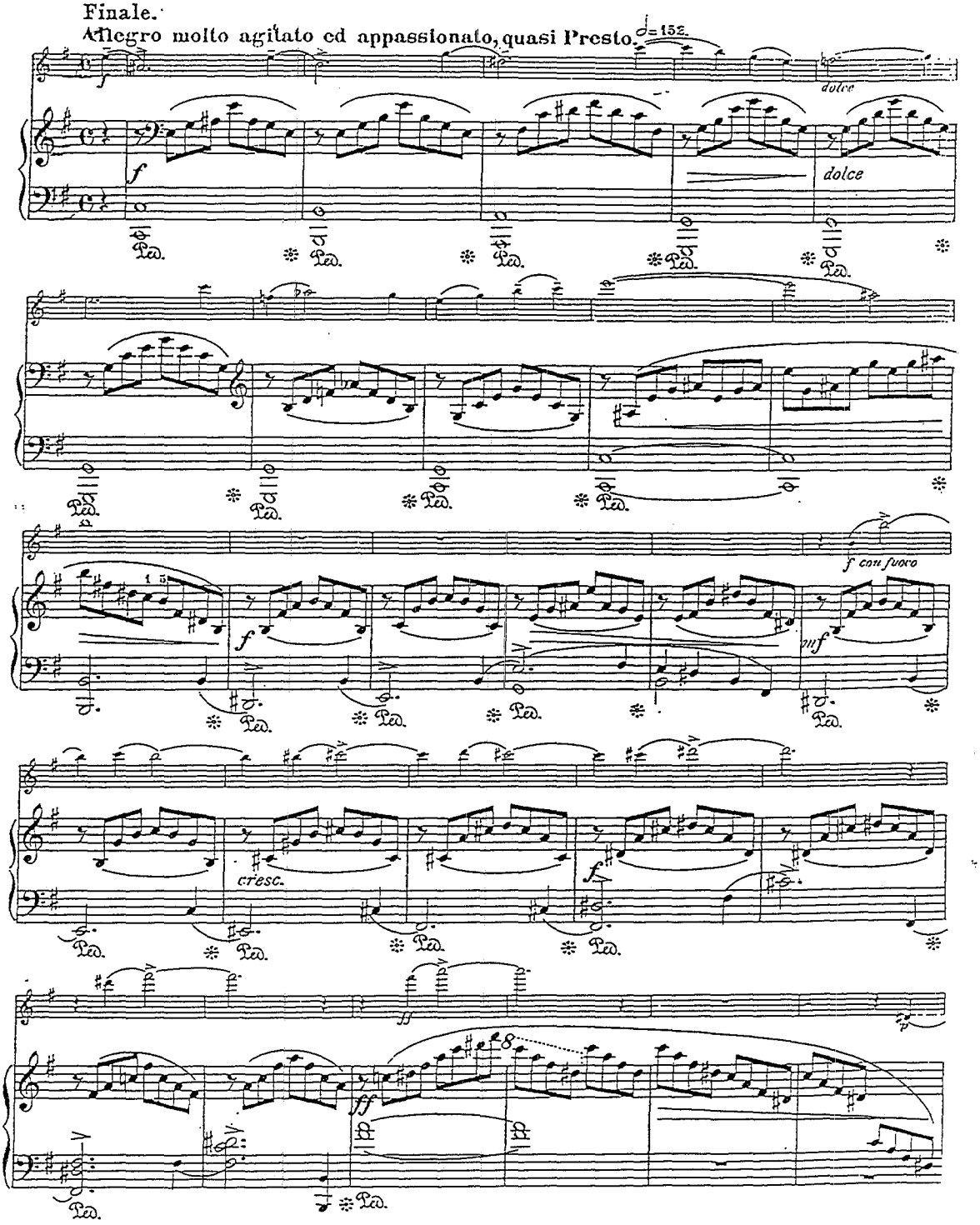
The final movement of the sonata carries much of the musical and narrative weight of the piece. The harmonic and rhythmic turbulence of the movement and its clear motivic connections to earlier movements make certain of its narrative aspects explicit. The movement is in sonata form, but its two main themes are so similar to one another as to make the movement feel almost monothematic. The second theme (Example 18) is a rhythmically and harmonically more stable version of the tortured main theme.

Example 18: Fourth movement, mm. 40-57



The dolce passages that form the tail of the second theme suggest Undine's pleading, in response to the angry outbursts of Huldbrand heard in the first theme (Example 19).

Example 19: Fourth movement, mm. 1-27



Texturally, also, the movement often suggests a troubled duet, though the duet in this movement is most often between the flute and the left hand of the piano. It does not seem too far-fetched here to interpret parts of the first theme as an altercation between Undine and Kühleborn, while later passages are duets between Undine and Huldbrand.

The fourth movement introduces several new motives to represent the motion of the waves, the most important of which are the agitated triplets and the more tranquil alternating seconds. The Development section is based completely on the first theme, fragmenting it and modulating to ever more remote keys.

There is a musical transformation in this final movement, in the coda, which may represent Undine's transformation from human back to water spirit. After a restatement of the second theme in the tonic major, an internal coda states the second theme again in Ab major.

There are two moments of clear semantic significance in the movement. The first is the statement of the distorted Undine theme at the end of the internal coda, as identified by Phillip Moll.[23] It seems reasonable to interpret this as Moll does, as Huldbrand's distorted vision of Undine as a witch. The other is the reappearance of the

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[23] Moll, notes to RCA ATC1-4034.

Undine theme in its original form in the movement's external coda. The theme is stated in E major, played first by piano alone, then by the flute with a bare harmonic support from the piano. While it is tempting to see this as the gentle expiration of Undine as a brook, burbling on Huldbrand's grave, the music does not suggest any such specific interpretation.[24]

What is clear is that the two instruments are no longer playing the roles of personae in the unfolding drama, since they now share the same musical material, with no dialogic interplay. This suggests the reassertion of a narrative, rather than a dramatic point of view, a calm and reflective closing comment by a narrator who has observed and recounted the tragic events from a distance. The closest correspondence to this moment to be found in Fouqué's story is probably the dedication with which he begins the tale, in which he reflects upon the charm of Undine's character.

CONCLUSION

It can be demonstrated from examining these unusual structural points that Reinecke's sonata is more than an evocation of Undine's character or a representation of the

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[24] Brown, Programmaticism.

emotional climate surrounding the tale. There is a clear attempt at narration, although, except in a few cases, it is difficult to specify beyond doubt exactly which episodes of the tale are being represented. The main techniques used by Reinecke to strengthen the narrative level of the tale are structural disturbance, cyclic motivic connections, and symbolic representation of characters by corresponding voice ranges.

Even more difficult than constructing a credible narrative structure for the sonata is determining Reinecke's attitude to his material. He alternates in the course of the sonata between the point of view of uninvolved narrator, detailing events and even transmitting dialogue, as in the third movement, and that of commentator, combining narration with comment and emotional background, as in the external coda of the last movement.

The medium severely limits the ways in which Reinecke can reinterpret the literary material of Undine according to his own desires. Almost no interpretation of or comment on the material can be discerned. Perhaps by necessity, Reinecke emphasizes the depiction of the two main characters and the contrast between them, as well as the turbulent atmosphere of the tale. To achieve greater detail and clarity in his narrative, Reinecke would have had to sacrifice some of the equilibrium of his traditional form.

The tension between Reinecke's devotion to Classical ideals and his desire to narrate both restricts the narrative potential of the work and gives the sonata a strength and balance poised between the two streams of the late Romantic movement.

Thematically, the contrast between the human and water worlds is given prominence, using methods similar to those used by Hoffmann. The opposition between the two worlds is represented primarily by the techniques of key contrast and structure, heard most clearly in the centrally placed passage representing the human world in the third movement.

It is interesting that the character of Bertalda seems to make no appearance in the thematic system of the sonata. This allows Reinecke to focus on the attraction and the conflict between the two worlds and their representatives, Undine and Huldbrand, without undue confusion. Nor is Kühleborn granted an individual theme: his appearances are suggested only by voicing.

Reinecke's sonata for flute and piano combines the balance of Classical structure with a more typically Romantic disruption of structure which communicates the work's narrative dimension. Both on the level of narrative detail and on the level of individual interpretation of the material, the medium of instrumental sonata can communicate

less precisely than opera. However, the Reinecke sonata does effectively express the basic conflict of the fairy tale, the allegorical opposition between man and nature, without achieving the rich detail and resonance that was possible in Hoffmann's treatment.

CHAPTER 7- CONCLUSION

In order to examine the three musical depictions of Fouqué's Undine in the larger context of the Romantic era and its style, it will be useful to summarize the approaches taken by the three composers, both to their literary material and to the conventions of the time. Each of the three composers discussed has taken Undine as a starting point from which to respond to the musical conventions of his times, in order to communicate the particular meanings of Undine that were important to him. The specific meanings that each composer finds in the tale reflect both his individual enthusiasms and his social and historical setting.

The differences and similarities between the approaches of Hoffmann, Lortzing and Reinecke can be categorized on three levels: the methods used to depict the tale's literary content, the attitude of each composer to musical convention, and the type of interpretation of the material offered by each composer.

It is in the area of depiction of the characters and situations of the tale that the greatest similarity between the three approaches can be seen. The three composers

relied on many of the same techniques of contrast and characterization, suggesting that there is a strong basis in fact for the various theories of universal Western musical expression.

The area in which the similarity of approach is most striking among the three works studied is the representation of the spirit world, and specifically of the character of Undine. All three composers step outside the bounds of formal and harmonic convention in their efforts to portray the world of the water spirits.

Music associated with the water kingdom in the three works often uses traditional rippling arpeggiated figures to denote the physical movement of water, but an equally important resource for Hoffmann and Reinecke is the use of open forms, non-periodic phrase structures and irregular rhythmic figures to convey the freedom from social restraints that is a primary characteristic of the water kingdom.

These techniques are also used by all three composers to colour the music associated with the character of Undine. The capricious nature of the water nymph is communicated by all three works in much the same ways: sudden contrasts of dynamic, wide leaps, and frequent tempo and key changes.

In their stylistic responses to convention on the large scale, the attitudes of three composers differ more greatly. As stated above, Hoffmann and Reinecke step outside convention in significant ways in order to communicate the foreignness of the water kingdom. Only Hoffmann takes this small-scale experimentation further, to the point of evolving a new style to represent the material.

Lortzing's response is to defy convention for brief moments of characterization, but to retain the strictly codified number opera or Singspiel-like structure that characterizes all his operas. In fact, Lortzing bends the shape and content of the fairy tale in several important ways to suit it better to his highly-organized theatrical vision, and hence to the demands of his audience.

Reinecke's flute sonata treads a middle path, making few significant structural changes to the traditional nineteenth- century sonata, but adding intermittently a narrative dimension to his structure. The non-conventional aspects of Reinecke's work tend to be more prominent on the small scale, particularly in the realm of thematic construction.

Of the three composers, Hoffmann is the only one to be influenced deeply enough by the literary source to allow it to challenge the structural conventions that had dominated his work up to that point. The way in which the

fairy tale appealed to Hoffmann's literary love of mysticism and allegory and simultaneously fit in with his attitudes to the aesthetics of opera inspired him to take important steps in the evolution of a new style of through-composed, leitmotivically organized opera.

It is in the realm of interpretation of the literary material that the way in which the three composers reflect their times and places is especially obvious. Hoffmann's extreme receptivity to the demands of the literature is typical of the early years of the century, in which all art strove to be symbolic, allegorical and synaesthetic. The private milieu of Lortzing, that of the travelling company of entertainers, and the public one of pre-revolutionary fervour conspired to make Lortzing's treatment of Undine one which reclaims the story and places it firmly among the people, for the purpose of entertainment, not philosophical significance.

The non-verbal, non-specific nature of the Reinecke sonata makes it difficult to determine any but the most general attitude of the composer to his material. Reinecke's unusual position as a formally conservative composer of programme music and the sonata that results from this conflict are perhaps representative of a larger conflict at the end of the Romantic era, as composers simultaneously attempted to strip down their forms by

returning to classical ideals, and to expand the expressive potential of their music.

Reinecke concentrates on the opposition between the worlds and the personalities of Undine and Huldbrand, ignoring, probably by necessity, all other aspects of the tale, including the rivalry and the redemption motives. Although this contrast between the two worlds is predominant in the sonata, it is almost certainly in the foreground for musical reasons of variety and contrast, and it would be misleading to regard this as a deliberate interpretation of the tale by Reinecke.

Hoffmann, like Reinecke, focusses on the contrast between the two worlds, but his treatment of this dichotomy is richer and more detailed. It is the allegorical depths of this opposition that interest Hoffmann. His use of words and semantically charged motives allow him to treat the conflict between water and human worlds as a reflection of oppositions between nature and humanity, the artist and society, and music and literature.

Lortzing's approach to the content of the fairy tale is diametrically opposed to Hoffmann's. His desire is to bring all the characters and events of the story into the cosy confines of the experience of his middle-class, Biedermeier audience, in particular to familiarize the supernatural aspects of the plot. Lortzing's interpretation

of Undine emphasizes the human and the comic element throughout, focusing almost exclusively on the motive of the love triangle.

Fouqué's Undine offers certain universal elements that have suited it for frequent musical settings and interpretations and that have ensured its wide and enduring popularity. At the same time, Undine offers a multiplicity of interpretations which have allowed Hoffmann, Lortzing and Reinecke to produce three widely divergent compositions, each of which reflects the musical and social mood of the composers' times.

If one great strength of Undine is its versatility, another factor in the tale's wide appeal to composers must surely be the portrayal of Undine, the spontaneous and free, but always isolated artist figure. The position of Undine, balanced tragically between her two worlds, as a metaphor for the position of the nineteenth-century composer is a powerful one. Although made specific only in Hoffmann's opera, this metaphorical level is significant, and it may have appealed to all three composers on some level and influenced their decisions to set Undine to music.

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