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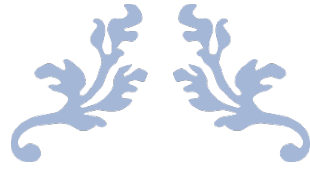
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**Characteristic Brilliance: an examination of compositional
influence in Clara Schumann's Op 5**

Ruairidh Pattie

**A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in
fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of
Arts**

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CHARACTERISTIC BRILLIANCE

An examination of compositional influence in Clara Schumann's Op 5



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1 – Introduction

Over the course of the last few years the life and work of Clara Schumann¹ has gained an increasing level of academic interest, especially after the 200th anniversary of her birth in 2019. The popular image of Schumann as the counterpart to Robert Schumann and later to Johannes Brahms has been somewhat displaced by a recognition of her as an artist in her own right, with several monographs, a number of articles, and even an entire conference devoted to her work. Much of this more recent scholarly attention focuses on her mature work as a composer (after her marriage to Robert Schumann) especially her output of songs. Less focus has so far been placed on Schumann's development as a composer and the musical works she studied that shaped her compositional voice.

In this thesis I will address this gap by examining the influence of the pieces Schumann studied at the piano on her *Quatre Pièces caractéristiques* Op 5, written between 1833-1836 when Schumann was 14-16 years old. Larry Todd (2004, p. 320) characterises Schumann's Op 5, as a transitional opus, carrying Schumann from 'the dance forms of her youth to the character pieces of her maturity'. Schumann's compositional style in her pieces written before her Op 5 is fairly uncomplicated, mainly utilising popular dance forms, whilst certainly showing signs of the compositional flair that was to come. These pieces were designed to be crowd pleasing (Reich, 2001, p. 212), fulfilling the expectation of an early-nineteenth-century pianist to play something of their own composition in their concerts.

During the composition of her Op 5, there were several factors in Schumann's musical life that may well have contributed to the transition in compositional style that Todd describes, the largest of these being the arrival of Chopin's music in her repertoire. The addition of Chopin into Schumann's repertoire also signalled the arrival of the broader *Field* school of playing (named after John Field the inventor of the nocturne) into Schumann's repertoire. The Field school is broadly characterised by 'lyrical, sometimes lavishly ornamented melody for the right hand supported by a wide-ranging arpeggiated accompaniment. Most often the harmonic motion is slow, as individual sonorities are sustained through extensive tonic pedal points' (Plantinga, 1984, p. 90). Field's style has received most attention in relation to his nocturnes. Leon Plantinga (1984) gives a good explanation of the development of this style, and its organic growth through Field's career, charting Field's musical journey from the pupil of Clementi through the development of his own style. Whilst this style of composition is now most closely associated with Chopin, in the 1830s it was John Field who was considered to be the greatest exponent of this style, indeed Friedrich Wieck describes Chopin's Op 2 as having 'his [Field's] influence on every page' (Makela, Kammertons, Ptasczynski, & Wieck, 2019, p. 54). Wieck goes on to describe Chopin as being admired by all those who are aware of the *Field* school. In Schumann's Op 6, Chopin's influence is clear to see, as discussed by Todd (2004, p. 322). However, Chopin's influence begins to be felt as early as her Op 5, and I shall investigate this in this thesis.

The other style whose influence can be strongly felt in Schumann's Op 5 is that of the *brilliant* style of writing for the piano. Ritterman (1992, p. 18) describes the *brilliant* style of playing as:

one in which variety of nuance, clarity of articulation, sharpness of contrast and rapidity of execution were paramount....This style first emerged in a distinctive way in the second decade of the [nineteenth] century

¹ Hereafter 'Schumann'. To avoid confusion Robert Schumann is referred to as either 'Robert Schumann' or 'R. Schumann', and Friedrich Wieck as either 'Friedrich Wieck' or 'Wieck'.

and was associated with pianists such as [Johann Nepomuk] Hummel, [Friedrich] Kalkbrenner and [Ignaz] Moscheles – pianists whose technique had been formed on the light-actioned Viennese instruments.

The association between the Viennese pianos and this style of composition led to it sometimes being called the ‘Viennese style’.

This style of playing was accompanied by a school of composition in which rapid scalic passages, and virtuosic arpeggiated figures were common.² Virtuosity could be considered to be the unifying factor of this school of thought, and compositions written with this style in mind prioritise virtuosity above other musical concerns. As is discussed by Stefaniak (2018, p. 196), mechanical virtuosity was equated by writers in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* to the skill of an acrobat: purely physical. The *brilliant* school has also been discussed by Jean Roudet (2015) in her article on the piano style of Chopin and Schumann, largely in relation to Chopin’s Op 2. Field’s style, when compared to the *brilliant*, is often more lyrical, using widely spaced arpeggiated accompaniments, with simple melodies that become embellished through the piece. In the 1830s the two most famous exponents of this style were John Field himself and Chopin. My contention is that Schumann used the techniques she learnt through playing the music of other composers in her own compositions and that the techniques she used in her compositions were influenced especially by the pieces she played. The models used by these composers, in particular Chopin, but also the composers of the *brilliant* school such as Carl Czerny, Henri Herz, Johann Nepomuk Hummel and Friedrich Kalkbrenner are reflected in Schumann’s composition. The differences between these two styles, and how Schumann navigated them in her Op 5 will form a large part of this thesis. Although these three styles have a great deal of overlap, there are some key points of difference between them. Broadly speaking, the Field school is flowing and lyrical, the *brilliant* is florid and virtuosic, while Schumann’s individual voice is mainly identifiable through specific gestures.

Schumann’s Op 5 consists of four pieces: Op 5 no 1 ‘*Impromptu, Le Sabbat*’ (republished as ‘*Hexentanz*’ in 1838); no 2 ‘*Caprice a la Boleros*’; no 3 ‘*Romance*’ and no 4 ‘*Le Ballet des Revenants*’. Each piece has its own distinct character. No 1 is angular, played largely in homophonic chords in octaves, using what Reich (2001, p. 224) describes as ‘nineteenth-century demonic touches’ such as ‘wide leaps, reiterated appoggiaturas, accents on weak beats [and] chromatically ascending bass passages’. No 2 is in ternary form: the A section uses driving dance rhythms underneath rapid scalic passages, whereas the B section is written in a contrastingly flowing style, the first appearance of the influence of the *Field* school in this opus. The piece then returns to the dance of the A section, with little embellishment when compared to the first iteration of the A section. In No 3 Schumann returns to a more flowing style, a gentle contrast to much of the rest of the opus. This is also the only piece of the four that does not involve a dance of some kind. Schumann instead chose to focus on lyricism and lush pianistic writing. Finally, No 4 portrays the ghostly ballet of the title with a reiteration of many of the ‘demonic touches’ Reich describes as being present in No 1. Most notably, in the opening section of the piece which utilises reiterated appoggiaturas and chromatically ascending bass passages in order to build musical tension before eventually arriving at the main theme of the piece. In all her previous opuses Schumann stays fairly rigidly within traditional dance forms, and within a single stylistic model for each set of compositions. The contrasting styles in Schumann’s Op 5 speak to the transition in her compositional voice that Todd describes.

² The arpeggios of the *brilliant* school were intended for virtuosic display, whereas they were a method of accompaniment in the *Field* school, so although the two schools used similar techniques, they used them in different ways.

I will explore to what extent Schumann's compositional style was influenced by what she studied at the piano, under the direction of her father, Friedrich Wieck. As Hunter (2005) argues, there was an expectation for a performer to have an almost spiritual connection to the composer of the music they were performing, in order to render the musical work most effectively, as the title of the article suggests the performer was to 'play as if from the Soul of the Composer'. Stefaniak (2018, p. 195) builds on Hunter's work in relation to Schumann, arguing that 'Schumann, as an individual pianist, embodied an ideal that Mary Hunter has revealed as foundational to nineteenth-century performing aesthetics'. Stefaniak (2018, p. 199) goes on to describe Schumann's 'repertory as central to her profile', especially in her career before her marriage. Given that Schumann's repertoire was central to her reputation and she would be expected to display a deep connection to the music, I will therefore argue that the music Schumann studied played a central role in influencing her musical choices.

The diary that was begun by Wieck for Schumann and then continued by her throughout her life provides an extensive list of pieces that Schumann studied. This list was first compiled in 1902 by Berthold Litzmann in his biography of Schumann (1913), although later scholars have disputed the accuracy of this list. The Schumann Netzwerk (2019), part of the Schumann archive in Zwickau in which many of the primary sources connected to the Schumann couple are stored, provide a corrected list compiled from a re-examining of the data provided by the diaries and letters written by Wieck and Schumann. This list of pieces studied by Schumann in the years 1825-1836 is given as an appendix to this thesis,³ and an examination of the composers that Schumann studied year by year tells a fascinating story of the shifting musical aesthetics to which she was exposed. A study of Schumann's concert programs and her response to the changes in musical taste has already been undertaken by Kopiez et. al (2009). The pieces that Wieck selected for his daughter to learn are reflected in the music that she wrote as well as in her concert performances. The particular moment in which Schumann's Op 5 was written was a transition between two styles of pianism, namely from the *brilliant* to *Field* school, and so Schumann's compositions reflect these pianistic aesthetics. I will argue that much of the music Schumann studied came from the opposing styles of the *brilliant* and *Field* schools, two of the major schools of piano playing and composition at the beginning of the nineteenth century and within Schumann's repertoire. It is also possible to demonstrate specific instances in which the music of Clara Schumann and Robert Schumann influenced each other in her opus 5. This is hardly surprising as the two composers were living and working in the same house at the time.

In this thesis I will examine further the transition in styles that Todd suggests, what influences may have been at play in Schumann's compositional choices and how they affected the music she wrote. This will comprise of a combination of musical analysis and by placing the compositional decisions she made in a historical context, and therefore determine what influences drove Schumann to make the musical choices she did throughout her Op 5. This will begin with a review of the literature surrounding Schumann's Op 5, then an examination of the distinct musical styles present in the opus. Finally, I will use Chopin's Op 2 (a piece studied by Schumann in 1831)⁴ as a case study for the ways in which the pieces Schumann studied affected her compositional voice. This thesis will focus on the music that Schumann studied at the piano, as this is what we have the most accurate record of through Schumann's diaries, the work of Litzmann and the Schumann Netzwerk.

³ The appendix given at the end of this thesis covers the pieces that Schumann learnt from the beginning of her education as a pianist in 1825 until 1836, the year in which Op 5 was published.

⁴ See appendix

Given the extensive documentary evidence available as to what pieces Schumann studied at the piano the focus of this thesis will be towards these pieces. Therefore, consideration of the influence of the music Schumann may have additionally heard played in concert or in private lies outside the scope of this thesis. Furthermore, although the perceptions of gender and its effect on creativity in the nineteenth century is an area that requires greater exploration in relation to Schumann's Op 5, it also lies beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate it.

2 - Literature review

For most, if not all, studies of Clara Schumann's life and work the starting point is the biography of Berthold Litzmann, or its translation into English by Grace E. Hadow (1913). Litzmann's account is a useful resource, as he was a family friend of the Schumann's. He had personal experience of Schumann herself to draw upon, as well as her vast collection of diaries and letters on which he based his biography. However, this personal relationship may have coloured his account of Schumann's life to some degree, wishing to portray her in the best light possible. As Hadow puts it in her introduction to her translation, 'the biographers of our great musicians have too often tended to merge the historian in the advocate. They are full of generous enthusiasm for their subject; they are anxious above all things to present it in an attractive light' (Litzmann, 1913, p. Preface). This was fairly standard for nineteenth century biographers, as Hadow notes, and is worth bearing in mind when reading Litzmann's account. Furthermore, by his own admission Litzmann was not a musicologist, rather a literary historian. Litzmann (1913, p. XXVII). even states in his introduction that he 'felt [he] had not the peculiar technical knowledge of music necessary for the biographer of an executive artist'. Litzmann's account is therefore an excellent resource in terms of the events of Schumann's life but is occasionally lacking in musical detail. This issue was first addressed by Florence May, in her book *The Girlhood of Clara Schumann* (1912). In her introduction May (1912, p. v) writes:

I can in no wise claim that I am able to offer any hitherto unpublished particulars of biographical interest. For the main facts of that portion of my work which deals with the personal events of Clara Wieck's [Schumann's] life I am indebted to the first volume of Berthold Litzmann's "*Clara Schumann, ein Künstlerleben*" (three volumes, published 1902-1908), which, founded on the diary and correspondence of the great artist, is, from the purely biographical point of view, exhaustive. There is, however, another standpoint from which Frau Schumann's early career may be studied; one that has been left unconsidered by Litzmann and that was, perhaps, necessarily excluded from the scope of his work by mere bulk of the personal material at his command, yet of great interest to music-lovers: the stand point of musical history.

May's monograph was the first attempt to provide a truly musicological account of at least part of the life of Schumann. May's intention was to inform her readership of the more exact musical happenings in Schumann's life. May(1912, p. vii) returned to such resources as the archive of the Leipzig Gewandhaus, Karasowski's volume on the letters of Chopin, as well as other various biographies of other figures in Schumann's life before her marriage, in conjunction with references to contemporary news reports of Schumann's playing and concert giving. All of these combine to create a more convincing picture of Schumann's early musical life. This volume was, however, in large part based on the work of Litzmann, and so does contain some of the same tendency towards the merging of history and advocacy that Hadow describes in Litzmann's own work.

In the English-speaking world, the most consequential work on Clara Schumann's life after these two books was Nancy B. Reich's *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman* of 1987, with the revised edition published in 2001. In this book Reich sought to explain the attitudes that had caused

Litzmann to portray events in Schumann's life the way he had and to contextualise them within the confines of an early twentieth century biography. Reich (2001, p. 138) goes as far as to call Litzmann 'Schumann's greatest apologist'. Reich's work has gone on to be a major influence on how Schumann's work is perceived and serves as a reference point for understanding Schumann's musical and personal choices. In the German speaking world Beatrix Borchard's (1991) biography *Clara Schumann: Ein Leben* has also provided further perspectives on the life of Schumann. In this volume Borchard presents many letters and diary entries of Schumann's with little comment, allowing Schumann's words to speak for themselves. Borchard does use many of the passages quoted by Litzmann, but also adds others enriching the picture of Schumann's life. Janina Klassen's (2009) *Clara Schumann: die Virtuosin als Komponistin*, which places a special emphasis on Schumann as a composer, has also helped shaped the discourse in Schumann studies.

Another primary resource we have is Friedrich Wieck's (1853) book *Clavier und Gesang (Piano and Singing)*. In this book Wieck details what he thought was wrong with the musical world as he knew it in a series of stories in which he comments on the young students in a household he is visiting and then critiques the teaching technique of their piano master. Unfortunately, Wieck is quick to point out the flaws in others' methods but does not always provide a practical solution to the problems he cites. Wieck (1853, p. 39) is also very keen to emphasise his connection to his daughters, he writes:

And now with regard to my daughters. It has been their fortune to have had me for a father and teacher: they certainly have talent, and I have been successful in rousing and guiding it. Envy, jealousy, pride, and offended egotism have tried as long as possible to dispute this; but at last the effort is abandoned. They say that it requires no art to educate such talent as theirs, that it almost "comes of itself". This assertion is just as false and contrary to experience as it is common, even with educated and thoughtful people, who belong to no clique.

This quotation perfectly encapsulates Wieck's view of his daughters. Even after the decade which had elapsed between Schumann's marriage (in 1840) and the publication of this volume (in 1853) and all the strife that surrounded her union with Robert Schumann, Wieck still looks upon her as his property and all her achievements as his. He was also quick to dismiss the notion that he had little work to do as the teacher of Schumann and her younger sister Marie, framing their success as the product of his teaching. This was typical of Wieck who, as an astute businessman, was always in search of a way to advance his career and to maintain the security of the money he had earned (Reich, 2001, p. 32).

Wieck's book is not a conventional method for playing the piano and should not be seen as such, as it is not intended to be used as a way to learn to play the piano or to sing, but rather is used to communicate Wieck's ideas about music. It is an unparalleled source for understanding his attitudes to piano playing, teaching and music in general. *Clavier und Gesang* tells us much about how Schumann would have been taught, which composers Wieck respected and how they may have influenced Schumann's compositional style. After Wieck's death in 1873, his daughter Marie Wieck (1880) published a series of exercises that Wieck had used in teaching her and Schumann. Although this was not published until 1880, several years after F. Wieck's death, it does allow us a limited understanding of the practicalities of Wieck's teaching. Although it only consists of basic exercises this method does show what Wieck would have prioritised in piano playing, and how Schumann's musical education might have progressed.⁵ The exercises are designed for improving finger dexterity

⁵ An example of Wieck's exercises are given in Figure 11 on page 20.

and independence, as well as for providing an introduction to playing the piano. Notably, Wieck (1880) is insistent upon the use of varied dynamics and articulation from the very first exercise.

The issue of musical influence is one that is sometimes difficult to approach. Influence more generally is defined as ‘the capacity to persuade: being able to affect people’s attitudes, values, and/or behaviour due to power, status, knowledge, contacts, and/or wealth, alternatively, the effect or agency’ (Chandler, 2020). As Charles Rosen (1980, p. 88) puts it ‘the influence of one artist upon another can take a wide variety of forms, from plagiarism, borrowing, and quotation all the way to imitation’. Korsyn (1991, p. 5) built upon Rosen’s ideas arguing that ‘it is not enough merely to accumulate data by observing similarities among pieces; we need models to explain which similarities are significant, while accounting for differences among works’. Alexander Reynolds (2003, p. xi) wrote that:

This spectrum [of musical allusion] ranges from many completely improbable examples (hearing Beethoven in Buxtehude or vice versa) to the few incontestable ones (as when Fanny Mendelssohn writes Felix that she has cited one of his works in one of hers). At one end of the spectrum are two pieces by composers who did not know each other’s works; at the other, two compositions written by siblings with a letter documenting the musical debt.

In the case of the examples I will explore in this thesis, all the stylistic models are taken from composers that Schumann studied, and therefore closer to the more certain end of Reynold’s spectrum. However, given Reynolds is dealing specifically with allusion, rather than influence more broadly, the sources of influence on Schumann’s work may have been broader than the examples discussed below.

Often, influence is seen as coming from teacher to pupil, for example Haydn to Beethoven, where the teacher’s influences can clearly be seen in the early works of the pupil, for example Haydn’s influence on Beethoven’s second piano sonata, in that the tripartite structure is derived from Haydn (Rosen, 2002, p. 125). If we follow Korsyn in trying to ascribe significant similarities, teachers would be seen as exerting a powerful influence on young composers, taking precedence over other music influences. There is also the issue of a ‘great composer’ of the past influencing a composer later in history. This is discussed in relation to Bach and his influence on Liszt by Martin Zenck (1997). In this article Zenck discusses the changing influences Bach had on music, from his own life time into the twentieth century, detailing his less direct influence through the Classical period, into the more tangible influence on Romantic composers, specifically focusing on Liszt, who made several transcriptions of Bach’s organ pieces for piano. In this case it is Bach’s status as a ‘great composer’, as someone whose example should be followed which means he was able to exert influence on Liszt’s music. It is this second type of influence that is most pertinent to this thesis, as I will examine specifically the music that Schumann is known to have studied. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to also consider the less specific influence of more general musical currents on Schumann’s musical choices. In the case of Schumann, much of her musical influence came from the choices of her father and teacher, Friedrich Wieck, although he was not primarily a composer so the pieces he chose for his daughter to learn would instead serve as the compositional models from which she would learn. In his discussion of the Goldberg and Diabelli variations (composed by Bach and Beethoven respectively) Alfred Kanwischer (2014, p. 10) argues that the influence of Bach’s style, or the wider ‘serious style’ of the baroque, can be seen in 14 of Beethoven’s variations, and that the 24th and 32nd variations are ‘instances of direct homage’ to Bach. However, despite this Kanwischer goes on to say that scholars are yet to find any evidence that Beethoven knew the Goldberg variations, and the only connection is a brief mention of the piece in the foreword to his Diabelli variations. A further study of musical influence was conducted by Roy Howat (1992, p. 246) into Chopin’s influence on the *fin*

de siècle which includes composers such as Saint-Saëns, Bizet, Fauré, Debussy and Dukas as the ‘immediate recipients of the “Chopin tradition” through teachers or close musical contacts’. However, Howat’s main contention is that these composers, instead of beginning in the Chopin style and moving outwards, moved more towards Chopin’s style as they matured. In each of the examples given above, the exertion of influence is necessarily less tangible. Each composer takes stylistic elements that could be attributed to the style of an earlier respected composer. This is the case for much of the discourse surrounding compositional influence, as it is often uncertain which pieces were studied at which time by composers, and how they reacted to these pieces.

In the case of Schumann there is much more certainty. There are several factors about the biographical accounts of Schumann that aid us in understanding exactly what music is most likely to have influenced her. I would argue that the extensiveness of Litzmann’s list owes itself to the perception of Schumann as primarily a virtuoso pianist and her compositional activities occupying a secondary place in her musical legacy. To have such an exact list of pieces studied by a musician, detailed across so much of their career is highly unusual, and so allows us to assess more accurately which pieces influenced Schumann in what way. By contrast, in the *Cambridge Companion to Liszt* an exhaustive list of his compositions is given (Hamilton, 2005), but there is no such similar list of pieces that Liszt studied as a pupil. Liszt was Schumann’s great rival on the concert stage, and so is a comparable contemporary. Given that Liszt was famously the student of Carl Czerny in the apostolic succession⁶ only one generation removed from Beethoven, we may assume that Liszt’s training as a pianist followed Czerny’s school of teaching or had a particularly large volume of Beethoven’s piano music, but we do not know exactly what pieces Liszt learnt and at what time. That we do have this information in the case of Schumann allows us to examine in greater detail than may be possible in the case of her contemporary composers exactly which pieces may have had the greatest influence on her compositional style, rather than being left to guess at which pieces seem most likely. To satisfy Korsyn’s ‘significant similarities’ I would suggest that similarities to pieces that Schumann studied to passages in her compositions can be considered as significant similarities. This in turn can lead us to a much more in depth understanding of Schumann’s compositional voice than might otherwise be possible. In this thesis I will investigate to what extent the specific pieces that Schumann studied had a direct impact on the compositional decisions that she made.

To suggest that Schumann was influenced by the music of the composers she studied raises the question of originality. James Garratt discusses two of the schools of thought on originality in early-nineteenth-century Germany, namely those of Schopenhauer and Goethe. Schopenhauer (2002, p. 10) argued that a genius’s creativity would stand alone, becoming the ‘clear mirror of the inner nature of the world’. Garratt (2002, p. 11) then explains Goethe’s argument that ‘every artist is a composite being indebted to a multiplicity of sources, and greatness can proceed only from the appropriation of other people’s treasures’. Given Goethe’s model of originality, I would suggest that Schumann’s borrowing of stylistic traits from other composers, whilst maintaining her own compositional voice demonstrates she was a sophisticated and original composer, even at this early stage in her career. Janina Klassen (2020, p. 103) has explored the ideas of genius and originality in relation to Clara Schumann, contrasting the idea of a ‘natural born genius who produces original ideas without effort’ with Schumann’s hard work as a composer. Klassen (2020, p. 103) goes on to argue that ‘understanding the concept of genius in different historical periods prompts us to re-think our own explicit and implicit assumptions’ of what would constitute a genius. With reference to

⁶ The ‘apostolic succession’ of composers is used here to describe the lineage of teachers and pupils who are considered to be part of the canon of western classical music. This begins with Joseph Haydn, passing to Beethoven, the Carl Czerny and finally to Liszt.

Schumann's opuses 5, 6 and 7, which were all composed in the same period, Klassen asserts that these mark a further stage in Schumann's development as a composer. In her earlier opuses Schumann was using dance forms with templates stretching back to the eighteenth century. Klassen explains that all the pianistic technique that Schumann could offer is demonstrated in her Op.7, and I would argue that much of it is on display in her Op. 5 also. Klassen (2020, p. 107) attributes this to Schumann's wide ranging study of the music of many composers including 'Bach, Scarlatti, Beethoven, Herz, Moscheles, Henselt, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Liszt, Thalberg and Schumann'.

One composer who featured particularly prominently in Schumann's repertoire in the years preceding the composition of her Op 5 was Frederic Chopin. The dramatic shift towards the music of Chopin in Schumann's repertoire can be seen in the appendix at the end of this thesis. Given the prevalence of Chopin within Schumann's repertoire it is unsurprising that his influence can be felt in her compositions. Consequently, there has been a reasonable amount of analytical literature comparing the music of Schumann to Chopin's writing. Roudet's (2015) article 'Fredrich Chopin, Clara Schumann and the singing Piano school' explores the relationship between the two pianists' styles of composition and how it may have been related. Roudet (2015, p. 67) also provides some compelling descriptions of the Viennese (*brilliant*) school of playing:

1. A Viennese piano must be played with a precise and varied touch so that all its rich sound possibilities will be explored.
2. A precise touch is also required for long notes because the dampers are very efficient.
3. This instrument can't bear being played with arm weight and muscular strength.
4. Nevertheless, this instrument provides a bright tone. To play in a brilliant way, one must quickly strike the keys and make them bounce, by playing chords in arpeggio, for instance.

This clear description is extremely useful in understanding the techniques that would need to be used to compose for these Viennese instruments, and how these playing techniques may have affected the compositional language of those who wrote for them. The light action of the pianos lent itself to rapid execution, and so this is what the composers who used this design of piano would write. The efficient dampers allowed for a clarity of tone, and so harmonies could be crystallised in an instant, but would not bleed into the next chord. The opposing school of piano makers to the Viennese was the English. Fredrich Kalkbrenner wrote of English pianos in 1830 that they:

Possess rounder sounds and a somewhat heavier touch; they have caused the professors of that country to adopt a grander style, and that beautiful manner of *singing* which distinguishes them; to succeed in this, the use of the loud pedal is indispensable, in order to conceal the dryness inherent to the pianoforte (Rowland, 1992, p. 22).

The English pianos were played by Clementi, Field's teacher and by Field himself. The singing quality of the pianos is reflected in their style of composition, as it lends itself to lyrical melodies. Furthermore, the English pianos greater capacity for sustaining notes meant that it was the ideal vehicle for the wider ranging arpeggiated accompaniments used by Field in his nocturnes, as the whole arpeggio could be maintained without the performer having to be able to hold down all the notes of the chord simultaneously. Composers used the instruments on which they played to compose, and the limitations of their instruments as well as the possibilities they created are reflected in the music composed on them. Roudet (2015, p. 68) relates a story that Chopin found the touch of the Viennese pianos very agreeable for his playing, because they allowed for closer control

of tone compared to the English style piano, although much of his music was conceived on English style pianos, and so favours their 'singing' quality. As this example of Chopin shows, composers played on both types of piano, and each type had advantages and disadvantages compared to the other. The style of piano that Schumann's Op 5 was conceived on may have had a bearing on the pianistic techniques she chose to employ. However, given that she can be seen borrowing from schools based on both types of pianos, this would appear to be a lesser factor in her compositional choices.

In his chapter in *Nineteenth-century Piano Music* Larry Todd (2004, p. 320) states that '*Quatre pièces caractéristiques*, op. 5, published in 1836, represent a transition between the dance music of Schumann's youth and the Romantic character pieces of her maturity'. Todd (2004, p. 322) later says of Schumann's Opus 6:

Of Schumann's compositions, the *Soirées Musicales*, op. 6, approach most closely the music of Chopin. They were conceived following the period of 1833–34 when Chopin's etudes, mazurkas, and nocturnes entered her repertory, and were published in 1836. Many harmonic progressions and melodic turns are reminiscent of the Polish composer's style; repetitions of melodic phrases are varied with Chopinesque figuration.

Todd's description places Schumann's Opus 5 at the apex of her transition from youth to maturity, and therefore ideally positioned to give us an insight into the influences on her early compositions as well as the influences that would shape her later more mature works.

In his article 'Voice Leading and Chromatic Harmony in the Music of Chopin' Richard Parks (1976, p. 189) observes:

An interesting aspect of Chopin's compositional technique is his use of altered chords in passages where they do not appear to function in their conventional harmonic roles such as applied dominants, leading tone chords, and so on.

I would argue that in the case of the music learnt by Schumann, most of Chopin's harmony is functional, but with 'added extras', being built largely on the tonic or dominant. For example, the opening bar of Chopin's Op 9 no 2:

Figure 1 Chopin, Op 9 no 2 (1832), Nocturne in Eb, Bar 1

In this bar the harmony is fundamentally built on the tonic. However, with each beat the harmony is altered slightly by the addition of a seventh or a ninth, each resolving to a new dissonance, creating a sense of harmonic momentum, as each dissonance implies a coming resolution which Chopin delays giving to his listener. This would be consistent with the idea of 'layers' in Chopin's music discussed by Samson (1996, p. 120) in his monograph. At the fundamental

layer the harmonic language is relatively simple, but with other layers overlapping it becomes more complex. This is very much comparable to the harmonic language of Schumann in the 'Chopinesque' passages of her compositions. The idea of layering helps to explain, and to justify her harmonic choices.

One piece of Chopin's that will form a particularly important part of this thesis is Chopin's Op 2, a set of variations on the 'La ci darem la mano' theme from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. It is worth noting that much of the literature on Chopin's early works, including Op 2, largely tends to diminish these works. Gerald Abraham (1939) was particularly quick to criticise these pieces, arguing that Chopin's early pieces did not compare to his later works. However, he does argue that Op 2 marked an important change for Chopin, saying 'from *La ci darem* onwards, Chopin's figuration is no longer octave-bound. That in itself necessitated a far more advanced pedal technique than anyone had employed hitherto' (Abraham, 1939, p. 11). Furthermore, Roudet (2015, p. 11) adds that:

Items of this kind [La ci darem la mano variations] would have created little surprise: in the 1820s variations or rondos were staple concert items for pianists. As contemporary reviews make clear, it was because of the style and method of his playing and of his composition that Chopin appeared to Viennese critics of 1829 to stand apart from most piano virtuosi of his time.

Although Roudet was writing much more recently than Abraham, they agree that it was the advance in technique that made Chopin's op 2 appealing to his audiences. This was Chopin demonstrating his mastery of an existing style, rather than forging a new path. This piece marks a move away from the *brilliant* style, which was a vehicle for Chopin to show his skill on the concert stage, and towards his more mature *Field* style. That it was one of Schumann's most popular concert pieces and contains the same duality, of both the *brilliant* and *Field* schools being clear influences on the work, as Schumann's Op 5 is certainly significant. Chopin's Op 2 is part of his transition towards the *Field* school and away from the *brilliant*, although he would continue to utilise both styles in many of his works. The lack of critical attention that Chopin's op 2 has received has meant that this fact has been somewhat overlooked.

A second composer who had a particular personal connection to Schumann was Carl Czerny, as a friend of her father. Anton Kuerti (2008, p. 491) argues that Czerny composed in four styles, one of which was 'brilliant pieces for concerts'. Kuerti (2008, p. 487) goes on to say:

Carl Czerny (1791-1857) occupies a pivotal niche in music history, for he alone links Beethoven – his teacher and the ultimate archetype of profoundly spiritual music – with Liszt – his student, who exemplifies the ultra-romantic and often exhibitionistic virtuoso.

This view of Czerny gives him a much greater significance within the nineteenth-century canon of composers, as compared to his traditional place as the archetypal pedagogue. However, Kuerti still reduces Czerny's contribution to that of a conduit of ideas from Beethoven to Liszt in a grand apostolic succession. Czerny held a strong position within the *brilliant* school of composition in his own right, and as such it is important to recognise the importance of this school of playing within the education of Schumann, and its consequent effects on her compositional style. Schumann grew up in the *brilliant* school of playing, of which May (1912) names Czerny (along with Hummel, Steibelt and Moscheles) as a leading representative.

May (1912, p. 18) also quotes from a letter from Czerny and Friedrich Wieck dated 9th of May 1824:

You will probably have heard particulars of the impression made on us last autumn by Moscheles and Kalkbrenner. Both pleased and entertained our public yet not so irresistibly as to prevent one from

discovering the natural limitations of their talent. Moscheles' two new concertos are very good and fulfil their aim. His playing has become more solid and may approach Hummel's perfection if his individuality should allow it. Imagination is his weak side. Kalkbrenner's playing is a finished, so to say, classical, mechanism; his concerto in D minor pleases without making a striking impression.

Your most sincere friend, Carl Czerny

The tone of this letter is friendly, displaying a cordiality between the two men who saw themselves as having some authority in the matter of piano teaching. It is especially interesting to note that they are discussing which style of piano (both maker and Viennese/English) and how that has affected the performance of the player, and which instruments match which musicians best. This was clearly an integral part of the choices a performer had to make.

The cordial relationship between Wieck and Czerny and their similar attitudes to piano teaching would explain the large volume of Czerny's music (especially at the end of the 1820s and in the early 1830s)⁷ used by Wieck to teach Schumann because this was a style of playing he approved of.⁸ It would also suggest that the techniques present in the music of Czerny (which are largely used by composers who wrote in the *brilliant* style) were important to Schumann's playing.

Martin Gellrich and Richard Parncutt (1998, p. 12) discuss one of Czerny's developments in piano fingering, namely that the most comfortable fingering is the one that should be used. This allowed players to play at much greater speeds and with greater ease, with the development of virtuosity as a central feature of Czerny's system. Czerny's system of fingering stood in contrast to, among others, C.P.E. Bach's system of fingering. Bach's system consisted of a number of patterns, that served as a rule of thumb for pianists. Czerny's major developments were that he taught his students that fingers should not cross over each other, and advocated a much greater use of the thumb in order to facilitate greater agility at higher speeds (Parncutt, 1998, p. 12). This development would have been vital to Schumann's ability to play the pieces she did, and so to be learning from the music of a man whose compositions were based on this principal would have had a great effect on her musical style.

However, this is not the only insight Gellrich and Parncutt (1998, p. 9) have that is pertinent to this thesis. They also relate this story:

Many of the famous virtuosos spent their whole lives inventing new exercises. Clara Schumann's daughter Marie wrote that her mother regularly spent three hours a day improvising passages and exercises. When she asked her mother to write down her daily technical exercises, Clara Schumann answered that she could not - her passage work and exercises changed from day to day, depending on which aspect of her technique she wished to work on.

Given that Marie Schumann tells us that Schumann would improvise her own etudes in order to practise a particular skill. This suggests that Schumann was using the music of Czerny for specific purposes, either to acquire a skill she could not improvise her own *études* for, or to have *brilliant* pieces to perform at her concerts. I would argue that Wieck is likely to have given Schumann Czerny's music to learn as Wieck and Czerny were friends, and Schumann playing Czerny's music would benefit them both. This led to Czerny's music being a large part of Schumann's early repertoire⁹, and as such Czerny's compositional style is likely to have had an influence on the compositional decisions Schumann made.

⁷ See appendix

⁸ For specifics of the order in which Schumann learnt these pieces, see appendix

⁹ See appendix

3 - Understanding Schumann's compositional voices

Schumann's Op 5 is situated at a pivotal point in her compositional career. As a 14-16-year-old, Schumann was becoming more acutely aware of all the musical styles that surrounded her; further to this she was developing the compositional skills to explore them. This opus coincides with Schumann becoming a teenager in a sense that we might recognise today, as Reich (2001, p. 34) tells us it was 'on a concert tour to Magdeburg, Hannover, and other northern cities in 1834-35 the baffled father [Friedrich Wieck] had a rebellious adolescent on his hands'. In this chapter I will explore how this sense of rebellious adolescence can be felt in Schumann's composition as she jumped from style to style in seemingly unpredictable ways, clearly experimenting with different compositional voices and finding her own niche within each. Specifically, she was experimenting with the *brilliant* style, and with the newer *Field* school, which was being championed by Chopin at the time of Op 5's composition (Plantinga, 1984, p. 96). As well as these two styles, Schumann had a third compositional voice that is more broadly connected to the general pianistic style of the era, largely characterised by homophonic textures and an extensive use of grace notes and melodic figures involving long strings of repeated notes. The opus can be divided into these three styles, as shown in Table 1. There is a certain amount of overlap between these differing styles, especially in the A section of Op 5 no 2 as it's melodic structure would imply Schumann's particular compositional voice whereas the texture would imply that it is more influenced by the brilliant style, with each bleeding into the other to differing extents. Given this is all the music of one composer it is to be expected that elements of her own style would pervade throughout all the pieces to differing extents, and other stylistic idioms may be seen as having come from outside the composer and shaped her compositional choices. As such it is not always immediately clear the level of influence that Schumann felt from each style in each section. However, to best understand these different sections, it is most useful to think of them as is shown in the table below. Although the comparisons made in this section involve stylistic traits that were quite common during this period, the examples chosen are specifically from pieces that Schumann studied (the date she studied each piece is also given). This means there is a strong case for saying that it was in these pieces which Schumann encountered the stylistic traits, and in learning these pieces that she absorbed them into her musical vocabulary. The criterion for ascribing similarity, and therefore influence, is based around each piece's place in Schumann's repertoire and the extent to which similar techniques are used by Schumann and the composers she learned from.

| Schumann | Brilliant | Chopin |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| Op 5 no 1 | Op 5 no 2 – bars 1-97, 149-239 (Texture) | Op 5 no 2 – bars 98-148 |
| Op 5 no 2 – bars 1-97, 149-239 (Melody) | Op 5 no 4 – bars 44-67,136-165 | Op 5 no 3 |
| Op 5 no 4 – bars 1-43, 165-175 | | |

Table 1 Schumann Op 5, divided by compositional voice

Schumannesque

Schumann's own compositional voice has a few particular characteristic fingerprints which are more strongly present in the sections where the influence of the *brilliant* and *Field* schools can be felt less strongly. Namely, these are strings of repeated notes, homophonic textures and extensive uses of grace notes as both melodic and harmonic decoration. Although none of these techniques is exclusive to Schumann, she tends to utilise them in sections of the music that owe less to the music that she studied and reflect broader currents in popular pianism at the time. The first of these I shall discuss is the melodic gesture of a series of repeated notes at the beginning of a melodic line. This can be seen in Schumann's Op 2 (Figure 2).



Figure 2 Schumann, Op 2 no 1 Caprices en forme de valse(1832), bars 1-25

In her Op 2 Schumann uses the repeated notes as part of accompanying chords, providing a frame around which the melodic idea is hung. The repeated notes are not a solo melodic gesture but do form a prominent part of the texture.

The first instance of this gesture as a specifically melodic device arises in Schumann's Op 3 (Figure 3).



Figure 3 Schumann, Op 3 Romance and Variations (1833), bars 33-45

In this instance (Figure 3), the repeated notes are part of a melodic gesture, prolonging the A minor arpeggio. Schumann had used repeated notes before, but as part of a broader texture (as in Op 2) rather than as a lone standing gesture, as can be seen in the above figure from Op 3. Schumann perhaps included this series of repeated notes because the technique would be ideal for demonstrating the relatively new Erard ‘repetition action’ which only gained its patent in 1825 (Wainwright, 1929, p. 75). For Schumann, beginning her compositional career in the early 1830s this would have provided new and exciting feats of technical prowess with which she could entertain her audience.

Schumann again uses the repeated note melodic figure at the start of her Op 4, this time, played in octaves for even greater dramatic effect (Figure 4).



Figure 4 Schumann Op 4, Valses Romantic (1835), bars 1-15

In this example (Figure 4), another development has taken place, in that the repeated notes signal the start of a melodic figure. Each time the repeated notes are played, they are followed by the descending figure. As Reich observes, this particular passage shares a lot of similarities with Robert Schumann’s ‘Valse allemande’ from *Carnival*, which was being composed at the same time in the same house. There are also similarities with some of the works of Chopin, however, none of Chopin’s

music that Schumann had studied up to the composition of her Op 5 includes prolonged repeated notes.



Figure 5 Schumann, Op 5 no 2, Caprice a la Bolero (1836), bars 12-31

A repeated-note figure also manifests in the opening theme of Schumann's Op 5 no 2 (Figure 5). Although the repeated notes are once again subsumed by the melodic line. In fact, the rising scales leading to the repeated Bs serve as anacrusis to the repeated notes, highlighting their position at the start of the melodic lines. Larry Todd (2004, p. 320) discussed this theme stating:

The primary theme of the Boleros features repeated notes like those of Op 2; however, they are given a distinctive flavour through the use of hemiola and harmonic and melodic emphasis on the flat sixth scale degree.

The repeated note figure in Op 2 that Todd refers to can be viewed as a prototype for the later use of repeated notes in Schumann's music (Figure 2). In Op 2 the figures are often part of a chord rather than a stand-alone figure, as is more common in the later opus numbers.

A second texture that is particularly common in Schumann's compositional style is that of repeated homophonic chords, or chords joined by passages of octaves as shown below (Figures 6 and 7).

Figure 6 Schumann, Op 5 no 1, Hexentanz (1836), bars 1-10

Figure 7 Schumann, Op 5 no 2, Caprice a la Bolero (1836), bars 45-61

This was a texture that Beethoven used to give the music a particularly dramatic flavour, for example in the opening bars of the *‘Appassionata’* sonata Op 57 (Figure 9), which Schumann studied in 1835. It is therefore arguable that this was a Beethovenian effect that Schumann wished to emulate. Beethoven is, of course, the giant with which all early nineteenth century composers had to contend, his shadow falling over all composers in the era. The names of Schumann and Beethoven were linked by a poem named *‘Clara Wieck [Schumann] und Beethoven’* by Franz Grillparzer as a response to her performance of Beethoven’s Op 57 (Reich, 2001, p. 3). During the 1830s Schumann studied relatively little of Beethoven’s music, only four pieces, and only one for solo piano. This was a deliberate choice on the part of her father, in that he selected popular music for Schumann to play

as this would have greater concert success. This is not to say that Beethoven did not feature in Schumann's repertoire, but his music was usually played by Schumann in private (Litzmann, 1913, p. 67). The lone solo piece was the 'Appassionata' sonata Op 57, which Schumann learned in 1835. Rosen (2002, p. 192). describes Beethoven's Op 57 as follows: 'For musicians and public alike, this sonata [Op 57] has remained, with the C minor Symphony, the archetypal example of Beethoven's heroic style'. Famously, this sonata opens in octaves, in a gesture that forms the backbone of the first movement (Figure 9). Repeated notes are also a prominent feature of this piece dominating many sections (Rosen, 2002, p. 194). However, similar textures appear briefly in Schumann's Op 4 (Figure 8), composed before she had studied Beethoven's Op 57, which would suggest another source for this textural device.



Figure 8 Schumann, Op 4 (1835), bars 55-68



Figure 9 Beethoven (1807), Op 57, Appassionata sonata, bars 1-5

Homophonic textures, as a fairly common pianistic device, do appear in several other pieces that Schumann studied in the early 1830s, for example in Henri Herz's Op 62 which Schumann learned in 1832 (Figure 8). Indeed, playing homophonically would be one of the skills that a young pianist would learn if they followed Carl Czerny's teaching method especially laid out in his Op 500 (Kitchen, 2013, p. 235). Czerny was also an exponent of the *brilliant* style. Although Czerny did not consider his *brilliant* music to be part of his serious compositional output it still occupies a significant proportion of his oeuvre (Kuerti, 2008, p. 491). Schumann studied several pieces from the *brilliant* portion of Czerny's output. This is perhaps evidence that Schumann's own particular style of composition was influenced by the *brilliant* style of composition in her early career. However, it was uncommon for these homophonic textures to occupy such a large proportion of the music, the entire piece in the case of Schumann's Op 5 no 1. Usually these textures are used to produce a particularly dramatic effect. Perhaps Schumann wished to convey the stark drama in the Witches' dance (Op 5 no 1) and this is why she chose to use such a dramatic texture.



Figure 11 Schumann, Op 4 (1835), bars 55-68



Figure 12 Schumann, Op 4 (1835), bars 350-355

Although Schumann had experimented with homophonic textures in her Op 4 (Figures 11 and 12) using similar textures to those in Op 5, they do not have the same high profile as they would assume in her Op 5. In her Op 5 Schumann explores homophonic textures more fully, especially in Op 5 no 1 where the whole piece is built around a homophonic texture. One example of the way in which Schumann begins to explore homophonic textures in her Op 4 is given as Figure 11 above. Schumann punctuates the texture with broad chords, outlining the harmonies that are being followed, while the main texture is merely a series of octaves. This method of varying the thickness of the texture is a technique Schumann would return to in her Op 5 (Figure 7). This texture is used in conjunction with a repeated note figure, further establishing this as a passage with Schumann's distinct compositional voice.

One other possible explanation of Schumann's extensive use of homophonic textures lies in Friedrich Wieck's (1880) piano method. Given that homophonic textures were fairly common in piano music of the period, much of Wieck's training method is also to be played homophonically. Although it would not be published until after Wieck's death, by his daughter Marie, this method offers an insight into how Wieck taught his students, including Schumann. Many of the exercises are in octaves and played homophonically, with an emphasis placed on equality between the hands as well as an ability to have a delicate control over the expressive qualities of the piano. For example, exercises 9 through 12 are devoted to playing in thirds in each hand, in octaves as shown in figure 13:

9. Die Terzen genau zusammen anschlagen und verbinden. Play these Thirds legato, and strike both notes simultaneously.

Exercise 9 consists of two systems of piano and bass clef staves. The first system shows chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand, with fingerings 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, and 4-5. The second system continues with similar chords and notes, ending with 'etc.' and a final chord.

10. In Gegenbewegung. In contrary motion.

Exercise 10 consists of two systems of piano and bass clef staves. The first system shows moving lines in both hands with fingerings 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, and 4-5. The second system continues with similar moving lines, ending with 'etc.' and a final chord.

11. Die Hände leicht überschlagen. Stark, auch piano zu spielen. Cross the hands lightly and easily. Practise both forte and piano.

Exercise 11 consists of two systems of piano and bass clef staves. The first system shows hand-crossing patterns with fingerings 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, and 4-5. The second system continues with similar patterns, ending with a final chord.

12.

Exercise 12 consists of two systems of piano and bass clef staves. The first system shows chords with dynamic markings *cresc.* and *f*. The second system shows moving lines with dynamic markings *divisi* and *f*.

Figure 13 F. Wieck, Posthumous piano method (1880), exercises 9-12

This particular technique would be extremely useful to playing Schumann's Op 5 no 1, as much of the piece is in thirds in octaves. It could therefore be understood that Schumann was using her Op 5 to demonstrate her technical prowess and mastery over particular pianistic techniques. Wieck's exercises are designed to develop the fundamental technique of the pianist, rather than to instruct the pupil in a particular style. As Wieck's pupil these exercises would have formed a significant part of Schumann's study of the piano. As such, it is unsurprising to find they have at least some level of influence on Schumann's music. Given that she would use these exercises almost daily in her practise, under the supervision of her father, therefore when reaching for a pianistic technique to display in her compositions, these would be the ones most readily available.

A further aspect of Schumann's compositional voice is her extensive use of grace notes. These are extremely prevalent in Op 5 no 1 and also as part of the melodic line in Op 5 no 2's A section, as well as in sections of Op 5 no 4. It is perhaps interesting that Schumann does not use these grace notes in the Chopin inspired sections of Op 5 no 2, or in Op 5 no 3 (discussed below). This is one of the features that clearly signals a break in style by Schumann, and a deliberate change in the compositional voice. Grace notes are not stylistically inappropriate in Chopin's style of composition, as Bellman (2000) explores, with particular regard to *fioriture*. However, given that Schumann chose to use grace notes widely in some sections, and not others would certainly indicate a deliberate choice that differentiates one style from another.

Schumann's use of grace notes as melodic decoration has a relatively short history within her compositional vocabulary, as they only appear for the first time in her Op 4, first in bars 34-35, and then as a prominent feature from bar 88 (Figure 14).¹⁰



Figure 14 Schumann, Op 4 (1835), bars 87 – 99

¹⁰ The following section is longer than is practical to give as an example, so I have selected a few bars to show the differing usages.

Figure 15 Schumann, Op 4 (1835), bars 129-133

These two sections in Schumann’s Op 4 represent the first time that the grace note presents a significant and defining feature in the melodic line (Figures 14 and 15). The use of these grace notes causes the melodic line to have a skipping, dancing quality. Schumann returns to this sense of skipping and dancing in her Op 5 no 1, as it is used to enhance the characterisation of the witches in their dance. Reich (2001, p. 224) describes these wide leaps accompanied by grace notes as ‘typical nineteenth-century “demonic” touches – contribut[ing] to the supernatural effect of “Le Sabbat”, a reference to the witches’ sabbath, a theme that intrigued many romantic composers’. Schumann is again drawing on the tropes around her and illustrating them in a way particular to her own compositional style.

Schumann returns to the extensive use of grace notes in the A section of her Op 5 no 4, where they are used as decoration for the repeated quaver chords (Figure 16).

Figure 16 Schumann, Op 5 no 4 (1836), bars 15-17

The combination of the upbeat quavers and grace notes conspire to give a strong emphasis on beats one and three, giving this section a strong rhythmic grounding. In a similar way to the example from Op 5 no 1, the grace notes Schumann uses in her Op 5 no 4 unsettle the harmony, with small chromatic additions. These additions create moments of harmonic tension, which Schumann uses cumulatively to lead towards the re-establishment of the tonic at the end of the section (bar 43),

once the grace notes are no longer in use. This use of chromaticism gives the impression of a long build towards the main theme of the piece, with the harmonic tension growing with each passing bar. Schumann uses the grace notes as an integral part of the building of this tension, showing them to be an important part of her musical vocabulary. Although the extensive use of grace notes is relatively new in Schumann's music it was nonetheless a central part of her compositional voice at that point in time.

However, Schumann is not equally harmonically adventurous throughout the opus, even when comparing sections of similar styles. In Op 5 no 1 Schumann uses almost entirely diatonic harmonies, with much of the chromatic colouration coming from the grace notes, but not affecting the overall diatonic harmony. In this piece there is only one briefly chromatic passage to speak of, in which Schumann uses movements of a semitone to progress from one chord to the next (Figure 17).

Figure 17 Schumann, Op 5 no 1 (1836), bars 33 – 50

In both the progressions in bars 37-39 and 45-47 Schumann raises the bass by a semitone each time in order to move to the next chord. The rising semitones in the bass are a device to increase the harmonic tension of the passage. However, in the wider harmonic scheme, both these passages begin with chord V and end with chord I, rendering them in effect decorated perfect cadences. This is the extent of chromatic harmony within Schumann's Op 5 no 1.

Contrastingly, in Schumann's Op 5 no 4 quite heavy and pronounced chromaticism is evident from the very opening bar, which is a series of tritones played in octaves. This texture is then developed into oscillating IV and #VII chords, and several other oscillating pairs, before a wide chromatically expanding series of chords, all of which serves to delay the arrival of the tonic until the 13th bar. As Reich (2001, p. 225) has observed, these oscillating tritones are echoed by Robert Schumann in his Op 11 as perfect fifths. However, in Robert Schumann's piece he uses the effect for only half a bar, as a way of transitioning to a new section. By contrast Schumann extends this feeling

of undulating uncertainty, by repeating the figure four times at the opening of her piece. Of these four, two are in octaves, and two are chordal. In the chordal iterations Schumann includes a series of repeated notes, hallmarking it as her theme. The delaying of the tonic through the entire introductory passage is a way in which Schumann may build the harmonic tension and increase anticipation for the main theme of the A section. This is not of itself a particularly unconventional compositional device to use, however it is in stark contrast to Schumann's harmonic language in her Op 5 no 1, in which the tonic is strongly present throughout. Given these two passages would seem to be composed in the same style by Schumann it is intriguing that she chose such differing harmonic palettes for them. As can be seen in her previous opuses, Schumann was not afraid to use chromatic (and especially diminished) harmonies.

Schumann's use of harmony may owe something to the level to which she viewed the relative romanticism in each of her compositions, and whether she was influenced by the new romantic *Field* school. As Richard Taruskin (2005, p. 360) discusses, what distinguishes the work of many romantic composers, and especially Chopin, is a certain open-endedness in the harmony. In Schumann's Op 5 no 1 the harmonies are not open-ended, they have a particular focus on the tonic. Contrastingly, in her Op 5 no 4 the harmonic focus is much less on the tonic and rather on the chromatic tension that Schumann builds over long periods of the music. This would lead me to suggest, that although the two passages (Figures 16 and 17) share much of the same compositional voice, this is in fact evidence that Schumann was beginning to be more influenced by the newer romantic school in her own composition. Even within the time frame of composing a single opus, with the composition of Op 5 no 1 preceding that of Op 5 no 4 (Reich, 2001, p. 294), Schumann's harmonic focus shifted from the tonic to a more open approach. Schumann used chromatic harmonies to delay resolution, for example in the A section of Op 5 no 4 leading to the resolution at bar 43. This shows Schumann transitioning to a more open-ended approach to harmony. This is supported by a review, which Reich (2001, p. 213) quotes, which states that 'In 1837, when Clara [Schumann] and her father were on their way to Vienna, a Prague newspaper, presumably with [Friedrich] Wieck's consent, published an article describing her as a "member of the new romantic school"'. Reich (2001, p. 213) goes on to argue that 'by the time Clara [Schumann] was fourteen years old, many features of the new romanticism could be heard in her compositions'. This is only a year after the publication of Schumann's Op 5, and I would therefore argue that the assertion of this article is based on the strength of her Op 5 and Op 6, which was published later in 1836. This would suggest that Schumann's compositional voice was shifting away from the stylised dance forms of her youth, and was moving towards the romantic school that would shape the rest of her life, lending weight to the view of her Op 5 as a transitional opus between styles, rather than as a collection of pieces in one style or another.

Brilliant

The second style of composition which is prevalent within Schumann's Op 5 is the *brilliant* style. In this chapter I will explore the sections of Op 5 that display this influence most clearly. These are the A section of Op 5 no 2 and Op 5 no 4 – bars 44-67 and 136-165. In examining the A section of Schumann's Op 5 no 2 we find many factors within the music that are consistent with the *brilliant* style. The first aspect I shall discuss is Schumann's use of texture. Schumann chooses to use a conventional melody and accompaniment texture, in sharp contrast to the angular homophonic texture which has preceded this in Op 5 no 1. One composer who was particularly fond of melody and accompaniment textures, and whose music Schumann studied often in her early career was Carl Czerny. The example below (Figure 18) is taken from Czerny's Op 230, which Schumann studied in 1830.¹¹ This is intended to demonstrate a typical texture within Czerny's music, rather than be a concrete example of exactly where Schumann would have encountered this texture. Woolley and Kitchen (2013, p. 235) argue that a contribution to musical pedagogy made by Czerny was his increased focus on the left-hand in his exercises, citing his Op 500 as a major turning point for this, in that it was in Czerny's Op 500 that he focused most on left-hand technique. They also argue that the prominence of left-hand playing in Czerny's works mirrored the fashions of the virtuoso world, the level of left-hand dexterity increasing over the first decades of the nineteenth century (Kitchen, 2013, p. 235). The implication of this would be that the left hand is less prominent in Czerny's early music, therefore increasing the prominence of the right hand. This can be seen in much of Czerny's music that Schumann studied, written long before his Op 500 was conceived. In Schumann's repertoire Czerny represents a style of playing in which the right hand gives virtuosic displays, where the left provides a more rudimentary accompaniment. For example, in the opening of Czerny's Op 230 we see a texture that is somewhat similar to that used by Schumann at the opening of her Op 5 no 2 (Figure 19).

¹¹ See appendix for full details

Figure 18 Czerny, Op 230 (1830), bars 1-24

Figure 19 Schumann, *Op 5 no 2* (1836), bars 12-31

The similarities are particularly clear between bars 20-22 of the Czerny and bars 13-20 in the Schumann, as the repeated, left hand triads with rests in between create a stable rhythmic drive to the music whilst also allowing for the right-hand melody to be clearly heard above. The simpler writing for the left hand also allows for greater virtuosic displays in the right hand as the player has to give less attention to the left hand.

The second texture used by Czerny, from bars 20-24, was common in the compositions of those who wrote in the brilliant style such as Pixis, Hummels, Herz, Moscheles as well as Carl Czerny. Schumann studied the music of all of these composers during her formative years as a pianist. For example, in Pixis' third trio (Figure 20), which Schumann learned in 1833, we see in the following passage:

The image shows a page of musical notation for the piano part of Pixis' Op. 118, Fourth Piano Trio, bars 332-369. The score is written in two staves, treble and bass clef. It features various musical notations including dynamics (pp, mf, f, dim.), articulation (loco, dolce, Calmato, Poco ritenuto, Marcato), and phrasing (8-measure groups, slurs). The key signature is three flats (B-flat major/C minor).

Figure 20 Pixis, Op 118, Fourth Piano trio (c1832), bars 332-369 (Pixis, c.1832, p. 10)

Although this is only the piano part rather than the full score, the texture is similar to that used by Czerny in his Op 230 bars 20-22, in that the left hand provides a simplistic harmonic bass, freeing the right hand to play the more virtuosic figures. In Pixis' version of this texture, the left hand does not provide a particular rhythmic impetus to the piece, but the function and balance of prominence between the two hands remains similar.

Schumann also experiments with the 'melody and accompaniment' textures discussed above, by placing the melody in the left hand and accompaniment in the right, an inversion of the conventional texture. In examining bars 44- 67 (Figure 21) and 136-165¹² of Schumann's Op 5 no 4 we find that the right hand provides the harmony, as well as the rhythmic impetus while the left provides the melody. In the opening 8 bars of this section Schumann only uses tonic and dominant chords. This is

¹² Figure 21 only shows bars 43-59, rather than demonstrating the whole of these two sections. This example is intended to give an overview of the texture used throughout these sections.

the ultimate in simple, functional harmony. The hypnotically even harmonic rhythm combined with the regularity of the rhythm of the accompaniment creates the sense of a forthright march at the beginning of this section. As Schumann's harmonies begin to become more adventurous, the rhythms stay constant. This creates a stable framework in which Schumann is able to expand the harmonic palette of the section.

Figure 21 Schumann, op 5 no 4 (1836), bars 43 – 59

The very clear repeated statement of the tonic and dominant by Schumann mirrors that of Czerny's in Figure 18. Both composers have chosen to use this most basic of harmonies as this creates a sense of continuity with the previous section. By placing the melody in the left-hand Schumann is able to better exploit the lower sonorities of the piano, lending the music a much darker colour than in earlier passages. The fast-moving semiquavers create a sense of urgency, which is enhanced by the transition from 4/4 to 2/4. The change in meter means that the emphasis placed at the start of each bar arrives more frequently, which gives a stronger, more impactful rhythmic impetus, suggesting an almost marching quality. Schumann's use of doubled octaves in the left hand furthers the ominous character of the music, as it broadens the texture, with the upper octave reinforcing the lower, so that the melodic line still cuts through the texture even at this low tessitura. This is an inversion of the traditional melody and accompaniment texture, with melody in the right hand, accompaniment in the left, used in piano music. Placing the melody in the left hand is something Schumann had only briefly experimented with before, normally used as a textural embellishment. The extended use of a left-hand melody is something new in her compositional vocabulary in Op 5.

One certain source for this passage (Figure 21) is the fandango in the first movement of Robert Schumann's sonata no 1, Op 11 published in 1836, but composed between 1833 and 1835, and dedicated to Clara Schumann (Figure 22). Clara Schumann wrote to Robert Schumann on the 1st of September 1835:

I send their master, whom you know well, many greetings through you, and so does the *Davidsbündler Florestan Sonata*, which is looking forward to being made a little easier towards the end of its magic tones – B minor, instead of F# major (Litzmann, 1913, p. 74).

In this section of letter Schumann is referencing Robert Schumann's Op 11, explicitly telling Robert Schumann that she is making reference to the music he had dedicated to her in her own composition.



Figure 22 Robert Schumann, Op 11 (1835), *Allegro vivace* (Schumann, 1887)

The similarities between these two excerpts from Schumann's Op 5 no 4 and Robert Schumann's Op 11 are undeniable, with similarities in the rhythm and character of the melodies, as well as the accompanying figures. A further similarity is drawn by Reich (2001, p. 225) between the oscillating fifths at the beginning of the passage of Robert Schumann's (the first bar shown in Figure 22) to those at the beginning of Schumann's Op 5 no 4 (although hers are diminished fifths). There is again an undeniable similarity, as discussed earlier. Reich goes on to explain that the oscillating figure originated with Clara Schumann, while the melodic theme originated with Robert Schumann. This is one of the earliest examples of the Schumanns' influence on each other's work, foreshadowing the artistic partnership as well as the romantic relationship that would follow the couple until Robert Schumann's death. While this passage from Robert Schumann's Op 11 is undoubtedly the source for the theme in Schumann's Op 5 no 4 there are still a few key differences that are worth highlighting. Firstly, Robert Schumann ties his accompanying quavers over the bar lines, creating a sense of hemiola and slight off set in the rhythm. Schumann, on the other hand, is incredibly regimented in her rhythms, sticking rigidly to her feeling of driving two in a bar, which is responsible for the forthright nature of this passage (Figure 21). It is also clear that Schumann wanted to achieve a different harmonic effect to Robert Schumann, shown by her rather sparing use of accidentals when compared to his. Robert Schumann's use of accidentals serves to make the tonality of this passage unclear, using both major and minor thirds in close proximity. By contrast, Clara Schumann's lack of accidentals allows the minor tonality to be solidly established. The result of this is that Clara Schumann's harmonic language is simpler than Robert's. Given her extensive command of chromatic

harmony demonstrated across the rest of her Op 5, I would suggest that Schumann chose to use a simpler harmonic approach in order to make this music more acceptable to the concert going public.

The most noticeable melodic difference between the two passages, is that Schumann's melody is entirely played in the left hand, whereas Robert Schumann's is shared by both. While this is what most differentiates the two passages, Schumann's utilisation of a lower tessitura lends the music a darker quality that is not necessarily shared by Robert Schumann's piece. Notwithstanding the ominous quality of Schumann's version of the passage, which is enhanced by its minor tonality, it is clear to see that even at this early stage in the life of the two Schumanns their music was becoming interwoven, the two composers quoting and borrowing ideas from each other's music.

Further to the musical borrowing between the two composers, there was also clearly discussions of musical aesthetics and the dilemma of creating music that is acceptable to both its creator and the paying public. As much as Robert Schumann railed against the empty virtuosity of the prevailing *brilliant* pianistic style (Chernaik, 2018, p. 30), Schumann was always more pragmatic and conscious of what the concert going public would approve of. A particularly good illustration of this is a letter written to Robert Schumann by Schumann on the 4th of April 1839:

Listen, Robert, won't you for once compose something brilliant and easy to understand, something that has no titles, but hangs together as a whole, not too long and not too short? I want so much to have something of yours to play publicly, something that suits the audience. It is indeed humiliating for a genius, but policy demands it (Reich, 2001, p. 253).

The considerations expressed in this letter may have led Schumann to include a simpler version of the passage from Schumann's Op 11 in her Op 5, as it would be a way of introducing Robert Schumann's music to new audiences in a more palatable package.

Given the prevalence of the *brilliant* style in the Leipzig music circles, it is unsurprising that there are several similarities between the *brilliant* and Schumann's particular compositional quirks. For example, the harmonic palette of all the sections discussed so far are broadly similar. The fundamental harmonies are built around the tonic, dominant, subdominant and dominant seventh. The largest difference between the specifically Schumannesque sections and those in the *brilliant* style is that in the more overtly *brilliant* sections Schumann places a greater emphasis on the mediant. In both the *brilliant* sections of Op 5 no 2 and 4¹³ Schumann uses mediant harmonies more often than dominant sevenths. Contrastingly in the more Schumannesque sections mediant harmonies are hardly ever used. This subtle change in the overall harmonic picture of these two styles is enough to distinguish them, but the broader similarities in the fundamental harmonies shows that they are very closely related in compositional style.

There is certainly overlap between the *brilliant* style and Schumann's individual compositional voice especially in Op 5 no 2. It is clear that Schumann was drawing heavily on the *brilliant* style music that she heard around her at her father's musical evenings, and that she learnt in her lessons with her father. This means that aspects of Schumann's compositional voice, especially at this early stage in her career owed a great deal to the popular *brilliant* style of the era. Although Schumann's music would later be tied to Chopin and that of Robert Schumann, at this juncture in her compositional life Schumann was just as influenced by the more mainstream *brilliant* school of composition and playing as she was by the newer style of the *Field* school and Chopin.

¹³ The A sections of Op 5 no 2 and bars 44-67/136-165 of Op 5 no 4

Chopin

The third and final style of composition represented in Schumann's Op 5 is the *Field* school, represented most heavily in Schumann's repertoire by Chopin. In this chapter I will examine the links between the music of Chopin that Schumann learnt and her opus 5. This connection between the two composers has been explored by Larry Todd (2004, p. 322), who argues that Schumann's Op 6 is the point at which her music most resembles Chopin's, borrowing harmonic progressions, melodic turns and even musical forms from Chopin. Todd cites the large amount of Chopin's music that had entered Schumann's repertoire in 1835-1836, the years in which Op 6 was composed. Much of Op 5 was composed within this same time frame, and so it is unsurprising that the beginnings of the influence of Chopin's music on Schumann can be seen in this opus. Schumann's interaction with the music of Chopin began with his Op 2 (Variations on 'La ci darem la mano' from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*), which she learned in 1831, and her interest only grew from there until by 1835 Chopin was the dominant composer in Schumann's repertoire. As discussed above, and Todd (2004, p. 320) highlights, Op 5 was a transitional opus for Schumann, from the dance forms of her youth to the classical character pieces of her maturity. I will also argue that through the composition of her Op 5 Schumann gained a greater understanding of the mechanics of Chopin's style of composition. Chopin's particular style, which incorporated elements of the *brilliant* school from his early career as a virtuoso and the wider *Field* school of composition to which he belonged for most of his compositional life were relatively new in the 1830s, having only come to prominence in the late 1820s through John Field's nocturnes. May (1912, p. 11) describes the latter as part of 'the first personal notes of a new romanticism'. Certain sections of Schumann's Op 5 can be seen as early attempts at understanding this new mode of writing for the piano: the B section of Op 5 no 2 (bars 98-148) and her Op 5 no 3 '*Romance*'. The name of Op 5 no 3 sets it apart from the other three pieces in this opus, as it is the only one that does not involve a dance. This could be interpreted as Schumann signalling that she was moving away from the dance forms of her earliest compositions, and therefore would imply that this was a particularly conscious decision in that she was deliberately experimenting with a new style not just imitating what she had heard or played.

Some of the first pieces of Chopin that Schumann studied were his early Mazurkas, namely his Op 7 no 1 (Mazurka in B \flat major) and Op 6 no 1 (Mazurka in F# major), both studied by Schumann in 1835. The Mazurka, as a form has some particular characteristics, which Chopin wholeheartedly embraces in these two pieces: they are in triple time, with much of the melodic interest and metrical emphasis falling on the second beat of the bar. This offsetting of the melodic interest, usually a beat behind any harmonic change gives the Mazurka as a genre its particular character. This emphasising of the second beat can clearly be seen in Chopin's Op 7 no 1 (Figure 23).

Figure 23 Chopin, Op 7 no 1 (1830-32) Mazurka in Bb, bars 1-12

The semiquavers leading to the second beat serve as an anacrusis, highlighting the second beat of the bar as the melodic focal point. Similarly, in the falling motif in bars 4-6 the second beat is highlighted by both this anacrusis and a large melodic leap, which widens with each passing bar. This displacement of emphasis allows Chopin to create brief moments of more unconventional harmony as the harmony of the previous bar is being held over in the right hand, whilst the left hand has already moved to the next chord.

Schumann also uses semiquaver anacruses to place melodic emphasis on a specific beat, however, as shown in the Figure 23 she uses them to emphasise the first beat of the bar, rather than the second.

Figure 24 Schumann, Op 5 no 3 (1836), Romance, bars 33 - 38

Schumann uses this figure throughout her Op 5 no 3, in multiple melodic settings. In many other ways, her Romance is very similar to Chopin's mazurkas. It is in triple time and uses dotted rhythms

and the melodic phrases end on the beat. The only way in which it does not satisfy the definition of a Mazurka is that it does not emphasise the second beat of the bar. It would seem likely that Schumann borrowed this dotted rhythmic figure from Chopin's music, but chose to move the dotted figure to the beginning of the bar, in order that the rhythmic emphasis coincides with the bar line. In many ways, this is a microcosm of the development of Schumann as a composer. She is drawing on the musical world around her, incorporating it in to her own music, especially that of the 'new romantics' such as Chopin (Reich, 2001, p. 213). By emphasising the first beat of the bar, rather than the second Schumann's *Romance* loses some of the dancing qualities of a Mazurka, but the use of these dotted rhythms give a subtle reference to the playful, rustic character of this dance.

A second technique utilised by Chopin and subsequently by Schumann is the suspension and anticipation of harmonies in his op 6 no 1, this time, through the use of descending appoggiatura in the bass (Figure 25).



Figure 25 F. Chopin, Op 6 no 1 (1830-32), Mazurka in F# minor, bars 1- 10

These offset descending chords, with the middle voice offset against the bass, again create a sense of greater harmonic purpose, in that they lead the listener through a series of dissonances to eventually return to the more familiar ground of tonic and dominant harmony. This in turn creates a sense of harmonic momentum through the piece and is a technique Chopin returns to twice more through the course of the piece.

This use of appoggiatura is echoed by Schumann in her op 5 no 3 (Figure 26).



Figure 26 Schumann, Op 5 no 3 (1836), Romance, bars 1 – 8

The tied tonic pedals in the bass in bars 1-2 and 4-6 are a good example of the offsetting of the harmony. Taking an example from the first bar, the continuation of the B under the third beat of the bar, which would otherwise be a clear dominant seventh, instead prolongs the tonic harmony and allows it to be enriched by the dominant chord. Conversely, in the eighth bar, Schumann maintains the dominant harmony from the previous bar in the right hand until the third beat, whereas the tonic is stated in the left hand on the first beat of the bar. Unlike Chopin, Schumann chose to hold her appoggiatura in the left hand, rather than the right.

Leonard Ratner (1992, p. 10) wrote that:

Harmony contributes its own colour to the palette of Romantic sound qualities. Many nineteenth-century writers commented on Romantic composers' novel and rich harmonic progressions and colourful manner of presenting individual chords or keys.

This is a key difference between Classical and Romantic composers, in that it marks the change from functional harmony, to the harmony being a focal point of the musical interest. Although these things are not mutually exclusive, the Romantic composers placed a greater emphasis on their harmonic language and the colouristic qualities they could create.

In an article on the voice leading and chromatic harmony in the music of Chopin Richard Parks (1976, p. 189) comments that:

An interesting aspect of Chopin's compositional technique is his use of altered chords in passages where they do not appear to function in their conventional harmonic roles such as applied dominants, leading tone chords, and so on.

Here Parks outlines both what makes Chopin a Romantic composer, and also what is particular about his harmonic language, namely, that Chopin repurposes the chords common in functional harmony and uses them to create a different harmonic style, with greater use of more chromatic harmony through contrast between melody and harmony. This use of applied dominants, leading tone chords (and I would add use of the 'upper structure' referring to 9ths, 11ths or 13ths, to borrow from jazz terminology) is also very much present in Schumann's opus 5, giving us a clear link between the two composers styles.

In this example taken from Chopin's op 9 no 2 (Figure 27), which Schumann studied in 1834, the first G in the right hand is held over the first change in harmony.

Figure 27 Chopin, Op 9 no 2 (1830-32), Nocturne in Eb, bars 1-3 (Chopin, 1833)

This creates an appoggiatura, tying the simple Eb harmony to the more elaborate harmony in the second beat of the bar, still based on Eb but now using the fourth and the major seventh. This is then followed by an F in the melody over a clear tonic harmonisation in the left hand, giving a ninth chord. The F is an appoggiatura, and so implies a coming resolution. A more functional approach would have been to use a dominant chord at this point, and the second chord is dominant

functioning; however, Chopin chose to use the increased harmonic tension to pull his listener through the phrase. In melodic terms, Chopin has added a slight decoration to a held mediant, which has had the effect of enriching the overall harmonic flavour of the bar, as this slight melodic deviation is left to resound as the sustain pedal will maintain the notes played. As Chopin arrives at the end of this phrase, falling by step to the E \flat in the fourth beat of the first bar, he has already created the dissonance that propels the music into the next phrase, through the falling bass line, leading to the minor sub-mediant harmony at the beginning of the next bar. As the melodic tension is resolved, the harmonic tension is increased, this eb and flow between differing types of musical tension is what characterises Chopin's music. Given that Schumann learned this piece in 1834,¹⁴ while she was composing Op 5, the presence of techniques used by Chopin in this piece would suggest that Chopin's music was influencing Schumann's compositional decisions.

Schumann's Op 5 no 2's B section's melody also uses suspensions and appoggiatura as a way of creating harmonic interest, in a similar manner to Chopin.



Figure 28 Schumann, op 5 no 2 (1836), bars 100-103

The above example is taken from the start of the B section of this movement (Figure 28). There are three appoggiaturas, or anticipations in this passage. The first, in bar 100 with the C# falling to the B, the third in bar 103 where the E natural in the melody line anticipates the arrival of the tonic chord by a quaver. However, the most interesting of these figures in relation to Chopin's influence on Schumann is the genuine suspension from bar 101-102, with the E being re-stated from one bar to the next. The repetition of melody notes across the bar line and across a harmonic change in order to create an extended harmony is a technique prevalent in the music of Chopin that Schumann had studied and is precisely what Schumann has done here. The E is the root of the previous chord (bar 101), but also the seventh of the chord over which it is held (bar 102, first beat). Further to this, Schumann uses the rising bass line to imply a chord of F#7, or a brief secondary dominant. All of this has the effect of obscuring the dominant harmony, whilst maintaining its fundamental character, in the same way as can be seen in Chopin's Op 9 no 2, or Op 7 no 1. Damschroder (2008, p. 41) states that Chopin's use of such appoggiaturas are a 'written-out equivalent of standard eighteenth-century embellishments...that offer improvement in both melody and harmony'. This is an effect Schumann employs in various forms six times in this, relatively short, B section. A slow-moving melodic line containing appoggiaturas was clearly a melodic effect that Schumann wished to explore, and given its prevalence in the music of Chopin, it is likely that this is where Schumann encountered it most often.

A further aspect of the B section of Schumann's Op 5 no 2 that links it strongly to the music of Chopin is the regularity of its harmonic rhythm. In much of Chopin's music the harmonic rhythm is exceedingly regular, only being broken very occasionally. For example, in the opening 24 bars of his Op 7 no 1 Chopin changes chord only on the first beat of each bar except for one instance in the ninth bar in which Chopin moves to a dominant seventh chord from the tonic on the second beat of

¹⁴ See appendix

the bar. Similarly, in this instance Schumann adopts a regular harmonic rhythm of one chord per bar, with very few exceptions. This sits in contrast to the A section of this piece, in which Schumann's harmonic rhythm is relatively irregular, with some chords lasting across several bars, and others lasting a beat or less. This marked change in harmonic rhythm, to one that is more similar to that of Chopin, is further indication that Schumann was experimenting with the approach of the Field school, and especially that of Chopin, given his overwhelming presence in her repertoire compared with other composers from this school. It is worth noting that this B section is not a wholesale imitation of Chopin's style. It still maintains elements of Schumann's own compositional voice. These are that the hands still play in rhythmic unison (Figure 29), and although the figuration is more complex than the block chords of Op 5 no 1, Schumann maintains much of her tendency to homophonic writing, as the quaver accompaniment is played simultaneously by both hands. There is some indication that Schumann was beginning to move away from complete homophony as the melody and bass lines move independently, however it is still clear that Schumann wished the two hands of the player to still be working together in rhythmic unison. Schumann also maintains certain melodic gestures; namely repeated notes as can be seen in Figure 29.



Figure 29 Schumann, Op 5 no 2 (1836), bars 111- 113

Although this is a much subtler repeated note motif than the very explicit iteration earlier in Op 5 no 2's A section (see Figure 19), it is nonetheless a version of the same melodic gesture that appears throughout Schumann's music up to this point in her compositional career as discussed by Todd (2004). The B section of Schumann's Op 5 no 2 can therefore be viewed as a particular Schumann spin on the idioms of Chopin.

Another device Chopin uses in his Nocturne in E \flat major op 9 no 2, that Schumann echoes, is a series of homophonic chords ending in a perfect cadence to lead into a new section (Figure 30). This device appears twice: once in the twelfth bar and once in the twentieth.



Figure 30 F. Chopin, Op 9 no 2 (1830-32), Nocturne in E \flat major, bar 20

These homophonic chords represent a significant departure from the overarching texture of arpeggiated chordal accompaniment, with melody in the right hand used in the rest of this piece and

therefore this becomes a memorable transition feature. Chopin uses this device as a way of framing segments of melody in the same key, whilst still maintaining harmonic interest. The sequence of chromatic chords could be understood to be leading to a key change, however the strong perfect cadence at the end of this sequence reaffirms the original key whilst also giving it a sense of newness.

Schumann uses a gesture similar to that in Chopin's Op 9 no 2 (Figure 30) in the opening of her Op 5 no 3 (Figure 31). In Schumann's version the homophonic chords fall down to the perfect cadence but arrive at it nonetheless. As in the Chopin example, in this passage Schumann is utilizing a contrasting texture to the rest of the section in order to draw attention to this transitional stage. However, no tonal transition is made. Schumann instead delays this until bar 21, with a brief tonicization of D major. The use of this transitional homophonic sequence to lead back to a statement of the first theme, as Chopin's does, allows Schumann to prepare for a reharmonization of this theme in the new key. However, the transition is more gradual, and does not come in the expected place (as a result of the cadence), which adds interest for Schumann's listeners, given she is playing with their tonal expectations.



Figure 31 Schumann, Op 5 no 3, Romance, bars 15-16

Given that Chopin uses this particular gesture (Figure 30) several times in his nocturne in E \flat Op 9 no 2, and each time it is made prominent by its contrast to the surrounding material, it seems likely that Schumann borrowed this transitional technique that would allow her to restate the initial melody in a familiar form before developing it.

Schumann and Chopin also share a decorative melodic motif, as shown below (Figures 32 and 33)



Figure 32 Schumann, Op 5 no 3 (1836), Romance, bars 41-42



Figure 33 F. Chopin, Op 9 no 2 (1830-32), Nocturne, bar 5

This is a figure that Chopin repeats several times throughout the piece, with it recurring in bars 13 and 15. That Schumann chose to notate this figure as a series of grace notes rather than as measured notes in the melody would not affect how it would sound in playing. It is intriguing that either composer chose to write these out in notes at all as they are in effect an upper mordent followed by a lower mordent. In practice both figures act as decoration for a scalic melody, providing contrast to the longer held melody notes. That Schumann was using similar patterns of embellishment in her melody to Chopin would seem to suggest that Chopin's writing style had a more than passing level of influence on Schumann's compositional style. Although these devices are relatively small, they are prevalent only in the areas of Schumann's compositions that resemble the style of Chopin. This would therefore suggest that Schumann was deliberately borrowing from Chopin to add interest to her music. It is again worth noting that Schumann still maintained elements within her own compositional voice, namely melodic figures including repeated notes and homophonic textures, that were common to much piano writing at the time alongside a more Chopinesque style of writing. This would suggest that Schumann had a strong sense of her own voice as a composer and chose to experiment in a new style drawing on its idioms, rather than writing purely pastiche versions of this music.

While no single one of the examples given above would suggest that Chopin was a major influence on Schumann's Op 5, the fact that there are so many similarities between the music of Chopin that she studied and the music that she then composed is a strong indicator that Schumann saw Chopin as a significant influence on her own compositional style. Much of the similarity is textural, showing that these were pianistic patterns trained into Schumann's hands, and then used

in her own compositions. This would then suggest that the music Schumann was studying was influencing her compositional choices; given the large volume of Chopin's music in her repertoire it is likely that Chopin's influence was felt strongly.

3 - Virtuoso Variations: Chopin's *Variations on 'La ci darem la mano'* and their influence on Schumann's Op 5.

One of the most famous pieces in Schumann's repertoire during the 1830s was Chopin's Op 2. If Schumann was drawing influence from the music she was studying, it would be expected that this was one of the pieces she would have drawn from. In this chapter I will analyse the links between Schumann's Op 5 and Chopin's Op 2 and assess how Chopin's Op 2 may have influenced Schumann's compositional voice. Chopin and Schumann met several times during the first half of the 1830s, playing for each other and both praising the other's playing. On one occasion in 1835 Chopin waited a whole hour for Schumann to return home so that he could hear her play (Litzmann, 1913, p. 75). The admiration between the two composer-pianists was clear. Chopin's Op. 2 is a set of variations for piano and orchestra on the theme of 'La ci darem la mano' from the opera *Don Giovanni* by Mozart. In the original duet Don Giovanni attempts to seduce Zerlina, a peasant girl, through various entreaties. These variations were designed to be a show piece, for Chopin the virtuoso as well as Chopin the composer, therefore the technical difficulty of each movement is the most important aspect, not the compositional skill it took to create. The variations are also largely in the *brilliant* style, although there are flashes of the *Field* school and a more recognisable 'Chopinesque' compositional voice. This compositional voice would be characterised by flowing lyrical melodies and wide voiced accompaniments spanning over an octave (Abraham, 1939). Taruskin (2005, p. 351) describes Chopin's musical style as 'vividly if enigmatically expressive performance pieces, albeit in an "improvisatory" style'. Chopin's Op 2 has moments of seemingly improvised genius, especially in the virtuosic flourishes, however, he was yet to find the enigmatic voice that would come to define his works for piano.

There is, as yet, relatively little scholarly literature focused on Chopin's Op 2. This may be, as Samson argues, because when Chopin's early compositions are compared to his later works, they come up short. According to Samson (1996, p. 81) Chopin's Op 1, Rondo in C minor, has an 'inorganic nature' in the music connecting the structural pillars. Samson (1996, p. 82) goes on to argue that the same impression of lack of organic growth in the music is gained from Chopin's Op 2, with Chopin lavishing 'special attention on music not directly related to the theme'. This characterisation of Chopin's Op 2 by Samson would imply that this piece can be viewed as a quasi-apprentice piece by the young virtuoso, eager to show off his virtuosity but not quite yet able to wield it within the confines of an organically developing structure. Furthermore, as Ritterman (1992, p. 11) explains, variation sets such as this were not particularly uncommon, and seen as a standard form for a composer-pianist to have written in, in the early nineteenth century. Abraham (1939) set the tone for the scholarly discussion of this piece in his book, in which he argues that Chopin's Warsaw era compositions (of which Op 2 is one) are to be seen as a development section in Chopin's compositional life, and not to be seen as on a par with his later works. This attitude may have contributed to the lack of scholarly interest in the piece. Much of the literature does not go beyond acknowledging Robert Schumann's (1831) excited reaction to the piece, exclaiming 'Hats off gentlemen, a genius' in his review of the piece in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*. In terms of literature surrounding Schumann, Chopin's Op 2 is mentioned as the first large scale piece by Chopin that Schumann learned. May (1912, p. 59) describes the variations being acclaimed 'with no little joy and exultation' on their arrival in the Wieck household, but gives little analytical detail of what the variations contain, with the focus more on how quickly Schumann learned the piece and how they would be the centrepiece of her first tour outside of Saxony, in 1831.

Like Robert Schumann, Fredrich Wieck was quick to signal his approval of Chopin's new piece, writing a rave review of his own. Wieck was just as gushing as Robert Schumann in his praise of what he described as a 'daring manner' (Makela, Kammertons, Ptasczynski, & Wieck, 2019, p. 56) of composition vividly characterising each movement as a scene from the opera for his readers. Wieck describes the variations as follows: the opening of the introduction depicts the imminent declaration of Love for Zerlina by Don Giovanni. Wieck continues, saying that at the 'Piu mosso' mark the *risoluto* octaves characterise the confidence of the swaggering Don Giovanni. He goes on to describe the first variation as a character study of Don Giovanni, showing his daring, but also his decency (according to Wieck) and decorum. The second variation is more servant-like, as it portrays the character of Leporello, Don Giovanni's manservant. Leporello's voice can be heard alongside his master's in the search for Zerlina. In the third variation Don Giovanni and Leporello have found Zerlina and Don Giovanni is wooing her. However, the jealous Masetto, Zerlina's fiancé, can be heard in the left hand. The fourth variation, purely a bravura variation, is another character study of Don Giovanni, and a chance for the player to display their virtuosity. The fifth variation changes character. It is the first not to be in B♭ major, instead in B♭ minor. The tempo of the fifth variation is *adagio*, illustrating the softer more loving side of Don Giovanni. He is trying a new method to woo Zerlina who finally takes his hand as Don Giovanni has been imploring her to, so Wieck argues. The final, *Alla Polacca* variation, is a variation purely to show the skill of the player (Makela, Kammertons, Ptasczynski, & Wieck, 2019). Wieck asks 'Did the composer compose it with foaming champagne? Or should the virtuoso play it after enjoying the sparkling wine? Or should the listener only enjoy it while drinking champagne?' (Makela, Kammertons, Ptasczynski, & Wieck, 2019, p. 58).

Throughout his article Wieck is quick to point out the virtuosity required to play this set of variations, with phrases such as 'they are not easy to play, but may sing at the hands of an experienced pianist' (Makela, Kammertons, Ptasczynski, & Wieck, 2019, p. 57) and 'a bravura variation, which requires an above average bravura player' (Makela, Kammertons, Ptasczynski, & Wieck, 2019, p. 58). As Wieck was writing this review, Schumann would have been studying playing the variations in the same apartment, in readiness for an upcoming tour. Wieck is careful to ensure that his readership will be suitably impressed by his daughter's playing and must have hoped that this review would increase their ticket sales on the tour, as the public would flock to hear the young virtuoso who could play these variations so masterfully. It would have been Wieck's hope that his intended readership would have been made more familiar with these variations by his article, as well as increasing their anticipation for his daughter's upcoming performances of them.

These variations were a particularly significant part of Schumann's repertoire as they were the first major work by Chopin she learnt. In her diary of the summer of 1830 Schumann writes:

Chopin's Variations Op. 2, which I learnt in eight days, is the most difficult piece of music which I have ever played. This original, inspired composition is still so little known that it has been considered incomprehensible and unplayable by nearly all pianists and teachers. At the next concert that I give, here, or in Berlin, or anywhere else, I shall play it in public for the first time (Litzmann, 1913, p. 23).

Schumann went on to play these variations in public many times, especially on the tour to Paris of 1831. The incredible shows of virtuosity that the variations require impressed many that she encountered, including Louis Spohr, whose reaction Friedrich Wieck described as follows:

Spohr praised the composition as remarkably imaginative and original, but he found Clara's playing so broad and sustained, and at the same time so brilliant and solid, that he could hardly listen to the end of each variation without discussing it with his wife (Litzmann, 1913, p. 31).

While Wieck's descriptions of reactions to his daughter's playing have a tendency to be a little overblown, it is a good illustration of the impact being able to perform these variations had on Schumann's wider reputation as a virtuoso. Furthermore, that Schumann had such a command of these challenging variations that she felt confident to play them in front of as eminent a musician as Spohr would suggest that this was a piece that had been comfortably absorbed into her repertoire in 1831. Therefore, any techniques used in this piece would have been readily available tools for Schumann to deploy in her own compositions.

In examining Chopin's 'La ci darem la mano' variations we are given an intriguing picture of his early compositional style, ranging from the high bravura virtuosity of the *brilliant* style to flashes of the flowing *Field* style that would become the hallmark of his piano compositions. Stefanik (2017, p. 708) argues that Wieck saw these variations as both drawing on the 'current trends in post-Classical pianism' of the school of Herz, Moscheles and Kalkbrenner (the *brilliant* school), but that Wieck thought Chopin also 'transcended the limitations of these styles', being reminiscent of the *Field* school. This transcendence of the popular *brilliant* style, and experimentation with the newer *Field* style within a single piece is clearly an influence on Schumann's Op 5, as these two styles are both strongly present in the music of both Schumann's Op 5 and Chopin's Op 2. Given that Chopin was blending the two styles in a piece that was so prominent in Schumann's repertoire it would seem logical to suggest that this was a possible source of influence on Schumann's compositional choice. Chopin's use of Mozart's melody is quite standard for an early-nineteenth-century variation set, in that it was a popular and well-known melody at the time, but there are still a few notable points of discussion. Firstly, Mozart's melody is developed very little through the variations, remaining easily recognisable and prominent in the texture throughout all the movements. Samson (1996, p. 82) observes that these variations are largely a series of clichés, but that they are still part of Chopin's 'apprenticeship'. As Belkin (2018, p. 92) writes: 'the theme of a set of variations normally has a fairly straightforward structure, so as to provide a clear, easily memorable frame for the subsequent variations'. Because this is one of the most famous themes written by Mozart, it would certainly been a recognisable theme around which Chopin could weave his variations. The theme is certainly quite straightforward, easily memorable and gives a clear structure around which the variations can be constructed. It was therefore a shrewd choice on Chopin's part as it allowed for the piece to be readily memorable for his audience. This would be typical of variation forms written by many composers at the time, however, what sets Chopin's variations apart is the scale of his virtuosity. As Ritterman (1992, p. 11) says:

Items of this kind [La ci darem la mano variations] would have created little surprise: in the 1820s variations or rondos were staple concert items for pianists. As contemporary reviews make clear, it was because of the style and method of his playing and of his composition that Chopin appeared to Viennese critics of 1829 to stand apart from most piano virtuosos of his time.

Chopin's Op 2 does not break with the traditional variation form, staying close to the original melody, and the harmonic content is largely relatively close to Mozart's original. However, what does set it apart is the pianistic dexterity required to perform this piece.

La ci darem la mano
Themes from each of the variations, introduction and thema

Chopin

Introduction

Thema

Variation 1

Variation 2

Variation 3

Variation 4

Variation 5

Alla polka (5th bar)

Figure 34 A comparison of the use of the first phrase of the theme in Chopin's op 2

Figure 34 shows the progression of the theme used by Chopin for his variations. In the Introduction, Chopin stops two notes short of the complete first phrase of Mozart's original theme. This heightens the tension for the listener, as they would have known this theme, and expected it to be completed. From the 'Thema' onwards, the theme is stated in its entirety.

Chopin wished to show the quality of his right hand playing as well as his assimilation of the brilliant style (Roudet, 2015, p. 68), and moved the theme to the left hand so that more complex figures could be played by the right. This is evidenced by the fact that in the 4th, 5th and Alla Polacca variations the right hand does not simply play the original theme, but an embellished variation of it. In the fourth, both hands must leap over an octave to fill in the accompanying chords. In the 5th the player is required to play a 2 against 3 rhythmic pattern in one hand (something that is difficult to achieve with two hands) and finally the Alla Polacca variation uses an embellished version of the melody set to a polka rhythm, providing a rousing finale. This division of parts in one hand, from the 5th variation, was very much part of the style of Thalberg, who was able to create the appearance of a 'third hand' through division of parts to the different sections of his hands (thumbs playing a 'tenor' part that would seem miraculous to his audience) (Davies, 2014, p. 96). Chopin uses this technique to demonstrate his attainment of the highest level of *brilliant* virtuosity.

Chopin employs rhythmic alterations in the 2nd, 4th and 'Alla Polacca' variations. In all three cases the tune appears embellished in smaller note values, but not so far as to distort the overall shape of

the theme. This again suggests that he wanted to keep the theme recognisable, so that it would serve as a focal point, around which he could weave more virtuosic figures. This mixture would come to be a characteristic of nineteenth-century piano repertoire, especially in the *Field* school. As Rowland (1992, p. 38) argues 'relatively long-note melodic writing' of the main theme contrasts with the 'decorated figuration' to create a constantly interesting musical landscape. Rowland discusses this with particular reference to the nocturne as a genre. However, this style of melodic writing is common across much of Chopin's composition and a prototype for this style can at times be seen in his Op 2.

In variations 1 to 4 Chopin's harmonic language is rather unadventurous. He uses only chords I, ii, II, V and IV, outside of a few instances in which he uses a chromatic progression to transition between sections, for example at the end of the A section in the third variation (bar 7). This ensures that Chopin does not stray too far from the original harmonisation in Mozart's opera. This further supports the suggestion that Chopin is seeking to foreground virtuosic techniques, almost as if these variations are studies in a particular aspect of his pianistic skill (as Robert Schumann and Wieck claimed) (Stefaniak, 2017, p. 708), rather than in his ability to construct a traditional set of variations.

In the opening movement, 5th variation and Alla Polacca variation Chopin's harmonic language is much more adventurous than in the other variations. In these movements there is a greater use of sevenths and ninths, as well as the overall harmonic flavour being enriched by a wide variety of chromaticism. For example: the #iii diminished chord in bar 3 of the 5th variation; or the #iv diminished chord in bar 6 of the same variation. A further example is the passing ninths in the left hand of the 12th and 13th bars also in the fifth variation, which although they only last for a semiquaver, would be extended by the use of the pedal and therefore have a greater impact on the overall harmonic character. In the Alla Polacca variation Chopin uses rising chromatic progressions to transition between sections, for example from bars 32 – 34, or the descending chromatic progression from bars 49 – 50. There is also extensive use of diminished harmonies throughout the variation. These chromatic sequences act as a simple bridge between different ideas in the variation, whilst also adding harmonic tension, which is released as the new section is reached by each bridge. These two bar interludes prolong the final movement, eking out every possible second for Chopin to show off his virtuosity to his audience.

One element of Chopin's harmonic language that is prominent throughout all the variations is the use of secondary dominants. This harmonic technique is used by Mozart in the original theme. However, Chopin extends this harmonic idea by including further secondary dominants, for example the inclusion of a VI7 chord in this passage from the 3rd variation (Figure 35):

Figure 35 F. Chopin, Op 2 Variation 3 (1827), bars 1-5

Similarly, in this example from the opening of the first movement (Figure 36):

Figure 36 F. Chopin, Op 2 (1827) First movement bars 1 - 13

This could be interpreted as Chopin building on the harmonic devices used by Mozart in the original theme. It also has the effect of slightly destabilising the tonal centre, as there is the momentary implication of a modulation. Chopin may have done this in order to create tonal interest as these variations are overwhelmingly in the same key of B \flat major (a semitone higher than Mozart's original A major), with only one variation departing to the tonic minor, a not untypical tonal pattern for a variation set to take in the early nineteenth century. A further explanation of these secondary dominants is that they are a product of Chopin's voice leading, causing these chords to not function in their conventional harmonic roles, but instead as part of a larger architecture, as Parks (1976) discussed. The VI7 chord is being used as an entry point into a progression around the cycle of fifths, culminating in the dominant, rather than functioning as a traditional sub-mediante harmonisation.

Although Chopin creates moments of harmonic interest, the primary function of each of Chopin's variations is designed to demonstrate a certain aspect of his virtuosity. There is no doubt that this piece was conceived as a way for Chopin to advertise himself as a piano virtuoso and Schumann's

command of this piece would also have shown her to be a virtuoso of the first rank. The first variation is a masterclass in the split-hand technique of Thalberg, a leading virtuoso in the *brilliant* style (Davies, 2014, p. 90). In this the hand must be divided into different parts to accomplish what is desired. This requires a great deal of independence in the fingers, and a high level of virtuosity from the performer. However, this variation is still in the mode of proving that Chopin was able to compete with the best technical pianists of the day in terms of their *brilliant* playing, which Chopin is demonstrating. As Davies (2014, p. 97) explores, Liszt thought that most piano music was either a simplified, amended or exaggerated version of Thalberg's playing. Chopin is most certainly in the exaggerated category, as he was trying to prove himself as a virtuoso.

The second variation is an exemplar of playing in octaves, demonstrating quite literally the equality between the virtuosity of each hand, as they are required to play in precise unison throughout the variation. The great speed of this variation is also designed to mark Chopin as a foremost exponent of the rapidity of execution that was a hallmark of the *brilliant* school of playing (May, 1912, p. 11), so fashionable in Vienna at the time of his Op 2's premier. The articulation of the player is also highlighted, in that to make the theme come through the texture the correct notes must be accented (usually at the start of each group of demisemiquavers). To articulate well at the speed required by this movement would have been extremely difficult but is a detail that many of Chopin's audience would have not picked up. This extremely fine control is directly aimed at impressing the virtuosi of Vienna who would have understood just how difficult this touch was to achieve. Similarly, for Schumann in her concert performances, demonstrating this precise control of this variation would have been a significant marker of virtuosity.

The third variation is intended to highlight the dexterity of the performer's left hand, requiring leaps of over an octave as well as intricate chromaticism. Piano pedagogues would not start treating the left hand as equal to the right for another decade, beginning with the first exercise of Czerny's Op 500 (Kitchen, 2013, p. 233). Kitchen and Woolley (2013, p. 235) explain that Czerny's exercises were in response to the increase in the prominence of left-hand technique in virtuoso playing with Beethoven at the forefront. Chopin's use of advanced left-hand technique was designed to signal his place among the ranks of the foremost modern virtuosi. A similar example of this style of left hand writing can be found in the fourth variation of Hummel's 'Variations on God Save the King' Op 10 published in 1824, only a few years before Chopin's variations. Hummel was a great exponent of the *brilliant* style, and so would be a model for any early nineteenth century virtuoso. In the Hummel, as in the Chopin, the left hand plays rapid, elaborate figures (Hummel uses semi-quavers whereas Chopin uses demisemiquavers). Further to this, most of the figures in Hummel's Op 10 are within an octave, whereas Chopin frequently uses figures that stretch over an octave. In many ways these are acts of 'one-upmanship' by Chopin. He is seeking to demonstrate that he can play more elaborately, and with greater virtuosity than Hummel. In this sense Chopin is building on the *brilliant* style that was prevalent in Vienna at the beginning of the nineteenth century and showing that he had mastered it.

The fourth variation mirrors the technique found in Bach's C minor prelude from the *Well-tempered Clavier*, Book 1, with oscillations between the inner and outer voices. However, where Bach keeps all the oscillations within the span of a hand, Chopin greatly exceeds this with regular leaps of over an octave in both hands both upwards and downwards. This would again require tremendous accuracy, and an exceptional command of the geography of the instrument, as the slightest miscalculation would result in a harsh discord. There are several parallels between the work of Bach and Chopin, not least Chopin's series of 24 preludes, one in each key, 'in conscious imitation of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*' (Plantinga, 1984, p. 192). Chopin's reference to Bach is unsurprising

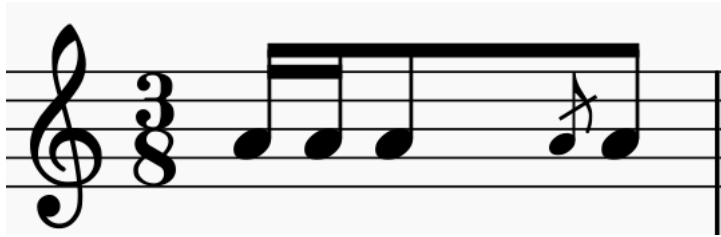


Figure 38 Prominent rhythmic figure in Schumann's Op 5 no 1 (1836)

While it is not unusual for a piece to be characterised by a rhythm, especially one based on a dance, there is a similarity between these two rhythmic phrases. Much of Schumann's compositional output was based on dance rhythms. Of her previous published compositions only her Op 3 was specifically not a dance form, the others either being waltzes or Polonaise. It would be hard to argue that the rhythm shown in Figure 38 is a direct quotation from Chopin. However, there is a great deal of similarity between the gestures in Figures 37 and 38. Schumann's added grace note is usually a rising fourth, resolving to the fifth, and so serves a more harmonic function, rather than rhythmic, and if played as a true grace note, the rhythmic character is very similar to the middle two beats of the Chopin example. The fact that the finale of the Chopin is by far the longest movement, and its central rhythm appears so frequently (32 times, when quoted fully) and prominently throughout, and that the rhythm Schumann chose to use is so similar is a strong indication that this style of rhythmic writing influenced Schumann and the way in which she chose to write her opus 5 no 1. While this is by no means a direct quotation from Chopin's Op 2, given that a large proportion of Schumann's repertoire was in various dance styles she could have chosen from any number of dance rhythms. The fact that she chose one so close to a rhythm that is featured so substantially in a prominent piece in her repertoire suggests that it had some level of influence on her compositional choices.

Another area in which Chopin's influence can be seen are the specific areas of compositional technique Schumann chose to foreground in her Op 5. Schumann had only recently become known for playing Chopin's variations, and so would want her own compositions to highlight the areas of technical prowess she had become famous for. As Karasowski (1879, p. 139) explains, the employment of the diminished chord was a special characteristic in Chopin's music, especially when it was used to return to the chief subject. The first example of the use of these diminished harmonies is an extended arpeggio on a diminished chord being used as a transition between sections by Schumann (Figure 39) a second example of this technique is given in Figure 40. The arpeggio leads to a transitional section which in turn reintroduces the main subject of the piece:

Figure 39 Schumann, Op 5 no 2 (1836), from bar 57 -65

Figure 40 Schumann Op 5 no 2 (1836), bars 177-180

This is a particularly interesting use of this chord. Simply stating the diminished chord would have been harmonically sufficient for the transition Schumann was making, but instead she chose to use the more virtuosic flourish of an arpeggio across several octaves.

This is a technique Chopin also uses in his finale (Figures 41 and 42).

Figure 41 F. Chopin, Op 2 (1827), Alla Polacca, bars 40 - 41

Figure 42 F. Chopin, Op 2 (1827), Alla Polacca, bars 97 - 101

This extension of the more complex arpeggiated figures, by both composers, only serves to highlight the player's virtuosity and achieves little in terms of progressing the piece. This link

between the two composers may at first seem contrived; however, both compositions were written with the aim of showing that the composer was not only a virtuoso, but also a composer (Chopin, Voynich, & Opienski, 1931).¹⁵ In both instances, the harmonic progression through the transition shows a competent use of harmony, in order that the virtuosic figure in which it is packaged would allow the performer to display their technical prowess. While the precise manner in which the virtuosity manifests changes slightly from example to example, the intended effect of the virtuosic display would have been the same.

Abraham (1939, p. 11) observes that a major change in Chopin's style from Op 2 onwards was that Chopin's figurations were no longer octave-bound. This change in figuration is most closely reflected in Schumann's op. 5 no 3, where many of the left-hand figurations are much wider than an octave (Figure 43):



Figure 43 Schumann, Op 5 no 3 (1836), bars 1 - 8

In this passage there is also a clear demonstration of Schumann creating the 'layers' discussed by Samson (1996, p. 120) in relation to Chopin's music. Layers are several voice lines, utilizing differing parts of the piano's timbre and creating different textures, being played simultaneously by dividing different parts between the two hands. They are made possible by the use of the pedal (as discussed in earlier chapters) to create the impression of multiple voices, across diverse registers (Figure 43 and 44).

¹⁵ Chopin describes playing his variations many times in his letters of 1829 and is always careful to note the positive reaction.

Figure 44 Schumann, Op 5 no 2 (1836), bars 104-116: Opening of B section

This example (Figure 44) from Schumann's op 5 no 2 shows another variant of bass figuration spanning over an octave, and again the use of layering, as described by Samson, can clearly be seen through Schumann's use of distinct bass, melody and two accompanying voices, occupying the low, upper and middle registers respectively. This creates a much broader texture than would be possible if this technique of layering were not used. The arpeggiated accompaniment also serves to populate the divide between the treble and bass, which would otherwise sound quite divorced. The arpeggiated figures running between the melody and bass hold the two together sonically, as well as providing a constant motion to the music.

Similar passages to those shown in Figures 43 and 44 appear both in the 'Alla Polacca' finale, and in the fifth variation of Chopin's Op 2:



Figure 45 F. Chopin, Op 2 (1827), *Alla Polacca*, bar 102 -105



Figure 46 F. Chopin, Op 2 (1827), variation 5, bars 9 - 12

These two examples (Figures 45 and 46) have certain similarities to the figuration used by Schumann in her Op 5 no 3 and also in the Chopinesque sections of her Op 5 no 2, both in terms of the compass of their figuration and in terms of the creation of layered voicing textures. This development in bass figuration was very much characteristic of Chopin's music, and of the *Field* school (Plantinga, 1984, p. 97), and is likely to have been what led to Wieck's suggestion that Chopin was part of the *Field* school (Makela, Kammertons, Ptasczynski, & Wieck, 2019, p. 54). However, given this figuration is prominent in several of the variations by Chopin, and Schumann chose to dedicate a whole piece to this style of accompaniment, soon after having learnt Chopin's variations, it seems highly likely that the influence for this particular compositional choice to use this style of accompaniment came from this piece of Chopin's.



Figure 47 F. Chopin, Op 2 (1827), variation 5, bars 5-6

A further style of accompaniment that Chopin uses only briefly is shown in Figure 47, above. It is worth highlighting for its prominence in the introduction of the fifth variation for two reasons. Firstly, this is the first example of this texture in the fifth variation, which is the variation that most closely resembles the *Field* style. The accompanying figure ranges over an octave, broader than the accompanying figures in much of the rest of the piece. This broad accompanying figure is the most obvious characteristic of the *Field* school. This wider compass is felt both between the bass and middle accompaniments, as well as the voicing of the inner chords being greater than an octave, giving a 'more spacious' sound to the accompaniment, when compared to the more compact accompanying figures used in other sections of Chopin's Op 2. The second reason is that these two bars are very prominent in the introduction for being the only two bars with a proper melody and accompaniment texture, the rest of the accompaniment being given over to virtuosic flourishes. This means that although the appearance of this texture is only fleeting it is immediately recognisable. Chopin further ensures this recognition as this texture is used to introduce the main theme into the fifth variation, drawing further attention to it. As if to make this unmissable, Chopin repeats the introductory eight bars of the variation. The rest of the introduction (bars 1-8) is comprised of forgettable passage work, but these two bars (bars 5-6) state the theme for a second time in the repeat as if to make this newer texture even more starkly contrasting to the passage work that surrounds it.



Figure 48 Schumann, *Op 5 no 3* (1836), bars 25-35

Schumann chose to use a similar texture of repeated chords in the middle voice framed by sustained melody and bass lines in the B section of her *Op 5 no 3* (Figure 48). While it is impossible to know if this is an overt reference to Chopin's work, the use of similar textures is no doubt intriguing. Like Chopin, Schumann uses an accompanying texture of a slow-moving bass line, with repeated chords spanning over an octave in the inner voices filling in the harmony, while the main theme sails serenely over the texture in the soprano voice. This texture also has the effect of making the hands play as a cohesive unit, rather than as two separate entities, as both are responsible for accompanying the melody. Schumann used this texture much more liberally in her *Op 5 no 3* than Chopin does in his *Op 2*, making it the basis for an entire section, rather than only a few bars. This would indicate that the textural choice Schumann made was influenced by Chopin's work, as she chose to use a similar model. This is especially striking, given the plethora of alternative textures available to Schumann. It would seem likely that she instead chose to base this section of *Op 5 no 3* on a textural idiom that is highlighted in a piece of Chopin's that she had only recently perfected playing. This textural device seems fairly innocuous, although there is only one other piece in Schumann's repertoire that uses it from the time she learnt Chopin's variations until she had written her own composition. This example is in John Field's *Concerto no 2* (Figure 49):



Figure 49 J. Field, *Concerto no 2*, Op 31, bars 171-180 (Field, 1876)

In this example from Field's concerto the accompanying chords are only in the left hand, rather than in the right, but the range and register of the accompaniment lend it a certain similarity, although the connection is more tenuous than to the Chopin. Given that these are the only pieces, from those Schumann had studied, that she could have learned this texture in, and that she had achieved much greater concert success with Chopin's music, I therefore think it is likely Chopin's Op 2 is where the influence to use this texture had come from.

Initially the similarities between the harmonic language in Chopin's Op 2 and Schumann's Op 5 are not obvious, especially in the variations where Chopin remains close to Mozart's original harmonisation of the melody, namely the first, second, third and fourth. However, once Chopin begins to be more harmonically adventurous in the fifth variation and finale, there are more similarities between the harmonic palettes that the two composers draw from.

Throughout both Schumann's Op 5 and the fifth variation and finale of Chopin's Op 2 both composers use a large volume of diminished chords, using them as steps between more traditional chords. For example, in the A section of Schumann's Op 5 no 4, the many repeated chords, if harmonised conventionally would sound rather bland. However, by using diminished chords to transition between the more conventional harmonies Schumann achieves a greater level of harmonic interest (Figure 50):

Figure 50 Schumann, Op 5 no 4 (1836), bars 27-35

As can be seen in Figure 50 above, from Schumann’s Op 5 no 4, Schumann moves by step, or by step and octave to reach the next harmony. This creates a harmonic cohesion, and a sense of purpose and direction to the dissonance and extended harmony, as the listener is reassured of an eventual resolution. Abraham (1939, p. 19) describes Chopin’s movement from diminished to diatonic harmony as a dance through the air before landing back on firm ground. Schumann is using this same effect in her own chords, in that the extended distances between diatonic harmonies could be characterised as the leaps of a dance punctuated by the pirouettes of the non-diatonic harmonies.

Figure 51 F. Chopin Op 2 Variation 5 (1827), bars 3-7

The voice leading used by Chopin in the above example (Figure 51) is less immediately clear, but also lends a consistency to the harmonic progression. For example, in the first two bars of the figure, the Ds in the right-hand lead to the E flats in the ii7 chord, which is used to pivot to the dominant. Similarly, the repeated Fs, descending only by a semitone, serve to prepare for the arrival of the mediant in the fourth bar. In the seventh bar Chopin uses a diminished chord built on the sharpened fourth, which Abraham (1939, p. 19) calls Chopin’s ‘favourite diminished seventh’, to add harmonic colour to what otherwise would be two solid bars of the same repeated chord. This dissonance is again prepared for and resolved by logical voice leading in both hands, creating an intriguing but

expected dissonance. The use of similarly prepared diminished dissonance by Schumann links her and Chopin's harmonic writing as she is using dissonance in the way that Parks (1976) described Chopin doing.

In conclusion, I would argue that the similarities between Chopin's Op 2 and Schumann's Op 5 are sufficient to imply that Schumann's compositional style was influenced by these variations. Given that Schumann had studied and performed these variations, with great success and critical acclaim, recently before beginning work on her Op 5, it would certainly seem likely that she would emulate certain aspects of the composition. However, Schumann chose not to write a simple pastiche of the Chopin, choosing to use techniques that were prevalent in the Chopin piece instead, showing her assimilation of and mastery over the virtuoso techniques in the piece Chopin had written.

4 - Conclusion

Schumann's Op 5 provides a fascinating insight to a pivotal moment in her compositional career, and certainly is the transitional opus that Todd describes (2004, p. 320). This transition can be seen between the simple dance forms of her youth, and the romantic style of her mature compositions. The musical events around Schumann as well as her own maturation as an individual and composer conspired to create a sometimes-disjointed series of pieces. There is no unifying style or musical idea running through her Op 5. It consists very much of four separate pieces. However, the one thing that could be said to unite this opus is a sense of exploration. Schumann pushes each of the genres in which she writes within this opus, be that with greater use of chromatic harmonies, or using the new textures of the *Field* school. Schumann's Op 5 is characterised by the confidence of a youthful composer willing to try new techniques.

The influence of Chopin on Schumann's work is plain to see. His visits to Leipzig, the social interaction of the two composers, and Schumann's clear love for Chopin's music (especially his Op 2) were all contributing factors to this, as well as the enthusiastic reception Chopin's music received from Robert Schumann and Wieck, two musicians whose opinions Schumann respected above all others. Chopin's dominance in her repertoire leading up to the date of the composition of her Op 5 also played its part, with several gestures being borrowed from various pieces of Chopin's music that Schumann had studied. However, Schumann maintains her own compositional voice as well, assimilating the Chopinesque gestures into her own particular style and using them to broaden the range of her own compositional palette.

Schumann's Op 5 also shows us the early stages of the working artistic relationship between her and Robert Schumann, with the mutual quotation between Schumann's Op 5 no 4 and Robert Schumann's Op 11. Robert Schumann had previously quoted Clara Schumann in his work, but this is the first such explicit quotation that Clara Schumann made of Robert Schumann's work. This shows the growing respect and admiration the pair had for each other. However, the two still had some differences, Schumann seeing the value in less serious music appropriate for parties, while Robert Schumann insisted on writing in the way that best fit his vision of the artistic ideal, with much less concern for the reaction of an audience. Schumann's pragmatism is shown greatly in the *brilliant* sections of her Op 5.

Throughout this thesis I have shown that Schumann's compositional style was influenced by the music around her, and especially by that which she studied at the piano. This may seem an obvious conclusion to draw, however, given the detail in which Schumann's life was recorded in her diaries and letters and the biography by Litzmann, the level of specificity and certainty over which pieces by which composers most greatly influenced her style during the composition of her Op 5 is highly

unusual. In this way we can see the development of the influence of certain composers and are able to tie certain compositional decisions to specific events within Schumann's life, as well as the organic growth of the influence of certain composers on her compositional voice through the integration of a larger portion of their work into Schumann's repertoire. The fact that Schumann was so attuned to the world around her and can be shown to be exploring the latest musical trends in her compositions at a young age helps to characterise her as an engaged and curious musician, whose compositions always betray her characteristic brilliance.

Appendix – Pieces studied by Schumann by year

1825

| Composer | Title | Op. No |
|----------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Spohr | Polonaise from Faust | 60 |
| F. Wieck | Dances and more difficult exercises | 6 |
| N/A | Scales and arpeggios in all keys | |

1826

| Composer | Title | Op. No |
|------------|--|------------------|
| Cramer | Caprice in C major | |
| Czerny | Decameron | 111 nos. 1,2,3,6 |
| Czerny | Etude vol 1 | |
| Czerny | Rondo Mignon | |
| Czerny | Sonata | 50 nos. 1,2 |
| Czerny | Variations | 125 |
| Czerny | Variations | 132 |
| Diabelli | Waltzes for four hand | |
| Field | Polonaise in Eb major | |
| Haslinger | Concertino for four hands | |
| Horr | Three Waltzes on a theme from Spohr's <i>Berggeist</i> | |
| Leidesdorf | Bagatelles | 43 |
| Moscheles | Rondo | 145 |
| Mozart | 2 sonatas | |
| Weber | <i>Invitation to the dance</i> for four hand | |

1827

| Composer | Title | Op. No |
|------------|--|---------------|
| Clementi | Exercises, Vol 1 | |
| Czerny | Variations | 140 |
| Czerny | Variations | 141 |
| Czerny | Introduction and variations on a <i>Marche favorite della Donna del Lago</i> | 20 |
| Czerny | Brilliant Divertissement No 2 on a Cavatina. 'Aure felice' for four hands | 43 |
| Czerny | Brilliant Variations on 'Ah come nancondere' for four hands | 25 |
| Frommel | Three themata | 89 nos. 1,2,3 |
| Hummel | First Concerto in G | 73 |
| J. Scherdt | Etudes Vol. 1 | |

| | | |
|------------|----------------------------------|----|
| J. Scherdt | | 58 |
| J. Scherdt | Variations for four hands | 48 |
| Leidesdorf | Pieces choisies | |
| Leidesdorf | Variations | |
| Maisede | Duo for four hands Vol 1 | |
| Mozart | Concerto in E \flat major | |
| Pleyel | Sonatinen | |
| Ries | Variations on 'Di tanti palpiti' | |
| Spohr | Quatour for four hands | |
| Spohr | Accompaniment to his songs | 25 |
| Wanhall | Sonatinen Vol 1 | 25 |

1828

| Composer | Title | Op. no |
|-----------------|---|---------------|
| Beethoven | Minuet from trio | 1 no 3 |
| Czerny | Grand Trill Rondo | 87 |
| Dusseck | Rondo from the 12 concertos for four hands | |
| Herz | Passagen | |
| Hummel | Trio | 96 |
| Hüntten | Trio | 56 |
| Hüntten | Variations | 26 |
| Kalkbrenner | Trios Andantes (Romances) | 54 |
| Kalkbrenner | Variations for four hands on March from Rossini opera | 94 |
| Moscheles | Rondo in A major for four hands | |
| Mozart | Piano pieces | |
| Reis | Etudes | |
| Scherdt | Variations | 56 |
| Scherdy | | 53 |
| Schmidt | | 56 |
| Schubert | Die Forelle (arr. For piano) | |

1829

| Composer | Title | Op no. |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Beethoven | Rondo from C minor Concerto | 37 no 3 |
| C. Wieck | Polonaise in E \flat | 1 no 1 |
| Czerny | Variations | 170 |
| Czerny | Variations | 87 |
| Czerny | Toccata | |
| Herz | Variations for four hands | 50 |
| Hummel | Concerto in A minor | 85 |
| Hummel | Sonata for four hands | 92 |
| Hüntten | Rondo | 28 |
| Hüntten | Variations: on Alexis | |
| J. Schmitt | Etudes | |

| | | |
|-------------|----------------------------------|-----|
| J. Schmitt | Polonaise | 62 |
| Kalkbrenner | Concerto, Rondo Gage D'Amitié | 66 |
| Lickl | Rondo a la Paganini | |
| Reis | Quartet | 17 |
| Reis | 4 Polonaises | 140 |

1830

| Composer | Title | Op no |
|-------------|---|-------------|
| C. Wieck | Variations on a Tyrolese Song | Unpublished |
| C. Wieck | Variations on an original theme | Unpublished |
| Czerny | Quartet for four pianos with orchestra | 230 |
| Herz | Variations on a Waltz by Reissiger | |
| Herz | Variations brilliants on 'Il crociato in Egitto' by Meyerbeer | 23 |
| Hummel | Septet in C for Piano and Strings | |
| Kalkbrenner | Rondo Brilliant for Piano and orchestra | 101 |
| Kragen | 3 Polonaises | |
| Reissiger | Rondo Mignon in Eb | |

1831

| Composer | Title | Op no |
|----------|--|-------------|
| C. Wieck | Fantasia on the theme. 'Wieck-Romanze' for Physharmonica and piano | Unpublished |
| C. Wieck | Free Fantasia on 'Einsam bin ich nicht allein' | Unpublished |
| C. Wieck | Scherzo fur Orchestra | Unpublished |
| Chopin | Variations on 'La ci darem la mano' | Op 2 |
| Czerny | Variations for four hands on a theme by F. Wieck | |
| Czerny | Bearbeitung von Mayseders Violin | |
| F. Wieck | Romance for Physharmonica and Piano (Wieck-Romance) | |
| Herz | Bravoura Variations | 20 |
| Herz | Variations for Piano on the 'Cavatine favorite de la Violetta da Carafa' | 48 |
| Herz | Variations for solo piano | 51 |

| | | |
|---------|---|-----|
| Herz | Grand Variations for piano of Rossini's Wilhelm Tell for four hands | 50 |
| Hüntten | Rondo for four hands on the 'Elisabeth' theme by Rossini | |
| Pixis | Concerto | 100 |
| Pixis | Third Trio | |
| Pixis | Variations and Rondo for piano and orchestra | 20 |

1832

| Composer | Title | Op No |
|-----------------------------|---|--------|
| Bach | Bach fugue in C# minor from the Well-tempered Clavier | 849 |
| Beethoven | Trio in C minor | 1 no 3 |
| F. Wieck | Nocturne for Physharmonica and Piano | |
| Field | Concerto no 2 | |
| Herz | Grand Variations on <i>Euryanthe</i> | 62 |
| Hummel | 'Sentinelle' for piano, violin, guitar and tenor | |
| Moscheles | Concertos in Eb Major and G minor | 60 |
| Moscheles/Giuliani/Mayesder | 'Der Abschied der Troubadours' for piano, guitar, Violin and singer | |
| Pixis | Duo for Piano and Violin | |

1833

| Composer | Title | Op No |
|-----------|---|-------|
| Beethoven | Fantasia with Chorus | 80 |
| C. Wieck | Capricces en forme de Valse | 2 |
| C. Wieck | Mazurka | |
| C. Wieck | Romance Variée | 3 |
| Chopin | Finale of E minor concerto | |
| Chopin | Mazurkas Vol 1 and 2 | 6 & 7 |
| Hummel | Grand septet for Piano, Flute, Oboe, Horn, Viola, Cello and Double Bass | |
| Moscheles | 'La belle Union' Rondo for four hands | 76 |
| Pixis | Grand duet for two pianos | |
| Pixis | Fantaisie militaire with orchestra | 121 |
| Pixis | Concerto with orchestra and obligato | |
| Pixis | 4 th Trio | |

| | | |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Reissiger | 6 th Trio | |
| Robert Schumann | Two violin studies by Paganini arr. for Piano | |
| Thalberg | Adagio and Rondo | 3 |
| Worgischek | Variations for two Pianos | |

1834

| Composer | Title | Op No |
|-----------|-----------------------------|-------|
| Beethoven | Trio B-Dur | 97 |
| C. Wieck | Ein Hexenchor | |
| C. Wieck | Rondo from the Concerto | 7 |
| Chopin | Concerto in E minor | 11 |
| Chopin | Grand Piano concerto | 8 |
| Chopin | Rondo in E \flat major | 16 |
| Chopin | Nocturne in E \flat Major | 9 |
| Chopin | Etudes in C and F major | 10 |
| Chopin | Fantasy with orchestra | 13 |
| Schumann | Toccatà | 7 |

1835

| Composer | Title | Op No |
|-------------|--|-------|
| Bach | Concerto for 3 keyboards | 1063 |
| Bach | Fugue in C# Major - Well- Tempered Clavier | |
| Beethoven | Sonata in F minor | 57 |
| Beethoven | Sonata for piano and violin in A major | 47 |
| C. Wieck | Caprice in A flat major | 2 |
| C. Wieck | Caprice a la Bolero | 5 |
| C. Wieck | Concerto | 7 |
| Chopin | Arpeggio Etude E \flat major | 10 |
| Chopin | Mazurka in B \flat major | 7 |
| Chopin | Nocturne in F# major | 15 |
| Chopin | Mazurka in F# minor | 6 |
| Herz | Grand variations on the Greek chorus from 'Die Belagerung von Corinth' | 36 |
| Herz | Variations on the Trio de 'Pre- aux-Clercs' by Herold | 76 |
| Herz/Lafont | Duet for Piano and Violin | |
| Mendelssohn | Capriccio brilliant in B minor | 22 |

1836

| Composer | Title | Op No |
|----------|--|-------|
| Bach | Fugue in D major - Well- Tempered Clavier | 850 |

| | | |
|-------------|--|-----|
| Bach | Fugue in F# Major - Well-Tempered Clavier | 858 |
| Beethoven | Adelaide for Piano and Clarinet | 46 |
| C. Wieck | Mazurka from 'Soirees musicales' | 6 |
| Chopin | Etude in C minor | 10 |
| Chopin | New B minor Mazurka | 24 |
| Chopin | Grand Etude in C major | 10 |
| Henselt | Allegro di Bravura | |
| Henselt | Andante and Allegro Poeme d'amour | 3 |
| Mendelssohn | Lieder Ohne Worte | |
| Mendelssohn | Caprice in A minor | 33 |
| Reissiger | New Piano quartet | 108 |
| Thalberg | Divertissement on Rossini's <i>Soirees musicales</i> | |

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