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A Stylistic Analysis of the Fünf Lieder Opus 15

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A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE

FÜNF LIEDER OPUS 15

by

Richard Strauss

A Covering Paper

Presented to

the Graduate Faculty

Central Washington State College

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Education

by

Thomas William Reich

June, 1971

An integral part of this covering paper is a tape recording of a graduate recital performed on April 7, 1971 as part of the requirement for the completion of the thesis.

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

Wayne S. Hertz, COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

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CENTRAL WASHINGTON STATE COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

presents in

Graduate Recital

TOM REICH, Baritone

*KAY ROSKAM, Piano

PROGRAM

I

PIANGO, GEMO A. Vivaldi
O DI TUA MAN MI A. Vivaldi
CHE FIERO COSTUME G. Legrenzi

II

PREACH NOT ME YOUR MUSTY RULES Dr. Arne
(Comus)
WHERE'ER YOU WALK G. Handel
(Semele)
THE BAILIFF'S DAUGHTER OF ISLINGTON arr. H. Willan

III

CHANSON TRISTE H. Duparc
LIED MARITIME V. d'Indy
ARPEGE G. Faure

IV

CORTIGIANI, VIL RAZZA G. Verdi
(Rigoletto)

INTERMISSION

V

FUNF LIEDER R. Strauss
 Madrigal
 Winternacht
 Lob des Leidens
 Ans den Liedern der Tauer
 Heimkehr

VI

MY OWN COUNTRY P. Warlock
LAMENT N. Dello Joio
THE TAXI C. Dougherty

HERTZ RECITAL HALL
April 7, 1971
8:15 P.M.

In partial fulfillment for the Master of Education Degree in Music
**Member of Music Department Faculty*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Many musicologists have stated that the period of 1884 to 1886 was a transition period for Richard Strauss. The Fünf Lieder Opus 15 was written during this transition period in 1885 and the writer has set out to examine the stylistic qualities employed by Strauss in his Fünf Lieder.

II. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This paper is a study of the stylistic qualities of the rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, and form structures used in the Fünf Lieder and not a detailed analysis of the five songs.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

1. Art Song. A song in which the composer attempts to bring out the meaning of the text.
2. Lieder. "A song in the German vernacular" (1:481).
3. Accidentals. "The signs used in musical notation to indicate chromatic alterations or to cancel them" (1:5).
4. Expressionistic Style. ". . .music written in a deeply subjective and introspective style" (1:302).

CHAPTER II

STYLISTIC AND UNIFYING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FÜNF LIEDER

Both the traditional and expressionistic characteristics of Strauss' song writing are evident in his use of rhythms, melodic themes, harmonic progressions, and form. This section attempts to provide an overall view of the stylistic characteristics in the Fünf Lieder.

STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS

Rhythmic Structure

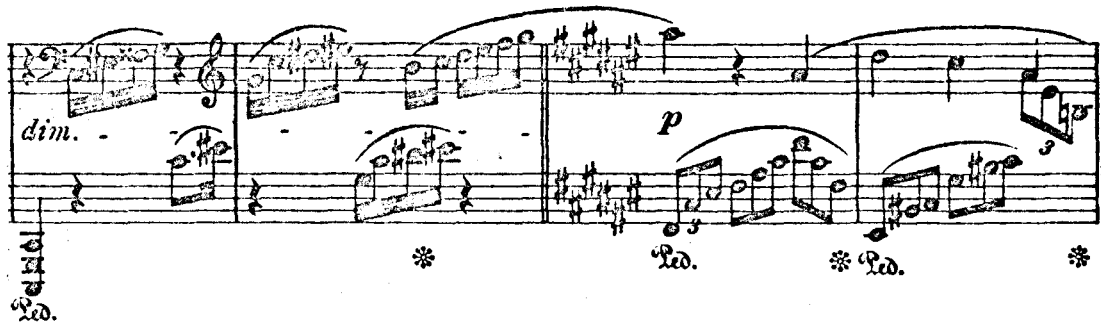
One of the unifying forces working in the five songs is the rhythmic structure, a constant shift from duple meter to triple meter throughout. At times the vocal line is in direct rhythmic contrast to the accompaniment. The example below shows the triplet figure in the accompaniment against the two eighth note figure in the vocal part.

Example 1. Aus den Liedern der Trauer

wenn es lang um - sonst nach ei - ner Trä - ne
long in vain Have yearned to feel the tear - drops

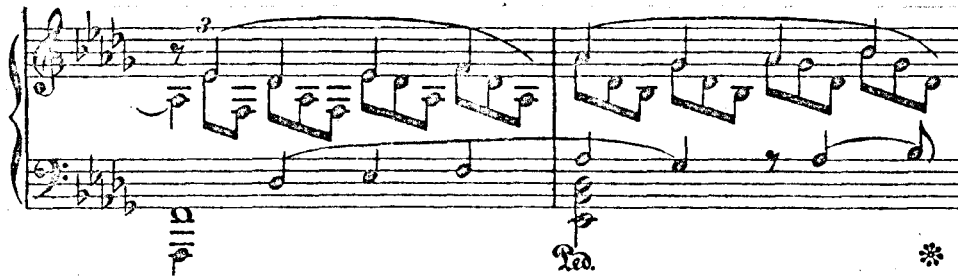
Strauss also changed the accompaniment pattern within a song from duple figures to triplet figures as is illustrated below.

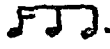

Example 2. Winternacht



Another device of the duple against triplet pattern used by Strauss was the contrast in the accompaniment with the meter of the song. If the time signature indicated duple meter, the accompaniment was made up of triplet figures or if the time signature indicated triple meter, the accompaniment was made up of duple figures.

Example 3. Lob des Leidens



Strauss used the rhythmic pattern of  in the first song quite frequently. In the last song, to relate these two songs more closely, a slight alteration of the pattern to  is often used. The second, third, and fourth songs do not employ either of those rhythmic patterns but are rhythmically related through the constant use of triplet patterns in the accompaniment.

The rhythmic pattern of the first and last songs and the deviation from the pattern in the other three songs provides a rhythmic unity for the cycle.

Melodic Structure

The melodic lines of Strauss have been greatly criticized for their lack of smoothness as compared to the melodies of Schubert or Brahms. "Too frequently the melodic line is erratic; skips are many and of awkward widths, often resulting from harmonic, rather than melodic, urge" (5:125). The partial cause for this melodic characteristic is the method Strauss used to compose a song. Strauss would be reading some poetry and when a certain poem caught his eye, he would set the music to it right away. "But often, (Strauss) says, the poem that presents itself is not the right one; then he has to bend his musical mood to fit the best way he can . . ." (9:94) This method seems to set up barriers to composing a fully developed melodic line.

Although Strauss was criticized for his erratic melodies, he achieved a dramatic quality similar to his operas and tone poems. "(He) often demands a voice of operatic dimensions, in both range and volume" (6:236). This dramatic quality coupled with the erratic melodic lines serve as a characteristic quality in the group of songs. Each song has a certain portion which is more irregular and dramatic than any other part of the song and also calls for that operatic quality. The example on the following page illustrates such a portion of one of the songs.

Example 4. Aus den Liedern der Trauer

The musical score for 'Aus den Liedern der Trauer' consists of three staves. The first staff shows a melodic line with a long note on 'Wald' and a descending line on 'und'. The second staff continues the melody with notes on 'Feld, um Berg und See' and 'spriesst wuchernd auf ihr al - - tes'. The third staff shows a single note on 'Weh'.

Durch Wald und
From field and

Feld, um Berg und See spriesst wuchernd auf ihr al - - tes
wood, o'er hill and plain Breaks forth a - new her an - - cient

Weh
pain

The constant use of accidentals in the melodic lines seems to suggest that the melodies were created from the harmonic background. A segment of one of the melodies is depicted in the example below.

Example 5. Madrigal

The musical score for 'Madrigal' consists of three staves. The first staff shows a melodic line with notes on 'bäum' ich mich nicht mit Groll, mir bangt viel - mehr'. The second staff continues the melody with notes on 'Yet re - bel not, for now I fear in - stead'. The third staff shows a melodic line with notes on 'dalen' and 'pp'.

bäum' ich mich nicht mit Groll, mir bangt viel - mehr.
Yet re - bel not, for now I fear in - stead

dalen
pp

The lack of smoothness to the melodies and the dramatic and operatic quality demanded of the singer are definitely characteristics of Strauss' style evident in all five songs.

Harmonic Structure

Another unifying force involved is the harmonic structure of the group of songs in opus 15. As was stated previously, the use of many accidentals in the melodies of Strauss' songs indicates that the melodies generate from the harmonic background. In Strauss' early songs of Zueignung Op. 10, No. 1 and Allerseelen Op. 10, No. 8 very few chromatic alterations are used in the melodies. However, in the songs of opus 15, a vast number of chromatic alterations are used. Denis Stevens, in his book A History of Song attributes the greater harmonic elaboration to remote modulations rather than dissonances.

The traditional movement of modulation involved in song writing was either a modulation to the dominant of the original key and back or modulation to the relative minor or major of the original key. Strauss used this type of movement of modulation quite often in his early songs of opus 10. With the last song of opus 10, Allerseelen, Strauss began to employ a more chromatic movement of modulation--that is modulation by half-step or whole step to another key.

The use of chromatic modulation in Strauss' harmonic structure of his songs seems to be the key to his very dramatic and often operatic style of song. However, the method of inspiration used by Strauss in writing a song and the harmonic style of Strauss were often incompatible which in many cases produced very poor songs.

"Play through things like 'Anbetung' (op. 36, No. 4), 'Mein Herz ist stumm' (op. 19, No. 6), or 'Am Ufer' (op. 41, No. 3), and you will have merely a queer sense of having drifted aimlessly through one key after another and from one part of the scale to another. . . ." (9:93)

Strauss did establish his style of writing with his early works. The rapid chromatic modulations in the songs of opus 15 when compared to his later songs of Morgen Op. 27 and Meinem Kinde Op. 37 show this early establishment of style.

Form

The last unifying force at work in the songs is form. Both the first and last songs are written in ternary form. This simply means an opening statement is made, followed by a contrasting section, then a repeat of the opening statement with slight alteration at the end. This form of song writing demonstrates Strauss' background in traditional composition. The ternary form was used by most all Lied composers since the Baroque and Classical periods.

The other three songs can be considered as through-composed songs. This means ". . .songs in which new music is provided for each stanza" (1:850). This form of song writing is preferred for "dramatic or narrative texts in which the situation changes with every stanza. . ." (1:850) The dramatic qualities of these songs and the free form of the second, third, and fourth songs show the influence of the expressionist composers, e.g., Wagner, Liszt, and Brahms.

As with the use of the rhythmic patterns in the songs, Strauss used form to complete the songs into one group by ending with a song in the same form as the first song.

CHAPTER III

FÜNF LIEDER OPUS 15

Inasmuch as each song has its own unique qualities, the rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic structures will be examined in some depth. The English translation of the German text is included to provide those not conversant in the German language with the impact of the text as the influence on Strauss to write certain melodies, rhythms, and harmonic background.

MADRIGAL


Text

My neck under the yolk I humbly bow,
And, smiling at my own defeat, lay low
My heart before my foe, a willing captive.

Wounded sore I start, yet rebel not,
For now I fear instead that time may ease the smart.

When from your eyes a dart
This pain transmutes to life in every vein,
What deadly pow'r is left to other pain?

Meter, Rhythm

The most unusual quality of this song is the attempt by Strauss to obscure the strong beat of one in a 3/8 meter. The rhythmic patterns of the vocal line set up a triple meter, but the accompaniment through the use of the pattern  sets up a duple meter.

Example 6. Madrigal

The musical score for 'Madrigal' consists of two systems. The first system shows a vocal line on a single staff with the lyrics: 'Wenn dei-nes Au-ges Strahl dies' and 'When from your eyes a dart This'. Above the staff is a 'cresc.' marking. The second system shows a piano accompaniment with two staves. The left hand starts with a 'pp' (pianissimo) marking and features a descending chromatic line. The right hand has a 'cresc.' marking and features an ascending chromatic line. Both hands use slurs and accents to indicate phrasing.

Melody

The melody of this song is generally of lyrical quality with a lack of awkward intervals and wide skips. The melody follows an A B A form with the B section being more chromatic and varied in range than the A section. It is similar in smoothness and lyrical qualities to the earlier songs of Strauss such as Zueignung and Allerseelen.

Harmony


The harmony in this song also follows an A B A pattern. The key of the A section is E^b major. The only chromatic movement is a C^9 chord progressing to an A minor chord which means an alteration of E^b to E and A^b to A. The B section is a rapid movement of chromatic progressions with inference to the keys of F^b major, G^b major and F minor. This type of progression adds to the dramatic and contrasting qualities of the B section.

WINTERNACHTText

Though stormclouds with rage are swelling,
 Gladly I greet thee, thou wintry moon!
 Be thou my guide to yon dear dwelling,
 There one that loves me, awaits me soon.
 Ne'er found I the flowers of springtime,
 The glittering dewdrops, the radiant heaven,
 So dear to my sight, So welcome as now seem
 thy snowladen clouds By stormwinds ariv'n.


What tho' the snowflakes are falling?
 Filled is my heart with spring's delight!
 Clearly I hear the nightengales calling
 With Love's own voice through the winternight!

Meter, Rhythm

The meter of the second song is 3/4 and unlike the first song, the accompaniment stresses the accent on the beat one. The rhythmic pattern of  is used extensively at an allegro agitato tempo marking in the first part of the song to depict a storm-like background to the story being sung.

Example 7. Winternacht


Re - gen und Sturm - ge - brau - se
 storm-clouds with rage are swell - - - ing,

As the story shifts from a forceful storm to lightly flowing snowflakes, the accompaniment uses the rhythmic pattern of  to indicate the gracefulness of the snowflakes.

Example 8. Winternacht



p

denn durch das Flok - ken - ge -
What tho' the snow-flakes are

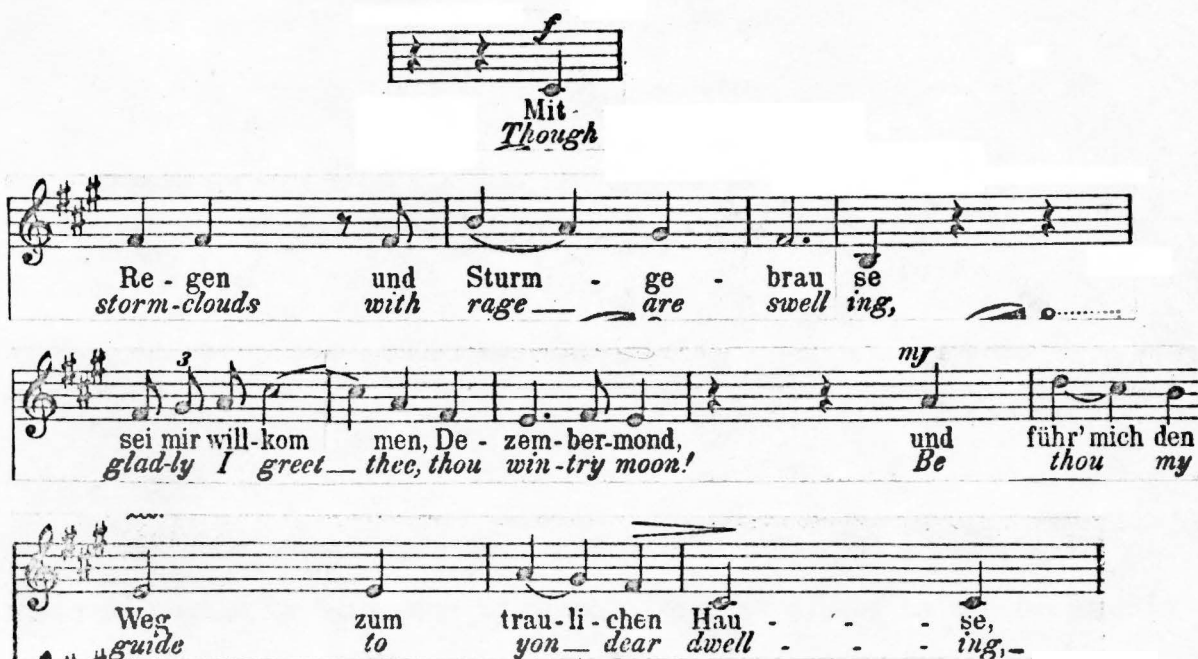
p

Ad. * Ad. *

Melody

The melody is broken into four measure fragments which at the fast tempo seem rather unrelated and not conducive to a smooth melody.

Example 9. Winternacht



f

Mit-
Though


Re - gen und Sturm ge - brau se
storm-clouds with rage are swell ing,

sei mir will-kom men, De - zem-ber-mond, und führ' mich den
glad-ly I greet thee, thou win-try moon! Be thou my

Weg zum trau-li-chen Hau - se,
guide to yon dear dwell - ing,

The second half of the song is more lyrical to express the smoothness of light, falling snow.

Harmony

The key of the first part of this song is F# minor. Strauss seemingly relied heavily on the rhythmic figure  to carry the mood of the song rather than the harmony. There is very little chromatic alteration either in the vocal line or the accompaniment. With the change of mood in the last part of the song, Strauss went to the key of F# major, again seemingly to rely on the rhythmic patterns and intensity of the text to make the impact of the song on the listener.

LOB DES LEIDENS

Text

O, never shrink from sorrow's hold!
Are not the oakleaves, near the falling,
In all their wealth of glowing gold,
Far fairer than when spring was calling?

Spring hath not glory worth the showing,
Like woods when Autumn winds are blowing.

More Limpid than the crystal stream
Is sorrow's eye, with tears o'erflowing,
And brighter than the noonday beam
The evening sky with flame is flowing,

And never kiss doth fire the heart
As when two lovers meet, to part.

Meter, Rhythm

Strauss returned to the duple meter versus the triple meter style of rhythm in this song by using a triplet figure in the accompaniment and using a duple figure in the vocal line.

Example 10. Lob des Leidens

Was gleicht der Bli - - - te des Ver - ge - - di
 Spring hath no glo - - - ry worth the show - -

Red.

This conflict in rhythm between the vocal part and the accompaniment continues through the entire song which aids the tension and emotional aspect of the song dictated by the title "In Praise of Sorrow".

Melody

When compared to the previous melodies, the melody of this song is more lyric and smooth in quality. Unlike most of Strauss' melodies, this melody seems to develop as the song progresses. Whenever an emotional section occurs, the voice is taken from a relatively low pitch to a higher part of the range.

Example 11. Lob des Leidens

als hoch am Tag die Son - nen - hel - - le
 the even-ing sky with flame is glow - - ing;

The only use of wide intervals occurs at the climax of the song. Strauss used octaves, perfect fifths, and augmented fourths to heighten the emotional impact of the climax.

Example 12. Lob des Leidens

und kei - - - - -
And ne - - - - -

ner küsst so hei - - - - -
ver, kiss doth fire

ssen the Kuss, als wer für
the heart As when two

e - - wig schei - - - - -
lov - - ers meet, to

muss,
part,

Harmony

The key signature indicates B^b minor. As the song grows more intense, the characteristic quality of rapid modulation becomes more evident when the keys of E^b major, B^b major, and D major are inferred. Strauss used a broken chord type of accompaniment to give the song a flowing quality and to establish the tonality. Strauss used block chords in the home key of B^b minor to give the song a definite ending.

Example 13. Lob des Leidens

The musical score consists of two systems. The top system features a vocal line with the lyrics "schei - den muss. meet, — to part." and a piano accompaniment. The bottom system continues the piano accompaniment, showing a left hand with a dotted line and a right hand with a fermata. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

AUS DEN LEIDERN DER TRAUERText


As hearts that languish long in vain
 Have yearned to feel the teardrops rain.
 Till some relief be given,
 So now the earth is free at last
 From ice and snow that held her fast.
 And winter's chain is riven.

From field and wood, o'er hill and plain
 Breaks forth anew her ancient pain
 In wealth of budding branches,
 And deepens in the azure sky,
 And trembles in the dewdrop's eye,
 Gleaming in the meadow trenches.

Now, wake, my grief, long in my breast
 Concealed, come thou forth, confessed,
 Forth with the streamlet gushing!
 Come thou forth!
 In fiery light'ning shalt thou glow,

And with the early roses blow,
 In crimson splendour flushing

Meter, Rhythm

In contrast to the preceding song, Strauss used the triplet figure of  in a harsh manner. The left hand of the accompaniment establishes the chord while the right hand uses the triplet figure to reinforce the established chord.

Example 14. Aus den Liedern der Trauer

Allegro agitato

Singstimme
Voice

Pianoforte

ff

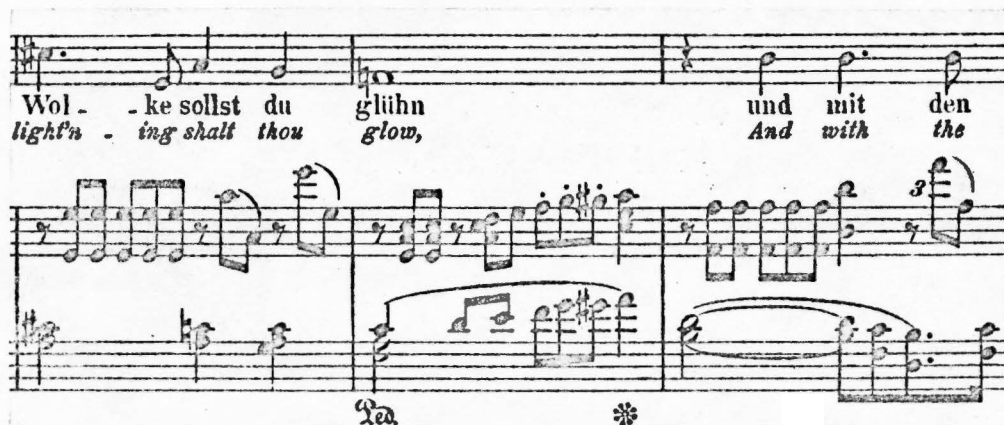
Dem
As A



To increase the intensity of the song, Strauss used a duple figure in the left hand part of the accompaniment which is the same rhythm in the vocal line, while keeping the triplets in the right hand. Occasionally, a triplet would appear in the left hand but it did not destroy the duple rhythm already established.

Example 15. Aus den Liedern der Trauer

Wol - ke sollst du glühn und mit den
light'n - ing shall thou glow, And with the



Melody

Again contrasting the preceding song, the melody of this song is erratic and seems to have developed from the harmonic background. The melodic phrases are not equal in length, e.g., two measures or six measures or one measure. The frequent use of accidentals shows that the melody probably developed from the harmony.

Example 16. Aus den Liedern der Trauer

und dun - - kelt in dem Him - - mels-blau und zit-tert
 And deep - - ens in the a - - sure sky, And trembles

mf *cresc.*

Acc. *

Another general characteristic of a Strauss melody of wide skips is prevalent in this song. The smooth melody of the preceding song seems out of place when followed by this typical Strauss melody.

Harmony

The key of this song is A minor with a definite modulation to the key of D major in the middle portion of the song. The song is relatively free of any inference to different keys. It seems as though Strauss wanted the rhythmic conflict in the accompaniment to create the excitement in the song.

Near the end of the song, there is a combination of the keys of A major and A minor which gives the feeling of instability to the song. To add to the instability of the harmony, the singer ends on the note A but the chord played in the accompaniment does not contain a third to establish major or minor. Only until the last chord is played three measures later is the tonality established, A minor.

Example 17. Aus den Liedern der Trauer



HEIMKEHR

Text

Sunset breezes are sighing,
The bark comes home from sea,
Homeward the white dove is flying,
My heart comes home to thee.

All day 'mid struggle and turmoil,
While skies were bright above,
I've roamed on aimless pinions
Far from the haven I love.


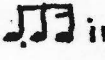
But now the sun hath departed,
And light is alone on the lea,
Homeward I turn, happyhearted,
To find my rest in thee.

Meter, Rhythm

In this song, Strauss continued the triple meter against duple meter but in a more subtle manner. The tempo marking is andante, molto cantabile which means a moderate, flowing style. The accents in the accompaniment which set up the duple meter against triple meter are not forceful but are quite lyrical.

Example 18. Heimkehr

Example 18 shows a musical score for the song "Heimkehr". The score includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has the lyrics "n mein Herz. / ie to thee." The piano accompaniment features a triple meter pattern. The tempo marking "molte" is visible. There are asterisks and "Ad." markings at the bottom of the piano part.

The rhythmic pattern of  used in the first song to help destroy the feeling for one in triple meter is reversed to form  in order to maintain a feeling for one in 3/8 meter.

Example 19. Heimkehr

Example 19 shows a musical score for the song "Heimkehr". The score includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has the lyrics "schwärmt / love. / Doch / But". The piano accompaniment features a triple meter pattern. The tempo marking "un poco calando" is visible. There are asterisks and "Ad." markings at the bottom of the piano part.

Melody

The form of this melody is A B A, the same as the form of the first song. Also, like the first song, the A section (Example 20) is quite lyrical with the B section (Example 21) being more chromatic and disjunct.

Section A

Example 20. Heimkehr

Lei - ser schwan - ken die Ä - ste. der Kahn flieg
Sun - set breez - es are sigh - ing, The bark come:

u - ferwärts heim kehrt die Tau - be zum Ne - ste.
home from sea, Home - ward the white dove is fly - ing,

zu dir
My heart

kehrt heim mein Herz.
comes home to thee.

Section B

Example 21. Heimkehr

mf un poco agitato
Ge-lug am schimmernden Ta - ge.
All day mid struggle and tur - moil,

wenn rings das Le-ben lärmt.
While skies were bright a - bove,
mit ir - rem
I've roam'd on

un poco c
Flü - gel-schla - ge ist es ins Wei - te ge-schwärmt
aim - less pin - ions Far from the hav - en I love.

Harmony

The key of the A section in this song is E major. It stays in that key with the exception of two altered chords. The B section begins in E minor and ends in B major which is the perfect key to get back to E major for the repeat of the A section; the key of B major being the dominant of E major. Harmonically, Strauss chose to stay with his traditional training to end the Fünf Lieder.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

The Fünf Lieder Opus 15 displays the development of the style of Strauss' song writing. The traditional background in composition of Strauss is evident in his use of form in the first and last songs of the cycle and somewhat in the harmonic structure of those same songs. The expressionistic approach to composing is evident in the middle three songs in the use of through-composed form and chromatic harmony.

The most outstanding stylistic qualities developed in the five songs are the harmonic and melodic structures. Up to 1885, Strauss' songs were not harmonically complicated. Rapid key changes were not evident in any of his early songs. However, the middle three songs of the opus 15 contain much chromatic movement in modulation. The melodies of the early songs were also more simple and plain and lacked a certain dramatic quality. With the Fünf Lieder, the melodies developed more from the chromatic harmonic background which added a more dramatic and exciting quality.

Authorities on Strauss have said that the style of his song writing was established very early and never developed much from that early establishment. The Fünf Lieder definitely shows the transition of Strauss from his traditional training to his expressionistic style.

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