Softened, Smudged, Erased: Punctuation and Continuity in Clara Schumann’s Lieder

Stephen Rodgers

DRAFT (May 2020)


Introduction

One of the things that I love most about Clara Schumann’s songs is the way they flow. They tend to move in four-bar phrases – indeed, some scholars have heard a certain ‘squareness’ in her melodies\(^1\) – but each four-bar phrase is connected seamlessly with the one that follows it. Her songs exhibit a strange and wonderful mixture of regularity and fluidity – *regularity* because we feel the music moving in four-bar chunks, but *fluidity* because those chunks don’t feel like chunks. They feel more like undulating arcs that move in one continuous motion, like the crests of a gentle sine wave.

One way that she creates this sine-wave quality, this long-breathed continuity, is by undermining cadences. More specifically, she often weakens or avoids cadences at the ends of musical sections and the poetic stanzas associated with them, fusing together adjacent sections and stanzas by softening, smudging, or even erasing the musical and poetic punctuation marks at the end of them. These weakened and avoided cadences tend to occur not at the end of her songs but in the middle, yet that makes them no less striking.\(^2\) Indeed, it is the norm for composers of early

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\(^2\) Her only song that ends without a bona fide cadence is ‘Geheimes Flüstern hier und dort’, Op. 23, No. 3. In bars 37–39 the vocal melody rises from ^6 to ^7 to ^1, but the harmonies beneath
to mid nineteenth-century Lieder to place cadences at the end of sections, so as to provide an obvious demarcation between stanzas. Look through the Lieder of composers such as Franz Schubert, Felix Mendelssohn, Fanny Hensel, and Robert Schumann and you will routinely find examples of these kinds of stanza-ending cadences – so many examples, in fact, as to suggest that in this genre and time period the parallel between musical cadence and poetic punctuation is more than just an abstraction. Aligning section-ending cadences with stanza-ending punctuation marks is the ‘rule’ for composers in and around Clara Schumann’s generation – yet she frequently breaks it.

My main goal in this chapter is to consider how and why she does this, by exploring the strategies that she uses to join together sections and stanzas, as well as the various ways that those

\[ IV-vi^4-3-I,\] rather than \[ IV-V^7-I.\] (I assume that the bass \( G<\text{flat}> \) in bar 37 remains active in bar 38 even though it is not technically sounding.)

3 In a well-known article about cadences in Classical-era music, William Caplin has questioned the idea that musical cadences are analogous to punctuation marks (‘The Classical Cadence: Conceptions and Misconceptions’, Journal of the American Musicological Society 57/1 [2004]: 103–6). His main criticism of the analogy, in essence, is that while punctuation may make the syntactic units of language more obvious, it is not the source of those syntactic units. ‘A phrase or sentence achieves a degree of syntactical closure not by ending with any given punctuation mark’, he writes, ‘but by word meanings, inflections, and ordering. Cadence, too, is an element of syntax, more specifically, an element that generates formal closure at specific levels of musical organization’ (104). A punctuation mark, one might say, is more akin to a cadence label in a score than to a cadence per se. This may well be true in instrumental music, but in nineteenth-century song the parallel between cadence and punctuation is more reality than abstraction, more fact than fiction, and evidence that composers were thinking deeply about the connection between the cadential progressions in the score and the punctuation marks on the page.

4 A brief comparison with the Lieder of Robert Schumann is instructive in this context. Robert Schumann is justifiably famous for the novel closing strategies that he uses in his songs. One thinks of course of the dominant-seventh ending to ‘Im wunderschönen Monat Mai’, but also of the many songs where the vocal melody halts before the final PAC arrives. For all his inventiveness with endings, however, he generally tends to end stanzas with cadences, abiding by the ‘rule’ that adjacent poetic stanzas should be separated by clear cadences. Not so with Clara Schumann: more than her husband (and, indeed, more than almost any song composer in the first half of the nineteenth century) she is willing to avoid cadences at the ends of stanzas, and even to avoid piano interludes and melodic breaks – anything that would prevent two adjacent stanzas from seeming like one continuous thought.
strategies relate and respond to the poetry. Yet my chapter is not only about Schumann’s songs; it is also about a broader analytical question that they raise – namely, *how do musical and poetic closure relate to one another?* In the past few years there has been a wealth of writing on closure in Romantic music that considers how nineteenth-century composers modify and distort the cadential norms of their eighteenth-century predecessors.\(^5\) This writing is only one part of a larger effort to better understand nineteenth-century form more generally, and to apply and adapt the tools of the new *Formenlehre* to this repertoire.\(^6\) As a result of this renewed interest in Romantic form, we have learned a great deal about the many ways that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century formal practices differ, even as they also overlap. Sentences and periods abound in nineteenth-

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century music, for example, and Romantic composers continue to employ ‘Classical’ cadences; but at the same time new techniques begin to emerge, such as more processual approaches to form, a weakening of closure, an expansion of themes, and a greater interest in eliding and overlapping formal boundaries.

Most of the research on Romantic form, however, has concentrated on instrumental music. Exploring form in Romantic vocal music means reckoning with an inescapable fact: the way that song composers shape musical phrases and sections is inseparable from the way that they read poetic lines and stanzas. This is no truer than with Clara Schumann. Looking at two representative songs – ‘Warum willst du and’re fragen’, Op. 12, No. 11, and ‘Ich hab’ in deinem Auge’, Op. 13, No. 5 – in which she smooths over the boundaries between sections and stanzas provides a particularly vivid illustration of how a gifted songwriter adapts her musical forms and modifies Classical-era conventions of closure in response to the meaning, structure, and flow of poetry.

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8 The two songs discussed here belong to a larger corpus of Clara Schumann songs with sections and stanzas that end with weakened or avoided cadences: these include ‘Er ist gekommen’, Op. 12, No. 2 (V6–5–I in A<flat> major in bar 15, at the end of the poem’s first stanza); ‘Ich stand in dunklen Träumen’, Op. 13, No. 1 (vii”4–2/iii–V7/IV in bar 23, at the end of the poem’s second stanza); ‘Die stille Lotosblume’, Op. 13, No. 6 (plagal ‘cadence’ in C<flat> major in bar 29, as part of a broader sequential progression, at the end of the poem’s third stanza; the C<flat>-major chord sustains across the stanza division); ‘O Lust, o Lust’, Op. 23, No. 6
‘Warum willst du and’re fragen’, Op. 12, No. 11

My first case study, the penultimate song of Clara and Robert Schumann’s joint opus *Zwölf Gedichte aus F. Rückerts Liebesfrühling* (her Op. 12 and his Op. 37, published in 1841), shows how she weakens cadences for expressive effect, creating a musical continuity across sections that responds to a comparable poetic continuity across stanzas. Rückert’s poem is a plea from the speaker to her beloved, to look only to her eyes for proof of her love, not to her actions, her words, or the words of other people. (I follow both Rufus Hallmark and Melinda Boyd in hearing the speaker of this poem as implicitly female – in large part because, as Hallmark suggests, the solo-voice songs in the cycle suggest a dialogue between the male speakers of Robert’s songs and the female speakers of Clara’s.)

Note that the poem drives to its final line and seems to build in intensity as it goes. The first stanza starts with a question, the second is full of more direct imperatives, and the third, though it also starts with a question, ends more emphatically than any other stanza, with a confession of love and a revelation of what the speaker’s eyes say.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warum willst du and’re fragen,</td>
<td>Why enquire of others,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Die’s nicht meinen treu mit dir?</td>
<td>Who are not faithful to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glaube nicht, als was dir sagen</td>
<td>Only believe what these two eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diese beiden Augen hier!</td>
<td>Here tell you!</td>
</tr>
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</table>

(phrase ends on V6-5/V in bar 16, at the end of the poem’s first stanza); ‘Am Strande’ (V4-3/ii–ii in G<flat> major in bars 22–23, at the end of the poem’s second stanza); ‘Volkslied’ (iv in bar 8, at the end of the poem’s first stanza; the stanza has three lines, and Schumann places a clear half cadence at the end of the second line, and joins line 3 with the following stanza); ‘Mein Stern’ (V6-5–1 in bars 14–15, at the end of the poem’s first stanza). See Harald Krebs’s chapter from this volume for a discussion of the slur that smooths over the boundary between stanzas 2 and 3 in ‘Ich stand in dunklen Träumen’. Poundie Burstein also discusses this moment in ‘Their Paths, Her Ways: Comparison of Text Settings by Clara Schumann and Other Composers’, *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 6 (2002): 17.

Glaube nicht den fremden Leuten,  Do not believe what others say;
Glaube nicht dem eignen Wahn;  Do not believe strange fancies;
Nicht mein Tun auch sollst du deuten,  Nor should you interpret my deeds,
Sondern sieh die Augen an!  But instead look at these eyes!

Schweigt die Lippe deine Fragen,  Are my lips silent to your questions
Oder zeugt sie gegen mich?  Or do they testify against me?
Was auch meine Lippen sagen,  Whatever my lips might say,
Sieh mein Aug’, ich liebe dich!  Look at my eyes; I love you!\(^\text{10}\)

The forward drive of the poem is enhanced by the manner in which Rückert repeats and varies words and ideas. In her classic book *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End*, the literary theorist Barbara Herrnstein Smith writes that ‘systematic repetition of formal elements is fundamentally a force for continuation, and closure is, of course, always weakened by the expectation of continuation.’\(^\text{11}\) Her words nicely describe the effect of reading Rückert’s poem, with its ‘repetition of formal elements’ that creates just such an ‘expectation of continuation’. Notice, for example, that the phrase ‘Glaube nicht’ appears at the start of lines 3, 5, and 6, and that ‘nicht’ itself appears alone in lines 2 and 7; these repetitions fuse together stanzas 1 and 2, carrying us forward across the stanza division. Notice also that each stanza ends with reference to eyes – once we hear the word ‘Augen’ at the end of the second stanza, we anticipate that it will appear at the end of the third stanza. What makes the final line of stanza 3 sound decisively final, of course, is that it states the long-awaited declaration (‘I love you!’). Rückert’s technique here represents an example of ‘terminal modification’, in which, after repeating so much material, a poet modifies something, even slightly, so as to ‘secure the reader’s acceptance of the last stanza, as indeed, terminal.’\(^\text{12}\)

\(^{10}\) The translation is drawn from Richard Stokes, *The Book of Lieder: The Original Texts of Over 1000 Songs* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2005).
\(^{12}\) Smith, *Poetic Closure*, 56.
How, though, should the last line of the ‘terminal’ stanza be read? Should one follow the build-up of energy through to the very end and say the last line emphatically? Or should one back away from the last line, saying this final declaration in a more hushed tone? To me, the first option – maintain the intensity to the end – seems more in keeping with the structure of the poem. But in truth, either of these readings is plausible, since each in a different way draws attention to the crucial final line.

One of the marvels of Schumann’s song is that she chooses neither of these options. Instead, she chooses both: she states the final couplet twice, first as an impassioned plea that leads to an imperfect authentic cadence (IAC) in the ‘wrong’ key (the subdominant) and then as a hushed expression of love that leads finally to a perfect authentic cadence (PAC) in the tonic – but a PAC that sounds more hesitant than any other cadence in the song. (Readers can find a score to the song by accessing the International Music Score Library Project [IMSLP; imslp.org]. The first statement of the final couplet appears midway through the second system on the second page.) In setting these final lines twice, and in two different ways, Schumann composes an ending that is more equivocal than Rückert’s. Her song ends with a proper cadence in the tonic, but because that cadence is so subdued, we are left with the sound of the subdominant cadence lingering in our ears. The song, in short, sounds finished but not fully resolved. What better way to suggest that the real resolution – the reciprocation of the speaker’s feelings – lies just beyond the poem’s final word and the song’s final bar.

Understanding how this final cadence works, and what it reveals about Schumann’s reading of the poem, requires placing it in the context of the entire song. After a short introduction, we hear an eight-bar antecedent, setting the first stanza of the poem (bars 5–12). The antecedent is fairly straightforward, so far as it goes, but its ending is peculiar: the phrase ends on an inverted
rather than a root-position dominant. What might have been a clear half cadence becomes a weakened half cadence – or, one might argue, not a cadence at all since, in this time period, half cadences at the end of antecedent phrases overwhelmingly involve root-position dominants.¹³ No matter whether we hear this as a weakened cadence or a non-cadence, the crucial point is that it blurs the boundary between the first and second phrases of the vocal melody. The musical blurring responds to a poetic blurring: the inverted dominant links the end of the antecedent with the beginning of the would-be consequent, just as the repeated words ‘Glaube nicht’ link the end of the first stanza with the beginning of the second.

The end of the next section is even more unorthodox. The eight-bar consequent ends in bar 20 with a half cadence rather than a PAC – and a half cadence in the subdominant. Borrowing from William Caplin, we might say that if the antecedent falters, the consequent ‘fails’.¹⁴ But such a description – ‘failed’ consequent – only paints half a picture. It doesn’t fully capture the sense that, in light of the text, the end of the consequent sounds not ‘wrong’ but just right: As a result of this weaker-than-expected cadence, the phrase, like the poetic couplet associated with it, ends but also pushes onward; the feeling of forward momentum is heightened by a crescendo, a gradual widening of the space between melody and bass, and the presence of a chordal seventh in the dominant harmony, creating what Janet Schmalfeldt calls a ‘nineteenth-century half cadence’.¹⁵

¹³ In general, like Caplin, I tend to regard half cadences as progressions that end with root-position V or V⁷ chords (as opposed to inverted V or V⁷ chords), the reason being that in Classical and early Romantic music so many half cadences feature root-position dominants. See Caplin, Classical Form, 29, for an articulation of this viewpoint. Even if one disagrees with this in this passage viewpoint, one can nonetheless agree that the inverted dominant seventh creates a greater sense of continuity across the two phrases than a root-position dominant seventh would.


¹⁵ On the concept of the nineteenth-century half cadence, see Schmalfeldt, In the Process of Becoming, 202–3. Caplin cites the nineteenth-century half cadence as but one indicator of a
(Note also that chordal seventh resolves and the piano melody completes the stepwise ascent that began back in bar 17: A–B<flat>–C–D<flat>–E<flat>–F.) For comparison, imagine if Schumann had written a more conventional period with a half cadence at its midpoint and a tonic PAC at its end. My recomposition, shown in Example 6.1, is tidy and idiomatic, but it has none of the forward drive of her actual composition. As much as this cadence looks forward, it also looks backward: the melodic line at the end of the ‘failed’ consequent is a diatonicized version of what appeared at the end of the antecedent; even the bass line is similar in that it moves down by step. The musical similarity of these bars underlines the linguistic similarity of the lines associated with them, both of which reference eyes: ‘Diese beide Augen hier!’ and ‘Sondern sieh die Augen an!’

[INSERT EXAMPLE 6.1 HERE]

Example 6.1 Clara Schumann, ‘Warum willst du and’re fragen’, recomposition of bars 1–20

The phrase starting in bar 25 (‘Schweigt die Lippe…’) also evades a proper consequent that closes in the tonic: the ‘failed’ consequent leads to an authentic cadence, but it is imperfect and, moreover, it is once more in D<flat>, not A<flat>. The melodic shape is again similar to what we heard at the end of the previous vocal phrases, with melody climbing stepwise upward (appropriately enough, considering the return of the word ‘eye’). Yet there are some crucial differences. First, unlike in the previous subdominant half cadence, the piano’s melody and the singer’s melody climb upward to F. Second, we reach the loudest dynamic of the song, forte (followed by a crescendo, no less). Third, this is the first phrase since the introduction in which

common stylistic characteristic of early Romantic compositions: ‘a more extensive use of chromaticism and dissonance’ (‘Beyond the Classical Cadence’, 4–6).
the left hand of the piano leaps at the moment of closure rather than moving stepwise, which gives even more weight to the cadential arrival. The result is the song’s rhetorical high point.16

This is of course the speaker’s declaration, so it makes sense that Schumann would give it rhetorical weight. But why not give it equal syntactical weight, with a tonic PAC?17 (I use the word ‘syntactical’ to refer to the type of cadence – where a PAC is syntactically stronger than an IAC and an IAC is syntactically stronger than a half cadence – and ‘rhetorical’ to refer to how a cadence is compositionally realized – where, for example, a forte cadence with a thick texture is rhetorically stronger than a piano cadence with a thin texture.) And why also place syntax and rhetoric out of alignment in the next phrase, a ‘correction’ of sorts that closes with a syntactically strong PAC in A<flat> major but one that is so rhetorically weakened? These bars repeat the declaration but with all the signs of energy loss, not the energy gain of the previous cadence: the melody descends stepwise where earlier it ascended; the dynamic decreases where it previously increased; and the piano accompaniment is full of non-chord tones and borrowed tones, signs of tentativeness, not forcefulness.

Schumann’s handling of this final cadence is key to her interpretation of the poem, and to her understanding of its mechanisms of closure. Imagine a setting that ended with a rhetorically forceful tonic PAC, one that took the place of the emphatic IAC in D<flat> major; such a setting might sound too resolute. Or imagine a setting that ended only with a subdued tonic PAC, and without the ‘wrong’-key emotional outpouring in D<flat>; such a setting might sound too hesitant.


17 I draw this distinction between cadential syntax and rhetoric from Caplin, ‘The Classical Cadence’, 103–6.
In reading the line in two contrasting ways – first as a wellspring of desire that breaks beyond the home key, then as a gentle repetition that naturally finds its way home but does not quite dispel the D<flat> reverberation – Schumann strikes a perfect balance between desire and fulfilment. Nominally, the song is resolved, but experientially, it seems to await a more complete resolution, a fully reciprocated ‘I love you’ that lies just beyond the double bar.


If in ‘Warum willst du und’re fragen’ Schumann weakens certain cadences, transforming what might have been a root-position dominant into an inverted one and what might have been a PAC in I into a half cadence in IV, in ‘Ich hab’ in deinem Auge’ she sidesteps a cadence altogether, melding the end of the song’s middle section with the return of its opening section. Furthermore, in doing so, she doesn’t depart from a hypothetical model; she departs from an actual model. In the original version of the song, which she gave to Robert on his thirty-third birthday in June 1843, the middle section closes with an authentic cadence. In the 1844 published version, however, the cadence is removed and the middle and final sections flow together seamlessly. On one hand, this moment of cadential erasure is subtler than what happened in ‘Warum willst du und’re fragen’: as we will see, the non-cadential ending in the published version of ‘Ich hab’ in deinem Auge’ passes by almost unnoticed, unlike the rhetorically emphasized cadences in IV in the previous song, and even the pause on a V6-5 chord, which is highlighted by a slowing of the tempo and a crescendo. Yet, on the other hand, the erased cadence in ‘Ich hab’ in deinem Auge’ is even more novel since it involves a near-complete fusion of two adjacent sections – and since, in the process, it encourages us to read the poem in a new way.
The poem, again by Friedrich Rückert, is about someone who continues to see youth and beauty in his beloved’s face, despite the fact that she has grown old and pale. I refer to the poetic speaker as a man, the main reason being that the image of roses on the lover’s cheeks (‘Ich sah auf deinen Wangen einmal / Die Rosen des Himmels stehn’ [I saw on your cheeks / The roses of heaven]) has clear gender implications: this is in all likelihood an old man speaking to his wife. As you read the poem, take special note of the fact that it moves from past to the present to the future.

Ich hab’ in deinem Auge den Strahl
Der ewigen Liebe gesehen,
Ich sah auf deinen Wangen einmal
Die Rosen des Himmels stehn.

Und wie der Strahl im Aug’ erlischt
Und wie die Rosen zerstieben,
Ihr Abglanz ewig neu erfrischt,
Ist mir im Herzen geblieben.

Und niemals werd’ ich die Wangen seh’n
Und nie in’s Auge dir blicken,
So werden sie mir in Rosen steh’n
Und es den Strahl mir schicken.

I saw in your eyes
The ray of eternal love,
I saw on your cheeks
The roses of heaven.

And as the ray dies in your eyes,
And as the roses scatter,
Their reflection, forever new,
Has remained in my heart.

And never will I look at your cheeks,
And never will I gaze into those eyes,
And not see the glow of roses,
And the ray of love.\textsuperscript{18}

Schumann sets the poem in ternary form, with one section for each stanza. (Here again, readers can access the score via IMSLP.) The passage that interests me is the seam between stanzas 2 and 3, between B and A’, between the present and the future. Schumann originally included a short piano interlude between her setting of these two stanzas, a brief passage that closes with an IAC in the tonic, A<flat> major, and prepares the return of the opening material (Example 6.2). This is the song as it looked in the book that she gave to Robert on his birthday. Later that same year, however, after copying the song into a Liederbuch that she intended to keep for

\textsuperscript{18} Stokes, The Book of Lieder.
posterity, she made a change: she crossed out the interlude, suturing together the bars surrounding it, and removing the cadence (see Example 6.3)\textsuperscript{19} Rather than ending with a V\textsuperscript{7}–I progression, in the revised version the middle section of the song ends with a V6-5 chord – not an IAC and not even really a half cadence because the V chord appears in inversion and, more to the point, because it connects seamlessly with the I chord that follows it. This is the version of the song that Schumann used in her Op. 13 collection, published by Breitkopf & Härtel (Example 6.4). The change is hardly radical. In the revised version, the moment when V6-5 resolves to I is anything but jarring; indeed, the moment is characterized by its lack of disruption. But the subtlety of the passage belies its oddity. In characteristic fashion, she makes a move that is at once understated but powerfully expressive: in fusing together these two stanzas, she overrides Rückert’s period – and, in fact, in the 1844 published version of the song she removes this punctuation mark altogether. Seeing that she was famously fastidious about correcting proofs of her published works, this seems to be as she wanted it.

[INSERT EXAMPLE 6.2 HERE]

Example 6.2 Clara Schumann, ‘Ich hab’ in deinem Auge’, end of stanza 2 leading into stanza 3;

original version, June 1843

[INSERT EXAMPLE 6.3 HERE]

Example 6.3 Clara Schumann, ‘Ich hab’ in deinem Auge’, end of stanza 2 leading into stanza 3;

revised version, later 1843

\textsuperscript{19} The Liederbuch manuscript (titled ‘23 Lieder’) can be accessed via the digital collection of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin: https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/.
Example 6.4 Clara Schumann, ‘Ich hab’ in deinem Auge’, end of stanza 2 leading into stanza 3; published version, 1844

Why would she make such an alteration? What was she picking up on in the poem that prompted her to read it in such a novel way? In part, she appears to have been responding to the structure of the poem. The first line of the last stanza begins with the word ‘und’ (and), as do the second and fourth lines. The final stanza continues and heightens a syntactic momentum – and increasing drumbeat of ‘und’s’ that started in the first two lines of the second stanza. This may help to explain why she does not fuse together stanzas 1 and 2; the momentum has not built up yet. Notice also that the first line of stanza 2 and the last line of the poem are remarkably similar (‘Und wie der Strahl …’ and ‘Und es den Strahl …’). In combining stanzas 2 and 3, she effectively creates one big stanza framed by these similar lines.

Her fusion of these two stanzas responds even more to the meaning of the poem. In the original version of the song, the beginning of the third stanza sounds to some extent like a new idea, a shift in tone, the poetic persona’s sudden realization that even though he holds the ‘reflection’ of his beloved’s youthful face in his heart, he will never actually see that youthful face in real life. Here are the last two stanzas recast in prose form, with the stanza break shown as a paragraph break.

And as the ray dies in your eyes, and as the roses scatter, their reflection, forever new, has remained in my heart.
And never will I look at your cheeks, and never will I gaze into your eyes, and not see the glow of roses, and the ray of love.
And here they are as we are encouraged to read them in her revised version, again cast as prose. In this reading there is no new paragraph, no shift in tone, no sudden realization, just one ongoing thought, sustained by the certainty that her youth and beauty will never fade.

And as the ray dies in your eyes, and as the roses scatter, their reflection, forever new, has remained in my heart and never will I look at your cheeks, and never will I gaze into your eyes, and not see the glow of roses, and the ray of love.

This reading is certainly unorthodox – admittedly, the paragraph reads a little like a run-on sentence. But perhaps that is the point. By smoothing over the seam between stanzas 2 and 3, treating them as though they are one continuous thought, Schumann makes youth and old age, past, present, and future seem to run together as well. Imagine an old man saying to his wife, ‘You look just the same as the day we were married!’ For that matter, imagine Clara imagining Robert saying this to her in her old age, transporting herself fifty years into the future when she hopes he will continue to see light and beauty in her face. (This thought exercise is all the more heart-breaking when one thinks about Robert’s early death.) In this context, the syntactic continuity of Schumann’s music – and its imposition of a syntactic continuity on Rückert’s poem – is more than just a technical aspect of the song; it is a key to unlocking the expressivity and the originality of her setting.

**Conclusion**

How to end an essay about songs with sections that seem at once resolved and unresolved? I suppose not with a decisive PAC but with a more open-ended cadence. Let me close, then, not with hard-and-fast conclusions, but instead with three recommendations.

*Recommendation #1:* We need to devote more analytical attention to Clara Schumann’s music, and furthermore to discuss it on its own terms, without always comparing her musical aesthetic
with her husband’s. Indeed, the same could well be said of music by women composers more generally. The amount of research into music by women has grown enormously in the past twenty years, but detailed analytical discussions of that music are still fairly uncommon.\textsuperscript{20} And in cases where a female composer is connected in some way with a male composer – Clara Schumann and Robert Schumann, Fanny Hensel and Felix Mendelssohn, Alma Mahler and Gustav Mahler, Louise Reichardt and Johann Friedrich Reichardt, and so on – the woman’s music is often measured against the man’s. For many years, for example, scholars tended to view Clara Schumann as a mere contributor to the Schumannian style or, worse, a poor imitator of it. To choose only one example: writing about her three songs by that were included in the couple’s collaborative \textit{Liebesfrühling} cycle, Eric Sams argued that Robert must have helped Clara considerably, because her songs ‘have an occasional master touch which is not hers.’\textsuperscript{21} In this essay I have mentioned Robert Schumann only in passing, and there is a reason for this: in my view, we elevate Clara Schumann, we celebrate her artistry, when we focus on what makes her music distinctively her own, rather than more or less ‘Schumannian’ (by which I mean more or


less like the music of her husband). Thankfully, in recent years a number of scholars have begun to treat Clara Schumann as an independent composer, with an eye (in part) toward defining the hallmarks of her music. More work is needed along these lines if we are to fully understand the nature of her achievement as a composer and her importance to the history of nineteenth-century music.

Recommendation #2: We need to see musical closure as one of the main things that differentiates Romantic music from Classical music (and even early Romantic music from late Classical music). It may well be that the musical styles of, say, Haydn and Mozart, or Chopin and Mendelssohn, are similar enough that we should see them less as different languages than as different dialects of the same common-practice language. But those differences in dialect matter, and one of the clearest indicators of them is, to put it simply, the way these Romantic composers end things. Further analysis of this crucial facet of Romantic music will yield even more strategies and help us to grasp

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22 This isn’t to say that comparison should be avoided altogether – there may be reason, for example, to consider how Clara Schumann’s music enters into dialogue with the music of her contemporaries (both male and female). But especially when comparing the work of a woman with the work of a more famous and canonical male contemporary, we should ensure that our comparisons are not of the greater-than and less-than variety, and that we are not treating the man’s work as the paragon of value, the measuring stick against which the woman’s work is evaluated. I elaborate upon this point in a chapter from my book The Songs of Clara Schumann (‘Three Assumptions’) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

exactly how and why composers in the second quarter of the nineteenth century began to redefine formal boundaries.\textsuperscript{24}

\textit{Recommendation #3:} In our continued examination of closure in Romantic music, we need to look as much to vocal music as to instrumental music, and, in so doing, to engage as thoroughly and meaningfully with the myriad strategies of poetic closure as we do with the myriad strategies of musical closure. Clara may have insisted to Robert that she lacked the requisite insight into great German poetry to be able to compose a great song,\textsuperscript{25} but songs like ‘Warum willst du and’re fragen’ and ‘Ich hab’ in deinem Auge’ show that she was selling herself short. Clara Schumann was a remarkably gifted reader of poetry, who showed as much sensitivity to the expressive contours of verse as she did to those of music. Matching this level of sensitivity may be a tall order, but it’s worth a try.

\textsuperscript{24} In a forthcoming article Tyler Osborne and I explore several strategies that Fanny Hensel uses to avoid cadential closure at the end of her songs (‘Prolongational Closure in the Songs of Fanny Hensel’, \textit{Music Theory Online} 26/3 [2020]). Writing this article has helped me to appreciate one of the main differences between Fanny Hensel’s and Clara Schumann’s approaches to closure: unlike Schumann, Hensel likes to end \textit{songs} without cadences, and unlike Hensel, Schumann likes to end \textit{sections} without cadences. As a result, Hensel’s songs (in general) tend to sound more open-ended, as though reaching beyond their final bar lines, but Schumann’s sound more fluid, as though reaching across their internal bar lines.

Example 6.1

Andante

antecedent

Warum

willst du and're fragen, die's nicht meinen treu mit

dir? Glaub' nicht, als was dir sagen diese
bei den Augen hier! Glaube nicht den fremden Leuten, glaube nicht dem eigenen Wahn; nicht mein Tun auch sollst du deuten, sondern sieh die Augen an!
Example 6.2

ritardando

ist mir im Herzen geblieben.

Und nie-mals werd ich die Wan-gen sehn

IAC
Example 6.3
Example 6.4

Ab-glänz e-wig neu er-frischt, ist mir im Her-zen ge-

blie-ben und nie-mals werd' ich die Wan-gen seh_n._