



Research on the musical cultural characteristics and styles of German and Austrian art songs during the Romantic period

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ABSTRACT

The Romantic period in music history persisted from the late 18th century to the early 19th century, and their music was innovative and passionate, exploring themes of human identity, the natural world, and spirituality. From the center of this musical revolution, those art songs or Lieder from Germany and Austria could be analyzed as poetry and music in a concentrated form as composers chose this media in which to externalize personal thoughts and feelings. This paper aims to identify and analyze the main musical and cultural features of German and Austrian art songs in the period of Romanticism while focusing on the specific achievements of major composers of time including Johannes Brahms, Franz Schubert, Hugo Wolf and Robert Schumann. These composers built the genre in their fashion: Schubert with the Austrian folk influences, Schumann with the featured harmonic inventions harmonic control and Brahms with his outlook towards classically inspired music. The last significant contributor and the most significant in many ways was Hugo Wolf, whose interpretations brought Lied to newer lyrical and many cases, emotional heights inspiring the following generations. The subject matter is the impact that the cultural, literary, and philosophical trends in art songs at the time had on the thematic and stylistic aspects of art songs involving Romanticism, individualism, and nationalism, as well as other literary and philosophical movements of the time. Therefore, while analyzing the relationship between text and music, this paper seeks to offer an insight into the techniques employed in creating such musical works and the extent of their contribution to the art of song literature.

Keywords: Romantic period, German and Austrian art songs, Lieder, Cultural influences, Art song analysis, Musical characteristics

A.INTRODUCTION

The period of Romanticism in music, dating from the late classical period to the early modern period, was a time of revolutionary creativity and passion ^[1]. Introducing themes of spirituality, nature, and individuation, as well as a departure from rigid classicism and conservatism in comparison to earlier periods. At the center of this musical revolution lay the art songs or Lieder of Germany and Austria ^[2]. These compositions in which music was a set in poems for one voice with piano backup became characteristic of Romance and Cultural movements ^[3]. As a genre, art song or lieder is arguably one of the best representations of Romanticism in the sense of poetry and music. While opera or oratorio involves a chorus and several singers at once, Lieder in terms of size is small, thus enabling the composer to examine personal concerns. The integration of voice and harmony was a powerful tool for expressing various emotions; melancholy and exultation in a condensed and dense song format ^[4].

Romantic art song music traditions were influenced by German and Austrian composers during the romantic period. Some of the noteworthy contributors include such luminaries as Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Hugo Wolf and Gustav Mahler whom contributed to some of the most beautiful Lieder of the age developed the possibilities of the genre ^[5]. As known, Schubert, the founder of the German art song wrote more than 600 songs in his short life and set a profound model for future song composers in his extraordinary ways of combining text and music. Schumann, explored some new ways of harmonic language and the aspect of stories, whereas Brahms brought a prominent classical sense to Lieder. Focusing on the comparative aspect of the musical and cultural features of Lieder is important to capture the depth of the impact of romantic spirit and it influenced art and culture. It was during this period of uncertain political and social transformations that music became an instrument for philosophical inquiries of people's nature, purpose of life, and existence. Engaging with thematic concerns, aesthetic choices, and historical settings of German and Austrian Lieder enables us to better comprehend the contours of

Romanticism and how it continues to shape culture^[6].

Furthermore, the Lieder genre provides an opportunity to analyze how the text and music are worked through and therefore reveals the creative process between the composer and the poet^[7]. Studying the specific reactions and interpretations of composers to literary texts, one can reveal the semantics of the music that seems to be hidden in its structure. On the same note, understanding the manners of singing and in which Lieder has been received offers a window into a shifting set of aesthetics and cultural values^[8].

The objective of this study is to comprehensively analyze the musical and cultural characteristics of German and Austrian art songs during the Romantic period, focusing on key composers, while examining the influence of cultural, literary, and philosophical movements.

In this paper, we explore the characteristics and cultural influences of German and Austrian art songs during the Romantic period. Section B reviews relevant literature on the topic, while Section C delves into the formal design of art songs. Section D discusses the musical and cultural characteristics of German and Austrian art songs, focusing on composers. Section E examines the cultural influences on art song composition. Finally, Section F concludes by summarizing the significance of German and Austrian art songs.

B.LITERATURE REVIEW

The German Kunstlied and Chinese romance were the main topics of the article^[9] which examined the genesis and evolution of the national Chinese art song, "Period of Openness". It looked at how Western European and traditional Chinese music systems interacted. Analytical techniques and a methodical approach were used in the study methodology to examine the geographical distinctiveness of Chinese romance in songs. According to the study, European compositional skills had a transformative effect on Chinese music over the 20th century.

The study^[10] looked at the aesthetic and creative foundations of Ukrainian Romanticism across a variety of cultural areas to explore as a national interpretation of 19th–20th century European Romanticism. The book explained how European Romanticism's creative and aesthetic norms influenced Ukrainian Romanticism. The author concluded that Ukrainian Romanticism's creative legitimacy was dependent on the interaction between native and European tendencies.

The lied was a key way in which the melody-poetic link and cantability were expressed in the article^[11]. It might be heard in classical school works from the 18th century in Vienna, such as arias reminiscent of Mozart and folk songs by Haydn. By employing romanticism's unique expressiveness and technical possibilities, romantic composers such as Schubert, Schumann, Franz, Mendelssohn, Bartholdy, Wagner, Brahms, and Wolf converted songs into cultural art forms for voice and piano.

The preparation of future musical art instructors was examined in the essay^[12], with a particular emphasis on historical, theoretical, and performing arts disciplines. It outlined how multidisciplinary cooperation may be implemented didactically and offered suggestions for how to do so. A distinctive feature of music was highlighted by the phenomenological method. Future educators could benefit from the flexible and consistent use of all learning process components made possible by interdisciplinary cooperation, which cultivates a shared body of knowledge.

Using both public and private sources, the paper^[13] investigated the music-cultural ties that existed between the Prague nobility and the educated middle class in the 1830s and 1840s. It used music to emphasize cross-societal connections in the private sector as well as new aspects of Prague's cultural life. Understanding the history of music in the Czech lands and elsewhere more deeply may be possible by reconsidering analytical binarities.

Carinthia and Crain, Coastal territories, Dalmatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia and Slavonia, the paper^[14] examined music concerns in South-Slavic territories within the Monarchy. The music was separated into folk and art music sections according to a political-territorial framework. The investigation was conducted with the assistance of authors and musicologists, under the supervision of Eduard Hanslick, a university professor, critic, and aesthetician of Viennese music.

An examination of early piano sonatas by Schumann and Brahms, centered on their response to the aesthetics of the day, might be viewed as a careful reading of a few movements, as presented in the paper^[15]. The weaknesses and contradictions of those sonatas were exposed when compared to prior compositions. But when the sonatas were seen as a reaction to dominant aesthetics, their coherence became increasingly dependent on how they related to other pieces and the arts as a whole.

C.ART SONG

Art song, a vocal music composition with piano accompaniment, holds a significant place in the classical tradition, particularly during the Romantic period. This genre, referred as Lieder in the German tradition, embodies a fusion of poetry and music, intended for concert performance in formal settings.

a.Art Song Characteristics

Defining art songs involves considering various factors. While some vocal compositions are straightforwardly recognized as art songs, others pose classification challenges. For instance, wordless vocals by classical composers sometimes fall into this category. Distinctive characteristics of art songs include the exclusion of staged works like operas or musicals, though some Baroque arias find inclusion due to frequent recital performances. Differentiation from vocal chamber music is caused by the absence of additional instruments or singers. Exempt from being categorized as orchestral songs unless originally composed for

solo voice and piano. Consideration of folk songs are considered art songs only when arranged concertedly by a composer. Ambiguity regarding sacred songs, with some concert settings considered art songs while others may not.

b. Art Song Formal Design, Performance and Performers

Formal design in art songs often reflects the composer's musical language and interpretation of the text. Strophic songs feature identical music for each verse, while modified strophic songs maintain consistent vocal melodies in changing accompaniment. Through composed works present fresh music for each text section, incorporating repetition. The ABA form, or "song form," is prevalent in many art songs, with sections offering musical contrast. Art song performance demands a unique collaboration between singer and pianist, characterized by intimacy and subtlety in conveying the poem and music's emotions. Renowned vocalists built illustrious careers centered on art songs. Accompanying pianists specialize in enhancing art song performances with their nuanced playing.

D. MUSICAL CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS AND STYLES OF GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN ART SONGS DURING THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

a. Austrian and German art song composers

1. Franz Schubert: Franz Schubert (1797-1828) was born in Austria, inherited the style of the Vienna classical music school, and was also the forerunner and founder of the Romantic music school. In his short life, he composed a large amount of excellent music, with a wide range of works, rich in content and of great artistic value. In particular, he composed more than 600 art songs, and was therefore called the "father of art songs". Schubert's compositional style is unique, with the elegance and freshness of classicalism and the delicate lyricism of romanticism, and he also incorporates Austrian folk music into his songs, in addition to finding the shadow of German folk music in his works. He paid great attention to the choice of lyrics, and most of his compositions were based on poems by famous poets such as Heine and Goethe. The piano accompaniment and the lyrics depend on each other, so that the melody perfectly fits the rhythm of the poems, and the two complement each other. His works are full of expectations and aspirations for a better life, with searing emotions and rich fantasies. Unlike some negative romanticism, which tries to cover up social contradictions or lead people to divert their attention, his works are brave enough to face the reality that they are not as good as they should be, which is one of the reasons why Schubert's music is loved by everyone. Schubert composed art songs in various forms, including "Marguerite by the Spinning Wheel" and "To the Music" in the form of sectional songs, "Beautiful Mill Girl" and "Winter Journey" in the form of vocal suites, and "The Magician" and "Death and the Maiden" in the form of unison songs. Schubert brought the German and Austrian art songs to the public, gave them a distinctive national color, and opened up a new path among many operas and foreign music, Liszt evaluated him as "the most poetic musician ever", and the influence he brought to later musicians was immeasurable. In examining the musical legacy of Franz Schubert (Figure 1), we explore the fusion of Austrian folk influences and poetic sensitivity in his compositions. Franz Schubert is known as the "father of art songs". Some of his famous art songs include

"Gretchen am Spinnrade," "Erlkönig," "Die Forelle," and "Winterreise."



Figure 1: Musical Legacy of Franz Schubert

2. Robert Schumann: Robert Schumann (1810-1856) was born in Germany. Since his father was a literary bookseller, Schumann was bathed in the world of literature from his childhood, and as a young man, he loved to write and was highly educated in literature. Growing up swimming in the world of literature, he possessed romantic fantasies, and his works were full of romanticism. Many of Schumann's compositions are similar to autobiographies, inspired by his love. He was married to his wife in 1840, and the inspiration derived from life and love led him to compose more than one hundred art songs that year. For example, his vocal suite "The Love Life of Women" resembles his love story with his wife Clara. Schumann's compositions are largely inherited from Schubert, but Schumann is more delicate than Schubert, and the emotions he expresses are more introspective and pure, with short and compact phrases, innovative harmonic techniques, alternating major and minor keys, and off-key techniques that incompressible pitch, giving his works a hazy mood. Schumann attached great importance to the piano accompaniment, highlighting the piano in important moments of certain works, and in some art songs, the piano accompaniment even tended to take the form of a solo piano piece. Schumann's compositions have great artistry and bring the art song to its second peak. In exploring the musical oeuvre of Robert Schumann (Figure 2), we delve into his introspective melodies and innovative harmonic techniques. Schumann composed numerous art songs, often reflecting his own romantic experiences. Some of his famous Lieder include

"Dichterliebe," "Frauen-liebe und -Leben," "Widmung," and "Die Lotosblume."

Robert Schumann (1810–1856)



Figure 2: Musical Legacy of Robert Schumann

3. Johannes Brahms: Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) was born in Hamburg, Germany. His father was a double-bass player at the Hamburg City Theatre and paid great attention to the musical education of his children, so he had a deep musical background. Brahms composed in the heyday of Romanticism, but his works are heavily classical, and he can be considered the most classical musician of the Romantic period. The collision of classicism and romanticism, and the development of Schubert and Schumann, led Brahms to develop a distinctive compositional style. Brahms was very strict in his choice of words for his art songs, and "The Loneliness of the Fields" and "No Home, No Homeland" were chosen from the best poems of the same period. In addition to art songs, he also composed many other genres, such as children's songs, folk dances, and so on. Brahms' compositions are also nationalistic, and he paid much attention to the exploration of folk music, using folk music elements in his compositions to give them a unique charm. While the music of the Romantic period was rich and complex, Brahms wrote classical, solemn, and quiet music with a quiet mind. Many of his works have a sentimental tone, such as the songs "Death in a Cold Night" and "Four Serious Songs", which are typical of his works. Brahms was a master of classicism and romanticism, but he also drew from folk music and the works of Schubert and Schumann and added his philosophical thoughts to create a unique style of music, which has added to the development of German art songs. Figure 3 illustrates the melodic richness and classical depth characteristic of Johannes Brahms' compositions. Brahms' art songs are characterized by their classical style and emotional depth. Some of his famous Lieder include

"Wiegenlied," "Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer," "Die Mainacht," and "Feldeinsamkeit."

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)



Figure 3: Musical Legacy of Johannes Brahms

4. Hugo Wolf: Hugo Wolf (1860-1903) was an Austrian composer who is considered to have given his best to the field of lied or art songs in German. He was born in Windischgrätz and was a key composer of late Romantic music, as well as a master of vocal writing with a remarkable feeling for poetic words and a harmonic language far removed from Wagnerian excesses. His songs are through-composed, and this permits the musical development of every description to continue without interruption and to correspond in detail with the word music. The increase in harmony and chromaticism brings substantial emotional value to every piece of music performed by Wolf. Wolf only chose verses from famous poets such as Eduard Mörike, Joseph von Eichendorff, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and gave these scenes strong, moving emotional undertones. Some of his song cycles include Mörike-Lieder, Goethe-Lieder, and Spanisches Liederbuch all of which have characterized singing and extensive

musical quotations from the text. Even if Wolf lived a short and tragic life, filled with mental disorders, and even if he composed only 55 art songs his contribution to the art song genre is invaluable. He raised the genre of the Lied to new levels of lyrical and emotive art, which shaped later generations of composers and singers. Wolf's compositions continue to be core components of the art song canon and are prized for the complex relationship between the lyrical text and the setting as well as the honest dramatic/psychological portrayal. His presence remains vibrant as an appreciation of his creativity and artistic feeling. Hugo Wolf's songs have lyrical richness and emotional depth as illustrated in Figure 4. Wolf's art songs are celebrated for their lyrical and emotive qualities. Some of his famous Lieder include

"Mörike-Lieder," "Italienisches Liederbuch," "Spanisches Liederbuch," and "Goethe-Lieder."



Figure 4: Musical Legacy of Hugo Wolf

b. German musical cultural characteristics and styles

German art songs, epitomized by composers like Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms, feature rich harmonic language, flowing melodies and diverse rhythmic patterns. The integration of voice and piano, with the piano assuming an orchestral role, creates intimate musical narratives that convey the emotional depth of the poetry.

1. **Harmonic Language:** German art songs, particularly those by composers like Franz Schubert, feature a rich harmonic language characterized by chromaticism and modulation. Schubert's compositions often utilize adventurous harmonic progressions, including frequent modulations to remote keys, to mirror the emotional depth of the poetry.

2. **Melodic Structure:** Melodically, German art songs are known for their lyrical and flowing melodies, seamlessly interwoven with the poetic text. Schubert's melodies, in particular, exhibit a naturalness and singing ability, reflecting his extreme sensitivity to the expressive tones of the poetry he set to music.

3. **Rhythmic Patterns:** Rhythmic diversity is a hallmark of German art songs, with composers like Schubert employing syncopation and hemiola to enhance textual expression. Schubert's rhythmic inventiveness adds vitality and momentum to his songs, complementing the rhythmic intricacies of the poetry.

4. **Integration of Voice and Piano:** In German art songs, the piano often assumes a quasi-orchestral role, providing harmonic support, melodic counterpoint, and dramatic commentary. Schubert's piano writing is particularly virtuosic, with the instrument contributing significantly to the expressive depth and emotional impact of his compositions.

c. Austrian musical cultural characteristics and styles

Austrian art songs, exemplified by composers like Hugo Wolf, showcase lush harmonic textures, expressive melodies, and intricate rhythmic patterns. The piano, serving as a sensitive partner to the voice, enhances the dramatic intensity of the music. Emphasizing psychological depth, these compositions reflect a profound understanding and interpretation of poetry.

1. **Harmonic Language:** Other types of art songs include the Austrian lyric songs whose composers include Hugo Wolf contain a clear harmonic fabric with chromatic and harmonic densities. In his compositions, Wolf placed extra emphasis on chromaticism, delicate, and complicated harmonies that offer musical representation of the poetical matter.

2. **Melodic Structure:** Concerning the melodic aspect, it can be stated that Austrian art songs are highly charged with emotions and drama, and in most cases, the line can be followed to reflect the text. The major forms of Wolf's melodies in this connection are jagged edges and dramatic undertones which bespeak an exceptional understanding of the poems he was setting to music.

3. **Rhythmic Patterns:** An analysis of the art songs from Austria shows that rhythms are complex and include rhythm displacement as seen in Wolf who used an asymmetrical meter to take the drama of the text a notch higher. Wolf's tempo is variable, and in particular, staccato – this is why he adds increased emotional opportunities and various accents of rhythm to the compositions.

4. **Integration of Voice and Piano:** In the art song Lied of Austria, which is traditionally an art song, piano, and voice are of almost equal status and are partners in telling the dramatic and story aspect of the song. In the accompaniments by Wolf, prominence can be seen in the figurations as well as the thematic transformation that may occur when supporting the voice and the texture as well as the dramatic continuity of recitative.

E.CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON ART SONG COMPOSITION

Certain cultural, literary, and philosophical movements of the Romantic period affected the composition of German and Austrian art songs. This section will discuss how these influences affected the thematic and expressive nature as well as stylistic aspects of the art song genre.

1. Romanticism and Individualism: The Romantic period refers to individualism, emotion, and the sublimity of nature and human creativity. People all around the world wanted to express their inner feelings and concerns and discover the multifaceted aspects of life in their songs. In art songs, this attitude is manifested in the choice of ornate and personal themes that encompass love and beauty, nature, and the reflection of life.

2. Literary Influences: Art songs depended heavily on poetry to be produced as a form of art. Contemporary poets collaborate with composers and many works of literature are turned into music thus establishing a link between literature and music. Goethe, Heine, Rückert, and other German poets offered music makers like Schubert and Schumann ample text for their song creations. The poems included illustrations and profound imagery that impressed the composers and evoked proper music that fit in and supplemented the poetic work. Hugo Wolf was famous in Austria for providing music to poems of Eduard Mörike, and Joseph von Eichendorff among others, the music he composed was very intricate and helped to convey the meaning of the poems in a very elaborate manner through the use of harmony and melodies.

3. Nationalism and Folk Traditions: During the Romantic period, there was a growth of nationalism, and composers began to use folk themes with music in their compositions. Many German and Austrian art songs contain folk-like melodies and harmonies, which give those songs an air of national distinctiveness and ethnic purity. The art songs "Dichterliebe" by Schumann and "Zigeunerlieder" by Brahms are good examples of how such folk influences brought cultural aspects and broadness into this song genre.

4. Philosophical Context: If we compare the Romantic composers with their contemporaries, we may see that the former were much more involved in these ideas. This is especially about such concepts as nature, the divine, and the self. Indeed it was impossible not to be captured by all the beauty of nature and the countryside that surrounded people during those days, some traces of which could be found in many of their art songs. At this joint relationship between music and visuals, one should pay attention to Schubert's "Der Lindenbaum" from his song cycle "Winterreise". Furthermore, themes related to the supernatural or dark side are also prominent objects in art songs just as they were in literature of that period. By skillfully using subtle harmonies or sharp contrasts composers made listeners feel themselves like a part of something unreal.

5. Innovations in Music: During the Romantic period, there were many new ideas and changes in how music was made, especially in art songs. Composers tried different ways to arrange songs, moving away from the basic repeating pattern. They used forms that had continuous music and slightly changed repeating patterns, giving them more freedom to express emotions. Also, using short musical ideas that represent certain thoughts or people became more common. This method, often seen in operas by composers like Wagner, helped art songs have deeper meanings and better connections between different songs in a collection. Plus, improvements in making pianos and playing them allowed for more exciting and emotional background music, making the songs more powerful. The piano played a big role, matching the voice and adding beautiful sounds and layers to the music.

F.CONCLUSION

The romantic period of music can be referred to as a musical trend that took place between the late 18th century and the early 19th century and was marked by revolution and emotions such as individualism, nature, and religious themes among others. This period was rooted in German and Austrian art songs also known as Lieder which were works with words and music with preferences for individual emotions. The primary purposes of this paper are to introduce the major musical and cultural features of the epochs of German and Austrian art songs and to analyze the songs of four composers. Schubert incorporated the elements of Austrian folk into his compositions, Schumann introduced new harmonies into the music, Brahms was able to combine the elements of the classical and romantic periods into his compositions and Wolf intensified the elements of poetry and intensity in the Lied. Another aspect analyzed in the given paper is the influence of cultural, literary, and philosophical tendencies, including Romanticism, individualism, and nationalism, on the art song phenomenon. In examining how the text has been related to music in these works, this work can present the processes that were used in developing this repertoire, how these composers continue to affect future generations and the true beauty and real artistic meaning of their creations for society.

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