

ISTANBUL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY ★ GRADUATE SCHOOL

**CYCLIC FORM, TONAL AMBIGUITY, AND ROMANTIC EXPRESSION
IN ROBERT SCHUMANN'S *FANTASIESTÜCKE*, OP. 12:
A SCHENKERIAN PERSPECTIVE**

M.A. THESIS

Doğucan TEMİZEL

Department of Music

Music Programme

JUNE 2025

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İSTANBUL TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ ★ LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ENSTİTÜSÜ

**ROBERT SCHUMANN'IN *FANTASİESTÜCKE*, OP. 12 ESERİNDE
DÖNGÜSEL FORM, TONAL BELİRSİZLİK VE ROMANTİK İFADE:
SCHENKER YAKLAŞIMI**

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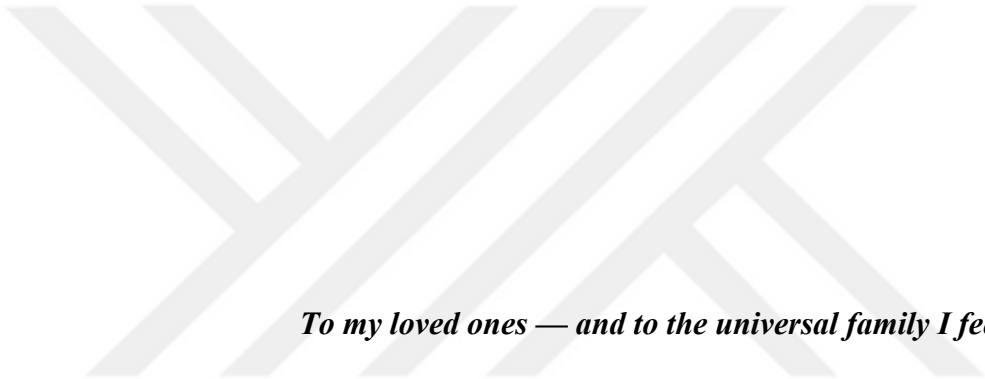
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To my loved ones — and to the universal family I feel a part of,



FOREWORD

This research grows out of a journey that began in my education in architecture and gradually turned toward the Eurogenetic art music. In 2010, during a design project for the İzmir Opera House competition, I first became curious about the subtle links between sound and space. Over time, my interest evolved into a comprehensive investigation of how the aesthetics and theories of structure and expression in the cultural environment of nineteenth-century music relate to each other across architecture, literature, and philosophy. Through this period, I discovered a lasting connection to the music and writings of Robert Schumann, whose dual role as composer and critic allowed me to experience music both artistically and personally.

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June 2025

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
FOREWORD	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS	xi
ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
SYMBOLS	xv
LIST OF FIGURES	xvii
SUMMARY	xix
ÖZET	xxi
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	2
1.2 Significance of The Study	5
1.3 Purpose of the Study	5
1.4 Scope	6
2. LITERATURE ON SCHUMANN’S EARLY PIANO CYCLES AND ROMANTIC EXPRESSION	7
2.1 Cyclic Form in Romantic Music	7
2.2 Schumann’s Early Piano Cycles	9
2.3 Genesis and Reception of Fantasiestücke, Op. 12	11
2.4 Romantic Expression in Schumann’s Music	13
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	15
3.1 Tonal Ambiguity and Chromaticism in Romantic Music	15
3.1.1 The role of tonal ambiguity in expressive narratives	15
3.1.2 Chromaticism as a tool for expanding harmonic language	17
3.2 Foundations of Schenkerian Analysis	18
3.2.1 Key concepts	19
3.2.2 Adapting Schenkerian analysis for cyclic structures	20
4. ANALYSIS OF FANTASIESTÜCKE, OP. 12	25
4.1 Overview of the cycle	25
4.1.1 Tonal trajectory and narrative flow	27
4.1.2 Motivic connections and cyclic unity	30
4.2 Schenkerian Analysis of Individual Movements	33
4.2.1 Movement 1: <i>Des Abends</i>	33
4.2.2 Movement II: <i>Aufschwung</i>	41
4.2.3 Movement III: <i>Warum?</i>	48
4.2.4 Movement IV: <i>Grillen</i>	53
4.2.5 Movement V: <i>In der Nacht</i>	59
4.2.6 Movement VI: <i>Fabel</i>	63
4.2.7 Movement VII: <i>Traumes Wirren</i>	67
4.2.8 Movement VIII: <i>Ende vom Lied</i>	73
4.3 Integration of Tonal and Formal Observations	77
4.3.1 Cyclic unity revisited: linking movements through tonal design	78

4.3.2 Expressive and narrative implications of Schenkerian findings	81
5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION	83
5.1 Florestan and Eusebius unfolded: Duality and Structural Depth	83
5.2 Tonal Trajectory and Third-relation Map (<i>Tonnetz</i>)	84
5.3 Schenkerian Insights of Sixth progression: Motivic Frame	88
5.4 The Role of Tonal Ambiguity in Expressive Perception	90
5.5 Conclusion	92
REFERENCES.....	93
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	99



ABBREVIATIONS

FD	: Fundamental descent/line (<i>Urlinie</i>)
FS	: Fundamental structure (<i>Ursatz</i>)
LP	: Linear progression (<i>Zug</i>)
NT	: Neighboring tone (<i>Nebennote</i>)
PT	: Primary tone (<i>Kopftone</i>)
TdR	: Third-related





SYMBOLS

◦	: Diminished
b	: Flat
ø.	: Half-diminished
♮	: Natural
^	: Scale degree
#	: Sharp





LIST OF FIGURES

	<u>Page</u>
Figure 2.1 : Transformation of Robert Schumann’s ‘Clara’ theme.....	10
Figure 3.1 : Schumann, “Warum?” op. 12, no. 3, mm. 29–33	16
Figure 3.2 : Fundamental line (<i>Urlinie</i>) and bass arpeggiation (<i>Bassbrechung</i>).....	19
Figure 3.3 : Composing-out (<i>Auskomponierung</i>) and related concepts	21
Figure 3.4 : Instances of <i>Directional-Tonal Structure</i>	22
Figure 4.1 : Schumann, <i>Fantasiestücke</i> , Op.12, tonal scheme in bass progression..	27
Figure 4.2 : Mediant transformations; a) variants of F major, b) variants of F minor.	28
Figure 4.3 : Mediant transformations; variants of Db.	29
Figure 4.4 : Schumann, <i>Fantasiestücke</i> , Op.12, tonal trajectory.....	30
Figure 4.5 : Schumann, <i>Fantasiestücke</i> , Op.12, a) <i>Des Abends</i> , mm. 1-5, main motive and its inverted development; b) motivic transformations.....	31
Figure 4.6 : <i>Fantasiestücke</i> , Op.12, formal structures and narrative unity.	32
Figure 4.7 : <i>Des Abends</i> , mm. 1-88, formal structure and tonal progression	34
Figure 4.8 : <i>Des Abends</i> , mm.1-18, foreground annotated graph, prolongation of $\hat{3}$ and transformation of the main motive	35
Figure 4.9 : <i>Des Abends</i> , mm.1-6, foreground reduction, prolongation of $\hat{3}$	36
Figure 4.10 : <i>Des Abends</i> , mm. 37-40, enharmonic modulation and analytical interpretation	37
Figure 4.11 : <i>Des Abends</i> , mm. 1-87, background and middleground reduction of level 1... ..	39
Figure 4.12 : <i>Des Abends</i> , mm. 1-87, middleground reduction, level 2.....	40
Figure 4.13 : <i>Aufschwung</i> , mm. 1-154, formal structure and tonal progression.....	42
Figure 4.14 : <i>Aufschwung</i> , mm. 1-4, foreground annotated graph, Db as cover tone (<i>Deckton</i>).....	43
Figure 4.15 : <i>Aufschwung</i> , mm. 5-14, foreground annotated graph, prolongation of $\hat{3}$	44
Figure 4.16 : <i>Aufschwung</i> , mm. 15 -17, foreground annotated graph, a 6th leap to $\hat{3}$	45
Figure 4.17 : <i>Aufschwung</i> , mm. 47-53, foreground annotated graph, the <i>Urlinie</i> of $\hat{3}$ - $\hat{2}$ - $\hat{1}$ and elision..	46
Figure 4.18 : <i>Aufschwung</i> , mm. 115-119, foreground annotated graph, return of theme A with harmonic and contrapuntal density.....	46
Figure 4.19 : <i>Aufschwung</i> , mm. 1-154, background and middleground reduction ...	47
Figure 4.20 : <i>Warum?</i> , mm.1-42, formal structure and tonal progression	49
Figure 4.21 : <i>Warum?</i> , mm. 1-5, foreground annotated graph, a 6th leap to $\hat{3}$	50
Figure 4.22 : <i>Warum?</i> , mm. 22-26, foreground annotated graph, the use of Neapolitan chord (bII).. ..	51
Figure 4.23 : <i>Warum?</i> , mm. 3-41, background and middleground reduction..	52
Figure 4.24 : <i>Grillen</i> , mm. 1-156, formal structure and tonal progression.....	53

Figure 4.25 : <i>Grillen</i> , mm. 1-5, foreground annotated graph, initial ascent (<i>Anstieg</i>) by a sixth progression (<i>Zug</i>), C-Ab.	55
Figure 4.26 : <i>Grillen</i> , mm. 11-16, foreground annotated graph, the descent of <i>Urlinie</i>	56
Figure 4.27 : <i>Grillen</i> , mm. 22-26, foreground annotated graph, a 6th leap to $\hat{5}$	56
Figure 4.28 : <i>Grillen</i> , mm. 5- 156, background and middleground reduction.....	58
Figure 4.29 : <i>In der Nacht</i> , mm. 1-223, formal structure and tonal progression	60
Figure 4.30 : <i>In der Nacht</i> , mm. 1-4, foreground annotated graph, arpeggiated ascent by a sixth leap, C- Ab	60
Figure 4.31 : <i>In der Nacht</i> , mm. 17-20, foreground annotated graph, arpeggiated ascent by a sixth leap, C-Ab.	61
Figure 4.32 : <i>In der Nacht</i> , mm. 3-214, background and middleground reduction..	62
Figure 4.33 : <i>Fabel</i> , mm. 1-89, formal structure and tonal progression.	63
Figure 4.34 : <i>Fabel</i> , foreground annotated graph, mm. 1-12, the dialogue of Eusebius and Florestan, initial ascent (<i>Anstieg</i>) formed by a sixth progression (<i>Zug</i>), G-E.....	64
Figure 4.35 : <i>Fabel</i> , mm. 13-20, foreground annotated graph, a sixth progression (<i>Zug</i>), D-B..	65
Figure 4.36 : <i>Fabel</i> , mm. 1-85, background and middleground reduction.....	66
Figure 4.37 : <i>Traumes Wirren</i> , mm. 1-177, formal structure and tonal progression	68
Figure 4.38 : <i>Traumes Wirren</i> , mm. 1-4, foreground annotated graph, initial ascent (<i>Anstieg</i>) by a third progression (<i>Zug</i>).....	69
Figure 4.39 : <i>Traumes Wirren</i> , mm. 13-17, foreground annotated graph, the <i>Urlinie</i> of $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ and ellision	69
Figure 4.40 : <i>Traumes Wirren</i> , mm. 33-36, foreground annotated graph, modulation by Neapolitan chord in B maj.....	70
Figure 4.41 : <i>Traumes Wirren</i> , mm. 59-62, foreground annotated graph, tonal transition by a chromatic mediant relationship, I to bV	70
Figure 4.42 : <i>Traumes Wirren</i> , mm. 111-126, foreground annotated graph, overarching tonal scheme, $bVI(Db)-V(C)-I(F)$	71
Figure 4.43 : <i>Tramumes Wirren</i> , mm. 4-177, background and middleground reduction	72
Figure 4.44 : <i>Ende vom Lied</i> , mm. 1-117, formal structure and tonal progression ..	74
Figure 4.45 : <i>Ende vom Lied</i> , mm. 1-8, foreground annotated graph, <i>reaching-over</i>	74
Figure 4.46 : <i>Ende vom Lied</i> , mm. 81-94, foreground annotated graph, the final descent of $\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ and final return to $bVI (Db)$ in Coda	75
Figure 4.47 : <i>Ende vom Lied</i> , mm. 1-117, background and middleground reduction	76
Figure 4.48 : Schumann's <i>Fantasiestücke</i> , Op.12, middleground reduction, the cycle as a whole	80
Figure 4.49 : Schumann's <i>Fantasiestücke</i> , Op.12, the symmetry of <i>Ursatz</i> and narrative interplay of Eusebius and Florestan	81
Figure 5.1 : Schumann's Musical Reference: "Eusebius, Schubert, Schumann"	84
Figure 5.2 : <i>Tonnetz</i> diagram	86
Figure 5.3 : Schumann's <i>Fantasiestücke</i> , Op.12, Tonal Map (<i>Tonnetz</i>) diagram. ...	87
Figure 5.4 : Schachter's (2016) descending sixth progression	89
Figure 5.5 : Bach, <i>Sarabande</i> , mm.1 and 13, Schachter's analytical sketch.....	89
Figure 5.6 : Mozart, Sonata, K.481, mm. 43 and 56, Schachter's analytical sketch	89

CYCLIC FORM, TONAL AMBIGUITY, AND ROMANTIC EXPRESSION IN ROBERT SCHUMANN'S *FANTASIESTÜCKE*, OP. 12: A SCHENKERIAN PERSPECTIVE

SUMMARY

From the Renaissance through the early Romantic period, the *cyclic principle* evolved as a compositional tool in Western classical music. In this tradition, Robert Schumann's *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12 (1837), represents how cyclic organization can create a musical narrative in a multi-movement work. Building on recent scholarship, I situate Schumann's approach to "cyclic form" and motivic integration along with the evolving aesthetic values of his era. The language of "Romanticism," in a defined context, embodies increased chromaticism, poetic expression, and experimentation in musical form. My thesis aims to examine the underlying melodic and harmonic relationships of *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12. The Schenkerian approach, therefore, helps understand how this collective form achieves structural unity by connecting diverse character pieces and embracing tonal ambiguity within its formal framework. For this analytical approach, some music scholars, such as Arthur Komar (1971), Patrick McCreless (1986), David Neumeyer (1982), and Peter Kaminsky (1989), debate whether Schenkerian analysis applies to the music of the Romantic era. In this regard, my analytical research suggests that Schenker's concept of fundamental structure (*Ursatz*) and composing-out (*Auskomponierung*) is still valid for the Romantic repertoire since it can illustrate the tonal structures and the organic unity, even in fragmented music with "Romantic expression".

The stylistic aspects of *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, balance resonant sonorities with dynamic piano texture while utilizing a blurred harmonic language that expands conventional tonal hierarchies. Moreover, Schumann's original title, *Phantasien*, in which Brown (2001) indicates that there is an allusion made to E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier* (1814–15), positions the piece in a broader nineteenth-century fantasia tradition. This literary association, therefore, shows his intent in relating individual movements in an organized whole, following on in a process evident in earlier cycles such as *Papillons*, Op. 2 (1829–31), *Carnaval*, Op. 9 (1834–35), and *Davidsbündlertänze*, Op. 6 (1837).

Schenkerian theory provides the analytical framework for my thesis research. I used the textbooks on this topic by Cadwallader, Gagné, & Samarotto (2020) and Beach (2012), which helped me apply detailed graphing for the foreground (*Vordergrund*), middleground (*Mittelgrund*), and background (*Hintergrund-Ursatz*) levels across all eight pieces in Schumann's formal plan. Apart from that, the recurring third-related tonal axis (D $\flat$ –F) and the prevalence of the fundamental line (*Urfinie*) of $\hat{3}$ – $\hat{2}$ – $\hat{1}$ are articulated clearly as integrative features together. In addition, the distinctive motivic contours within each set, especially the descending and ascending sixths, defining the concept of linear progression (*Zug*), function as "cross references" both in melodic and harmonic context, which develop connections among at all the levels of structure. As

a result, the detailed voice-leading graphs of middle ground and background reveal the implementation of fairly disguised harmonic progressions through sections and of the prolongation of substituted tonic harmony of F major through its subordinate chromatic mediant transformations. From a programmatic perspective, the interplay of contrasting duality of Eusebius and Florestan, on the other hand, appears in through tonal ambiguity and remote key relationships, heightening the cycle's narrative character with the dynamic layering in piano texture.

Building upon the Schenkerian framework outlined in this study, the analytical findings reveal how Schumann's *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, achieves expressive and structural coherence through the integration of motivic duality, tonal direction, and contrapuntal design. The contrast between Eusebius and Florestan, initially perceived through rhythmic profiles, articulation, and texture, is mirrored at deeper structural levels, where their dialogue shapes the tonal and formal trajectory of the cycle. Unified by the mediating voice of "Master Raro," this expressive polarity supports a broader compositional logic in which narrative and structure are inextricably linked. A central aspect of this synthesis lies in the recurring use of sixth intervals, both descending and ascending as well as a leap, within linear progressions (*Zug*) that operate across pieces and support the *Urlinie* descent. The "Clara" motive, exemplified by dyads such as E–G♯, and its transposed transformation of G♭–B♭ apparent in the beginning of *Des Abends*, functions as a motivic "cross-reference" that reinforces tonal connections between distant key areas, which contributes to voice-leading continuity throughout the work. Furthermore, the analysis in the discussion chapter maps out third-related tonal shifts between D♭ major and F minor/major, A♭ and E major using post-Riemannian *Tonnetz* models alongside Schenkerian middleground (*Mittelgrund*) graphs, revealing how chromatic mediants, enharmonic modulations, and modal mixture enhance both local contrast and global cohesion. In this context, tonal ambiguity is not treated as structural instability but as an expressive device embedded in Romantic aesthetics, where fluid tonality and formal unity are maintained in mutual dialogue. The resulting reading positions *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12 not as a loose collection of independent character pieces, but as a cyclically integrated work shaped by symbolic dualism and tonal transformation.

To conclude, my analytical research contributes to broader musicological discourse by clarifying how third-related tonal pairs sustain coherence within Romantic chromaticism and compositional innovation. By illustrating the value of Schenkerian analysis in revealing deep motivic and harmonic relationships, the findings might open a new understanding for analysis of Schumann's other cyclic works, such as *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16, the *Novelletten*, Op. 21, or *Nachtstücke* (*Night Pieces*), Op. 23 and, encourage continued research into the intersection of literary narrative, tonal structure, and structural expressivity in nineteenth-century music.

**ROBERT SCHUMANN'IN *FANTASİESTÜCKE*, OP. 12 ESERİNDE
DÖNGÜSEL FORM, TONAL BELİRSİZLİK VE ROMANTİK İFADE:
SCHENKER YAKLAŞIMI**

ÖZET

Rönesans'tan başlayarak erken Romantik döneme kadar Batı klasik müziğinde, döngüsel ilke ("cyclic principle") besteciler tarafından çok bölümlü eserlerin bütünlüğünü sağlamak için giderek daha önemli bir teknik olarak gelişmiştir. Bu tarihsel süreçte, Robert Schumann'ın *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12 (1837) başlıklı eseri, döngüsel yapının hem anlatı kurucu hem de birleştirici rolünü örnekleyen önemli örneklerden biridir. Bu tez çalışmasında, sekiz karakter parçasından oluşan eserleri Schenker yaklaşımı ile melodik, armonik ve motivik ilişkiler açısından inceleyip bu ilişkilerin nasıl bir yapısal bütünlük yarattığını detaylı şekilde ortaya koymaya çalıştım.

"Romantizm" kavramı müzikte, artan kromatizm, biçimsel yenilik ve şiirsel anlatım ile özdeşleşir. Schumann'ın müziği de bu dönemin yenilikçi ruhunu, geleneksel formlara olan bağlılık ve anlatsal özgürlük arasındaki dengeyle yansıtır. Tez çalışmamda, Schumann'ın döngüsel form, motivik entegrasyon ve anlatı yapısını, dönemin estetik değerleriyle birlikte ele alıyor, özellikle "tonal belirsizlik", "uzak tonal ilişkiler" ve "ifadesel piyanistik doku" gibi öğelerin, yapısal bütünlükle nasıl birleştiğini gösteriyorum. Bu çerçevede, Heinrich Schenker'in temel yapı (*Ursatz*) ve "dışa besteleme (*Auskomponierung*)" kavramlarının Romantik dönem eserlerine uygulanabilirliğini sorgulayan güncel tartışmaları dikkate alıyorum (Komar, 1971; McCreless, 1986; Neumeyer, 1982; Kaminsky, 1989). Sonrasında, Schenker yaklaşımının tonlar arası ilişki ve organik bütünlük analizinde ne kadar işlevsel olduğunu gösteriyorum (Cadwallader, Gagné & Samarotto, 2020; Beach, 2012).

Araştırmanın ikinci kısmında, Romantik dönemde döngüsel formun tarihsel gelişimi açıklanmaktadır. Burada, bu formun Schumann'ın erken piyano döngülerinde aldığı çeşitli biçimler üzerinde durulmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Romantik dönemin yükselen bireysellik, yoğun duygusal anlatım ve biçimsel yenilik anlayışının, özellikle Schumann'ın *Papillons*, Op. 2, *Carnaval*, Op. 9 ve *Davidsbündlertänze*, Op. 6 gibi erken döngüsel eserlerinde nasıl somutlaştığı karşılaştırmalı olarak tartışılmıştır. Ayrıca, eserlerin bağlamsal açıdan biçimsel yapıları üzerine tarihsel bilgiler verilmiş ve *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12'nin yaratımındaki estetik ve entelektüel ortam ele alınmıştır. Benzer şekilde, Schumann'ın eserlerinde romantik ifadenin nasıl ortaya çıktığı, E.T.A. Hoffmann ve Jean Paul Richter başta olmak üzere dönemin edebi ve felsefi kaynaklarıyla olan ilişkisiyle ortaya konmuştur. Son olarak, yapının teknik ve poetik temellerini anlamak üzere bütüncül bir yaklaşımla incelenmiştir.

Üçüncü bölümde, tezin analitik yaklaşımını oluşturan kuramsal çerçeve detaylandırılmıştır. Romantik dönemin müziğinde görülen tonal belirsizlik ve artan kromatizm, hem anlatı oluşturma hem de armonik çeşitlilik sağlama bakımından çeşitli makaleler değerlendirilmiştir. Özellikle Schumann'ın eserlerinde bu unsurların yapısal

ve ifade edici işlevleri üzerinde durulmuştur. Schenker analizinin temel kavramları açıklandıktan sonra, romantik müzikteki akışkan tonal merkezlerin ve kromatik ilişkilerin yapısal çözümlemedeki rolü ortaya konmuştur. Döngüsel yapılar için Schenker yaklaşımının nasıl adapte edilebileceği ve bu yöntemin romantik dönemin karmaşık müzik dili karşısındaki sınırları tartışılmıştır. Bu kuramsal zemin, analitik bölümdeki yorumların hem geçerliliğini hem de açıklayıcılığını desteklemektedir.

Dördüncü bölüm, *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12'nin sekiz parçasını hem geleneksel hem de Schenker analizi ve kavramsallığı ile çok katmanlı biçimde ele almaktadır. Öncelikle, döngüdeki genel tonal yapı ve motivik ilişkiler tanımlanmış, ardından her bir parçanın yüzeydeki tematik dönüşümleriyle birlikte, bu dönüşümlerin daha derin yapısal düzeyde nasıl “dışa besteleme (*composing-out*)” sürecinin bir parçası olarak işlediği gösterilmiştir. Analizlerin başlangıcında, döngünün genel tonal güzergahı ve anlatısal akışı üzerinde durulmuş, Db majör ile başlayan dizinin F minör ve C majör üzerinden F majöre ulaşan yapısal rotası ortaya konmuştur.

Eserin açılışında, *Des Abends*'teki inici ve çıkıcı altılı dizisel ilerleyiş ve sürekli değişen armonik renkler, *Aufschwung*'un hızlı senkoplarıyla kontrast oluşturur. Her bir hareketin kendine özgü piyano dokusu ve tempoları, yalnızca yüzeysel bir süsleme olarak kalmaz; aynı zamanda anlatısal derinliği ve karakterler arası diyalogu güçlendirir. Eusebius ve Florestan'ın zıt karakterleri, döngü boyunca ortaya çıkan dramatik geçişler ve tonal belirsizliklerle müzikal anlatının temel direğini oluşturur. Bu bağlamda, harmonik yapı ise, yakın ve uzak tonal merkezleri birbirine bağlayan diatonik ve kromatik unsurlardan oluşur. Schenker yaklaşımı bakış açısıyla, bölümler arası tonal ilişkiler yalnızca biçimsel sınırları belirlemekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda arka plan bas çizgisinde ortaya çıkan yapısal birliği de destekler. Döngü boyunca tekrar eden üçüncü ilişkili tonal merkezler ve modal paralellikler, majör ve minör tonları hem yerel hem de büyük ölçekli bağlamda birbirine bağlar.

Motivik düzeyde ise, açılış motifinin varyasyonları döngünün bütününde belirleyici bir rol oynar. Özellikle inici ve çıkıcı altılı diziler, hem melodik hem de armonik bağlamda tematik ilişkilendirme (“cross reference”) işlevi görür ve bölümler arası bağlantıyı güçlendirir. Her bir hareketin sonunda ortaya çıkan altılı sıçrayışlar ve tipik motifler, arka plan çizgisiyle (*Urlinie*) bütünleşerek eserin yapısal bütünlüğünü sağlar. Böylece, görünüşte bağımsız olan sekiz parça, temel ses ilişkileri ve motif tekrarı yoluyla organik bir birlik olarak şekillenir. Son olarak, son kısmı olan tonal ve biçimsel gözlemlerin sentezi bölümünde, elde edilen tüm bulguları bütünleştirir. Schenker yaklaşımı ve analizi yardımıyla, Db ve F arasındaki üçüncü ilişkisi ve F majörün tonal eksen olarak belirleyici rolü, döngüdeki yapısal birlik ve anlatı bütünlüğünü açıklamaktadır. Eserin sonunda, tonik olan F majöre ulaşılması, yalnızca tonal bir çözüm değil, paralel anlamda karakterlerin ve anlatının çözüm noktasını oluşturur.

Çalışmanın sonuç bölümünde, *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12'nin sekiz parçadan oluşan döngüsel yapısının, Schumann'ın hem romantik anlatım dilini hem de yapısal bütünlüğe verdiği önemi açıkça ortaya koyduğu gösterilmektedir. Schenker analiz yönteminin sağladığı bakış açısıyla, döngünün genelinde Db ve F majör arasındaki üçüncü ilişkili tonal eksenin ve F majör ekseninin, eserin tamamına yön veren temel unsurlar olduğu gösterilmiştir. Özellikle F majör tonunun, yalnızca bir tonal hedef olarak değil, aynı zamanda birleştirici bir perde ve yapısal eksen olarak döngü boyunca nasıl işlev gördüğü, motivik tekrarlar ve büyük ölçekli ses örgüleriyle desteklenmiştir. Tezde ulaşılan bir diğer önemli sonuç, Eusebius ve Florestan karakterlerinin döngü boyunca karşılıklı etkileşimlerinin, uzaktaki tonal merkezlere yapılan modülasyonlar,

tonal belirsizlik ve armonik yenilikler aracılığıyla hem anlatısal hem de biçimsel bütünlüğe katkıda bulunmasıdır. Bu karakterler arasındaki zıtlık ve dönüşüm, anlatı akışının yanı sıra, eserin formal yapısının da temelini oluşturmaktadır.

Tartışma bölümünde ortaya konan analizler, bu anlatısal ikiliğin yalnızca yüzey düzeyinde değil, aynı zamanda orta ve arka plan ses örgülerinde de yapılandırıldığını göstermektedir. Schumann'ın Florestan ve Eusebius karakterleri üzerinden geliştirdiği bu karşıtlık, özellikle artikülasyon, ritmik yapı, armonik yönelim ve tekstürel katmanlar üzerinden şekillenmekte, fakat bu farklılıkların ötesinde, "Master Raro" figürü aracılığıyla yapısal bir bütünlüğe ulaşmaktadır. Bu sentez, özellikle ses yönelimlerinde görülen karşılıklı hareketler, lineer simetri ve kontrapuntal denge aracılığıyla açık hale gelmektedir. Ayrıca, parçalar arası üçüncü ilişkili tonal yönelimlerin akorsal ilişkiler (*Tonnetz*) diyagramıyla haritalandırılması, Schumann'ın döngüsel yapı içerisinde hem lokal hem de geniş ölçekli armonik geçişlerle anlatısal bir süreklilik yarattığını göstermektedir. Bu bağlamda, Schenker yaklaşımıyla post-*Riemannian* analizlerin birlikte kullanılması hem tarihsel formların organik gelişimini hem de romantik dönemin armonik ifade olanaklarını aynı yapıda birleştiren özgün bir analiz perspektifi sunmaktadır.

Bununla birlikte, tezde öne çıkan bir diğer bulgu, temelde var olan altılı aralıkların yalnızca motivik tekrarlar düzeyinde değil, aynı zamanda derin yapısal bir örgüleme unsuru olarak kullanılmasıdır. Başta "Clara" temasının transpoze olmuş bir çeşitlemesi olarak tanımlanan "Gb-Bb" seslerinin altılı aralıklarla oluşan varyantları, özellikle *Des Abends*, *Grillen*, *Warum?* ve *In der Nacht* gibi parçalarda hem yüzeysel figürasyon hem de temel çizgi (*Urlinie*) ile uyumlu orta katman (*Mittelgrund*) yönelimleri aracılığıyla yapısal sürekliliği sağlamaktadır. Bu motivik altılılar, özellikle Florestan ve Eusebius karşıtlığını güçlendirirken, aynı zamanda tonal yönelimlerin gelişiminde temel bir örgü olarak işlev görmektedir. Altılı aralık ilişkilerine dair bu bulgular, Schachter'ın (2016) J.S. Bach'ın "Partita No. 1, Bb major, *Sarabande*" ve Mozart'ın "Sonata for Violin and Piano, K. 481, Adagio" analizlerinde gösterdiği yapısal yayılım ilkeleriyle de örtüşmekte; böylece, Schumann'ın romantik anlatımı, klasik dönem yapısallığı ile analitik bir devamlılık içinde yeniden okunmaktadır.

Sonuç olarak, bu analitik çalışmanın sağladığı özgün katkı, on dokuzuncu yüzyıl müziği analizine üçlü ilişkili tonal çiftlerin ve romantik kromatizm biçimsel yenilik ortamında dahi yapısal bütünlüğü nasıl koruduğunu göstermektedir. Ayrıca, yapısal indirgeme yönteminin, Schenker yaklaşımının, motivik ve armonik ilişkileri analiz etmede değerli bir araç olduğu görülmektedir. Gelecekte, bu yaklaşımla Schumann'ın *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16, *Novelletten*, Op. 21 ya da *Nachtstücke*, Op. 23 gibi diğer döngüsel eserleri üzerine yapılacak analizlerin, döngüsel bütünlük, tonal birlik ve anlatısal ifade gibi kavramların farklı örneklerini de ortaya çıkaracağı düşünülmektedir. Son olarak, bu türden analizlerin, edebi ve anlatısal modellerin romantik biçim üzerindeki etkisini anlamada da müzikoloji literatürüne katkı sunacağı görülmektedir.



1. INTRODUCTION

My motivation to study Robert Schumann's *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12 (1837) developed through a series of academic experiences at MIAM with seminars and multifaceted musical events. Additionally, I gradually gained deep insights on musical form and analysis by taking coursework in music theory, counterpoint, and harmony that grounded my analytical thinking in Baroque repertoire, with particular emphasis on fugue technique and the structural logic of J.S. Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier. These applied theory courses helped me identify similar principles, such as "cross reference," thematic transformation, chromatic mediant relationships, and cyclic forms in Romantic-era music, where composers such as Chopin, Brahms, and Liszt further expanded the stylistically inflected formal boundaries of the genre.

As I advanced in my musical studies, I turned into aspects of melodic and harmonic processes, in which thematic development, the integration of a single idea in various forms throughout a musical composition, defines the concept of cyclic principle and its realization as a formal scheme. This curiosity strengthened my enthusiasm for analyzing Schumann's music, and I explored his engagement with J.S. Bach in a focused manner during his year of intensive study with Clara Schumann in 1845 with the outcomes of his subsequent works, such as the 6 Fugues on B-A-C-H for organ or pedal piano, Op. 60, and Four Fugues (*Vier Fugen*), Op. 72. A decisive moment in my analytical direction was a Schenkerian analysis of *Davidsbündlertänze*, Op. 6. In this context, Schenker's approach to Baroque, Classical, and Romantic music, especially in the works of Bach, Schumann, and Brahms, broadened my understanding of how deep structure shapes surface detail of a musical composition. Therefore, I followed this perspective further through key Schenkerian texts by Schachter (1999, 2016), Damschroder (2018), and Cadwallader et al. (2020), which led me to focus on the structural coherence of *Fantasiestücke*, Op.12.

1.1 Background of the Study

In the early nineteenth century, European art music entered a period of aesthetic reevaluation, as conventional structural norms gave way to new interpretive aims. Many early romantic composers, such as Franz Schubert, Felix Mendelssohn, Frédéric Chopin, and Robert Schumann, began to reconceive formal trajectory not as a conventional framework but as a process shaped by motivic development and tonal tension. As a result, compositional strategies came to rise to foreground thematic transformation, harmonic expansions, and localized discontinuities as expressive devices.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica (2025), “Musical Romanticism is marked by emphasis on originality and individuality, personal emotional expression, and freedom and experimentation of form.” It is likely that we see these changes as a representative example towards intense chromaticism, the expansion of lyrical melodies, and the decline of symmetrical forms. Hence, what the idea of “Romantic expression” lies in these idiomatic languages, yet its impact is clear in the emphasis on vocal-style melody, “tonal ambiguity,” and a search for unity across multi-movement works.

When examining the concept of “Romantic expression” in music, it is necessary to first address the broader notion of “Romanticism,” itself. As Samson and Elek (2025) argue, the term “Romanticism,” resists any single, stable definition in both music and literature. From a historical perspective, Dahlhaus (1985) also observes that defining aesthetic autonomy in a meaningful and nuanced way is challenging. He explains that, even though the idea of “Romanticism” in music has its roots in literature, some of the essential qualities that set nineteenth-century music apart from the eighteenth century have no clear literary counterparts. Noticeably, Dahlhaus emphasizes the significant changes in how nineteenth-century musicians engaged with the music of the past.

Despite these complexities in its definition, reference sources offer a useful working definition. As Kennedy and Kennedy (2007) describe, *Romanticism* refers to music from 1830 to 1900, “where emotional and picturesque expression was valued over formal or structural considerations” (p. 633). In other words, romantic composers began to prioritize individual connections in their works. Furthermore, these definitions mentioned above, when viewed from different angles, are also influenced

by the development of contrasting timbres in compositions, resulting in the development of instruments and harmonic language alongside these trends in this era.

Robert Schumann (1810-1856) gained prominence as one of the main actors in this aesthetic transition. Even though his works are often saturated with literary symbolism and narrative suggestion, as they remain structurally grounded, which defines formal coherence at once. As Wilfing (2021) explains, Schumann's conception of musical form maintains that poetic or extramusical content must never override the internal logic of the composition, instead, every musical detail should be justifiable through the work's formal organization alone.

In fact, this balance is already evident in his earliest published works. Take the case of Schumann's *The Variations on the name "Abegg" in F major*, Op. 1, it offers an early example of his creative engagement with theme and variations form, where the musical material is not only varied structurally but also embedded with extramusical references. In this case, the theme is derived from the letters A–B–E–G–G, corresponding to the name *Abegg*, illustrating a practice Schumann would revisit with other encoded names, such as "Clara" and "BACH," throughout his career. Evidently, his ability to generate thematic material from symbolic figures reflects far-reaching Romantic concerns with the synthesis of personal meaning and compositional logic.

Furthermore, Schumann's approach to *Romantic* aesthetic first took shape during his years as a music critic. Palantiga (1991) points out that, albeit Schumann's writings are often remembered for their imaginative sketches of the *Davidsbündler*, including Florestan, Eusebius, and Raro, these figures appear only rarely in his extensive output for the *Neue Zeitschrift*. Over his ten-year association with the journal, Schumann wrote hundreds of articles, most of which display the seriousness, authority, and clarity of a professional critic rather than the unusual voice of the *Davidsbündler*. This creative outlook, however, seems to have its roots in Schumann's early childhood. Accordingly, Daverio and Sams (2001) indicate that Schumann started writing creatively when he was thirteen years old. At this time he wrote poems and dramatic sketches and biographical notes under a pen name.

Throughout my reading of Schumann's biography and his intellectual reflections, I observed how his dedication to literature and music analysis influenced his compositional output in-depth. As illustrated by Geck (2013), this binary nature is also

supported, as Schumann dedicated more time to literature than to music. As we know, Schumann thoroughly integrated these literary influences into his compositional process using them not only as aesthetic references but also as a structural framework. The sophisticated attributes of Schumann's personality are reflected in a way that:

Today we know Robert Schumann in several ways: as the composer who created, behind the masks of Florestan and Eusebius, visionary music during the German romantic efflorescence of the 1830s and 1840s; as the seasoned journalist who in the pages of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* assaulted philistinism in the arts; as a cultured man of letters whose career was ultimately eclipsed at midcentury by the new music and philosophy of music of Richard Wagner and his circle; and as a genius who, having passed his mantle on to the young Brahms, succumbed to mental disease (Todd, 1994, p.ix).

Having said that, Schumann's role as a critic acknowledges his deep interest in the formal and stylistic analysis of his contemporaries' works. As Bent (2001) notes, Schumann's review of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* demonstrates a multi-faceted analytical perspective. It combines structural examination with aesthetic and expressive evaluation. This dual focus on expressive content and structural logic invites a closer look at the analytical tools best suited to understanding Schumann's approach to cyclic unity and tonal design.

At this point, If we look at the analytical side when analyzing nineteenth-century music, Heinrich Schenker's (1868 -1935) theory of fundamental structure (*Ursatz*) and the notion of composing-out (*Auskomponierung*) suggest a practical perspective to disclose how much interconnected compositional techniques are embedded in the original score, involving tonal and motivic relations.¹ In this sense, Plantinga (1991) highlights, as is the case with "Schumann expected of the romantic composer rich and original musical expression, but also genuine musical craftsmanship...he was intensely concerned with rational, analyzable aspects of musical style" (p. 180). For that reason, this perspective aligns with Schenker's concept of structural coherence, where coherence grows out of the development of motivic ideas. Plantinga (1984)

¹ Cadwallader et al. (2020) point out that "Schenkerian analysis can address a variety of concerns, illuminating the relationships among various structural levels and the interrelated functions of harmony and counterpoint in a tonal composition" (p.4).

further emphasizes Schumann's analytical orientation, citing his dissection of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* and his interest in theorists such as Simon Sechter as evidence of a mindset that anticipates Schenkerian methods.

1.2 Significance of The Study

The existing scholarship on *Fantasiestücke*, Op.12 has primarily emphasized on literary associations, poetic imagery, and fragmentary structure within the context of early Romantic aesthetics, there remains a distinct need to clarify the work's tonal design and motivic unity. Kaminsky's (1989) article on Schumann's early piano music includes *Papillons*, Op. 2 *Carnaval*, Op. 9 and *Davidsbündlertänze*, Op. 6, however, these characteristic eight pieces of *Fantasiestücke* Op.12 have not been analyzed in comparable detail for its structural coherence. One important source, as it is relevant to the background of its tonal scheme, the Schumann scholar, Daverio (1997) drew attention to "Schumann's use of third-related tonal pairings as a device for large-scale unity" (p.135).

In addition, MacAuslan (2016) dedicates substantial attention to the role of E.T.A. Hoffmann's writings in Schumann's works of the 1830s, including *Fantasiestücke*, Op.12 (pp. 91-124). He also draws connections between the overall tonal relationships of the work, namely, D $\flat$ major, C major, and F major, and links the opening motif in *In der Nacht* (f 1 -g 1 -a $\flat^1$) with the sequence a $\sharp^1$ -g 1 -f 1 in the final piece, *Ende vom Lied*. There is a significance in how these features resonate with imagery and associations from Schumann's literary world, most distinctly with the fragmented structure, emotional volatility, and psychological dualism found in Hoffmann's *Fantasiestücke*.² Most studies focus on literary and surface-level connections. As a result, how these traits relate to deeper Schenkerian structures, the background, middleground, and foreground across overall structure remains underexplored.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my thesis is to investigate how Robert Schumann creates structural integrity and expressive continuity throughout *Fantasiestücke* Op. 12. The primary

²Mechell (2016) examines Hoffmann's and Jean Paul's influence on Schumann's early Works.

research questions are: What are the compositional techniques that unify the set despite its diversity? How do motivic, harmonic, and tonal processes interact with Schumann's use of literary and narrative symbolism, particularly for the personified aesthetic ideals of Eusebius and Florestan? I argue that Schumann's integration of motivic relationships, long-range harmonic planning, and thematic transformation results in a work whose unity reflects deep structural connections rather than independent sets.

To address these questions, I apply Schenkerian perspective to reveal how underlying voice-leading and prolongational techniques inform the organization of each movement and the thematic network as a whole. This analytical approach demonstrates that the expressive and structural duality between Eusebius and Florestan, along with tonal ambiguity and motivic recurrence, form the basis for cyclic unity. The findings will show that Schumann's compositional strategy is not only stylistically innovative but also analytically coherent when viewed through Schenkerian perspective.

1.4 Scope

In my thesis, I only concentrate on the eight movements of Schumann's *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12. The conducted analysis, therefore, centers on Schenkerian methodology, emphasizing the Fundamental structure (*Ursatz*) of each piece, composing-out (*Auskomponierung*), and tonal relationships that connect these eight movements together. Accordingly, I focus on how key areas, prolongations, chromatic harmonies, and motivic transformations interact within and across the pieces. The role of Db-F "third-related"³ pair as key-defining regions and the dialogue between 'Eusebius and Florestan' receive particular attention, but narrative or literary references are included only when they inform analytical observations. In addition, my study does not cover Schumann's other miniatures or large-scale movements, like his *Fantasie* in C, Op. 17 or piano sonatas. With this in mind, my thesis research begins with the historical and analytical background, followed by a literature review and theoretical context. The following chapters present analyses of each independent movement, supported by analytical figures. The conclusion brings together the main findings.

³ From this point on, I will use the abbreviation 'TdR' for "third-related."

2. LITERATURE ON SCHUMANN'S EARLY PIANO CYCLES AND ROMANTIC EXPRESSION

During the 1830s Robert Schumann developed the *cyclic principle* into *cyclic form* as a musical genre through his early motivically-unified pieces and his song cycles from 1840 onward. Consider the example of *Davidsbündlertänze*, Op. 6, *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, and *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16 as well as vocal collections like *Liederkreis*⁴, Op. 24, *Myrthen*, Op. 25 and *Dichterliebe*, Op. 48, the distinct compositional style for these overall designs consist of all the aspects of fragmentary and disrupted nature of Schumann's "Romantic irony."⁵ In fact, these works show Schumann's foundation in the musical traditions of Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, however, the musical language reflects the influence of his early literary and poetic experiences in depth.

This chapter begins by explaining the musical concept of *cyclic form* during the early nineteenth-century before presenting an overview of Schumann's formative piano works. Later, it continues with a discussion of the genesis and reception of *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12 before examining how Romantic expression functions in Schumann's musical thinking. The subsequent sections develop from the preceding literature review to provide a contextual foundation for the Schenkerian analysis.

2.1 Cyclic Form in Romantic Music

Cyclic form holds a distinct position in early nineteenth-century music. It comes into view not only as a structural technique but as an attribute of compositional aim and artistic coherence. As Kennedy and Kennedy (2007) describe, "cyclic form" involves "a formal structure, in which one musical theme is heard, sometimes in a varied form,

⁴ This is also used to define "song cycles" as Peake (2001) indicates that "a term used to mean a circle (or cycle) of songs, for example Schumann's *Liederkreis* op.24."

⁵ This topic involves a complex and far-reaching discussion. Romantic irony forms a core aesthetic in Schumann's compositional outlook, closely tied to Romantic expression and tonal ambiguity. As Dill and Schumann (1989) observe: "According to Schumann, 'the aesthetic principle is the same in every art; only the material differs.' If Schumann's 'literary experience' shaped his 'musical intentions,' then his sense of *Romantic irony* likely stemmed not only from Heine but also from Hoffmann and Jean Paul, both inheritors of early *Romantic irony*" (pp. 172–173).

in more than one movement, and its evolution from Classical prototypes to Romantic masterworks signals a shift in aesthetic priorities” (pp. 182–183). Examples such as Mendelssohn’s *Octet and String Quartet* Op. 13 (1827) and Liszt’s *Piano Sonata in B minor* (1853) also illustrate how cyclical strategies became vehicles for large-scale integration, in parallel to developments in Schumann’s own works.

Romantic composers, with specific regard to Beethoven’s late period, Schubert, and Mendelssohn, did not simply use repetition or recall, however, they did transform their thematic material to achieve a deeper integration for coherence. Thus, Macdonald (2001) exemplifies that “In the finale of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, a large variation scheme provides a prototype of many 19th-century thematic transformations, when the “Joy” theme is transformed” (p.2). Here, it is taken as embedded in the Romantic ideal of unity, especially throughout the nineteenth-century, where thematic returns connect multi-movement forms into expressive wholes. On the other hand, the distinction between “cycle” as a lexical meaning and “cyclic form”⁶ as a genre is not always clear. This compositional aspect encompasses multiple practices that span from extensive structural scheme to smaller fragmented sets. As reflected, Taylor (2011) notes that Mendelssohn’s Op. 13 Quartet (1827) and Schubert’s *Winterreise* represent two fundamentally different approaches to musical cycles despite their temporal proximity. As he explains:

A cycle can exhibit characteristics of cyclic form, and all cyclic forms are by definition a type of cycle, in its broadest sense, but the two concepts are not in essence the same thing. Their most general common characteristic, the idea of relationship of parts to whole, is too vague an attribute to support a common definition. (Taylor, 2011, pp.7-8).

In my view, this stance on the descriptive notion itself reveals a creative flexibility that composers like Robert Schumann exploited adapting the idea of *cyclicism* to suit both instrumental and vocal genres. In this manner, Tusa (1993) supports the idea that the *Romantic* concern for thematic coherence encouraged the use of overt connections,

⁶ The “cyclic technique” or “cyclic form” may also be understood through Liszt’s concept of “thematic transformation.” Hugh Macdonald (2001) defines this as “a term used to define the process of modifying a theme so that in a new context it is different but yet manifestly made of the same elements; a variant term is ‘thematic metamorphosis.’ With Cyclic form and the desire for continuity between movements, the process became a favourite method in 19th-century music of giving greater cohesion both between and within separate movements of multi-movement works” (p. 1).

such as motivic transformation, literal quotation, and transitional links, so that even the most fragmentary works could project an underlying cohesion.⁷ Rather than seeing *cyclic form* as a fixed genre convention, Ferris (2000) also suggests that its analytical significance depends on our ability to distinguish its sectional design from mere collections by tracing their embedded networks of tonal, motivic, and formal relationships.⁸ All in all, this scholarly framework establishes the critical and historical context for examining how Schumann's early formal experiment negotiate the boundaries of cyclic unity, which I will explore next.

2.2 Schumann's Early Piano Cycles

Schumann's 1830s piano works signal a Romantic rejection of formal monumentality and a focus on subjective expression. *Papillons*, Op. 2 (1829-32) and *Carnaval* Op. 9 (1834-35), serve as early exemplars. Due to this, as Reissmann (1900) states, "In these first works, Schumann closely approaches the manner of Franz Schubert, although we can already perceive that profound difference which afterwards became more and more marked" (p. 34). Schumann's preference for formal design in these character pieces partly enabled him to convey transient emotions and extra-musical narratives while maintaining a connection to *Classical ideals* in terms of using simple forms, such as binary or ternary structures.

During this period, Schumann's fascination with ciphers, symbolism, and coded references also becomes integral to his compositional practice. Sams (1966) remarks that Schumann's "musical thinking is no less fantastic or subtle" than his literary imagination, as he repeatedly draws on cryptic allusions and semantic symbolism to fuel his compositions (p. 392). Here, this intellectual aspect forms a significant premise for understanding his thematic practice. This method is evident in Figure 2.1, which shows the transformation of the "Clara" theme, a procedure later crucial in *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12. We will see that it directly relates to the same motive, transformed in D♭ major of *Des Abends*, the initial piece of these eight character sets.

⁷ With emphasis, based on the above, I highlight Tusa's (1993) article on Beethoven's early music, in which he demonstrates how the pursuit of cyclic unity, through thematic recall, structural parallels, and tonal "cross references," anticipates the integrated approach later seen in Schumann's early collections.

⁸ David Ferris's (2000) book, Schumann's "*Eichendorff Liederkreis* and the Genre of the Romantic Cycle", offers an in-depth perspective on Schumann's engagement with cyclic form.

It is likely to say that there seems to be a transformed theme but explicitly present as if it comes from Schaufller, Bodky, and Fiske's hypothesis. In fact, this procedure shows that Schumann creates in-depth connotations of meaning, linking musical and textual ideas in a way that encourages motivic unity and “cross reference”⁹ within and between the character piece series of 1830s and 1840s.

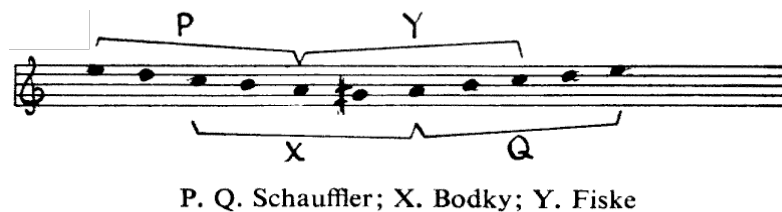


Figure 2.1: Transformation of Robert Schumann’s ‘Clara’ theme (Sams, 1966, p. 395).

As these innovations developed, the distinction between a simple collection and a true large-scale form gained increasing importance. Kaminsky (1989), seen most clearly in his analytical discourse, identifies *Papillons*, *Carnaval* and *Davidsbündlertänze* as key works that adopt motivic transformation, “cross reference,” and sophisticated tonal planning.¹⁰ With emphasis on *Carnaval*, diatonically related (TdR) keys, the use of *Sphinxes*, and global linkage procedures ensure tonal coherence and organizational clarity. As a result, we see that Schumann bridges surface variety and structural unity through these approaches to establish a formal groundwork that reaches its maturity in *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12.

Schumann’s novelty and the increasing formal complexity in his Romantic miniature collections become even more apparent when considered through recent scholarship in nineteenth-century studies. Newcomb (2004) notes that, for example, from the outset, “the professional and commercial context for the composer (R. Schumann) of piano music in the 1830s was in a state of extraordinary flux”(Newcomb, 2004 as cited in Todd, 2004, p.266). On one side, Schumann challenged generic conventions by pursuing hybrid forms, combining variation, miniature cycles, and loosened formal

⁹ In my analyses, I employ the concept of “cross reference” as discussed in Dr. Jerfi Aji’s course “Topics in Nineteenth-Century Music Analysis,” drawing specifically on Kaminsky’s (1987) article, titled “Principles of Formal Structure in Schumann’s Early Piano Cycles.”

¹⁰ This article is significant not only for its conceptualization and analytical approach to Schumann’s early works. Kaminsky’s Schenkerian analysis of harmonic “cross reference” in *Davidsbündlertänze*, Op. 6, directly influenced my decision to examine similar relationships in *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12 (p.219). This was what I briefly noted in the Background of the Study.

syntax. And, it is evident to say that his intentional resistance to tradition displays a self-conscious effort to reconsider the possibilities of compositional form. In support of this, Daverio (1997) argues that Schumann's later output is defined by a dialectic between "higher" forms and associative character sets, with *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12 and *Davidsbündlertänze*, Op. 6, serving as key examples of this integration of inspiration, cyclic structure, and narrative unity (pp. 134–136).

Schumann's approach to compositional theory accommodates not only technical ingenuity but also a commitment to structural logic, as already evident in the literary tradition. Building on this argument, Tunbridge (2007) highlights the influence of Hoffmann's texts, both in subject matter and in the use of less conventional key relationships for establishing tonal coherence. This literary-musical interplay defines Schumann's early piano cycles. Similarly, Pereira et al. (2014) addresses that Schumann's synthesis of German literary strategies, most notably of Jean Paul Richter's use of coded puzzles and maze-like narrative constructions, resulted in a uniquely innovative formal language, transcending both Viennese classicism and the conventions of his Romantic contemporaries. Their study of *Carnaval*, Op. 9, for example, elucidates the broader creative context that shaped Schumann's approach to "cyclic form." On the whole, these studies help to understand how Schumann progresses in his initial outputs from concise lyricism and motivic experimentation to the creation of integrated cycles.

2.3 Genesis and Reception of *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12

Fantasiestücke, Op. 12 is a set of eight piano pieces that Schumann composed in the summer of 1837. It was a time when his close relationship with Clara Wieck and the formation of new artistic friendships occurred. Although these pieces reflect his connection to Clara, Schumann chose not to dedicate the set to her but to Anna Robena Laidlaw, a pianist he had recently met in Leipzig (Herttrich, 2004, p. 5). According to Daverio and Sams (2001), "the piece occupies a pivotal position in Schumann's output. The first of his cycles to draw on the world of E.T.A. Hoffmann (the title comes from the poet's *Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier*), it inaugurates a shift in emphasis from larger to smaller forms" (p.18). Moreover, Jensen (2001) also highlights that tonal relationships link each piece and follow mostly ternary forms, with titles that evoke the world of fantasy, echoing a theme Schumann borrowed from Hoffmann. Beyond

the titles, some pieces carry extra-musical meaning. For example, *In der Nacht* later reminded Schumann of the story of “Hero and Leander”, and *Ende vom Lied* reflects his thoughts on marriage, combining personal experience with musical expression. There is also the dialogue between Florestan and Eusebius, Schumann’s allusions reflected in his musical output as well, which forms the principal structure. In addition, Schumann's letters from this period display a tension between hope and sorrow, which mirrors the music’s character and the interplay of these dual personas. In fact, this combination of narrative and form is essential to the character of *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12.¹¹

The early reception of *Fantasiestücke*, Op.12 was notably promising. Clara Schumann soon performed this cycle in public in 1840s, which helped introduce them to wider audiences (Pettler, 1980, p.76).¹² Again, Herrlich (2004) directly addresses that “Even Franz Liszt took up the cause of the *Fantasy pieces*,” with strong endorsement, playing the pieces “with delight,” further elevated their status (p.5). However, as Tunbridge (2007) notes that few of Schumann’s piano pieces were performed publicly during his life, except for Liszt’s 1840 reception of *Carnaval* in Leipzig and Clara’s recitals featuring select movements from *Fantasiestücke*.

In compositional terms, *Fantasiestücke* became a model for Schumann’s later innovations in parallel to *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16. Rosen (1998) observes that unifying techniques and motivic development first found in this cycle would form the foundation of his later song cycles. Schumann’s use of motivic development, which I understood it as a thematic process, created both cohesion and flexibility. Schumann’s broad conception of “variation,” in a similar way, as Turchin (1985) describes, extended beyond conventional alterations to include associative connections among movements, particularly evident in works like *Papillons*, *Carnaval*, *Kinderszenen*. In other words, “variation” as a means of transformative technique was a crucial tool for balancing unity and diversity within these cycles.

¹¹ Schumann’s correspondence with Clara from this period can be found in Karl Storck’s (1907) book titled “*The Letters of Robert Schumann*” (Bryant, H., Trans).

¹² Pettler’s (1980) article offers a detailed catalogue of Clara (Wieck) Schumann’s concert repertoire. Noticeably, Pettler emphasizes that, “despite the continued inclusion of such pieces, works of more serious composers -Beethoven, Chopin, and Schumann- had now become an important part of her repertoire” (p.73). *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, later became central to her programming after her marriage. Table 2 in Pettler’s study confirms the presence of *Fantasiestücke* in Clara’s repertoire (p.74).

Irving (2001) argues that, “the privileged features of this repertory include; colouristic harmonic chromaticism; overt programmaticism, and virtuosity as *topos*, as at the beginning of ‘*Traumeswirren*’ from *Fantasiestücke*, Op.12” (Irving, 2001, as cited in Samson, 2001, p.187). Although these eight pieces appear progressive in poetic imagery embedded in harmonic texture, they still rely on traditional forms, like ternary, binary and sonata-rondo or sonata forms. This contrast highlights Schumann’s ability to combine innovation with Classical conventions. Ultimately, *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, represents Schumann’s stylistic evolution in the broader Romantic use of cyclic form.

2.4 Romantic Expression in Schumann’s Music

“Romantic expression” in Robert Schumann's music is rooted in the German literary and philosophical sources. Jacobs (1949) describes how Schumann adapted Jean Paul Richter’s “*Musikschwärmerei*,” treating music as a vehicle for transcendental experience. Schumann championed “Geist”, the animating spirit, over formal architecture, echoing Jean Paul’s idea that music expresses heightened subjectivity” (Jacobs, 1949, pp.256-257). Hoeckner (1997) connects this to the Romantic ideal of “infinity,” a notion Schumann embraced as motto for the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*” (p.62). By invoking the idea of “infinity,” in my view, Schumann embraced the boundless character of Romantic aesthetics. Hence, it situated his musical ideals within the ongoing discourse of literary and artistic theory.

At the same time, Schumann's conception of “artistic sensibility,” was not simply inherited but steadily developed as the driving force behind his expressive conceptions. Nevertheless, the influence of literature on his approach to form remains a matter of debate. Truscott (1961) argues that even in Schumann's most expressive early piano works, literary inspiration never undermined structural firmness. These cycles typically comply with classical forms, such as sectional rondos and a simple ABA form, balancing passionate content with clear phrase structure. This interplay of emotion and order, with some reservation, plays a crucial role for Schumann's musical language. Similarly, Lippman (1964) notes that Schumann's evocative titles enhance his expressive intent so that it transforms them into meaningful connotations rather than mere descriptions.

Narrative construction and psychological duality, however, are no less essential to his musical language. An instance of this, Newcomb (1987) asserts that Schumann applied the narrative methods of Jean Paul, Novalis, and E.T.A. Hoffmann directly to instrumental music, creating a model for musical storytelling that went beyond mere programmatic references (Newcomb, 1987, pp. 167–168). I believe that this technique transformed his cycles from collections into integrated narratives, with structure emerging from literary logic in this sense. Accordingly, Kautsky (2011) identifies Schumann's alter-egos, Florestan and Eusebius, which “Robert Schumann searched them out in his favorite authors, finding for them a new, and particularly congenial, home in his piano cycles” (p.31). Despite such literary devices turned musical protagonists in his musical language, procedures for intensifying the divided-self permeate “Romantic expression” in his piano music. In this context, this presence of duality is not only symbolic. Likewise, it helps to maintain structural unity and expressive contrast.

Schumann's literary imagination, when we look at his writings, finds concrete expression both in formal scheme and narrative content of his instrumental piano cycles. As found in scholarly debates, Daverio (1990) contends that Schumann's character pieces can solely be fully figured out in the context of early nineteenth-century aesthetics, as they challenge genre conventions and seek unity through thematic “cross reference” and associative structure. One might find it as a distinguishing stylistic aspect of his piano music. For this reason, this approach distinguishes Schumann's cycles from those of his predecessors. Furthermore, Reiman (2004) also reminds us that "Schumann's connection with the Classical forms was both immediate and lasting. Thus, knowledge of Jean Paul's relationship with the *Bildungsroman* and with Classical narrative strategies can lead to a more fully informed criticism of Schumann's later cycles " (p.135). The synthesis of literary and formal concerns is perhaps most apparent in the negotiation of fantasy and reality that Frisch (2013) attributes to Schumann's deep engagement with Hoffmann.

In summary, the reviewed literature clarifies how the dialectic between inherited formal conventions and compositional innovation defines the idiomatic nature of Schumann's early piano cycles. This analytical perspective further shows how Schumann adapts the principles of formal coherence and motivic unity through character-based sectional designs in his instrumental piano writing.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Tonal Ambiguity and Chromaticism in Romantic Music

The organization of melodies and harmonies around a central pitch or tonic defines the concept of tonality. The interpretation of this term depends on both historical and analytical perspectives. According to Hyer (2001) the term “tonality” can be used to describe either common-practice era (1700–1910) or any musical system that separates consonance from dissonance. During the nineteenth century, composers used their conceptual flexibility to develop tonal language and new resonant voicing in piano music. It promoted, to a lesser extent, pedal-infused resonances with layered voicings, which enabled blurred tonal boundaries. Two fundamental techniques arose as indicators of Romantic harmonic style in that context; tonal ambiguity¹³ and chromaticism. These sonic materials created complex functional progressions in the course of establishing distant key connections which deepened harmonic color. These tonal constructs for romantic aesthetic both fulfilled narrative-based needs and transformed the fundamental principles of composition. As a final thought, this chapter investigates how these structural devices create musical discourse and convey emotive character before introducing the Schenkerian analysis of Robert Schumann's *Fantasiestücke* Op.12 in Chapter 4.

3.1.1 The role of tonal ambiguity in expressive narratives

Tonal ambiguity, defining key instability, in Romantic music involves the intentional blurring of harmonic clarity, tonal centers, and functional progressions to heighten rhetorical force. As traditional tonality provides directional motion and structural stability, ambiguity interrupts or delays these expectations. According to Ratner

¹³ Kofi Agawu (1994) defines tonal ambiguity by analogy with linguistic ambiguity: just as words like port or mouth have multiple meanings, a musical situation is ambiguous “if it gives rise to two or more meanings” and “if and only if its two (or more) meanings are comparably or equally plausible, leaving the listener undecided about their future significance” (Agawu, 1994, as cited in Pople, 1994, pp. 88–89).

(1992), Romantic composers treated the deployment of sound as equally important as thematic or formal design: “The deployment of sound was an important strategy of composition in Romantic music, equal in significance to strategies and processes that have received attention in analytic studies, layout of themes, organicism, developing variation, harmonic syntax, *Ursatz* and *Urlinie*” (Ratner, 1992, p. xiv).¹⁴ This view positions harmonic ambiguity not as deviation but as a calculated strategy within the broader lyrical language of the time. For example, Schumann’s “*Warum?*” from *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, offers a vivid example. As Cubero (2022) illustrates in Figure 3.1, a descending fifths sequence in the recapitulation blurs tonal clarity through rhythmic dislocation and pedal resonance, turning an expected moment of formal clarity into an expressively contoured suspension. Such passages draw attention to the tension between local instability and formal cohesion.

29 31

rit. *p*

Db: VI⁷ II⁷ V⁷ I

Descending-fifths progression (VI⁷-II⁷-V⁷-I)

Clear → Blurry → Clear

Figure 3.1: Schumann, *Warum?*, op. 12, no. 3, mm. 29–33. (Cubero, 2022, p. 2).

Analytical perspectives differ on how this ambiguity functions. Agawu (1994, as cited in Pople, 1994) argues that ambiguity is only meaningful when understood within a hierarchical system, such as Schenkerian analysis. Schachter (as cited in Agawu, 1994) similarly cautions that ambiguity often fades under detailed analytical examination. As a result, these views emphasize that while ambiguity may dominate the foreground, tonal coherence often remanifests at deeper structural levels. For case in point, Schumann’s *Grillen* opens with what seems like Bb minor, but a Schenkerian reading reveals an unfolding Db major framework, with a definitive V–I cadence in mm. 15–16. What appears ambiguous on the surface is clarified through deeper voice-leading

¹⁴ Ratner (1992) examines this topic in detail, not only in terms of sound palette but also with reference to form, texture, phrase structure, and genres in the context of the nineteenth-century Western music.

processes, which I will focus on the detailed analysis of each piece in the next chapter. As a result, this tension between dynamically varied surface and structural grounding remains crucial for understanding Schumann's harmonic language and provides for a closer look at how chromaticism interacts with these compositional techniques.

3.1.2 Chromaticism as a tool for expanding harmonic language

The expansion of chromatic harmony in nineteenth-century music significantly developed the tonal complexity of the Romantic era. While Heinrich Schenker (1868-1935) distinguishes between polyphonic texture and tonal composition, he notes that chromaticism reveals itself mostly from processes like secondary dominants and melodic embellishment. As Brown (2005) explains, "whereas strict counterpoint is primarily diatonic and avoids direct chromatic successions, functional tonal composition uses *mixture* (*Mischung*) and tonicization to create the entire spectrum of chromaticisms" (p. 61).¹⁵ Besides, Ratner (1992) adds that Romantic composers did not limit chromaticism to harmonic function; they treated it as a source of color and evocative nuance. As chromatic inflections permeated tonal functions, harmony took on qualities associated with timbre and coloristic dense texture, broadening the ways of tonal shaping could expand in expressive trajectories.

Schenker's model of consonance and dissonance, as discussed by Arndt (2018), treats chromatic dissonances as elaborations of underlying diatonic structures, therefore, it supports the idea that even dense chromaticism can prolong tonal coherence. In a similar way, Kopp (2002) identifies chromatic mediants as a key structural device in nineteenth-century harmony, not just as color but as a constructing principle. In terms of the significance of Schenkerian perspective on the topic, Wadsworth (2016) also notes that analyzing such chromatic textures requires careful hierarchical judgment, as chromaticism can blur distinctions between ornamental and structural elements of music. Schenkerian analysis, therefore, offers a framework for interpreting these complexities by connecting chromatic foreground (*Vordergrund*) details to deeper structural levels.

¹⁵ The concept of *mixture* (*Mischung*) plays an important role in the prolongation of the fundamental *Urlinie* in Schumann's *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12. Pankhurst (2008) states that "Schenker most often uses the term mixture to refer to alternation between major and minor thirds" (p.244).

3.2 Foundations of Schenkerian Analysis

The theoretical foundations of Schenkerian analysis, used as an analytical methodology in this thesis, remain significant to understanding tonal structure in Eurogenetic Western music. Schenkerian theory focuses on the idea that all tonal music derives from a single structural prototype and that musical coherence gains clarity through its layered elaboration. In his later work *Free Composition (Der freie Satz, 1935)*, Schenker (1935) asserts,

Musical coherence can be achieved only through the fundamental structure in the background and its transformations in the middleground and foreground... the same principle applies both to a musical *organism*¹⁶ and to the human body: it grows outward from within (p. 6).

This interactive perspective positions Schenker's theory as not merely an analytical method, but a theory of musical perception. Snarrenberg (2001) underscores that the heart of Schenker's theory lies in the three volumes of *Neue musikalischen Theorien und Phantasien* (1906), each of which elaborates key aspects of harmony, counterpoint, and voice-leading. His critique of traditional treatises by Fux and others forms the conceptual starting point, while *Harmonielehre* (1906) introduces the idea of harmonic scale degrees (*Stufen*) as structural pillars. Finally, *Free composition* presents the fundamental notion of linear progression (*Zug*), illustrating how melodic motion unfolds over time within a tonal space.

Schenker's influence, particularly, extended well beyond his lifetime, as his students and followers continued to expand his methods. Analysts such as Ernst Oster and Oswald Jonas adapted and disseminated his ideas throughout the twentieth century. As Cook (1987) argues, Schenkerian analysis asks a fundamentally different set of questions than other analytical methods. Rather than cataloging surface features, it

¹⁶ Neubauer (2009) points to the term in the context of nineteenth-century aesthetic; "In the widest sense, *organicism* is an interpretive metaphor that imposes some aspect of organic life on objects perceived. The standard, though simplified, approach to organicism is to set it up as a Romantic metaphor against the Enlightenment's mechanistic worldview... By the end of the eighteenth century, this world view ran into theoretical and practical problems, as did the related cosmology of a mechanical clockwork winding down. Attention shifted from physical mechanics to physiology and biology—just as would happen in the second half of the twentieth century. The shift is well exemplified by the following passage from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *NUNO-NP Lectures on Belles Lettres*, which contrasts externally-imposed forms with forms that develop organically out of an inner principle" (Neubauer, 2009, as cited in Crispin, p.11).

seeks to reveal deeper structural connections and large-scale coherence. In this sense, Schenker's work intersects music theory, philosophy, and musical cognition, as it asks what it means for a piece to be "*unified*" and how listeners perceive such unity over time. Next section, therefore, will outline the key concepts of Schenkerian theory and examine the challenges of adapting these principles to compositions with cyclic and multi-sectional forms.

3.2.1 Key concepts

Schenkerian analysis is rooted in the principle of reduction, which reveals a composition's structural depth through successive layers. Cadwallader et al. (2020) emphasize that tonal structure operates on multiple levels, from surface embellishment to a fundamental background framework called the *Ursatz*. This underlying structure comprises two main components: the *Urlinie* (a descending melodic line, typically of $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ or $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$) and the *Bassbrechung* (an arpeggiation of the tonic triad in the bass, I-V-I) as seen in Figure 3.2. These properties represent the abstract foundation of tonal coherence.

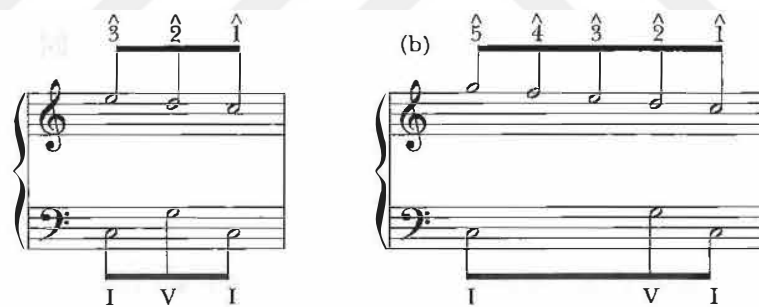


Figure 3.2: Fundamental line (*Urlinie*) and bass arpeggiation (*Bassbrechung*).

The notion of *composing-out* (*Auskomponierung*) is underlying in Schenker's methodology. It describes how a simple structure is elaborated through intermediary tones and chords. Through this concept, a tonic triad can generate an entire movement, as its internal intervals unfold linearly in the upper voice and through contrapuntal motion in the lower voices. Cadwallader et al. (2020) define *composing-out* as "the expansion of a structure through prolongations and motions of various kinds" (pp.74-75), transforming harmonic implications into an audible musical experience. This transformation happens across structural levels: background (*Hintergrund*), middleground (*Mittelgrund*), and foreground (*Vordergrund*). The process is not

arbitrary; it follows voice-leading norms such as the tendency of $\hat{4}$ and $\hat{7}$ to resolve to $\hat{3}$ and $\hat{1}$ respectively, as Beach (2012) notes.

Another foundational idea is the distinction between *Stufe* and chord. A *Stufe*, or harmonic scale step, refers to the harmonic function of a triad within a tonal framework, rather than any individual chord that may momentarily sound. This distinction allows analysts to perceive larger-scale harmonic movement beyond local sonorities. Schenker's focus on stepwise melodic motion, resolution of dissonance, and triadic prolongation forms the basis of this conceptual framework. As Beach (2012) explains, Schenker's theories stem from melodic stepwise progression, normative resolution of dissonances, and the recognition of harmonic degrees as the deep structure supporting the surface.

The *Urlinie*, then, is not merely a motivic element but a structural representation of tonic harmony over time. Its melodic descent articulates a goal-directed process within a single tonal space, and it gives coherence to the work across formal boundaries. As Cadwallader et al. (2020) explain, the *Urlinie*'s abstraction allows it to unify an entire piece, even as individual sections diverge in surface details. Importantly, not every tonal work follows the strict I-V-I framework, but most can be reduced to a variant of the *Ursatz*, showing the adaptability of Schenker's model.

3.2.2 Adapting Schenkerian analysis for cyclic structures

As Schenker's model was initially developed for single-movement tonal works, its adaptation to cyclic compositions introduces conceptual challenges. Multi-movement works, such as Romantic piano cycles, often feature tonal discontinuities, motivic fragmentation, and contrasting exclamatory characters. These features complicate the search for a unified background structure, raising questions about whether such works can be analyzed under a single *Ursatz* or require more flexible approaches. Kirkegaard-Larsen (2020) points to the role of “interruption”¹⁷ (*Unterbrechung*) in multi-part structures, showing that breaks in the *Urlinie* descent often signal sectional

¹⁷ Pankurst (2008) simply explains the term as “This is an elaboration of the *Ursatz* in which the *Urlinie* descends to $\hat{2}/V$, returns to the *Kopft*on and begins the descent to $\hat{1}$ again. An interrupted *Urlinie* from $\hat{3}$ would thus read as follows: $\hat{3} \ \hat{2} \parallel \hat{3} \ \hat{2} \ \hat{1}$. Note the double vertical line that is used to indicate the point of *interruption*. This is one the most important *Ursatz* elaborations because it creates a structural division on the dominant at the point of interruption ($\hat{2}/V$) that frequently corresponds to the end of the A section of binary (and indeed sonata) form pieces. In orthodox Schenkerian theory the interruption after $\hat{2}$ is the only possible division of the *Urlinie*” (p. 242).

divisions or dramatic narrative shifts. These disruptions do not negate tonal unity but rather reframe it in terms of temporal displacement. They allow the unfolding of harmonic and motivic material across sections, thus maintaining coherence without strict formal continuity. In this light, *interruption* becomes a crucial tool for understanding musical form in Schenkerian terms.

Neumeyer and Tepping (1992) illustrate that structural levels do not always follow a rigid tripartite structure. Analysts sometimes may include multiple middlegrounds or foreground layers depending on the complexity of the piece. In fact, their diagrams, demonstrate how the background structure reinforce the analysis, while the foreground reveals chromaticism, rhythmic dissonance, or thematic nuance. On the top of their discussion on the relationship of Schenker's fundamental structure (*Ursatz*) and composing-out (*Auskomponierung*), Figure 3.3 shows briefly the holistic relationship of Schenker's conception all together. This table briefly illustrates how structural levels, such as background, middleground, and foreground, relate to *composing-out* processes, with elements prolonged across layers. It also reflects the shift from diatonic harmony in deeper levels to increasing chromaticism in the foreground, alongside "the interaction between strict and free counterpoint," governed by a general contrast between simplicity and complexity (Neumeyer and Tepping, 1992, p. 6). This flexibility is, in a focused manner, relevant in analyzing cyclic works, where different movements may contain varying degrees of elaboration or tonal deviation.

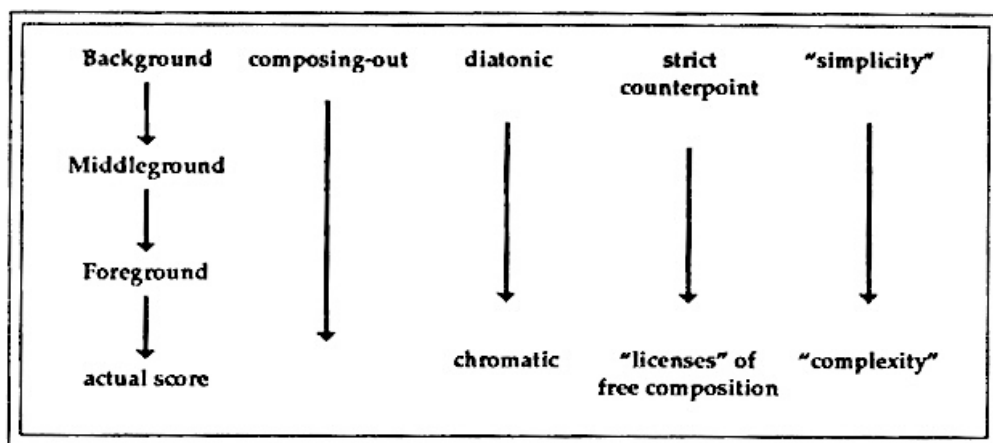


Figure 3.3: *Composing-out* (*Auskomponierung*) and related concepts, (Neumeyer and Tepping, 1992, p. 6).

From a detailed analytical perspective, Wadsworth (2012) discusses Schumann's use of "directional tonality" as a strategy that diverges from classical tonic-dominant

frameworks. His early piano cycles, in illustration, often move between keys by third relationships, particularly diatonic minor thirds.

In his extended reading, Wadsworth (2012) connects this tonal strategy with literary dualities, such as Schumann's Florestan and Eusebius or the narrative voices of Jean Paul Richter. Regarding this point, *Directional-tonal* processes in *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12 involve several key pairings based on relative major/minor relationships, particularly D $\flat$ major–B $\flat$ minor and F major–D minor. These pairings function not only at the local level within individual pieces but also at the broader structural level across movements. Their tonal juxtaposition becomes analytically meaningful when observed based on the theory of the fundamental structure (*Ursatz*), especially as each pairing interacts with the descending *Urlinie*. As seen in Wadsworth's (2012) Figure 3.4, relative key pairings such as C major–A minor expose localized *Urlinie* descents linked by common tones in the upper voice, producing a looser but coherent unity across movements. This approach, yet deviating from a singular *Ursatz*, maintains continuity through impulsive shifts within a shared diatonic space. These motions create narrative dualities, symbolizing contrasting mental states or dramatic agents, and blur the lines between monotonal and dual-tonal constructions.

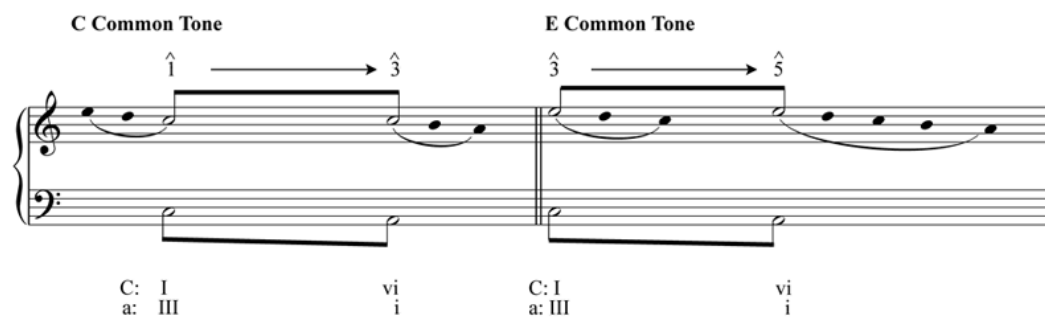


Figure 3.4: Instances of *Directional-Tonal* Structure (Wadsworth 2012, p.3).

From such findings, adapting Schenkerian analysis to such contexts requires a reconceptualization of form and tonality. Rather than imposing a single *Ursatz* on the entire cycle, analysts may consider multiple fundamental lines interacting across movements. These interactions can reveal larger patterns of voice-leading, tonal planning, and thematic return. Forte (1982) suggests that the three-part form's outer sections typically preserve the fundamental structure, while the middle section introduces variation or *interruption*. In cyclic works, this insight allows analysts to identify how thematic and tonal coherence are preserved or challenged between

movements. Moreover, chromaticism and tonal ambiguity, defining aspects of foreground diminutions, must be understood as elaborations of underlying tonal structures. As discussed in Chapter 3.1, these techniques serve form-functional alignment. Schenkerian analysis provides tools for interpreting these features without reducing them to surface-level elaborations.

The principle of prolongation, through linear progression and motivic development, accommodates inflected chromaticism within a coherent tonal frame. In this way, the Schenkerian theory provides a framework not only for traditional tonal works but also for Romantic compositions that intensify tonal ambiguity, thereby reframing tonal perception. The next chapter will apply these theoretical principles to the analysis of Schumann's *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, exploring how cyclic unity and tonal design are articulated across the character pieces.



4. ANALYSIS OF *FANTASIESTÜCKE*, OP. 12

This chapter integrates the conventional analytical methods, motivic and Roman numeral analysis, together with Schenkerian principles which were established in Chapter 3. The examination starts by describing the overall tonal structure and motivic relationships of the cycle (4.1) before proceeding to perform Schenkerian analysis on each movement (4.2). I analyze both the surface-level transformations of thematic material and the deeper *composing-out* (*Auskomponierung*) processes which unifies these eight pieces together. The last section (4.3) combines these results to assess how motivic, tonal and formal relationships reveal both its cyclic unity and narrative aspects.

4.1 Overview of the cycle

Fantasiestücke, Op. 12, consists of interrelated character pieces that balance independence with structural integration. As Donat (2005) observes, the set was not conceived as a unified cycle in the manner of *Carnaval*, but rather as a collection suited to the *Hausmusik* tradition.¹⁸ Reflecting this, “writing to Clara Wieck on 12 February 1838, Schumann recommended individual pieces for public performance, in particular, *Des Abends* and *Traumes Wirren*” (Donat, as stated in Hamelin, 2005, p. 7). Their coherence emerges nonetheless through a combination of expressive contrasts, narrative associations, and underlying tonal organization. That is, Schumann structured the cycle in two implied groups of four, loosely centered around the tonal centers of D $\flat$ major and F major, each exploring a different expressive register and formal trajectory. Rather than adhering to a single narrative line, the movements oscillate between introversion and agitation, *lyricism* and *irony*, an expressive alternation most evident in the contrast between *Des Abends* and *Aufschwung*, or

¹⁸ It is defined in *Grove Music Online* (2001), as “Music intended for performance in the home by family and friends for their own entertainment and edification. Associated particularly with the music of the middle class as opposed to that of the aristocracy, the term is peculiar to Germany and retains a sociological significance not found in similar terms such as the English ‘music at home’ or ‘household music’. Any suitable chamber music can be considered *Hausmusik*.”

Warum? and *Grillen*. Each miniature exhibits a distinct formal identity, most frequently realized as a ternary, rondo, or sonata-rondo form; however, their juxtaposition creates dynamic tension across the set. The overarching narrative climax in *Fabel*, discernibly features the duality of Eusebius and Florestan, using distinct tempo markings, *Langsam* and *Schnell*, and textural contrast. In *Traumes Wirren*, Schumann employs a melody-and-accompaniment texture characterized by continuous semiquavers and syncopated quavers that span a wide register span, which results in a swirling, unsettled motion heightened by frequent tempo fluctuations. The final piece, *Ende vom Lied*, brings closure through a more grounded and ceremonial character, combining “bell-like”¹⁹ figures with lyrical recollection to evoke both celebration and reflection. While not cyclic in the strict thematic sense, the recurrence of characteristic intervals, such as sixth and third, recurring motives, and harmonic parallels, suggests a deliberate strategy of cross-movement cohesion.

The expressive logic of the set relies heavily on Schumann’s manipulation of pianistic parameters, articulation, voicing, rhythmic displacement, and registeral expansion to evoke different affective domains.²⁰ For example, frequent use of metric dissonance, hemiola, and ambiguous downbeat placement, especially in *Aufschwung*, destabilizes rhythmic clarity, intensifying expressive unpredictability. In addition, the pianistic sonority alternates between dense chordal textures and transparent contrapuntal passages, which often embed melodic ideas in the inner voices or lower registers, as in *Warum?* and *Grillen*. This idiosyncratic voicing becomes a structural agent rather than surface coloration.

Building on this expressive palette, Schumann’s use of extended pedal markings, sustained dissonances, and sudden textural shifts support an expressive landscape that is fragmentary yet consistent. For example, the surface-level elaborations, such as articulated motivic/rhythmic fragments feature timbral color, which are traits of

¹⁹ As Herttrich (2004) notes in the preface, Schumann described *Ende vom Lied* shortly after publication on 19 March 1838, stating: “Everything ultimately dissolves into a merry wedding – but my distress for you came back at the end, and the wedding bells sound as if commingled with a death knell” (p.5). Schumann’s comment shows that the final piece combines joyful celebration with a sense of sorrow.

²⁰ Rosen (1995) observes that “*Des Abends*, the loveliest of Schumann’s pieces from *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, exploits a different kind of ambiguity of register. The music here springs so directly from piano sound that one must count as part of the material of the work not only motifs, harmony, and texture, but also certain aspects of piano technique—above all, the way the thumbs can be placed on the keyboard” (p. 33).

Romantic expression. The extended chordal vocabulary with tonal ambiguities, such as blurred tonal entries as if they begin in minor tonality rather than the central tonic in major, or the long diminished (⁰7th) or half-diminished (^ø7th) sequential patterns, prolong the harmonic expectations. These technical devices, coupled with tonal extensions, mediant relations, and blurred cadential areas, result in a network of expressive disruptions that mirror the internal dialogues between imagined personas of Eusebius and Florestan. Instead of narrating a singular dramatic arc, the work foregrounds contrast as a formal principle, using expressive diversity to suggest a unified poetic whole.

The harmonic structure of this piece uses both diatonic and chromatic inflections to connect keys that are closely related and more distant. The tonal connections which were established in previous chapters receive additional analytical support through Schenkerian analysis. The tonal scheme of Schumann becomes apparent in the foreground through modulations and cadential points, which define formal boundaries; yet, the underlying bass progression in Figure 4.1 reveals a more profound structural unity. The entire cycle follows a unified closure through its sectional transitions. The TdR pairs and modal parallels connect major and minor tonal centers. The analysis of these connections reveals how Schumann consolidates the subtle details with structural integration. Does this synthesis suggest a planned compositional intent to blur the boundaries between narrative and structural logic? That is a question that frames the following analyses.

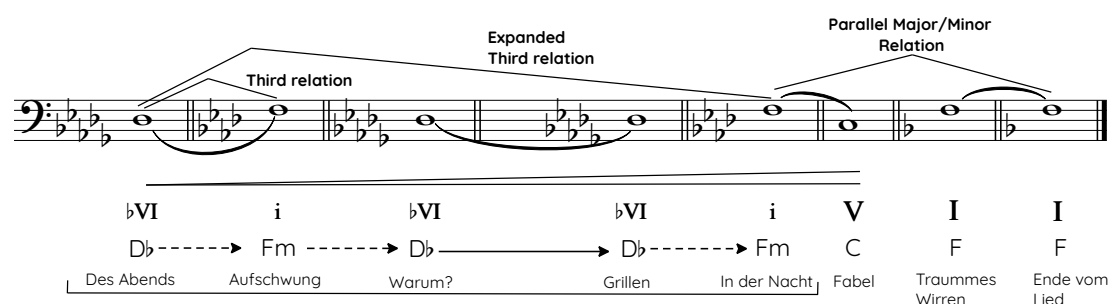


Figure 4.1: Schumann, *Fantasiestücke*, Op.12, tonal scheme in bass progression.

4.1.1 Tonal trajectory and narrative flow

The tonal plan of *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12 appears to be directional because it follows a sequence of TdR key centers. The mediant and modal connections between movements function as both structural links and narrative connectors. In this manner, the musical connection between $D\flat$ major and F minor functions as something greater

than a traditional diatonic mediant relationship. Similarly, the fundamental tonal axis is F major so that it functions as a basis for both small-scale and large-scale harmonic structures. The chromatic submediant function of D $\flat$ major ($\flat$ VI) to F major (I) brings mode mixture connections that confuses functional relationships while disrupting the single tonal center.

The parallel connections between F major and F minor, as shown in Figure 4.2, include diatonic, chromatic, and doubly chromatic relationships. These connections generate tonal ambiguity, a characteristic of the musical language of the cycle. At the same time, the harmonic relationships among D $\flat$ major, F minor, and F major outline a consistent tonal direction that unfolds across the entire set. To some extent, this layered harmonic structure serves a narrative function rather than simply introducing structural contrast. The multiple and overlapping roles of enharmonic reinterpretation become especially significant in the developmental sections of the cycle.

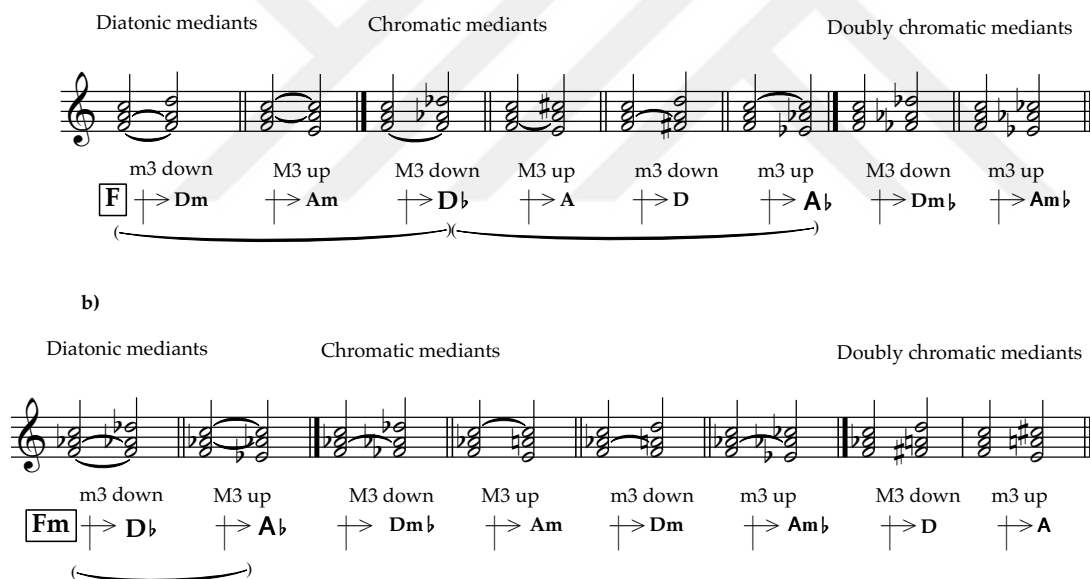


Figure 4.2: Mediant transformations; a) variants of F major, b) variants of F minor.

The technique of enharmonic transformation plays a crucial role in this context. The first movement *Des Abends* uses the episodic shift between D $\flat$ major and E major and enharmonic F $\flat$ to create tonal connections that go beyond traditional key relationships. The triadic derivations of D $\flat$ major, as illustrated in Figure 4.3, brings up a mediant transformation which shows every possible chordal structure between distant tonal areas. This enharmonic reinterpretation functions to merge different harmonic regions into an integrated narrative structure. As a result, the D $\flat$ major and B $\flat$ major

relationship appears multiple times, as tonic-pre-dominant modulation (I -IV), to invoke structural tension which enables additional modulatory movements. Voice-leading graphs later in the following analytical chapter, reveal organizational patterns of foreground diminutions.²¹

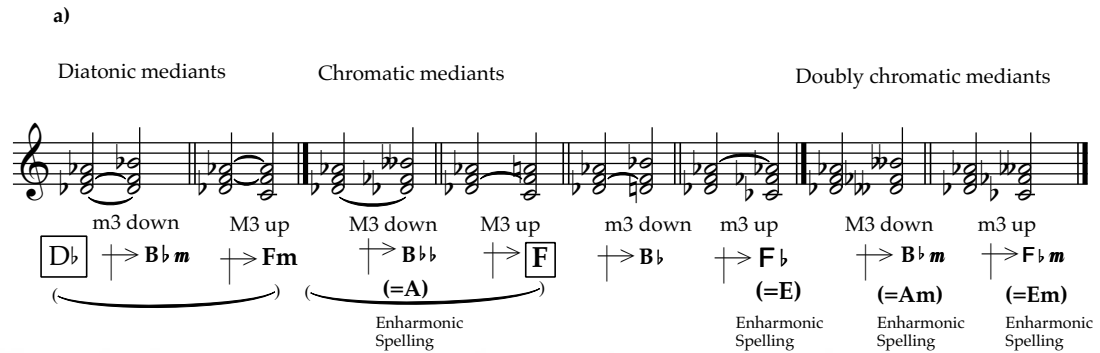


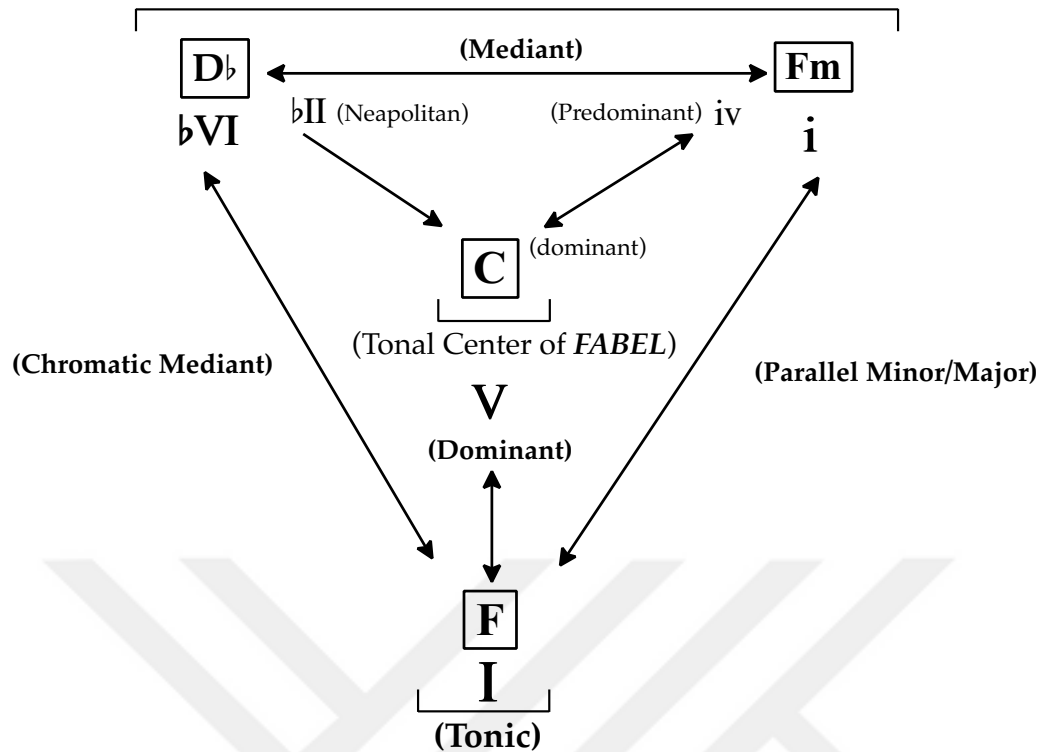
Figure 4.3: Mediant transformations; a) variants of Db major.

The harmonic strategy of Schumann as seen in Figure 4.4, lies in a complete network which uses mediant and Neapolitan chordal vocabulary to achieve both thematic and formal integration. That is, the TdR between Db major (bVI) and F minor (i), and the Neapolitan relationship between Db major (bII) and C major (I) in *Fabel*. The modal mixture between C major (V) and F minor (i) incorporates with the parallel relationship of F major (I) and F minor (i). The chromatic mediant connection between Db and F major functions as a tonal ambiguity which creates compelling tension by delaying tonal resolution throughout the piece.

The structural unity of the cycle depends on motivic design in addition to harmonic operations. The initial intervallic punctuation from the opening measures transforms through variations of contour and rhythm. The main motive, namely, the descending 6th progression (*Zug*), which I consider the main motive of *Fantasiestücke* Op. 12, appears at crucial points, both at foreground diminutions, and middleground transformations throughout the piece. The following section examines this motivic structure which guides Schumann's compositional technique.

²¹ ‘*Diminution*,’ in general, means shortening note values. For our context, Pankhurst (2008) defines it as “A term used by Schenker to describe the embellishment of simpler musical structures beneath the surface of the music. The process of analysis is partly one of looking “behind” the surface diminutions, but Schenker was more interested in a process of generation from background to foreground” (p.241).

(Tonal Centers of *Des Abends - Aufschwung - Warum? - Grillen - In der Nacht*)



(Tonal Centers of *Traumes Wirren - Ende vom Lied*)

Figure 4.4: Schumann, *Fantasiestücke*, Op.12, tonal trajectory.

4.1.2 Motivic connections and cyclic unity

The opening measures of *Des Abends* introduce a set of intervallic relationships that serve as the basis for motivic connections across the entire cycle. However, this motive does not remain static. The descent pattern in m. 3 changes direction when it shifts from B $\flat$ to E $\flat$ before making a large leap to G $\flat$ before descending to F. The modification of melodic contour creates a transformational logic which appears both openly and subtly throughout the following movements. The process is clearly shown in Figure 4.5. The voice-leading reduction shows how the descending sixth unfolds above a tonic pedal in D $\flat$ major, reinforced by a pattern of 5–6 harmonic progression. This intervallic idea appears throughout the movements, often in the soprano voice. Does its repetition indicate only surface parallelism, or does it function as a deeper organizing principle, the one that controls the structural and narrative logic of the entire set? I would argue it for the latter, since the motive's integration into longer linear progressions supports both narrative coherence and musical continuity.

a)

x
Descending stepwise 6th
g $\flat$ - b $\flat$

y
Inverted and transformed
b $\flat$ - e $\flat$ → g $\flat$

3rd Leap

5
D $\sharp$ pedal

6

6

5

I — VI — VI — I — I

b)

Des Abends Aufschwung Warum? Grillen In der Nacht Fabel Traumes Wirren Ende vom Lied

Descending 6th
G $\flat$ - B $\flat$

6th leap
(C - A $\flat$

6th leap
A $\flat$ - F

6th leap
C - A $\flat$

6th leap
C - A $\flat$

6th leap
G - E

6th Leap
(Tonal)
F - D

6th Leap
F - D

D $\sharp$:

Fm

D $\sharp$:

D $\sharp$:

Fm

C

F

E

Figure 4.5: Schumann, *Fantasiestücke* Op.12, a) *Des Abends*, mm. 1-5, main motive and its inverted development; b) motivic transformation.

The motivic character evokes a capacity for transformation, adapting to the character-driven qualities for each subsequent piece. In the opening movement, *Des Abends*, the 2/8 meter and *Sehr innig* indication establish a fluid, intimate character. As a result, flowing sixteenth-note triplets articulate the motive within a prelude-like piano texture. More precisely, we see in the second piece, the same intervallic idea receives a complete transformation in *Aufschwung* (Florestan) through a dotted 6/8 rhythm which generates a flow. Later, the opening section of *Warum?* shows the main thematic statement through an imitative dialogue between soprano and alto line. Besides, it displays how piano texture and motivic contour create a variety in musical expression. Lastly, the interaction between rhythmic and intervallic structure shapes a sense of unity that arises from surface-level contrasts, involving accentuation, articulation, and metric dissonance.

The motivic dimension of varying gestures stays most prominent at the foreground level because it shapes harmonic bass line connections. The codas in *Traumes Wirren*, and *Ende vom Lied* through repeating sixth-leap patterns in harmonic context, I- $\flat$ VI, or $\flat$ VI-I, accomodates the primary tone of the *Ursatz*, the descent of $\hat{3}$ - $\hat{2}$ - $\hat{1}$ at the end. These motivic transformations, in this selected example, present themselves as melodic leaps of a sixth in the upper voice. The scale step (*Stufe*) between tonal regions

reintroduce themselves, and the main tonality, F major, gets reaffirmed or transformed, as seen in *Ende vom Lied* from Db (bVI) to F (I) major.

Figure 4.6 does not directly show the motivic processes. However, it addresses the structural design of each piece and reveals the characters of each movement. As seen below, it starts and ends with Eusebius. In addition, it illustrates Schumann's use of classical musical forms, such as simple versions of ternary and rondo, which he transforms into expressions of *Romantic subjectivity*.²² For example, the ternary structure of *Des Abends* is extended through internal symmetry to create a prelude-like form, articulated through Eusebius's lyrical subtlety. In contrast, the seven-part rondo structure in *Aufschwung* serves as a dramatic counterpoint to the opening, expressing Florestan's energetic instability. This alternation continues in *In der Nacht*, where an expanded ternary structure works as a transitional *interlude*²³, suggesting an anticipatory encounter between the dual identities of Eusebius and Florestan.

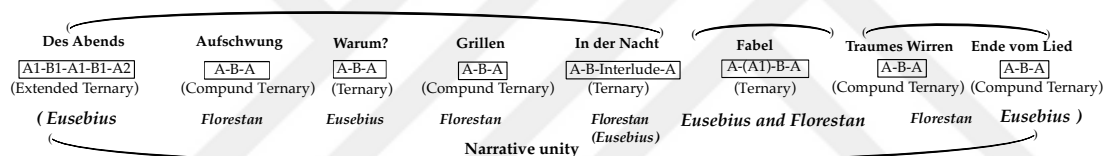


Figure 4.6: *Fantasiestücke* Op.12, formal structures and narrative unity.

Similarly, the Rondo form in *Fabel* functions as the expressive and structural climax of the cycle, uniting thematic polarity with formal clarity to embody Schumann's poetic strategy. The final two pieces, *Traumes Wirren* and *Ende vom Lied*, adopt compound ternary forms that reintroduce Classical stability while preserving the Romantic fragmentation presented at the outset. These formal choices, ranging between extended ternary and rondo forms, shows Schumann's simultaneous respect for Classical tradition and his ability to incorporate it with expressive nuance.

²² As Daverio and Sams (2001) note, Schumann embraced "the recent tendency towards fragmentary musical utterance and the demise of classical forms" (p.15), favoring new expressive structures such as the *capriccio* and *fantasy* that aligned with *Romantic subjectivity*. Even when employing classical forms, his approach reflected this shift toward *poetic* expression.

²³ It is defined as "A general term for music played or sung between the main parts of either a musical work or, occasionally, a non-musical event" (Tilmouth, 2001).

4.2 Schenkerian Analysis of Individual Movements

The analysis of each movement through Schenkerian perspective discloses the structural relationships which exist beneath the musical surface as addressed earlier. For this reason, the harmonic and motivic framework from 4.1 directs my analysis, however, I focus this time on showing how voice-leading and the techniques of prolongation along with motivic “cross reference’s” affect each movement at the background and middleground levels. The Schenkerian graphs and my comments show how motivic and harmonic connections work at different levels, laying the groundwork for the hypothesis of large-scale coherence as a unified whole in section 4.3.

4.2.1 Movement 1: *Des Abends*

Des Abends forms a peaceful character through its D $\flat$ major diatonic foundation. The large-scale tonal plan remains consistent throughout this introductory piece. The main tonality makes a brief transition to A $\flat$ major before unexpectedly shifting to E major, which creates tonal ambiguity. The temperate instability in this piece reflects the contemplative nature of Eusebius. The piece expresses its presence through its controlled and internalized nature. The rhythmic pattern remains steady through triplets until rubato markings appear to create a peaceful “nocturnal effect.”²⁴ The long melodic lines, which utilize scale-based motion, extend above broken chords that span wide intervals. The arpeggios produce a high-register figuration with a rapid note texture that requires sustained pedaling to achieve its resonance and pianistic color, establishing a wide registral span with softened dynamic shaping.

The musical structure of *Des Abends* follows an expanded ternary design, which is separated into A1–B1/A2–B1/A3 sections as illustrated in Figure 4.7. The B1 sections create prolonged dominant chords, which first appear over A $\flat$ before moving unexpectedly to B1, leading to enharmonic resolution at E major (=F $\flat$ major). It functions as a chromatic mediant of the tonic. The harmonic return serves as a structural echo because it reappears before the A section returns in D $\flat$ in mm. 77 and

²⁴ It is defined as “A piece suggesting night, usually quiet and meditative in character, but not invariably so”(Brown and Hamilton, 2001).

78. Thus, this transformation appears twice in the work to invoke its cyclic-like structure which connects specific thematic units to the overall tonal plan.

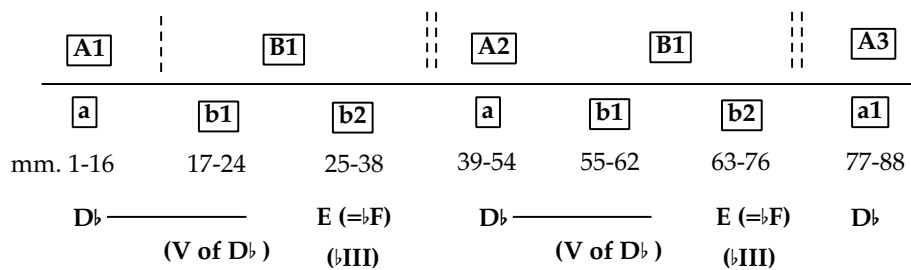


Figure 4.7: *Des Abends*, mm. 1-88, formal structure and tonal progression.

The thematic tension in this piece is maintained through continuity and transformation, rather than by contrastive formal design. A short modulatory bridge, in mm. 36 and 38, connects the extended B area to the return of A3, which remains in D♭ throughout. The harmonic vocabulary presents clear tonal relationships while adding chromatic elements. The diminished seventh chords (°7t) and chromatic non-chord tones modify the diatonic framework to enhance expressive content without compromising the tonal center. Schumann employs the combination of stable elements with chromaticism to create a poetic opening that blurs the distinction between musical form and atmospheric elements.

The opening measures of *Des Abends* immediately introduce a sense of directed motion. As MacAuslan (2016) points out, “It is however but one of three upper lines that run through the piece” (p. 94), highlighting the complex interplay of simultaneous melodic connections that define the work’s textural richness. Not only is the sense of motion generated by chordal weight, but through the subtle deployment of non-chord tones. At this point of elaboration, g² functions as an accented passing note, intensifying harmonic tension at the very threshold of the Fundamental descent’s (*Urlinie*) establishes itself in m. 1.²⁵ The approach to PT (*Kopftön*), f², the $\hat{3}$ in D♭ major, is effected by a stepwise descent, specifically, an interval of a minor second. It draws attention to the critical role of neighboring tone (*Nebbenote*) in shaping the primary motive. This use of chromatic notes is typical of Schumann’s style, as shown in Figure 4.8. He builds chords with passing tones and chromatic voice-leading, creating tonal instability that marks delayed resolution, not just surface decoration.

²⁵ I will abbreviate “Fundamental descent” as “FD,” from now on.

Sehr innig zu spielen.

A $\hat{3}$ (Kopftöne)

p

Db ped VI_5^6 VI_5^6 VI_5^6

Db: I I

7

Example 10 is a musical score for a piano accompaniment. It features a treble and bass staff. The treble staff contains six measures of music, each with a triplet of eighth notes. The bass staff contains six measures of music, each with a triplet of eighth notes. The bass line is written in figured bass notation, with figures: $\text{vii}^{\text{ac}}/\flat\text{VII}$, $\text{vii}^{\text{ac}}/\text{vi}$, vi^4 , $\text{vii}^{\text{ac}}/\text{V}$, and $\text{vii}^{\text{ac}}/\text{V}$. A box labeled "Ab:" is placed between the vi^4 and $\text{vii}^{\text{ac}}/\text{V}$ figures. A dashed line with the text "Db ped" is positioned below the first measure of the bass line. The score is labeled "(V)" at the bottom.

Figure 4.8: *Des Abends*, mm. 1 -18, foreground annotated graph, prolongation of $\hat{3}$ and transformation of main motive.

In the motivic relationship between the A and B1 sections, the primary motive ‘x’ is now transformed in m. 17, beginning on an A $\flat$ dominant pedal and descending as a four-note progression, G $\flat$ -F-E $\flat$ -D $\sharp$. Right from the first measure, diminished seventh chords ($\circ 7^{\text{th}}$) and chromatic appoggiaturas appear. These chromatic inflections add more dissonance and, although the music reflects Eusebius’s calm character, they create strong tension in musical expression. This intensity is an effective compositional

technique for *Romantic expression*, and it is further heightened by abrupt modulations to fragment the formal structure. The continuity of sixteenth-note texture and the recurrence of similar motivic relationships reinforce the meaning of its narrative title, *Des Abends*. In a broader sense, the piece's coherence, and its capacity to evoke an atmosphere of dreamy-like scene, is captured by Charles Rosen (1995), who observes, "Schumann's uncanny ability to erode the abstract structure of voice leading which he had learned as a student, and to create ambiguities of resonance, gives '*Des Abends*' its atmosphere of reverie" (p. 38).

The sixteen-bar opening period reveals its submediant (vi) relationship with the tonic of I, D $\flat$ major. The mediant shift creates unity throughout the piece while predicting tonal shifts that will appear later in the cycle. The musical progression advances at a consistent rate of one bar length. The first two bars establish a 5–6 shift from tonic, I, to submediant, VI $^{6/5}$, before continuing through a series of linear diminished seventh chords. The upper voices follow linear progression and the bass maintains a pedal point as seen in Figure 4.9.

(Imaginary Continuo)

5 6/5 6/5 5 5 6/5

Schenkerian prolongation: I ————— I

Figure 4.9: *Des Abends*, mm.1-6, foreground reduction, prolongation of $\hat{3}$.

And later, it leads directly to the dominant key of A $\flat$. The vii $^{\circ 7}/V$ in A $\flat$ at bar 11 functions as a crucial pivot before the V 9 sonority asserts itself as an extended dominant chord. It is obvious that Schumann's practice of using coloristic dominant chords enhance the prolongation at this structural level. Moreover, the perfect authentic cadence (PAC) reaches its expected tonal closure after a delayed resolution via secondary diminished chords along with the dominant chord (V) of E $\flat$ at bar 15. The relationship between descending linear motion of the sixth and the persistent D $\flat$ pedal becomes clearer. The bass motion which uses TdR shifts operates as an

“imaginary continuo,”²⁶ structured in the Schenkerian approach where the *Stufe* (scale step), I, prolongs across the opening phrase.²⁷ As a result, the descending line in right-hand melody and pedal tone, D $\flat$, in bass voice create harmonic stability which allows linear progression, such as the transformation of the main motive, only elaborated in upper-parts to develop while showing Schumann's dual approach between stability and flow.

Des Abends becomes more pronounced through specific techniques including the use of F $\sharp$, where in m. 74, it becomes a chord member of B major in its second inversion causing the upper part-voicing of B $\flat$, a chromatic inflection of diminished 3rd. In addition, its enharmonic reinterpretation in the bass line in m.75, transforms it into G $\flat$ that becomes the seventh of the dominant chord of D $\flat$ major, A $\flat$ in mm. between 75-76. This transition, shown in Figure 4.10, functions as more than a chromatic device because it links up the thematic continuity with harmonic variance, as being a *Romantic expression*, projecting Eusebius's introspective characteristic. This conveys musical nuances, such as the overall dynamics and tempo marking. The F $\sharp$ –G $\flat$ relationship appears at both formal and motivic levels in mm. 37 and 75 which creates multiple layers of chromaticism of remote key relationship.

Figure 4.10: *Des Abends*, mm. 37-40, enharmonic modulation, analytical interpretation.

²⁶ As Cadwallader et al. (2020) indicates that “The imaginary continuo can clarify harmonic prolongations and stepwise melodic associations in a tonal framework” (p.69).

²⁷ *Stufe* (scale step), as Pankhurst (2008) puts, “Schenker uses the term scale step to refer to the principal steps of the *Bassbrechung* (the bass part of the *Ursatz*). If the *Bassbrechung* basically outlines the progression I–III–V–I... The term thus distinguishes between diatonic structural harmonies and chords that are understood as embellishments of those harmonies” (p.245).

The background (*Hintergrund*) and deeper middleground (*Mittelgrund*) graphs, seen in Figure 4.11, show *interruption* (*Unterbrechung*), first at deeper level, becomes evident at the *Ursatz* in m. 55. Later, if we look at b) figure, in this case, the descent of *Urfinie's* $\hat{2}$ stops earlier at the dominant *Stufe*, $A\flat$, the V of $D\flat$, while $F\sharp/G\flat$ functions as a neighbor note to lead the upper-voice line towards scale degree $\hat{3}$, the primary tone (*Kopftone*). The deeper structural voice-leading demonstrates implicit tonal coherence, as discussed earlier, in Schenker's theory. Following this thread, this specific topic, the concept of *interruption* as a formal division in Romantic analysis parallels Schachter's discussion of Chopin's binary reinterpretation.²⁸

The higher-level middleground relations shows that the sixth progression first appears in thematic form. The work maintains its tension through this subtle neighbor-note inflection at the development sections, so that we see how Schumann uses voice-leading complexity to create the prolongational technique that defines the expansion of chromatic vocabulary in his composition. In addition, there comes another lower level middleground reduction as seen in Figure 4.12. The LP (*Zug*) from $D\flat$ to $A\flat$ runs from measure 1 to measure 16 to create a unifying thread between surface diminution and deep structure, as seen in the graph.

The process of transforming basic material into advanced tonal axis is implied through this "cross reference" between structural levels. Besides, the unresolved seventh in m. 24 functions as an enharmonic substitute in the formal transition so that the extended prolongation of scale degree $\hat{3}$, F, marks a principal juncture for tonal and narrative development in the movement.

The final descent of $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ indicates a large-scale unity pattern. On this matter, the neighbor-note motion and linear progression with an enharmonic connection in parallel to structural *interruption* show how Schumann develops his design from basic building blocks to complex structures. This process also reflects Schenker's broader principle that the same foundational techniques can give variety in compositions.

²⁸ Schachter (2016) explains that although Chopin's *C minor Etude* (Op. 10, No. 12) is often viewed as ternary in form, "For Schenker, and from the perspective of large-scale voice leading, the determinant of the form of the piece is the repeated descending fourth-progression in the bass, from tonic to dominant. The second of those descending fourths encompasses what many people would see as the contrasting B-section in the Etude. In Schenker's view of the form of the Etude, the *Ursatz* is divided into two parts, and each of those parts is also divided into two, marked with interruptions" (Schachter, 2016, p. 44).

(a)

Ursatz

① 3̂ 55 2̂ //

77 3̂ 86 2̂ 87 1̂

I V I V I

D♭ major:

(b)

Urlinie: ① 3̂ 17 2̂ //

39 3̂ 55 2̂ //

77 3̂ 86 2̂ 87 1̂

N N

D♭ major: I V (E:♯VI) I V (E:♯VI) I V I

The figure displays two musical score reductions for 'Des Abends', measures 1-87. Part (a) is the background reduction, showing the Ursatz. It consists of a single melodic line on a treble clef staff and a harmonic line on a bass clef staff. The melodic line starts with a whole note G3 (labeled 1), followed by a half note A3 (labeled 3̂), and ends with a whole note G3 (labeled 55) and a half note F#3 (labeled 2̂). The harmonic line starts with a whole note D2 (labeled I), followed by a half note A1 (labeled V), and ends with a whole note D2 (labeled I), a half note A1 (labeled V), and a whole note D2 (labeled I). Part (b) is the middleground reduction, showing the Urlinie. It consists of a single melodic line on a treble clef staff and a harmonic line on a bass clef staff. The melodic line starts with a whole note G3 (labeled 1), followed by a half note A3 (labeled 17), and ends with a whole note G3 (labeled 39) and a half note F#3 (labeled 55). The harmonic line starts with a whole note D2 (labeled I), followed by a half note A1 (labeled V), and ends with a whole note D2 (labeled I), a half note A1 (labeled V), and a whole note D2 (labeled I). The Urlinie is marked with a dashed line and a 'N' (Neapolitan) symbol. The harmonic line is marked with a dashed line and a 'N' (Neapolitan) symbol. The key signature is D♭ major, and the time signature is common time.

Figure 4.11: *Des Abends*, mm. 1-87, background and middleground reduction of level 1.

(a)

Form: **A** **B** **A** **B** **A'**

① ⑩ ⑬ ⑭ ⑰ ⑳ ㉓ ㉔ ㉕ ㉖ ㉗ ㉘ ㉙ ㉚ ㉛ ㉜ ㉝ ㉞ ㉟ ㊱ ㊲ ㊳ ㊴ ㊵ ㊶ ㊷ ㊸ ㊹ ㊺ ㊻ ㊼ ㊽ ㊾ ㊿

6-prg. (Zug) 8ve (Harmonic Trans.) Unresolved 7th

D $\flat$ major: I (=A $\flat$:II I) V V (E: $\sharp$ VI) V I (=A $\flat$:II I) V V (E: $\sharp$ VI) V I 4 3 6 6 9 7

Figure 4.12: *Des Abends*, mm. 1-87, middleground reduction, level 2.

As Cadwallader et al. (2020) puts it, “Schenker’s motto, ‘Always the same, but never in the same way’, reminds us that general principle of harmony and counterpoint underlie a vast and varied repertoire” (p.12). My intention, therefore, demonstrates both the natural consistency and creative variations which define Schumann's compositional approach. The prolongational consistency of *Des Abends* emerges through continuous reinterpretations of the main thematic idea. Overall, each segment appears to be adapted and transformed by means of the recurring intervallic connection of sixth, which functions on both tonal and motivic fabric.

4.2.2 Movement II: *Aufschwung*

The first statement of *Aufschwung* (‘Soaring’) presents an abrupt dramatic shift from the preceding prelude-like movement. The musical expression of Florestan's impulsive character appears through the combination of block chords with fast articulation and light musical texture compared to the arpeggiated voicing of *Des Abends*. The piece maintains a broad tonality in F minor until it shifts into multiple local keys that include its relative major, Ab major, Db major, Bb minor, C minor, and Db major, before returning to F minor. The expressive aspects of tonal and harmonic relationships achieve elaborated dramatic intensity through their multiple modulations. The musical representation of Florestan's persona expresses passionate and dynamic qualities through its quick tempo alongside syncopated rhythms and recurring cross-rhythms. The main theme starts with a strong rhythmic pattern of Db in upper-part while following a repetitive form until it progresses to descending melodic motifs and arpeggiated patterns during the lighter sections.

Not only does *Aufschwung* reflect the contrasting aspects of rhythm and meter but also it carries a distinguished thematic design and harmonic structure compared to *Des Abends*. Now, the piano texture transforms with chordal statement. The formal structure of *Aufschwung* follows a compound ternary design²⁹, A–B–A, as shown in Figure 4.13. The initial A–B–A1 functions as a larger A section, framing the piece’s

²⁹ While the overall structure may resemble a sonata-rondo (A–B–A–C–A–B–A), the self-contained nature of the B section invites a reinterpretation of the form as compound ternary, with an internal subdivision of A–B–A. Berry (1986) describes compound ternary as a flexible, expressive form common in Romantic character pieces, where each large part may itself be a binary or ternary unit. This contrasts with Caplin’s (2013) more functionally-oriented view of large ternary in Classical contexts. In the present analysis, Berry’s model better captures Schumann’s use of sectional contrast and thematic return. (Berry, 1986, p. 69; Caplin, 2013, p. 566).

main thematic ground. Each subdivision undergoes notable harmonic and textural variation, reinforcing the character contrast across the formal sections.

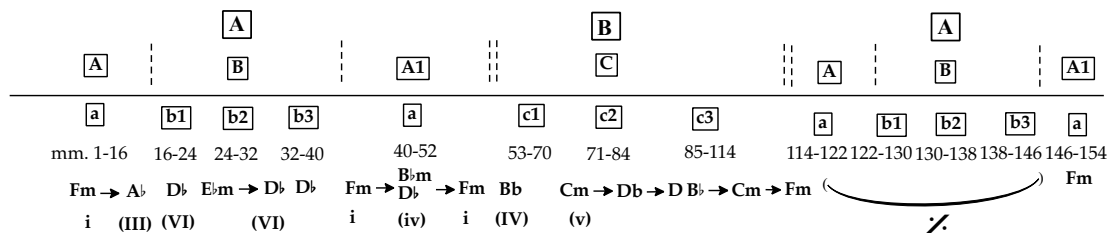


Figure 4.13: *Aufschwung*, mm. 1-154, formal structure and tonal progression.

The opening A section (mm. 1–16) consists of a modulating eight-bar sentence in Ab major, followed by its exact repetition. Since the first 8 bars end with a perfect authentic cadence in m. 8, it does not qualify as a compound period.³⁰ It begins in F minor with an octave-doubled C pedal in the bass in m. 2, and modulates to Ab major by mm. 5 and 8. Both statements conclude with a perfect authentic cadence in the new key. The right-hand grouping in mm. 5 through 6 uses displaced rhythmic alignment to create a *hemiola*³¹ effect, and it repeats in mm. 13 through 15. The B section, starting in m. 17, presents arpeggiated chordal patterns while it modulates from Db major to Eb minor in m. 27 before returning to Db major with an IAC in m. 33. The A1 section starts in F minor in m. 40, modulating to Bb minor (iv) at m. 45 and moves back to F minor through a perfect authentic cadence (PAC) in m. 51. The C episode moves through Bb major and C minor in m. 63, Db major in m. 77, and D major in m. 81 before F minor returns at m. 109 to anticipate the reprise. The final A sections feature contrapuntal development in the bass in mm. 114–122, as the harmonic progression transitions from F minor to Ab major, thereby strengthening cyclic development.

The opening sentence structure, including 2+2 measures, basic idea and its repetition, and 4 measures (continuation), creates direct motivic momentum, shown in Figure 4.14. The “db²,” previously the tonal center of *Des Abends*, now reappears as the third of a minor predominant (iv) harmony, functioning as a non-chord tone through a 9–8

³⁰ As Caplin (2013) explains, “the compound antecedent usually closes with a half cadence (either regular or reinterpreted), but rarely with an IAC. The compound 8-m. consequent repeats the antecedent but closes with a PAC” (p. 166).

³¹ *Hemiola*, from greek *hemilios*, defined as ‘the whole and a half’, means “By extension, ‘hemiola’ in the modern metrical system denotes the articulation of two units of triple metre as if they were notated as three units of duple metre” (Rushton, 2001).

suspension in m. 2. This “cross reference” highlights a shift from structural foundation to surface dissonance, now placed in the upper register. Therefore, the opening *anacrusis*, the upbeat at the beginning, increases the dynamic effect of the transferred pitch. In that case, the D $\flat$ functions as a pedal point to cover the melodic section in tenor part. The melodic ascent with a dynamics of ‘*f*,’ from b $\flat$ to c 1 in the initial upbeat, gains harmonic significance in m. 4, forming the vertical relationship of the dominant V 7 chord. In fact, it serves as the punctuation of the opening four-bar phrase. This dramatic point, with a leading-tone in alto part, the third of C major, e $\natural$, marks the placement of the sixth leap up to the FD (*Urlinie*)’s line.

Sehr rasch

D $\flat$ Cover tone (*Deckton*)

f *f* *f* *f*

C ped

[Fm:] iv ————— iv 6 V 7 (iv ————— iv 6) V 7

8vb

Figure 4.14: *Aufschwung*, mm. 1 -4, foreground annotated graph, D $\flat$ as cover tone (*Deckton*).

The sixteen-bar melodic unit ends in A $\flat$ tonality with a perfect authentic cadence, PAC in m.16. The cadential closure is immediately offset by a dynamic drop from *f* to *p*, while the dotted quarter-note pulse is retained metrically. In this shift, A $\flat$ major is reinterpreted as the dominant of D $\flat$ major, marking a pivot both in harmony and expressive weight. The development shows how *directional tonality* works by linking motivic and harmonic fragments across these extended musical sections.

Throughout the movement, its Fundamental structure (*Ursatz*) encompasses a descending line of $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$. The main descent begins at bar 5 through a soprano leap of a sixth as shown in Figure 4.15. This intervallic sixth leap from c 2 to a $\flat^2$, functions as more than a melodic element because it serves as a “cross reference” in relation to the opening statement of a sixth descent in *Des Abends*. For that reason, it creates an unifying cyclic element. At the same time, through his doubling technique, doubled ‘c’ on the downbeat of measure 5, the i 6 of F minor, Schumann creates an upper voice

implication which leads to an inner voice motion with a linear descending progression of an octave at bar 8, where the pivot chord modulation occurs. Through this melodic development, which moves to the upper part in m. 4 and undergoes a registral transfer (*Hoeherlegung*) in m. 5, Schumann creates temporal growth while showing how different linear progressions interact at both foreground and middleground levels.³²

Figure 4.15: *Aufschwung*, mm. 5-14, foreground annotated graph, prolongation of $\hat{3}$.

The B section begins right away because sectional modulation leads directly to D $\flat$ major as shown in Figure 4.16. The structural line (*Urlinie*) of $\hat{f}^2$, scale degree $\hat{3}$ in D $\flat$, and $\hat{1}$ in F major, extends throughout measure 17. This point serves as both a unifying motivic element and a tonal axis that maintains the cyclic coherence. To some extent, the entire tonality, at this step, rests on F, $\hat{1}$, in m. 16, the member of the FS (*Ursatz*). According to Schenker's monotonicity, thus, we see in that passage how the I–VI $\flat$

³² In my view, this Schenkerian concept is significant, as Cadwallader et al. (2020) also emphasize: “Some of the most common elaborations and transformations of a structural line involve motion to a higher or a lower register. This can occur in various ways, among which are octave displacement, the inversion of an interval.” (p.143). This is chiefly relevant at this point, as our main motivic line is frequently prolonged using this technique throughout the piece.

relationship (F–D $\flat$) functions as a key element in this movement, even at this local level.³³

Figure 4.16: *Aufschwung*, mm. 15 -17, foreground annotated graph, a 6th leap to $\hat{1}$.

The musical technique of *elision*³⁴ connects the end of the preceding section to the beginning of the next by allowing the final gesture of one phrase to continue into the next. In m. 52, this moment coincides with a structural reinterpretation of F as the root of a dominant seventh chord, enabling a common-tone modulation to B $\flat$ major—the subdominant (IV) in the broader sonata-rondo design—rather than returning to A $\flat$ major. This shift is supported by a doubled melodic line that presents a varied form of the main theme, marking the entrance into the developmental section. The chromatic tendency develops when A $\flat$ transforms into the leading tone A $\natural$ in B $\flat$ major, as shown in Figure 4.17. The harmonic instability in mm. 53 and 114 arises from chromatic and remote key modulations that use B $\flat$, C minor, D $\flat$, D major, and F minor.

As shown in Figure 4.18, the thematic return in mm. 115-119 presents a varied restatement of the theme A with increased harmonic density and a contrapuntal texture.

³³ William Drubkin explains Schenker’s concept of monotonal structure as follows: “Linked to the concepts of *Prolongation* and *Auskomponierung* is a favorite metaphor of Schenker’s, *Saat–Ernte*, by which musical structure is made analogous to organic growth: ‘from seed to harvest’” (Drubkin, 2006, as cited in Christensen, 2006, p. 821).

³⁴ According to Caplin (2013), “an *elision* occurs when the cadential arrival of one theme corresponds with the moment when the next theme structurally begins. A single complete measure thus functions simultaneously as both an ending and a beginning” (p. 316).

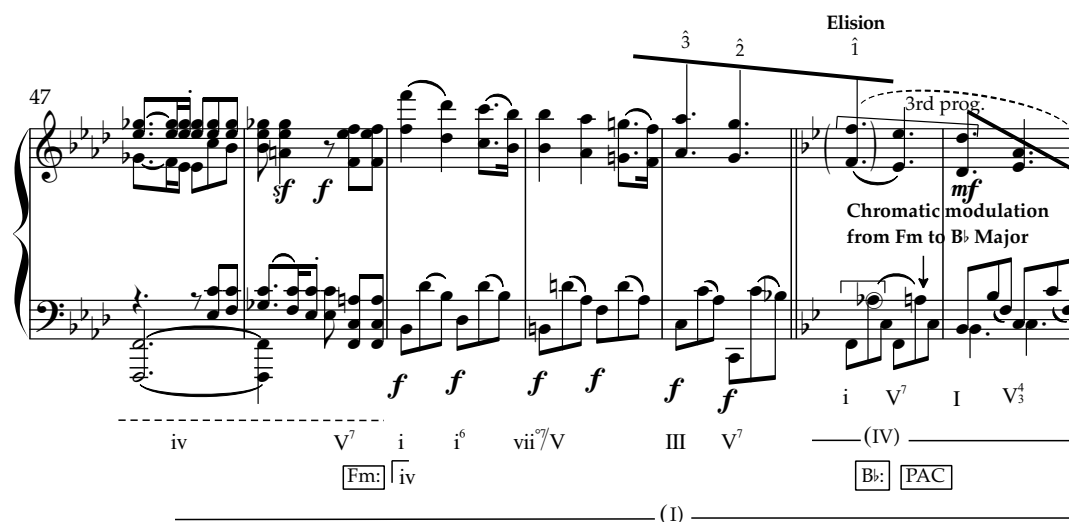


Figure 4.17: *Aufschwung*, mm. 47-53, foreground annotated graph, the *Urlinie* of $\hat{3}$ - $\hat{2}$ - $\hat{1}$ and elision.

At this time, it enriches the texture compared to its initial appearance. This passage supports the sonata-rondo interpretation, as it avoids the earlier modulation to $D\flat$ major, which is used in the exposition of the second theme, and instead proceeds from $A\flat$ major through a cadential progression. This adjustment not only shifts the tonal plan but also reinforces a TdR prolongation around the relative major, which extends until the full return to the tonic key, F minor, in m. 146.

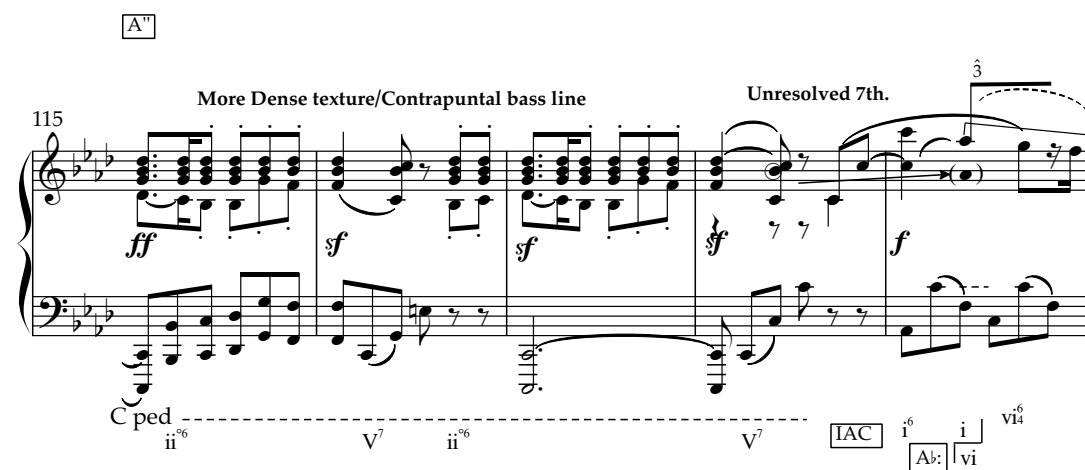


Figure 4.18: *Aufschwung*, mm. 115-119, foreground annotated graph, return of theme A with harmonic and contrapuntal density.

The voice-leading graph in Figure 4.19 shows that the prolongation of D , $\hat{3}$ of $B\flat$, IV, moves through the measures between 53 and 92, with an ascending linear progression of a fifth that leads to the main theme in m. 119. The fundamental line (*Urlinie*) of $\hat{3}$, $a\flat^2$ is missed by a resolution on third beat in m. 118 by an unresolved seventh, $b\flat$ with

(a)

Ursatz

⑤ 3̂

119 3̂

153 2̂

154 1̂

F (minor): I

I

V

I

(b)

Urlinie: ⑤ 3̂

51 3̂

52

53

92

109

119 3̂

153 2̂

154 1̂

Coupling (Koppelung)

A1

B

A2

F (minor): I

I

(IV IV)

I

V

I

The image displays two musical score reductions for the piece 'Aufschwung' (mm. 1-154). Part (a) is the background reduction, showing the Ursatz (fundamental structure) with a single melodic line and harmonic progression. The melodic line starts on a whole note G4 (labeled ⑤ 3̂) and ends on a whole note G4 (labeled 154 1̂). The harmonic progression is F (minor): I, I, V, I. Part (b) is the middleground reduction, showing the Urlinie (fundamental line) with a more complex melodic line and harmonic progression. The melodic line starts on a whole note G4 (labeled ⑤ 3̂) and ends on a whole note G4 (labeled 154 1̂). The harmonic progression is F (minor): I, I, (IV IV), I, V, I. The middleground reduction includes a coupling section (Koppelung) between measures 51 and 119, which is marked with a dashed line and the label 'Coupling (Koppelung)'. The middleground reduction also includes a section labeled 'A1' (measures 1-51) and a section labeled 'A2' (measures 119-154). The middleground reduction is marked with various measure numbers: ⑤, 51, 52, 53, 92, 109, 119, 153, and 154. The middleground reduction is also marked with various scale degrees: 3̂, 2̂, and 1̂. The middleground reduction is also marked with various Roman numerals: I, (IV IV), V, and I.

Figure 4.19: *Aufschwung*, mm. 1-154, background and middleground reduction.

a register transfer (*Koppelung*) right form c1, which draws a particular attention. It is clear to state in this section that because the structural descent moves in between different voices in accordance with my analytical interpretations, the same register appears in the background level (*Ursatz*). Thus, Florestan's inconsistency, conveyed through Schumann's use of the sixth-leap motive and the TdR relation between F minor and Db major, is achieved through prolongational techniques applied to the segmentation across the movement.

4.2.3 Movement III: *Warum?*

The third piece of *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, *Warum?*, functions as an interlude between the dramatic tension of *Aufschwung* (Florestan) and the impulsive instability of *Grillen* (also Florestan). It reflects the questioning and inward nature of Eusebius through its restrained musical language. The piece begins with an Eb7 chord that functions as both the secondary dominant of Ab major (V/V) and as a ♯II7 in Db major. The melody in m. 2 presents a specific interval pattern which descends from eb² to ab¹ before leaping upward to f² thus creating a sense of “uncertainty.”³⁵

As MacAuslan (2016) notes, “‘*Warum?*’ is also endlessly involved, with tiny inflections to confuse the sense of direction. It is a picture of childlike innocence, asking questions without finding answers—the way the brooder feels from the inside” (p. 104). In general, the tonality of the piece centers on Db major while using 2/4 time signatures to present rhythmic clarity through left-hand syncopations along with right-hand half-note figuration.

The ternary structure of *Warum?*, A–B–A1, features tonal shifts and motivic transformation, which suggest clear structural boundaries, as seen in Figure 4.20. The main idea in Db major occupies the first sixteen measures, yet the music briefly moves to Eb minor and Bb minor while suspensions and unresolved sixths create harmonic uncertainty. The musical structure of *Warum?* becomes balanced through the combination of melody and accompaniment texture, when we look at the contrapuntal right hand gesture.

³⁵ The melodic line reflects a smooth voice-leading, but the disruption of stepwise motion broken by a 5th leap from eb² to ab¹ causes this expressive inclination.

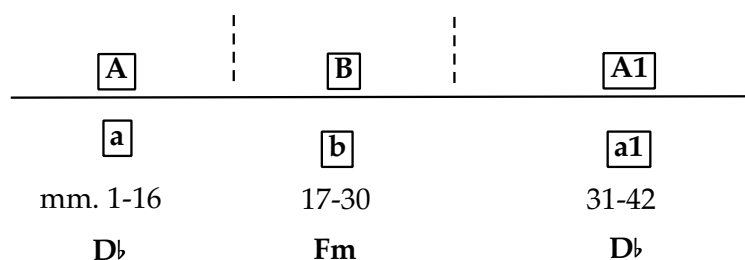


Figure 4.20: *Warum?*, formal structure and tonal progression.

The main motivic unit appears three times with minimal changes, which prevents the music from reaching a final authentic cadence in m. 15. The B section presents a more active harmonic sequence that moves toward F minor and later to E $\flat$ minor through chromatic voice-leading techniques. It includes diminished chords, applied dominants, and a “Phrygian II”³⁶ chord and its secondary dominant through mm. 26 and 28. It takes on E $\flat$ minor, starting with a pivot chord in m. 20, functioning as predominant key area in D $\flat$ major. The distant key areas in the B section combine with the motivic repetition of the main theme and harmonic instability to create increased expressive ambiguity. The A1 section presents the initial material in a compressed form while maintaining tonal transformation and returning to the home key in D $\flat$ major.

The melodic leap of a sixth from a $\flat^1$ to f 2 in m. 2, shown in Figure 4.21, outlines scale degree $\hat{3}$, functioning as the first PT (*Kopftön*) of the *Urlinie*. This passage is framed by a V7/V–V7–I harmonic motion, beginning with E $\flat^{4/3}$ in m. 1, which introduces tonal ambiguity. Although the progression remains harmonically straightforward, Schumann generates internal tension through the contrast between G $\sharp$ and G $\flat$, in fact, a chromatic detail that subtly disrupts the otherwise diatonic surface. While the melodic line preserves tonal clarity, these inflections create expressive nuance. The D $\flat$ in lower-part and F in the upper-part gains additional structural weight through the registral leap at the downbeat of m. 3, noticeably establishing the tonal center of D $\flat$ major. This pitch had previously functioned as a cover tone (*Deckton*) over iv in *Aufschwung*, but here it is transformed into a stable harmonic foundation.

³⁶ In Schenkerian analysis, chromaticism is often understood as the temporary raising or lowering of a diatonic scale degree within a major-key framework. Damschroder (2018) discusses this under the topic of mixture (*Mischung*), including “the chord built on b2 (often referred to as the ‘Neapolitan’ or ‘Phrygian II’ chord), and chromatic upper-third chords. A Schenkerian approach to what is conventionally referred to as the ‘augmented sixth’ chord is introduced as well” (p. 145).

This interplay of harmonic stability and chromatic coloring reflects Schumann's characteristic contrast between restraint and intensity. It also evokes the expressive duality of Florestan and Eusebius, not through direct quotation but through textural behavior. The simplicity of the harmonic framework stands in dialogue with the searching quality of the melodic line. In this way, *Warum?* quietly opens the reflective space that *Grillen* later externalizes.

Langsam und zart

6th leap cross-reference

3̂(Kopftone)

[A]

Db: V⁷/V

Schenekrian prolongation:

V⁷

I

I

Main theme in alto (Imitative texture)

Figure 4.21: *Warum?*, mm. 1-5, foreground annotated graph, a 6th leap to 3̂.

The main theme comes in again in the alto voice in m. 5, starting on f^l, by half step to e^b, this time a chromatic inflection as a lower neighbor tone. Through his method of distributing thematic material among upper-part ranges, Schumann achieves stronger textural contrast that enhance the Romantic expression of the work. As a pointed reference, the thematic identity of the piece remains clearly traceable, as its motivic material is developed not only through contrapuntal texture but also via the TdR modulation in m. 17, from D^b major to its mediant, F minor (iii). Again, the same harmonic unity, V⁷/V-V⁷-I, reoccurs, however, it is a part of the sequential progression down by a step to E^b minor, reaching up to ii⁰-V⁷-V⁷ of ^bII (N) in m. 23. It repeats again and modulates back to D^b in m. 31 taking us back to the main statement of the theme in the A section.

Furthermore, the Romantic expression lies in Schuman's use of the extended vocabulary, to a notable degree, the Neapolitan chord (^bII) in E^b minor. It does not reach a full V⁷-I resolution but its function as V⁷/^bII, as illustrated in Figure 4.22, enhances the prevailing sense of chromaticism for a long period of time. This passage evokes an imitative texture, as the main theme reappears in the bass between mm. 23

and 25, then successively transfers to the alto in m. 27 and the upper voice in m. 31, resembling a fugal development within Schumann's idiosyncratic language. This contrapuntal texture, combined with the consistent rhythmic pattern of quarter notes and dotted-eighth–sixteenth figures, creates a sense of structural cohesion while subtly recalling Baroque developmental procedures. Despite its apparent simplicity, this passage reveals Schumann's ability to reframe traditional techniques within an expressive, cyclic context.³⁷

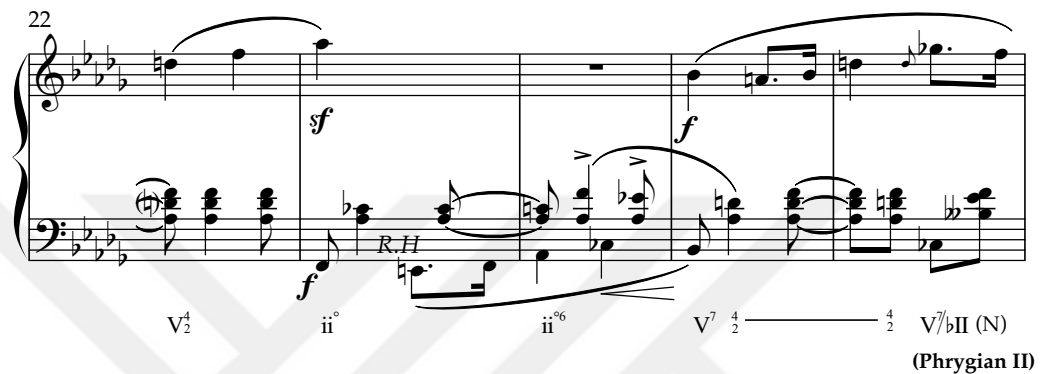


Figure 4.22: *Warum?*, mm. 22-26, foreground annotated graph, the use of Neapolitan chord (bII).

Warum? Stands as the shortest piece in the cycle. Repeated fifth-based progressions contribute to a sense of coherence, unfolding across both background (*Hintergrund*) and foreground (*Vordergrund*) levels. In the A1 section, the cadential return to D $\flat$ major maintains the opening harmonic framework but deliberately avoids full resolution. This open-ended quality, as Perrey (2007) suggests, lends the piece its distinctive Romantic expressiveness by suspending closure and leaving the musical idea unresolved. The Schenkerian graph in Figure 4.23 shows this structural division, which refers to *interruption* (*Unterbrechung*), in m. 40. This moment differs from a typical foreground conclusion because it suspends the FS's (*Urlinie*) at scale degree $\hat{3}$ as if the main theme could restart from there. The harmonic progression moves to an imperfect authentic cadence, IAC, V^7-I before establishing a two-measure prolongation on a $I^{6/4}$ chord.

³⁷ KoBmaly (1844) emphasizes this point, stating: "In all Schumann's compositions for the piano one can sense a constant striving for originality—originality of both form and content, even if the former is not always marked by uniformly fortunate results and the latter often can by no means be called uplifting. One cannot fail to note the powerful, lasting impressions that the study of classical models, such as Sebastian Bach or Beethoven, made on Schumann" (KoBmaly, 1844, as cited in Todd, 1994, pp. 307–308).

(a)

Ursatz

③ $\hat{3}$ ④① $\hat{2}$ ④① $\hat{3}$

Interruption //

D $\flat$ major: I V I

(b)

③ $\hat{3}$ ⑩ ⑫ ⑭ ⑮ $\hat{3}$ ⑰ ⑲ B ⑳ $\hat{3}$ ㉓ A2 ㉕ ㉖ ㉗ $\hat{3}$ ㉙ ㉚ ㉛ ㉜ ㉝ ㉞ ㉟ $\hat{2}$ Interruption //

6th Leap 6th Leap 6th Leap 6th Leap (cross-reference)

D $\flat$ major: I V I (III) V I V I V I V I

Figure 4.23: *Warum?*, mm. 3-41, background and middleground reductions.

because the sixth-interval “cross reference” continues while maintaining motivic continuity and creating a binary FS (*Ursatz*) structure within a ternary surface form.

4.2.4 Movement IV: *Grillen*

Grillen, the the fourth piece of the set, illustrates the most evident tonal ambiguity throughout the entire cycle. The descriptive marking of *Mit Humor* recalls playful articulation, and it maintains fast harmonic changes with extensive use of chromaticism, especially the use of secondary dominants. The opening theme is introduced by a prolonged expectation of the main tonality of Db major until its establishment with an authentic cadence in m. 16. The harmonic progression of thematic material centers on Bb minor, which functions as Db’s relative sixth degree through its use of secondary dominant, V/vi, and stepwise melodic motion. The irregular off-beat rhythmic elements produce unpredictability, while the musical texture maintains homophonic characteristics throughout the piece through its dense chordal voicing and extensive pedal usage. Dynamic contrast and localized tempo changes add further expressive nuance. In addition, the combination of Florestan's impulsive gesture with the submediant chord relationship established by its secondary dominant, V/vi, produces a tension from the very beginning.³⁸

The form of *Grillen* also follows a compound ternary design, A–B–A, with each section containing internal tripartite subdivisions, as marked in Figure 4.24. As mentioned above, the opening measures seem to start in Bb minor but the Db of I⁶ chord moving to V^{4/3} in m. 2 along with repeated V⁷/IV- IV patterns in mm. 4 and 5 prevent any clear tonic establishment. The 16-bar opening period features a denser harmonic texture in the consequent phrase. It is developed by register shifts and syncopation.

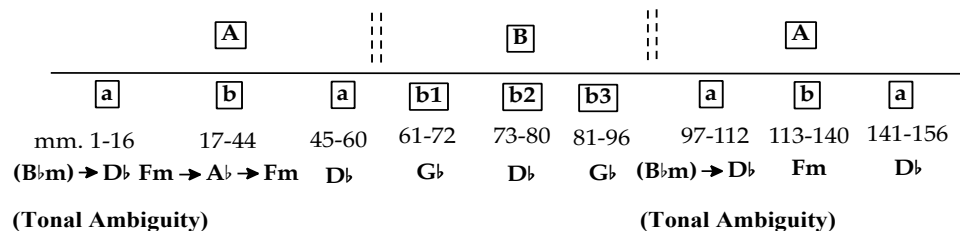


Figure 4.24: *Grillen*, mm. 1-156, formal structure and tonal progression.

³⁸ We did also see it in Cubero's (2022) article on Schumann and Brahms.

The upper-part melody develops a continuous motivic pattern which starts with d¹ on the upbeat before reaching its highest tessitura at A^b in m. 11 for the first phrase structure. In this part of the progression, the dense chordal texture, high in register compared to the beginning of the statement of the same material, the right hand block chords of dominant V⁷/V – IV – V – V^{6/5}/vi – vi – ii⁶ – V⁷ -I, defines Schumann's early approach to chromatic intensification through rapid harmonic rhythm.³⁹ In m. 23, a V^{#5}-i cadence (enharmonically G[#] resolving to B^b minor) introduces a brief tonic affirmation, though this G[#] is alternatively interpretable as an inversion of the mediant (III). Measures 45–60 reintroduce the initial theme, and now it leads up to a D^b major PAC at m. 60.

The B section modulates to G^b major, the subdominant (IV) of D^b, before fragmenting the main theme. Between mm. 73–80, D^b major dominates through a tonic pedal in the bass, while diminished sevenths and descending third relations (A–F[#]–E^b) move to the cadence in m. 79. The return of A in m. 97 restates the earlier material with minor adjustments, concluding the piece with a firm PAC in D^b major at m. 156. It creates a dramatic impact at the moment of arrival. Most prominently, the A section uses mediant relationships between B^bm–D^b, Fm–A and Fm–D^b to establish its local structure while the B section moves to G^b, IV, through the same tonal progression found in previous movements.

The *Urlinie* begins its transformed sixth ascending motion from c¹ to a^{b1} which refers to its primary descending one as “cross reference.” The first scale step (*Stufe*), I, D^b major leads to a harmonic surprise that shifts to a dominant seventh chord, D^b–F–A^b–C^b before moving to G^b, IV, as a secondary dominant. The initial ascent pattern (*Anstieg*) asserts presence in Figure 4.25 as the use of V^{6/4} and V⁷ passing harmonies creates uncertainty about the tonal resolution. The rhythmic instability starts early in the piece. In m. 3, the left hand plays a dotted half note, and the third beat is accented.

³⁹ Kehinde (2012) describes this as a delayed resolution, noting: “Schumann showed in some sectioning of his works that a chromatic note can be ‘elongated’ or prolonged in time before eventual resolution. This concept increases the importance of the ‘wrong’ note. The opposition of chromaticism against tonality as opposing forces takes the role of dissonance to the next level” (p. 197).

This pattern continues with shifted downbeats and agogic accents, creating displaced stresses that disrupt the regular pulse and result in a clear sense of metric dissonance.⁴⁰

Figure 4.25: *Grillen*, mm. 1-5, foreground annotated graph, initial ascent (*Anstieg*) formed by a sixth progression (*Zug*).

The ab^2 (*Urlinie*) follows a descending pattern of $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ line while undergoing a major register transfer during measure 11. The registral movement together with chordal doubling produces denser sonority and higher structural tension at the climax point shown in Figure 4.26. The repeated use of scale degree $\hat{2}$ in mm. 13 and 15 produces tension that reflects Florestan's evolving personality in terms of harmonic expression, which is referred to as “tone color”⁴¹ by Ratner (1992).

This movement maintains its integrity through transformative mediant connections which both connect the sections and continue the primary sixth relationship throughout every section. The standing on the dominant, the Ab persists throughout the measure between 25 and 35, and a direct modulation to F minor in m. 35 by the $V^{6/5}$ as it

⁴⁰ ‘*Agogic*’ accent means that “The first of the note of a phrase, for instance, may be felt to suggest a slight lingering which confers the effect of an accent.” (Kennedy and Kennedy, 2007, p. 9).

⁴¹ As Ratner (1992) explains, tone color became a significant area of theoretical exploration in the nineteenth century, with treatises offering more detailed commentary than critical writings. He writes: “Treatises on instrumentation explore a major new area of music theory in the nineteenth century. [...] Both criticism and theory present evidence for instrumental tone color in Romantic music as a prominent and, at times, autonomous value. [...] The rich and varied palette of tone color in Romantic music evoked responses [...] involving comparisons and analogies with poetry and painting” (p. 7). He further observes that listener responses were often personal and interpretive: “Most of the reactions [...] are subjective, personal manifestations of a specific listening experience. [...] Other comments characterize personal styles of composers or national styles. Still other approaches [...] take sociological or historical views” (p. 14).

dominates both upper and lowest part before returning to the main thematic material in D $\flat$ major in m. 45. In B section, The tonality modulates to G $\flat$ major (IV).

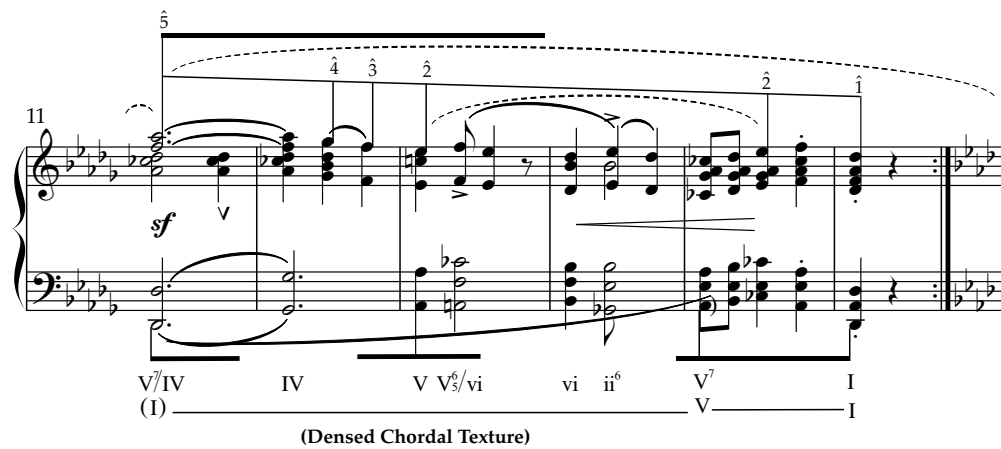


Figure 4.26: *Grillen*, mm. 11-16, foreground annotated graph, the descent of *Urlinie*.

In Figure 4.27, the Schenkerian context highlights the functional significance of A $\flat$, not as a prolongation of the *Urlinie* in half value at the highest level, but as a locally structural tone within the key of A $\flat$ major as a tonic. It simultaneously acts as $\hat{1}$ in A $\flat$ and $\hat{5}$ in the broader context of D $\flat$ major. This dual role illustrates how a single tone can operate on multiple structural levels within the voice-leading framework.

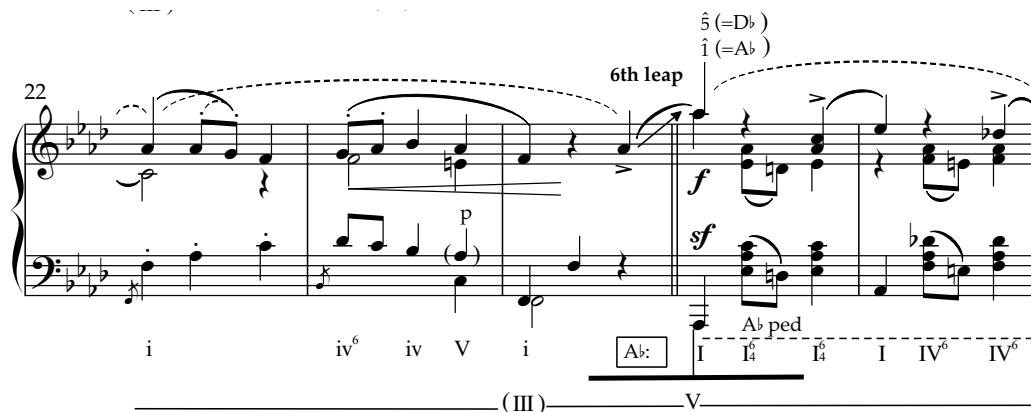


Figure 4.27: *Grillen*, mm. 22-26, foreground annotated graph, a 6th leap to $\hat{5}$.

The background (*Hintergrund*) and middleground (*Mittelgrund*) graphs in Figure 4.28 show *Grillen's* distinctive structural placement among the eight pieces. The *Ursatz* follows a descending line of $\hat{5}$ - $\hat{4}$ - $\hat{3}$ - $\hat{2}$ - $\hat{1}$. It constitutes of a ternary, A-B-A scheme that aligns with its harmonic progression, which involves I-IV-V-I, at the background level (*Ursatz*). The predominant prolongation D $\flat$ (I)-G $\flat$ (IV) appears in both development

sections between measures 61 and 96 and recapitulation section between mm. 97 and 99, in order to create extensive composing-out (*Auskomponierung*) of the tonic. The prolongation serves to define the movement structure while maintaining unity throughout the cycle because *Grillen* functions as a transition between adjacent pieces.

In the A section, the FD (*Urlinie*) demonstrates markedly both “motion to inner voice” and “motion from inner voice” techniques between mm. 5 and 38. At this hierarchical stage, the tonic chord, I, Db major in mm. 3 and 11 moves to V in m. 15, and subsequently to III in m. 17, eventually returning to Ab in m. 25. This return to Ab marks a localized prolongational span, which is mirrored again in m. 55, where a prototype of the full FD, as of $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$, appears. The B section is best interpreted as a subdominant (IV) prolongational span; however, rather than simply expanding scale degree $\hat{1}$, Db, it reflects Schenker’s notion of layered hierarchies, where the lower-level prolongation serves as a structural bridge back to the primary line.

The inner-voice motion in the A section links surface harmony to the *Ursatz* as the fundamental line descends from $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{1}$ through prolongations that occur near Ab and F minor while these notes function as stabilizing points in the extended voice-leading span. The harmonic areas maintain their local contrast yet function to present essential stages in both the formal structure and tonal organization of the piece. Through *Grillen* Schumann shows how inner-voice activity and background-level prolongation work together to create both contrast and return within a ternary framework. Following this, the locally prolonged Db, $\hat{1}$, ascends through a fifth-progression (*Zug*), and returns to the *Urlinie* in m.100, which in turn leads to the recapitulatory A section in m. 152, where the prolongation continues. As the middleground graph shows, this underlying A-B-A symmetry clarifies how *Grillen*’s motivic and prolongational structure operates on both local and large-scale levels. This interaction between thematic return and tonal structure reflects MacAuslan’s (2016) view that *Warum?* and *Grillen* mark a shift from the intensity of the opening pieces to a lighter character. Within this cyclic design and structural background (*Ursatz*), *Grillen* acts as a pivot, which links expressive contrast with formal resolution and transition to *In der Nacht*, the piece in the set.⁴²

⁴² Both *Grillen* and *In der Nacht* begins with *Kopftön* (ab¹) that suggest a “cyclic reference.”

(a) **Ursatz**

D $\flat$ major: I I V I

(b)

D $\flat$ major: I V (III) I IV IV I I V I

Figure 4.28: *Grillen*, mm. 5- 156, background and middleground reduction.

4.2.5 Movement V: *In der Nacht*

The fifth movement, *In der Nacht*, displays the most dynamic expression of the musical dialogue between Florestan and Eusebius in Schumann's *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12. The piece articulates an internal tension between lyrical moderation and heightened expressivity in terms of melody, texture, and phrase structure, mediated through unstable harmonic progressions, primarily consisting of passing diminished and dominant chords, as well as fluid melodic transformations and fragmented, shifting registers of the primary motive. The tonality moves through F minor as its primary key while also passing through C minor, F major, C major, B $\flat$ minor, and A $\flat$ minor so that it creates an increased sense of dramatic tension. The right-hand melody displays Eusebius's searching introspection through its fragmented circular contours, while the left-hand broken-chord figuration expresses Florestan's restless energy. The musical foreground is permeated by tempo changes and breathless rhythms in 2/4, which are supported by arpeggiated oscillations and metric ambiguity, such as the triplets of Eusebius's figuration against the sixteenth-note figuration of Florestan's accompaniment at the beginning. The harmonic structure and textural relationships embed the thematic opposition between these two characters.

In der Nacht consists of a ternary structure with an inserted *interlude* section, as illustrated in Figure 4.29. The thematic introduction of the A section starts in F minor with an irregular 17-bar phrase structure. The left-hand bass part maintains a tonic pedal throughout the first four measures before the music shifts to C minor in m. 5, expanding until the thematic return in m. 18. The theme shifts to D major in m. 23 before returning to E $\flat$ minor in m. 26. The dominant pedal provides support in m. 27 with vii⁰⁷/V-i^{6/4}-V^{4/2} harmonic progression till m. 29. Later, the pivot chord modulation to Cm in m. 40, and then directly to Fm in m. 44 brings back the main theme in m. 45. a moment of lyrical contrast that MacAuslan (2016) describes as “a puzzling turn,” where “the accompaniment clears to the major... and a lyrical interlude opens in a slower piano duple rhythm” (p.106).

The transition in the B section in m. 69 moves through F minor and C minor before establishing F major as its tonal center. It achieves harmonic clarity and cadential resolution through its perfect authentic cadence in F major in m. 108, which also anticipates the tonality of the subsequent movement, *Fabel*. The *interlude* begins in

B $\flat$ minor before transitioning through G $\flat$ minor, culminating in a German augmented sixth chord on the downbeat of m. 141, which leads back to the A section. This recap recalls the opening material to maintain structural and expressive unity throughout the piece.

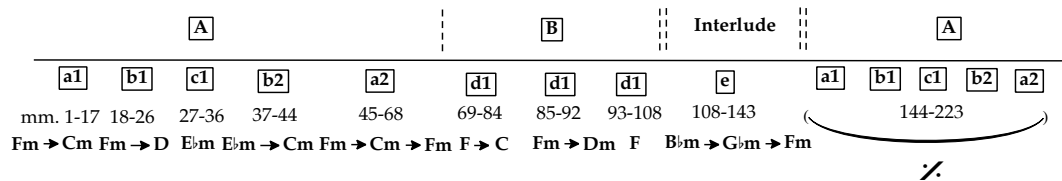


Figure 4.29: *In der Nacht*, mm. 1-223, formal structure and tonal progression.

The Fundamental line (*Urlinie*) of *In der Nacht* consists of a descending line of $\hat{3}$ - $\hat{2}$ - $\hat{1}$, a consistent pattern with the overarching design of the cycle. The analytic interpretation in Figure 4.30 shows the opening melody rising from c¹ through f¹ before moving down to g¹ and then a $\flat$ ¹. The primary tone $\hat{3}$ is revealed in m. 3 through ascending arpeggios from C to F and G before reaching A $\flat$. The neighboring tone inflected figure then descends from B $\flat$ to A $\flat$ and G, arriving at the downbeat of measure 4 with a marked rest.

Figure 4.30: *In der Nacht*, mm. 1-4, foreground annotated graph, *arpeggiated ascent* by a sixth leap.

The right and left hand dialogue in the accompaniment has often been noted for its contribution to the narrative character of the piece and for supporting Schumann's melodic design. For example, as MacAuslan (2016) observes, "What occurs 'in the night' appears to be an F minor drama in the relationship between a primary voice and its accompaniment," (p.105). This subtle interplay is heightened in the way Eusebius's

calm disposition is articulated through the triplet figures in m. 3. The prolongation of F as tonic is articulated with frequent diminished seventh chords and dominant arpeggiation, which both expand and enrich the harmonic context.

The movement shows registral shifts as its main characteristic which becomes distinguishable in Figure 4.31. The thematic material extends across seventeen measures starting with eighth-note upbeat and triplet figure before moving registally from ab^1 to ab^2 in m. 18. Later, it descends linearly through an octave span by m. 21. The sixth interval functions as a motivic connection to the *Urlinie* through its prominent appearance, which Schumann uses throughout the set for motivic integration.

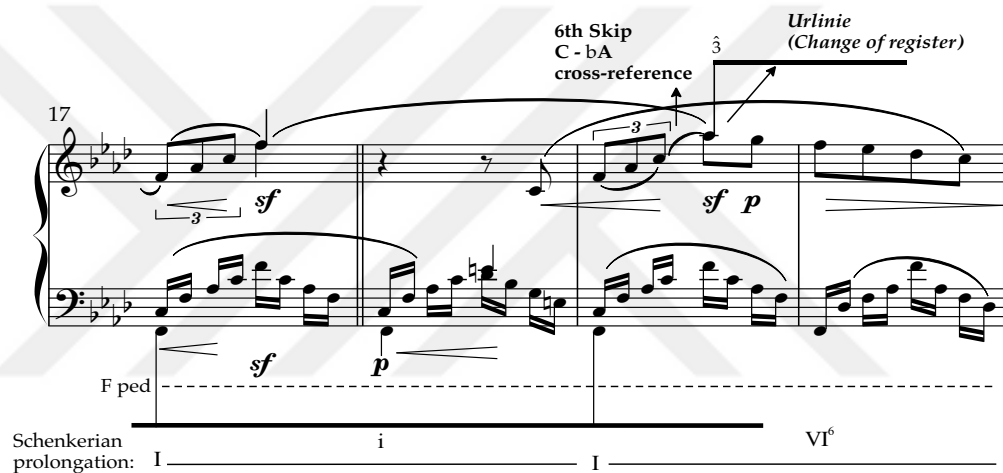


Figure 4.31: *In der Nacht*, mm. 17-20, foreground annotated graph, *arpeggiated ascent* formed by a sixth leap, C- Ab .

The middleground level of Figure 4.32 shows a scale step (*Stufe*) progression of I–IV–V–I while the interlude uses both the bass line and upper-voice connections between Bb and Ab in m. 115. The unfolding (*Ausfaltung*) appears in the musical relationship between F and Ab in m. 69 before Bb enters through a neighbor note in m. 73. The movement expands its emotional range through Schumann's unexpected harmonic shift. As a result, the increased linear chromaticism affects his decision to quicken the harmonic rhythm in the later subsections in the thematic development. Distinctly, it is likely to say that the musical statement of this characteristic piece mirrors the continuous dialogue between Eusebius and Florestan, the mythical story of *Leander and Hero*, which Schumann described this in his letter to Clara “how he had found in this piece when completed the lovely old romantic legend” (MacAuslan, 2016, p.109).

(a) **Ursatz**

③ 192 213 214

3̂ 2̂ 1̂

F minor: I I V I

(b)

③ 63 69 73 84 87 108 115 146 192 213 214

3̂ 3̂ 3̂ 3̂ 2̂ 1̂

A1 B Interlude A2

N N

(VI) (IV) (IV)

F minor: I I I (IV) V I I (IV) I I V I

Figure 4.32: *In der Nacht*, mm. 3-214, background and middleground reduction.

4.2.6 Movement VI: *Fabel*

Fabel brings the personas of Eusebius and Florestan into an open thematic dialogue, where Eusebius' tempo, with its *Langsam* (slow) and then Florestan's *Schnell* (fast), creates a contrast that highlights reflective and impulsive expression in musical meaning. The opening section introduces Eusebius through his constant C major triad while presenting a scale-based melody. The musical texture, after the 4-bar theme, changes when Florestan enters with its syncopated sixteenth-note figuration with staccato articulation. As a result, these two themes are presented through alternating homophonic and fragmented textures, which support the characters' interactions as an example of Romantic expression. This contrast reflects Schumann's Romantic notion of "blurred consciousness," where music itself "dreams, and we in it," as MacAuslan (2016, p. 114) puts it. Rather than offering discrete sections, *Fabel* reshapes the identities of Florestan and Eusebius through contrasting pacing and textures, embodying inner conflict and expressive fluidity.

The musical structure follows a "loose" ternary form through an A-(A1)-B-A2 pattern⁴³, which represents tonic and dominant relationships within a quasi-classical framework as shown in Figure 4.33. The C major material at the beginning establishes the thematic foundation for subsequent contrasts.

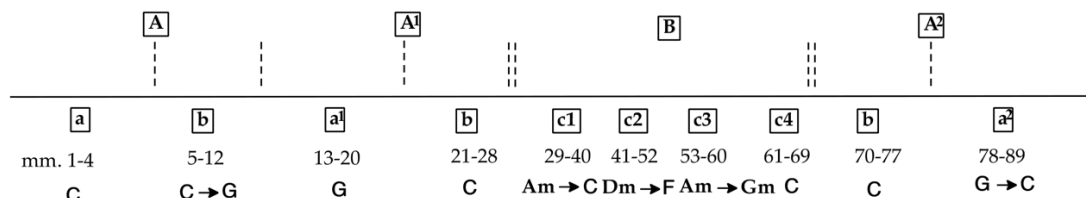


Figure 4.33: *Fabel*, mm. 1-89, formal structure and tonal progression.

The G major return of *Langsam* in m. 13 introduces an inner countermelody in mm. 15 and 20 and it brings back Eusebius's theme in G major. Schumann employs a sequence of modulations that move through G major between measures 13 and 20, A

⁴³ As Caplin (2013) defines it: "As its name suggests, the small ternary consists of three main sections, typically labeled with letters: A–B–A' (read A' as 'A-prime'). These sections can also be labeled with terms that indicate their formal function: A = exposition, B = contrasting middle, A' = recapitulation" (p.195). However, in *Fabel*, this structure is not entirely symmetrical. When the A theme returns as A1, the initial four-bar Eusebius theme is expanded to eight bars, modulates to the dominant key (G major), and concludes with a four-bar cadential extension. In A2, instead of beginning with the original "a" theme, the "b" section reappears in m. 70, forming a recap with altered thematic order. For these reasons, the piece may be more accurately described as a loose ternary form.

minor in mm. 29 and 36, and D minor in mm. 41-44. Later, it moves through F major in mm. 45 and 52. G minor in transitional passage to C major in m. 66 prolongs the dominant V, G major until it reaches Florestan's return in m. 70. The central C section, which spans from mm. 29 to 69, establishes itself as the expressive and structural core of the movement. The TdR pairings of A minor and C major, D minor and F major introduces a cyclic element, whereas thematic and harmonic development intensifies the tonal scheme. When we look at the the foreground analysis, there is a chromatic inflection introduced as G $\sharp$ (=A $\flat$), coloring the harmony on the second beat of bar 1. It provides a ii 6_5 -V 7 -I progression. This sequence, characterized by stepwise linear motion, establishes the *Urlinie*'s opening note, $\hat{3}$, and exposes how Schumann integrates chromatic auxiliary tones into a transparent diatonic frame. The effect is clear in Figure 4.34, where the accented E $\flat$ serves both as a component of the C major triad and as a chromatic neighbor to the dominant chord, imparting voice-leading tension within an otherwise straightforward phrase.

Langsam. Initial Ascent (*Anstieg*) Schnell.

G - E 6th motion Inverted motive (x) (cross-reference)

C ped

Schenkerian prolongation: I — I

7

vi V/V V C ped ii 6_4 V 7 I It 6 of D ii 6

V I

Figure 4.34: *Fabel*, foreground annotated graph, mm. 1-12, the dialogue of Eusebius and Florestan, initial ascent (*Anstieg*) formed by a sixth progression (*Zug*), G-E.

The entry of the Florestan character is marked in m. 5 by a lively 16th-note upbeat, set above an extended C pedal. At this step, a new motivic cell takes shape and quickly ascends to e^2 in bar 8, prolonging the fundamental line. The local descent $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$, articulated over the progression It^{+6} of $ii-V-I$, completes the opening section at bar 12. As seen here, Schumann's common harmonic language, in particular, the use of the It^{+6} chord in bar 10, reinforces the narrative drive and chromatic palette. Another ascending motion from g^1 to e^2 in the same section presents a "cross reference" with earlier motivic leaps that emphasizes the motivic connection that ties these eight pieces as a whole.

Figure 4.35 shows that the dominant, G major, achieves tonal resolution as a transpositional axis, and the *Urlinie* reaches scale degree $\hat{2}$ in bar 13, momentarily suspending resolution and extending the structural tension to bar 20. In this section, the familiar sixth-interval motive appears as an ascending d^2-b^2 sequence, again treated with chromatic inflections with $d\sharp^2$ and $f\sharp^2$.

D - B 6th motion
Inverted motive (x)
(cross-reference)

13 $\hat{2}$

mf

(I) ii^6 V^7 I I IV V^7 (I)

V V V V V V V

Figure 4.35: *Fabel*, mm. 13-20, foreground annotated graph, a sixth linear progression (*Zug*), D-B.

At the background and middleground levels, as seen in Figure 4.36, the underlying structure confirms a ternary A–B–A form reminiscent of *Aufschwung*. The linear progression of 3rd (*Zug*) comes into focus in bar 4 and is subsequently expanded by the mediant relationship in m. 29, resulting in a broad, eight-bar voice-leading span. The voice-exchange technique is pointedly apparent. At this point, the harmonic 5–6 progression, visible in bar 29 as A–E, and again in m. 36 as E–A in first inversion, demonstrates a prolongation at the middleground.

(a) **Ursatz**

④ ⑧② ⑧④ ⑧⑤

3̂ 3̂ 2̂ 1̂

(2)

C: I I V I

(b)

④ ⑫ ⑬ ⑳ ㉔ ㉕ ㉟ ㊸ ㊹ ㊺ ㊻ ㊼ ㊽ ㊾ ㊿ ㉛ ㉜ ㉝ ㉞ ㉟ ㊰ ㊱ ㊲ ㊳ ㊴ ㊵ ㊶ ㊷ ㊸ ㊹ ㊺ ㊻ ㊼ ㊽ ㊾ ㊿

6th prog. (Zug) G-E 3rd 3rd 8ve prog E-E 4th 4th 3rd 3rd

A1 B A2

(Circle of 5ths)

C: I I II⁶ V I V V I II⁶ V I VI 6 V I 5- 10- 10- 10-10 (IV) 10-10 V II⁶ V I V V I V I

Figure 4.36: *Fabel*, mm. 1-85, background and middleground reduction.

Significantly, the approach to the *Uralinie*'s $\hat{3}$ at bar 40, followed by sequential parallel tenths, as an attribute of Schenkerian theory, sustains motivic continuity up to m. 53. The arrival of the dominant in m. 66, and the subsequent return of the primary thematic material in m. 77, set the directed motion for closure. The final descent, $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ in mm. between 82 and 85, unifies the movement's motivic and harmonic design, delivering a sense of cyclic completion that echoes the opening theme.

4.2.7 Movement VII: *Traumes Wirren*

Traumes Wirren conveys Florestan's unsettled nature through its continuous sixteenth-note figuration in F major at the beginning. While the opening gesture, the rising " f^2 - g^2 - a^2 " in mm. 3 and 6, appears regular in melody, harmony, and metre; only the perhaps exaggerated brightness of the treble figuration suggests a dream" (MacAuslan, p. 116). Namely, this expression in registral contrast, suggested by the title, is reinforced by the staccato articulation of the chordal accompaniment and syncopated accents, both of which disrupt metric clarity in relation to the right-hand motion. The primary melodic material in the upper voice features a brief upper-neighbor figure that descends into a leaping gesture. At the same time, the left hand sustains harmonic motion through a persistent rhythmic pattern. Tonally, the movement modulates through distant keys of B $\flat$ major, D $\flat$ major, G $\flat$ major, and B $\flat$ minor, eventually generating a sense of disorientation that dissolves formal expectations and intensifies expressive ambiguity.

Traumes Wirren follows a compound ternary structure, A-B-A, as outlined in Figure 4.37, in which the A and B sections are internally divided into three and two subsections respectively, followed by a closing coda. The F major tonality, I, establishes the A section and extends as a 16-bar period, constructed in 8+8 phrase, while the consequent phrase repeats the main theme through a transposition up a second with decreased harmonic rhythm. That is, the second 8-bar phrase has ii and vi chord progressions, which appear in mm. 9 and 12, moving to I 6 chord in m. 13. The ii-V 7 progression at the end of the period modulates to B $\flat$ major in m. 17, which illustrates how the structural connection between I and IV supports the tonal design.

A			B		A		CODA	
a	b	a1	c	d	a2	b1	a1	
mm. 1-16	17-38	39-62	63-78	79-94	95-102	103-122	123-144	144-177
F	B $\flat$ $\rightarrow$ B $\rightarrow$ F	F	D $\flat$	G $\flat$	G $\flat$ $\rightarrow$ B $\flat$ m	B $\flat$ m	F	

Figure 4.37: *Traumes Wirren*, mm. 1-177, formal structure and tonal progression.

Schumann introduces his enharmonic technique in m. 25 through the reinterpretation of B $\flat$ as A $\sharp$. A direct modulation breaks into B major, but the tonal center stays uncertain without resolving in the expected I chord, B major. The harmony, instead, changes direction toward C major (V), the dominant of F major, through the incomplete diminished seventh chords of C–E $\flat$ –F $\sharp$ and the Italian sixth chords of D $\flat$ –F–B $\sharp$ in mm. 32 and 34. The C major in m. 35 eventually functions as the dominant ninth, leading to F major through measures 35–38. The development section expands the harmonic palette. The B section begins with a sixth leap from F to D $\flat$ that establishes D $\flat$ major through a four-part homophonic texture. This gesture that recalls the opening TdR relation pair in *Des Abends* and refers to a “cyclic reference.” The development establishes the tonality in G $\flat$ major, $\flat$ II, the Neapoliton of F major, beginning in m. measure 78. The a2 section, passing through G $\flat$ and B $\flat$ minor, the minor predominant of F major (I), reintroduces the main theme in transposition. The progression then moves toward G $\flat$ major by using D $\flat$ as its dominant (V), yet avoids a complete closure, ending with a dominant 7th chord of D $\flat$, V 7 , in m. 94. A second part appears in B $\flat$ minor, starting in m. 95 before the main theme returns exactly as it did in mm. 39 and 60 in m. 123. Finally, the coda section from m. 144 brings back the thematic material from mm. 17 and 24 while sustaining the tonic through a pedal point in the lower voice. The German augmented sixth chords D $\flat$ –F–A $\flat$ –B $\sharp$ create a strong chromatic effect in mm. 160 and 164 before it arrives at a closure in m. 177.

From a Schenkerian viewpoint, *Traumes Wirren* is governed by a fundamental descent, the *Urlinie* of $\hat{3}$ – $\hat{2}$ – $\hat{1}$. Figure 4.38 provides a visual representation of that the initial tonic prolongation is achieved through initial ascent (*Anstieg*), reaching a 2 in m. 4 with a 5–6/4 voice-leading pattern. Already in m. 2, the local F–D, I–vi 6 , relationship projects a mediant motion at the higher level, foreshadowing larger-scale transformations.

Figure 4.38 shows the first four measures of the piano piece *Traumes Wirren*. The music is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major). The foreground is annotated with a Schenkerian prolongation line labeled 'I' that spans the entire four-measure phrase. Above the staff, a bracket labeled 'Initial Ascent (Anstieg)' covers measures 1 through 4. A box labeled 'A' is placed above the first measure. The harmonic progression is indicated below the staff: I, I⁶, vi⁶, 4, I⁶, I, I⁶. The Schenkerian prolongation is labeled 'I' at both ends, with a horizontal line connecting them.

Figure 4.38: *Traumes Wirren*, mm. 1-4, foreground annotated graph, initial ascent (*Anstieg*) by a third progression (*Zug*).

The 16-measure period structure supports a local $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ progression in m. 17, with an elision at the junction of phrases that transforms the tonic into the dominant of Bb, as observed in Figure 4.39. This approach reinforces the prolongational role of *Stufe* (scale degree), I, within the harmonic progression.

Figure 4.39 shows measures 13 through 17 of *Traumes Wirren*. The music is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat. The foreground is annotated with a Schenkerian prolongation line labeled 'I' that spans measures 13 through 17. Above the staff, a bracket labeled 'Urlinie of 3-2-1' covers measures 13 through 15. A box labeled 'Ellision' is placed below the staff, indicating the transition from measure 15 to 16. The harmonic progression is indicated below the staff: I⁶, I⁶, ii⁶, ii, V, (Bb: V), V⁷. The Schenkerian prolongation is labeled 'I' at both ends, with a horizontal line connecting them.

Figure 4.39: *Traumes Wirren*, mm. 13-17, foreground annotated graph, the *Urlinie* of $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ and ellision.

At this point, Figure 4.40 shows a modulatory passage from m. 33, where an extended dominant prolongation, $N-V^{4/2}-It^{+6}-N$, results in a dominant ninth (V^9) in m. 36. These chromatic inflections are primarily pronounced in the use of the Neapolitan chord (N), C major in its relation to B major, in m. 35 as a pivot chord functioning as the dominant of F major through B major ($\sharp IV$) to F major (I). This harmonic sequence, saturated with consonant chordal figuration along with its non-chord tone (*neighboring*) elaborations, both delays and intensifies the eventual tonic resolution, outlining the inconsistent spirit of Florestan.

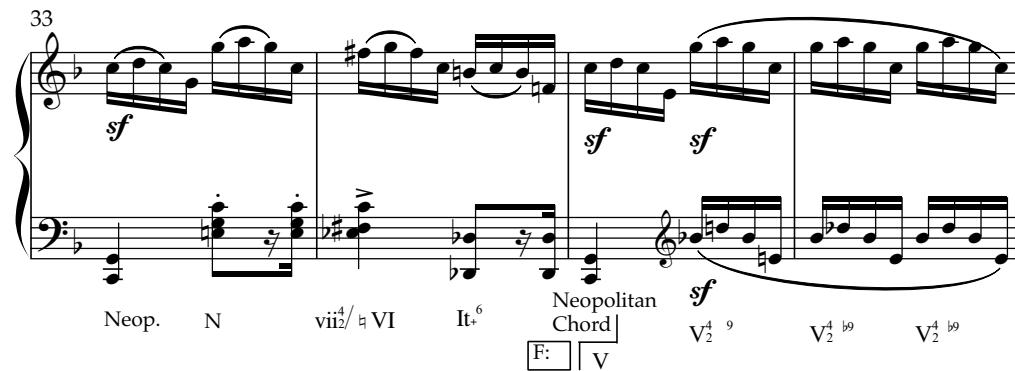


Figure 4.40: *Traumes Wirren*, mm. 33-36, foreground annotated graph, modulation by Neapolitan chord in B maj.

Figure 4.41 displays how the passage from F to Db , through a chromatic mediant shift, functions as both sectional transition and motivic recall. Again, Schumann blurs the line between formal articulation and motivic development, reinforcing the cyclic unity that underpins the cycle as a whole.

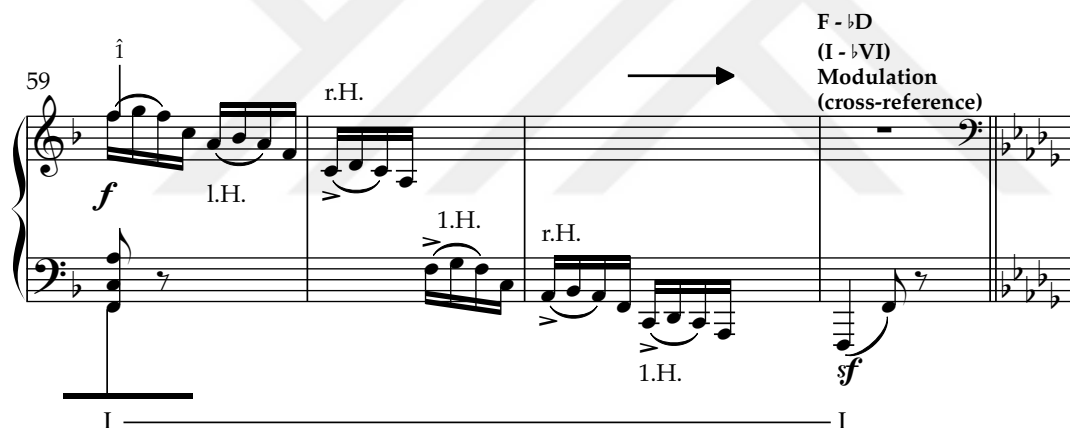


Figure 4.41: *Traumes Wirren*, mm. 59-62, foreground annotated graph, tonal transition by a chromatic mediant relationship, I to bV .

The interrelated relations of these techniques become clear in the final section, where cyclic unity, tonal ambiguity, and expressive intent intersect. As demonstrated in Figure 4.42, the prolongation between mm. 111 and 123 is defined by an $It.^6$ chord ($Db-Bb-F$), which functions as an augmented sixth as pivot chord of the home key, F major. After an extended dominant pedal on C major and its inversions in mm. 115–122, the primary theme reappears in m. 123. Furthermore, it presents a large-scale tonal departure that echoes the structure of the entire cycle, consisting of Db major in *Des Abends*, C major in *Fabel*, F major both in *Traumes Wirren* and *Ende vom Lied*. Later, the dynamic accent in m. 115 highlights this arrival, marking a climax that

resolves both harmonically and expressively. Still, it maintains the metric accentuation on the downbeats of right-hand gesture along with varying dynamic shifts.

The figure displays a musical score for the piece 'Traumes Wirren' (mm. 111-126). The score is written for piano, with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into four systems, each corresponding to a measure number (111, 115, 119, 123). The foreground notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, dynamics (sf, ff, p), and articulation marks. Below the score, an overarching tonal scheme is presented, showing the progression of chords and their functional relationships. The scheme is organized into four systems, each corresponding to a measure number. The first system (mm. 111-114) shows a progression from F major (F) to D-flat major (D-flat), then to C major (C). The second system (mm. 115-118) shows a progression from C major (C) to D-flat major (D-flat), then to C major (C). The third system (mm. 119-122) shows a progression from C major (C) to D-flat major (D-flat), then to C major (C). The fourth system (mm. 123-126) shows a progression from C major (C) to D-flat major (D-flat), then to C major (C). The tonal scheme is annotated with various symbols, including 'It' (Italian), 'V' (Dominant), 'I' (Tonic), and 'F' (First). The scheme is also annotated with various symbols, including 'It' (Italian), 'V' (Dominant), 'I' (Tonic), and 'F' (First).

Figure 4.42: *Traumes Wirren*, mm. 111-126, foreground annotated graph, overarching tonal scheme, $\flat\text{VI}(\text{D}\flat)\text{-V}(\text{C})\text{-I}(\text{F})$

Figure 4.43 displays the background (*Ursatz*) and middleground (*Mittelgrund*) structure for the entire movement. Particularly, not only does it highlight the *elision* and the Neapolitan chord (C) in the context of B major transiting episodes, but also it

(a) **Ursatz**

(b)

Figure 4.43 displays two musical reductions of *Tramumes Wirren*, mm. 4-177. Part (a) shows the **Ursatz** (background reduction) with a treble staff and a bass staff. Part (b) shows a more detailed reduction (middleground reduction) with a treble staff and a bass staff. The reduction in (b) includes various annotations such as **A1**, **B**, **N**, **A2**, and **Coda**. The bottom of part (b) contains a complex harmonic analysis with Roman numerals and text like **Neopolitan**, **Chromatic mediant**, and **VI relationship**.

Figure 4.43: *Tramumes Wirren*, mm. 4-177, background and middleground reduction.

brings the chromatic mediant connection by linking F major and D $\flat$ major. The FD of the *Urlinie*, $\hat{3}$ – $\hat{2}$ – $\hat{1}$, unfolds between measures 126 and 143, so that it leads to the coda and firms up the structural coherence of the movement. In this analytical context, Schumann's use of motivic recurrence, harmonic transformation, and formal interconnectedness, all combines to reinforce both the individuality of *Traumes Wirren* and its role in the broader narrative expression of the cycle.

4.2.8 Movement VIII: *Ende vom Lied*

The final piece of the set, *Ende vom Lied*, opens with a lyrical interplay of melody and accompaniment, established in F major. The upbeat thematic entry, emphasized by a flowing sustained melodic arc, immediately sets a calm expression with legato articulation that reflects the characteristic of Eusebius. In addition, as MacAuslan (2016) suggests:

Hoffmann signs off his tale with *Ende des Märchens*, and Schumann's title may in some sense parallel that. The opening music can be heard as akin to that of *Grillen* – in its marking, *Mit gutem Humor*, low register, crotchet movement and thick chords, and even melodic pattern, rising through $\hat{1}$ to $\hat{5}$ answered by a stepwise descent (p.119).

In parallel, the rhythmic progression shows a marching quality through its alternating fast-paced rhythms and brief ritardandos, such as at the syncopated downbeat of m.14. The tonal structure of the movement modulates from F major, through B $\flat$ major, C minor, and A $\flat$ major before returning to the home key, F major, the distant key relationships, reflecting a contrasting tension that Schumann implied it as “a wedding and a death knell,” according to Herttrich (2004, p. 5).

The formal structure of *Ende vom Lied* is organized as a compound ternary design, A–B–A, as shown in Figure 4.44. The section A opens in F major with a 4+4 phrase structure, ending on an imperfect authentic cadence in m. 8. Its theme features denser chordal textures and faster harmonic rhythm. The contrasting ‘b’ subsection extends into a 16-measure period, introducing secondary dominants for such intensification of beat by beat harmonic units. This layout reinforces the formal clarity and tonal orientation of the movement.

A		B				A		CODA
a	b	a	c	d	c	a	b	a
mm. 1-8	9-16	17-24	25-32	33-52	53-60	61-68	69-76	77-84
F	F	F	B $\flat$ Cm $\rightarrow$ A $\flat$ $\rightarrow$ B $\flat$	B $\flat$	F	F	F	D $\flat$ $\rightarrow$ F
								$\flat$ VI - I

Figure 4.44: *Ende vom Lied*, mm. 1-117, formal structure and tonal progression.

The B section begins in B $\flat$ major before moving to C minor in m. 35 and A $\flat$ major in m. 38 before returning to B $\flat$ in m. 41. The tonal device of the third-related pair (C minor–A $\flat$ major) replaces the F–B $\flat$ axis in this section, which Schumann often employed. The mediant pairing strengthens both harmonic structure and thematic development. The main theme reappears in m. 61 in its original form to conclude the entire cycle. As a result, this thematic ascent, traced in mm. 1 and 8, exemplifies the Schenkerian technique of reaching-over (*Übergreifen*), as shown in Figure 4.45, where the *Urlinie* line unfolds thematic material from f1 to a², supported by passing and neighboring tones.

Figure 4.45 displays two musical excerpts from *Ende vom Lied*, mm. 1-8, with foreground annotated graphs illustrating the Schenkerian technique of reaching-over (*Übergreifen*).

The top excerpt (mm. 1-8) shows a melodic line starting on F4, moving to D5, and then to F5. The annotations include "F - D 6th skip cross-reference" and "Schenkerian prolongation:". The harmonic progression is indicated by Roman numerals: I, V⁶/V, V, 6, 7, I, V⁷/ii.

The bottom excerpt (mm. 9-16) shows a similar melodic line starting on F4, moving to D5, and then to F5. The annotations include "Reaching-over" and "Schenkerian prolongation:". The harmonic progression is indicated by Roman numerals and figured bass notation: V⁷/ii ii⁶ V⁶/vi V⁷/ii 6, ii, V⁷ 7, V⁷ 6, I.

Figure 4.45: *Ende vom Lied*, mm. 1-8, foreground annotated graph, *reaching-over*.

Distinct from *Grillen* and *Traumes Wirren*, the melodic contour in *Ende vom Lied* frequently departs from the primary melodic line through upper neighbor leaps and diminutions producing the prolongation of the *Urlinie*. The leap of a sixth from f^1 to d^1 in m. 3 recalls the motivic interval existing earlier in the cycle, reaffirming “cross reference” across the set. Following the initial tonic prolongation in mm. 1 and 3, a chromatic sequence comes out, driven by secondary dominants and pre-dominant/dominant relationships, concluding in an authentic cadence and the arrival of PT (*Kopftön*), a^2 , $\hat{1}$. The coda serves as both tonal and narrative culmination. As seen in Figure 4.46, a direct modulation is achieved following the conclusion of the $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ of *Urlinie*, marked by a quarter-note rest.

Figure 4.46 shows the musical score for *Ende vom Lied*, mm. 81-94, with foreground annotated graph. The score is in two systems. The first system (mm. 81-86) shows a melodic line with a leap from f^1 to d^1 in m. 3, and a chromatic sequence. The second system (mm. 87-94) shows a direct modulation to $D\flat$ major in m. 87. The graph below the score shows the harmonic progression: ii , V^5/vi , V/ii , V^4 , V , I , $A\flat$ ped, V^5/vi , V^5/vi . The final descent of $\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ and final return to bVI in Coda are indicated.

Figure 4.46: *Ende vom Lied*, mm. 81-94, foreground annotated graph, the final descent of $\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ and final return to bVI in Coda.

Echoing the pedal point of *Des Abends*, the progression pivots to A section as a recap, acting as $V^{6/5}$ of vi , and then modulates directly to $D\flat$ major in m. 87. This $I-bVI$ connection strengthens the tonal bond with the cycle’s opening and creates a sense of return and completion. In Figure 4.47, the background and middleground relationships

(a) **Ursatz**

F: I I V I

(b)

A1 B A2

Coda (85 - 117)
(bD- F)
Chromatic mediant

F: I V (=B: I IV) I IV I IV =F: I V I V II V I

Figure 4.47: *Ende vom Lied*, mm. 1-117, background and middleground reduction.

are outlined through a Schenkerian perspective. The final return to F major in m. 95, presented in a chorale-like texture, provides a contrasting sonority and closes the set with a sense of finality. The local descent $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ is articulated between mm. 8 and 24 over an I–I⁶ framework in the A section, with an octave displacement from f¹ to f² during the development. Substantially, the prolonged line remains in the upper register, only returning to the obligatory register (*Obligate Lage*) in m. 61. Between measures 63 and 68, an extended initial ascent is observed, even though the final *Urlinie* descent is supported by a dominant prolongation from mm. 74 to 83, resolving to the tonic in m. 84. Finally, the homophonic texture prevails throughout the piece, and rhythmic deceleration and dynamic shaping create a sense of finality that brings the cycle to a closure in the coda.

4.3 Integration of Tonal and Formal Observations

This chapter unites all observed tonal patterns with recurring motivic utterances as well as formal characteristics to demonstrate Schumann's method of uniting *Fantasiestücke* Op. 12 across its eight pieces. The connection between mediant pairs functions as an intervallic and motivic link which uses the direct sixth intervals of F and D^b to represent the cycle's underlying fundamental TdR between D^b and F major. This interplay functions as a “cross reference” which consolidates thematic material across the entire collection. From the large-scale dimension, the background pitch of $\hat{1}$, F major represents the FS's (*Urlinie*) final resolution. During the progression of *Des Abends*, ‘F’ tone starts as D^b major's $\hat{3}$ scale degree as its primary tone (*Kopftone*), but it gains increasing structural importance which becomes clear at the local level. In my view, the opening D^b major tonality extends beyond its role as a local tonic. Through this substitution first with F minor, and then tonal progression towards C major, the dominant, F major appears to be a resolution at the end although Schumann displays his chromatic mediant relationships alongside the tonal ambiguity emerged at the beginning. In addition to it, the Schenkerian perspective, therefore, shows how the ab^2 functions as $b\hat{3}$ before transforming into $a\hat{4}^2$. As a structural deviation, it serves as the *Urlinie* of the expanded prolongation at the middleground (*Mittlegrund*), on the other hand, F minor in *Aufschwung* and F major in *Traumes Wirren* and *Ende vom Lied* engage in “form-producing effect” in Schenker's term through mixture (*Mischung*) to

connect different movements through their common motives and tonal modulations (Cadwallader et al, 2020, p.160).

The following Section 4.3.1 displays the synthesis that these eight piece can be interpreted as seamlessly connected sections of a single larger composition. Through tonal connections and repeated motivic elements, the fragmented surface of the cycle transforms into an integrated whole which contains diverse formal structures, which involves a loose structure of contrasting, developmental and recapitulated design. The expressive qualities of integrated formal structures receive analysis in Section 4.3.2 through a graphic presentation of how FS (*Ursatz*) symmetry with $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ and the Eusebius-Florestan dialogue create the narrative flow of the cycle.

4.3.1 Cyclic unity revisited: linking movements through tonal design

I started my analysis by mapping out the large-scale tonal path that runs through the entire cycle. The main tonal centers are D $\flat$ major, F minor, C major, and finally F major. At the very opening, D $\flat$ functions as both the pedal tone and a structural bass (*Stufe*), forming a linear progression (*Zug*) through F–E $\flat$ –D $\flat$ and establishing the cycle’s fundamental tonal space. In *Aufschwung*, this D $\flat$ is reinterpreted as the sixth of F minor and initiates the first arpeggiated ascent in the *Urlinie*, $\hat{3}$, a $\flat$, connecting the upper-part voice line to the background tonic via a cover tone (*Deckton*) and stepwise descent. This “cross reference,” apparent in the leap from D $\flat$ to F, is not confined to the foreground (*Vordergrund*) but also operates on the middleground (*Mittelgrund*) by reoccurring in transitions such as the register transfer from *Grillen* to *In der Nacht* and the coupling between F minor and D $\flat$ major.

When the Fundamental line (*Urlinie*) moves from *Aufschwung* to *Warum?*, $\hat{1}$ of F minor, serves as a local tonic prolongation in D $\flat$ major, becoming scale degree $\hat{3}$. The *Urlinie*’s descent from a $\flat^2$, $\hat{3}$, in *Aufschwung*, to f 2 , $\hat{1}$ of *Warum?*, from an emancipated tonic prolongation, creates an unresolved structural span as seen at the closure. This was examined in detail through the foreground (*Vordergrund*) graphs in the earlier section. In parallel, this dramatic expansion of the *Urlinie* is reinforced by register transfers in *Grillen* dropping to a $\flat^1$, $\hat{5}$ of D $\flat$ and a return to a $\flat^2$, $\hat{3}$ of F minor in *In der Nacht*. Thus, particularly, this illustrates Schenker’s concept of coupling (*Koppelung*), involving changes of octave transfer in registral shifts, as well as a long-term

connection across registers. The relationship is further enriched by neighbor tones, such as $e\flat^2$ in *Warum?*, which support the prolongation of F and create a framework for C major's disclosure in *Fabel*. In the voice-leading scheme, the main *Urlinie* of C major, $\hat{3}$, $E\sharp$, arises as a structural mixture at a lower level. This transformation, seen as b^3 in *Aufschwung*, *Grillen*, and *In der Nacht* and as $E\sharp$ in *Fabel*, creates a significant connection of motivic and harmonic "cross reference."

As I already highlighted above, the interval of a sixth leap plays a leading function throughout the cycle. Not only does it operate within the *Urlinie* but also in the bass. It provides a unifying voice-leading principle. From *Des Abends* to *Aufschwung*, the leap of a sixth is echoed at the scale step (*Stufe*) from I- bVI , at the background level when transitioning to *Warum?*, then in the descent to *Grillen*, and again in the progression from *In der Nacht* to the final bVI -I motion, $D\flat$ -F major. As Figure 4.48 illustrates, *In der Nacht* and *Fabel* are linked through a linear descending sixth progression, $ab^2-gb^2-f^2-e^2-d^2-c$, at the middleground, with the implied " $g\sharp^2$," $\hat{2}$, acting as a substitute for the leading tone, $\hat{7}$ of F major, and creating an *interruption* (*Unterbrechung*) before resolving in *Fabel*.

Throughout the cycle, such motivic and the *composing-out* (*Auskomponierung*) processes integrate the independent movements of Schumann's *Fantasiestücke* Op. 12, into a cohesive musical architecture. Register transfers, such as the one from *Grillen* to *Ende vom Lied*, reinforce the symmetry and axis of the entire set. The obligatory register (*Obligate Lage*) is established at the final descent to $\hat{1}$, f^1 , in *Ende vom Lied*. This registral placement not only unifies the large-scale voice-leading structure, but also underscores the functional parallelism among the movements by aligning them within a shared tonal framework.

All in all, my analytical interpretations reveal two main types of prolongational spans. First is the higher level of the *Urlinie*, $b\hat{3}$ and $\sharp\hat{3}$ mixture (*Mischung*), ab - $a\sharp$ in the upper-part line. Likewise, the secondary layer involves the prolongation of $\hat{1}$, F, where a bass prolongation passes through $D\flat$ major in *Des Abends*, the *Urlinie* both in *Aufschwung* and *Warum?*, and the bass line following *Grillen* and *In der Nacht*. The second one is that the prolongation of $D\flat$ across *Des Abends*, *Warum?*, and *Grillen*, establishes its own tonal and motivic prolongation.

Consistently, the underlying harmonic units in the middle ground (*Mittelgrund*) level, $\flat\text{VI} (\text{Db})\text{-I} (\text{F})\text{-}\flat\text{VI} (\text{Db})\text{-I} (\text{F})\text{-V} (\text{C})\text{-II} (\text{G})\text{-V} (\text{C})\text{-I} (\text{F})$, confirm the overall tonal space. The point, then, is that this progression established by diminutions as a “cross reference” binds the movements together. I assert that Schumann achieves this structural coherence through rational design, shaped by the linear (*Zug*) motion and the leap of a fundamental sixth motive in mind. This compositional technique plays a significant role acting as a unifying device, which reflects the Schenkerian concept of composing-out (*Auskompenierung*).

All in all, these motivic and tonal relationships, in a synthesized form, demonstrate how Schumann transformed each movement’s apparent independence into a single, interconnected whole. Consequently, the middleground graph in Figure 4.48 presents the directional tonality of the entire cycle, tracing how F major functions as a tonal center across the eight pieces and revealing the formative role for its TRd relations.

4.3.2 Expressive and narrative implications of Schenkerian findings

The musical narrative and expressive elements in Schumann's *Fantasiestücke* Op. 12 stem from its structural organization. The musical dialogue and tension rises from Schumann's paired allusions of Eusebius and Florestan. The fundamental structure of the eight pieces depends on a repeated Schenkerian background pattern which exists beyond their dual nature. The *Urfinie* structure in *Grillen* stands as the only exception because it follows a $\hat{5}\text{--}\hat{4}\text{--}\hat{3}\text{--}\hat{2}\text{--}\hat{1}$ pattern but all other pieces use the FD of $\hat{3}\text{--}\hat{2}\text{--}\hat{1}$ line. The background structure of the cycle achieves symmetrical form through *Grillen* that functions as a structural axis, as shown in Figure 4.49.

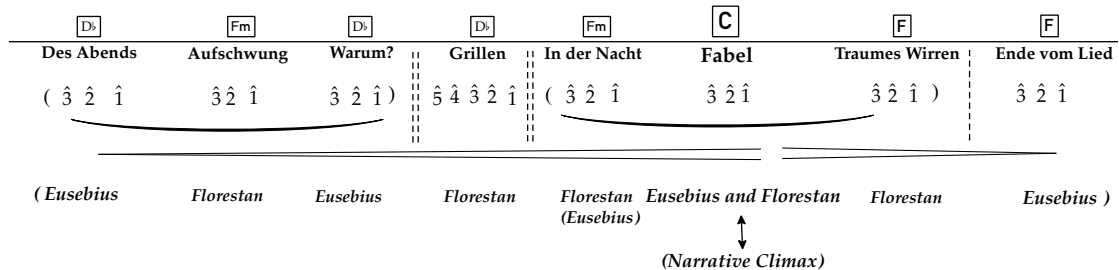


Figure 4.49: Schumann’s *Fantasiestücke* Op.12, the symmetry of *Ursatz* and narrative interplay of Eusebius and Florestan.

The axis of a 5th descent of *Urfinie* functions both as a formal element and as a narrative component. The first four pieces of the cycle maintain Db major as their tonal

center while passing through F minor only in *Aufschwung* before presenting Eusebius's peacefulness and Florestan's turbulent nature. The musical narrative then moves into a contemplative phase with *Warum?*. Beginning with *Grillen*, however, thematic and expressive roles begin to merge, signaling a turning point in the structure of the cycle. *In der Nacht* presents Florestan's energetic elements alongside Eusebius's peaceful accompaniment. In parallel, *Fabel* combines both characters through thematic opposition to create the dramatic peak of the cycle. The last four pieces of the narrative follow tonal areas that progress from F minor through C major to F major which represents the unification of Eusebius and Florestan.

The Schenkerian approach suggests that the expressive contrasts between Eusebius and Florestan shape the foreground structure, while an unbroken underlying framework maintains the cycle's tonal unity. The symmetry around *Grillen* serves to unite both expressive and formal aspects of the composition. The Fundamental stepwise descent (*Urlinie*) of $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ recurs multiple times throughout the piece so that the structural connections proves how Schumann integrates poetic expression with compositional process. Finally, these eight character pieces function as a "unified musical whole" by merging contrasting thematic elements, such as dynamic shifts, rhythmic variations, textural contrasts, and tonal relationships within a coherent structural design, which is mediated through Schenker's fundamental structure (*Ursatz*) and Schumann's narrative strategy that is realized as a musical dialogue between Eusebius and Florestan.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Florestan and Eusebius unfolded: Duality and Structural Depth

This conclusion builds on the literature review and analytical findings of my thesis to show how Schumann's expressive duality, personified in Florestan and Eusebius, shapes both the narrative and structural design of *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12. As the eight movements embody contrasting and unifying personas, they represent the cycle's expressive and formal dimensions. Schumann integrates these characters into musical parameters such as articulation, texture, melody, rhythm, and harmony. Rhythmic disjunctions like "hemiolas," combined with surface-level contrasts, reflect this difference. Florestan's impetuous nature is conveyed through syncopated rhythms in 6/8, 2/4, and 3/4 meters along with dynamic shifts and agogic accents in *Aufschwung* and *Grillen*. In contrast, *Eusebius* is characterized by sustained melodic lines, legato textures, and harmonic stability in 2/8, 2/4, and the closing 4/4 of *Ende vom Lied*.

The aspects of textural differences of Eusebius and Florestan occur primarily at the foreground (*Vordergrund*) level. However, as shown in the middleground graphs in the previous analytical chapters, Schumann articulates a deeper structural balance that transcends this duality. This mediating function, which is associated with "Master Raro," the character Schumann identified as a unifying voice between Eusebius and Florestan, comes out overtly in their dialogue through balanced contrapuntal lines and voice-leading symmetry, evident at the surface-level elaborations.

As Daverio and Sams (2001) pointed out, Schumann himself explained in the 1854 introduction to his collected writings that "in order to express different points of view on artistic matter, it seemed appropriate to invent contrasting artist-characters, of whom Florestan and Eusebius were the most important, with "Master Raro" occupying a mediating position" (p.15). Therefore, this structural balance is perceptible not only in the middleground (*Mittelgrund*) levels for each piece, which follows the natural development of classical forms, such as ternary (A-B-A) and its derivations, extended and compound forms, but also within the structural unity of the background (*Ursatz*).

Schumann's *Romantic irony*, by means of “symbols of expression and sign”⁴⁴, emerges from the dialectical relationship between Florestan and Eusebius throughout the piece. One of the idiomatic approaches appears in *Des Abends* and *Warum?* along with *In der Nacht*, where musical passages shift from lyrical moments to rhythmically dynamic movements with fast-paced sixteenth-note figurations and the increased tempo marking. For example, the enharmonic modulation that shifts to E major in m. 25 in *Des Abends*, while standing on its dominant B⁷, suggests a symbolic gesture rather than a functional modulation, inviting interpretive readings related to character and narrative. To explain this associative use of harmony, in Figure 5.1, Chernaik (2011) also shows how Schumann used letter-note correspondences, such as the overlap between “Eusebius, Schubert, and Schumann,” to reflect his fascination with musical symbolism or cryptographic allusions. I argue that the shift from Db to E major in *Des Abends*, serves as both a chromatic third relation and a subtle allusion to Schumann’s symbolic vocabulary. As a result, this tonal shift reflects how Eusebius is integrated into a structure that balances expressive character with formal coherence.

Eusebius:	E S(Es) B(Bb) S(Es)	E Eb E Bb Eb
Schubert:	S(Es) C H(B) B(Bb) E	Eb C B Bb E
Schumann:	S(Es) C H(B) A	Eb C B A

Figure 5.1: Schumann’s Musical Reference: “Eusebius, Schubert, Schumann”
(Chernaik, 2011, p.53).

5.2 Tonal Trajectory and Third-relation Map (*Tonnetz*)

I would like to discuss the findings from Chapter 4 through a broader analytical approach, combining Schenkerian and post-Riemannian perspectives. The large-scale chromatic third relation between Db (bVI) and F (I) major is reinforced by local third-

⁴⁴ As previously discussed in the literature review, the quotation of the so-called “Clara” theme in Schumann’s works has often been interpreted as a symbolic gesture tied to personal narrative. Eric Sams (1966) describes this as a thematic quotation with autobiographical meaning. Dill and Schumann (1989), however, frame such quotations as signs embedded in a broader semiotic system. They write: “Schumann’s music is also surrounded by and embedded in a whole network of signs, so that one could almost speak of a secret language [...] added to and superimposed on the purely musical language. [...] If romantic irony is a device by which the artist indicates his position above himself and above his work of art, the various signs mentioned above indicate Schumann’s idea of imitating his literary models in music. [...] One kind of ‘sign’ which, although consisting of tones only, also points to another context and thus fits precisely the definition of romantic irony; this is the quotation” (Dill & Schumann, 1989, p. 176).

related shifts throughout the cycle. These include the D $\flat$ (I) and E (bIII) major relation in *Des Abends*; F minor and A $\flat$ major in *Aufschwung*; D $\flat$ major (I) and F minor (iii) in *Grillen*; and D $\flat$ major (I) and E $\flat$ minor (ii) in *Warum?*. Furthermore, the tonic and dominant polarity of C (I) and G (V) in *Fabel* as well as the subdominant/tonic of F (I) and B $\flat$ (IV) major in *Traumes Wirren* offer additional layers of harmonic progression, often framed by fifth and fourth relations. These intra-movement tonal paths reflect Wadsworth's (2012) claim that Schumann's cyclic structures tend to loosen tonal closure in favor of circular and "metamorphic" trajectories, where recurring keys suggest fluid narrative development and expressive transformation (p.7). In this context, the tonal oppositions gain coherence as part of an overarching structural logic.

This multi-faceted comprehension of third relations also invites comparison with Schenker's structural hierarchy, even though his system generally de-emphasizes chromatic mediants. At this point, David Kopp (2002) clarifies that twentieth-century scale-degree centered theories, including Schenker's and Schoenberg's, often interpret chromatic mediants as context-dependent events without a fixed formal function. However, Kopp (2002) also outlines alternative approaches that treat such relations as "coherent participants in tonal processes" (p. 4), which offers analytical frameworks that emphasize their local significance in Romantic contexts.

While Schenker's theory critiques vertical harmonic labeling, as in Riemann's chord functions, his emphasis on linear voice-leading and background coherence does not prevent the expressive function of chromatic third relations. Kirkegaard-Larsen (2020) explains that Schenker's opposition to Rameau and Riemann resulted from their overemphasis on vertical structures detached from contrapuntal motion. In Schenker's view, true harmonic meaning arises from "the flux of horizontal voice-leading in which every superimposition has its origin" (Schenker, 1997b, p. 2). This emphasis on the organic *unfolding* of structure allows us to interpret such chromatic mediants not merely as chromaticism but as expressive displacements embedded in tonal structure.

In this manner, the post-Riemannian triadic transformation helps to understand how Schumann's mediant relations can be mapped in relation to each other. In Figure 5.2, this conceptualization models the voice-leading transformations that arise from the

interaction between held tones and the motion of surrounding voices. To clarify the system, Cohn (1998) explains:

Each triangle represents a consonant triad. [...] P, for Parallel, inverts around a horizontal (perfect fifth) edge, mapping C minor to C major; R, for Relative, inverts around a secondary diagonal (major third) edge, mapping C minor to Eb major; and L, for Leading-tone exchange, inverts around a main diagonal (minor third) edge, mapping C minor to Ab major (p. 172).

The *Tonnetz* thus serves as a geometric model of triadic relations through contextual inversion.

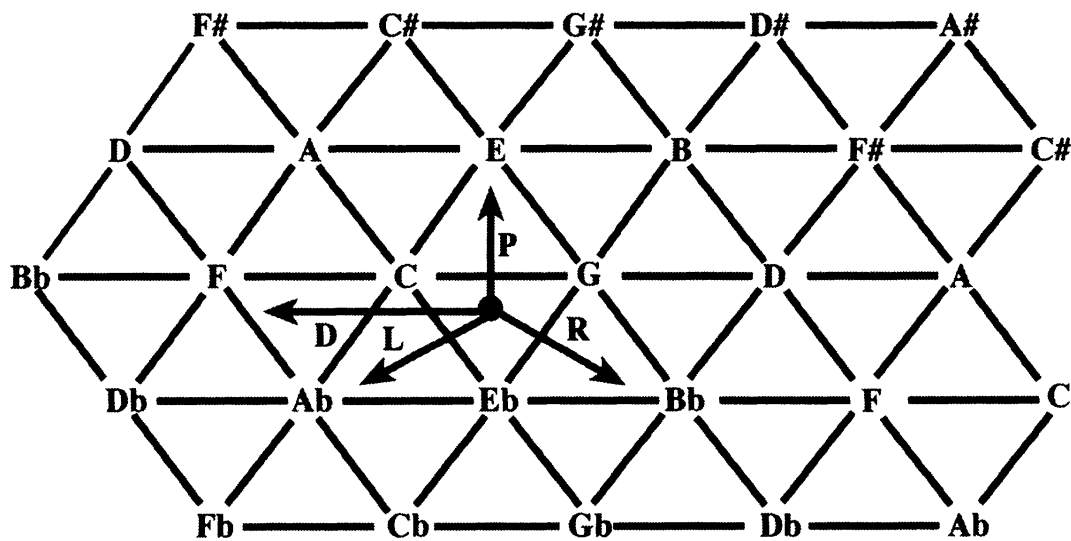


Figure 5.2: *Tonnetz* diagram, (Cohn, 1998, p. 172).

As already illustrated in Figures 4.2 and 4.3, showing mediant transformations based on F major/minor and Db major, and integrated into Figure 4.4, which shows the tonal trajectory of the cycle, we see the foundation for a TdR harmonic scheme. Figure 5.1 further supports this interpretation through its symbolic and narrative implications. Finally, Figure 5.3 presents a *Tonnetz* (tonal grid) model for *Fantasiestücke*, Op.12 that visualizes a post-Riemannian framework. As mapped out, the L, P, and R transformations articulate both local and large-scale third relations across *Fantasiestücke*'s movements. For instance, the L transformation from Db (bVI in F major) enables a diatonic third progression between *Des Abends* and *In der Nacht*, reinforcing a sense of “directional tonality.” The i–V relation between *In der Nacht* and *Fabel* (F minor to C major) may similarly be interpreted through L'

transformation.⁴⁵ Together, these transformations form a coherent harmonic map of Schumann's *Fantasiestücke* Op.12, in which third-related shifts trace both “cyclic” expressive and tonal relationships. In addition, the solid black arrows indicate both local and global tonal motions found within *Fantasiestücke*, Op.12, while the dotted arrows represent tonal transitions that imply necessary but unrealized modulations, for instance, the move from D $\flat$ to F $\flat$ (E) major would theoretically pass through D $\flat$ minor, although this key does not appear directly in the piece.

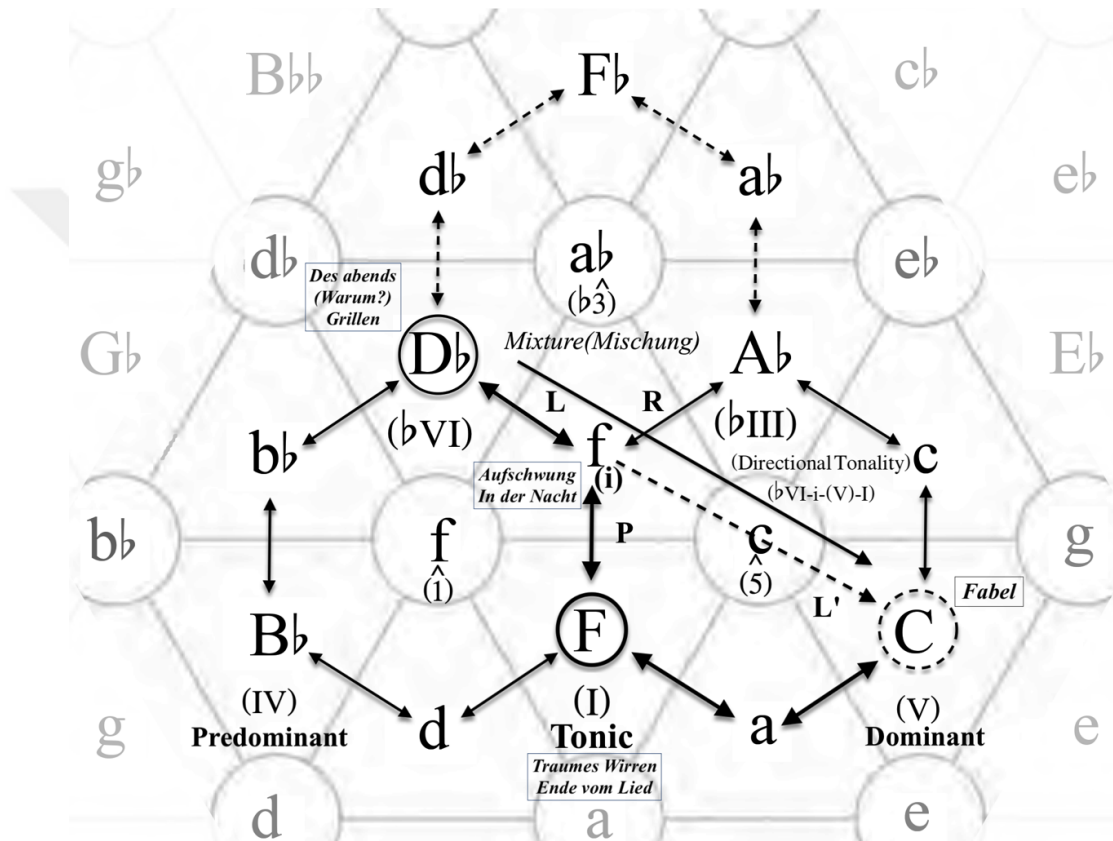


Figure 5.3: Schumann's *Fantasiestücke* Op.12, Tonal Map (Tonnetz) diagram.

All in all, these overlapping analytical approaches, Schenkerian, “directional tonality” of Wadsworth (2012), and post-Riemannian, disclose how *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, represents both tradition and innovation. The integration of scale-degree unity, centered on the *Urlinie* of $\hat{3}$ as “A $\flat$ ”, with chromatic displacement and voice-leading continuation reinforces both the monotonal design as Schenker's perspective and the post-Riemannian functions. This duality also strengthens the analytical foundation for

⁴⁵ The L' transformation, consisting of successively the operations of R, L, and P, also, shows the transformational relationship between F minor and C major.

interpreting Schumann's *Romantic irony*, as well as offering a transferable framework for his other cyclic piano works.

5.3 Schenkerian Insights of Sixth progression: Motivic Frame

To conclude on my analytical outcomes, this section offers a focused consideration on the recurring motivic role of descending and ascending sixths across *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, from a Schenkerian perspective. My analyses demonstrate that the “Clara” theme that Sams (1966) indicated, the $E^2-G\sharp^1$ interval, functions as a disguised “motto” in $D\flat$ major of *Des Abends*, $G\flat^2-B\flat^1$, through the cycle. This sixth-based motive appears not only as a surface-level gesture but also as a deep structural unit that contributes to the unfolding of the *Urlinie*. In various movements, this motive is transformed, transposed, and embedded into different textures and tonal contexts as a melodic leap and a linear progression (*Zug*).

In *Des Abends*, the initial descent $G\flat^2-B\flat^1$ sets a precedent for this motivic identity, later mirrored by ascending versions that help shape melodic continuity. As seen in Figure 4.9, this motivic cell initiates the descent of the *Urlinie* and suggests a “cross reference” that structurally binds multiple movements. The tonal connection between $D\flat$ major and F minor in *Grillen* and *Warum?*, as well as the longer prolongations observed in middleground (*Mittelgrund*) levels between sectional boundaries, further support this connection. These prolongational sixth spans play a critical role in establishing large-scale coherence.

The importance of the sixth interval is not unique to Robert Schumann. Schachter (2016), in his analysis of J.S. Bach's “Partita No. 1, $B\flat$ major, *Sarabande*,” and Mozart's “Sonata for Violin and Piano, K. 481, Adagio,” identifies descending sixths as fundamental expansions of structural tones. As Schachter explains, “It is very often the case that you have an upper neighbor at the beginning of a descending linear progression (*Zug*), or a lower neighbor at the beginning of a rising one” (p. 5). He illustrates this principle with a descending sixth $A-G\sharp-F\sharp-E-D-C\sharp$, expanding from a central tone and elaborated with neighbor tones, as seen in Figure 5.4.



Figure 5.4: Schachter’s descending sixth progression (Schachter, 2016, p. 5).

In Figure 5.5, Schachter observes in J.S.Bach’s *Sarabande*, mm. 1 and 13, that “a large-scale motion from tonic to dominant harmony, supporting an upper voice that goes from scale-degree $\hat{3}$ to $\hat{2}$ before descending into an inner voice by a sixth” (p. 23).

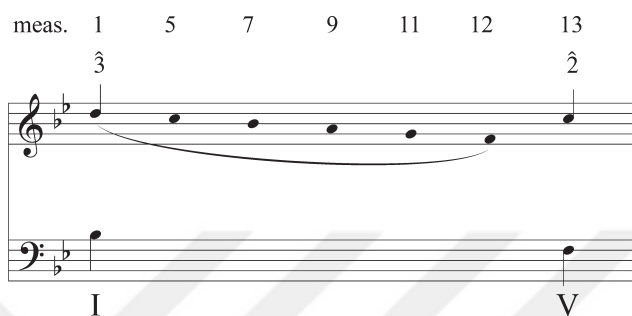


Figure 5.5: Bach, *Sarabande*, mm.1 and 13, Schachter’s analytical sketch (Schachter, 2016, p. 25).

Likewise, in his reading of Mozart’s “Sonata for Violin and Piano, K. 481, Adagio,” in Figure 5.6, he demonstrates a “very large progression of a descending sixth, from F all the way to A $\flat$ ” (p. 149). These examples suggest that the sixth interval, as a transformation of the consonant third, often articulates key thematic and structural movements.

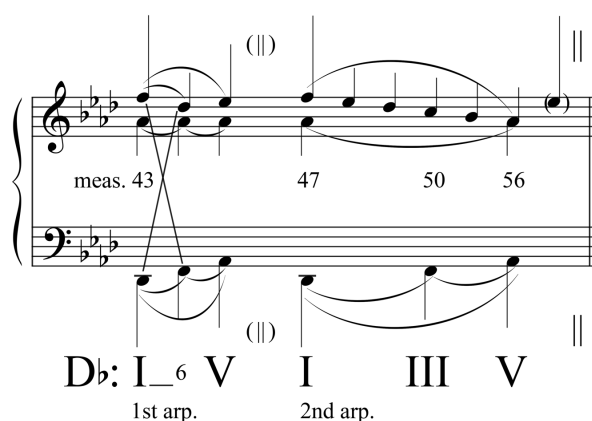


Figure 5.6: Mozart, Sonata, K.481, Adagio, mm. 43 and 56, Schachter’s analytical sketch (Schachter, 2016, p. 150).

In Romantic music, particularly in Schumann’s writing, this sixth relation becomes more fluid and symbolic. Rather than functioning solely as a *Zug* or formal neighbor-note progression, the sixth functions as an expressive and referential device. The

figures in my thesis support this: Figure 4.5 and the analytical sketch of *Des Abends* in Figure 4.9 reveal how this motivic interval sets the stage for larger structural motions.

Most importantly, Figure 4.48 summarizes the analytical hypothesis of this thesis so that the entire cycle is unified by a sixth-based linear motion. This middleground (*Mittelgrund*) graph shows a consistent presence of sixth relations across *Fantasiestücke*, particularly between *Aufschwung* and *Warum?* (I–bVI as F minor and Db), and a symmetrical return between *Grillen* and *In der Nacht* (bVI–I as Db and F minor). These patterns form a motivic arc. Finally, *In der Nacht* and *Fabel* complete a descending sixth line toward the *Uralinie*’s conclusion. The leap from C² to A² acts as a structural “cross-reference,” reinforcing both my analytical claim and the narrative logic of the cycle. Taking into consideration, this motivic reading of the sixth interval, supported by both Schenkerian theory and Schumann’s compositional design, highlights how seemingly local gestures accumulate structural weight across the cycle. It further confirms that Schumann’s integration of motivic unity and tonal progression exemplifies an idiosyncratic Romantic approach to form, where cyclic identity comes out from voice-leading continuity and motivic transformation.

5.4 The Role of Tonal Ambiguity in Expressive Perception

Tonal ambiguity, in terms of listening perception, can be described as the listener’s inability to identify an expected tonal center, the presence of unexpected cadences within musical passages, or the blurring of harmonic relationships due to chromatic saturation. This issue is addressed in both Cubero’s (2022) analytical study of Schumann’s and Brahms’s works, and Agawu’s (1994) broader discussion on tonal function and interpretation. Additionally, Ratner (1992), in *Romantic Sound and Sonority*, situates tonal ambiguity in a historical-aesthetic framework, illustrating how chromatic harmony contributes to the expressive vocabulary of Romanticism. In Schumann’s early piano cycles, as Kehinde (2012) shows in his study of *Kinderszenen* (1838), chromaticism is used to evoke romantic sonority through incomplete chords, extended harmonic vocabulary, enharmonic shifts, modal interrelations in cadential progressions, and ornamental arpeggiation that functions as expressive appoggiaturas. These create contrasting bitonal implications and deepen the perception of ambiguity.

In *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, the very first piece, *Des Abends*, presents this phenomenon clearly. In the second development section, the passage modulates from D $\flat$ major to E major with no conventional tonal preparation, relying solely on the standing on the dominant, B major. This enharmonic chromatic progression, supported by the TdR relationship (tonic–dominant–relative), offers a prime example of tonal displacement that leads to ambiguity. As Agawu (1994) suggests, tonal ambiguity always resolves at some level, making the term itself somewhat contradictory when applied without nuance. However, from the perspective of Romantic aesthetics, shared by the visual arts, literature, and philosophy, the expressive instability created by ambiguity is not a defect but a stylistic indication. *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, embodies this Romantic spirit and becomes a key work through which such interpretive ambiguities can be explored.

Cubero (2022) writes, “In Schumann’s and Brahms’s music some chords emerge distinctly while others blur together, distorting common progressions. How clear or blurry the chords appear depends largely on two factors, one rhythmic and the other harmonic” (p. 5). This observation is particularly relevant for *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, where both rhythm and harmony shape ambiguous perception. In *In der Nacht*, chromatic mediant relationships, such as between D $\flat$ and F minor, and blurred modal orientation sustain expressive tension. Similarly, in *Traumes Wirren*, contrasting cadential patterns, suspended resolutions, and chromatic appoggiaturas intensify local instability. These surface effects align with Schachter’s (1998) view that “functional harmony” exists not as a fixed sound object but as a Platonic ideal whose realizations can vary widely, making detail perceptible only through a broader understanding of structural unity (pp. 122–123).

Therefore, tonal ambiguity in Schumann’s *Fantasiestücke* should not be reduced to a technical irregularity. Instead, it functions as an expressive tool that invites interpretive depth. The blurred edges of harmonic progression and tonal center are not merely compositional challenges but serve as central elements of listener-centered expression. Consequently, through chromatic mediants, enharmonic shifts, extended tonal vocabulary, and rhythmic displacement, Schumann’s harmonic ambiguity activates a mode of listening whose perception aligns with Romantic introspection, expressive complexity, and structural fluidity.

5.5 Conclusion

My thesis research aimed to show that Schumann's *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, exemplifies the synthesis of cyclic unity and Romantic expression in early nineteenth-century music. Thanks to the Schenkerian perspective, my analytical research investigated that the chromatic TdR relationship between D $\flat$ and F major shapes the cycle's directed-tonal goal, in particular, with "F" functioning as both a unifying pitch and a tonal axis. As reflected throughout the piece, it also supports the underlying *Ursatz*, $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$, that shapes the work's cyclic cohesion. Therefore, this structural unity comes out across the eight character pieces, where motivic connections and large-scale tonal relations reinforce connections beneath the foreground diminutions. The existing interplay between the contrasting characters of Eusebius and Florestan is realized through harmonically innovative strategies, such as remote-key relationships, destabilizing modulations, modal mixture, and persistent tonal ambiguity. These compositional devices not only develop the expressive aspects of the composition but also contribute to the narrative depth and formal cohesion of the cycle.

In contributing to the literature on nineteenth-century music analysis, this research clarifies how third-related tonal pairs can persist for Romantic chromaticism and formal innovation, and it illustrates the value of structural reduction in analyzing motivic and harmonic relationships in these cyclic piano miniatures. Future research may productively apply this analytical approach to other multi-movement works by Schumann, such as *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16, *The Novelletten*, Op. 21, or *Nachtstücke* (*Night Pieces*), Op. 23, each of which presents distinctive aspects to the challenges of coherence across these character pieces in terms of their tonal unity and musical discourse. Continued exploration of this overarching design, as well as broader examination into the influence of literary and narrative models on this Romantic form, will further refine our understanding of structure and expression in Schumann's late piano and song cycles.

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