

# Robert Schumann's Song Cycle *Frauenliebe und Leben* (A Woman's Life and Love): An Interpretive Guide for Singers

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## Abstract

In this study Robert Schumann's song cycle *Frauenliebe und Leben* is analyzed in terms of interpretation. It includes pointers for a singer to make the piece more expressive and meaningful. On a piece of music, the markings that are made by the composer are very important and should be followed carefully. But the singer will need more for a perfect song interpretation, because the composers do not indicate how diction is to be used as an interpretive tool. The rhythms, the sounds of the language and their correct use, as well as small details such as an expressive breath in between phrases or words are also left to the singer. Over the years, there have been many published works by vocal coaches and voice teachers on how to interpret vocal compositions that detail which approaches are useful and appropriate and which ones are not. This work offers a comprehensive analysis of each song in the cycle based on the ideas of these coaches as well as the author's own singing experience with these songs.

**Keywords:** *Frauenliebe und Leben*, Robert Schumann, Vocal Guide. Song Cycle, Singing Lieder.

## Robert Schumann'ın *Frauenliebe und Leben* (Bir Kadının Hayatı ve Aşkı) Şarkı Dizisi: Şancılar İçin Yorum Rehberi

### Özet

*Bu çalışmada Robert Schumann'ın şarkı dizisi *Frauenliebe und Leben* yorum açısından incelenmiştir. Çalışma şancıların eseri daha ifadeli ve anlamlı söyleyebilmesi için ipuçları içerir. Bir müzik eserinin üzerinde, besteci tarafından belirtilmiş olan ifadeler çok önemlidir ve dikkatlice takip edilmelidir. Ancak mükemmel bir şarkı yorumu için şancı daha fazlasına ihtiyaç duyar, çünkü besteciler diksiyonun bir yorum aracı olarak nasıl kullanılması gerektiğini belirtmezler. Ritimler, dilin sesleri ve doğru kullanımları, hatta müzik cümleleri veya kelimeler arasında alınan yorumu güçlendirici bir nefes gibi küçük detaylar şancıya bırakılmıştır. Yıllar içinde, vokal eserlerin yorumlanması üzerine hangi yaklaşımların kullanışlı ve uygun olduğunu, hangilerinin olmadığını detaylandırarak ses koçları ve şan pedagogları tarafından yayınlanmış birçok çalışma bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışma şarkı dizisindeki her şarkının ses koçlarının görüşlerine ve yazarın bu şarkılar üzerine kendi deneyimlerine dayanan kapsamlı bir incelemesini sunmaktadır.*

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** *Frauenliebe und Leben*, Robert Schumann, Şan Rehberi, Şarkı Dizisi, Lied Söyleme.

## Introduction

Musical compositions are the reflections of composers' ideas, feelings and their souls. It is a universal language that composers use to express themselves. In their songs, composers communicate with the singers only through the notes, the use of harmony, rhythms, musical phrases, text, musical terms and dynamic nuances that they add to the score. Without an interpreter their works are not alive. An interpreter is therefore required to understand and deliver what the composer has imagined for that particular piece. An interpreter makes a piece come alive, but while doing so, they are not completely free: They have to follow what the composer has prescribed on the score. They cannot add things other than what the composer has asked for nor alter them. The best interpretations are invariably the ones where the singer meticulously reflects the composer's directions (Pierre Bernac, 1978). While some singers add extra nuances to the compositions to convey a sense of personal touch such as portamentos, glissandos and technical interpretations such as approaching a note under the pitch, such deviations from the composer's directions are considered fallacious and amiss (Pierre Bernac, 1978).

Still, there are certain things that singers can do to make a piece more sentimental and alive without contesting the composer's artistic vision. These include personal contributions to the interpretive experience such as bringing out the text by using a correct diction and making correct accents on the words and notes, since the sounds of the language play an important role in creating a song's atmosphere (John Moriarty, 1975). Diction can further be used to emphasize meanings and feelings. A singer can also use different vocal colors according to the text. For instance, if the text describes the murmuring trees, as is the case with many of Debussy's songs, the singer can use a softer voice with a warm color to create the corresponding effect. Finally, breathing at the right spot helps and supports correct phrasing.

In this work, suggestions have been made on phrasing, the use of diction, correct accents, and nuances while being loyal to the composer's directions for the piece. These include using different vocal colors according to the text and interaction between the voice part and the piano

part, since Schumann's piano writing is more than just an accompaniment to the voice. It has a dominant place in the cycle compared to the songs of other composers before Schumann (Carol Kimball, 1996).

## Frauenliebe und Leben – a Woman's Life and Love

Robert Schumann (8 June 1810- 29 July 1856) was a German composer who is one of the most influential figures of the Romantic era. He left law school to pursue a career as a pianist but unfortunately he had a hand injury that ended his dream; but then he focused on composing. Before composing his lieder (songs) he had written most of the large piano works that brought him fame such as *Papillons*, *Davidsbündlertänze*, *Toccata*, *Fantasia in C*, *Arabeske*, *Humoreske*, *Novelletten*, *Carnaval*, *Fantasiestücke*, *Kinderzenen*, *Etudes symphoniques*, and his three piano sonatas. In 1840, the year of his marriage to Clara Wieck was his 'song year' and *Frauenliebe und Leben Op.42* was composed in that year along with his many other great song cycles and collections such as *Dichterliebe Op. 48 Nos.1-16*, *Liederkreis Op.39 Nos.1-12* and *Myrthen, Op.25*.

In June 1840, Robert Schumann and Clara were fighting Clara's father in the law courts for their right to marry. It took until May, 1841; to have Wieck (Clara's father) sentenced to 18 days in prison. There was the wedding to plan and a home to find. All the while, Schumann's thoughts were entirely preoccupied with the psychology of women because he was in love with Clara. At that time Schumann was looking at the poems by Chamisso (cf.No.40). After a year Carl Loewe had set the same poems to his Opus 60, Schumann started composing his *Frauenliebe und Leben* as his wedding gift for his beloved Clara (Dietrich Fisher Dieskau, 1988:89). In these songs Clara appears as girl, bride, wife, mother and widow. Schumann omitted the final Chamisso poem, wherein the now-grandmother tells the joys and sorrows of her life to her granddaughter (Carol Kimball, 1996:89).

Female singers probably give more performances of *Frauenliebe und Leben* than of all other Schumann Lieder. In this cycle, there is an appeal about the progression from bride to mother to widow, because it speaks directly to the joys and sorrows of womanhood. Also the genius of Schumann's music attracted me to this cycle as a performer

myself. The cycle has been criticized on several accounts because of the poetry. First of all, Chamisso's poetry is not of the highest quality. As early as 1874, Theodor Storm wrote to Paul Heyse about these poems: 'Mörrike once told me how distasteful were these poems to him, and those are exactly my sentiments' (Dietrich Fisher Dieskau, 1988:89). Secondly and more importantly, when viewed in contemporary social understanding, the idea of a woman's entire being revolving only around her husband and her position as a wife goes against women's role in society today (Carol Kimball, 1996:88).

### Analysis of the Song Cycle

In this section, each song in the cycle is reviewed and analyzed in terms of meaning, use of diction and musical elements of interpretive significance.

#### 1. *Seit ich ihn gesehen*

The translation of the songs from German goes as follows: (Eric Sams, 1993) and (Dover Publications, INC 1981:244)

#### *Seit ich ihn gesehen*

Seit ich ihn gesehen  
Glaub' ich blind zu sein;  
Wo ich hin nur blicke,  
Seh' ich ihn allein;  
Wie im wachen Traume  
Schwebt sein Bild mir vor,  
Taucht aus tiefstem Dunkel,  
Heller nur empor.  
Sonst ist licht und farblos  
Alles um mich her,  
Nach der Schwestern Spiele  
Nicht begehrt' ich mehr,  
Möchte lieber weinen,  
Still im Kämmerlein;  
Seit ich ihn gesehen,  
Glaub' ich blind zu sein.

#### *Since I saw him*

*I believe I have gone blind;  
Wherever I look,*

*I see only him;  
His image floats before me like a waking dream,  
Emerging brighter and brighter out of the deepest  
darkness.  
Everything else around me is lightless, colorless,  
No longer drawn to the games of my sisters,  
I would rather weep quietly in my little room.  
Since I first saw him,  
I believe I have gone blind.*

*Seit ich ihn gesehen* opens the cycle in an atmosphere of adoration. This is a small portrayal of a young woman's love and devotion. The first three bars should be felt as one phrase although there is a pause mark. The breath in the second phrase should be taken quietly and unobtrusively. At the beginning of the piece Schumann indicates that the sustaining pedal carries the tone to the third beat without an interruption although there is a pause. This should be a clue for the singer in her interpretation of pauses through-

Figure 1. Vocal line should treat the breaks the same way as the piano part, without interrupting the line for a breath.

out the song (Gerald Moore, 1981:25) (Figure 1).

According to Eric Sams research in his book 'The Songs of Robert Schumann', he found out in a letter written by Schumann to Clara in January 1838 that Schumann has a 'Clara theme' that he used in almost all of his works. It is a combination of notes:

C – B – A – G# – A

C – L – A – R – A

In the song *seit ich ihn gesehen* we see a couple of these CLARA motives in measures 10-11, on the words 'Bild mir vor', and in measures 26-27, on the word 'Kämmerlein' (Eric Sams, 1993:23), (Figure 6)

Singers sometimes destroy the inherent dignity of

this song by tearing it into sentimental bits and pieces, sausageing of the vocal line and with diminuendos on each note 'lamentably, moaning often heard' (Miller, Richard, 1999:85). An honest vocal timbre and a good legato provide the most expressive performance of this Lied.

## 2. *Er, der Herrlichste von allen*

### **Er, der Herrlichste von allen**

Er, der Herrlichste von allen,  
Wie so milde, wie so gut!  
Holde Lippen, klares Auge,  
Heller Sinn und fester Muth.

So wie dort in blauer Tiefe,  
Hell und herrlich, jener Stern,  
Also er an meinem Himmel,  
Hell und herrlich, hoch und fern.

Wandle, wandle deine Bahnen;  
Nur betrachten deinen Schein,  
Nur in Demuth ihn betrachten,  
Selig nur und traurig sein!  
Höre nicht mein stilles Beten,  
Deinem Glücke nur geweiht;  
Darfst mich niedre Magd nicht kennen,  
Hoher Stern der Herrlichkeit!

Nur die Würdigste von allen  
Darf beglücken deine Wahl,  
Und ich will die Hohe segnen,  
Viele tausend Mal.

Will mich freuen dann und weinen,  
Selig, selig bin ich dann,  
Sollte mir das Herz auch brechen,  
Brich, o Herz, was liegt daran?

### **He is the finest of all men**

*He is the finest of all men,  
How gentle and loving he is!  
Sweet lip, bright eye,  
Clear head, true heart.*

*As stars shine in the blue depths of the sky, bright and  
glorious,  
So he is a star in my sky, bright and glorious, high and far*

*Go on your way,  
Just let me gaze on your brightness; Humbly to think of  
that is  
All my sorrow and all my joy.  
Heed not my silent prayer  
Said for your happiness;  
You must not know so lowly a maid as I am, you high  
and bright star!  
Only the finest of all women is worthy of your choice;  
And she shall have my thousand fold blessing.  
And I shall be glad and weep,*

The treble line of the piano and the voice sing their shared line of joy and adoration. Under it the strong bass octaves seem to represent lover himself (Eric Sams, 1993:130). One of the most effective moments in the entire cycle is at 'nur in Demut' on the 24. and 25. measures: The crescendo to a sudden piano dynamic. The singer should do the same dynamic nuances with the piano part (Figure 2) The singer should deliver the word 'Demut' with a slight emphasis on the initial consonant (d) and sing it with a warmest and most tender timbre possible without slowing down until the bar 27-28 (Richard Miller, 1999:86).



Figure 2. The singer should do the same dynamic nuances with the piano part with a slight emphasis on the initial consonant (d) on the word 'Demuth'.

When done properly this song has some magical moments in it. This song is the one when the contemporary woman has most problems dealing with Chamisso's poetry, since humility is a clear implication.

In this song we can see 'Schumann the pianist'. He wrote little ornamentations (gruppettos) for the voice that is mostly used in piano writing. These ornamentations are called the Chambonnières ornament (Eric Sams, 1993:131), (Figure 3). Jacques Champion de Chambonnières (1600-1672), a French harpsichordist and a composer created a table of ornaments for the keyboard performers which

included symbols with their realizations (Roland Jackson, 2005). In my opinion, interpretively in this song they represent the young lady's adoration for her lover. Furthermore slowing the pace is recommended so that these small notes (32<sup>nd</sup> of the 'turn') can be heard well.



Figure 3. Chambonnières ornament.

### 3. Ich kann's nicht fassen

Ich kann's nicht fassen

Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben,

Es hat ein Traum mich berückt;

Wie hätt' er doch unter allen

Mich Arme erhöht und beglückt?

Mir war's, er habe gesprochen:

'Ich bin auf ewig dein!'

Mir war's ich träume noch immer,

Es kann ja nimmer so sein.

O laß im Traume mich sterben,

Gewieget an seiner Brust,

Den seligsten Tod mich schlürfen

In Thränen unendlicher Lust.

#### *I can not grasp it*

*I can not grasp it or believe it,*

*It must be a dream;*

*How, from all others*

*He has chosen and blessed poor me.*

*It must have been in a dream that I heard him say 'I am yours forever!'*

*It seemed to me I was still dreaming*

*It can't possibly be true.*

*O let me die in this dream*

*Cradled in his arms,*

*Let me enjoy the most blissful death*

*Weeping with endless joy.*

Schumann wrote this song in declamatory style, its breathless tempo, and repeating phrases over and over

portrays the young woman's excitement and confusion. Many singers start this song dynamically piano because it has been done in that way in almost every recording (Richard Miller, 1999:88). This is a happy song although it is in c minor and Schumann indicates a 'forte' dynamic for the singer and the pianist as well. This is a song that should burst with joy and energy; there is no place for whispers in this song. The measures 17-36 should be slower, legato and dynamically contrasting with the entrance of this song (Figure 4).

Figure 4. The measures 17-36 should be slower, legato and dynamically contrasting with the entrance of this song.

The song ends surprisingly with a C Major chord. Interpretively, this means that she finally started to believe that it really happened, that it is not a dream anymore and her dream did become true. Note that a sudden change from a minor key to a major one typically indicates the occurrence of something positive and happy in the music, since major tones creates a more positive atmosphere (Wayne Chase, 2006). In my opinion in the setting of this song, such a change from minor to major can only be associated with the realization of a blissful event. Moreover, in many recordings I heard singers, especially in this song they tend to attack the note that have longer value, first with a straight tone then adds the vibration. This is a pop style technique that is not appropriate in lieder interpretation.

### 4. Du Ring an meinem Finger

#### **Du Ring an meinem Finger**

Du Ring an meinem Finger,

Mein goldenes Ringlein,

Ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen,

Dich fromm an das Herze mein.

Ich hatt' ihn ausgeträumt,  
 Der Kindheit friedlich schönen Traum,  
 Ich fand allein mich, verloren  
 Im öden, unendlichen Raum.  
 Du Ring an meinem Finger,  
 Da hast du mich erst belehrt,  
 Hast meinem Blick erschlossen  
 Des Lebens unendlichen Werth.  
 Ich will ihm dienen, ihm leben,  
 Ihm angehören ganz,  
 Hin selber mich geben und finden  
 Verklärt mich in seinem Glanz.  
 Du Ring an meinem Finger,

### **You, ring on my finger**

*You, ring on my finger,  
 My little gold ring,  
 I press you devoutly to my lips  
 Devoutly to my lips, to my heart.  
 I woke from the peaceful dream of childhood,  
 I found myself alone  
 Forsaken in an infinite barren space.  
 You, ring on my finger,  
 Then you began to teach me  
 You opened my eyes to infinite, deep value of life.  
 I shall live to serve him, live for him,  
 Belong to him completely  
 Surrender myself and become transfigured in the light  
 of his love.  
 You, ring on my finger,*

The whole atmosphere of this song is much calmer and grounded compare to the songs before which were lighter and fantasizing. Also, the vocal register is lower in this song which indicates to me that she is portrayed as a more mature woman. Singing this song with a flowing tempo helps the singer because there are long and legato lines and not many breaks to take a good breath. A flowing tempo also shows the beautiful melody that the piano part has; otherwise the phrase loses its direction. The soprano

voice in the accompaniment moving in unison with the vocal line should not be emphasized; it is the alto voice that is of more important (Gerald Moore, 1981:30) (Figure 6).

The higher pitches in this song should not be false stressed such as 'Du Ring AN meinEM Finger' and also in bar 5 'Ich drücke DICH fromm an DIE Lippen' On the contrary these quiet phrases need velvety smoothness and they should have curves not sharp angles (Figure 6). This can be achieved with an absolute legato and equal breath pressure on each note. In measures 8 and 9 'an das Herze mein' and also 'endlichen tiefen Werth' Clara theme appears again (Figure 6).

The musical score for 'You, ring on my finger' is presented in three systems. The first system covers measures 1-4, the second system covers measures 5-8, and the third system covers measures 9-13. The vocal line is in the upper staff, and the piano accompaniment is in the lower staff. The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The score includes a tempo marking 'Innig.' and a measure number '2. Measure'. The lyrics are: 'Du Ring an mei - nem Fin - ger, mein gold - nes Rin - ge - lein, ich drü - cke dich fromm an die Lip - pen, dich fromm an die Lip - pen, an das Her - ze mein. Ich hatt' ihn aus - ge - träu - met, der Kind - heit fried - lich schö - nen Traum, ich

Figure 6. The alto line in the piano part should be emphasized. In addition, the higher pitches in the voice line should not be false stressed.

In Schumann songs, the piano part is as important as the vocal part, it is not just an accompaniment for the singer. Especially in this cycle there are many places in almost every song that piano either continues the singer's lines or completes them. For example in the first song in measures 15-17 piano repeats the singer's thoughts, in the second song in measures 25-27 piano part continues to sing the melody while the singer pauses briefly for a breath (Figure 7).



Figure 7. In the first song, piano repeats the singer's thoughts on the measures 15-17.

### **5 Helft mir, ihr Schwestern**

#### **Helft mir, ihr Schwestern**

Freundlich mich schmücken,  
Dient der Glücklichen heute mir.  
Windet geschäftig mir um die Stirne  
Noch der blühenden Myrte Zier.  
Als ich befriedigt, freudigen Herzens,  
Sonst dem Geliebten im Arme lag,  
Immer noch rief er, sehnsucht im Herzen,  
Ungeduldig den heut'gen Tag.

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,  
Helft mir verscheuchen eine thörichte Bangigkeit;  
Daß ich mit klarem aug' ihn empfangen,  
Ihn, die Quelle der Freudigkeit.  
Bist, mein Geliebter, du mir erschienen,  
Giebst du mir Sonne deinen Schein?  
Laß mich in Andacht,  
Laß mich in Demuth,  
Laß mich verneigen dem Herren mein.

Streuet ihm, Schwestern,  
Streuet ihm Blumen,  
Bringet ihm knospende Rosen dar.  
Aber euch, Schwestern,  
Grüß' ich mit Wehmuth,  
Freudig scheidend aus eurer Schaar.

#### **Help, dear sisters**

*Help, dear sisters,  
Be friendly and help me adorn myself  
Be of service today to happy me.  
Busily wind about my forehead  
The wreath of blossoming Myrtle.  
When I rested, in peace and joyful at heart*

*When I lay in my beloved's arms,  
He would call with impatient heart for this wedding  
day.*

*Help me sisters,  
Help me to banish foolish fears*

*So that I can receive him with clear eyes  
Him, the fountain of happiness.*

*My beloved, have you appeared before me  
Are you giving me your warmth, sun?*

*Let me in worship,*

*Let me in humility,*

*Let me bow down to my lord and master.*

*Strew flowers, sisters,*

*Strew flowers before him*

*Bring him budding roses.*

*But you, my sisters,*

*I greet with melancholy,*

*As I joyfully depart from your circle.*

After the lyric and calm *Du Ring an meinem Finger* comes the wedding day. One can sense through its busyness the excitement of the bride; can picture her helpers stir around her, making last minute adjustments to the wedding gown. The tempo of this piece is fast (72 for half note). Therefore, if the singer can breathe in every four bar, it really helps the piece to move without an interruption. Also, giving importance on some words instead of all of them, of course without sacrificing the diction, helps the piece to move as well and gives that breathless quality to the piece. For example: In the opening phrase we have 'Helf mir, ihr Schwestern, freundlich mich schmücken, dient der Glücklichen heute mir'. Pronouncing each word equally slows down the piece and takes away the 'breathless quality' but if we stress only the words 'Helf, schwestern, schmücken, dient, heute' it gives a direction to the phrase and the vocal line becomes more flowing (Figure 8). This tempo and technique should be sustained until measure 41, the phrase 'Aber euch, Scwestern'. There should be a *ritardando* since she say goodbye to her sisters. There is also a lot of chromaticism in the piano part that slowing down brings it out.

Ziemlich schnell. 5.

1. Measure 2. 3. *mf* 4. 5.

Hilft mir, ihr Schwestern, freundlich schmücken, dient der Glücklichen

6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

heu - te, traurig, windet geschäftig mir und die Stirne noch der blühenden Myr - the Zier.

*Immer mit Pedal.*

Figure 8. Please stress only the words 'Hilft, schwestern, schmücken, dient, heute'.

The piano postlude is written in the style of a wedding march and should be slower than the first tempo (52 for a half note). The piano postlude strangely enough is in the same key as Wagner's bridal chorus in *Lohengrin* (Eric Sams, 1993:135). Many think that the piano postlude's march tune was an inspiration for Wagner for his bridal march (Figure 9).

*ritard.* 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52.

eu - rer Schaar.

*ritard.*

*dim.*

Figure 9. Bridal march at the end of this song.

## 6. Süsster Freund

### Süsster Freund

Süsster Freund,  
 Du blickest mich verwundert an,  
 Kannst es nicht begreifen,  
 wie ich weinen kann;  
 Laß der feuchten Perlen ungewohnte Zier  
 Freudig hell erzittern in den Auge mir.  
 Wie so bang mein Busen,  
 Wie so wonnevoll!  
 Wüßt' ich nur mit Worten,  
 Wie ich's sagen soll;  
 Komm und birg dein Antlitz  
 Hier an meiner Brust,  
 Will in's Ohr dir flüstern alle meine Lust.

Weißt du nun die Thränen,  
 Die ich weinen kann?  
 Sollst du nicht sie sehen,  
 Du geliebter Mann;  
 Bleib' an meinem Herzen,  
 Fühle dessen Schlag,  
 Daß ich fest und fester nur dich drücken mag.  
 Hier an meinem Bette hat die Wiege Raum,  
 Wo sie still verberge meinen holden Traum;  
 Kommen wird der Morgen, wo der Traum erwacht,  
 Und daraus dein Bildniß mir entgegen lacht, dein  
 Bildniß!

### Dear friend

Dear friend,  
 You look at me in surprise,  
 You cannot understand  
 Why I weep.  
 Let the unaccustomed glory of wet pearls  
 Tremble with joyous brightness in my eyes.  
 How anxious my heart feels,  
 Yet how blissful;  
 If only I knew  
 How to say it in words.  
 Come and hide your face  
 Here on my breast,  
 Let me whisper all my joy.  
 Now do you know  
 Why I am crying?  
 Should you not see my tears,  
 my beloved husband;  
 Stay by my heart,  
 Feel how it beats;  
 Let me hold you closer, closer.  
 Here by my bedside there is room for a cradle,  
 Silently hiding my blissful dream;  
 And one morning the dream will wake  
 And look at me laughing with your eyes. Your likeness!

In this song, she intimately tells her husband of her pregnancy. After five songs in flat keys, the tonality of G major is striking. It means something new and unexpected.

It is also a turning point that divides the cycle's first poems of girlish charm from the mature woman that she became.

This song starts with an augmented interval in the vocal line and repeated six times. This augmented interval sometimes sound like weakness such as in the beginning of the song and sometimes as a compassion. The interpretation of this interval is related to the text underneath it and it should be sung with a different intention and meaning. Otherwise repetition of this interval the same in each time it comes (6 times throughout the song) may sound boring. This is the most intimate of all the songs in this cycle. The vocal color should be as warm as possible. The vocal writing can be classified neither as recitative nor as arioso, yet it is both.

Measures 20-21 'will ins Ohr dir flüster'n' should have a color imitative of whispered secret joy. Therefore, the high note should sound as pianissimo as possible (Gerald Moore, 1981: 34). The change to C-major in the piano interlude shows that young wife summons up courage to tell her secret. After the interlude, both voice and piano part becomes very intimate and passionate. The tempo and the volume should increase gradually to sustain this passionate moment.

### 7. *An Meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust*

#### **An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust**

An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust,  
Du meine Wonne, du meine Lust!  
Das Glück ist die Liebe, die Lieb' ist das Glück,  
Ich hab's gesagt und nehm's nicht zurück.  
Hab' überschwenglich mich geschätzt  
Bin übergücklich aber jetzt.  
Nur die da säugt, nur die da liebt  
Das Kind, dem sie die Nahrung giebt;  
Nur eine Mutter weiß allein,  
Was lieben heißt und glücklich sein.  
O, wie bedaur' ich doch den Mann,  
Der Mutterglück nicht fühlen kann!  
Du lieber, lieber Engel, du!  
Du schauest mich an und lächelst dazu,  
An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust,  
Du meine Wonne, du meine Lust!

Instead of using a lullaby setting, Schumann chooses a quick rocking tempo. The vocal phrases are set syllabically and rhythmically repetitive as if she is baby-talking. The tempo should not be too fast at the beginning because it will get faster towards the end. In measures 26-30 the singer may sing almost staccato, imitating the piano part since the tempo becomes very fast 'noch schneller' in this part (Figure 10).

Figure 10. The singer may sing almost staccato, imitating the piano part

The piano postlude at the end describes the play between the mother and the child. Chamisso may also upset today's man by saying 'How I pity a man, who cannot know the joy a mother has'. This line is a proof that these poems had not be written to offend women; the roles of women and men was just different back in 1840.

### 8. *Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan*

#### **Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan**

Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan,  
Der aber traf.  
Du schläfst, du harter, unbarmer Mann, den  
Todesschlaf.  
Es blicket die Verlass'ne vor sich hin,  
Die Welt ist leer.  
Geliebet hab' ich und gelebt,  
Ich bin nicht lebend mehr.  
Ich zieh' mich in mein Inn'res still zurück,  
Der Schleier fällt,  
Da hab' ich dich und mein verlornes Glück,  
Du meine Welt!

#### ***Now for the first time you have hurt me***

*Now for the first time you have hurt me, But this hurt is grievous;*

*Hard, pitiless man, you are sleeping the sleep of death.  
The forsaken woman just sits and stares,  
The world is empty.  
I have lived and loved,  
Now no life is left in me.  
I withdraw silently into my inmost soul; The veil falls.  
There I have you and my past happiness,  
You my whole world!*

In striking contrast to the joy of previous scene, newly widowed looks at her husband's body. This is an intensely dramatic song, unrelieved in mood until the final postlude. The singer may feel exposed during this song since there is not enough support comes from the piano and also most of the vocal part consists of repeated single notes. Piano part has long chordal notes and since it is a percussive instrument the sound gets weaker and weaker. The only thing that will sustain the intensity of this song is keeping the beat exact at all times (although this song has recitative qualities) and a perfect diction from the singer. For example: 'Ersten Schmerz' (first hurt), 'traf' (cruel), 'harter unbarmherziger Mann' (hard, pitiless man) must be sung with cutting articulation (Gerald Moore, 1981: 37). Singing on the consonants also really help to deliver sforzandos such as in 'Nun hast du'. Elongating and resonating the consonant 'N' before the vowel 'u' helps the singer to achieve the 'sforzando' mark better since making sforzandos in the middle register of the voice is more difficult compared to the high register (Figure 11).



Figure 11. Entrance of this song should be sung with cutting articulation on the consonants.

The intensity of the drama should continue until the highest point in the song 'die Welt ist leer, ist leer' (the world is empty, is empty). Schumann repeats the word 'empty' and the singer should chose which one to give more emphasis because both of them shouldn't be accented. The

choice of which 'leer' is accented is a matter of taste: The first 'leer' appears more important on the music as the note value of the first 'leer' is longer and it has a crescendo mark above it. The second 'leer' should be cut with an exhaustion of pain (Figure 12).



Figure 12. Interpretation of the repeated word "leer" should be different in each time.

Then the dynamic volume and intensity should drop gradually as she withdraws herself silently. The last phrase before the piano postlude 'da hab' ich dich...' should have the warmest and quietest sound. This is the part where the audience holds its breath and it should be treated carefully in order to not to lose the magic of this moment.

In the piano postlude the theme of the first song is played in its entirety. How to interpret this long postlude is completely up the performer. The singer should continue to act even though she is not singing because these are still her thoughts.

## Conclusion

In this cycle Schumann not only expressed the meaning of the words with his music but also he was sensitive about creating a completely feminine atmosphere with the quality of the harmony and tone. The dynamic markings are mostly gentle and soft and it only gets louder when the character becomes more passionate. Also, the choice of tonalities that he made indicates that this cycle has many feminine qualities. Because it is believed that 'sharp' keys have hard and 'flat' keys have soft qualities in sound (Dietrich Fisher Dieskau, 1988: 89). Schumann composed numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 in flat-keys; and only numbers 6 and 7 in sharp keys. This cycle is a true work of art which has many beautiful, passionate and magical moments in it. But it is the duty of the singer to bring out these special moments. Therefore singers must analyze each song they sing in detail in terms of harmony, rhythm, diction, composer's markings, meaning of the text and the historical

context. These songs will always have a special place in the repertoire.

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