AN EXAMINATION OF TEXT REFLECTION AND IMAGERY IN ZOLTÁN GÁRDONYI’S FÜNF LIEDER NACH GEDICHTEN VON RAINER MARIA RILKE

Anne Beloncik Schantz, B.S., M.M.

Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

August 2014

APPROVED:

Linda Di Fiore, Major Professor
Stephen F. Austin, Minor Professor and Chair of the Division of Vocal Studies
Jeffrey Snider, Committee Member
Elvia Puccinelli, Committee Member
James Scott, Dean of the College of Music
Mark Wardell, Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School
Zoltán Gárdonyi is described as having exemplified “the continuation of the Liszt tradition” in his music; however, since for so much of his compositional life he was forbidden to publish by the Communist government in Hungary due to his connection to the Christian church, he has been largely forgotten. Shortly after the composer’s death in 1986, Gárdonyi’s son, Zsolt (b.1946) began publishing his father’s music in addition to his own. However, the elder Gárdonyi’s works are still not widely known outside Hungary and Germany. Gárdonyi’s ability to support and reflect text musically makes his songs excellent teaching tools and recital repertoire. A characteristic example of this may be found in his Fünf Lieder nach Gedichten von Rainer Maria Rilke.

According to his son, Zoltán wrote these songs “in the German romantic tradition (e.g. Brahms) like a mirror for the romantic influenced lyrics.” Examination of the Rilke-Lieder, and of the poems which make up the cycle, demonstrates the composer’s ability to “mirror” text in both general tone and specific idea. Discussion of imagery, textures and sonorities, and elements of harmony, melody and rhythm as they relate to interpretation of the poetry, reveal the depth to which the poetry is embedded in the music of the songs. At times the piano becomes another “narrator” or even a character in the poems, expressing not only text but subtext as well. This document explores the illustration of the extensive imagery of Rilke’s texts in the music of Fünf Lieder nach Gedichten von Rainer Maria Rilke, with the purpose of both introducing Gárdonyi’s song literature to American singers and voice teachers, and making the case for its inclusion in the canon of repertoire for the studio and the stage.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All musical examples are reprinted with kind permission from Edition Walhall, Richard-Wagner Straße 3, D-39106 Magdeburg, Germany. www.edition-walhall.de

Poetic translations are my own.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the guidance and patience of my major professor, Dr. Linda Di Fiore, and advisors Dr. Stephen F. Austin and Dr. Elvia Puccinelli, as well as Dr. Jeffrey Snider. I offer special thanks to Prof. Dr. Zsolt Gárdonyi for introducing me to these lovely songs, and for encouraging my work on this project. Finally, I owe eternal gratitude to my family, especially my husband, Cory and our daughter, Lia.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</th>
<th>iii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2. BIOGRAPHY OF ZOLTÁN GÁRDONYI</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3. AN OVERVIEW OF <em>FÜNF LIEDER NACH GEDICHTEN VON RAINER MARIA RILKE</em></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4. “HERBSTTAG”</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5. “ICH WAR EINMAL SO KINDERKÜHL”</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 6. “TRÄUME”</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 7. “DIE LIEBENDE”</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 8. “DER SCHUTZENGELE”</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 9. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX: PUBLISHED WORKS OF ZOLTÁN GÁRDONYI</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

All musical examples are reprinted with kind permission from Edition Walhall, Richard-Wagner Straße 3, D-39106 Magdeburg, Germany. [www.edition-walhall.de](http://www.edition-walhall.de)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Example Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Herbsttag,” mm. 3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>“Herbsttag,” mm. 33-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>“Herbsttag,” mm. 43-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>“Herbsttag,” mm. 48-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>“Herbsttag,” mm. 50-54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Zoltán Gárdonyi, <em>Fünf Lieder nach Gedichten von Rainer Maria Rilke</em>, “Ich war einmal so kinderkühl,” mm. 1-4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>“Ich war einmal so kinderkühl,” mm. 13-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>“Ich war einmal so kinderkühl,” mm. 18-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>“Ich war einmal so kinderkühl,” mm. 24-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>“Ich war einmal so kinderkühl,” mm. 22-23, 27-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>“Ich war einmal so kinderkühl,” mm. 32-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Zoltán Gárdonyi, <em>Fünf Lieder nach Gedichten von Rainer Maria Rilke</em>, “Träume,” mm. 1-5, 6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>“Träume,” mm. 17-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>“Träume,” mm. 22-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>“Träume,” mm. 34-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. “Träume,” mm. 42-45</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. “Träume,” mm. 47-49</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. “Träume,” mm. 50-54</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. “Die Liebende,” mm. 7-8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. “Die Liebende,” mm. 18-20</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. “Die Liebende,” mm. 32-33</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. “Die Liebende,” mm. 34-36</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. “Die Liebende,” mm. 46-47</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. “Die Liebende,” mm. 47-52</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Zoltán Gárdonyi, Fünf Lieder nach Gedichten von Rainer Maria Rilke, “Der Schutzengel,” mm. 1-4</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. “Der Schutzengel,” mm. 9-12</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. “Der Schutzengel,” mm. 28-29</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. “Der Schutzengel,” mm. 34-35</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. “Der Schutzengel,” mm. 39-41</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. “Der Schutzengel,” mm. 46-47</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. “Der Schutzengel,” mm. 48-49</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. “Der Schutzengel,” mm. 56-67</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. “Der Schutzengel,” mm. 76-77</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. “Der Schutzengel,” mm. 86-87</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. “Der Schutzengel,” mm. 95-97</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
38. “Der Schutzengel,” mm. 110-113
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Six decades removed from World War II and the horrors of the Third Reich, scholars recognize the importance of music conceived by the victims of Nazi oppression, whether because of ethnicity, style or ideology. Shortly after the war ended, activists and historians such as Schmerke Kaczerinski and Yehuda Eisman began collecting and publishing music produced during the Holocaust, and “suppressed” works are being discovered (or rediscovered), published, and performed even now, sixty-nine years after the end of the war. A similar form of artistic suppression had begun in Russia as early as the 1920s; in 1932, the Communist Party brought all activity of Russian musicians under the control of the Composers’ Union.¹ In the years following 1945, as communism gained momentum in Europe and the Cold War began to loom, censorship of the arts increased behind the Iron Curtain, particularly against those artists and musicians who held religious convictions. One country where this occurred was Hungary, the home of Zoltán Gárdonyi (1906-1986).

Zoltán Gárdonyi is described as having exemplified “the continuation of the Liszt tradition” in his music; however, since for so much of his compositional life he was forbidden to publish by the Communist government in Hungary due to his connection to the Christian church, he has been largely forgotten.² For several years, Gárdonyi’s son, Zsolt (b.1946), a fine composer in his own right, has been publishing his father’s music in addition to his own.³ Though this means the elder Gárdonyi’s works are becoming more available, they are still not widely known outside Hungary and Germany. Gárdonyi’s ability to support and reflect text

³ Zsolt began publishing Zoltán’s works a few years after his father’s death in 1986.
musically, and to preserve the spoken rhythm of the German language in sung phrases without sacrificing musicality, make his songs excellent teaching tools and recital repertoire. A characteristic example of this may be found in his *Fünf Lieder nach Gedichten von Rainer Maria Rilke*.

According to his son, Zoltán wrote these songs “in the German romantic tradition (e.g. Brahms) like a mirror for the romantic influenced lyrics.”⁴ Examination of the *Rilke-Lieder*, and of the poems which make up the cycle, demonstrates the composer’s ability to “mirror” text in both general tone and specific idea while maintaining the integrity of Rilke’s poetic rhythm. Discussion of imagery, textures and sonorities, and elements of harmony, melody and rhythm as they relate to interpretation of the poetry, reveals the depth to which the poetry is embedded in the music of the songs. At times the piano becomes another “narrator” or even a character in the poems, expressing not only text but subtext as well. This document explores the illustration of the extensive imagery of Rilke’s texts in the music of *Fünf Lieder nach Gedichten von Rainer Maria Rilke*, with the purpose of both introducing Gárdonyi’s song literature to American singers and voice teachers, and making the case for its inclusion in the canon of repertoire for the studio and the stage.

---

Zoltán Gárdonyi was born April 25, 1906 in Budapest, Hungary. His father, Albert, was a recognized historical scholar and amateur violinist; his mother, Mária, studied piano at the Budapest Academy in the same class as Béla Bartók, graduating with her diploma in 1903. Both parents greatly encouraged Zoltán’s musical talents. The Gárdonyi household was “a haven of domestic and chamber music,” where “prolific and varied music-making” took place among the family’s numerous musical friends. Not surprisingly, as his mother was a pianist and the two undoubtedly played together often, Zoltán’s early compositions utilized the piano extensively – solo and two-piano pieces, songs for voice and piano, and chamber music with piano. As a young teenager, Zoltán became intrigued by organ music as well, which later became a large part of his compositional life.

Zoltán Gárdonyi studied composition with Kodály at the Budapest Liszt Academy of Music beginning in 1923, and with Hindemith at the Berlin Staatliche Hochschule für Musik from 1927 until his graduation in 1930. The teaching styles of the two composers could not have been more different. Kodály encouraged his students to study the works of the “great masters of music history” and use their own judgment in finding solutions when needed; according to Gárdonyi himself, this most often resulted in developing a student’s individual style. Hindemith focused almost exclusively on contemporary techniques and expected students to incorporate them into their work, using precisely dictated solutions to problems. Gárdonyi, already an experienced composer when he began studying under Hindemith, seems to have successfully

---

6 Ibid., 5.
7 Ibid., 9.
synthesized the two approaches in his work after completing his studies; according to Dezső Karasszon in his biography of Gárdonyi, many examples exist of “sections and passages that, while not showing any ostensible signs of Kodály’s influence or Hindemith’s style, clearly could not have been written without direct personal experience of the two composers, an experience which lay in layers, one on top of the other.”

After completing a doctorate at Berlin University in 1931, Gárdonyi taught music at the Lutheran teacher-training college in Sopron, Hungary until 1941. According to Karasszon, during this time Gárdonyi acted as “piano accompanist to virtually the whole of Sopron, which became the equivalent of Côthen for him: in addition to exploring the chamber music repertoire of the 18th and 19th centuries…it also gave him ample opportunity to try out and to introduce his own compositions.” It was during this period of prolific creativity and immersion into musical community that Gárdonyi composed the Rilke-Lieder. In 1941 he began a post at the Liszt Academy, where he taught musicology and special courses on Liszt and Bach. In 1946 Gárdonyi became head of the department of Protestant Church Music at the Academy; in 1948 the department was disbanded and Gárdonyi was “denounced,” restricted to teaching only “optional subjects” for a time. He continued to teach at the Academy, however, before retiring in 1967. In 1972 he left Hungary and moved with his family to West Germany. He served as a choirmaster in Bad Soden for two years, then retired to Bad Salzuflen where he lived until his death on June 27, 1986.

A Liszt scholar, Zoltán Gárdonyi edited Liszt’s Hungarian Rhapsodies for the Editio Musica Budapest in addition to publishing numerous articles on Liszt (including one on his unpublished Hungarian piano pieces); other publications include articles on Bartók and J.S.

---

8 Ibid., 10.
9 Ibid., 12.
10 Ibid., 14.
Bach, among other topics, as well as two books on the counterpoint of J.S. Bach. Gárdonyi composed thirty works for orchestra; thirty-five for piano, both two-hands and four-hands; eighty-four for organ, the majority of which are based on chorale melodies; four for harmonium; twenty-nine for chamber strings; fifteen for chamber winds; one hundred thirty-six sacred choral works, both accompanied and unaccompanied; thirty-nine secular choral works; twelve sacred vocal chamber works; and twenty-two songs for voice and piano, which include *Fünf Lieder nach Gedichten von Rainer Maria Rilke.*\(^{11}\)

---

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 21-31.
CHAPTER 3

AN OVERVIEW OF FÜNF LIEDER NACH GEDICHTEN VON RAINER MARIA RILKE

The five poems which comprise the Rilke-Lieder were composed early in Rilke’s career, dating from between 1898 and 1906. According to the Poetry Foundation’s information on Rilke, “Rilke's early verse, short stories, and plays are characterized by their romanticism. His poems of this period show the influence of the German folk song tradition and have been compared to the lyrical work of Heinrich Heine.” Overall, Rilke’s writings are known for rich imagery; in a New Republic book review of an English translation of Rilke’s Duino Elegies, W. H. Auden argued that “Rilke's most immediate and obvious influence has been upon diction and imagery.” Fittingly, Gárdonyi’s setting of these five poems, three of which are found in Buch der Bilder (Book of Images) draws upon and reflects the images in Rilke’s words.

Dezső Karasszon calls Fünf Lieder nach Gedichten von Rainer Maria Rilke Zoltán Gárdonyi’s “setting of the German poet’s prophetic vision of the universe.” In light of the fact that Rilke rejected Christianity, it seems an ironic twist that Gárdonyi’s song cycle begins and ends with the Creator. However, his tendency toward the sacred in this instance makes sense given that Gárdonyi’s work was suppressed years later because of his commitment to the music of the Christian church. Gárdonyi composed the Rilke-Lieder after World War II had begun in Europe; each of the five poems deals in some way with fear and, logically, Gárdonyi addressed this very human emotion with respect to the Divine.

Rilke often used objects to describe or exemplify humanity, and created physical representations of emotion. For example, in “Herbsttag,” the first of the five poems in this cycle,

14 Karasszon, Zoltán Gárdonyi, 13.
wind and flying leaves signify anxiety. In the second poem, “Ich war einmal so kinderkühl,” a valley and a tower represent different kinds of fear. The speaker of “Die Liebende,” the fourth poem, compares her former calm existence to a stone, over which a brook - representing the busy outside world - simply murmured quietly. Also, though Rilke rejected the Christianity of his upbringing, he used references to the divine and supernatural in his writings; for instance, the final poem in the Gárdonyi Rilke-Lieder, “Der Schutzengel,” addresses an angel. The speaker describes the angel’s name as “an abyss, a thousand nights deep,” and asks the angel when it will acknowledge the Creator whose radiance still exists in its wings. During the period of Rilke’s life when he composed “Der Schutzengel,” his work “often featured traditional Christian imagery and concepts, but presented art as the sole redeemer of humanity.” The angel, and all the images describing it, may be said to represent the higher, artistic aspects of the human mind, and perhaps the various, at times unexplainable human emotions and behaviors.

Musically, Gárdonyi’s settings of these texts reflect and amplify Rilke’s imagery in several ways. Melodies in both the voice and the piano suggest height, depth, rising and falling, or intensity of emotion. Emotional intensity is also depicted by complexity or simplicity of harmonies, as well as by the speed of harmonic movement. Tonal ambiguity illustrates unease, both physical and emotional. Similarly, rhythm conveys not only specific thoughts and emotions, but mood, state of mind, and physical aspects such as rapid pulse or approaching sleep as well. Of course, all these elements combine to reflect Rilke’s vivid texts in Gárdonyi’s music.

15 Poetry Foundation, “Rainer Maria Rilke.”
Literally, “Herbsttag” describes the end of summer and the beginning of autumn – the “winding down” of the year – and the practical aspects of preparing for winter: making sure one has adequate shelter and can care for himself. Poetically, of course, the text implies much more, and Gárdonyi’s musical embodiment of the poem reflects this. From the very beginning of the song (and the cycle), the musical “scene” is set.

The opening measures of “Herbsttag” suggest an ending, immediately conveying the idea of inevitability; the piano leads into the vocal entrance through a progression which includes two fully diminished seventh chords, resolving into the tonic harmony which begins the sung text, “Herr: es ist Zeit (Lord: it is time)” (Ex. 1).

Viewing the season of autumn as a metaphor for the later years of one’s life, the poem illustrates the emotional ambivalence of growing older and looking back upon past experiences. The first statement of the poem – “Lord: it is time.” – suggests the inevitability of the end of “summer,” or youth; the next words, “The summer was very grand,” suggest a measure of contentment, or at least acceptance. As the voice enters, addressing the Creator, the piano’s initial rhythmic motion is replaced by hymn-like, perhaps even dirge-like, slow-moving chord changes with a slowly descending bass line (see measures 3-4 of Example 1 above); the voice begins singing the words “Lord: it is time. The summer was very grand” in a simple, unaffected melody over the slowly descending harmonies in the piano.

This initial statement of resigned acceptance grows into actively receiving the signs of waning summer - fading sunlight, increasing winds, maturing crops – sung in an increasingly expansive melody over the near-constant presence of the triplets in the piano depicting the sweeping wind. The triplet arpeggio figure from the first two measures returns as the words “lass die Winde los (let loose the wind)” are sung (Ex. 2). This “wind” figure remains prominent as the voice goes on to ask that the “last sweetness” of summer’s fruit yield be chased into the heavy wine for autumn; the rhythmic sweeping of this motive again settles into hymn-like heaviness as the voice begins warning of the stark loneliness of autumn and winter (Ex. 3). This musical picture captures the urgency of accomplishing goals and dreams before time runs out,
along with the excitement of seeing the work of a lifetime bear fruit; the “wind” is a constant reminder of the unstoppable passing of time.


The sense of urgency soon gives way to a renewed realization of the inevitable; a return of the grave, slow-moving chords underlies the pronouncement that the time for preparation is ending (“Whoever now has no house…”). The “wind” motive again returns in a slightly altered version at measure 43; the voice describes someone feeling restless, without peace, as the leaves fly and drift. Here the more chromatic, closely voiced triplets and faster harmonic changes depict the short, sometimes twisting gusts that often come with changing weather and colder temperatures, rather than the earlier sweeping wind of the end of summer (Ex. 4).

Example 4. “Herbsttag,” mm. 43-45.

Just as autumn ends the freedom and bounty of summer and ushers in the starkness of winter, life comes to a point at which one fears he has accomplished all he ever will, and wonders if it is enough. As the triplet motive once again brings the wind into play, the voice describes the lonely restlessness that might accompany a long winter; certainly a person entering
the “autumn” of life might fear loneliness and loss of activity in old age. The wind motive underlying these words suggests the loss of control to another force – as the leaves fly where the wind takes them, and someone passing a long winter has no control over nature, a person facing the last years of life cannot help but feel powerless against time.

Finally, “Herbsttag” concludes with a diminishing of rhythmic and harmonic intensity. The final vocal phrase, “wenn die Blätter treiben (“while the leaves fly”),” ends on A, the third of the F major triad, again suggesting uncertainty or instability (Ex. 5). The piano returns to the opening triplet figure but redirects through indistinct chords rising into silence; it then closes in a series of chords similar to those under the first words of the song – as if the last of the wind is exhausted into stillness (Ex. 6).

Example 5. “Herbsttag,” mm. 48-49.

Example 6. “Herbsttag,” mm. 50-54.
CHAPTER 5

“ICH WAR EINMAL SO KINDERKÜHL”
(“I WAS ONCE SO CHILDISHLY ALOOF”)

Ich war einmal so kinderkühl:  
da traf mich alles wie ein Bangen.  
Jetzt ist mir jede Angst vergangen,  
nur diese wärmt mir noch die Wangen:  
ich fürchte mich vor dem Gefühl.

I was once so childishly aloof:  
since everything made me afraid.  
Now each anxiety is gone from me,  
Only this one still warms my cheeks:  
I am afraid of feeling.

Es ist nicht mehr das Tal, darin ein Lied  
wie schützend seine lichten Schwingen breitet,  
es ist ein Turm, der vor den Fluren flieht,  
bis meine Sehnsucht hoch vom Saume sieht  
und zitternd mit der fremden Stärke streitet,  
die sie so selig von den Zinnen zieht.

It is no longer the valley, in which a song  
protectively spreads its bright wings.  
It is a tower, which from the fields retreats;  
Until my longing looks from high upon the edge,  
And trembling, struggles with the foreign power  
Which so blessedly pulls from the battlements.

“Ich war einmal so kinderkühl” begins with a short, sparse, staccato piano introduction which immediately establishes the aloofness described in the text (Ex. 7).


The voice sings the first phrase as the piano continues the opening texture, simply doubling the melody in alternating octaves. As the voice admits childish fears in the second phrase, the piano delivers simply voiced IV-I chord movements; the following two phrases
contain slightly more complex chords, as the text begins to describe the one remaining “adult” anxiety. The apprehension in the phrase “I am afraid of feeling” is emphasized by a halting, hesitant rhythm, culminating in a single foreboding, low-lying voice in the piano (Ex. 8).

Example 8. “Ich war einmal so kinderkühl,” mm. 13-17.

A sudden change occurs at measure 18: as the text begins to elaborate on the “feeling” of the previous phrase –implying it can no longer be soothed by a song – the music abruptly moves from the D minor tonality to B-flat major. The halting rhythmic movement gives way to triplets in the piano’s right hand, along with a dynamic increase to mezzo-forte and a con Pedale marking; the voice, however, sings a descending minor scalar passage in even eighth notes. Together with this ambiguous tonality, the angular, twisting shapes of the triplets in the piano reflect the heightening unease of the text, particularly against the even eighths in the voice (Ex. 9).
Example 9. “Ich war einmal so kinderkühl,” mm. 18-19.

Diminished harmonies at measure 23, borrowed from the minor mode and adding to the ambiguous tonal structure, create an increasingly strong pull back to the momentary tonic of B-flat. The winding triplets “untwist” into a rising arpeggio in the piano at measure 24, which reinforces the image of the song’s protectively spreading wings; the figure then becomes even eighths in the voice which depict the tower in the next measure, accompanied by another abrupt tonal shift to D-flat (Ex. 10).


As one image gives way to another poetically, musically one image becomes another.

This happens again at measure 27, where another figure from the previous phrase becomes part
of a new image; this time the augmented-sixth harmony depicts the “retreat” of the tower (Ex. 11).


![Example 11](image1)

The voice then restates the tower figure, a major third higher, and sings the highest pitch in the song on the word “hoch” (“high”), as a quickly descending arpeggio in the piano brings out the height of the voice in contrast. At the words “vom Saume sieht (“from the edge looks”),” the voice’s descending melody illustrates the steep drop from the edge of the tower to the ground far below; the half step from F to E before the open fifth drop emphasizes the sharp descent. The melody’s open fifth, and its suggestion of precarious balance, is reiterated harmonically in the piano beneath the voice, and the piano then restates the melodic figure to finish the phrase (Ex. 12).

Example 12. “Ich war einmal so kinderkühl,” mm. 32-36.

![Example 12](image2)

A return of the initial texture of the song accompanies the text, “and trembling, struggles with the foreign power”; interestingly, the alternating octaves in the piano which so clearly
depicted aloofness in the opening phrases just as clearly suggest trembling here. A sudden
dissonance underlies the word “streitet” (“struggles”), before the flowing triplets from measure
18 return as the aforementioned power “blessedly pulls from the battlements.” The “longing”
seems to be victorious in its struggle with the “foreign power,” as is suggested in the relative
peace of the harmony and rhythm from measure 40 to the end; the song ends calmly in D major.
However, the final cadence moves from E minor\(^7\) (ii\(^7\)) through F-sharp minor (iii) to D major (I)
– hardly the clear, firm V-I resolution one might expect; also, both the voice and the piano end
on A, the fifth of the scale. These suggest that the victory is perhaps temporary and unsettled;
fear can always return.
CHAPTER 6

“TRÄUME”
“DREAMS”

Dreams have many connotations and functions in literature. Often they are portrayed as ethereal and other-worldly, with their own kind of logic (or non-logic). They may be prophetic, or bring messages of comfort or warning; they sometimes are entered deliberately and navigated to solve problems or find answers. In literature and in reality, time and space often function much differently in dreams than in wakefulness, and the dreamer often has physical abilities or limitations that exist only in the dream; other times, however, they are quite vivid and realistic. Of course, another form of dream is an ambition or desire; the dreamer may strive to achieve the dream, or simply hold it as a far-off wish. In either case, and in either kind of dream, many emotions may be involved, including longing, excitement, frustration, despair, and fear.

“Träume” begins by continuing the ambiguity between major and minor tonalities from the previous song, as well as contrast between rhythmic structures to convey different images and feelings. With an expressive marking of lusingando (“coaxing,” “flattering,” “beguiling”), the piano opens in a haunting introduction which, though clearly rooted in B-flat major, employs nearly constant half-step suspensions in a syncopated pattern that extends and obscures the basic

Träume, die in deinen Tiefen wallen,
aus dem Dunkel lass sie alle los.
Wie Fontänen sind sie, und sie fallen
lichter und in Liederintervallen
ihren Schalen wieder in den Schoß.

Und ich weiß jetzt: wie die Kinder werde.
Alle Angst ist nur ein Anbeginn;
erst ohne Ende ist die Erde,
und das Bangen ist nur die Gebärde,
und die Sehnsucht ist ihr Sinn –

Dreams, which well up in your depths,
out of the dark let them all free.
Like fountains are they, and they fall
lighter and in song-intervals
into their shells, back into the womb.

And I know now: become like children.
All fear is only a beginning;
but the earth is without end,
and fear is only the gesture,
and longing is its meaning –

Dreams, which well up in your depths,
out of the dark let them all free.
Like fountains are they, and they fall
lighter and in song-intervals
into their shells, back into the womb.

And I know now: become like children.
All fear is only a beginning;
but the earth is without end,
and fear is only the gesture,
and longing is its meaning –
I-IV-I harmonic movement. An extraordinary layering of images occurs as the voice enters, describing dreams that well up in the depths. The half-step suspension and release pattern is incorporated into the rising and falling shape of the vocal melody, suggesting the “welling up” of the dreams; in the piano this melody is doubled an octave below the voice, evoking the “depths,” and the syncopation continues to achieve a hanging, unsettled feeling reminiscent of a dream state (Ex. 13).


At the words “aus dem Dunkel,” the voice dips low into yet another leaning half-step figure before releasing into the dominant F major tonality at “lass sie alle los.” At measure 13, the rising and falling melody in the voice continues as the text compares dreams to fountains; at the same time, a new texture begins to appear in the piano, an ascending triplet which conveys the water rising into the air. At first the triplets alternate with the previous syncopation, which along with the shape of the vocal melody depicts the brief feeling of suspension before the water falls back down. However, the triplets soon become constant, their melodic shape suggesting the rise and fall of the water (Ex. 14).

After the voice sings “lichter, und in Liederintervallen,” the shape of the triplets changes slightly – they begin to suggest the descent of the water in both rhythmic and melodic “song-intervals” back into the “womb” of their shells (Ex. 15). As the “fountain” triplets continue in the piano, the voice seems to settle into childlike simplicity, along with simpler harmonies; however, after the phrase “Alle Angst ist nur ein Anbeginn,” the undulating melody in the voice and syncopation in the piano return as emotion begins to heighten. Here the half-step motive which earlier reflected the motion of the water conveys emotional intensity; also, the melody changes slightly so that as the text describes an earth without end, and feelings of fear and longing, the phrase becomes a sequence which climbs higher in tessitura and seems to shift harmonies endlessly (Ex. 16).
The rising intensity reaches its peak at “Sehnsucht,” in both vocal pitch and harmonic movement (Ex. 17). Then, though the sense of urgency subsides, the final phrase is repeated, nearly identical in melodic shape but lower in tessitura and immediately piano in contrast to the forte of the climax. This is the only instance of repeated text in the entire set of songs, and it includes one final half-step suspension at “Sehnsucht”; this combination highlights the importance of “longing” in the discussion of dreams (Ex. 18).


The final phrases of the poem say “fear is only the gesture, and longing is its meaning”; fear, though a powerful and often overwhelming emotion, is in this case a symptom of the longing brought about by the dream. This longing is felt even after the voice ends, in truncated versions of the opening vocal phrase – or, more accurately, versions of the piano’s doubling of the opening vocal phrase, with brief portions of the syncopated rhythm beneath – and two other manifestations of the falling half-step figure (Ex. 19). Through these elements, the postlude both recalls the image of the dream, and portrays it returning to the “depths” from which it rose.

Example 19. “Träume,” mm. 50-54
The speaker of “Die Liebende” is a woman in love, feeling out of control and powerless against her feelings and their consequences. It is worth noting that the speaker never utters the word “love,” but only speaks of yearning for her lover – a much more raw and visceral emotion, which the music of this song reflects. The short one-measure piano introduction consists of oscillating octave triplets that depict the rapid, thundering pulse of the woman as she begins to explain herself to her lover. The C of the octave triplets are the basis for what, by the end of the second measure, becomes a dominant seventh and finally resolves at measure 3 into the tonic F major; this opening harmonic sequence, along with the first word, “Yes,” suggests that the speaker is perhaps answering a question from her lover. At the word “sehne,” the half-step
suspension so prevalent in the previous song reappears to convey the yearning the woman admits to feeling (Ex. 20). She goes on to add that she feels she is losing herself; as she finishes these words, a short interjection in the piano reminiscent of a leitmotiv in Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* conveys the woman’s feeling that the outcome of her situation is inevitable (Ex. 21).

Example 21. “Die Liebende,”

In addition, in these opening phrases the voice is doubled an octave below in the piano as in the first phrase of “Träume.” In this instance, the doubling reinforces the sense of inevitability – as if her melody, like her life, is simply surrendering to a momentum that cannot be stopped. She actually voices this feeling in the next phrase, “without hope that I resist what comes to me, as from your side, serious and undeterred and unwavering.” Throughout this section, the triplets in the piano that began the song remain constant against the duplet rhythms in the voice, adding even more emphasis to the sense of unrelenting momentum.

Suddenly this momentum stops and a placid stillness replaces the racing pulse. Time seems to be suspended; the piano plays block chords solely on beats two and four, either releasing or sustaining through beats one and three, while the voice sings a smoothly contoured melody. For the first several measures of the section, the chords are played in inversions with the lowest pitch at or near middle C, adding to the feeling of suspended time and space (Ex. 22).
In this peaceful texture, the woman recalls feelings of stability and self-sufficiency, when “I was One, nothing called and nothing betrayed me.” The chords in the piano gradually descend toward the bass as the woman compares her stillness to a stone over which a quiet brook murmurs; she recalls feeling settled, grounded, undisturbed by events and circumstances around her (Ex. 23).

After a brief moment of final hesitation in which the piano simply sustains octave C’s in the bass, the placid calm of the memory ends as abruptly as it began. A marking of “Wie anfangs” (“Like at first”) returns the tempo to that of the first section. Rather than the agitated triplets in the piano, however, a sixteenth-note pattern pulls the image of the quiet brook from the calm middle section and turns it into a quickly moving river, yet another reminder of the woman’s feeling that she cannot resist her fate (Ex. 24).

The sixteenth-note pattern comes to an abrupt but brief stop as the voice finishes the word “abgegrochen” ("torn"), then returns just as suddenly an octave lower at the description of the “unconscious dark year.” Here the voice also drops low in range, and the augmented-sixth harmony at “dunkeln” emphasizes the “dark year” even more. The triplets return in the piano as the woman begins the final thought of the poem. Despite her obvious strong emotional connection to her lover, she feels as if some outside force has given her life to someone who does not know who she was before she loved him; she fears losing her individual identity to a shared identity. The restlessness suggested in the triplets plays into the increasing anxiousness conveyed by the harmonies; in typical Romantic fashion, prolonged progressions and delayed resolutions heighten the tension and lead to a climactic moment, harmonically and melodically, at “der nicht weiß” (Ex. 25).

Following this climax, the voice drops an octave in pitch, the piano settles into half-note and quarter-note motion, and the harmonic texture brings the song to a surprisingly simple end – after all the extended harmonies in the previous phrases, the voice ends with essentially a V7-I cadence, and the “release” of the resolution is extended through a combination of IV-I movements and brief suspensions (Ex. 26). The relatively low pitch level of the final measures in the piano, combined with the simplicity of the harmony, suggest resigned acceptance, or perhaps just spent energy, on the part of the woman.

The first sounds in the brief piano introduction of “Der Schutzengel” suggest the call of a bird in an otherwise still, ethereal atmosphere. Markings of piano and mezza voce along with the static harmonies resulting from the high-pitched birdsong and the barely moving left-hand
pattern give a weightless, dreamlike quality which suggests the quiet of night (Ex. 27). Once again, the ambiguity of major and minor tonality adds to the veiled quality. The birdsong and the hushed stillness continue as the voice enters, addressing the angel as a bird who responded to a nighttime cry. As the speaker recalls waking in the night and crying out, the motion in the piano begins to expand slightly; the left hand finally leaves the pedal E flat and the harmonies begin to progress, moving from E flat to a key center of G for the next phrase (Ex. 28). Still, the bird call persists even as the piano’s left hand gradually descends to depict the “abyss, a thousand nights deep;” the voice also conveys this image with an octave drop to D, the lowest vocal pitch of the entire song.

Example 27. “Der Schutzengel,” mm. 1-4.

Example 28. “Der Schutzengel,” mm. 9-12.
The dreamlike beginning returns in the piano and voice, in its original key of E flat, at “Du bist der Schatten, drin ich still entschlief,” but at the actual mention of a dream, the texture in the piano becomes undulating triplets over which the vocal melody climbs, culminating in an A flat at “du bist das Bild” (Ex. 29). The bird call figure returns, and immediately the vocal line begins descending, eventually resettling toward a low E flat at the description of “shining relief” in contrast to the angel’s image (Ex. 30).

Example 29. “Der Schutzengel,” mm. 28-29.  
Example 30. “Der Schutzengel,” mm. 34-35.

The second stanza of the poem begins with a new musical texture as the speaker begins to address the angel with more passion and fervor. In contrast to the floating, dreamlike atmosphere of the opening section, here driving triplets and gradually rising pitch levels in the piano become the basis for a building intensity (Ex. 31).

The speaker describes the angel “grandly gushing forth,” and the rising figure which began in the piano’s left hand (see Ex. 31) now becomes part of the right-hand triplet pattern (Ex. 32). This also ushers in another change in key, to a temporary key center of E; the contrast between the angel and the speaker is reflected in the piano, as the triplets move to the left hand and the ascending seconds are in the right hand (Ex. 33). As the speaker begins describing a sleep that felt like a grave, and like being lost and fleeing, the harmonic structure becomes at once forceful and slow-moving. Over a pedal E flat in the piano’s left hand, the constant triplets in the right hand become a gradually rising sequence; though this figure rises by a whole step every four measures, the vocal melody contains a sequence twice as long and ascends overall by only a half step before the entire structure seems to contract into itself and return to E flat (Ex. 34).
However, E flat becomes a dominant harmony leading to an A flat tonality, and a renewed sense of expansion begins; as the speaker tells of being lifted from darkness, the voice and piano both ascend step by step, the ever-present triplets in the piano rising through a series of chord inversions that lead to the climactic moment of being “hoisted like a scarlet flag” (Ex. 35).
Example 35. “Der Schutzengel,” mm. 76-77.

Example 36. “Der Schutzengel,” mm. 86-87.

In the final stanza, the speaker attempts to describe the unfathomable mindset of the angel, to whom miracles seem ordinary while people and common flowers are of great significance. Harmonically, time seems to stop once more as the triplets that have dominated so much of the song finally give way to a harp-like pattern of arpeggiated chords which reflect several images—the awe of the miracles, the blooming of the roses, and finally the “flaming” events in the angel’s view—while not seeming to move in any clear direction (Ex. 36). Soon, however, another image takes shape: as the speaker begins to ask the angel when he will acknowledge the Creator, the voice and the right hand of the piano gradually ascend while the piano’s left hand descends by half steps, depicting the unfurling of great wings, while steady repeated sixteenth-note chords suggest the beating of those wings (Ex. 37).
Finally the radiance of the “seventh and last day” of Creation bursts forth as a leap of a seventh in the voice to a climactic A flat depicts the grandeur of the angel’s full wingspan, before the voice goes on to describe that radiance as now lying forlorn. At last the energy of the moment dissipates; under directives of *tranquillo* and *piano* the sixteenths slow to triplets and finally to eighths, and the speaker, perhaps timidly, poses one final question to the angel: “Do you bid me ask?” The open-ended melody in the voice is answered in the piano; both phrases contain one last “flutter” – perhaps a remnant of the radiance in the angel’s wings (Ex. 38).
CHAPTER 9
CONCLUSION

_Fünf Lieder nach Gedichten von Rainer Maria Rilke_ contains several elements found in much of the standard vocal repertoire used in the studio and in performance. The texts are well-set for good singing; the vocal melodies and rhythms allow individual words as well as phrases to be sung clearly and comfortably, and the piano supports the voice well while also serving the poetry itself. Rich with vivid and varied imagery, the cycle also allows moments of both individual virtuosity and attention to ensemble, as well as opportunities to use clear diction to further reinforce the images in the poetry and in the music. Performers and instructors alike should find _Fünf Lieder nach Gedichten von Rainer Maria Rilke_ suitable for use alongside literature by the “great masters” Zoltán Gárdonyi studied so closely.
APPENDIX

PUBLISHED WORKS OF ZOLTÁN GÁRDONYI
Edition Walhall, Magdeburg

Orchestral Works:

Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra
Serenade No. 2 for Strings
*Drei Bilder zur Karwoche (Three Images of Holy Week)* for Organ and Strings
  Der Gang an den Ölberg (Walk on the Mount of Olives)
  Gethsemane
  Golgatha

Chamber Works:

*Fünf Lieder nach Gedichten von Rainer Maria Rilke* for Soprano and Piano
String Quartet No. 3
Fantasy for Violin and Organ
*Rondo Capriccioso* for Violin and Piano
*Zwei Leichte Stücke* (Two Easy Pieces) for Violin and Piano
  Reigen (Round)
  Mädchentanz (Maiden’s Dance)
Sonata No. 2 for Viola and Piano
Sonata for Cello and Piano
Sonata for Double Bass and Piano
Sonata for Flute and Piano
Fantasy for Oboe and Piano
Sonatina for Clarinet and Piano
Woodwind Quintet
Sonata for Tuba and Piano

Organ Works:

*Psalm-Fantasie*
*Weinachtswiegenlied* (Christmas Lullaby)

Choral Works:

*Ende September* (SSATB, German translation of Hungarian text)
*Lobgesang nach Psalm 45* (SATB/Organ, German text))
*Adeste Fideles* (SATB/Organ)
Ostinato Musikverlag, Salzgitter

Chamber Works:

Zwei Kleine Rhapsodien for Cello and Piano
Fünf Klavierstücke zu vier Händen nach ungarischen Volksliedern (Five Piano Pieces for four hands on Hungarian folksongs)
Fünfzehn Ungarische Volkslieder (Fifteen Hungarian Folksongs) for piano, four hands

Organ Works:

Partita “Veni Creator Spiritus”
Three Chorale Arrangements
   Ein feste Burg
   Mit Freuden zart
   Finnisches Bußlied
Postludium

Choral Works:

Three Canons (Equal voices, German text)
Du Schöner Lebensbaum (SATB, German text)
Danklied der Erlosten (Psalm 107) (SATB, German text)

Editio Musica Budapest

Meditatio in Memoriam Zoltán Kodály (Organ)

Möseler Verlag, Wolfenbüttel

Three Motets (SATB, German text)
   Psalm 96
   Finnisches Bußlied
   Psalm 23

National Music Publishers, USA

Psalm 23 (SATB, English text)
REFERENCES


