ABSTRACT

Robert Schumann’s Frauenliebe und -leben and Dominick Argento’s From the Diary of Virginia Woolf are two song cycles that enjoy frequent performances. Argento modeled the large-scale form and dramatic concept of his own work after Schumann’s cycle: eight songs depicting chronological moments from a woman’s life feature a return in the last song to thematic material from the first song. With this comparative analysis of these two song cycles, the author argues that the two works have more in common than a broad schematic design.

The song cycles are linked on many important musical and dramatic levels. Due to the preponderance in both Frauenliebe und -leben and From the Diary of Virginia Woolf of strophic- and rondo-like writing, there is an obsessive quality that becomes apparent, though the object of obsession is different in each of the cycles. In the Schumann cycle, it is the patriarchal view that a woman’s obsession should be her husband, family, and home life. While in the Argento cycle, it is an artist’s obsession with her writing and her own thoughts on the complexity of life that directs the listener.

This document examines the similarities and differences between the two song cycles, primarily through musical means but taking into account text and drama, as well. Aspects such as text, concept, large- and small-scale formal structures, recurring motivic material, accompaniment, character and mood, and performance considerations all bear some degree of similarity between the two cycles and are examined here to show why they effectively complement one another in performance. A thorough understanding of both works and how they relate to each other also helps to inform the artists’ performance.
DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to my mother and father. Kristine and Alfred Fontaine are the two most giving people I have had the privilege of knowing. Their patience, support, kindness, and love extend not only to their family and friends, but to everyone. The care that they have always shown has been an example throughout my life. Without their encouragement to better myself, to believe in myself, to read everything, to ask questions, to think of others, to have countless goals and accomplish as many of them as possible, and to be a productive member of society, I would never be where I am today. I love you both with all of my heart.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are so many people to whom I am indebted for completing this degree program and the writing of this document.

Thank you to my committee members, all of whom provided invaluable information. Thank you, Dr. Cummins for being the most amazing advisor. You helped me immeasurably in this process. Dr. Susan Fleming, chair of my committee and my voice teacher, you are such an intelligent, talented, and supportive teacher, and I am grateful to know you and study with you. I thank Drs. Stephen Peles and Steffen Guenzel for their extensive revision suggestions, which ultimately improved my document far beyond what I would have thought possible. Dr. Joanna Biermann, it is incredible how much you support your students. You attend every recital and lecture that you possibly can, in addition to all of your many responsibilities. Dr. Stephen Cary, you have been a wonderful mentor and friend, and I would housesit for you again any day! Prof. Amanda Penick, your commentary at my meetings always lightened the mood while providing pertinent information.

I must express my gratitude to Dr. Carol Kimball, my mentor and friend. Your writing is truly the standard by which I judge my own. Your counsel, witticisms, and love of music have guided me throughout my studies. To Edward and Karen White, I must say thank you a thousand times for always having time for me and for generously sharing your wealth of knowledge on all subjects.

Thank you to Dominick Argento, who was kind enough to answer any questions I had about his cycle, when he had already discussed this work at great length with others.
To my dear friend, Jennifer Bryant, I am eternally grateful. You inspire me not only to be a better artist and teacher, but to be a better person. Because I knew you, I have been changed for good.

I have so many other friends and colleagues who have willingly offered their time and advice to aid me in completing this degree. In particular Christopher O’Rear, Dawn Wells Neely, Jonathan Roberts, and Amanda Smith Roberts have always been there to lend an ear, and I appreciate you all so much. To my close friends, Roza Tulyaganova and Kristopher Jordan, you are the two most unique people I know. You support me and challenge me, and we will always be there for each other.

I am grateful for my choir family at First Presbyterian Church of Tuscaloosa, particularly Jeff Binford. All of you are such caring, wonderful people and I have been so lucky to have such an amazing support system throughout my studies.

My brother, Peter, is a constant inspiration to me. You are the first Dr. Fontaine and I will always look up to you.

Finally, I am grateful to all of my grandparents—Theodore “Pepé” Fontaine, Theresa “Memé” Fontaine, Robert “Pauper” Neckel, and Frances “Granny” Neckel—for loving and encouraging me always. I love you all so much and wish we were all still here together.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Dominick Argento has made two statements regarding his Virginia Woolf cycle—“I decided on a sort of twentieth-century Frauenliebe und -leben and even my last song’s return to the musical material of the first is Schumannesque”\(^1\) and “I wanted to write a piece very much like Robert Schumann’s *A Woman’s Love and Life* [*Frauenliebe und -leben*], which he set to eight songs that go through a woman’s life, point of view … so that it’s a full cycle.”\(^2\) Thus, both the large-scale formal structure and general concept of *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* are based upon Schumann’s cycle. While Schumann’s *Frauenliebe und -leben* and Argento’s *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* have been researched, analyzed, and discussed at length as individual works, no extensive research exists which compares and contrasts these two important song cycles. Like Schumann, Argento constructed his cycle of eight songs depicting chronological moments from a woman’s life, featuring a return in the last song to thematic material from the first song. We might assume that the similarities end here. However, there is credence in the assertion that the commonalities between *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* and *Frauenliebe und -leben* are actually multilayered, occurring not only on the broad scale which Argento mentions, but also on a more detailed level. The argument here is not that Argento necessarily intended these additional similarities. In fact, as the composer stated in

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a recent interview, “Clearly, I knew the Schumann music pretty well at one time and I may have borrowed more than just the idea, but if so, it was an unconscious theft.”

Nevertheless, after closer examination the many similarities between the two are uncanny.

While Argento, at least to some degree, was influenced by Schumann in the composition of the *Virginia Woolf* cycle, the question still remains—why is a comparative analysis of these two works useful? There are many significant reasons. Such a comparison helps performers gain a better understanding of both works, by making evident those qualities that are unique and those that are shared. For example, when comparing these two cycles it becomes apparent that the woman in Adelbert von Chamisso’s cycle is a fictional character, while Virginia Woolf was a living person. There are many accounts of Virginia Woolf, both her own and those of her friends, family, and contemporaries. While a singer cannot be expected to ‘be’ Virginia Woolf onstage, she must certainly take this biographical information under consideration and incorporate what she can in creating her portrayal. The singer may therefore have more interpretive freedom in her performance of the woman in Schumann’s cycle because this character is not based on an historical person. Along these same lines, one must recognize that the female character in *Frauenliebe und -leben* is a depiction created entirely from a masculine perspective (both poet and composer are male) while *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* is a series of texts from a woman’s own hand. Schumann’s cycle is wholly man’s impression of what a woman should be and is often regarded as dated by our standards; the poetry was written in 1830 and offers at best a highly romanticized depiction of courtship and marriage and at worst an open endorsement of male chauvinism through female submission. In contrast, Argento’s cycle offers a feminine (and perhaps even early feminist) perspective. The passionate outpouring of emotion in Chamisso’s poetry reflects the ideals of Romanticism, while the intense

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3 Dominick Argento, e-mail message to author, August 9, 2012.
intellectualism of Woolf’s writing represents the Modernist movement. Any of these attributes may easily be overlooked when the cycles are performed individually, yet must be taken into consideration when performing them in the same concert.

This comparative analysis also lends some insight into the composers themselves—what ideas they share in common about setting text to music, their musical language, and important recurring themes in their compositions. For example, Schumann has been referred to as “co-creator of the text, either by careful selections from a widely ranging poetic collection or by arranging poems from disparate sources into a meaningful pattern,”⁴ but this title can certainly apply to Argento as well, as he too has meticulously selected and organized the texts found in his song cycles. Both composers also possess impeccable literary taste and choose poems or prose which perfectly reflect the mood and message they wish to convey. Thus, just as comparing the two cycles offers new insight, so does a better understanding of the composers in relation to one another provide information which may not have surfaced otherwise.

Finally, this document encourages performers to complete a comparative analysis of works programmed together on a recital, particularly a themed recital. Many musical artists program works on a recital without realizing shared qualities in historical context, drama, and musical analysis. Understanding the similarities and differences between pieces can aid the performer in creating a recital which consists of works that are connected, yet varied. In short, comparisons can reveal characteristics that otherwise might have gone unnoticed, or at the very least, they may offer new perspectives on existing ideas.

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CHAPTER 2
TEXT AND CONCEPT

Although the main focus of this document is musical, a general understanding of some of the other relationships between the cycles will help make important connections during the musical analysis. This discussion of the text and concept is not intended to be comprehensive, rather to support musical arguments. Perhaps the most important conceptual similarity between the two cycles is that of obsession, though the object of obsession for each character is unique. For the woman in Schumann’s cycle, the focus is solely her husband and their love for one another. Though the cycle is named “A Woman’s Love and Life,” her life does not ‘begin’ musically until she first sees him. Every song in Frauenliebe und -leben is directly related to their relationship—from their first meeting to marriage, from the birth of their child to the husband’s death. Virginia Woolf’s obsession is not directed towards worshipping a husband or a male lover but instead is directed inward. Woolf’s fixation, at least in the diary entries that Argento has chosen to excerpt, appears to be her own thoughts and observations about life and writing. Throughout the eight entries included in the song cycle, she tries to better understand herself and her art. Her metaphorical remark, “I think it is true that one gains a certain hold on sausage and haddock by writing them down...” suggests that writing helps Woolf to better comprehend herself and her experiences. Thus, both cycles revolve around a single idea, to which the text returns repeatedly. This obsessive quality that permeates the song cycles’ texts is also reflected musically and is discussed in depth throughout “Chapter 3: Music.” These cycles
each contain a dramatic theme representative of the composers’ entire compositional output. In his 1987 NATS National Convention address, Dominick Argento quoted author Henry James, “The author does not write many books—he writes the same book many ways.” Argento went on to argue that this is generally true for composers, also. Whether conscious or unconscious, the composer is inspired by a single dramatic concept that then appears repeatedly throughout his or her musical compositions. The composer is thus often drawn to similar themes. The musical forms and treatments of this concept may vary, but the essential idea is always present. For Schumann, “frustrated or embittered love” is certainly the most prevailing theme, especially in his songs. By 1840, the composer’s famous Liederjahr, Robert Schumann and Clara Wieck had been battling for years against Clara’s father to win the legal right to marry. It was a difficult time, one that resonated with Schumann for years, if not for the rest of his life. Especially during this time period, he was drawn to “gloomy and melancholy themes—hopeless love, death, intransigence, despondency” which certainly reflected his bitterness over his own situation.

Frauenliebe und -leben, with its theme of passionate love between a man and a woman, certainly appealed to Schumann. However, of particular importance to the composer is the fact that although the work appears joyful on the surface, it significantly ends on a tragic note with the death of the husband and the woman’s subsequent despair. This combination of romantic love ending in death and heartbreak, (outcomes Schumann perhaps feared or anticipated for himself and Clara, if not literally then metaphorically) attracted the composer and inspired his song cycle. For Argento, it is the idea of self-discovery which has dominated his choice in texts.

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7 Eric Frederick Jensen, Schumann (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 188.
8 It is more accurate to say that Schumann consciously chose to end the cycle in this fashion by omitting the final poem of Chamisso’s cycle.
throughout his life. The composer has stated, “I can see that most of my works have manifested that theme—self-discovery, self-knowledge—in different ways.” In particular, *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* stands out in this regard: “Of all my cycles, Virginia Woolf most directly addresses the issue of ‘who am I, what do I really feel?’” Argento has thus been drawn to letters (such as in *Casa Guidi, Letters from Composers*, and *A Few Words About Chekhov*) or other private papers such as diary entries (as in *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* and *The Andrée Expedition*) as the basis for his song cycles. While neither the *Frauenliebe* cycle nor the *Virginia Woolf* cycle is autobiographical, they certainly reflect ideas that each composer valued and the subjects to which they were drawn.

Each composer’s treatment of the text is an important consideration. Through text omission and repetition, both Schumann and Argento editorialized their respective texts to enhance their own dramatic interpretations. From Chamisso’s *Frauenliebe und -leben*, Schumann omitted the sixth poem’s middle stanza (which depicts the woman asking her mother’s advice on her pregnancy) and the entire last poem (in which the woman, now a grandmother, is speaking to her granddaughter on the girl’s wedding day). Often criticized for these rather major exclusions from his song cycle, Schumann’s reason may not be as chauvinistic as is sometimes hypothesized. The composer evidently sought to make romantic love the sole focus of his cycle, and thus, he removed material which he considered as undermining his original intent. These excluded poetic passages center on relationships other than that of husband and wife, so Schumann found them expendable for his purposes. The source for Argento’s work—an entire book of diary entries—necessitated major omissions to be a

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10 Ibid, 10.
11 The text for Chamisso’s entire original poetic cycle can be found in Philip L. Miller’s *The Ring of Words*, amongst other sources.
manageable length for a song cycle. Argento extracted only eight entries from *A Writer’s Diary* and then went on to heavily edit each of them, often choosing to include only a small section of an entry. Argento selected excerpts that span over the course of the diary and represent various states of mind, offering “a sampler” of Virginia’s personality and creative genius. The included passages tend to relate to one of the following: Virginia’s emotional or mental state, her writing, or her observations regarding a particular event or situation. In general, Argento omits passages that reference Virginia Woolf’s husband (Leonard), sister (Vanessa), or other family members. The reason for this seems obvious. Argento does not wish to obscure the cycle’s primary themes of self-knowledge and -discovery with the inclusion of familial relationships. In fact, mention of any actual persons (a common feature in most of Woolf’s diary entries) is extremely limited in the song cycle. Argento’s reason for omitting Woolf’s frequent mention of her contemporaries is likely one of accessibility. Rather than asking the audience to decipher these names and their relationships to Woolf, it is easier to simply exclude them. The composer retains only a handful of these references (such as the mention of authors Thomas Hardy in “Hardy’s Funeral” and Henry James in “Last Entry”) and generally only if they serve some dramatic import. Thus, through text omission, both Schumann and Argento are able to have influence in constructing the narrative that they desire. For Schumann, the narrative is one of romantic love ending in tragedy, while the narrative that Argento creates is a pastiche of Woolf’s thoughts, feelings, observations, and impressions over the course of her life, becoming progressively darker toward the end. Just as omission of text allows the composers to narrow the

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12 When Argento composed *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*, Woolf’s complete diary had not yet been published. Only *A Writer’s Diary* (1953), which was compiled and edited by Virginia’s husband Leonard, was available to the public. As Leonard Woolf explains in the preface, *A Writer’s Diary* contains entries related primarily to Virginia Woolf’s writing.

13 Noelle Woods in her DMA document “Reflections of a Life: Biographical Perspectives of Virginia Woolf Illuminated by the Music and Drama of Dominick Argento’s Song Cycle *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*” includes the eight complete original entries with Argento’s excerpted passages boldfaced.

14 Garton, 50.
focus of their cycles, so does text repetition allow them to highlight and bring to the forefront certain moods and images. Text repetition is a technique commonly used by song composers to accentuate a particular word or phrase, so this is not unique to Schumann and Argento.

However, it is worth mentioning that Chamisso’s poetic cycle features text repetition (the poet often brings back a line of text or even an entire stanza) which Schumann then expands upon further. Woolf’s diary entries, being prose, feature little to no repetition so the textual recurrences and repetitions found in the song cycle are almost entirely Argento’s addition.

Though these two works are quite similar in their overall concept, textual differences are plentiful. One of the most obvious differences is that Frauenliebe und Leben is a poetic cycle while Virginia Woolf’s diary entries are prose. Thus, Chamisso’s texts are highly structured stanzas featuring rhyme and meter, while Woolf’s entries are free flowing and unpredictable reflecting the stream-of-consciousness technique in her writing to which she subscribed. This proves to be an extremely important factor in each composer’s compositional process, particularly in the formal structures of the songs. In terms of the language, Chamisso’s poems are rather conventional and sentimental, undoubtedly due to the subject matter.15 These poems have often been frowned upon as “meager verses”16 especially by modern readers, though criticism associated with these poems can at least partially be attributed to the distaste accompanying the antiquated ideologies expressed. Woolf’s language, on the other hand, is highly intellectual featuring an enormous vocabulary. Again, this can be related to the subject matter, as well as the Modernist style which she exemplified. The entries included in Argento’s

15 Though the Frauenliebe poems have received a great deal of negative attention in recent years, Adelbert von Chamisso was in fact highly respected by many of his contemporaries, including such renowned poets as E. T. A. Hoffmann and Heinrich Heine (Kristina Muxfeldt, “Frauenliebe und Leben Now and Then,” 19th-Century Music, Vol. 25, No. 1 [Summer 2001], 84-85).

cycle tend to focus on either Woolf’s own writing (with lines such as “What sort of diary should I like mine to be?” and “Why not invent a new kind of play?”) or her psychological reflections (such as “Why is life so tragic; so like a little strip of pavement over an abyss” and “Over all this broods for me some uneasy sense of change and mortality and how partings are deaths”), both of which lend themselves to elevated language. Schumann and Argento reflect these differences in the level of vocabulary and subject matter with their musical settings.

Another contrasting textual element between the cycles is the plot. Chamisso’s poetic cycle follows a rather traditional storyline: a woman meets her future husband, falls in love, marries him, bears his child, and finally, mourns his death. In contrast, Woolf’s diary entries—much like her novels—are written in the stream-of-consciousness style; her emotional and intellectual responses to people, places, and situations, rather than telling a story. Therefore, *Frauenliebe und -leben* has a very definite plotline, while *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* is reminiscent of a mosaic—the individual fragments seem unrelated, but when they are viewed together as a whole, these connected pieces reveal a larger picture: a character study of Virginia Woolf and the many facets of her mind and creative genius.

The timeline of each cycle is yet another aspect which offers contrast. While Argento’s cycle covers a very definite span of time—over twenty years of Virginia Woolf’s life, with diary entries from 1919 to 1941—there is no way of knowing the amount of time that elapses over the course of Schumann’s cycle. Due to Schumann’s omission of the final poem (in which the woman is a grandmother), we only know that the song cycle encompasses her meeting, marrying, and outliving her husband. Though Chamisso’s original poetic cycle covers multiple decades, it can be argued that Schumann implies a much shorter timeline, perhaps not more than 10 years. The events in Schumann’s cycle seem to occur in relatively close proximity. In the
first song she meets her future husband, by the fourth song they are engaged, followed by their wedding day in the fifth song, her pregnancy in the sixth song, the birth of their child in the seventh song, and her husband’s death in the last song. It is ultimately left to the performer to decide upon a timeframe for Frauenliebe und -leben, and there is certainly some degree of flexibility.

Both cycles also share in common a female protagonist depicted, at least to some degree, from a masculine perspective. Obviously, in Schumann’s cycle, this is overwhelmingly the case as both the poet and composer are male. Although Argento has set a female writer’s text, he admits that there is still a masculine lens present: “I don’t think that as a male, I have any confidence in knowing how Virginia Woolf felt.” An important difference from Schumann is that Argento intentionally sought out a text from a woman’s viewpoint. “I wanted the words to be from a woman. I did not want the words to be from a man talking about women problems.” In searching for the text for his song cycle, Argento states, “I wanted to find… something feminine but not the hackneyed sentiments so frequently ascribed to women by male authors. I decided I’d like to find a text by a woman writer, especially a woman of refined and modern sensibilities.” This is one of the major differences between the two cycles: Frauenliebe is largely conventional and patriarchal, while Virginia Woolf is primarily modern and feminist.

Both cycles were dedicated to women. Frauenliebe und -leben was a gift to Schumann’s fiancée, Clara Wieck, and From the Diary of Virginia Woolf was dedicated to the singer for whom it was commissioned and composed, Janet Baker. Both composers worked with their respective dedicatees in mind. Thus, Schumann’s cycle is a tribute to romantic love and married life, while Argento’s is in recognition of an intelligent and creative female persona.

17 Garton, 46.
18 Ibid, 47.
Finally, Argento notes, “Both Schumann and Woolf suffered from some form of madness, which may or may not have been related to their work. I think it was.”

Schumann suffered a mental breakdown in 1854 and was institutionalized shortly after, remaining there until his death in 1856. Virginia Woolf spent time in and out of asylums throughout her life and attempted suicide multiple times before succeeding in 1941. Thus one of the major contributors to each of the cycles (the composer of one and the author of the other) was mentally unstable, a disturbing yet striking similarity, and one that certainly influenced each of the works.

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20 Dominick Argento, e-mail message to author, August 9, 2012.
CHAPTER 3
MUSIC

Recurring Motivic Material

In both Frauenliebe und -leben and From the Diary of Virginia Woolf, recurring musical motifs and formal structures play an important role. They weave a connective tissue within and between songs, reveal textual and musical relationships, and offer many different levels of dramatic insight. It is this author’s argument that the use of certain forms and recurring motifs are the two musical elements that most closely link the two song cycles. An understanding of the recurring motivic material of each cycle is useful for formal analysis, and therefore, will be discussed first.

Grove’s definition of ‘motif’ is as follows: “A short musical idea, melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, or any combination of these three. A motif may be of any size, and is most commonly regarded as the shortest subdivision of a theme or phrase that still maintains its identity as an idea.” The article goes on to say:

Theme and motif have usually been contrasted, theme being viewed as a self-contained idea, as opposed to the elemental, incomplete nature of the motif. In fact the relationship between motif and theme is analogous to that between theme and an entire movement or composition: in each case the smaller unit is incomplete, yet it has a special identity with important consequences for the shape and structure of the larger.  

This definition is notably vague, leaving much room for interpretation as to what constitutes a motif. Similarly, in this document the term ‘motif’ is used loosely, ascribed to musical ideas of

varying construction and length. It must also be noted that motifs in both cycles are frequently varied at recurrences, not always identical to the original.

The defining feature of both song cycles is a consistent return to an initial thematic statement—whether textual, musical, or a combination of the two. This is a unifying device within each cycle and between the two cycles when they are performed together in recital. Also of great significance are the musical motifs which are the building blocks of each thematic statement. The musical motifs considered here are solely those that are cyclically recurring, in other words those that appear in more than one song of the cycle. Although both Schumann and Argento make use of this idea, Argento greatly expands and elaborates upon this concept in his cycle.

Schumann and his contemporaries were among the first composers of the nineteenth century to promote both poetic and musical coherence within a song cycle. The composers in this circle favored close key relationships, however Schumann took the idea of coherence even further by utilizing a “basic thematic core”—a motif that appears throughout the cycle in varied forms—22—and motivic relationships between songs. Barbara Turchin, in her article “Schumann’s Song Cycles: The Cycle within the Song,” asserts that in Frauenliebe und -leben, “The first song establishes for the cycle particular tonal, motivic, and poetic ‘themes,’ and... these ‘themes’ acquire special meaning and significance as the cycle unfolds.”23 This is a characteristic common to Schumann’s song cycles, including Dichterliebe and the Eichendorff Liederkreis.

The first musical motif of Frauenliebe und -leben is a vocal melodic figure first heard in mm. 2-4 of “Seit ich ihn gesehen” (Figure 1). This motif, $\hat{5} - \hat{6} - \hat{5} - \hat{1}$, is the thematic core of the work. Harmonically, the fifth scale degree is supported by tonic, the sixth scale degree by $\hat{5} - \hat{6} - \hat{5} - \hat{1}$, is the thematic core of the work. Harmonically, the fifth scale degree is supported by tonic, the sixth scale degree by

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23 Ibid, 233.
subdominant, the return to the fifth scale degree is supported first by dominant then tonic, and
submediant anticipates the first scale degree. This harmonic progression, ending in a deceptive
cadence, conveys the woman’s unexpected bliss. Before making its most significant
reappearance in the final postlude of the cycle, the thematic core motif recurs in varied forms in
the third, fifth, and seventh songs.

Figure 1
Thematic core motif, “Seit ich ihn gesehen” mm. 1-4

The first seven measures of “Ich kann’s nicht fassen” feature the thematic core motif with
two notable modifications: the motif appears in a different key (C minor, a whole step up from
the original)\textsuperscript{24} and the melodic order is now essentially in retrograde—$\hat{5} - \hat{1} - \hat{5} - \hat{6} - \hat{5}$ (Figure 2).

There are also recurrences of this $\hat{5} - \hat{1} - \hat{5} - \hat{6} - \hat{5}$ melody at mm. 36-42 and 52-58. The dramatic
reason for this alteration of the motif seems clear. The woman’s world has been turned upside-
down by the revelation that ‘he, the noblest of men’ does indeed love her. Thus, the thematic
core motif heard in reverse and in a new key creates a sense of bewilderment and confusion,
matching her emotional state. Enhancing this change in her emotional state, Schumann changes

\textsuperscript{24} All keys listed in this document are the original keys. However, mezzo-sopranos sometimes sing Frauenliebe und
-leben in the lower key.
the harmonic support from the first song. The rising bass line (which is briefly chromatic, mm. 2-5) underscores the following harmonies: tonic, second inversion dominant, first inversion tonic, applied dominant of subdominant, subdominant, and second inversion tonic. These harmonies build toward an applied fully-diminished seventh of dominant at m. 7, reflecting the woman’s heightened state of emotion.

Figure 2
Thematic core motif, “Ich kann’s nicht fassen” mm. 1-7

![Thematic core motif](image)


There is only one exact appearance of the original thematic core motif in the third song, and that occurs in the piano accompaniment in mm. 68-71 (Figure 3). Schumann then elaborates upon the motif in subsequent measures, expanding the leap of a fourth to a sixth (mm. 73-75) and then to an octave (mm. 77-79). This exact reference to the original and the successive elaborations indicate that the woman’s dream from the first song is finally within reach and that it even surpasses her expectations.

25 ‘Exact’ here refers to the intervallic relationships and scale degrees remaining the same (♯5 - ♯6 - ♯1). This does not take into account rhythm or key.
The next occurrence of the thematic core motif is found in the opening vocal phrase of “Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,” the fifth song of the cycle (Figure 4). Here the motif appears in the same key as the first song (B♭ major) with a slight expansion of the original melody (5-6-5-3-1). This version of the motif recurs in mm. 7-8, 19-20, 23-24, and 37-38, though there are also numerous variations appearing throughout the song. The harmony supporting the thematic core motif in this song is simplified from the previous two occurrences, alternating between only two chords: tonic and submediant. The change in harmony reflects the mood in this song, one of simple happiness. Dramatically, the reappearance of the thematic core in the
original key communicates the fulfillment of her dream, while the slight expansion of the motif conveys her exuberance.

Figure 4
Thematic core motif, “Helft mir, ihr Schwestern” mm. 3-4

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The thematic core motif appears in its most varied form in the seventh song of the cycle, “An meinem Herzen.” The original 5 - 6 - 5 - 1 melody becomes 5 - 1 - 2 - 7 - 1 in mm. 2-3 of the vocal part, thus possessing only the same starting and ending scale degrees (Figure 5). Also, the key of this song is the furthest removed from the original (D major, a major third higher). The harmony beneath the thematic core motif is quite simple, alternating between dominant and tonic chords. The dramatic explanation here is undoubtedly that the woman’s dreams have grown and changed. With the birth of their child, the woman realizes her role not only as wife, but as mother. The simple harmony and undulating rhythmic figures are reminiscent of a lullaby.
Finally, the thematic core motif recurs in the piano postlude of “Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan,” the last song of the cycle (Figure 6). This recurrence is nearly identical to the first song, communicating that the woman has indeed drawn into herself as she has stated (‘Ich zieh’ mich in mein Inn’res still zurück’), reliving the past through her memories.

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26 In fact, alterations are only made to the piano’s melodic line so that it reflects the vocal line from the first song.
The importance of the thematic core motif throughout the cycle is not solely melodic. The ascent and descent of a major second outlined melodically (5 - 6 - 5) is also represented in the key relationships of the first, third, and fifth songs of the cycle (B♭ major, C minor, and B♭ major, respectively). “Thus, the opening measures of ‘Seit ich ihn gesehen’ disclose a very close correspondence between the micro- and macro-structure of the cycle.”27 In addition, the harmonies that support the thematic core motif change with each occurrence, adapting to the progression of both keys and drama throughout the cycle.

The thematic core motif is important both musically and dramatically as the primary connective tissue of the cycle. It functions as a unifying device between songs but also changes and grows depending on the woman’s emotions and the circumstances at hand. The dramatic implications of the recurring thematic core motif are many, but none more so than the piano postlude at the end of the cycle which brings back an entire strophe of “Seit ich ihn gesehen.” With this musical gesture, Schumann brings the cycle full circle, closing the work as it began.

Secondary motifs, though less structural and pervasive than the thematic core motif, also provide cohesion between songs. The husband motif (so called because at every occurrence it is associated with the husband) features an accented upper neighbor which delays the resolution to tonic in the melody (♯7 - 2 - 1). This figure conveys a sense of longing and anticipation, which reflects the woman’s feelings toward him. It is first heard in the final measures of “Er, der Herrlichste von Allen” (Figure 7) and recurs in the fifth, sixth, and seventh songs of Frauenliebe und Leben.

27 Turchin, 234.
This motif is heard again in mm. 12 and 16 of “Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,” the poem’s second stanza, where the woman describes the happiness she and her husband feel in each other’s arms (Figure 8). In each instance, the motif occurs on some variation of the word “Herzen” (‘heart’): in m. 12 she is referencing her own “happy heart” and in m. 16 his “longing heart.”
The husband motif appears multiple times throughout the sixth song in a varied form. In each of these occurrences, the accented upper neighbor is approached from a fourth below (not a third as in the previous examples) and resolves to the fifth of the chord and not the tonic (Figure 9). The first instance of this variation of the motif is heard in mm. 3-4, but there are similar recurrences at mm. 6-7, 13-14, 16-17, 46-47, and 49-50.

**Figure 9**
Husband motif, “Süsser Freund” mm. 3-4

![Musical notation](image)

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However, the most notable appearance of the husband motif is found in the final measures of “Süsser Freund” as a sort of codetta (Figure 10). This recurrence is not altered in any way from the original, excepting the key. The textual recurrence of “dein Bildnis” added by Schumann at the end of this song is often thought to emphasize that the child will bear the father’s image, perhaps even insinuating that the child will be male because of this.\(^{28}\) The recurrence of the husband motif reinforces this musically. In addition, the accented upper neighbor which delays the resolution to tonic again creates a feeling of anticipation, well-suited to impending childbirth.

\(^{28}\) This is a breach from Chamisso’s original text, where we discover in the final poem that the child was in fact a daughter, not a son.
This motif then recurs in the piano postlude of the seventh song (Figure 11), perhaps confirming that the child does indeed share the father’s appearance.

It must be noted that the husband motif is always supported by a cadence, although the key may vary between and within songs. Dramatically, this symbolizes the finality which the woman’s
husband brings to her life, that he completes her. It is significant that Schumann ends three of
the eight songs with this motif, emphasizing its conclusive quality.

Another motif worth mentioning is the chromatic line motif, which may be ascending or
descending. It is most often heard in the piano accompaniment, though there are notable
instances of its appearance in the voice part. The chromatic line is usually three to four pitches
in length, occasionally as many as five. A chromatic line is a rather generic musical device often
used for harmonic purposes, so it may seem slightly unsound to call it a ‘motif.’ However, in a
work such as Frauenliebe und-leben, in which the songs “are not particularly short or long,
extreme neither in rhythm nor in remote key relationships, and not especially adventurous
tonally,”29 a chromatic line takes on special significance, both as an unexpected musical sound in
this context and as a symbol of underlying complexity. Examples from many of the songs are
provided, though due to the abundance of this motif throughout the cycle, the examples included
here are limited to chromatic lines found only in the melody or bass line (not the inner voices)
and those that are of special import dramatically.

In general, the ascending chromatic line motif is associated with masculinity, conveying
aggressive and energetic emotions, while the descending chromatic line motif is synonymous
with femininity, expressing submissive and calm states of being.30 The second song of the cycle,
“Er, der Herrlichste von Allen,” offers examples of both types. The rising half notes of the
accompaniment’s bass line (mm. 2-4) introduce the ascending chromatic line motif (Figure 12).
This figure then recurs at the repeat of the A section (mm. 10-12). In both of these cases, the
accompanying text praises her future husband:

29 Bresnick, 173.
30 The ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ designations are ascribed in following with the patriarchal nature of this cycle.
Er, der Herrlichste von Allen,  
Wie so milde, wie so gut! ...  

He, the noblest of all—  
How kind, how good! ...  

So wie dort in blauer Tiefe,  
Hell und herrlich, jener Stern,  

As yonder in the deep blue  
That bright and glorious star,

**Figure 12**  
*Ascending chromatic line motif, “Er, der Herrlichste von Allen” mm. 2-4*

However, at the next recurrence of the A section (beginning at m. 29) Schumann changes the pattern, now employing descending chromatic half notes (Figure 13). Examining the text in these measures offers some explanation:

Höre nicht mein stilles Beten,  
Deinem Glücke nur geweiht;  

Do not listen to my quiet prayer,  
Dedicated only to your good fortune;

The woman speaks of herself in this passage with a submissive and timid tone, noticeably altered from the exalted quality she uses when speaking of the man she loves.
Another example of Schumann’s use of these motifs to express distinct moods is found in the third song of the cycle, “Ich kann’s nicht fassen.” The piano accompaniment’s bass line in mm. 2-5 features rising chromatic quarter notes (see Figure 2, page 15) immediately followed by a falling chromatic line in the voice part in mm. 5-9 (Figure 14). The reason for this abrupt shift between motifs may again be attributed to the text. The ascending chromatic line motif accompanies text demonstrating disbelief and excitement:

\begin{align*}
\text{Ich kann’s nicht fassen, nicht glauben} & \quad \text{\textit{I cannot grasp or believe it}} \\
\end{align*}

In contrast, the descending chromatic line motif introduces text indicating her unworthiness:

\begin{align*}
\text{Es hat ein Traum mich berückt.} & \quad \text{\textit{I am beguiled by a dream.}} \\
\text{Wie hät’t er doch unter Allen} & \quad \text{\textit{How could he, from among them all,}} \\
\text{Mich Arme erhöht und beglückt?} & \quad \text{\textit{Have exalted and blessed so lowly a one as I?}} \\
\end{align*}
In some cases, Schumann’s use of the chromatic line motif is explicitly cyclical. For example, each occurrence of the words “deinen Schein” (‘your light’), such as in the second and fifth songs of *Frauenliebe und -leben*, is accompanied by an ascending chromatic line in the piano accompaniment (Figures 15 and 16). Similar wordings, such as “heller” (‘brighter’) in the first song or “seinem Glanz” (‘his brilliance’) in the fourth song, are also supported by this same motif (Figures 17 and 18).
Figure 16
Ascending chromatic line motif, “Helft mir, ihr Schwestern” mm. 29-30

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Figure 17
Ascending chromatic line motif, “Seit ich ihn gesehen” mm. 13-14

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An abundance of chromatic lines may be used to enhance a particular mood, such as in the postlude of the seventh song. The eight-measure postlude contains five descending chromatic lines (Figure 19). This motif, associated with feminine submission, seems particularly apt at the end of “An meinem Herzen” where the continual recurrence likely emphasizes the woman’s utter contentment in her traditional role as mother.
As stated previously, ascending and descending chromatic line motifs are generally found in the piano accompaniment, therefore occurrences in the voice part are significant. “Ich kann’s nicht fassen” contains the highest occurrence of vocal chromatic line motifs in the cycle. These are mostly descending; however, there is one significant occurrence of the ascending chromatic line motif in mm. 18-21, which is then repeated in mm. 23-25 (Figure 20). Notably, the text accompanying this chromatic ascent features the husband’s ‘voice:’

Mir war’s—er habe gesprochen:  It seemed to me—he spoke:
Ich bin auf ewig dein—  “I am yours forever”—
The prevalence of these chromatic lines in the voice part may be indicative of a more overt emotional expression in contrast to the inherent subtlety of their occurrences in the accompaniment. Indeed, this song displays heightened emotion textually. The following lines depict “sensual scenes” of “passionate fantasy:”

O lass im Traume mich sterben
Gewieget an seiner Brust,
Den seligen Tod mich schlürfen
In Tränen unendlicher Lust.

O let me perish in my dream,
lulled upon his breast!
Let me relish the most blessed death
in the endless happiness of tears.

Also, Schumann’s added repetitions of the poem’s opening lines (not part of Chamisso’s original text) contribute to the intensity.

Figure 20
Ascending chromatic line motif, “Ich kann’s nicht fassen” mm. 16-27

Unlike the previous example, “Helft mir, ihr Schwestern” features no chromaticism in the voice part until the final musical section. The mood throughout the song is joyful, but at this moment, the text becomes more poignant as the woman realizes that in order to embrace her new happiness she must leave her sisters’ company. The juxtaposition of a descending chromatic line (m. 42) with an ascending chromatic line (mm. 42-43) reflects her feeling of being pulled in two directions by feminine and masculine influences (Figure 21).

Figure 21
Descending and ascending chromatic line motifs, “Helft mir, ihr Schwestern” mm. 41-46

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Juxtaposition of ascending and descending chromatic lines can also be effective in building and releasing musical and dramatic tension. “Du Ring an meinem Finger” exhibits this
technique in the climax of the song. The bass line’s ascending chromatic line motif (mm. 25-27) conveys the woman’s feverish excitement as she proclaims that she will “serve him, live for him,” which is directly followed by the descending chromatic line motif (mm. 27-30) in which she gives herself completely and finds herself “transfigured in his light” (Figure 22).

Figure 22
Ascending and descending chromatic line motifs, “Du Ring an meinem Finger” mm. 25-30

The final song of the cycle is notably lacking in the chromatic line motif, both ascending and descending (excepting the piano postlude which brings back music from the first song). There is an occasional descending chromatic line embedded in an inner voice (mm. 10-12, for example), but never in the outer voices. This would seem to reflect the text “Die Welt ist leer”
(‘The world is empty’). The woman’s previous displays of masculine excitement or feminine contentment are nowhere to be found here.

The chromatic line motif in its ascending and descending forms represents masculine and feminine states, respectively. The relationship between husband and wife or man and woman is the primary theme throughout the cycle, so the prevalence of the chromatic line motif in both its masculine and feminine forms is fitting. Similarly, the absence of this motif in the final song conveys the emptiness the woman feels once her husband is gone. It must be noted that Schumann’s use of chromatic lines is not purely motivic. Chromatic lines in Frauenliebe und leben also support changes in harmony, but as there is no consistent or relevant pattern between songs, this aspect of the motif is not considered here.

The recurring motifs in Frauenliebe und leben are perhaps what most give the cycle such a cohesive quality. The songs are united, not merely by poetic content or key relationships, but by musically connective tissue that reflects the drama throughout. According to Martin Bresnick, “There is in each of the eight songs a network of patterns that lends both a hidden unity and a subversive aspect to the cycle.”32 This idea was a relatively new one in 1840 when Schumann composed the Frauenliebe cycle, and it is not a prerequisite even today in defining a song cycle.

In From the Diary of Virginia Woolf, Argento employs recurring motivic material much like Schumann, but greatly expanding upon the techniques found in Frauenliebe und leben. Similarities include: a thematic core motif that is melodic in nature and recurs in varied forms throughout the cycle, other secondary motifs between songs that add to the cohesive quality of the work, transposition of motifs though always maintaining intervallic relationships, and a

32 Bresnick, 174.
return to initial thematic material at the end of the cycle. Differences or how Argento takes these ideas further include: the thematic core in its original state is shared between the voice and piano parts (and not merely doubled), the appearance of secondary motifs becomes more prolific as the cycle progresses, and the final song not only brings back material from the first song but from every song in the cycle. Just as before, only cyclically recurring motifs are taken into account here.

In contrast to *Frauenliebe und -leben*, the thematic core motif of Argento’s cycle is not the first motif heard. There are two motifs that precede the thematic core: the descending minor second motif and the initial piano prelude motif (both of which are discussed in the “Form” subchapter, pages 68-69). The thematic core motif does not begin until m. 7 with the introduction of the voice part. The twelve-tone row G♯-D♯-D♯-A♯-G♯-C♯-B♯-A♯-E♯-F♯-C♯-F♯ is the thematic core of the cycle (Figure 23). This is due to both its prevalence throughout and because it serves as a symbol for self-discovery, the most important theme of the work, according to the composer.33 Paired with the opening line of text, “What sort of diary should I like mine to be?” the twelve-tone row embodies Virginia Woolf’s desire to understand herself and her art. Presented in linear fashion in its original form, this is Argento’s preferred usage of the row throughout (rather than vertical chordal sonorities).

Argento is ingenious in his inclusion and modification of the twelve-tone row throughout the cycle. The row is sometimes embedded in the harmonic texture or varied to such a degree that it is almost impossible to recognize without analysis. Examples included here are therefore limited to more literal statements of the row; in other words those that are melodic in nature and thus more easily perceptible to the ear. More extreme variations of the row may be mentioned though not thoroughly discussed, especially if there are no other examples of the row within a particular song. The original statement is shared between the voice and piano parts—with the pitches of the row alternating between them—which complements the questioning atmosphere. However, Argento varies this throughout the cycle, often giving the motif solely to one or the other. Like Frauenliebe und -leben, this motif recurs not only within the song but throughout the cycle. In addition to the original statement, there are two recurrences within “The Diary.” The first (mm. 23-26) is an enharmonic spelling of the original row (Figure 24). Unlike the initial statement, this occurrence features the two parts doubling one another on most of the pitches. This
doubling may indicate that the image of her diary being like a “deep, old desk” is a comforting thought to Woolf.

**Figure 24**
The thematic core motif, “The Diary” mm. 23-26

![Figure 24](image)

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The second recurrence (mm. 39-42) is a transposed and inverted form of the row (Figure 25). Excepting the first pitch provided by the voice, the piano accompaniment expresses the entire row. By placing the row in inversion, Argento is literally representing the phrase “to reflect the light of our life.”
“Anxiety” opens with only the first seven pitches of the row, transposed and inverted (Figure 26). This is a common feature of Argento’s compositions. He does not strictly follow the rules of twelve-tone composition (or any type of composition for that matter), but instead changes them according to his will. The composer states, “It’s a device that I can use and I can make it a thorough-going device, but it’s never anything to really act as what shapes the music. I want more control over my music than that.”

This fragmented, transposed, and inverted excerpt of the row that opens “Anxiety” immediately conveys to the listener Woolf’s unbalanced frame of mind.

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34 Garton, 59.
“Fancy” features a literal, though transposed, version of the row in mm. 17-19 (Figure 27). A notable distinction from the original form of the row is that Argento has switched the roles of the voice and piano parts, both rhythmically and melodically. When we consider that the subject of this entry is the creation of a new type of work (“Why not invent a new kind of play?”), this variation of the row seems apt.
The next literal representation of the row opens “Hardy’s Funeral.” The piano’s opening chant-like prelude features the row in prime form transposed down a minor second (Figure 28). This same melody recurs in the bottom system of the first page continuing into the top system of the second page.\textsuperscript{35} It recurs again in numbered m. 25, this time transposed down a tritone from the original row. This interval of transposition—representative of “the devil in music”—is a fascinating choice. As the song progresses, it becomes clear that Woolf is ridiculing the religious ceremony she is observing, thus the tritone transposition musically reflects her disdain.

**Figure 28**

**Thematic core motif, “Hardy’s Funeral” first system of the first page**

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In mm. 40-52, Argento includes two more statements of the chant-like melody. The voice introduces it first, offering an incomplete form of the row containing only the first eight pitches. In m. 45, the piano accompaniment begins this melody again (a minor second higher than the previous statement, heightening the emotion), again with only the first eight pitches. The voice

\textsuperscript{35} “Hardy’s Funeral” is unmeasured until the last system of the second page.
part completes this statement—slightly delayed due to the fermata in the piano part—at the words “perhaps melodramatic” in m. 52 (Figure 29). This delay of the final pitches of the row becomes more and more prevalent as the cycle progresses and often represents a pause or shift in Woolf’s thoughts, which is certainly the case here as the textual and musical grandiosity dissipates into mockery.

Figure 29
Thematic core motif, “Hardy’s Funeral” numbered mm. 45-52

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“Rome” features the original form of the row spelled enharmonically, beginning at m. 22 with the quasi un mandolino marking (Figure 30). The pitches of the twelve-tone row (A♭-E♭-D♭-B♭-G♭-D♭-C♭-A♭-E♭-F♯-C♭-F♯) are found in the right hand of the piano accompaniment.

The return of the prime form of the row conveys a sense of calm, a rare mental state for Woolf. This same figure is then repeated a third higher in mm. 31-37.

Figure 30
Thematic core motif, “Rome” mm. 22-28

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In m. 39 of “Rome,” Argento again begins a statement of the original form of the row in the right hand of the piano accompaniment (Figure 31). The first nine pitches of the row are given melodically in succession, while the remaining pitches are less easily identified. The voice
provides the tenth and twelfth pitches of the row (mm. 44-45) while the piano’s pedal tone on C (beginning at m. 43) provides the eleventh tone. The reason for obscuring the end of the twelve-tone row here seems to be a significant change in mood, much like the delay of the final pitches of the row in “Hardy’s Funeral.” In both songs, the climactic material that leads up to and culminates with the appearance of the row is then dissipated as Woolf’s thoughts shift. Argento makes the thematic core motif intensely connected to Woolf’s mental state throughout the cycle. Delaying or obscuring part of the row is a way of communicating a change or disruption in her thoughts.

Figure 31
Thematic core motif, “Rome” mm. 39-45

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It must also be mentioned that the voice part of “Rome” consists entirely of various statements of the row. However, none of these matrices is easily discernible to the ear, in that all of them are some version of retrograde or retrograde-inversion.
The most obvious melodic occurrence of the thematic core motif in “War” is provided by the voice part in the second, third, and fourth systems of the fifth page (Figure 32). Much like mm. 39-45 of “Rome,” the first nine pitches of the row are given melodically in succession, whereas the final three pitches are slightly delayed. The tenth pitch (B♭) is provided at the words “We pour to the edge of a precipice…” while the final two pitches of the row (E♯ and B♮) are not heard until the words “…and then?” These delays have an almost literal attachment to the text. By pausing the row at these lines of text, it gives the impression that Woolf is poised at the edge of a mental precipice, anticipating what is to come.

Figure 32
Thematic core motif, “War” second, third, and fourth systems of the fifth page

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36 “War” in its entirety is unmeasured.
A less obvious reference to the row is made by the piano’s rapid-fire repeated note figure throughout “War.” Over the course of the song, the piano part contains each note of the twelve-tone scale. However, the order in which the pitches occur does not match any form of the row (F♯-C♯-D♯-F♯-G♯-C♯-G♯-E♯-D♯-A♯-B♭-B♯). This jumbling of the row conveys Woolf’s turbulent state of mind at this point in the cycle. Statements such as, “The war has taken away the outer wall of security,” reveal a world that lacks certainty and order. The twelve-tone row, in its state of utter disarray, reflects this.

In “Parents” there are two obvious statements of the row in the piano accompaniment. The first occurrence (mm. 5-6) is transposed a half-step up from the original (Figure 33). The voice part doubles the first, fourth, fifth, ninth, tenth, and twelfth tones with the piano. This same figure recurs at measures 16-17 (in this instance, the voice only doubles the second and third tones of the row with the piano). As was mentioned in “The Diary,” doubling of the row is symbolic of contentment and security, very fitting in this song.

Figure 33
Thematic core motif, “Parents” mm. 5-6

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There are two statements of the row shared between the voice and piano parts in “Parents,” almost identical to the original version in “The Diary.” The first occurrence (mm. 25-26) expresses stability as Woolf speaks of her parents’ lives, “No mud; no whirlpools. Simple, clear, gay, serene.” The next occurrence at mm. 35-38, on the other hand, communicates quite a different atmosphere (Figure 34). Paired with the rapid-fire rhythmic motif from “War,” the ambiance here is one of insecurity and unease.

Figure 34
Thematic core motif, “Parents” mm. 35-38

Argento enhances this feeling further by including an abbreviated version of the row at mm. 39-40 (Figure 35). Delivered by the voice part, this shortened motif contains only the first six tones.
of the row which is then interrupted by the opening piano motif of “Parents.” Unlike previous instances where the final pitches of the row are merely delayed, the final six pitches of this statement are omitted completely. This creates a sense of extreme disquiet which continues throughout the final measures of “Parents” and into “Last Entry.”

Figure 35
Thematic core motif (fragmented), “Parents” mm. 39-40

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These variations of the twelve-tone row throughout the cycle communicate Woolf’s shifting states of mind. Through the use of tempo, rhythm, musical markings, and many other tools, Argento makes each version of the row unique. The initial statement of the row in the “The Diary” communicates a questioning atmosphere. The unfinished row that opens “Anxiety” conveys Woolf’s agitation and distraction. “Fancy” features the voice and piano parts exchanging the roles they had in the first song; paired with the voice part’s humming, this offers an image of thoughtfulness and creativity. The opening of “Hardy’s Funeral” features the row as a chant-like melody symbolizing the religious ambiance ever present in this song. The row paired with the quasi un mandolino marking in “Rome” sounds like early-twentieth-century café music. Argento’s jumbling of the row in the piano accompaniment dispersed throughout the course of “War” creates an unsettling feeling. The elegant, stately representation of the row in
“Parents” conveys nostalgia for better times. The recurrence of the row at the end of “Last Entry” (discussed on pages 51 and 61), identical to its appearance in “The Diary,” brings the cycle full circle. Like Schumann’s use of the thematic core motif throughout Frauenliebe und -leben, Argento’s twelve-tone row varies and changes depending on the mood of each song, ultimately returning to its original form providing finality and closure.

In addition to the thematic core motif, two motifs found in “War” are of particular importance and must be discussed. “War” is the only song of the cycle, excepting “The Diary,” whose motifs recur in multiple songs of the cycle. The first of these, the rapid-fire repeated-note motif first heard in the opening system of the song (Figure 36), is heard again in mm. 33-34 of “Parents” (Figure 37). It is then transferred to the vocal line in a modified form beginning in m. 35, giving the quasi parlato quality that Argento indicates (see Figure 34, page 45).

Figure 36
Rapid-fire repeated-note motif, “War” first system of the first page

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37 All of the songs in From the Diary of Virginia Woolf have motifs that appear in “Last Entry.” “The Diary” and “War” are unusual in that they both possess motifs that occur in other songs, as well.
The second important motif in “War,” the chiming clock motif, also appears in “Last Entry.” An analysis of the final song of the cycle follows. This song, which features motivic material from every song in *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*, is best considered from the first through the last measure, rather than by the individual motifs. This is due to the fact that the motifs appear in random order throughout.

The opening measures of “Last Entry” feature a repeated G♯ supported by C♯ Major chords. This is a variation of the chiming clock motif heard near the end of “War,” so named because of the repeated G♯ which resembles a clock chiming the hour. It is aptly paired with words associated with time—“nineteen forty-one” (Figure 38).
Whereas in “War” the voice and piano share this G♯ rhythmically, in “Last Entry” the voice displays erratic, unpredictable rhythms over the accompaniment (Figure 39). By doing this, Argento communicates Woolf’s mental instability over the steady certainty of time.
“The Diary” is the most heavily referenced song throughout “Last Entry.” The first song consists of four primary motifs, all of which recur in the final song: the descending minor second motif which is first introduced by the piano in the anacrusis (Figure 40), the initial piano prelude motif in mm. 1-6 (Figure 41), the thematic core motif or twelve-tone row in mm. 7-10 (see Figure 23, page 35), and the arching half-note motif in mm. 13-14 (Figure 42).

Figure 40
Descending minor second motif, “The Diary” anacrusis

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Figure 41
Initial piano prelude motif, “The Diary” mm. 1-6

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Measures 4-25 of “Last Entry” contain all of these motifs in some form. It must be remembered that the primary motifs from “The Diary” are related to self-knowledge and -discovery, or forms of introspection—something that Woolf comes to abhor over the course of the cycle. Beginning at m. 4 of “Last Entry,” the voice introduces the thematic core motif a perfect fourth lower than the original row and accompanied by the text “I intend no introspection. I mark Henry James’ sentence: observe perpetually.” This is followed by an ascending minor second in the voice part at the words “Observe the oncome of age. Observe greed.” This is a transposed inversion of the descending minor second motif, symbolizing the polarity between introspection and observation in Woolf’s mind. In mm. 12-13 of “Last Entry,” Argento quotes the first two measures of the initial piano prelude motif in the voice part, again in transposition. Simultaneously, the piano accompaniment references the arcing half-note motif, modified by substituting the longer note values for repeated pitches of shorter duration (Figure 43). The concurrent appearance of all of these motifs reflects Woolf’s mind—overrun with frantic thoughts and conflicting images.
The variation of the chiming clock motif is again heard in the piano accompaniment in mm. 17-18, though this time the voice does not double the G♯, instead rising a third to a B♮, further heightening the disparity between the voice and piano parts. Measures 20-25 of “Last Entry” feature the twelve-tone row in the voice in the same manner as mm. 4-9, but paired with new text (“I insist upon spending this time to the best advantage. I will go down with my colours flying… Occupation is essential.”). This is once again followed by the transposed inversion of the descending minor second motif in the voice part beginning in m. 25. The voice continues singing this half step motif paired with the word “observe” through measure 38, while the piano references motifs from previous songs.

Measures 25-41 send the piano accompaniment through a kaleidoscope of motivic recurrences from previous songs. The first of these is from “Anxiety.” It is a triplet figure with a twisting melody that appears throughout the second song, but mm. 59-62 (Figure 44) most closely resemble the occurrence in mm. 25-26 of “Last Entry” (Figure 45). This motif, which
underscores the text “Occupation is essential,” conveys Woolf’s desperate need to work continually. She had severe breakdowns after the completion of major works, so this music and text paired communicate the overpowering necessity of work for her.

**Figure 44**
Twisting triplet motif, “Anxiety” mm. 59-62

![Figure 44](image1)

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**Figure 45**
Twisting triplet motif, “Last Entry” mm. 25-26

![Figure 45](image2)

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“Hardy’s Funeral” features two motifs that recur in “Last Entry:” open fifths moving in parallel motion at the beginning of the second system on the first page and an arpeggiated chord first heard near the end of the second system on the first page (Figure 46). These two motifs recur in mm. 28-29 of “Last Entry” (Figure 47). Argento then interestingly follows this with a modified version of the twisting triplet motif from “Anxiety,” perhaps indicating that Woolf’s unease remains during this particular reminiscence.

Figure 46
Parallel open fifths motif and arpeggiated chord motif, “Hardy’s Funeral” second system of the first page

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Figure 47
Parallel open fifths motif and arpeggiated chord motif, “Last Entry” mm. 28-29

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The next recurring motif in “Last Entry” is actually a combination of two different sections from the A theme of “Rome.” Measures 1-3 (Figure 48) and measures 13-14 of “Rome” (Figure 49) directly correlate to measures 30-33 of “Last Entry” (Figure 50). This motif, reminiscent of café music, offers a sense of relaxed observation with an underlying melancholy due to the minor key and chromatically altered pitches.

**Figure 48**
Café music motif part 1, “Rome” mm. 1-3

![Figure 48](image1)

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**Figure 49**
Café music motif part 2, “Rome” mm. 13-14

![Figure 49](image2)

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The next motif featured in “Last Entry” is from “Parents.” The original motif, first heard at the opening of the seventh song, recurs in mm. 7-9 with a slight variation (Figure 51). It is this variation which most closely resembles the occurrence in mm. 34-36 of “Last Entry” (Figure 52). There is a slight modification to this motif in the final song. In “Parents,” it is the voice part that has the rising scalar melody, but Argento gives this to the piano accompaniment in “Last Entry,” allowing the voice to continue its ascending minor second figure.
Two motifs from “Fancy” appear next: the woman motif first heard in m. 8 of “Fancy” (accompanying the text “Woman thinks” and later “She writes” and “She sings”) and the man motif in m. 9 (accompanying the text “He does”) (Figure 53). These motifs appear in mm. 37-38.
of “Last Entry” (Figure 54). As with the recurring nostalgia motif from “Parents,” Argento gives the vocal melody to the piano accompaniment in “Last Entry.”

Figure 53
Woman motif and man motif, “Fancy” mm. 8-9

![Musical notation]

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Figure 54
Woman motif and man motif, “Last Entry” mm. 37-38

![Musical notation]

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“Fancy” is perhaps the most comforting song of the cycle. It is Woolf creating and writing—her best moments. The woman motif, consisting of arpeggiated major-key triplets, expresses utter contentment, beauty, and tranquility. This is sharply contrasted with the man motif which immediately follows. The polytonal, suddenly louder repeated chords suggest aggression and antagonism.

This is followed by a literal recurrence of the chiming clock motif in mm. 40-41 of “Last Entry” (Figure 55), which serves to bring Woolf out of her reverie.

Figure 55
Chiming clock motif, “Last Entry” mm. 40-41

There are many interesting aspects of this section of “Last Entry” that require discussion. The motifs from “Anxiety,” “Hardy’s Funeral,” and “Rome” do not appear in their original keys in the final song. The transpositions become closer and closer in proximity to the original keys as they progress—mm. 25-26 are a major second lower than the original, mm. 28-29 are a major second higher than the original, and mm. 30-33 are a minor second higher than the original. In
m. 34, the motifs begin to recur in the home keys (the motifs for “Parents,” “Fancy,” and “War”). One possible reason for this decision on the composer’s part is to show that Woolf is becoming more and more immersed in her memories. At first, they seem distant and vague, but as she continues on, they become clearer. It also seems fitting that the motifs from “Parents” and “Fancy” should appear in their original keys. These are certainly the most comforting reminiscences for Woolf, and the return to the home key helps to bring across the sense of security and stability that they instill in her. The recurrence of the chiming clock motif from “War” in its original key has quite a different effect. It is jarring, bringing Woolf back fully to the present moment.

It is also interesting that Argento introduces the motifs out of order from their original occurrence in the cycle. The motifs appear in the following order in mm. 25-41 of “Last Entry:” “Anxiety” (song no. 2), “Hardy’s Funeral” (song no. 4), “Rome” (song no. 5), “Parents” (song no. 7), “Fancy” (song no. 3), and “War” (song no. 6). Again, there are dramatic reasons for such a choice. Memories rarely come to us in chronological order, so it is logical that they would not be ordered in Woolf’s mind. Also, Argento builds dramatic tension with his ordering of the motifs. The unease associated with “Anxiety” transforms into the stony religious atmosphere of “Hardy’s Funeral” (with Woolf’s disquiet ever present as “Anxiety” is again referenced). The shift to “Rome” brings a more relaxed quality to her thoughts. The nostalgia motif from “Parents” and the woman motif from “Fancy” both are more comforting to Woolf, but immediately succeeding this is the man motif from “Fancy” which again creates tension. Argento follows this with an empty measure which increases the disquiet. The chiming clock motif from “War” with its increasingly louder dynamics further builds the unease. This tension is finally broken with the recurrence of material from “The Diary” beginning in m. 42 of “Last
Entry.” By increasing the tension, then relaxing it, and then building it again, Argento shows Woolf’s mental state which alternated between periods of calm and despair.

Following this complex section are references to “The Diary.” Musically, mm. 7-18 of the first song are brought back almost identically in mm. 42-53 of the final song. The alterations are slight and can be attributed primarily to changes in the text. Measures 32-46 of “The Diary” and measures 59-74 of “Last Entry” are nearly indistinguishable from one another in terms of both music and text. There are alterations, in particular to the piano accompaniment, but certainly the most important of these occurs in the final measure of “Last Entry” where the G♯ which concludes the first song is noticeably missing. This omission of the final note leaves a feeling of uncertainty, an indefinite ending. This could be symbolic of Woolf’s impending suicide or the fact that her writing has lived on long after her death.

The use of recurring motivic material is perhaps the strongest connecting factor between Frauenliebe und -leben and From the Diary of Virginia Woolf. Both song cycles make use of a thematic core motif, or a motif that recurs throughout the work uniting the individual songs. Both composers vary this motif, adapting it to the mood of each song and then bring the motif back in its original form at the end of the cycle. There are ways, however, in which Argento takes the idea of cyclical unification beyond Schumann’s techniques. Most notably, Schumann only directly references the first song at the end of the cycle, whereas Argento references all of the songs. Another important difference is that Schumann’s return to the initial thematic material at the end of the cycle is provided by the piano only. Argento brings back the last 17 measures of “The Diary” in “Last Entry” using both voice and piano, with the voice part’s original text: “…to come back, after a year or two, and find that the collection had sorted itself and refined itself and coalesced, as such deposits so mysteriously do, into a mould, transparent
two musical forms predominate in Schumann’s and Argento’s song cycles: strophic (an immediate repetition of initial thematic material) and rondo (contrasting sections separating recurrences of initial thematic material). Every song in each of the two cycles is written in some variation of strophic or rondo style or a combination of the two forms. In addition, both cycles in their entirety are either rondo-like (Frauenliebe) or strophic-like (Virginia Woolf) with each cycle’s consistent return to the thematic core motif. Thus, both the smaller and larger formal structures display a consistent return to original motivic material—whether original in the sense that it initiated the individual song or that it introduced the cycle as a whole.

In Frauenliebe und -leben, the musical forms adhere rather strictly to their definitions, and generally, each stanza of poetry is correlated with a musical section. (For example, the fourth song “Du Ring an meinem Finger” contains five stanzas of poetry, and therefore, five musical sections: ABACA’. ) The forms in Schumann’s cycle are thus easily identifiable. Argento, on the other hand, uses a more eclectic style which makes musical sections more difficult to label. However, through the composer’s use of recurring motifs, formal structures—loose-knit and blurred thought they may be—do become apparent.

The forms of the Schumann cycle are listed below. Excepting the final song, the forms are straightforward, either strophic or rondo or some combination of the two:
### Figure 56
**Musical forms of *Frauenliebe und -leben***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>“Seit ich ihn gesehen”</td>
<td>Strophic, two strophes + coda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>“Er, der Herrlichste von Allen”</td>
<td>AABA’ CC’ A’ + coda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>“Ich kann’s nicht fassen”</td>
<td>ABA’ A + coda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>“Du Ring an meinem Finger”</td>
<td>ABACA’ + coda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>“Helft mir, ihr Schwestern”</td>
<td>ABACA’ + coda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>“Süsser Freund”</td>
<td>AABA + coda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>“An meinem Herzen”</td>
<td>Modified strophic, four strophes + coda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>“Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan”</td>
<td>Through-composed; cyclically rondo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A brief explanation of some of the markings above is useful here. The prime (ʹ) designation is given only to those repetitions or recurrences that are noticeably altered from the original. Schumann indicates a modified theme quite clearly either through transposition or significantly varying the consequent phrase. Slight variations of rhythm, melody, or accompaniment to accommodate changes in text are not considered prime. Also, the ‘coda’ designation refers to the piano postludes, which almost always contain new or varied material.

The two most complex songs in the cycle in terms of formal structure—or those which do not so strictly follow conventional forms—are the second and eighth songs, both of which revolve solely around the husband. “Er, der Herrlichste von Allen” offers a vivid description of the woman’s future husband, particularly his high level of worth and her lowliness by comparison. “Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan” displays her utter grief and inability to be consoled following his death. The language in both of these songs is superlative. Examples include her description of him as “Hell und herrlich, hoch and fern” (‘bright and glorious, high and distant’) in the second song, and her statement “Ich bin nicht lebend mehr” (‘I am no longer alive’) in the final song. The remaining songs in the cycle are more predictable in terms of their
musical forms, and notably, the husband is not the sole focal point (though always a prominent figure): songs 1 and 3 focus on the young woman’s own feelings and impressions; songs 4, 5, and 7 feature her addressing someone other than her husband; and song 6 has her speaking of a subject other than her husband. It is also interesting to note that the two simplest forms in the cycle are those that include the husband in a more indirect manner—the first and seventh songs—both of which are set strophically. Though her future husband is clearly the catalyst for her discourse, “Seit ich ihn gesehen” conveys exclusively the woman’s thoughts and feelings upon first meeting him. Unlike the second song, however, she offers no description of him. Rather she relates her reaction. This song is strictly strophic with no real variation between the two verses. “An meinem Herzen” is addressed to her child, and the only reference to her husband is the statement that she feels pity for men because they cannot feel a mother’s joy. The song is set in modified strophic form, but the modifications are slight and simple. The choice of formal structures suggests that the real importance and complexity (at least according to Schumann) lies with the relationship between man and woman. All other relationships are secondary by comparison, even the woman’s own personal identity and her relationship with her child.

This is also evidenced by the composer’s omission of text from Chamisso’s original cycle. As mentioned previously, Schumann omitted both the middle stanza from “Süßer Freund” and the entire final poem of the set, “Traum der eig’nen Tage.” Reading these texts makes his reason evident. Whereas the remaining four stanzas of the sixth poem feature the woman addressing her husband in a very intimate discussion, the middle stanza recounts a conversation with her mother about her pregnancy. Similarly, the final poem, which takes place after the husband’s death in the eighth poem, reveals the woman imparting advice to her
granddaughter on the young woman’s wedding day. Though the woman speaks primarily of the
great love she and her husband shared and her suffering upon his loss, it is also clear that she has
continued her life without him:

War mein Herz gebrochen, Though my heart was broken
Blieb mir fest der Mut, My courage remained strong, 38

In other words, these omitted texts center upon the woman’s relationship with other members of
her family and her ability to survive without her husband. Inclusion of these texts would pull
focus away from the romantic relationship between man and woman, and so, Schumann chose to
exclude them.

The musical forms found in Frauenliebe und -leben are generally constructed around the
formal structures of the poems. In particular, Schumann took note of Chamisso’s use of
recurring text within the poems. Half of the poems included in Schumann’s cycle display this
trait in some fashion. The first and seventh poems’ opening two lines are also the last two lines
of each poem. The first, third, and fifth stanzas of both “Du Ring an meinem Finger” and “Helft
mir, ihr Schwestern” begin with the same line of text. 39 Schumann reflects these poetic
recurrences musically. “Seit ich ihn gesehen” and “An meinem Herzen” are in strophic form,
while “Du Ring an meinem Finger” and “Helft mir, ihr Schwestern” are in rondo form
(ABACA’). In addition, Schumann includes his own textual recurrences not found in the original
poetry. In both songs 2 and 3, the composer brings back the first stanza at the end of

39 Note that in “Helft mir, ihr Schwestern” the fifth stanza opens with, “Streuet ihm, Schwestern,” a slight variation
of the original line of text.
each song. These added textual recurrences are coupled with the musical material that originally accompanied them, though sometimes in a slightly altered form. Schumann also creates musical recurrences not suggested by Chamisso’s poetry. The most notable of these has already been mentioned—the last song’s piano postlude brings back a strophe of the first song in its entirety—though he also does this with some of the secondary motifs as mentioned in the “Recurring Motivic Material” subchapter.

It is noteworthy that both Chamisso and Schumann write a continuous return to initial thematic material, so there is a cyclic element always present in both the text and music. It is nearly always the A theme (or the first theme presented in each song) to which the composer returns. In fact, the only case in which a secondary theme is repeated is in the second song “Er, der Herrlichste von Allen” where the C theme which first occurs in mm. 38-46 of the song is immediately repeated transposed down a third with some other minor modifications (C’’) in mm. 46-54.

The form of the last song requires some explanation. Though commonly labeled as through-composed, Schumann begins with an initial musical theme (mm. 1-4) which is then immediately repeated (mm. 4-7), so there is an element of strophic writing (brief though it may be) that opens the song (Figure 57). This is worth mentioning, because Argento takes this same idea—an initial musical statement that is immediately repeated followed by through-composed writing—and expands upon it in the final song of From the Diary of Virginia Woolf.

40 In the case of “Ich kann’s nich fassen,” Schumann takes this a step further following the first stanza’s recurrence with yet another recurrence of the first two lines of text. This incessant return to the initial text is generally thought to emphasize the woman’s disbelief that the object of her affection could ever possibly choose her for his wife—‘I cannot grasp or believe it.’
Frauenliebe und Leben by Robert Schumann; Text by Adelbert von Chamisso.
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_Frauenliebe und -leben_ is rondo-like overall primarily due to the thematic core motif and the method of its recurrence throughout the cycle. This motif appears in the first, third, fifth, and seventh songs, as well as the postlude of the final song, thus revealing a large-scale alternating pattern between the initial theme and contrasting material. The rondo form, which Schumann pairs with the complexity of romantic love throughout (in contrast to strophic settings which are paired with relationships other than romantic love), is fitting as the cycle’s overall structure.

The forms for *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* are listed below. Unlike the forms for _Frauenliebe und -leben_, the designations for Argento’s cycle are not so easily classified, and are
therefore labeled according to those forms which they most closely resemble. (Designations such as ABA are included in parentheses to emphasize the fact that these are used neither strictly nor conventionally.)

Figure 58
Musical forms of From the Diary of Virginia Woolf

I. “The Diary” Rondo-like (introduction + ABACA + coda)
II. “Anxiety” Modified strophic, 6 strophes
III. “Fancy” Rondo-like (introduction + ABACADCA)
IV. “Hardy’s Funeral” Rondo-like (ABA)
V. “Rome” Rondo-like (ABA)
VI. “War” Strophic- and rondo-like (ABA)
VII. “Parents” Rondo-like (ABABA)
VIII. “Last Entry” Through-composed; cyclically strophic

Unlike the song forms of Frauenliebe und -leben, which essentially speak for themselves, those of From the Diary of Virginia Woolf require some explanation. The forms are determined primarily by the appearance and recurrence of motifs and themes within each song, however, these motifs and themes are often heavily varied throughout. While the above figure may be an oversimplification of the song forms, certain patterns within the songs begin to emerge which lends some support to the labels given here.

“The Diary” features four primary motifs, all of which were mentioned in the “Recurring Motivic Material” subchapter: the descending minor second motif (see Figure 40, page 50), the initial piano prelude motif (see Figure 41, page 50), the thematic core motif (see Figure 23, page

41 There may be some overlap with the “Recurring Motivic Material” section of this chapter, however the overlap of information is minimal. The “Form” subchapter is considering motifs within each song, while the “Recurring Motivic Material” subchapter is specifically dealing with motifs that are cyclically recurring (in more than one song of the cycle).
35), and the arching half-note motif (see Figure 42, page 51). Argento takes these motifs and constructs the entire song around them. The thematic core motif, which is the primary motif of the cycle, also serves as the A section for the rondo-like construction of “The Diary.” The motif appears in mm. 7-10, 23-26, and 39-42, with the other motifs separating these occurrences, loosely creating the following type of structure: introduction + ABACA + coda.\(^42\) The introduction consists of the first two motifs (the descending minor second motif and the initial piano prelude motif), which make up the first six measures of the song. The descending minor second motif (though of particular importance in “Last Entry”) is so brief that it cannot constitute an entire musical section. The initial piano prelude motif also is not considered the A section of “The Diary” because the six-measure entity never again appears in its complete form within the song. The motif features a rondo-like construction: mm. 1-2 and 5-6 are similar musically, while mm. 3-4 offer contrasting material. Argento excerpts these three subsections and intersperses them throughout the song. The thematic core motif—due to its being the only motif in “The Diary” initially shared between the voice and piano and its importance throughout the cycle—is labeled as the A section. This section begins at m. 7 with the entrance of the voice. The B section begins at m. 13 with the arching half-note motif. There is a return to the A section beginning at m. 23 with the return of the twelve-tone row, followed by the C section in m. 31. The A section returns for the last time in m. 39, and a piano postlude coda makes up the last four measures of the song. Textually, this division of musical sections makes sense, each time reflecting a change of thought or new idea.

“Anxiety,” set in what can best be considered modified strophic form, relates Woolf’s fear that life “is a little strip of pavement over an abyss” with its repetitive, nearly obsessive

\(^42\) Prime designations (ʹ) will not be used in describing the song forms of From the Diary of Virginia Woolf. All sectional recurrences in this cycle are varied and never exact.
quality. Argento’s variations in each of the six strophes are ingenious, becoming increasingly fragmentary throughout and reflecting Woolf’s crumbling state of mind. The first strophe (mm. 1-17) features multiple motifs which recur throughout, becoming progressively more distant from the original versions. The second strophe (mm. 18-35) begins this process, by repeating the first strophe in transposition and inversion. The third strophe (mm. 36-48) features further manipulation of the musical material, though many motifs still recur in this section (such as the why motif and the repeated-note triplet motif). By far the farthest musically from the original is the fourth strophe (mm. 49-58), which suddenly features sustained tones for the voice part and a deviation from the initial melodic material. This change of texture, combined with a complete statement of the row, makes this section the calmest in the song. The fifth strophe (mm. 59-73) begins to return to the original musical material of the song, but with its suddenly higher vocal tessitura and frantic repetitions of “why, why, why?” it is the climax of the song. The final strophe (mm. 74-90) is an almost exact replica of the first strophe, both musically and textually. The codetta (mm. 90-94) features the voice bringing back the why motif. All of the strophes are introduced with some version of the repeated-note triplet figure in the piano part (Figure 59).

Figure 59
Repeated-note triplet figure motif, “Anxiety” m. 1

From the Diary of Virginia Woolf by Dominick Argento; Text by Virginia Woolf
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“Fancy” is loosely rondo-like in its construction. There is a musical introduction in mm. 1-6 (evidenced by the text), serving as a lead in to the rest of the song. The woman motif, which is the primary motif or the A section, is first introduced in m. 8 and recurs in various forms throughout this brief song in mm. 11-13, 15, and 24-26. All of the other motifs (the man motif in m. 9, the organ motif in m. 10, the night motif in m. 16, and the humming motif—or the thematic core motif—in mm. 17-19) appear only once, excepting the ‘they’ motif, so called because it appears with every occurrence of the word “they.” This motif first appears in m. 14 and then recurs in mm. 20-23. In all of these cases, Argento’s music reflects the text. “Woman” or “she” appears three times in Woolf’s entry, “they” twice, and all remaining nouns and pronouns are only featured once. The musical motifs reflect these textual appearances. Two musical additions by Argento not prompted by the original text are the humming section (mm. 17-19) and the final musical occurrence of the woman motif (mm. 24-26). In ending with the woman motif, Argento emphasizes its importance further. This also reinforces the rondo quality of this song.

The form of “Hardy’s Funeral” is not easily defined. ABA form seems the most likely designation. Notably, both A sections correspond with unmeasured music (the opening two pages and the final page of “Hardy’s Funeral”), while the entire B section is measured. Again, these formal designations can primarily be attributed to the motifs used. The opening A section introduces three important motifs that recur in the return to the A section on the last page: open fifths moving in parallel motion in the accompaniment, an ascending modal melody for the vocal line, and rolled chords in the accompaniment (see Figure 46, page 54). The B section introduces a new motif (the bishop motif, so labeled because it is paired with the text “One catches a bishop’s frown and twitch”) which dominates this section—an accented sixteenth note followed by a dotted eighth note introduced by the voice part (Figure 60).
As the B section progresses, however, Argento begins bringing back motifs from the opening A section—the rolled chords (mm. 34-37), the piano’s opening chant-like prelude (mm. 25, 40-46, and 45-52), and open octaves (a variation of the original open fifths) moving in parallel motion (mm. 25 and 38-40). With the return of the A section on the last page, the composer creates a mirror-like impression by reversing the order of the three motifs from the first section. He also embeds the bishop motif within the accompaniment in this last section, adding another level of complexity.

“Rome” is perhaps the easiest song in the cycle to label formally. It is clearly written in ABA style. In general, “Rome” is more conventional in its musical sound. It is one of the few songs in From the Diary of Virginia Woolf to possess a key signature and to have a relatively tonal quality. The opening musical section (mm. 1-21) introduces the café music motif, the primary motif of the song. The B section (mm. 22-51) consists mostly of the mandolin motif (marked by tremolo writing for the accompaniment). The return to the A section beginning in m. 51 brings back the opening café music motif. Musical variations in the final section are mostly for the vocal part and are a result of the change of text. Both the tonal atmosphere and traditional form reflect Woolf’s momentarily calm state as she observes the people and scenes of Rome.
“War,” which Argento has referred to as “a long, long cadenza for the voice”\(^\text{43}\) does not at first glance seem to possess any recognizable form. However, the musical motifs are again the best guide to determining any sort of structure. The voice’s opening motif (scale degrees \(\hat{5} - \hat{1} - \hat{2} - \hat{3} - \hat{2} - \hat{1}\) in the key of A major set to the text, “This I thought yesterday…”) occurs three times in succession. It does not appear again until the final page of “War” with the text “I can’t conceive that there will be a twenty-seventh, June.” The contrasting section consists primarily of two motifs: an ascending perfect fourth (introduced by the voice with the words “the war”) and a bugle-like melody outlining triadic harmonies. Thus, “War” can best be described as ABA form. Argento confuses this slightly by having one motif (the piano accompaniment’s rapid-fire repeated-note motif, see Figure 34) occur throughout the course of the entire song across musical sections. The prevalence of this motif, symbolic of the war itself with its ominous similarity to gunfire, may allude to the war permeating all aspects of life. Two interesting changes that Argento makes near the end of the song are: the perfect fourth motif is transformed into a tritone at the words “and then” near the end of the song, creating a more ominous tone; and the recurrence of the initial vocal motif on the last page of “War” is in D major, a perfect fourth above the original, reflecting on a larger scale the interval of the ascending fourth.

The overall form of “Parents” may best be labeled ABABA. The main feature of each occurrence of the A section is the nostalgia motif (each time accompanied by the text “How beautiful they were”) which opens the song and is shared between the voice and piano. All of the A sections feature a \textit{Largo} tempo marking. The B sections are characterized by a \textit{Semplice} tempo marking and sweeping vocal melodies. The form of this song, like “Rome,” is very stable.

except for the last page’s *parlando* style, which is out of character. This moment of “Parents” emphasizes the war’s encroachment into even Woolf’s happiest thoughts. It also may allude to the fact that her childhood was not an entirely happy one. Sexually abused by her stepbrothers as a child, Woolf’s experiences have been documented by the author herself as well as many biographers.

“Last Entry” has no easily definable formal structure and is most important in terms of its cyclical form. However, it is noteworthy how much “Last Entry” and “Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan” share in common in terms of structure. Both songs feature opening musical material that is then immediately repeated (mm. 1-4 and 4-7 of the Schumann and mm. 1-17 and 17-27 of the Argento), through-composed material (mm. 7-22 of the Schumann and mm. 27-41 of the Argento), and finally, a return to thematic material from the first song (mm. 23-43 of the Schumann and mm. 42-74 of the Argento). The final songs of the two cycles thus bear a striking similarity in terms of musical form.

The form of each of the song cycles can be attributed to many factors. Certainly, the date of each composition helps dictate the formal structure. *Frauenliebe und -leben* was composed in the first half of the nineteenth century where strict forms were in fashion, while *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* was composed in the latter half of the twentieth century, a time of experimentation in all aspects of music. In this light, the degree of similarity between the cycles is even more remarkable. In addition to the time periods in which the works were written, the textual genres greatly influence the musical forms. Chamisso’s poetry, which is so strictly structured in meter and rhyme, lends itself to the clearly-defined formal structures that Schumann uses. The free prose of Virginia Woolf’s diary, on the other hand, is better suited to the complex, unconventional forms that Argento employs.

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44 The repetition in mm. 17-27 of Argento’s cycle is a modified version of only the first ten measures.
The overriding similarity in form between the two cycles is the return to initial thematic material on both the micro- and macro-structural levels. This is evidenced in the preference for strophic- and rondo-like writing. Both cycles feature a prevalence of rondo forms peppered with strophic forms, as well as a formally ‘unconventional’ final song which brings back material from the first song. This musical closure at the end of the two cycles is symbolic of life ending: for the woman in Frauenliebe und -leben “the life truly ends with the love”45 and in From the Diary of Virginia Woolf, Woolf’s life is literally at an end as “Last Entry” was written only days before her suicide.

Another shared quality in terms of formal structure is that both cycles have a very definite turning point, both musically and dramatically, which divides each work into two parts: songs 1-5 and songs 6-8. This division in Frauenliebe und -leben is created primarily through the key relationships between songs:

Figure 61  
Keys of Frauenliebe und -leben

1. “Seit ich ihn gesehen”   B♭ major  
2. “Er, der Herrlichste von Allen”  E♭ major  
3. “Ich kann’s nicht fassen”  C minor  
4. “Du Ring an meinem Finger”  E♭ major  
5. “Helft mir, ihr Schwestern”  B♭ major  
6. “Süsser Freund”  G major  
7. “An meinem Herzen”  D major  
8. “Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan”  D minor (returns to B♭ major at the end)

*These are the original keys of the cycle, or the ‘high voice’ keys.

45 Samuels, 142.
Songs 1-5 are a palindrome of closely-related keys. There is then an abrupt shift from B♭ major to G major (a distantly-related key) moving from the fifth song to the sixth. Songs 6-8 form another grouping of closely-related keys. Finally, the piano postlude brings about the return to B♭ major, the primary key of the cycle. Schumann’s construction certainly reflects the unfolding drama. A life-changing event separates the two groups: the woman’s marriage at the end of the fifth song. The first five songs thus take place before her marriage while the last three songs constitute her married life. The return to the original key of B♭ major at the end of the cycle reflects her words “ich zieh’ mich in mein Inn’res still zurück…/ da hab’ ich dich” (“I withdraw silently within myself…/ there I have you”), indicating that she is indeed drawing within herself to be with her husband, turning to her memories of their past together. Argento creates the same sort of division in From the Diary of Virginia Woolf and for the same dramatic reason—a life-changing event. Unlike Schumann, Argento achieves this motivically rather than through key relationships. The last three songs of the cycle all contain motifs introduced in “War” that do not appear anywhere else in the cycle. The rapid-fire repeated-note motif that appears throughout “War” returns in “Parents” first in the piano accompaniment (mm. 33-34) and then taken over by the voice in the subsequent measures. Similarly, the chiming clock motif that first occurs at the end of “War” reappears in “Last Entry” both in modified form (mm. 1-2 and 17-18) and direct quotation (mm. 40-41). No other motif from the cycle recurs in any song but the one in which it is first introduced and the final song (excepting the thematic core motif which appears in some form in every song of the cycle). As in Frauenliebe und -leben, a major event occurs in Argento’s cycle between the fifth and sixth songs—the outbreak of World War II. The first five songs therefore represent Woolf’s life pre-war and the last three songs take place during

46 Even though the woman is technically a widow in the last song, the wording indicates that like her husband, she is “no longer living” (‘ich bin nicht lebend mehr”), at least emotionally. Thus, it could be argued that she remains married to him in her heart and mind.
wartime. Thus, it is the composer’s belief that World War II had a profound effect upon Woolf’s mental state, something evidenced by many of her diary entries since the start of the war in 1939 to Woolf’s suicide in 1941. Argento’s inclusion of “War” motifs in the last three songs conveys the sense that the war never fully leaves her thoughts, even if it is not directly referenced in the text. The prevalence of these motifs at the end of the cycle also symbolizes Woolf at war with herself mentally and emotionally, a psychological battle that became more and more aggravated in her final years. (The last three songs of the cycle take place within one year of Woolf’s death—from June 1940 to March 1941.)

Yet another similarity is that both cycles feature a mirror-like quality. Sometimes the composers achieve this through their choice of musical forms and sometimes through the use of retrograde and inverted versions of motifs which offer both linear and vertical ‘reflections’ of musical ideas. The examples listed below were mentioned previously, but are listed here in close proximity to one another to illustrate the mirroring effect. Examples of mirroring in Frauenliebe und -leben include: the retrograde version of the thematic core motif in “Ich kann’s nicht fassen;” the palindrome of keys in the first five songs; the ascending and descending chromatic line motifs which reflect masculine and feminine counterparts, respectively; textual recurrences of initial lines or stanzas, particularly at the ends of songs (as in the first, second, third, and seventh songs) or throughout (as in the fourth and fifth songs); and the musical reflection in the last song’s postlude of the opening music. From the Diary of Virginia Woolf includes many examples of this mirror-like quality: the thematic core motif appears in a variety of retrograde and inverted forms throughout the cycle; the second strophe of “Anxiety” is an inverted form of the first strophe; the first and last strophes of “Anxiety” are textually and musically almost identical; many of the song forms in the cycle most closely match an ABA form (“Hardy’s
Funeral,” “Rome,” and “War,” as well as the ABABA form in “Parents”); and the cycle as a whole features a return in the last song to musical and textual material from the first song. The prevalence of this quality may be a literal reference to ‘reflection’ on the part of the heroines. This is certainly supported by the text, which is highly personal in both cycles often expressing each woman’s innermost thoughts and emotions. For the woman in Frauenliebe, this reflection is generally positive and comforting, but for Woolf, introspection becomes associated with despair. In “Last Entry,” she compares “introspection” and “observation.” The former is given negative connotations, while the latter is seen as comforting. When Woolf is at her most introspective, she is also at her most despondent—as in “Anxiety,” “Hardy’s Funeral,” and “War.” Observation, on the other hand, is associated with self-control. Thus, when she is simply describing a scene—as in “Fancy,” “Rome,” and “Parents”—she is slightly calmer, forcing herself not to give in entirely to her depression. Interestingly, the thematic core motif seems to represent introspection. From its first entrance in “The Diary,” this motif is associated with self-examination (‘What sort of diary should I like mine to be?’). Similarly, the appearance of the thematic core motif in “Fancy” is paired with humming, which communicates Woolf’s musing over her efforts to create a new kind of play. In “Parents,” the twelve-tone row is cut short at the words “no introspection,” a musical reflection of the text. One final mirroring similarity is that when programmed together in recital, the Frauenliebe and Virginia Woolf cycles—which both consist of eight songs—mirror one another on the page.

In an earlier discussion I examined the prevalence of rondo and strophic writing throughout both cycles, but the reason behind this choice has not been discussed at length. In each cycle, these forms represent something unique. For Schumann, rondo forms most often correlate with the more emotionally and dramatically complex themes of the cycle, specifically
romantic love which is the work’s primary focus. All of the songs that feature rondo writing (the fourth and fifth songs) or a combination of rondo and strophic writing (the second, third, and sixth songs) revolve around the relationship between man and woman. Strophic forms, on the other hand, tend to correspond to simpler or secondary themes. The only two purely strophic songs in Frauenliebe und -leben are the first and seventh songs. Most scholars agree that the seventh song is musically the weakest of the cycle. This is often attributed to the fact that there is nearly no mention of the husband at all in this song (focusing instead on the relationship between mother and child), thus Schumann found it uninspiring with his theme. The first song, though of great importance at the end of the cycle, still displays an element of simplicity reflecting the young woman’s innocence and her life before the complexity of romantic love. Overall, Schumann’s cycle can be considered cyclically rondo, because the thematic core motif appears in some form in the first, third, fifth, and seventh songs, and finally in the postlude of the last song. According to the assessment above, this would seem to argue that the cycle as a whole focuses on romantic love, more so than the woman’s individual self. Argento’s reasons for employing rondo and strophic writing are quite different than Schumann’s. Rondo forms in the Virginia Woolf cycle tend to be associated with security and stability, perhaps best observed in “Parents” where the return to the A section throughout is associated with nostalgia and contentment. “Fancy,” with the constant recurrence of the beautifully tonal woman motif, communicates a comforting quality. “Rome,” clearly in rondo form, has a sense of ease and tranquility throughout most of the song. In contrast, Argento uses strophic writing to represent Woolf at her most obsessive and emotionally unstable. “Anxiety,” the only purely strophic song in the work is the best example of this. In no other song of the cycle is her mania so apparent. “War” also contains strophic elements. The opening three statements of “This, I thought
yesterday, may be my last walk…” are set strophically for the voice, intensified further by the piano’s rapid-fire repeated notes. This brings up another important point that Argento uses not only consecutively repeated musical themes to communicate negative emotions, but also repeated pitches. Like “War,” “Anxiety” also features a preponderance of repeated tones in the piano part, creating tension and fear. Often these repetitions are quick in succession especially if the mood is one of anxiety, but Argento also uses slower repetitions—such as the repeated G♯ “chiming clock” motif at the end of “War” set to Woolf’s mention of the year “nineteen forty-one” —to convey a sense of foreboding and despair. The alternation between strophic and rondo writing throughout may also reflect Virginia Woolf’s manic-depressive nature—periods of stability punctuated by frantic outbursts of despair.

In terms of the musical language of each cycle, Schumann’s writing is largely conventional and tonal with elements of underlying musical complexity, while Argento’s music is highly cerebral employing twelve-tone technique but also humanizing with aspects of tonal harmony. Thus, yet again, even in terms of broad musical language, the two cycles seem to reflect one another: Frauenliebe und -leben on the surface is musically simple but features underlying complexities and From the Diary of Virginia Woolf is a highly cerebral work punctuated with moments of tonal simplicity.

**Accompaniment**

For some art song composers, the piano is viewed as subordinate to the voice. Both Schumann and Argento in their respective cycles treat the vocalist and pianist as equal partners in conveying the music and drama. Primarily, this is evidenced by the fact that the voice and
piano interchange motifs throughout, thus no part takes precedence over another. In the Frauenliebe cycle, the husband motif provides an example of this. It is first introduced by the piano accompaniment in the postlude of “Er, der Herrlichste von Allen,” is then transferred to the voice part at the end of “Süsser Freund,” and finally returns to the accompaniment in the postlude of “An meinem Herzen.” In From the Diary of Virginia Woolf, the thematic core motif or twelve-tone row offers many different examples of this trading off. First introduced in “The Diary,” the twelve tones making up the thematic core are originally alternated between the voice and piano parts, but appear in countless variations throughout the cycle: doubled by the voice and piano (such as in “The Diary”), stated solely by the piano (such as in the quasi un mandolino section in “Rome”), or stated solely by the voice (such as in “Last Entry”). This free exchange of motifs between the voice and piano in the two cycles lends great importance to both parts.

The composers’ use of piano preludes and postludes also lends support to the idea that the piano is an equally important partner to the voice, though why and how each composer utilizes these devices is slightly different. Though Schumann gives the accompaniment more independence and prominence than many of his Lieder predecessors, the piano still acts largely as a support for the voice in Frauenliebe und -leben with its repeated chords and frequent doubling of the vocal melody. However, through the extensive use of piano postludes—every song in the cycle contains a postlude though the lengths vary greatly—Schumann raises the level of importance of the accompaniment. The postludes often reflect or ‘comment’ upon what has transpired within each song. In some cases, the piano postlude even introduces a new scene or a change in the mood. “Helft mir, ihr Schwestern” and “Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan” offer examples. In the fifth song, the piano postlude brings back the opening vocal melody (slightly altered rhythmically) to represent the wedding march toward which the song
has been building. Thus, the culmination of the woman’s dreams (marrying her husband) is actually portrayed by solo piano. The final song, with its return to musical material from the first song, initiates the change in mood from utter grief to the reliving of past joys and sorrows.

Argento’s approach to the equality of voice and piano in *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* is quite different. While some of the songs contain a prelude (“The Diary” and “Hardy’s Funeral”) or postlude (“Fancy”), the majority of the songs feature the voice and piano beginning and ending together or at least in very close proximity. This choice reflects the codependency of the voice and piano in the cycle. Notably, Argento’s return in the last song to musical material from the first song employs both the voice and piano together, in contrast to Schumann’s method. In part, this is due to the text that accompanies the first song. Woolf specifically references looking back at her diary years later: “to come back after a year or two, and find that the collection had sorted itself…” Thus, Argento’s musical decision to include both the voice and piano is a very reasonable one. There is also argument for the idea that Schumann’s choice is a result of his intimate familiarity with and possible preference for the piano⁴⁷, while Argento’s choice is a reflection of his partiality for the human voice.⁴⁸

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CHAPTER 4
PERFORMANCE

Character and Mood

The performer must try to capture an intimacy associated with both cycles, as though the audience were being allowed to eavesdrop upon private moments in a woman’s life. On the surface, it would seem that this is where the similarities in terms of character and mood end between Frauenliebe und -leben and From the Diary of Virginia Woolf. The character in Schumann’s cycle is a young woman who is motivated almost entirely by romantic love. Her thoughts consist of adoration of her husband, married life, and family. However, the performer must not forget that there is more to this woman than mere familial devotion. Chamisso’s work, though heavily criticized for its patriarchal viewpoint, has also been praised for giving a passionate voice to women, something that was not common at the time that he wrote his poetic cycle.49 Women were most often portrayed as subdued and reserved, especially in displays of love. “Ich kann’s nicht fassen” offers an example of this highly charged language:

O lass im Traume mich sterben
Gewieget an seiner Brust,
Den seligsten Tod mich schlürfen
In Tränen unendlicher Lust.

\[
\begin{align*}
O & \text{ let me perish in my dream,} \\
& \text{lulled upon his breast!} \\
& \text{Let me relish the most blessed death} \\
& \text{in the endless happiness of tears.}
\end{align*}
\]

49 Muxfeldt, 88-89.
This inclusion of “a woman’s invocation of erotic bliss”\textsuperscript{50} was unusual for a poetic work of the early nineteenth century. The passionate outbursts found in Chamisso’s text are mirrored musically by Schumann. Virginia Woolf’s persona in Argento’s cycle is quite in contrast to this romantic heroine. The entries that Argento selected for his cycle focus on Woolf’s writing and thoughts relating to understanding herself. Though she was married for decades to Leonard Woolf, there is no mention of him at all in these eight entries. Leonard (or L. as she refers to him in writing) is frequently included in her complete diary, though rarely in the same manner as the husband in Chamisso’s cycle. Also, Leonard and Virginia never had children due to her mental instability, so any mention of family generally has to do with Virginia’s siblings, in particular her sister Vanessa (or Nessa).

The time periods in which the cycles take place are also worlds apart, with roughly a century between them. Chamisso’s poems and Schumann’s song cycle were published less than a decade apart in 1831 and 1840, respectively. Woolf’s diary entries range from 1919 to 1941, and though Argento’s cycle was published decades after that in 1975, the songs are obviously meant to take place in the time frame in which they were written. In both cases, it is beneficial for the performer to research the common dress and manner of women in these time periods. For Virginia Woolf in particular, there are photographs available to aid in this research.

There is one important similarity in terms of character and mood that may not be immediately obvious. The protagonist of Schumann’s cycle is a fictional character who is often considered as representative of many women from the first half of the nineteenth century. Argento’s cycle, we know, is based upon an actual person, but nevertheless, this is a fictional portrayal by the composer’s own statement: “I would not try to create the personality of Virginia

\textsuperscript{50} Muxfeldt, 88.
Woolf herself. I don’t know anything except what she wrote.”51 He goes on to say that his cycle is more of a generalization of thoughts and feelings that many bright women certainly share, such as “keeping a diary” or “talk about war.”52 Similarly, a performer cannot be expected to ‘become’ an historical person onstage. There will always be some degree of individual interpretation of both the text and music. While it is certainly helpful for the performer to research Virginia Woolf and know facts about her life, each portrayal will be unique. Thus, the characters in both cycles are ‘fictional’ in this sense.

In addition to these historical and textual considerations, the musical analysis of the two cycles offers further layers of interpretation for the performers. In particular, recognizing the musical motifs and where they recur throughout the two cycles can aid in giving a more detailed performance. The motifs are often embedded in the harmonic texture or significantly modified from their original versions; therefore, recognition of the motifs is not always straightforward. In Frauenliebe und -leben, the thematic core motif, husband motif, and chromatic line motif are used throughout the cycle, but often heavily altered or hidden. In From the Diary of Virginia Woolf, it is the last song of the cycle that is truly amazing in its use of recurring motifs. Some of the recurrences are easily identified, others much less so. There is such a large number of recurrences from songs earlier in the cycle that it is difficult to perceive all of them. In addition, Argento often layers or overlaps the motifs in “Last Entry.” An in-depth musical analysis, such as the one provided in this document, makes many relationships clear that might not have been otherwise. In both cycles, the motifs represent a specific idea or object, thus the performers can bear this in mind and subtly communicate these references to the audience.

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51 Garton, 47.
52 Ibid.
Recital programming

Although the two cycles pair well together in recital, there are certainly other programming possibilities when they are not performed together. *Frauenliebe und -leben* can be performed by soprano or mezzo-soprano, which offers different programming options depending on the performer’s voice type. *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*, first conceived for mezzo-soprano, has also been published in a high key allowing for sopranos to perform the work. For the purposes of this document, programming possibilities are limited to themed recitals for mezzo-soprano only.

Many themed recitals can be built around *Frauenliebe und -leben*. First and foremost, there are many other works in which a female character is depicted by a poet and composer who are both male. Many songs and song cycles fit this description. Some of the more well-known examples include: Rossini’s *La Regata Veneziana*, Debussy’s *Chansons de Bilitis*, and settings of the stories of Mignon and Gretchen (texts by Goethe) by composers such as Schumann and Wolf or Schubert and Verdi, respectively. A possible title for this recital would be: “Women Depicted by Men: Female Characters from a Masculine Perspective.” Another possible recital theme for the *Frauenliebe* cycle is “Women and Love.” Libby Larsen’s *Love After 1950* particularly fits this theme and has even been called “the new woman’s *Frau Love ‘em and Leave ‘em,*” referencing Schumann’s work.53 Another interesting option would be a joint recital featuring Schumann’s two song cycles about romantic love—*Frauenliebe und -leben* and *Dichterliebe*—each performed by a different artist. The cycles are each approximately 30 minutes in length and are very much counterparts offering conceptual similarities. A possible title for the recital would be: “Femininity and Masculinity: Perspectives of Romantic Love.”

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From the Diary of Virginia Woolf, which features text by a female writer and music by a male composer, also lends itself to themed recitals. There are many cycles that possess this same dynamic of female author and male composer, especially in the twentieth century. Aaron Copland’s Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson and William Bolcom’s I Will Breathe a Mountain are just two examples. Either of these two cycles, both roughly 30 minutes in length, would be well matched with the Virginia Woolf cycle. “Words by Women, Music by Men” is just one possible title for such a recital. Ultimately, there are countless programming possibilities for both cycles, themed or otherwise.

The reasons for pairing Frauenliebe und -leben and From the Diary of Virginia Woolf together in recital are many. Conceptually and formally, they are clearly linked as I have demonstrated in this document. Also, both song cycles are approximately 30 minutes in length (Frauenliebe is slightly shorter and Virginia Woolf is slightly longer), and there is sufficient variety in text and music to create interest throughout the performance. Without question, Frauenliebe und -leben should make up the first half of the recital and From the Diary of Virginia Woolf should encompass the latter half. The reasons for this are many. Chronologically in terms of both text and music, Schumann’s cycle precedes Argento’s. Also, the Virginia Woolf cycle is more mentally taxing than Frauenliebe, an important consideration Shirlee Emmons mentions in her book The Art of the Song Recital. Audiences must be allowed time to immerse themselves in a performance, so it is better to place the more intellectual or modern pieces later in the program. In addition, with each cycle consisting of eight songs and bearing so many structural similarities, they appear on the program and are perceived aurally as reflections of one another, a wonderful and fitting effect.

Having programmed and performed both song cycles on my final recital at The University of Alabama, I can say that the two works are demanding for the performer emotionally, mentally, and physically. The wide array of thoughts and emotions depicted, in addition to differences in musical and vocal writing, all contribute to challenge the performer. In particular, the fact that each cycle is the encapsulation of a life is a staggering concept. Thus, in essence, the performer experiences and portrays the lives of two very different women within a one-hour performance. I found this to be both an incredibly rewarding and challenging experience, one that I certainly recommend to other performers.
CONCLUSION

The similarities between Schumann’s Frauenliebe und-leben and Argento’s From the Diary of Virginia Woolf encompass many areas. Textually and dramatically, both works revolve around a single idea—an obsession—that permeates all aspects of the cycle. Similarly, both Schumann and Argento were drawn to a singular theme throughout their lives—frustrated or embittered love and self-knowledge or -discovery, respectively. This obsession, both in the cycles and in the composers themselves, is the driving force behind the musical compositions. Musically, the similarities between the two song cycles are plentiful, though accompaniment, recurring motivic material, and form are the most prominent areas of resemblance. Both Schumann and Argento treat the voice and piano as equal partners, although through differing methods. Both cycles feature a thematic core motif—a motif that appears in varied forms throughout the work and binds the songs into an integrated work. Frauenliebe und-leben and From the Diary of Virginia Woolf also contain many recurring secondary motifs that further connect and enhance the dramatic development. Rondo and strophic forms prevail, again reinforcing the return to initial thematic material and reflecting the obsessive quality that is the centerpiece of both works.

As I have attempted to show, the overall dramatic concept, the large-scale form as well as the prevalence of strophic and rondo forms, and the similar use of recurring motifs are all shared traits between the cycles. All of these factors make the works ideal partners for a recital performance and for comparative analysis. This document is not attempting to argue that the
similarities shared between these cycles are not to be found in any other vocal works, nor that Argento intentionally borrowed ideas from Schumann beyond the overall concept and form. Rather, the purpose of this comparative analysis was to illuminate musical, textual, and dramatic similarities and contrasting elements (whether intended or not) between the Frauenliebe and Virginia Woolf cycles that may not be immediately apparent to performers or audience members. These are qualities which can help to better inform both the performance and understanding of these two cycles. This type of in-depth dramatic and musical analysis can help us to appreciate the craftsmanship involved and gain a greater comprehension of the meaning and significance of the works.


APPENDIX

Complete Texts of Both Song Cycles

Frauenliebe und -leben

1
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 Schwester Spiele
Nicht begehr’ ich mehr,
Möchte lieber weinen
Still im Kämmerlein;
Seit ich ihn gesehen,
Glaub ich blind zu sein.

Since I have seen him
I think myself blind;
wherever I look
I see him only.
As in a waking dream
his image hovers before me;
out of deepest darkness
it rises ever more brightly.

There is no light or color
in anything around me;
playing with my sisters
no longer delights me;
I would rather weep
quietly in my room.
Since I have seen him
I think myself blind.

2
Er, der Herrlichste von allen,
Wie so milde, wie so gut!
Holde Lippen, klares Auge
Heller Sinn und fester Mut.

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

He, the noblest of all—
how kind, how good!
Fine lips, clear eyes
bright soul and strong spirit!

As yonder in the deep blue
that bright and glorious star,
so is he in my heaven,
bright and glorious, high and distant.
Wandle, wandle deine Bahnen;  
Nur betrachten deinen Schein,  
Nur in Demut 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,  
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!

3  
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 Traum mich sterben  
Gewiegt an seiner Brust,  
Den seligen Tod mich schlürfen  
In Tränen unendlicher Lust.
Du Ring an meinem Finger,  
Mein goldenes Ringelein,  
Ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen,  
Dich fromm an das Herze mein.  

O ring upon my finger,  
my little golden ring,  
I press you devoutly to my lips,  
devoutly to my heart.

Ich hatt’ ihn ausgeträumet,  
Der Kindheit friedlichen, schönen Traum,  
Ich fand allein mich verloren  
Im öden, unendlichen Raum.

I had done dreaming  
the peaceful dream of childhood;  
only to find myself lost  
in endless desert space.

Du Ring an meinem Finger,  
Da hast du mich erst belehrt,  
Hast meinem Blick erschlossen  
Des Lebens unendlichen, tiefen Wert.

O ring upon my finger,  
it was you who first taught me,  
revealed to my sight  
the infinite value of life.

Ich will ihm dienen, ihm leben,  
Ihm angehören ganz,  
Hin selber mich geben und finden  
Verklärt mich in seinem Glanz.

I will serve him, live for him,  
belong to him entirely,  
give myself and find  
myself transfigured in his light.

Du Ring an meinem Finger,  
Mein goldenes Ringelein,  
Ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen,  
Dich fromm an das Herze mein.

O ring upon my finger,  
my little golden ring,  
I press you devoutly to my lips,  
devoutly to my heart.

5  
Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,  
Freundlich mich schmücken,  
Dient der Glücklichen heute mir.  
Windet geschäftig  
Mir um die Stirne  
Noch der blühenden Myrte Zier.

Help me, sisters,  
please, to adorn myself,  
serve me, the happy one, today.  
Busily wind  
around my forehead  
the blossoming myrtle wreath.

Als ich befriedigt,  
Freudigen Herzens,  
Sonst dem Geliebten im Arme lag,  
Immer noch rief er,  
Sehnsucht im Herzen,  
Ungeduldig den heutigen Tag.

As I lay peacefully,  
happy in heart,  
in my beloved’s arms,  
he was always crying out  
with longing in his heart,  
impatient for this day.
Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,
Helft mir verscheuchen
Eine törichte Bangigkeit;
Dass ich mit klarem
Aug’ ihn empfange,
Ihn, die Quelle der Freudigkeit.

Bist, mein Geliebter,
Du mir erschienen,
Giebst du mir, Sonne, deinen Schein?
Lass mich in Andacht,
Lass mich in Demut,
Lass mich verneigen dem Herren mein.

Streuet ihm, Schwestern,
Streuet ihm Blumen,
Bringet ihm knospende Rosen dar.
Aber euch, Schwestern,
Grüss’ ich mit Wehmut,
Freudig scheidend aus eurer Schar.

6
Süsser Freund, du blickest
Mich verwundert an,
Kannst es nicht begreifen,
Wie ich weinen kann;
Lass der feuchten Perlen
Ungewohnte Zier
Freudig hell erzittern
In dem Auge mir.

Wie so bang mein Busen
Wie so wonnevoll!
Wüs’ 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.

Help me, sisters,
help me to banish
a foolish anxiety,
so that I may with clear eye
receive him,
him, the source of happiness.

When you, my beloved,
appeared to me,
o sun, did you give me your light?
Let me in devotion,
let me in humility
bow before my lord.

Scatter flowers before him,
sisters,
bring him the budding roses.
But, sisters,
I greet you with sweet melancholy
as I happily take leave of your group.

Dear friend, you look
at me in astonishment.
You don’t understand
how I can weep!
Leave the moist pearls—
unwonted ornament—
to glisten, bright with happiness,
on my eyelashes.

How anxious I am,
how full of delight!
If only I had the words
to say it!
Come, and bury your face
here on my breast;
into your ear I will whisper
all my happiness.
Weisst du nun die Tränen,  
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 Bildnis  
Mir entgegen lacht.

Now do you understand the tears  
that I can weep?  
Ought you not see them,  
dearest man?  
Rest upon my heart,  
feel its beat,  
and nearer and nearer  
let me draw you.

Here by my bed  
is place for the candle  
which shall quietly hide  
my lovely dream.  
The morning will come  
when the dream awakens,  
and from it your image  
will smile at me.

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 überglücklich 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!  

7  

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 überglücklich 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!
Now you have hurt me for the first time—really hurt me!
You sleep, hard pitiless man,
the sleep of death.

The forsaken one looks before her—
the world is empty.
I have loved and lived—I am
no longer alive.

I withdraw silently within myself.
The veil falls.
There I have you and my lost happiness,
O you, my world!\(^{55}\)

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\(^{55}\) All English translations are from Philip L. Miller’s *The Ring of Words: An anthology of song texts.*
I.
The Diary
April, 1919

What sort of diary should I like mine to be? Something … so elastic that it will embrace anything, solemn, slight or beautiful that comes into my mind. I should like it to resemble some deep old desk … in which one flings a mass of odds and ends without looking them through. I should like to come back, after a year or two, and find that the collection had sorted itself and refined itself and coalesced, as such deposits so mysteriously do, into a mould, transparent enough to reflect the light of our life …

II.
Anxiety
October, 1920

Why is life so tragic; so like a little strip of pavement over an abyss. I look down; I feel giddy; I wonder how I am ever to walk to the end. But why do I feel this: Now that I say it I don’t feel it. The fire burns; we are going to hear the Beggar’s Opera. Only it lies all about me; I can’t keep my eyes shut. … And with it all how happy I am—if it weren’t for my feeling that it’s a strip of pavement over an abyss.

III.
Fancy
February, 1927

Why not invent a new kind of play; as for instance: Woman thinks … He does. Organ plays. She writes. They say: She sings. Night speaks They miss

IV.
Hardy’s Funeral
January, 1928

Yesterday we went to Hardy’s funeral. What did I think of? Of Max Beerbohm’s letter … or a lecture … about women’s writing. At intervals some emotion broke in. But I doubt the capacity of the human animal for being dignified in ceremony. One catches a bishop’s frown and twitch; sees his polished shiny nose; suspects the rapt spectacled young priest, gazing at the cross he carries, of being a humbug … next here is the coffin, an overgrown one; like a stage coffin, covered with a white satin cloth; bearers elderly gentlemen rather red and stiff, holding to the corners; pigeons flying outside … procession to poets corner; dramatic “In sure and certain hope of immortality” perhaps melodramatic … Over all this broods for me some uneasy sense of change and mortality and how partings are deaths; and then a sense of my own fame … and a sense of the futility of it all.
V.
Rome
May, 1935


VI.
War
June, 1940

This, I thought yesterday, may be my last walk … the war—our waiting while the knives sharpen for the operation—has taken away the outer wall of security. No echo comes back. I have no surroundings … Those familiar circumvolutions—those standards—which have for so many years given back an echo and so thickened my identity are all wide and wild as the desert now. I mean, there is no “autumn”, no winter. We pour to the edge of a precipice … and then? I can’t conceive that there will be a 27th June 1941.

VII.
Parents
December, 1940

How beautiful they were, those old people—I mean father and mother—how simple, how clear, how untroubled. I have been dipping into old letters and father’s memoirs. He loved her: oh and was so candid and reasonable and transparent … How serene and gay even, their life reads to me: no mud; no whirlpools. And so human—with the children and the little hum and song of the nursery. But if I read as a contemporary I shall lose my child’s vision and so must stop. Nothing turbulent; nothing involved; no introspection.

VIII.
Last Entry
March, 1941

No: I intend no introspection. I mark Henry James’ sentence: observe perpetually. Observe the oncome of age. Observe greed. Observe my own despondency. By that means it becomes serviceable. Or so I hope. I insist upon spending this time to the best advantage. I will go down with my colours flying … Occupation is essential. And now with some pleasure I find that it’s seven; and must cook dinner. Haddock and sausage meat. I think it is true that one gains a certain hold on sausage and haddock by writing them down.