SECCIÓN "ARTÍCULOS"

Narrative in Music: Jean Paul's *Die Flegeljahre* and R. Schumann's *Papillons*. Ekphrasis of Content, Psychology, and Form

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Resumo

Estudos sobre narrativa em música frequentemente mencionam *Papillons* de R. Schumann que o próprio compositor conectou com o romance *Die Flegeljahre* de Je-an Paul Richter. Todavia, a maioria das análises se detém às questões de correspondências entre o enredo do livro e os temas musicais da peça de Schumann. Este trabalho propõe estabelecer uma conexão a nível mais profundo, baseado na noção clássica de écfrase, a sua expansão moderna como transmedialização (Bruhns) e o conceito de mediação estética (*mitgesehen*) proposto por Gadamer. A composição ecfrástica de Schumann, além das correspondências diretas entre personagens do romance e perfis musicais na peca, ocorre aqui em pelo menos duas outras dimensões, a saber, a cons-trução psicológica dos personagens e as suas representações formais. Ambas as categorias demonstram traços comuns com o estilo literário de Jean Paul. O escritor foi criticado por suas obras oferecerem pouca ação no enredo; da mesma forma, a écfrase nessa peça de Schumann se preocupa com algo mais do que apenas o enredo, utilizando estruturas musicais que são frequentemente rotuladas como 'fora das formas clássicas'. Essas peças recriam para o ouvinte a experiência psicológica dos personagens no enredo, demonstrando assim o processo de transmedialização como aquele onde a experiência de dois meios de comunicação diferentes, neste caso, a prosa e a música, podem expressar a mesma substância estética.

Palabras clave: ecfrase; música de programa; mediação; Schumann; Jean Paul.

Abstract

Discussions of narrative in music often mention R. Schumann's Papillons, *Op. 2, already connected by Schumann himself to Jean-Paul Richter's* Die Flegeljahre. *However, while most analyses dwell on the correspondences between plot and musical themes, this paper proposes a more subtle perspective, framed by the classic understanding of ekphrasis, its modern expansion as* transmedialization *(Bruhns) and Gadamer's mediation concept (*mitgesehen*). Schumann's ekphrastic construction, in addition to the direct links between characters in the novel and sections of music, ha-pens in at least two other dimensions: the psychological building of these portraits and their formal presentation, both spheres that present several common traits with Richter's literary style. Richter's plots are often criticized for lacking in action. Schuman's ekphrastic work is preoccupied with more than just a narrative plot, using musical structures labeled by musicologists as 'outside classical forms'. These pieces recreate for the listener the psychological experience of the character in the plot, therefore addressing the transmedialization process as one where the experience of the two different media (in this case, prose and music) can convey the same aesthetic substance.*

Keywords: *ekphrasis; program Music; mediation; Schumann; Jean Paul.*

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Analyses of Robert Schumann's *Papillons*, which Schumann himself connected to Jean Paul Richter's novel *Die Flegeljahre* or *Years of Indiscretion*, have mostly addressed the use of the literary narrative as programmatic material. Repeated references in Schumann's writings have been used to support such an approach, as expressed in the letter to his mother and siblings, dated April 17, 1832, in which he exhorted, "Everyone should read the final scene of Jean Paul's *Die Flegeljahre*, for *Papillons* transpose the masked ball into sounds" (Schumann, 1910, p. 227). Moreover, Schumann's copy of the novel, volume 29 of Reimer's complete edition of 1827, *displays* annotations in chapter 63 that link some of its passages to the first ten pieces in *Papillons* (Abraham, 1952, p. 37). Nonetheless, Schumann also expressed his awareness that the connection between *Die Flegeljahre* and *Papillons*, which he knew to be intrinsically strong, could be less obvious to others, perhaps listeners looking for more direct programmatic gestures in the music. In a letter to the critic Ludwig Rellstab, dated April 19, 1832, Schumann mentioned that "the thread that should bind them together [i.e., the novel and the piano piece] is hardly visible" (Schumann, 1886, p. 167[1]). One can read in this explanation the composer's defense of a different approach to creating music that conveyed the emotions of a narrative. His conviction of the integral connection between the two works was expressed best in his 1834 letter to Henriette Voigt, where he recommends the novel as a tool to understanding the music, because in the book, "everything is written in black and white, even the giant boot in F-Sharp Minor" (Erler, 1887, p. 50). In this statement, Schumann uses his interpretation of Jean Paul's text as an argument for his ekphrasis of the ball scene, though, in the original text, there is no mention of the F-Sharp Minor tonality.

Granted, among the descriptions of disguises present in the ball, one reads of a giant boot that was wearing and carrying itself (Richter, 1978, p. 368). The anthropomorphizing of the footwear in this description lends the ball a dream-like quality, where objects and humans have the same agency, thus blurring the distinction between transformation and disguise. Such an imaginative narrative addresses a much more complex philosophical problem, namely, the distinction between substantial change and accidental change, as described by Aristotle (Aristotle, 1991, p.14). While costumes and disguises are only accidental alterations of the substance – in this case, the figure wearing them – the narrator's choice of describing the boot as wearing itself gives a level

[1] Unless indicated otherwise, all translations from the original German texts are by the author.

of agency to the footwear that obfuscates the person wearing it, creating the illusion of a substantial change. That Schumann used this particular description to justify his compositional approach is altogether more meaningful if we consider that, on a deeper level, all studies on musical ekphrasis can be understood as discourses on the subtleties between accidental and substantial changes, especially when the musical ekphrasis turns the textual narrative into an instrumental discourse, i.e., lacking any words.

Earlier in the novel, Jean Paul mentioned Aristotle in a discussion about the boundaries separating love and identity between the twins Walt and Vult (Richter, 1978, p. 368). In that passage, Jean Paul's allusion to "one soul occupying two bodies" connects the *Doppelgänger* trope that underlies the whole narrative to the distinction between substance and form. Because Jean Paul called on Aristotle in the text, the use of the masked ball scene as the locus for application of classical philosophy is simpler to acknowledge than any indication that the boot was in F-Sharp Minor, though Schumann somehow saw that representation in *black and white*.

Musicologists such as E. A. Lipmann (1964), E. F. Jensen (1998), and E. Reiman (2004) have exhaustively and brilliantly addressed the particulars of the musical translations of the masked-ball narrative. However, there remains a need to acknowledge *Papillons* as a superior expression of musical ekphrasis, especially given Schumann's skepticism of music's ability to transmit specific extra-musical material with accuracy. This skepticism manifested itself in his ambivalent feelings toward the then-increasingly fashionable programmatic music. It is meaningful that he addressed the issue when writing about Berlioz's *Symphonic Fantastique*, the piece that became the hallmark of programmatic compositions for later generations. Schumann believed that the composer should refrain from guiding the listener to particular details of the pieces by means of a text:

> Whether this [music], in someone who is not familiar with the intentions of the composer, will awaken similar images to the ones the composer wanted to draw, I, who read the program before listening, cannot decide. Once the eye has been directed to one point, the ear judges no longer independently. (Schumann, 1914, Vol. I, p. 84)

In other words, Schumann believed that the merit of a composition had to be in the musical text, as he explicitly stated that "the main point remains whether music, without words and commentary, in itself is something, and all the more preeminent, whether its spirit dwells within"

(Schumann, 1914, Vol. I, p. 85). Nevertheless, he strongly argued that literary ideas often were the stimulus for the composer's musical inspiration, as he wrote:

> As to the difficult question in general, to what extent instrumental music may go in presenting thoughts and events, here many seem too scrupulous. It is certainly wrong to believe that composers take up pen and paper with the torturous intention of expressing, of portraying, of painting this or that. Yet outward accidental influences and impressions should not be underestimated. Unconsciously along with the musical image an idea continues to operate, along with the ear, the eye; and this, the ever-active organ, perceives among the sounds and tones certain contours which may solidify and assume the shape of clearcut figures. The more the elements contain within themselves thoughts and forms produced by tones related to music, the more poetic or graphic expression the composition will have; the more fantastically or acutely the musician perceives in general, the more his work will uplift and captivate. (Schumann, 1914, p. 84, transl. in Brown, 1965, p. 193)

Such ambivalent statements paint a picture of a complex aesthetic of representation as Schumann's compositional creed. Therefore, instead of a direct application of the concept of programmatic music to *Papillons*, a subtler analysis, calling on Siglind Bruhns's definition of musical ekphrasis as transmedialization (Bruhns, 2020, p. 246) and Hans-Georg Gadamer's concept of *Vermittlung* or "mediation" (Gadamer, 2004, pp. 116-117) better illuminates the relationship between *Die Flegeljahre* and *Papillons*. Schumann's approach is one of total mediation, that is to say, where the mediating cancels itself by not featuring just themes of the original idea, but representing the original truth through and in it, and, in this manner, to convey the full presence of truth to the spectator, albeit in another media. Such analysis requires the recognizance of the literary structure of the novel and of how the composer captured and recast that structure in music.

Jean Paul's Aesthetics and the form of *Die Flegeljahre*

The digressive style of Jean Paul's prose is often criticized as rambling to the point of becoming hermetic, which matches up with Jean Paul's diary entry where he stated that his goal was to confuse the reader (Casey, 1990, p. 866). His prose certainly defies canonic models. A closer look at *Die Flegeljahre,* though, demonstrates that Jean Paul was highly concerned with issues of form, including the creation of new forms that exposed the canonic ones in their inherent incompetence as mirrors of the human mind. Throughout his *School of Aesthetics*, he asserted

his skepticism about genre classifications, granting genius the power to "dissolve and blend the genres in its fire" (Berender, 1909, pp. 89-90). His theories are directly applied to his novels: the main character of *Die Flegeljahre*, Walt, claims to have invented a new form of poetry, called *Streckver*s or *polymeter*, to cast his discourse as a new manner of expression (Coker, 2018, p. 58).

On a higher structural level, Jean Paul seems to question the form and content of the *Bildungsroman* through the purposely erratic narrative of *Die Flegeljahre*. According to Abrams, the *Bildungsroman* is a novel of education or formation, narrating the transition of the main character from childhood into maturity, usually featuring some spiritual crisis that reveals one's identity and role in the world (Abrams, 1999, p. 193). However, in *Die Flegeljahre*, after sixty-three chapters systematically organized into four volumes, the fate of the twin brothers is summarized as a hopelessly failed experiment in betterment, since neither brother has undergone any substantial transformation: "You are not to be changed, I cannot be made better" (Richter, 1978, p. 375). Already the subtitle casts doubt on the genre: *Die Flegeljahre—eine Biographie* ends up narrating the adventures of twin brothers Walt and Vult, thereby creating two biographies instead of one. If we are to read the twins as doppelgängers of Jean Paul, the author himself adds a third character to the sum. W. Harich, the first post-romantic critic to write a comprehensive study of Jean Paul's style, read the novel in this way, classifying it as an *Entwicklungsroman*, a category that is grounded on the premise of an autobiographic narrative (Harich, 1925, p. 678). Expanding of the question of the personal projections in the doppelgänger trope, R. Jacobs affirms that "certainly the novel does suggest that the dual personality of Jean Paul, with which the eighteen-year-old Schumann felt a sense of affinity, was at the same time the expression of an emotional flaw – a typically romantic one." (Jacobs, 1949, p. 254). Ultimately, the novel is a satiric account on the futile attempts to change human nature, and the failure of both Vult and Walt can be perceived as "a study of two types of emotional impotence … Of the two personalities, one, it seems, was that of an idealist unable to love sensually, the other that of a sensualist unable to love idealistically" (Jacobs, Ibid.).

True to his strategy of displaying his genius by dissolving and blending genres, he resorts to the mixing of pseudo-scientific style into the text to create yet another fissure in the genre. A comical example is found in Vult's discourse on the nature of love that veers toward mythical absurdity: "Honestly speaking, Love is a bird-of-paradise and a jester, a phoenix full of soft ashes

without any sun, certainly female, but like a goat, with horns and beard, whose husbands give real milk" (Richter, 1978, p. 371). By means of a footnote, this statement calls on the scientific authority of J. M. Bechstein, the ornithologist who published a book in 1795 on the singing caged birds of England, a seemingly appropriate authority given the bird metaphor of love, but that authority crumbles under the weight of the editorial comment that "according to Bechstein and other natural scientists, the billy goat does produce real milk and so does the male native American" (Richter, Ibid.).

The subversion of the *Bildungsroman* structure is also apparent in the titles of each chapter, named after exotic materials, odd objects, and strange creatures such as *Marlstone*, *Sea Hen*, and *Flying Herring*. These titles read as the quick identifications in Seba's *Cabinet of Natural Curiosities* (Seba, 1734), further jumbling the genre with writings on natural science. Moreover, this sequence of titles implies a reversed alchemy: here the progress does not lead to more precious materials such as gold or, at least, the philosopher's stone. Instead, the materials become increasingly more absurd and worthless. The chapter that follows the masked ball depicted in *Papillons* is titled *Moonmilk*, a geological substance excreted from cave walls, a soft stone of creamy aspect with no monetary value. After all the attempts at transformations, metamorphoses symbolized by the many references to butterflies, also the title of Schumann's work, the characters are left untransformed and poor, just as raw as they started. If any changes occurred, they were only accidental, for the psychological substance of the twins remained the same.

Towards the end of the novel, the scene of the masked ball creates the space where the twins are forced to confront their true identities, as if to take a test at the end of their education. And here again, the *Bildungsroman* structure is dismantled by the obvious confusion of the final identity of the characters. The use of masks as a way to arrive at true identities poses a paradoxical reading of this intentional accidental change – masks and costumes -- as a strategy for reveling the authenticity of the substance. Jean Paul writes of the scene: "as stars are made visible other in a solar eclipse, each soul saw the other though far away all the more clearly." (Richter,1978, p. 368.) Later in the chapter (p. 369), he further explains the concept of the masked ball as a space where each individual can recreate her or his identity, a gesture that becomes an exercise in *poiesis* in the most classical sense:

A masked ball is perhaps the most perfect medium through which poetry can interpret life. In the same way that the poet conceives all conditions and seasons as being of equal worth, all outer

phenomena as mere trappings, but all inner qualities as air and sound, the human being seeks in the masked ball to poetize both his very self and life as a whole. In the masquerade, everything is rounded into a buoyant, happy circle which is set in well-ordered motion as if in obedience to the laws of prosody. It moves, to wit, in the sphere of music – the region of the spiritual, as the mask is the region of the physical. (Richter, transl. in Abraham, 1952, p. 39)

A critical analysis of the masked-ball scene as the climax of the novel choice must include M. Bakhtin's discussion of the defining traits of the carnivalesque as it applies to literary structures. Bakhtin groups these traits into four categories, each one of them defined as an intentional suspension of social rules and subversion of perceived normalcy, "because carnivalistic life is life drawn out of its usual rut, it is to some extent *life turned inside out*, *the reverse side of the world*" (Bakhtin, 1999, p.122). For this analysis of *Die Flegeljahre* and *Papillons*, Bakhtin's third carnivalesque category is the most germane, namely, the carnivalesque misalliances, the reunion of anything that generally occurs as separate (Bakhtin, 1999, p. 123). In this manner, Wina's disguise as a chaste nun, when indeed she is the ideal of the desired female for both Walt and Vult, demonstrates this coincidence of opposites that generates the carnivalesque. Furthermore, Walt, initially disguised as a coachman, and Vult as hope (*Spes*), exchange disguises in the middle of the evening, which recalls Aristotle's problem of accidental change, now made even more complex because one of these costumes has a female identity, inserting transgender traits into the doppelgänger concept. These misalliances are seminal components of wit in Jean Paul's aesthetics, seen as the complementary opposite of the sublime. As summarized by M. Hale, "the value of wit is that it forces its audience to mental exercise in the perception of dissimilarity conjoined with similarity" (Hale, 1973, p. xxv). Precociously ahead of Bakhtin's theory, Jean Paul demonstrates himself in control of the carnivalesque when he states that "a masked ball is perhaps the highest imitation of life possible in humorous poetry" (Richter, 1978, p. 369).

This awareness of how the artist must control wit may best elucidate the connection between *Die Flegeljahre* and *Papillons*, justifying an analysis of *Papillons* that places formal and structural choices at the forefront of the ekphrastic mediation process. Abrams points out the paradoxical and abrupt nature of wit, since "the surprise is usually the result of a connection or distinction between words or concepts which frustrates the listener's expectation, only to satisfy it in an unexpected way" (Abrams, 1999, p. 330). The enactment of wit is therefore not in the

text itself, which only carries the wit potential, but in the perceptual process, a premise demonstrated by the possibility that one reader might perceive wit where another does not. Composers have transmediated this literary strategy into music most often by tampering with formal designs that, from a perceptual perspective, are dependent on the audience's ability to build aural expectations on previous musical experiences, that is, musical enculturation. Studies on the perception of musical forms have established the concept of enculturation as the perceptual attunement that results from exposure to a particular environment" (Stevens et al., 2013, p. 2). That is to say, the audience must have a history with a musical form in order to recognize it, and, even more relevant to the construction of wit by formal tampering, that history must result in enough familiarity with the formal paradigm to allow not only for fast recognition but also for appreciation of the deviations imposed by the composer. Sometimes the disruption may be first perceived as a mistake, causing confusion without humor in the audience. Composers might then repeat the disruption to signal the intentionality of the gesture, which then may lead the listener to recognize the wit in the form tampering. One of the best-known examples of this strategy in classical music is Joseph Haydn's String Quartet in E-flat, op. 33, no. 2, nicknamed "The Joke," where the repeated rests at the final refrain in the rondo cause disorientation about the expected ending of the piece.

Papillons and Fragmentation

Similarly, the wit in *Papillons* appears mostly as abrupt formal shifts, which led John Daverio to connect the structure of *Papillons* to the theory of the fragment: "Brevity, tonal dualism, stylized quodlibet, quotation, feigned openings, partial returns – all of these features contribute to the portrayal of a fragmented musical world in *Papillons*" (Daverio, 1997, p. 87). However, this fragmentation is in itself an intentional disguise, a costume meant to generate wit in this musical masked ball, as argued by Judith Chernaik in her discussion of the piece: "far from being a collection of fragments, individual pieces are both complete in themselves and parts of a carefully constructed whole" (Chernaik, 2012, p. 69).

The connection between Jean Paul's aesthetics of misalliances and fragmentation with Schumann's piece cannot be seen as only a criticism *a posteriori*, since in addition to explicitly connecting the novel to his piece, already in a diary entry at age eighteen, Schumann expressed his

admiration for the writer as someone whose ideas were foundational for Schumann's aesthetics, almost in a filial tone:

> I often ask myself what would have become of me had I never known Jean Paul: at least from one side he seems to be related to me, for I had intuitions of him early on [*er scheint doch wenigstens auf einer Seite mit mir verwandt zu sein, denn ich ahnete ihn früher*.] Perhaps I would have written the same kind of poetry, but I would have withdrawn myself less from other people and dreamt less. I cannot decide, really, what would have become of me, the problem is impossible to solve. (Schumann, quoted in Kötz, 1933, p. 21)

The affinity that Schumann declares for Jean Paul is without a doubt connected to Jean Paul's familiarity with music, for he was also a pianist and improviser, and used musical concepts in his craft. For example, in *Die Flegeljahre*, while Vult is presented as a musical virtuoso, Walt is a music enthusiast *(Musikschwärmer*). It is worth mentioning that Jean Paul was the son of an organist and grandson of a cantor (Jacobs, 1949, pp. 255-256). He had more music in his ancestry than Schumann did. Moreover, Schumann asserted in a letter from 1849 that he learned more about counterpoint from Jean Paul than from his music teachers, indicating a keen awareness of literary strategies that run deeper than character delineation and plot sequencing (Schumann and Jansen, 1904, p. 148). Jean Paul had dedicated a whole section of his *Vorschule der Aesthetic* to the topic of wit (Hale, 1973, pp. 120-147). He concluded that chapter with a defense of what he called *learned wit*, a category that is built on allusions and assumptions. His conclusion that "art can thus require a certain range of knowledge" (Hale, 1973, p. 146) points to his awareness that the audience must contribute to whole effect of wit. Schumann documented his appreciation of wit, probably the result of what he learned from Jean Paul's writings, in a diary entry that states how music proves that it is possible to express the most profound things in the world under the disguise of frivolity (Schumann, 1971, p. 414).

When applying the concept of wit to another Schumann carnivalesque piece, eponymously titled *Carnaval*, Lawrence Kramer defines Schumann's use of wit "not as the principle that binds the unruly collection of miniatures into a formal whole, but as the force that arbitrarily breaks down a prior musical whole into bits and pieces" (Kramer, 1995, 103). What remains unanswered by Kramer, however, is what exactly this "prior musical whole" is. If we consider the perceptual aspect of the enactment of wit, the prior musical whole must be, by necessity,

some formal, harmonic, or rhythmic expectation that the audience brings to the aesthetic experience, constructed on prior models. Moreover, another explanation of wit as a fragmentary process, this one offered by Jean Paul's contemporary F. Schlegel, connects its "quality of rupture to the ruptured, derivative nature of consciousness itself" (Daverio, 1993, p. 243). In this light, Schumann's ekphrasis of the masked ball builds upon wit as a series of ruptures, or better yet, disruptions. The listener experiences in this manner the mercurial shifts of attention that plagued the nervous young characters in the novel; the ruptures in formal design in *Papillons* create the guise of musical frivolity that expresses in music the profound feelings of awkwardness and emotional insecurities brought about by the love triangle Walt/Wina/Vult in *Die Flegeljahre*.

Schumann's Deconstruction of the *Walzerkette*

If the composer aims to create wit by disruption, some archetypal design that the composer trusts to be in the audience's ear must underline the piece. In the case of Schumman's *Papillons*, this design is the *Walzerkette* model, or "chain of waltzes," as Reiman explained in her work on the piece (Reiman, 2004, pp. 38–45). In parallel to Jean Paul's deconstruction of the *Bildungsroman* in *Die Flegeljahre* to create wit, here Schumann deconstructs the *Walzerkette*.

Adolf Marx, in what may be one of the first definitions of the *Walzerkette,* published during Schumann's lifetime, explained the form as a cycle of waltzes unified by tonality and themes played sequentially, revisiting the original waltz at the end in a kind of musical peroration (Marx, 1847, pp. 93–94). Not surprisingly, Schumann casts the music version of the masked ball in this form. Yet the listener soon hears that this piece is less of a chain of waltzes and more of a bumpy ride. The introduction ends in A Major, leading the listener to expect that the first waltz will start in D Major; however, the dominant tension is continued throughout the whole first section of the first waltz and the first D Major chord, the tonic key of the *Walzerkette*, only appears in measure 14. The twelve short pieces travel through thirteen different tonal centers in a fast harmonic labyrinth that may spin the listener into vertigo. Five of the pieces feature truncated beginnings as if the listener were eavesdropping on conversations already happening, catching sentence fragments in the carnivalesque confusion. The fragmentation of form is augmented by strong contrasts of dynamics and texture between pieces: the bravado of the big boot, which

parades musically in canon, that is, one foot after the other (Schumann's musical translation of the boot's "wearing and carrying itself"), gives in to a softly delicate lyrical melody marked *piano*, as the listener is made aware of different characters and conversations in the room.

Schumann expresses the cacophony and confusion of the masked ball by the mixing of musical conventions: when Vult exchanges costumes with Walt and returns to the ballroom speaking in Polish to reinforce the disguise, two polonaises enter in the chain of waltzes and, even more confusing, quotations from the *Grossvatertanz* (a wedding folk tune) are clad in the straitjacket of the polonaise rhythm. The *coup de grace* to the *Waltzerkette* appears in the long coda: starting with references to earlier melodies, the movement is a deconstruction of the first waltz, now fragmented and interrupted by a bell-like high A, a clock chime signaling the end of the ball. This coda is not just the peroration of the *Walzerkette*, but also the end of the adventures of Walt and Vult, reduced to fragments, impressions, *vultus*.

Papillons*: Ekphrasis of the masked ball in *Die Flegeljahre

These structural manipulations of the *Walzerkette* point to a deeper level of Schumann's ekphrastic processing of *Die Flegeljahre*, one in which the composer transcends depictions of character and plot development, searching instead for mediation of the psychological reality of the story, eschewing the facile strategies of programmatic music. Those strategies often appear reduced to what Gadamer called *Verweisung*, "pure indication" or *Vertreten*, "pure substitution" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 145). Instead, the absence of a linear plot in *Papillons* illustrates Schumann's desire to recreate the masked ball as a musical structure that elicits from the listener the same feelings as the narrative, not necessarily the same facts. Thus, the work makes a genuine attempt at aesthetic mediation, at ekphrasis as transmedialization of a psychological impression. Here we return to the classic conception of ekphrasis as an oratory exercise that "tied to notions of *evidentia* and *enargeia*, an ekphrasis could bring a subject back to the present and to presence to explain an event, to win an argument or case, to create astonishment or wonder, to move listeners towards indignation or shock, or to render an argument or image vivid, clear, perspicuous, illuminating, and persuasive" (Goehr, 1995, p. 395). Schumann's composition does not tell the tale of the masked ball scene; rather, it brings the listener into the psychological state of the characters present in the scene, and it recreates, in a medium constricted by the flow of time, the

psychological shifts described in the narrative of Jean Paul. Without a doubt, Schumann was counting on the ability of the audience to perceive his distortions of musical form and expectations in order to achieve this psychological empathy.

As explained by C. Krumhansl, musical form can be described as units at a multiple, hierarchical-organized level. As a consequence, "when music has similar form, that is, when some characteristics of a pattern are repeated, it draws attention to higher levels" (Krumhansl, 2005, p. 294). Schumann's compositional strategy here, based on mercurial shifts that disorient the listener, has the opposite effect: similar to the nervous energy of Jean Paul's teenage characters in the ball, the quick changes, avoiding repetition, create a situation of hyper-alertness in the listener, who experiences the fragmentation of the form but probably cannot delve into the musical minutiae. This overloading of information, though all of it may be traditionally pleasant and beautiful to the senses, recreates the psychological restlessness of the characters in the story. Just like in the masked ball, the possible denouements are endless, and this uncertainty already causes anxiety, since the listener, according to the perceptual theory of L. Meyer, is engaged in a moment-by-moment evaluation of the future implications of present musical events. This premise is the foundation of Meyer's psychological theory of emotion, defined as "emotion or affect [that] is aroused when a tendency to respond is arrested or inhibited" (Meyer, 1956, 14). The arrested tendencies and musical expectations caused by the fragmentations in *Papillons* results in an aesthetic experience where the listener is led to "feel with," to sympathize, to undergo the psychological state of the characters, and not just to follow a narrative.

In his diary of 1831, Schumann, while defending the concept that a piece should offer unambiguous impressions, provided evidence of his awareness that the short segments in *Papillons*, while resulting in the quick changes of atmosphere that he used to achieve the contrasting moods in the piece, kept the listener from engaging with higher levels of aesthetic fruition:

> The impression of a piece should not be doubtful. . . And who expects of the hearer, when a piece is played to him for the first time, that he shall analyze it in mechanical or harmonic detail? With the *Papillons* perhaps one could make an exception, since the change is too quick, the colors are too motley, and the listener still has the previous page in his head while the player has already finished. (Schumann, transl. in Abraham, 1952, p. 10)

This statement indicates that Schumann had a complete understanding of the psychological effect he wanted to create in this piece. The appreciation of this ekphrastic gesture is what has

been missing in the writings about – and in many interpretations of – this masterwork of Schumann. Perhaps the strongest argument for looking at Schumann's work through the lens of ekphrasis is found in his own declaration about the way a work of art is transmedialized into another form or media, when – again, precociously ahead of modern theories of ekphrasis – he stated that:

> The educated musician will be able to study a Raphael *Madonna* as advantageously as the painter a Mozart symphony. Moreover: for the sculptor, the actor will become a quiet statue, and for the actor, the works of the sculptor will become living figures; to the painter, the poem becomes a picture, the musician transfers paintings into tones. (Schumann, transl. in Brown, 1965, pp. 30-31)

Gadamer stated that "our perception is never a simple reflection of what is given to the senses" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 78). Listeners and readers bring an array of memories and personal references to the perceptive process. Jean Paul already understood the power of memory in this process when he stated that "memory is the only Paradise from which we can never be expelled" (Richter, 1821, p. 197). As a result, the musical aesthetic experience is a *Mitgesehen,* a "seen-together-as" created by the artist, the interpreter, and the audience (Gadamer, 2004, p.79). Seen from this complex perceptual reality, Schumann's ekphrastic rendition of the masked ball demonstrates how the same humorous confusion of the quest for a well-fitting identity may be expressed musically as it had been masterly expressed in the rambling words of his beloved author Jean Paul.

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