

Vocal Piano Accompaniment: A Constant Research Towards Emancipation (1)

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Abstract: This article represents the first one in a series of two that investigate the evolution of vocal piano accompaniment through history and the role of the piano in its relationship with the voice. The research method used is musical analysis focused on the piano part, both in itself and its link with the text and the vocal part. The research method used is musical analysis centred on the piano part, both in itself and its link with the text and the vocal part. Initially, some preliminary questions necessary to establish a starting point around the piano accompaniment are addressed. Then, by means of musical examples of different composers following a chronological order, the article investigates all those aspects that provide evidence of the change in the role of the piano in the correspondence between the piano and the voice. In this way we will observe the trajectory of piano accompaniment to the voice and we will see how Schubert conceived the piano in vocal works with piano accompaniment. This new conception will influence both contemporary and later composers. The treatment of this influence will be dealt with in the second article. In the present article we will establish the basis of the functioning of piano accompaniment in compositions prior to Schubert, starting from the Ancient Italian aria (the beginnings of piano accompaniment) to his first *lieder*. We will observe the different dialogue between voice and piano that starts from the dependence of the piano in the beginnings towards its participation in the final result of the work with a decisive role. Schubert will articulate this drift, as will be seen. However, the results and conclusions, taking into account the whole evolutionary perspective of piano accompaniment, will be presented in the second article.

Keywords: Piano, Music, Accompaniment, Voice, Schubert

1. Introduction

With the help of a theoretical framework and the exemplification of scores we can see how it has evolved the voice's piano accompaniment. Throughout two articles we will see how the conception of the piano in its participation in voice-piano duo suffered, with Franz Schubert, a turning point that marked his future. To do this we would like to start this article explaining what the practice's accompaniment is because it will help to understand its historical evolution in relation to the song. The results and conclusions will be presented in the following article.

2. Preliminary Issues

The instrumental accompaniment in its most universal concept can be defined as "harmonic support or supplement that provides a solo instrument defined; such an instrument and soloist can be both instruments, vocals and dance" [1]. To find the germ of pianistic accompaniment we must go back to the birth of the piano as an instrument, located around 1700 with Bartolomeo Cristofori as the inventor [2]. However, we will see how the piano assumed roles previously performed by other instruments such as the harpsichord, the lute or the organ, which is where we can find the origins of the accompaniment.

During its evolution, the piano accompaniment served to

two different functions that are still in force nowadays:

- i. Melodic conception, which originates and adapts the chords to the melody. The most prominent genres of this origin are the Lied, the Baroque Sonata, and the Classical Sonata,
- ii. Harmonic conception, that improvises melodies on preset harmonic schemes. Characterizes the varied genres (Chaconne, Passacaglia, Folia, Variations) and jazz.

However, melody and harmony are interactive relationship influence each other. Proof of this is for example the fact that, in the variations, the melodic pattern can cause changes in the harmonic scheme. In parallel, classical melody fits the chord's functional order.

Historically, previous to Baroque art styles, we locate the origin of the musical accompaniment in the birth of music, instrumental music and musical notation. On the one hand, it is known that in the east, the Sumerians, the existence of harps accompanying dirges and hymns to the gods' cultures. On the other hand, in Greece it is known that the aulos or zither accompanied the melody (aulodia and citarodia). It was a melody redoubled with an instrument. It is the form of accompanying monody origin of the Gregorian chant, the troubadours and the opera as we know it today. In the same way in Rome they appeared the "iocolatores", musicians who accompanied the dances. All these examples are samples of accompaniment where the concept is subject to accompany a primary function or solo.

In the middle ages there were two figures who used the instrumental accompaniment: the minstrels and the troubadours. The first minstrels are an evolution of the jongleurs, who were the musicians responsible for providing instrumental accompaniment to the troubadours. We know that they existed in the thirteenth century, while the troubadours appeared in the eleventh century. This musical support was always improvised redoubling the main melody. The instruments used most frequently were the harp, the "viela" [3] and the lyre. Later troubadours accompanied themselves with musical instruments, relegating the minstrels. We owe the immense legacy of the Cantigas of Alfonso X the Wise, whose vocals are accompanied by instruments, to the troubadours.

We also have news of instrumental accompaniment with lute, rebec, flute, tambourine and drum forms like the nawba, the zéjel or the maquam, in Andalusian music. All these forms are danced forms. So instrumental accompaniment not only is provided accompanying the voice, but also the dance.

Polyphonic chansons of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries often contain voices which seem more instrumental voices than vocal ones. Similarly, in the XVI century they occasionally used instruments to reinforce or replace some of the singers in the polyphonies of equal voices.

The appearance of chamber music took place about the same time. This artistic expression is fundamental to understanding the evolution of piano accompaniment. The role of the piano accompaniment undergoes a transformation with it. If a few lines above we saw how the origins of the

same function were subjected to a major voice or soloist, there will be no such classification between primary and secondary with chamber music, but both sides will be formed with an equal rank. It was originated approximately 1500 with Renaissances' "madrigales", and then with a work of Martin Peerson called *Motects or Grave Chamber Musique* (1630) [1], melodies to 5 parts. This English term gave rise to the name and the origin of the Chamber Music, and it was a very important form and a style for the pianistic accompaniment.

Until the basso's continuo decline, improvisation played a key role in the accompaniment. Since then, it had been restricted to classical music in a few fields, primarily the organ accompaniment for congregational singing, in which improvisation was sometimes very elaborate. In folk and popular music, the accompaniment was often improvised, although some groups make use of written arrangements. There are a centuries tradition of providing accompaniments compounds for folk songs in which not only the works of composers like Haydn and Ives, but also what today are considered blundering efforts of some collectors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries include. In some non-Western music, heterophony is an accompaniment's prominent feature.

In the pianos' and the voices' relation, we have to go back to the origin of music. Speaking of this relationship is speaking of the relationship between poetry and music. This link goes back to the ancient Greece, where *musiké* was the art of the muses and whereas the name of music [1] come from. Muses, in the mythical stories, were nine, and they were related to activities such as poetry, history, tragedy, comedy or dance. This is because all these activities encompassed under the concept of *musiké*, thus comprising music, poetry (lyrical, epic and dramatic) and dance. Music then, was for the ancient Greeks an activity much more diverse than it is in our culture. This perfect balance between text and music was transferred in spirit until the middle ages, as it is evidenced by the monodia, in the Gallican liturgical, Gregorian chants and Ambrosiano, and by the secular and jugglers, the Minnesänger.

Throughout history, the Lied played a key role in the relationship between the piano and the voice. We establish through the following Lied's definitions, a starting point in the historical trajectory of this relationship:

1. "This word refers actually to the musical adaptation of a poem, for one voice with accompaniment, usually piano, orchestra sometimes." [4]
2. "Properly it means song, and as such was used in Germany long before the nineteenth century. However, outside Germany, it has usually encompassed within this name an intimate song to be sung by a voice with piano accompaniment, without vowels sensationalism, but with an artistic height. Its music and poetry intertwine". [5]
3. "[...] original song, written to be sung by one person, composed with an artistic ambition, but with an intimate style, devoid of vocal theatricality, and in

which poetry and music are completely melted, music is serving poetry, not the other way. It reinforces its accompanying stresses and squeezes the expression of the sung word". [6]

4. "German word [...] designating a short work and that can be translated as a song". [7]
5. "A German poem, usually lyrical and strophic; also a song that has a poem such as text; more commonly, a solo for voice and piano accompaniment in German-speaking countries during the Classical and the Romantic eras; more broadly, any song that starts from a German poetic text to speech alone or voice/s with tool/s. In German, Lied as a musical term means any song (EG, folk, work, kids, politics), while in other languages the term lied usually refers to the "concert's song" or to the German's "cult song" (Kunstlied) of the nineteenth and the ends of the eighteenth centuries, a poem with literary pretensions set to music by a composer". [8]
6. "A song in German language". [9]
7. "Vocal and instrumental genre vowel with a wide variety of music, performing, literary content and construction forms". [10]
8. "[...] the term Lied applies especially to the vocal compositions about Germans poetic texts for one voice with piano accompaniment, with an intimate tone, in which the character of the text is closely linked to music and in which vocal theatricality that are specific of genres such as opera or cantata are avoided". [11]
9. "In its specific sense, in the generic one it is synonymous with" song "- it designates a poetic text, usually without choruses and with a strophic structure, perfectly fused with a melody and with an individualizing geographical note of being born and flourished in German language and in Germanic lands". [12]
10. "German word meaning" song ", whose use became widespread in the fifteenth century. The term Gesang, which also means "song" (as in Meistersong, the art of the Meistersinger), was used less frequently. Lieder had its golden age in the nineteenth century with composers as Schubert, Schumann, Brahms and Wolf as the supreme masters of the genre". [3]
11. "It means, from the texts' point of view, a poem with stanzas of the same structure (number of lines and syllables), and from the musical point of view, the setting sounds of a strophic text of this nature". [13]
12. "Characteristic song of German Romanticism, written for voice and piano, and whose letter is a lyric poem". [14]

With these twelve definitions we can get an idea of the meaning of lieder throughout the history of music. Now, we are going to consider the differences between them. The first emphasizes vocal adaptation of a poem with accompaniment, pianos' or orchestras'. It clearly defines the framework in which the Lied develops, but it does not locate it geographically or temporally. In the second, we found it

equated to song. It adds an intimate character without vocal effects, it tries to differentiate it from other genres, and it locates it historically in the nineteenth century. It maintains vocal and pianistic features, but applying the adjective 'artistic' to it. This term can be ambiguous, but it adds a particular quality. In the third, we continue with the artistic and intimate vocal song with piano accompaniment, but it places the emphasis on poetry-music fusion, with the music serving to poetry. The second definition referred already to it, but this one gives to a greater importance. On the other hand, it specifies the function of the accompaniment, although it does not appear space-time located. The following definition refers just to the song, by the nickname of 'short'. It is so brief that it does not match the term, although it is the first one describing its duration. The fifth definition is a little more extensive, and apart from talking about the song, it specifies its structure, the vocal character with piano accompaniment, the artistic intent and for the first time it mentions both the geographical place of origin, Germany, and the fact of that it can be made extensible to other places. Conversely, it does not talk about its extension or the qualities of the accompaniment. The following definition is analogous to the fourth, concise referring to the song, to its geographical location and it does not require other descriptions we have been telling. The seventh definition incorporates the 'gender' in its definition and it leaves its description very open, at both vocally and instrumentally circumscribe, and by granting a wide variety of forms, but in another sense it does not provide other data like the source or the temporary location. Then the following two definitions does not present new information, they just make a collection of the others we've seen before, but it locates the birth in Germany and compare it with other vocal genres such as the opera or the cantata. In addition, the ninth does not mention that it is a song with piano accompaniment. The tenth focuses on an historical level, doing a brief tour, and getting round the musical characteristics. The eleventh itself defines the lieder from both literary and musical views, but it narrows that definition, IE, it does not say whether if it is vocal, or with piano accompaniment, or the origins' place. In the last one, making an effort to synthesize, it defines the word about the German song for voice and piano based on a poem. It gives us the information, but it does not develop anymore.

Once brought all these definitions, we extract from them lieder's spatiotemporal location, its structure, its literary relationship, its vocal performance and the nature of its accompaniment. We think that the meaning of lieder its defined in this way, while we consider that all these sources have provided us the necessary data to clarify the meaning of lieder. In our opinion, the compendium of all of them brings us closer to the lieder's reality, although there have been some of them overly terse or focused on just one aspect, providing insufficient. However, thanks to the variety of consulted sources, the reader can make up their own mind, and we can also issue our own definition: "Song performed by one or more voices in German language, with piano or orchestra accompaniment, as a result of the musical adaptation of a

poem. The voice, usually alone, does not have the virtuosic characteristics of opera, but rather a reserved character. The accompaniment, usually pianos' one, plays an important role in the conception of the work. Structurally it has usually a binary or ternary form ABA', but it can also be arranged freely. He had its splendor in the nineteenth century with composers such as Schubert or Schumann, but it has an anterior and a posterior trajectory. In other countries it was later developed a similar way, but in their own languages. This is the case of the Spanish song or *mélodie française*".

We will develop the theme setting our starting point through this definition. Lieder, as we know it today, were originated in the German Romanticism, associating a musical expression of poetry in German language to a song to be interpreted in intimate spaces. Therefore, it is a lyrical and strophic poem with the closest relationship between music and poetry. It was left off in that situation by Schubert, because he was who exalted and gave birth to this genre, belittled before him and culturally appreciated thereafter. The brevity of form is a feature, the renunciation of *belcanto's* virtuosity and the strong influence of German's folk song. These are the characteristics that distinguish it from the aria or the romance.

Lied's flowering develops in Vienna in the nineteenth century, partly due to the emergence and the abundance of German lyric poetry and other technical development of the pianoforte. Poetry, through sung music, brought all the romantic spirit, putting its emphasis on nature and humanism. The pianoforte, as music representative, gave enough sonic versatility, making it a participant in the musical work, expression of emotions and leaving aside the previous stereotype to serve the romanzas' style with no greater purpose than filling sound. The intellectual man of the nineteenth century is essentially introspective, finding in the Lied the perfect expressive channel to canalize his emotions arising from himself and from his relationship with nature. Further, the german accent being usually put in the first syllable¹, turns it an excellent language to add music, taking advantage of that accent the first beat of each measure. Therefore, a particular symbiosis between poetry and music was established, only seen in the last few recent years of the Italian Renaissance madrigal.

Poetry was capable of being adapted to the nationalist expression, as well as social aspirations with both religious and secular themes. Lied has the capacity to accommodate these features in the voice and the piano, and it represented the most romantic exponent by combining styles and themes of the opera, the cantata, the oratorio and the popular song.

The transformation which caused the Lied, occurred due to the revival of the German lyrical poetry, which was based on the single, solitary and universal expression themed focused on nature and love. Goethe primarily, but also Müller, Heine and others inspired many important contemporary composers such as Beethoven, Schubert or Schumann. The resurgence,

closed in part to the musical interest of these and other composers, made this genre born with a high intensity in the German geographical area.

3. Examples

In the centuries before Schubert, before the eighteenth century, two fundamental themes have always prevailed in sung music: love and God. These themes have been present in all artistic movements, giving music a significance that the word cannot reach. In the Renaissance the appearance of the ancient Italian aria took place, undoubtedly of singular importance within the production of vocal music with accompaniment for keyboard instruments. In reality, this musical form appears in the late Renaissance, at the beginning of the Baroque, and is the most important musical form that incorporates a part of accompaniment. It is for this reason that it serves us both as the beginning of piano accompaniment and as a bridge to link with the Baroque and the basso continuo.

3.1. Ancient Aria

In *Non posso disperar* of Sergio de Luca, appears the imitative and canonical style that will exploit the Baroque. The text deals with love, as is customary in all works of this time. The character is at all times languid and expressive. In this work we see different types of accompaniment. On the one hand, there is the mentioned imitative style with four voices, on the other hand the accomplishment of placated chords and later it redoubles the main melody together with the harmony of the rest of voices. The introduction is carried out by the voice, to which the accompaniment answers the next beat. We see how the role of dialogue between voice and piano is gradually being established. As a chorale, the keyboard instrument responds to three voices in a vertical texture. The next voice input is followed by the accompaniment with alternating chords. This approach will give the score another rhythmic air. We present, therefore, the first example in which in the same work there is a contrast of accompaniments and therefore of directionalities. This alternating arrangement will only last two bars, but it serves as a starting point to establish that the keyboard instrument is already beginning to collaborate in the dynamics of the work. Finally, we would like to point out that, within one or another accompaniment pattern, the accompanying instrument in very specific moments redoubles the melody, a fact that we saw in the first example. These are passages like that of measures 8 to 14. At that moment, the voice is repeating the text of the first two verses. He had presented them in one way and now he interprets them in another way, giving variety to the result.

The interior and final interlude functions as a tutti, with octaves for both the low and high parts and for the variation of the main melody interpreted by the accompaniment. This characteristic of melodic variation will be observed from this point onward. The idea of dialogue with the orchestra can be considered, even if it is in the solos of the keyboard

¹ For example, in the words 'Tage' or 'Liebe', 'day' and 'love' respectively, it is accented on the first syllable.

instrument. When this instrument accompanies the voice, it still has a very secondary role.



Figure 1. Measures 56 and 57.

Structurally it has the same ternary structure as the other two examples, but harmoniously there is a greater variety. The reference tonality is *E* minor, but colors are already observed within it. The insinuations to *G* major in measure 6 or to *C* major in measure 8, give melodic versatility. The harmony is completely carried by the accompaniment, but it gives this richer coloring than if it is harmonized only in *E* minor. There, with the help of the redoubling of the accompanying part, it begins modulating a *C* major, passing through *B* minor to the next bar, modulating a *G* major in bar 11 and returning to *E* minor in bar 12. In this bar 12 there is another internal modulation of the minor that finally resolves to *G* major in bar 13.



Figure 2. Measure 9.

As we see, this second part of the first stanza has been especially modulating. Although they have all been neighboring tonalities, this richness brings greater variety to the work, and it is the accompaniment that is in charge of presenting them. To conclude, he returns to the initial theme in *E* minor and ends this first part.

The second part begins in *G* major, and the imitative character is still valid, now even more shelled, as the voice begins, the bass enters and finally the right hand. In this second part there is a very relevant fact for our investigation. The dialogue established between the voice and the bass between measures 25 and 26 will set a precedent as a resource to be used later. In this case, the *duetto* a tercetas and the opposite movement that takes place bring a new sonority to the work.



Figure 3. Measures 25 and 26.

Otherwise, the harmonic turn at *Bb* major of measure 28 is surprising. In full harmonic play, the next bar places us in *G* minor, but its resolution ends with the natural *if*. Therefore, we have the natural *Bb-si* chromatism. Subsequently, in measure 31, it modulates *B* minor and maintains it for the rest of this second part. Nevertheless, he continues to play again with the chromatisms and on this occasion he alternates the natural *C#-do*, that is to say, lowering or not the second degree of the *B* minor scale. At the end of this section in *B* minor, it is the voice that starts again in the same way as at the beginning.

We see how this example has more features than the previous ones. We think that by showing this evolution we can clearly appreciate the evolution of the keyboard accompaniment. The melody reaches its climax in the second part in *B* minor, the dominant one. With a much wider tessitura and much more varied colors than before, we find echoes and a high expressive content, in contrast to the previous greater homogeneity. Rhythmically, the voice is more regular, since it maintains the declamatory style that corresponds to the period and only some accents in syncopes and some semiquavers stand out as a resolution of a quaver with dots. The syncopes appear in the second part, specifically from measure 28, an instant that also coincides with the greatest harmonic instability.



Figure 4. Measures 28 to 30.

On the other hand, we can find the semiquavers in more bars, as for example in the 9th, but always as anticipation of the later resolution and end of phrase. For the rest, the melody keeps a declamatory character, with a continuity only modified by the different accompaniment patterns. This set of peculiarities makes us anticipate the peculiarities that we will distinguish in the following styles.

3.2. Classicism

Subsequently, the vocal piano accompaniment in the 18th century will witness the progress of the piano as an instrument and the development of the lied as a form, because although it was born in the Baroque as we have just seen, it is now in Classicism where its consolidation begins that Schubert will culminate and subsequent composers will continue. The relationship between the main part and the accompaniment tends to diversify the paths and to be dynamically interactive. In the following example Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart will be the composer of *Ariette*. It is one of the two French arias that Mozart composed during his visit to Mannheim in 1777 and 1778. They were dedicated to Elisabeth Augusta, daughter of the Wendling family and with who he was in love. Both arias served as a preparatory work for piano compositions such as *Ah, vous dirai-je Maman* K. 265. The first thing you see when observing *Ariette* is the great variety of resources that Mozart displays. Until now, we were used to talking about a constant type of accompaniment, at most two to contrast. In this lied we distinguish up to six. We then give a deserved account of them, but first we want to highlight the inclusion in such a short work of such a variety of types of accompaniment. Its use is not banal, it is duly justified, and it is far from frequent to find such a variety of accompaniments with this duration of the work. With this, Mozart also wants to convey to us that the piano accompaniment participates in the character of the work in a consistent way, that is to say, with what it has within its reach it positively influences the handling of the transmission of expressiveness.

Let's analyze the accompaniment of the score. After the introduction, the first phrase works as a presentation, so the piano works in a rhythmic-harmonic way, with placates chords' marking the two beats of the measure. The introduction is an original melody, unrelated to the subsequent melody. It is based on the perfect cadence and is based on the quaver rhythm with semiquaver that we have already seen and that will continue to appear throughout the history of music. In the following phrase the piano already instills a certain movement with the arpeggio of harmony, although this with the nuance of the anticipated bite. This mordente functions as a rhythmic response to the semiquavers of the voice.



Figure 5. Measure 11.

Once in the first semicadence in the dominant, prepares the second with a duo with the voice, and then is where the greatest contrast occurs. The minor mode appears and the

harmonic arpeggios become triplets. This will give rise to a completely new sensation, because until now we moved in binary rhythm and in major mode.



Figure 6. Measure 28.

Once again in another semicadence in the dominant one, Mozart surprises us with a change of register, without bass, in the middle register of the piano and in unison with the voice, to return to the triplets but now in a greater mode. Finally, he repeats the previous phrase, but in this place with the dominant as a note repeated in semiquavers. This note repeated as a pedal note seems to emulate the singing of a bird. This would be the first occasion of programmatic music introduced in the accompaniment of the piano to the voice.



Figure 7. Measure 43.

The final coda brings the work to a conclusion just as it began, with rhythmic placados chords and a piano ending with the same dotted rhythm as it began in the introduction, albeit with a different melody.

The melody is very varied rhythmically. The quaver rhythm with semiquaver contrasts with the long values. This game is carried out in many phrases, for example, in the first one the voice begins with the most marked rhythm and in the second motif, in measure 9, it changes to black with appoggiatura with a sharper and more expressive register.

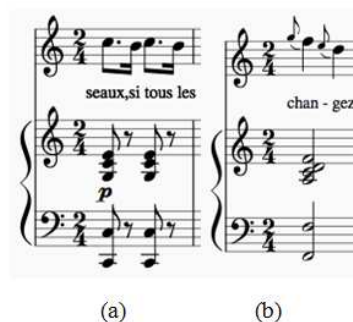


Figure 8. Measures 5 and 9.

In measure 16 the first triplet appears in the voice. It forms an interesting polyrhythm with the piano that is maintained one intervention plus two measures later. The first part ends with a semicadence to the dominant one preceded by the rhythm marked by quaver with semiquaver playing piano and voice. The next phrase begins with the *duetto* between the two looking for the dominant again that leads them to the minor mode, a darker and more expressive phrase. In this phrase they will have the two triplets, but the polyrhythm will appear again in measure 32, where the voice presents the quaver rhythm with semiquaver in front of the triplets. These polyrhythms are used by Mozart to give rhythmic vitality to the lied.



Figure 9. Measure 32.

Once the phrase has finished in minor mode, as we have commented, the melody returns to its initial register, but now with the absence of the bass that does not appear until measure 39, a moment in which the voice explores its high and expressive register and the piano takes up the triplets again. Again in these measures 39 and 40 the polyrhythmia reappears. The repetition of the melody that follows in measures 43 to 45 gives us the surprise of the right hand. The left hand of the piano interprets the same as it did in measure 35, but adds the semiquaver repetition of the dominant one in the right hand imitating the bird referred to in the poem. Finally, the resolution of the tension is balanced with eighth notes on the piano in measures 47 and 48 in the first instance and later with placated chords marking the times of the measure.



Figure 10. Measures 47 and 48.

However, in measures 51 and 52 he alternates the hands to help in the crescendo and in the horizontal direction. The voice will return to its initial quaver rhythm with semiquaver, the rhythm with which the lied will end the piano.



Figure 11. Measure 51.

Structurally it is delimited by the pilot whales on the dominant ones and the repetition of the initial motif C-B that appears in different moments of the lied.

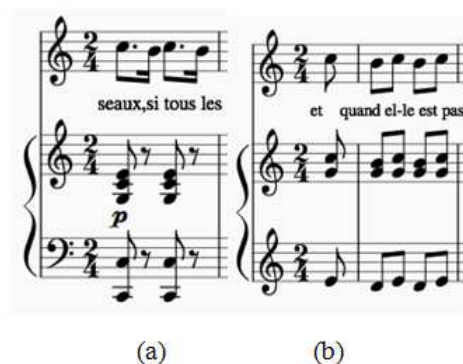


Figure 12. Measures 5 and 35.

The quaver rhythm with semiquaver we have also seen that it is a thread running through the entire lied. Harmonically, as we have commented before and as we will also see in the next lied, it is very simple: everything revolves around C major, except when it changes to the minor mode. This structural and harmonic austerity is compensated by Mozart's expressive variety in piano accompaniment.

With this lied Mozart seems to grasp the loss of innocence suggested by the poem. These changes in register, rhythm and color presage certain contrasts of an operatic nature that Mozart incorporates in this work. In all his musical work there is a continuous obsession to establish dialogues between characters both for works composed for a single instrument, as is the case, for piano and voice. Therefore, we can conclude that all changes of accompaniment throughout the work are nothing more than characters that appear in the imagination of Mozart's sound, and therefore the piano must transcribe using the most appropriate sound.

Beyond the specific and concrete case of this work, we want it to transcend Mozart's conceptual intentionally. All the

expressive journey we have made must serve to establish a precedent, that of the conceptualization of piano accompaniment and its interference within the whole between voice and piano. It is undoubtedly a step forward in this genre.

3.3. Franz Schubert

The following example, *Der Erlkönig* by Franz Schubert, is based on a poem by Goethe, based on a Scandinavian legend about which Johann Gottfried von Herder had already composed a poem. The original tale narrates the terrible habit of the Elf King of appearing before the living announcing his

imminent death. In bringing this story to his poem, Herder named his sinister king so that it sounded similar to the Danish original, "Ellerkang" (king of the elves). For this he used the expression "Erlkönig", which actually means king of alders (a type of tree) instead of "Elfenkönig" (king of elves). Goethe only used the name already used by Herder. Goethe wrote the poem in 1782 and tells the story of a father horseback riding through the forest on a stormy night holding his dying son in his arms, as he says he sees the elf king he intends to take with him.

Der Erlkönig, therefore presents four characters with different roles:

1. a narrator presenting the father riding home with a child who is his son, in the middle of a stormy night,

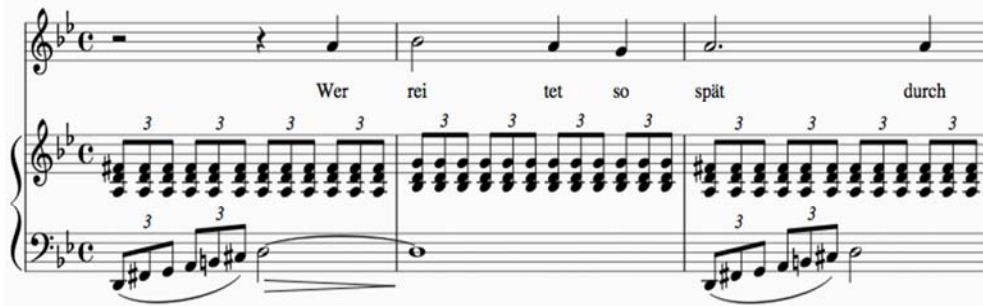


Figure 13. Measures 15 to 17.

2. the father, who tries to reassure the child with a voice in the middle register,



Figure 14. Measures 37 to 39.

3. the son, frightened to death by the appearance of the king of the elves and who sings in a higher register and of progressive intensity,



Figure 15. Measures 73 to 75.

4. and the elf king who tries to attract the child with a soft, somewhat mellow voice.

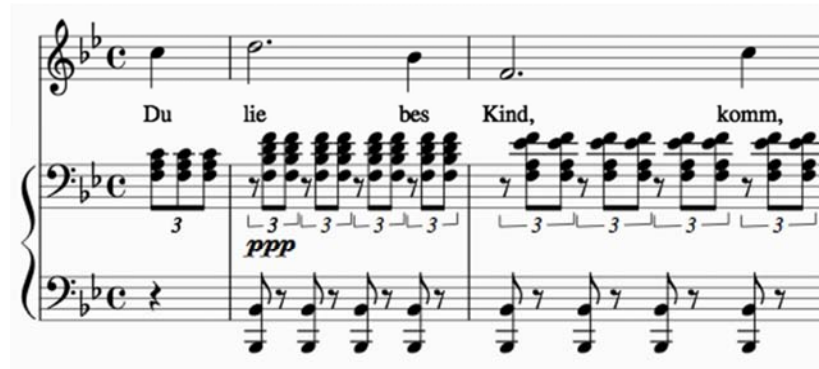


Figure 16. Measures 58 to 59.

It was composed in 1815, at a time when Schubert continues to live one of the fullest stages of his life, both musically and personally. In that year he made contact with his future best friends Johann Mayrhofer, Franz von Schober and Anselm Hüttenbrenner, composing more than 140 lieder. The high quality of these songs soon made it easier for the composer to enter the halls of Viennese high society, making famous his musical evenings that would soon be known as *Schubertiadas*.

The structure is very much related to the Germanic ballad and differs notoriously from the strophic lied due to the abrupt musical transitions that separate the different scenes. The voices have a declamatory or arioso character, sometimes almost of spoken dialogue. These resources come from the influence exerted by opera, a genre that was of great interest to Schubert, especially to equate the lied to it. The ballad ends, as the score indicates, with a recitative phrase

almost completely unaccompanied.

In this piece for voice and piano, Schubert succeeds in masterfully reflecting each of the characters that appear in the poem, giving each of them their own musical characteristics, thus making it difficult for the vocal soloist to perform, who has to display a very important expressiveness and ductility, as he has to reflect, at the same time, the son's growing fear, the suggestive persuasion of the Elf King, and the restless contention of the father. The narrator begins and ends the lied with a dramatic tone, the father requires a lower voice with a calming tone, the king of the elves, by means of pianissimos and soft tones, must be suggestive in order to try to convince the child to go with him, and the son, as the lied advances, increases the intensity of his voice while his fear increases. We must emphasize the expressiveness of the child's scream, absolutely heartbreaking as Schubert relates.



Figure 17. Measures 124 to 126.

This example illustrates that the most dramatic part of the lied is the vocal part. It is not in vain that she must dramatize and express in the text and voice all the anguish and deep pain of the characters. Such a dramatic poem could not be musicalized with the resources of the conventional lied. The artistic song created by Schubert is based not only on the lyrical tradition but also, especially in this example, on a dramatic tradition coming from genres such as theater and opera.

As for the piano accompaniment, Schubert gives it the power to provide the lied decoration. The *ostinato* rhythm appears once again, on this occasion triplets of quavers, both from the right hand and from the left.



Figure 18. Measure 2.

They represent not only the gallop of the horse but also the rain and wind, described on the other hand with the ascending and descending notes giving the sensation of

continuous movement and creating instability. In fact, the sensation of the listener at all times is the incessant speed of the lied, the energy of the gallop. Although this is not the beginning and end of the lied, this continuous movement in the piano gives us an idea of the consideration of the piano within the piano-voice duo, as well as Schubert's mastery of the space-time stage. Again, as in the previous lied, we checked the existence of both the appearance of an *ostinato* rhythm, and that of the continuous composition. Except at the end with the recitative in which the father finds his son dead, the persistence of the ternary rhythm, whether in percussive chords, arpeggios, alternations between hands or octaves, produces a common thread in the story.



Figure 19. Measures 146 to 148.

However, despite this union, the piano, together with the interpretation of the voice, the piano is responsible for framing the different changes of characters and characters, a fact that we find even more meritorious. If we saw in the first lied the different changes of tempo and tonalities to transform each stanza, on this occasion we see that Schubert has managed to establish greater compositional unity, but with an accentuated contrast between lines, thus maintaining the common thread of the story and the perfect emotional description of each character without losing continuity.

The left-hand goes from the initial independent dialogue with the *ostinato* in the right hand, to the rhythmic-harmonic support of the third page, at moment the father speaks.



Figure 20. Measure 58.

At the moment we have modulated to the major mode and Schubert wants to give the music a more amiable tone, is

changing the register. However, when speaking the child returns to the octaves of the right hand and the left hand establish an interesting *duetto* with the melody with tenths octaves.



Figure 21. Measure 73.

This dialogue between left hand and melody will be used in numerous occasions in the same way in other lied. At the end of this passage he transforms the octaves of the right hand into percussive chords and modulates C major. We return to the rhythm marked in black of the left hand but this time with arpeggiated triplets of the right hand; it is the moment of the king of the Elves.



Figure 22. Measure 87.

We can see how it uses differentiated material for each character from multiple points of view: harmonic, rhythmic, melodic and piano. Little by little we will see the whole series of Schubert's compositional resources. Many of them will appear in one of his lieder.

The use of the tonality of G minor bathes this whole scene with a mysterious and terrifying light until the first intervention of the king of the elves in measure 58, where the modulation of Bb major, relative major, dazzles us like the sun in the snow, bringing more icy character to the scene. Schubert becomes an artist of modulation and theatricalization. We had already seen an example of programmatic music in the previous example with the *ostinato* of the right hand, but now it is even more evident if it fits. All the passages are undoubtedly descriptive examples of everything that happens in the poem, and we never cease to be amazed at the imagination to conceive such an idea or the means to achieve such an end. The most effective moment, without considering the previous ones not very

adequate, is the end, where after having achieved all the tensions-distensions with the different accompaniments, rhythms and tonalities, the most absolute silence is made, with a cappella recitative, the dominant chords of the dominant, dominant and minor *G* tonic. Absolutely descriptive and heartbreaking. It has prepared perfectly all the moments of the work, but without a doubt this one is valued even more with the appearance of the silence after being all the work united with the *perpetual* motorbike of the triplets of eighth notes in its multiple forms. Within the plot it not only makes sense but multiplies its effect. Another example of the use of space-time and theatricalization.

At the end of the last verse, a desperate father accelerates the gallop.



Figure 23. Measure 135.

Schubert moves him to the piano, increasing his speed, creating anguish, to stop him in his tracks when he arrives home and discovers his dead son. There is a terrifying silence. This is another example of Schubert's space-time play. He conceives the lied as a whole, with a corpus composed of voice, text and piano, and gives the instrument itself the capacity to dominate the scene; he includes the voice within the delimitation that has defined the piano, and this fact is undoubtedly new in the use of the piano as an accompanying instrument.

The rest of the lied is a continuous dialogue between characters going through different tonalities and registers depending on each one of them and the moment of the scene. The minor tonalities are attributed to the narrator, the father and the son, and *A* major to Erlkönig. Through the tonalities he travels a path of contrasts and emotions, with the father being the one who most changes tonalities and registers. He uses the modulations to represent the changes of character and as another element of identification of the characters. At this point we can observe the creation of what will be the Wagnerian *leitmotif*. Schubert provides each character with a musical profile that the interpreter must exploit, assigning motifs for each character in the story.

In the last section the narrator reappears again, telling us passionately the dramatic end of the story, concluding with an austere recitative and two chords to make clear the character he wanted to print in this story. Therefore, the characteristic that has predominated in the lied has been the anxiety on the part of the interpreters and that this way it is

transmitted to the listener, as it is manifested in the story and as it seems that Schubert felt it when reading it and composing the lied. This transmission of character, so characteristic of Romanticism, reaches higher heights with Schubert, especially in his liederistic composition. Likewise, this intention of transmitting character in the work as a whole, but more specifically in the piano part, undoubtedly establishes a starting point in the conception of the piano accompaniment to the voice.

4. Conclusion

The results and conclusions, taking into account the whole evolutionary perspective of piano accompaniment, will be presented in the second article. However, we can point out some considerations, especially those concerning the transformation of the piano accompaniment to the voice. We have seen the subordination in the ancient aria, we have gone through the classicism, with its progressive incorporation to the formation, and, finally, we have analyzed Franz Schubert's *Der Erlkönig*, one of his first *lieder*, and in which we can already see a great part of his idea of the piano as a vocal accompaniment instrument.

The musicians of Romanticism were eager to break the previous rules based on everything popular, everything that identifies their patriotism. Let us remember that, although Mozart or Haydn were based on balance or unity, now Schubert is based on poetry, focusing on the piano all the weight of the liederistico drama. We have been able to verify the extent to which the piano participates in the final result of the work, establishing an indissoluble union between voice and piano and text and music. This conceptual entry of the piano into the active participation of the work will undoubtedly be Schubert's main contribution in the field of piano accompaniment to the voice. This milestone was undoubtedly achieved through the constant improvement and stylization of expressive media. We will explain it below.

The lied is, from Schubert, the first fully developed romantic genre. We have already explained the gestation of the birth of the lied, as well as the pleasant circumstance and motifs that led to its splendid development in Vienna. However, we want to answer the question of why this revolution in Schubert. The answer can be found in the fact that his great forerunners such as Bach, Mozart or Beethoven developed their full creative potential in other major forms such as opera, oratorio or symphony. Schubert, on the other hand, was the first to place the best of him in a brief form, the lied, discovering a location for the lied within the paradigm of the voice-piano relationship. With this he not only took the lied form to the top of the musical composition, but defined it, provided it with new aesthetic concepts through the popular character of its theme and was based on the poem. He gave the role of the piano full responsibility for the work, managing to establish a clear differentiation with the bel canto, fundamentally centred on the beauty of the melody. In the Italian melody, the piano or orchestra is subordinated to the beauty of the melody. On the other hand, Schubert

conceives the lied as a whole, a block of the voice with the piano, in which the piano accompaniment has great responsibilities in all fields of the work.

Schubert was the pioneer in capturing in the form of the lied the best of his compositional method. All his creative capacity was destined to the lied, being his form of reference, his natural means of expression from which he transferred all his compositional advances to other forms such as symphony (For example, the B minor tonality present in *In der Ferne* is also the tonality of his *Unfinished Symphony No. 8*, with the entire connotation we have seen that this tonality has for Schubert. Another example is the spatial-temporal conception we have commented on of his lieder, which had such an impact on his piano works, whether sonatas such as his *Wanderer Fantasy*, influenced by his lied *Der Wanderer*.). The characteristic that stands out above all the others of Schubert is undoubtedly the piano theatricalization, the attempt to describe through the piano musically everything that happens in the poem. For this approach he uses resources such as modulations, an infinite variety of accompaniment patterns, characterization, and the assignment of characters to motifs played by the piano or an infinite symbolism. Of course, modulations were used before Schubert, but Schubert's treatment of them is completely new. The contrast of change in a greater-minor way is not only used in Schubert as a play of lights, but above all as a change of stage or character within the story. Duality will be a characteristic that will be present in all his liederistic work. The piano will represent solitude and company; the accompaniment will infuse the character of the work. All this will be done with a naturalness and depth unknown until then.

The rest of the results and conclusions will be presented in the following article, where we will continue analyzing more lieder by Franz Schubert, as well as works by contemporary and later composers, thus specifying the conceptual legacy he left and how he influenced other compositions.

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