

Schumann's Orchestration for *Das Paradies und die Peri* and *Szenen aus Goethes Faust*

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Recent “historically informed” performances of Robert Schumann’s symphonic works have made a strong case for re-evaluating one of the most contentious aspects of his music: the quality of its orchestration.¹ So far, less attention has been paid to the orchestration of the choral works, although some of them have also benefited from the lighter touch of recordings by John Eliot Gardiner and the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique or Philippe Herreweghe and the Orchestre des Champs Elysées. However, in the scores of Schumann’s *Das Paradies und die Peri*, *Der Rose Pilgerfahrt*, *Szenen aus Goethes Faust*, the four choral ballades, and the Mass and Requiem, we can find multiple examples of inventive and delicate orchestral writing within the Romantic tradition of Carl Maria von Weber, Felix Mendelssohn, and even, to a degree, Hector Berlioz.

As can be seen in Table 1, throughout his career, Schumann wrote for a standard classical orchestra with paired woodwinds, paired horns and trumpets, three trombones, timpani, and five-part strings. The bass end was sometimes bolstered by ophicleide (*Das Paradies und die Peri*) or its descendant the tuba (the choral ballades). Extra instruments—piccolo, harp or triangle—were included for particular illustrative effects. In this, Schumann was little different

Table 1 Orchestration of Schumann's Choral Works

Title	Chorus	Soloists	Picc.	Flute	Ob	Cl.	Bsn	Hn	Tpt	Trb	Oph	Timps	Perc	Hp	Strings	Organ
<i>Das Paradies und die Peri</i> Premiered Dec 4, 1843, Leipzig. Piano score published 1844 (Breitkopf und Härtel), orch. 1874	SSAA TTBB	2 Sop. Mezzo, 2 Alto, Tenor, Baritone, Bass	1	2	2	2	2	4	2	3	1	Yes	Triangle Bass drum Gr. Tr	Yes	Violins I and II Violas Cellos Double bass	
<i>Der Rose Pilgerfahrt</i> , <i>op. 112</i> Premiered in piano version 6 July 1851, Düsseldorf; orchestral version 5 Feb 1852. Pub 1852 (Kistner).	SSAA TTBB	2 Sop. 2 Mezzos, 2 Alto, 2 Tenor, 2 Baritone, 2 Bass		2	2	2		4 (2 Ventilhorn, 2 Waldhorn)	2	3		Yes			Violins I and II Violas Cellos Double bass	
<i>Der Königssohn</i> , <i>op. 116</i> Premiered Düsseldorf May 6, 1852; Piano score pub- lished 1853. (Whistling), orch 1875	SA TTBB	Alto, Tenor, Baritone, Bass	1	2	2	2	2	4 (as above)	2 +2 cornets à piston	3	Tuba	Yes	Triangle		Violins I and II Violas Cellos Double bass	
<i>Des Sängers Fluch</i> , <i>op. 139</i> Premiered Feb 28, 1857, Elberfeld. Piano score pub- lished 1857. (Arnold), orch 1858.	SA TTBB	Alto, Tenor, Baritone, Bass	1	2	3	2	2	4 (as above)	2	3	Tuba	Yes		Yes	Violins I and II Violas Cellos Double bass	
<i>Vom Pagen und der König- stochter</i> , <i>op.</i> <i>post 140</i> . Premiered Dec 2, 1852, Düsseldorf. Piano score published 1857. (Rieter-Bieder- mann)	SA TTBB	3 Sop. Alto, Tenor, 4 Bases	1	2	2	2	2	4 (as above)	2	3		Yes		Yes	Violins I and II Violas Cellos Double bass	
<i>Das Glück von Edenhall</i> , <i>op.</i> <i>post 143</i> Premiered Oct 23, 1854, Leipzig. Published 1860. (Rieter-Bieder- mann)	TTBB	Tenor, Bass		2	2	2	2	4	3	3	Tuba	Yes	Triangle	Yes	Violins I and II Violas Cellos Double bass	

Das Paradies und die Peri and Szenen aus Goethes Faust



Title	Chorus	Soloists	Picc.	Flute	Ob	Cl.	Bsn	Hn	Tpt	Trb	Oph	Timps	Perc	Hp	Strings	Organ
<i>Missa sacra</i> , op. 147 Premiered Kyrie and Gloria in Düsseldorf, 1853. Published 1863 (Rieter- Biedermann)	SATB	Sop. Tenor		2	2	2	2	2	2	3		Yes			Violins I and II Violas Cellos Double bass	
<i>Requiem</i> , op. 48 Premiered Nov 19, 1864, Königsberg. Published 1864 (Rieter- Biedermann)	SATB	SATB		2	2	2		2	2	3		Yes			Violins I and II Violas Cellos Double bass	
<i>Szenen aus Goethe's Faust</i> , WoO 3 Part III premiered June 25, 1848, Dresden; complete work June 14, 1862 published 1858	SSAA TTBB	5 Sop. Alto, Tenor, 3 Baritones, Bass	1	2	2	2	2	4	2	3	Tuba	Yes		Yes	Violins I and II Violas Cellos Double bass	

from Mendelssohn.² Whereas Mendelssohn's orchestration is praised, however, Schumann's is not, even though there are many instances where he achieved comparable effects to the scores of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *St. Paul*.

Inevitably, the evaluation of Schumann's orchestration does not simply depend on whether or not he could compete with Mendelssohn. There are several other factors in play. Some have to do with the challenge of talking about orchestration altogether. Julian Rushton has pointed out that, as for any aspect of musical creativity, there are no eternal laws for successful orchestration.³ What is more, **it is almost impossible to disentangle orchestration from other features such as a composer's treatment of texts, themes, harmony, and form.** There are practical problems too. The table shows frequent delays between the publication of Schumann's choral works with piano reductions as accompaniments and orchestral scores becoming available. Such delays

were often detrimental to appreciation of the works. For instance, it took 23 years for an orchestral score of *Der Königssohn* to be published and the interim piano reduction does not give many clues to the work's distinctive low-voiced sonorities.

There is also the issue of where the choral and orchestral works fit within Schumann's career: *Das Paradies und die Peri* was composed in the early 1840s, but most of the choral music comes from the next decade. One of the reasons for Schumann's increased interest in choral music then was that he took up the post of music director in Düsseldorf in September 1850, duties for which included conducting and composing for the town choir and orchestra. (His revisions to what became known as the *Fourth Symphony*—the most notorious example of his "bad" orchestration, with all those doubled winds—were perhaps intended to suit the forces and abilities of his players in Düsseldorf.) The chivalric, nostalgic, and sentimental texts he chose to set, by Ger-

man poets such as Ludwig Uhland, were in keeping with the nationalistic impulses of the age.⁴ Schumann, in other words, was writing for the musicians and audiences around him.

Yet, when we look back on Schumann's time in Düsseldorf, our vision tends to be clouded by awareness of his final illness: of his incarceration in an asylum in 1854 and his death two years later. What with hindsight we call Schumann's late style has typically been associated with a falling off in his creative powers, even if that judgment is sometimes queried by how his composi-

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tions were received at the time.⁵ Negative assessments of Schumann's orchestration, therefore, need to be considered against a complex historical backdrop of not only musical but also personal and practical concerns. In order to attempt this, we will here focus on two works: *Das Paradies und die Peri*, in many ways, the composer's greatest success during his lifetime; and *Die Szenen aus Goethes Faust*, of particular interest because its three parts and Overture have been seen to document changes in Schumann's compositional approach in the last decade of his creative life.

Paradise and the Peri

Schumann had first considered using sections from Thomas Moore's extended poem *Lalla Rookh* (1817) as a source for an opera or concert pieces in 1841. The poem follows the journey of Princess Tulip Cheeks (Lalla Rookh) to her arranged marriage with the Sultan of Lesser Bucharra. Along the way, she is entertained by a young Persian poet's romantic fables; as you may have guessed, it is finally revealed that the poet is in fact her

betrothed. Schumann eventually decided on the second story from *Lalla Rookh*, about a peri's quest to find a gift with which to regain entry to paradise, from which she is excluded because she is the offspring of a fallen angel and a mortal. (A peri is one of a race of beautiful fairy-like beings from Persian mythology.) His friend Adolf Böttger devised a libretto (rather than dealing with Moore directly, it drew on translations by J. L. Witthaus (1822) and Theodor Oelker (1839)), which Schumann freely edited. *Das Paradies und die Peri* is in three tableaux. In the first, the Peri offers blood from a young warrior killed by the tyrant Gazna, but that gift is rejected. In the second, she takes the sighs of a maiden who dies in the arms of her plague-stricken beloved. Those did not suffice either. It is a criminal's tears at the sight of a boy at prayer, discovered in part III, that finally grant her redemption.

When the composition began, Schumann worked at his typical speed: Part I was completed between February 23 and March 30 1843; Part II was drafted from April 6–17; and Part III from May 17–25. Everything was orchestrated by June 16. *Das Paradies und*

die Peri was first performed at the Leipzig Gewandhaus on December 4 and 11, 1843, with Livia Frege as the peri. It was an immediate success and was Schumann's best known work during his lifetime: there were performances throughout Germany, Europe, and even in New York.⁶

In musical and formal terms, Schumann's score for *Das Paradies und die Peri* was unusual on two counts. First, it represented what the composer called "a new genre for the concert hall," that aimed to sit squarely between oratorio and opera.⁷ Second, Schumann pursued Heinrich Marschner's practice of linking numbers so that they ran virtually continuously. However, this was far from an amorphous structure: each tableau is clearly framed by changes in thematic material, harmonic area, ensemble (chorus, recitative, aria), and, importantly for our purposes, orchestration.

The exotic landscapes and supernatural characters of *Das Paradies und die Peri* provided ample opportunity for musical scene paintings and orchestral effects. So, too, did the choruses of Nile genies, houris (an houris is one of the beautiful virgins provided in paradise for faithful Muslims) and peris Schumann added to the libretto. These were not only crowd pleasers; they also allowed Schumann to show his mastery of orchestration in the manner of his two great German predecessors, Weber and Mendelssohn. The music for the Nile genies (no. 11) has been compared to the Act II finale of Weber's 1826 opera *Oberon*, in which mermaids and fairies sing the gratuitous if graceful, "Oh! 'tis pleasant to float on the sea." As in the Weber, Schumann's scene features sixteenth-note brocade for strings and upper winds as accompaniment for the chorus. Unlike the Weber, the string line is not for a soloist, but for "at least" three first violins, then violas, then second violins and cellos at the octave, lending the whole a more substantial sound. However, the slightly thicker texture makes the disappearance of the genies all the more effective: the sixteenth notes start to falter and eventually become triplet eighth notes that sink into the subsequent tenor arioso.

Mendelssohn's influence, meanwhile, has been heard in the arioso solo vocal writing and characterful choruses of *Das Paradies und die Peri*. Perhaps these features alluded

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Das Paradies und die Peri and Szenen aus Goethes Faust



to Mendelssohn's *Die erste Walpurgisnacht*, which Schumann heard in February 1843. The presence of an ophicleide in nos. 6, 7, and 23 also reminds us of Mendelssohn. Patented in France in 1821, this precursor to the tuba and euphonium is thought of today primarily as the instrument that represents the comic character of Bottom in Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In fact, it serves two roles: generally, it supports the bass line (as in the Wedding March) but it can also occasionally provide a distinctive timbre. For example, the ophicleide is the sound that signifies Thisbe's enchantment with Bottom despite his ass's head, and provides the donkey's bray in the dance of the clowns.

Schumann was impressed, on the whole, by Mendelssohn's incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which he heard in Potsdam on October 18, 1843. (Shakespeare's play he dismissed as a curiosity!) "The music is fine and fanciful," he wrote: "The instruments tease and joke as if the fairies themselves were playing them. One hears brand new sounds."⁸ He had already composed *Das Paradies und die Peri* by this point, and had himself experimented with what one might call brand new sounds. Schumann did not use the ophicleide in quite the same way as Mendelssohn, however. Rather than playing in conjunction with the other low brass instruments or to depict a braying ass, it provides a darker hue. In the sixth and seventh numbers of *Das Paradies und die Peri*, the ophicleide accompanies the Chorus of the Conquerors (*Chor der Eroberer*), who celebrate the tyrant Gazna's victory. In no. 23, it underscores the tenor solo's lengthy description of the old man:

Beim Knaben, der, des Spiels nun satt,
[Near the boy, who tir'd with play]

in Blumen sich gelagert hat,
[Now nestling 'mid the roses lay,]

sieht sie vom heißen Rosse steigen
[She saw a wearied man dismount]

jetzt einen müden Mann und schnell
[From his hot steed, and on the brink]

an einem hochumgrasten Quell
[Of a small imaret's rustic fount]

zum Trunke sich hinunterbeugen,
[Impatient fling him down to drink]

dann kehrt er schnell sein wild' Gesicht
[Then swift his haggard brow he turn'd]

aufs schöne Kind, das furchtlos saß,
[To the fair child, who fearless sat.]

obgleich noch nie des Tages Licht
[Though never yet hath day-beam burn'd]

ein wild'res Antlitz sah als das,
[Upon a brow more fierce than that, -]

entsetzlich wild, ein grauser Bund.
[Suddenly fierce – a mixture dire.]

wie Wetterwolk' aus Nacht und Glut.
[Like thunder-clouds, of gloom and fire:]

dort stehn die Laster all, es tut
[In which the [peri's] eye could read]

dort jedes Bubenstück sich kund –
[Dark tales of many a ruthless deed:]

Meineid, eschlag'ner Gast.
[The ruin'd maid – the shrine profan'd –]

betrog'ne Braut, mit blut'ger Schrift
[Oaths broken – and the threshold stain'd]

auf jenem Antlitz stand's geschrieben.
[With blood of guests! – there written, all.⁹]

The underlined passages mark where the ophicleide plays. It is clear that the instrument is associated with the rougher aspects of the man's mien: his ferocity and the dastardly deeds he has done. As we will see in later examples, Schumann did not only use orchestration to paint scenery; in his choral music, particular timbres also are used to enhance musical descriptions of a character or emotional experience.

Mendelssohn was far from the only composer in Germany to use an ophicleide in the early 1840s. The instrument appears in Richard Wagner's *Rienzi* and *Der fliegende Holländer* (premiered in 1842 and 43 respectively) and, perhaps most pertinently, in the Offertory to Berlioz's *Requiem*, another work Schumann heard in 1843.¹⁰ Despite their being contemporary, we don't often consider Schumann and Berlioz together. Perhaps they seem too contrasting in

character: the Frenchman theatrical and—significantly for this article—a master of orchestration, the German less so. The two met during Berlioz's tour of Saxony from January 29 to March 1, 1843. While they did not share a common spoken language, there seems to have been a musical connection. Schumann heard the already mentioned Offertory, the *King Lear* Overture and *Symphonie fantastique* (which he had favourably reviewed from a piano score eight years earlier). Perhaps it was only by chance that the Berlioz concerts coincided about Schumann's starting sustained work on *Das Paradies und die Peri*. The range of orchestral textures he explores, though, suggests that at the very least his imagination was fired.

One striking aspect of Berlioz's Offertory is its initial lengthy presentation, by upper strings, of a winding theme occasionally punctuated by horn chords. The choir begins with a simple melodic fragment as if it is accompanying the orchestra rather than the other way around. In *Das Paradies und die Peri*, Schumann frequently uses a similar set up, with the orchestra (often the strings) presenting a distinctive thematic kernel around which the voices enter. For example, the first number begins with a descending violin motive, treated sequentially, which is gradually imitated by the other string instruments; no. 7 features a prominent cello quarter-note melody; in no. 13 there is one in triplet quarter notes for violas and cellos. Allowing the orchestra to carry the thematic weight of a movement changed the way in which Schumann wrote for solo



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voices in particular. Early critics noticed that “very frequently the instrumental character (of Schumann’s melodies) shows through and the vocal line winds like an arabesque through the orchestra.”¹¹ Making the vocal writing more instrumental was not unproblematic; there were complaints about a lack of lyricism, and that the tendency to repeat melodies made no sense with regard to the ongoing text. But bringing voices and orchestra closer together did mean that Schumann could explore the coloristic and descriptive capacity of both, as evident in a couple of further examples.

No. 4, “Wo find’ ich sie?” begins with the peri wondering “whither shall I go / To find this gift for Heav’n?” Her uncertainty is mirrored by the wandering harmonies of the strings, the first violins sequentially repeating a quizzical ascending figure. The texture becomes thicker and a more stable A¹ major is established as the peri describes all the worldly wealth she knows: the whereabouts of “unnumbered rubies” and “Isles of Perfume” are described to clarinet, bassoon, and horn accompaniment, with the flutes and oboes echoing the end of the vocal phrase. Beneath them is an undulating viola line that an early critic described as if “engaged ... in a quiet soliloquy.”¹² Reference to King Jamshid’s “jewell’d cup” full of life’s elixir

introduces a distant trumpet fanfare; the German words *Gold* and *Juwelen* prompt the only tutti passage in the number. The music associated with the description of wealth evaporates, leaving the peri alone with the strings again to contemplate how to find “the drops of life” (*Lebenstropfen*). At first, the descending *pianissimo* figure in the violins and violas seems to be those drops, but they are converted into something more urgent by flute and oboe as they lead into the subsequent tenor solo. The orchestra here seems to reflect the peri’s consciousness.

The orchestra serves a more deliberately illustrative purpose in the opening number of Part III, “Schmücket die Stufen zu Allah’s Thron” [“Bedeck the steps to Allah’s Throne”]. **Across his choral works, Schumann frequently divided his choruses into male and female voices, and his orchestra into high and low instruments.** In *Das Paradies und die Peri*, there are several female choruses, partly because they seemed best suited to depicting the choruses of genies and, here, peris. Sopranos and altos (each divided into two parts) begin an imitative chorus as if the music itself is encircling Allah’s throne with flowers. Upper woodwinds occasionally echo their melodic contours, against a light drone from strings, *pizzicato* cello, bassoon, and horns and intermittent triangle and cymbal contributions.

A solo quartet (2 sopranos, 2 altos), introduces a new stanza, dotted rhythms and a new sound world—clarinet and horns, in the relative minor. But, this is soon dismissed with the return of the opening material. With the entrance of another soprano soloist, however, another section begins: faster, initially using the dotted rhythm of the quartet and, most distinctively, propelled by repeated triplet eighth notes on clarinets, bassoons, horn and violas. The soloist narrates what the peri is doing—“Lo, to the path to eternal light / The peri now has taken her flight”—after which the chorus interjects with support for their sister: “Lovely Peri, be thou not afraid; / Truth and faith have never been betrayed!”. A soprano duo then takes on the triplet rhythm of the accompaniment to return to urge the peri to return to the “rosy bower,” supported by punctuating chords from flute, bassoon, and strings. The chorus re-enters

to promise that “Endless award / Waits for those who joyfully serve the Lord.” The number ends with an ascending scale from the solo violin that leads into the following tenor solo.

In a review of the Leipzig premiere of *Das Paradies und die Peri*, Eduard Krüger praised Schumann’s facility at making the orchestra “take on the total content, illustrating and explaining the sung text.”¹³ **According to Krüger, Schumann was, first and foremost, an instrumental rather than a vocal composer: the judgment may strike us as odd today, when we think of Schumann as a composer primarily of Lieder and solo piano music.** Yet perhaps we can consider his use of the orchestra in his choral works as akin to the imaginative, evocative piano accompaniments of the songs which so often seem to tell us more than the words.

Although the above examples all point to Schumann’s skill as an orchestrator, it should be admitted that critics have not always been similarly convinced. One reviewer of a London performance of *Das Paradies und die Peri* in 1856 described it as “a work of great genius and power,” with the qualification:

Much of the difficulty which must be felt in comprehending and appreciating it on a first hearing arises, we think, from the great elaboration and intricacy of the score. There is such a profusion of minute and complicated details that the ear is perplexed, and finds it difficult to trace the simple form through the multitude of orchestral combinations and ornaments in which it is enveloped. In this respect, Schumann’s music reminds us of one of those pre-Raphaelite pictures in which every object is delineated with the laborious distinctness of miniature painting, or of the nice tracery and carved work of a florid Gothic edifice ... When the ear is once accustomed to it, it may be found that it is no longer perplexing, but only heightens the richness of the colouring without obscuring the form.¹⁴

Another complained that the score is:

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so often completely smothered by loud, complicated, and unproductive accompaniments, that their few beauties have to struggle through a fog, more or less opaque, of Neo-Germanic mystifications.¹⁵

The references in these reviews to pre-Raphaelite paintings and “Neo-German mystifications” raise two significant issues in the reception of Schumann’s choral works. Both have to do with the composer’s complicated relationship with what constituted modern art. Today, the sentimental poetry of the *Peri*, and its emphasis on choral writing, can make it seem old-fashioned. However, in the mid nineteenth-century, Schumann was considered to stand at the forefront of the musical avant-garde, alongside none other than Wagner.

This is not to say that there were not already those who found Moore’s poetry mawkish. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, one of the founders of the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, parodied the opening verse of *Lalla Rookh* to commemorate his pet wombat.¹⁶ Still, the critic who compared the orchestration of Schumann’s *Paradies und die Peri* to the detailed paintings of the pre-Raphaelites could have found several supportive examples from Rossetti’s oeuvre. “The Blessed Damozel,” a poem published in the short-lived journal *The Germ* in 1850, relayed the story of a lady separated from her lover by death:

The blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven;



Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Blessed Damozel*
@ National Museums Liverpool.

Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Rossetti’s later painting *The Blessed Damozel* (1871) shows said lady surrounded by angels, looking down towards her earthbound lover. She leans over a more literal gold bar too: the frame between the upper part of the picture and the lower predella canvas (a layout borrowed from Italian fourteenth- or fifteenth-century altarpieces). The division between heaven and earth is not dissimilar

to that in Schumann’s *Das Paradies und die Peri*, although, in the Rossetti, the central female figure wishes to return to earth not heaven. The connection I am interested in here, though, is the way in which the scene is painted. Rossetti reproduces his poetic description with care: the Damozel carries the three lilies mentioned and there is also a halo of stars around her hair. Everything from the background foliage to the folds of her gown is presented in detail and rich colours. We might draw a parallel to the combination of instruments in the score of *Das Paradies und die Peri*: both Rossetti and Schumann are invested in creating a kind of heightened realism.

The complexity of Schumann’s *Das Paradies und die Peri* was not simply a challenge for listeners; it also caused problems for performers. At its Leipzig premiere soloist Heinrich Schmidt refused to go on stage at the last minute (fortunately the Viennese tenor Johann Vesque von Püttlingen stepped in). When Schumann moved to Düsseldorf in 1850, it seemed that, finally, he would have a chance to write for and work with a stable group of able musicians. He had inherited a “well-drilled” orchestra of about forty players in Düsseldorf from his predecessors as municipal music director, Mendelssohn,

Julius Rietz and Ferdinand Hiller.¹⁷ Yet—as with Mendelssohn—it did not take long for his relationship with the musicians to sour. Within a year of Schumann’s arrival, there were complaints about his taciturn and absent-minded manner; his style of conducting, and his hiring of soloists from out of town. On his part, Schumann bemoaned the high rate of absenteeism and, to the disgruntlement of his players, scheduled extra rehearsals. After a fraught rehearsal for Bach’s *St Matthew Passion*, Schumann’s wife Clara, a famous virtuoso pianist, complained about the chorus’s “respect neither for art nor for

the conductor!"¹⁸ She continued: "The ladies hardly open their mouths and they behave (naturally with the exception of several trained singers) so impolitely, sit down when singing, throw their feet and hands around like quite untrained youngsters." Despite the importance placed on amateur singing as a way to consolidate and express feelings of nationhood and communities, there were still, it seems, tensions between professional and amateur musicians. Schumann's creative ambitions were perhaps at odds with the circumstances in which he found himself; this was never more apparent than with his attempt to set one of the great masterworks of German literature, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*, Parts I and II.

Scenes from Goethe's *Faust*

The year after the success of *Das Paradies und die Peri* Schumann considered setting several texts, among them August Bück's *König Artus* and Karl Leberecht Immermann's *Tristan und Isolde*. He eventually decided on the final scene of Goethe's *Faust*, but progress was unusually slow. In a letter to Mendelssohn, he explained that he had abandoned the work:

The scene from *Faust* rests on my desk.... I'm downright afraid to look at it. Only because the sublime poetry of precisely this closing scene grips me would I venture [to resume] work; I don't know whether I'll ever publish it.¹⁹

Hearing selections from Anton Heinrich von Radziwill's *Faust* at a soirée in Berlin on March 21, 1847, seems to have motivated Schumann to return to his score. By April 19 he was "busy with the Finale;" by May 22, he began revisions. He then left it untouched until early summer 1848 when he added a conclusion to the central number; "Gerettet ist das edle Glied." A private performance took place on June 25. Over a year later, the work received its first public airings, including a performance on August 29, 1849, as part of Dresden's, Leipzig's, and Weimar's celebrations of Goethe's centenary. Meanwhile, Schumann had decided to set more scenes from *Faust*. Between July 13 and 24, 1849, he drafted and scored the whole of Part I. Just days before the Goethe centenary celebrations, he completed the opening scene of Part II; the remainder was done by the following May. In August 1853, he added an Overture.

During the near decade that Schumann spent working on the *Faustszenen* he had completed numerous instrumental pieces as well as a sketch and chorus for Byron's *The Corsair*, an overture and incidental music for Byron's *Manfred*, the *Requiem für Mignon*, and his opera *Genoveva*. Traces of those experiences can be detected in the different characters, and orchestration, of *Faust's* three parts. Part I consists of three scenes from the Gretchen tragedy—a distillation of Faust's seduction and desertion of a young innocent, which leads to the deaths of her child, her brother, and her mother. This episode in Goethe's work is familiar from the operatic stage, and although Schumann was the first to use the poet's actual words rather than a paraphrase, as we will see, the overall effect is relatively operatic. Part II traces Faust's progression towards death, while Part III sets the scene of his transfiguration. If Part III is the most straightforwardly choral, Part II straddles opera and oratorio. The different genre of each is reflected in its vocal and instrumental requirements. As shown in Table 2, Part I is primarily for soloists, Part II for soloists and small choruses, Part III for numerous ensembles and multiple soloists. Closer inspection of a few scenes should help explain how the orchestration also shifts in each.

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Pepperdine University is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Ryan Board as director of choral activities at the Seaver College Campus in Malibu, California. Formerly on faculty at the Conservatory of Music and Dance at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, Dr. Board brings a wealth of musicianship and experience as a performer, educator, and clinician. He holds degrees from the University of Northern Colorado, Westminster Choir College, and the Conservatory at UMKC. Dr. Board joins Pepperdine's distinguished vocal music department, which offers a many-faceted approach to the development of the undergraduate singer and music educator.

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Das Paradies und die Peri and Szenen aus Goethes Faust



The final scene of Part I, “Szene in Dom,” finds Faust’s betrayed lover Gretchen in church, tormented by Mephistopheles. It is a scene you could easily imagine on an operatic stage. Schumann subsumes the scenery—the pillars of the church, the unforgiving congregation—into the parts for orchestra and chorus to create a suitably claustrophobic atmosphere. The chorus sings a *Dies irae*, while violas and cellos play a zigzag descending motive associated with Mephistopheles (and, looking beyond *Faust*, with the witch Margarete in *Genoveva*). Gretchen’s fragile solo line is pitted against full chorus and orchestra, with hardly any support in her register; and—understandably—she faints.

Part II finds further absorption of scenery into orchestration: indeed, you could even say that visual and sonic phenomena here become one and the same. It opens with

Faust resting in a pleasant landscape, trying to forget the horrors of Part I. Above him hover spirits, and Ariel (the nature spirit of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*) sings to the sound of Aeolian harps. The arrival of the sun is heralded by a “frightful clangor” (*angeheures Getöse*). Ariel warns the spirits to hide away, for if the sound strikes them they will be deafened. Schumann renders this sonic boom of dawn with a break in harmony and texture: swathes of *tremolando* strings unsettle the steady diatonic homophony of the preceding chorus, diverting the imminent cadence from E⁺ major to its tonic minor; and beginning a lengthy B^b pedal that lingers threateningly. Brass fanfares, the trumpets and trombones to which Ariel refers, piece the whole. The spirits disappear, and Faust awakens. Overwhelmed by the beauty of his surroundings, he indulges in a paean to nature. From behind the mountain peaks,

the sun emerges: a blaze of *tremolando* C major that, against the surrounding harmonies, seems like an unexpected glare on the horizon. It momentarily blinds Faust.

Sound and sight come still closer in the next scene. Faust, now wealthy, is alone in his palace at midnight. He hears a door creak and, shaken, asks who is there. Four gray women—Want, Guilt, Distress, and Care—have come to visit. Schumann’s score represents them by devices typical of Romantic representations of the musical supernatural—high woodwind pedals, scampering string figurations, and flickering chromaticisms. Care introduces herself: Faust refuses to succumb to her magical power and so she breathes on him to blind him. Those high woodwind pedals become part of Faust’s disorientation; interestingly, it is the only scene scored for piccolo.

The final part is in many ways more static; there are no scenery changes. The progression through low (Pater Profundus), middle (Pater Seraphicus), high (Angels) and highest regions (Dr Marianus), however, is reflected in changes in voice type and orchestration. Pater Profundus begins with a low B^b pedal from strings, trombones, and horn. Pater Seraphicus is accompanied by upper strings and cello in the tenor clef. The angels enjoy a full orchestral texture that is also high and airy. With Dr Marianus, we hear the harp (previously associated with Ariel at the beginning of Part II), that routine signifier of heavenly spaces.²⁰

Part III has always been considered the finest segment of *Szenen aus Goethes Faust*. In it, Schumann’s successor as editor of

Table 2 Vocal Parts in Schumann's *Szenen aus Goethe's Faust*

Part I	Part II	Part III
Faust (B)	Faust (B)	
Gretchen (S)		
Mephistopheles (B)	Mephistopheles (B)	
Martha (S)		
Chorus (SATB)	Chorus (S1 and 2, T1 and 2, B2, SATB)	Chorus (SATB)
	Ariel (T)	
	4 Gray Women (SSAA)	
	Lemurs (AT)	
		Pater Ecstaticus (T)
		Pater Profundus (B)
		Pater Seraphicus (B)
		Blessed Boys (S1 and 2, A)
		Angels (SATB)
		Young Angels (S2, chorus; later S2, M, T2, B3, chorus)
		The More Perfected Angels (T2, B3, chorus)
		Dr Marianus (T or B)
		Penitent Women (S4)
		Magna Peccatrix (S)
		Mulier Samaritana (S)
		Maria Aegyptaca (A)
		A Penitent (S)
		Magna Gloriosa (A)
		Chorus Mysticus (S2, M, T2, B1)

the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Franz Brendel, heard sounds of "the church music of the future."²¹ The other scene judged particularly successful by nineteenth-century critics was the appearance of the four gray women, described by one as a "Wunderwerk."²² Some felt uncomfortable about the shift in style from theatrical to something like sacred. The preference for Part III derived directly from awareness of chronology. Eduard Hanslick pointed out in his review of the first complete performance that the third part had been written first, during what he called the finest hours of Schumann's best period.²³ Parts I and II and the Overture, he continued, were written when Schumann was at Düs-

seldorf, when his physical and mental health was already wavering. Hanslick contrasted the chronology of Schumann's composition with Goethe's: the poet had written Part I of *Faust* at the height of his powers, and Part II as an old man, who would not live long beyond his next birthday. Schumann also divided *Faust* into two, but in reverse order, composing the music for the final scene at his creative peak, and the first parts when in decline. By the time he turned to Part I, Hanslick concluded, Schumann had no more power to produce something beautiful.

The reception history of Schumann's choral music is complex, merging elements of biography and preconceptions of the

composer's late style with more purely musical considerations. What I hope emerges from the above survey of *Das Paradies und die Peri* and *Szenen aus Goethes Faust* is the richness of both scores and the way in which they demonstrate Schumann's abilities not only to respond to poetry in music, but also to write inventively and effectively for chorus and orchestra.

NOTES

¹ See, for example, Herreweghe's *Symphonies no. 2 op. 61* and *no. 4 op. 120* (Harmonia Mundi, 1996); *Szenen aus Goethes Faust*

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Das Paradies und die Peri and the Szenen aus Goethes Faust



- (Harmonia Mundi, 1998); Gardiner's *Complete Symphonies* (Archiv, 1988); *Das Paradies und die Peri* (Archiv, 1999); and Norrington's *Symphony no. 3 in E flat op. 97 "Rhenish;" Symphony no. 4 in D minor* (EMI, 1990).
- ² For more on Mendelssohn, see R. Larry Todd, "Some thoughts on Mendelssohn's Orchestration," *Mendelssohn, The Hebrides and Other Overtures* (Cambridge University Press), 84–88.
 - ³ Julian Rushton, "The Art of Orchestration," *The Cambridge Companion to Berlioz*, ed. Colin Lawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 92–111; here 94.
 - ⁴ For more on the political aspect, see John Daverio, "Einheit—Freiheit—Vaterland: Intimations of Utopia in Robert Schumann's Late Choral Music," *Music and German National Identity*, ed. Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 59–77.
 - ⁵ See Laura Tunbridge, *Schumann's Late Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
 - ⁶ See Nicholas Marston, "'The most significant musical question of the day': Schumann's music in Britain in the later nineteenth century," *Schumann Forschungen: Robert und Clara Schumann und die nationalen Musikkulturen des 19. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Matthias Wendt (Mainz: Schott, 2005), 153–65.
 - ⁷ For more, see John Daverio, "'A New Genre for the Concert Hall': *Das Paradies und die Peri* in the Eyes of a Contemporary," *Schumann and his World*, ed. R. Larry Todd (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 129–55.
 - ⁸ Robert Schumann, "'A Midsummer Night's Dream': A Letter (1843)," *Schumann on Music: A Selection from the Writings*, trans. and ed. Henry Pleasants (New York: Dover, 1965), 195–96; here 196.
 - ⁹ Emil Flechsig's and Schumann's libretto is here given in parallel to Moore's original; the translation is by no means exact, but the spirit is true.
 - ¹⁰ See Schumann's diary entry for February 23, 1843, *Tagebücher 1827–38*, ed. Georg Eismann (Leipzig: VEB, 1971), III, 238.
 - ¹¹ Eduard Krüger, review of the premier of *Das Paradies und die Peri*, *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 47 (1845), cols. 561–70, 585–89, 606–11, 617–22; here col. 565; quoted in Daverio, "'A New Genre for the Concert Hall,'" 140.

- ¹² Krüger, review of the premier of *Das Paradies und die Peri*, *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 47 (1845), col. 567; quoted in Daverio, "'A New Genre for the Concert Hall,'" 141.
- ¹³ Krüger, review of the premier of *Das Paradies und die Peri*, *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 47 (1845), col. 620.
- ¹⁴ "Music: Philharmonic Society," *Daily News* June 24, 1856: 3152.
- ¹⁵ "The Theatrical and Musical Examiner," *The Examiner* June 28, 1856: 2526.
- ¹⁶ "I never reared a young wombat / To glad me with his pin-hole eye, / But when he most was sweet and fat / And tailless, he was sure to die!" mimics Moore's "The Fire Worshippers": "I never nurs'd a dear gazelle / To glad me with its soft black eye / But when it came to know me well / And love me, it was sure to die."
- ¹⁷ For more, see Cecelia Hopkins Porter, "The Reign of the Dilettanti: Düsseldorf from Mendelssohn to Schumann," *The Musical Quarterly* 73 (1989), 476–512.
- ¹⁸ Diary entry for March 30, 1852, translated in Porter, "The Reign of the Dilettanti," 502.

- ¹⁹ Letter of September 24, 1845, *Robert Schumanns Briefe: Neue Folge*, ed. F. Gustav Jansen (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1886), 240.
- ²⁰ See Daniel Beller-McKenna, "Distance and Disembodiment: Harps, Horns, and the Requiem Impulse in Schumann and Brahms," *Journal of Musicology* 22 (2005): 47–89.
- ²¹ Franz Brendel, *Geschichte der Musik in Italien, Deutschland und Frankreich von den ersten christlichen Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Heinrich Matthes, 1878), 359.
- ²² P. Lohmann, "Robert Schumann, *Szenen aus Goethes Faust*," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 51 (1859): 106–07.
- ²³ Eduard Hanslick, "Schumanns Musik zu Goethes Faust (vollständige Aufführung)," *Aus dem Concert-Saal: Kritiken und Schilderungen aus 20 Jahren des Wiener Musiklebens 1848–68* (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1897), 190–93, 304–09.



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