

***Poetry into Song; Performance and Analysis of
Lieder* by Deborah Stein and Robert Spillman.
Oxford University Press, 1996.**

Review by Steven Laitz

Elly Ameling's enticing foreword to Deborah Stein and Robert Spillman's *Poetry into Song* begins: "[T]he irresistible beauty of the *Lied* has long cast its spell on listeners around the world. No music pierces the heart's mysteries more deeply and no music [is] more deeply alive with verbal magic."¹ Stein, a music theorist and Spillman, an active accompanist, have merged their two strengths, the result of which is a pioneering study. While the authors identify the book's audience as "the performer," it will surely engage not only the singer and pianist, but also the theorist, historian, and anyone else interested in nineteenth-century *Lieder*. In addition, it will likely become a major resource for teachers and students of vocal literature and pedagogy.

Poetry into Song would also be an excellent starting point for both undergraduate and graduate courses in nineteenth-century *Lied* analysis since it contains examples ranging from Schubert to Mahler and Strauss. Given that the authors cast a wide net by employing a variety of analytical and interpretive techniques, the book is both accessible to readers with minimal theoretical training and challenging to those with a solid background in theory. That *Poetry Into Song* is able to merge introductory theoretical and analytical explanations with text-music interpretations that depend upon Schenkerian analytical principles makes it a unique contribution to the field. Readers interested in additional sources on related research will find a substantial and very helpful bibliography organized by topic (e.g., German Romanticism and poetry, editions, translations, text-music relations, biography, general music history, theory,

¹*Poetry Into Song*, xi; additional citations from Stein and Spillman appear within the text immediately following the quotation and include only the page number(s).

analysis, as well as detailed studies on specific songs). This up-to-date bibliography makes clear that the interest in text-music relationships begun in the 1960's and 70's with writers including Joseph Kerman, Arthur Komar and Thrasybulos Georgiades and continued in the 1980's by Lawrence Kramer, David Lewin, Arnold Feil and Carl Schachter, is very much alive today in the work of these same writers and augmented by numerous others including Richard Kramer and Susan Youens.²

Yet Stein and Spillman have produced a work that embraces much more than song analyses. The book is divided into three parts: Part I: The Language of Poetry; Part II: The Language of the Performer; and Part III: The Language of Music. This ordering acknowledges that poetry is the starting point for song. The first of the two chapters in Part I places song in its historical and social contexts with an overview of the various facets of German Romanticism. Chapter Two delves into poetry's content and form. Part II's three chapters take up issues that are directly applicable to the performer: Texture, Temporality and Elements of Interpretation. Part III, over twice as long as the first two parts combined, presents in

² Joseph Kerman, "A Romantic Detail in Schubert's *Schwanengesang*" *Musical Quarterly* X/viii (1962), 36; reprinted in *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies*,. Edited by Walter Frisch, 48-64, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986; Georgiades, Thrasybulos, *Musik und Lyrik*; Göttingen: 1967. Kramer, Lawrence, "The Schubert Lied: Romantic Form and Romantic Consciousness" in *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies*, Edited by Walter Frisch, 200-237, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986 and "Decadence and Desire: The Wilhelm Meister Songs of Wolf and Schubert," *19th Century Music* 10 (1987): 229-42; Lewin, David, "Schubert: *Auf dem Flusse*," *19th Century Music* 6 (1982): 47-59; Feil, Arnold, *Franz Schubert: Die schöne Müllerin, Winterreise*, Translated by Ann C. Sherwin, Portland, Ore.: Amadeus Press, 1988; Schachter, Carl, "Motive and Text in Four Schubert Songs," in *Aspects of Schenkerian Theory*, Edited by David Beach, 61-76, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983; Kramer, Richard, *Distant Cycles: Schubert and the Conceiving of Song*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994; Youens, Susan, *Hugo Wolf: The Vocal Music*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

its five chapters the concepts and analytical tools necessary for understanding how the musical domain of song unfolds, with separate chapters on “Harmony and Tonality,” “Melody and Motive,” “Rhythm and Meter,” and “Form in the German *Lied*.” The final chapter, “Different Settings of a Single Text: Comparison of Compositional Style,” attempts not only to integrate the ideas presented earlier, but to distinguish style characteristics. In addition to the bibliography already mentioned, extensive endnotes, line-by-line translations, a helpful glossary, scores not readily available, and a detailed index are provided in this 400+ page book.

The writers explain why the book’s three topics are addressed separately: “while our ultimate goal is to combine [them] . . . this approach models how we believe performers need to study a *Lied* in performance preparation. . . . By the end of the process, a recombination of the three topics will occur through polished performance” (xii). The book, then, is no mere compilation of the various activities involved in song analysis; rather, it is a pedagogical attempt to lead the performer through a series of steps toward a more informed performance. Stein and Spillman’s explicit aim is to provide singers with the means necessary to deal with the songs they encounter during their careers. To this end, they offer examples of how to make interpretative decisions. The book is peppered with questions designed to integrate the concepts and techniques presented which they feel “in preparing [a] song for performance, the singer and pianist will want to ask themselves” (p. 66). The authors have also included numerous varied and challenging exercises at the end of each chapter. These exercises are not ends unto themselves, but “in all cases, the reader is encouraged to consider the piece in question as repertory being prepared for performance, and to think that answering the questions in these exercises is analogous to preparing in one way to play or sing that piece” (pp. xvi-xvii). Students who work carefully through their questions and exercises, examples of which we will examine later, will learn a great deal.

Part One: The Language of Poetry

Part One begins with an ambitious claim: “These opening chapters will give readers the resources necessary for examining and understanding all of the verse set by the great *Lied* composers” (p. xii). But, in fact, Chapter One, “Introduction to German Romanticism,” has a more modest goal; it hopes to be a springboard that may launch “a lifelong study of the German Romantic mind and soul . . . that will continue to serve performers for years to come” (p. 3). This is a more realistic tack, given the complexity of the topic. The authors’ aim to “summarize the characteristics of the poetry of this period by identifying the predominant themes and images and by demonstrating those features that gave these poems their unique quality” (p. 3) is easily reached and even surpassed. Readers expecting to encounter the usual cursory dismissals of Romanticism as nothing more than schizophrenic contradictions and impossible juxtapositions will be delighted to find instead a brief, accessible and generally probing summary of German Romanticism and its poetry; it is one of the best introductions to the topic that I have encountered.

The chapter begins evocatively with the final stanza of Eichendorff’s *Mondnacht* which sets the stage for the authors’ entrance into the world of German Romanticism and its “poetry full of rich nature images and vivid poetic sensibilities” (p. 3). A list of the most important writers, painters and musicians in the early, middle and late Romantic period leads to the central figure of the time, J. W. Goethe, who, the authors are careful to stress, is more a classicist than a romantic. In their opinion, the two defining features of the Romantic soul are an “insatiable quest to go beyond what is known and (2) the embrace of the contradictory or dichotomous, the mingling of two seemingly incompatible, opposing elements into a singular entity” (p. 5) and these provide the starting point for their discussion of German Romantic themes and imagery. Complex, yet basic, romantic axioms such as irony, are fleshed out by carefully wrought definitions and examples which in

turn illuminate their defining features of the period. Stein and Spillman's representation of their four significant romantic themes of heightened individuality, nature, mystery and spiritual salvation with their attendant metaphors of *The Wanderer*, *Lonely Forest*, *The Night*, and *Yearning for Peaceful Death* is convincing, clear and concise, and they frequently capture the essence that these images are intended to convey with well-chosen examples drawn from poetry. They also describe the revival of ancient and Middle Age ideals, the importation of English and Oriental literature and the rise of nationalistic and folk culture, all important ingredients of the romantic movement.

There is one crucial facet of romanticism, that of *Angst*, which seems to be conspicuously missing from the discussion of romanticism. Specifically, images of the tortured soul, represented by the element of the Gothic, and terror and guilt would have added a vivid dimension to their overview. Stein and Spillman come close to this aspect of romanticism by naming "Peaceful Death" as an important metaphor, but only as a "release from life's complexities and a serene return to nature's peaceful domain" rather than that it often is the only, and ultimate, option that can stop the unbearable pain of daily life (p. 12). The important implication, of course, is that only self-induced release, suicide, can bring an end to such pain. Discussed in such a light, the authors' mention of Goethe's "Sorrows of Young Werther" would have imparted a more dramatic feeling for the tumultuous times. And by acknowledging this aspect of romanticism a flood of related topics could be touched upon, such as the awakening of the self or the unimaginable, subjects one encounters in poems such as "Edward, Edward" (whose verses lead one to the shocking realization that the protagonist's hands are blood-covered not due to killing his hawk or steed, but from taking his own father's life, and that this terrible deed was done at his mother's behest), and Goethe's *Harfenspieler* poems (whose subject, the harper, is an early manifestation of the Wanderer, tortured by an invisible demon, guilt, a double-edged agony he seeks to escape at the same time that he feels it is deserved: for his se-

cret shame is that while a man of the cloth he fathered a child, Mignon – by his own sister, no less). It is these more passionate aspects of romanticism that are missing from the book's introduction to the topic, aspects which would underscore the fact that the period is marked by extremes of emotion.

Chapter Two, "Devices and Delights in Poetry" presents a fine introduction to the ways in which the tenets of Romanticism manifest themselves in the poetry of the time. The chapter's introduction serves a dual purpose, first, to instill in students the need to systematically study the poetry of the songs that they sing and second, to allay potential fears of their being ill equipped to undertake such a study. Stein and Spillman "offer such individuals a primer of common poetic usage written expressly for the study of German Romantic poetry" (p. 20). The chapter is divided into two parts, "Poetic Content" and "Poetic Form."

"Poetic Content" explores "rhetorical devices such as imagery, metaphor, simile, symbol and irony . . . as well as more general concerns of poetic progression, *Stimmung*, persona and mode of address." Stein and Spillman assume that students have little background in such matters; thankfully they provide clear and simple definitions of the most important rhetorical devices found in poetry. For example, while asserting that the concepts of image and symbol "refer essentially to the same thing, a symbolic representation often [being] more abstract" they distinguish between them by the helpful example: "while the songs of birds generally connote the image of lively nature sounds, the nightingale's song is an actual symbol of the lament for lost love" (p. 22). While one can always challenge fine points such as the possibility that symbols are a subset of images in that the symbol is a *specific* rather than necessarily *abstract* entity, their definitions are excellent, and, like their discussion of German Romanticism, one is hard pressed to cite another source that has such a wealth of information in such an accessible format.

"Poetic Progression," defined as a process that "trace[s] the poet's thoughts or feelings as they evolve over time within one general span or continuum . . . involves tracing some

form of activity or movement . . . from one place to another. . .” (p. 26). Most importantly, an emotional or psychological transformation will necessarily accompany such activity. Making students aware of these possibilities is commendable given that such knowledge is potentially applicable to performance. For example, their comparison of Heine’s *Wenn ich in deine Augen seh* and *Ich hab’ im Traum geweinet* is particularly illuminating because they combine the localized rhetorical, expressive devices such as irony with the more encompassing and teleological process of poetic progression. After demonstrating that “while the first Heine poem conveys a progression from nurturing love to bitter despair, this second poem progresses from the clear pain of lost love to a more complex pain of love fulfillment” they conclude that: “In both poems, the poetic progression captures the poem’s essential message without conveying every image of the poem. Thus, the notion of poetic progression offers performers an approach to poetry that differs dramatically from immersion into details of poetic expression. . . . The two approaches, are in fact, complementary: once performers master the details of poetic meaning, the singer and pianist can place the poetic complexities into their poetic progression: the overarching temporal experience that makes the poem and its setting a coherent whole” (p. 27).

The terms that the authors address under the rubric “Poetic Form,” which occupies the second half of the chapter, include not only those typically associated with form, but also those which are rhythmic: meter and rhyme scheme, stanzaic division and line integrity (enjambment and caesura). Their examples of assonance and alliteration, meter, and scansion which clarify the definitions are particularly good.

The reader understands initially why the authors segregate the topics of poetry and performance implications; this approach facilitates a focused and detailed exposition. But given the multifarious nature of art song as a confluence of language and music, whose union projects textual images and meaning, such a segregation necessarily results in missed opportunities to present cross-dimensional interpretations. For

example, in their discussion of Schumann's *In der Fremde* (under "Poetic Meter") Stein and Spillman make the point that the poetic lines vary in length in the first stanza (5+3) but are consistent in the second (4+4) and that "[t]he effect of this change . . . reflects the overall meaning of the poem: the nature images of trouble . . . and the poet's brooding of stanza 1 are captured rhythmically by the uneven lines, while the change to thoughts of death's peacefulness in stanza 2 is reflected rhythmically in a more even pattern of line lengths" (p. 41). While this interpretation is perfectly acceptable concerning only the poetic domain, such segregation forbids them from comparing Schumann's setting which essentially *reverses* Eichendorff's organization. Schumann cast the first strophe in two clear four-measure hypermeasures, but rendered the second strophe in irregular six-measure units, perhaps seeking to underscore the temporal unfolding implicit in the poem. The first stanza recalls the past and, since it is reflective, is presented as a complete, well-formed entity. The second stanza, on the other hand, looks to the uncertain future – the protagonist's eventual death – and is unpredictable in the same way that the six-measure phrase lengths are.

Further, the authors provide two interpretations of the scansion of the problematic line *Da ruhe ich auch*:

	<i>Da</i>	<i>ruhe</i>	<i>ich</i>	<i>auch</i>
(a)		/	/	/
(b)	/	/		/

and state: "in (a), the spondee of the second foot emphasizes 'ich,' focusing on the poet yearning for peaceful death and in (b) the spondee emphasis is on 'Da' the actual place of salvation; either interpretation works fine" (p. 42). In spite of the fact that one might question the validity of interpretation b, one must look to the music, for simple metrical accent rarely tells the whole story. Schumann's setting highlights the word *auch*, and by doing so, forms the link between the first and second stanzas as it both harks back to the protagonist's dead parents and looks forward to his own death. Further, the

first chromatic pitch in the vocal line, A \sharp , occurs on this word, and functions at the deep middleground as a chromatic passing note that links the *Kopftón*, A, which supports the drama of the past, with the subdominant scale step and the structural upper neighbor B, which aligns with the tragic future. See Example 1.

In a commendable effort to bridge the gulf between the English-speaking singer and the German language, Stein and Spillman have provided their own translations of the poetic texts. “Because of our concern for precise understanding of the German language, Appendix I of this text uses *literal* translations . . . Our translations in Chapters One and Two, however, do alter word order a bit; this gives a more refined translation where the alignment of German word and vocal line are not at issue” (p. 241, note 32). The authors likely have come across more than their share of flowery translations having little to do with the meaning of the original text, translations perpetuated in sources such as G. Schirmer and Dover reprints, and have moved to the opposite end of the continuum by providing a word-for-word rendering. We have all been to recitals where it is clear that the singer has taken the requisite diction classes yet has no idea what any of the words mean. But a translation is only as good as its context; that is, the translation of an entire line must be idiomatic to the point of making sense, or its usefulness is questionable. And the problematic interface between German and English grammars – particularly with verb placement – demands some linguistic license. Translating the German line *Durch Feld und Wald zu schweifen* (from Goethe’s *Der Musensohn*) as “Through field and forest to roam” (p. 35) is awkward, and, however literal the translation of the individual words, does not replicate the meaning of the original German sentence. This is particularly disturbing when, for example, the text to such a well-known song as “The Trout” is translated as:

Example 1

The image displays a musical score for a piano accompaniment, consisting of two staves (treble and bass clefs) and a series of annotations below. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 2/6, 5/9, 10, 13, 15, and 19 circled. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Annotations include 'N' (Neapolitan), 'chrom.' (chromatic), 'PT' (Pedal Point), and 'coda'. Below the score, a series of chord symbols are provided: i , (III) , II^7 , iv , 7 , V , and i . The score is annotated with various musical notations and symbols, including measure numbers (2/6, 5/9, 10, 13, 15, 19), time signatures (3/4), and dynamic markings (N, chrom., PT, coda). The score is written on two staves (treble and bass clefs) and includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Below the score, a series of chord symbols are provided: i , (III) , II^7 , iv , 7 , V , and i .

<i>Ein Fischer mit der Rute</i>	A fisherman with his rod
<i>Wohl an dem Ufer stand,</i>	Indeed on the bank stood,
<i>Und sah's mit kaltem Blute,</i>	And saw it with cold blood,
<i>Wie sich das Fischlein wand.</i>	How the fish turned.
<i>Solang' dem Wasser Helle,</i>	As long as to the water's clarity,
<i>So dacht' ich, nicht gebricht,</i>	So thought I is not broken,
<i>so fängt er die Forelle</i>	Then catches he the trout
<i>Mit seiner Angel nicht.</i>	With his hook not (p. 278)

At best this sort of translation is clunky, at worst it misrepresents a poem's meaning, as in *Die Mainacht*, where "*Wann, o lächelndes Bild, welches wie Morgenrot/Durch die Seele mir strahlt, find ich auf Erden dich?*" becomes "When, o smiling image, that like the sunrise/Through my soul streams finds, I on earth you?" (pp. 279-280). Furthermore, the authors' dedication to literalness is occasionally inconsistent. For example, "*Und nach dem Takte reget*" is translated "and keeps time" while the subsequent line, "*Und nach dem Mass beweget,*" becomes "And in rhythm moves" (*Der Musensohn*). The result is of dubious value to the student who owns a German-English dictionary. A greater service would have been to provide an accurate line-for-line translation, idiomatic to the second language, but sources already exist that accomplish the task, such as *The Ring of Words* and *Lieder Word by Word*. In precisely the same way that Stein and Spillman have separated, yet embraced, both specific poetic rhetorical representations and their larger roles in the poetic progression, so too should they define both the individual words and the meaning of the whole.

Part Two: The Language of the Performer

Part Two explores crucial performance topics upon which the singer most often focuses: texture, temporality and interpretation, which includes dynamics, timbre, vocal accent and a reprise of the concept of persona. Part Two thus prepares the student for more complex musical issues, linking the poetic concerns of Part One with the analytical topics in Part Three.

In fact, one might view the organization of the book's three parts as a continuum of performance issues that range from relatively objective to subjective, given that the first part of the book deals with textual description and the final part of the book deals with the merging of musical parameters including pitch and rhythm and their possible impact on the text.

Each topic is introduced in its most typical context. This provides an excellent standard by which to identify and measure the variations and deviations that follow. The authors make this important point: it is precisely the musical deviants to which we should attend, since they are often the very means by which images in the text are projected.³ Occasionally they extend the standard definition of a term in order to embrace larger issues. For example, while texture is defined as the "relative density or thickness . . . of a piece," (p. 59) it also includes vocal styles (including syllabic vs. florid text settings, legato and *parlando* vocal lines) and how a particular type of vocal sound would be more appropriate to a certain setting. On the other hand, textural issues that one would expect the authors to explore in detail, including counterpoint and registral distribution, are not dealt with in any thoroughgoing manner. This omission prevents them from discussing such issues as canonic interplay and direct textual lines that occur in songs like Brahms' *Wir Wandelten* and Schubert's *Tränenregen*.

Another interpretive difficulty that might have been fleshed out is that of notational markings, including slurs, accents, stresses and hairpins. These performance markings not only provide crucial clues to performance but often shed light on the composer's interpretation of the poem. Instead, the analytical observations in this category are restricted to generalizations. We are told, for example, that Schumann's *Die Rose, die Lilie* from *Dichterliebe* "help[s] dramatize the per-

³ This is the tack that Stein takes in her earlier book, *Hugo Wolf's Lieder and Extensions of Tonality* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985), a valuable source not only for its probing analyses of complex and exceptional songs, but also for its clear presentation of important theoretical issues.

former's need to interpret Schumann's notation carefully. . . . The [song] is over quickly, and it is easy for the pianist to overlook some of the notation's fine tuning" (p. 70). Reading on, we learn that performing the song at a breakneck tempo "results in a neglect of the poetry that is most unfortunate" (p. 70). We might expect some interpretation of the myriad articulative markings and guidance in understanding how, if performed, these markings will help to project the text correctly. What follows, however, is simply a table of the rhythms, rests, staccato markings and slurs, and an elliptical return to the warning that we should observe Schumann's markings and take the song at a reasonable tempo so that we can observe the various articulations.

There are two main problems that recur throughout the book: the first is unnecessary hyperbole and secondly, there is a serious lapse in pedagogical organization. Perhaps motivated by the desire not to overwhelm the student with a series of dry rules, dogmatic interpretations and clinical observations, the authors sometimes substitute platitudes and effusive prose for specific and applicable interpretive techniques. For example, asserting that "the relative freedom of scansion interpretation is similar to that of the musician facing certain performance decisions; the uncertainty of many options can be overcome by careful thought and hard work" (p. 39) might well dismay a student, imparting a fear that scansion interpretation may be painful and arbitrary. Occasionally the prose is clouded by the overuse of certain words; for example "rich" and "richness" occur far too often to be meaningful; more than half a dozen instances occur between pages 61 and 67 alone.

The second shortcoming – lapses in pedagogical organization – appears in various guises and extends into many areas of the book. Eichendorff's *In der Fremde* is promoted as a poem that will "demonstrate a clear use of meter and substitution" (p. 40). But the authors immediately confess that "on first pass, the poem's meter seems ambiguous and contradictory" (p. 40). They go on to illustrate forms of metric confusion, and to "demonstrate how scansion of complex meter is worked through" (p. 41) – all this, before giving what turns

out to be a very good introductory set of criteria for determining poetic meter.

Concerns regarding ordering are made more obvious by contradictions which impede the generally smooth flow of the book's arguments. For example, *Gesang Weylas* is introduced by the statement that "every note is a reflection of the poetic text. . . . [T]he vocal line is a virtual study of precise text declamation. Wolf emphasizes the important words or metrically stressed syllables in four customary ways" (pp. 72-73). Following the four techniques that Wolf employs in marking important words (including metric placement on strong beats, agogic accent, syncopation and register) the authors begin their analysis by pointing out Mörike's stressed words, but then counter their earlier point of Wolf's sensitivity to text issues by saying that he "initially emphasizes other crucial words" (p. 73). Without reconciling this contradiction, they close their analysis with this arguably gratuitous summary: "because Wolf's notation can seem to lack any logic or pattern, many singers may initially experience this vocal line with awkwardness and discomfort. However, with careful study, the wisdom of vocal rhythms and their notation will emerge alongside the meaning of the poetry, and Wolf's expert text declamations will become a source of great significance and pleasure" (p. 73).

The reader may feel a bit disoriented when he comes upon the title of Chapter Five, "Elements of Interpretation," as the two previous chapters dealt with texture and temporality, issues explicitly connected with musical interpretation. The first sentence of this chapter states that the authors will now "focus upon those musical elements that help shape the musical expressivity of *Lieder*" (p. 81). This is puzzling since concepts such as rubato, which the authors state is "an essential interpretive agent in most nineteenth-century music" (p. 69) have already been taken up in the preceding chapter.

Conversely, one of the most egregious organizational problems takes the form of deferral; the reader is too often made to wait for satisfactory definitions until some later point in the book. For example, at the beginning of Chapter Five,

the authors say: “We preface our examination of tempo considerations with a caution. . . . The terms will be defined more precisely in Chapter Eight. . . . It is important to realize here that a potential confusion exists in using this terminology when discussing performance and analysis” (p. 69). In fact, there are sections in the book where such deferral occurs repeatedly, such as the following examples, all within five pages: “In tonal terms, progression . . . result[s] in a tonicization or modulation, two terms that will be explained in precise detail in the later section. . . .”; “we’ll discuss tonal polarity in the summary of mode and tonality later,” “the use of first inversion creates a subtle metric tension that will be described later, and “we’ll discuss the nuances of such phrase shaping more fully in Chapter Eight” (pp. 106-110). The most blatant organizational problem concerns the authors’ common procedure of beginning an analysis with a formal description of the song (e.g., as they do in Chapter Four with Schumann’s *Widmung*, Wolf’s *Gesang Weylas* and Schubert’s *Der Neugierige*) when musical form is not taken up until the penultimate chapter of the book. This is particularly counter-intuitive given that the book begins with a study of poetic form.

Part Three: The Language of Music

The five final chapters focus on theory and analysis, including common-practice harmony and its transformation during the nineteenth century (Chapter Six); melodic, linear and motivic analysis (Chapter Seven); an introduction to rhythm and meter (Chapter Eight); and form (Chapter Nine). The final chapter (Chapter Ten) examines the interactions of these issues by comparing different settings of the same text. Since it is in Part Three that the authors most thoroughly treat performance implications and present their most detailed text-music interpretations, I shall explore it in some detail.

Chapter Six opens with a very concise (just over one page) overview of tonic-dominant polarity, cadence (including the assertion that “knowing basic cadence patterns in all keys

is a prerequisite to be able to sight-read new repertory effectively and perform any piece with complete mastery of harmonic articulation” (pp. 105-106)), and the general affect created by closure (“The motion toward closure or the final tonic is one of the abiding features of tonal music, and when this directional impulse is understood and felt by a performer, it can be transmitted to an audience with interpretive nuance.” (p. 106)). These introductory, more global tonal issues are followed by a significant leap in complexity when Stein and Spillman take up the issues of prolongation vs. progression and structural vs. embellishing pitches. With no preliminary examples to help the reader ease into these relatively abstract concepts, the authors begin:

A structural pitch, chord, or tonality is heard as self-contained and unambiguously significant within the formal design of the piece, a musical space wherein the performer will feel stable and secure. In contrast, then, an embellishing pitch, chord, etc. functions as an ornament to the more structural elements to which the embellishment ultimately will resolve, either immediately or eventually over time (p. 106-107).⁴

Not only is the topic much more sophisticated than those in earlier chapters, but the language of the presentation is not consistent with the user-friendly tone in the rest of the book. The authors advise that “in those musical contexts where the structural vs. embellishing element is unclear, the performer can be guided by metric and phrase norms of musical syntax” (p. 107). Schubert’s *An den Mond* “demonstrate[s] the issues that arise in determining and articulating structural vs. embellishing elements,” but for some reason the score is not

⁴ Their description of prolongation as “impl[ying] a form of musical stasis, of standing still over time . . .” is problematic in that it may well give the novice the skewed sense that prolongation is a superfluous and even undesirable musical phenomenon, rather than being crucial to the unfolding of musical ideas in time.

given and the analysis, which progresses measure-by-measure, simply states what is and what is not structural. Without a set of analytical criteria the student might have considerable trouble keeping up with the authors' numerous and detailed descriptions: ". . . the RH piano line moves parallel to the bass . . . and in contrary motion to the bass Melodic tonic pitches E and C# are structural, while B, D, and F# are embellishing: B is N to A and C#, and D is N to C#; D also functions as P between E and C#" (p. 108). Discussion of "prolongation vs. progression" unfolds similarly; again, without the visual aid of annotated scores, their prose description of pitch details will be at best difficult to follow, and at worst, something that students will just not read. Given the important role hierarchy plays in making interpretive decisions – a fact that they acknowledge – it needs to be explored more clearly and thoroughly

The authors intensify their efforts to integrate analysis and performance issues in these final chapters, cautioning that without a proper analysis of the work at hand, a student's performance will greatly suffer in "vitality and focus," and promising that if s/he does as advised "the performance will have conviction and even panache" (p. 107). Based on this statement, the reader understandably looks forward to examples of the sort of probing text-music analysis that will improve his/her performance. But despite their assertion that deeper analysis will or can affect deeper musicality, they fail to show that and how this actually comes about. The reader instead encounters comments that are amorphous and whose purpose and musical value is open to question:

When performers consider all sections of a piece to be in separate but equal keys, the performance will not convey the relative weights of different keys and the shaping force and poetic expressiveness of tonal design. Thoughtful analysis, as conveyed in part by careful use of RNs, will enable the performer to place the tonal hierarchy within a work's *large-scale* tonal design (p. 112).

Such advice is likely to intimidate the student. It seems necessary first to distinguish between analysis that informs the *performer* and analysis that informs the *performance*. Unquestionably, analysis is crucial to understanding the ways in which a musical work is organized. I refer not to those organizing principles that may instinctively be understood and projected by the performer, such as hypermetric organization, structural downbeats, and the drive inherent in an embellished stepwise line toward its goal, but to those operating at deeper levels of the structure, like motivic parallelism, discoverable through no other means than thorough analysis of the score, and which, alas, are not very likely to have a demonstrable impact on one's performance. Reflecting on the authors' promise that doing a "thoughtful analysis" will enable the performer to project deep-level tonal relationships, one is compelled to ask: in what tangible and musically convincing sense may knowing that a single large-scale tonal progression unifies a Brahms song impact its performance? This is the sort of question the authors skirt; instead they provide a tonal map of the song, which may be helpful to the *performer*, but not to the *performance*. The closest Stein and Spillman come to supporting their claim that analysis will improve performance is to say:

performers sensitive to tonal flux know the formal effects of both departure from and returning to the original tonic. Using a variety of performance techniques, for example, those of rubato, touch, and timbre, both singer and pianist can convey the different psychological states of temporarily leaving the tonic and returning for closure (p. 113).

In the end, one might argue that most interpretive decisions depend upon the *surface* of the music. Clearly a performer should not contradict this surface in some misguided attempt to project the underlying structure; that would be patently unmusical. Of course Stein and Spillman are not the first writers to sink into this analytical quagmire, nor will they be the last. Given that this is not the proper forum to weigh the

success of the performance and analysis movement, suffice it to say that much work remains to be done if a truly convincing connection between the two is to be forged. I would be loath to admonish the performer for whom theory and analysis remain a mystery, and yet whose performance can move the listener's very soul.

The descriptions of "Tonality and Mode" in Chapter Six and the latter's impact on standard tonal relations in the nineteenth century is very useful, and the organization into parallel major/minor and relative major/minor pairs is clear and accessible. The examples which follow, including Schubert's *Wasserfluth*, *Erster Verlust*, and *Schäfers Klagelied*, are excellent. Stein and Spillman dramatically connect the tonal excursions with the text's unfolding, the result of which makes clear that there are other more subtle tonal processes involved in text-music relations than simple tone painting. The authors' discussion of enharmonic puns captures the essence of nineteenth-century musical syntax: this provides the basis for some additional and very powerful text-music analyses. This section could have been extended to include close readings of songs which take advantage of pitch-class associations, such as Schubert's *Der Neugierige*, *Meeres stille*, and *Die Liebe hat gelogen*.⁵ Chapter Six closes with a discussion of "Harmonic and Tonal Innovation." The authors explore chromatic third relations, directional tonality and implicit tonality, each of which is well defined.

Chapter Seven, "Melody and Motive" presents three analytical techniques. The first, entitled "melodic overview," "establishes the melody's context by defining its overall structure and relation to the poem, the tonal framework and melody's harmonic support, and the elements that make it unique" (p. 141). This is consistent with the authors' intention of introducing ideas as they traditionally function and then pointing out deviations. One could argue, however, with

⁵ Stein has already published a thoughtful and penetrating analysis of this song in "Schubert's '*Die Liebe hat gelogen*': The Deception of Mode and Mixture," *Journal of Musicological Research*, 9/4 (1989): 109-131:

the particulars of that which they consider unique and expressive about the melody in their example, Schubert's *Litanei*: namely, leaps of thirds, uniform dynamics, and a line that focuses on G encircled by lower and upper neighbors. What *does* in fact seem remarkable is the static nature of the melody and the effect of the ever-changing harmonies beneath it. Only later, under another topic, do the authors point out what is truly unique and expressive: the chromatic bass descent that begins against this static pitch and which is then mirrored in the piano's right hand.

The second technique, "linear analysis," seeks to uncover underlying melodic structure. This cursory look at reductive techniques focuses only on the primary tone and its prolongation, that is, the structure of the line. The authors' discussion of "hanging notes" and how they may be developed later in a song is very good; this is a topic which would seem to have considerable implications in the performance domain. The aim of the third technique, "motivic analysis," the authors say, is to "identify repetition of melodic ideas" (p. 152). Because such features are for the most part chromatic embellishments of non-structural events, this analytic focus is similar to Schoenberg's or Reti's, which concentrate on the surface design of the song, and is patently projectible in performance. The discussion of these three techniques concludes with how such analysis would impact a performance: "[U]ltimately, knowledge of these melodic relationships and registral connections strengthen the melodic expression of poetry, enabl[ing] both singer and pianist to perform melodies with greater clarity and conviction" (p. 148) but the claim is, unfortunately, not supported by specific examples.

Discussion of compound line is excellent; the authors' point that the disparate lines of a song are eventually interwoven in the subsequent stanzas is well taken. The performer may wonder exactly how, after identifying the independent melodic strands, s/he is supposed to project the contrapuntal structure. Stein and Spillman offer only a suggestion rather than the means to accomplish this: "[T]he singer can clarify

the compound line by using timbre and nuances of dynamics to connect the various registers over time” (p. 152).

The strongest analyses are found in the section that examines chromatic motives and enharmonic puns, but here again, attempts to connect analysis and performance sometimes fail to persuade. Motivic parallelism, for example, is introduced by statements of its usefulness to performers, but these are not specific; the reader is encouraged simply to “bring them out.” The model analysis, Schubert’s *Erlkönig*, is drawn from Stein’s very thoughtful article on this song.⁶ It is unfortunate that it must appear here in an abridged version since some of the power of her analysis is lost in the abbreviation. The numerous exercises that close this and the preceding chapter are generally very good, but some seem far too difficult. For example, Chapter Six’s first exercise essentially requires a student to undertake Schenkerian analysis; s/he is asked to determine the structural and embellishing roles of melodies and harmonies and to use Schenkerian notational symbols to illustrate his/her interpretation, tasks which most likely would daunt the student introduced to these topics only a few pages earlier. The first exercise in Chapter Seven asks the student to show “the compound structure of treble and bass, choose the primary tone and sketch structural and embellishing pitches. Slur embellishing to structural pitches and indicate underlying bass notes to all structural pitches” (p. 164). Again, it is difficult to imagine an undergraduate voice major with a background of perhaps but a single year of tonal harmony ably executing such exercises.

“Rhythm and meter” are the concern of Chapter Eight. One may question why this introductory chapter on temporal concepts follows one on pitch hierarchy and reduction when pitch analysis is dependent upon the rhythmic and metric context. The authors limit their discussion to foreground metric constructions, dismissing the notion of hypermeasure as being “beyond the scope of our review here” (p. 168), an

⁶ Deborah Stein, “Schubert’s ‘*Erlkönig*’: Motivic Parallelism and Motivic Transformation,” *19th Century Music* 13 (1989): 145-158.

unfortunate omission considering that it is a musical element that can bridge the significant gulf between analysis and performance by virtue of being performable. For example, in Schubert's song *Der Strom*, the unusual harmonic rhythm and phrase lengths fit together logically in a hypermetric analysis, and this approach may yield a far more dramatic reading of the song than a measure-to-measure analysis.

Some of the authors' discussion of text-music relations in Chapter Eight suffer as a result of skipped steps. For example, in their analysis of Schubert's *Du bist die Ruh*, one wonders exactly how "general tensions of uneven phrases [can] intensify [the] poet's expression of love" (p. 178). Such strained and superficial descriptions of text-music relations stem from a combination of hyperbole and organizational lapses alluded to above. Granted, there is a wide spectrum of potential text-music relationships ranging from the generic (e.g., the mood of the text is essentially accompanied by a corresponding tempo, mode, etc.) to the profound (e.g., textual images are mirrored in and sometimes even transfigured by the musical setting). The more subtle and elegant types of connections may be difficult for the average reader to appreciate, let alone to discover independently. Therefore, Stein and Spillman apparently chose to limit their interpretations to the more accessible types. In the process they sometimes divert attention away from other features in a song that may be more significant. For example, the authors focus on the dirge-like rhythm in Schubert's *Der Leiermann* from *Winterreise*, suggesting that "the steady eighth note progress of text underlines the poignancy of the organ-grinder's dire circumstances" (p. 60). While the general mood of Schubert's setting does convey a feeling of hopelessness, it is questionable that the steady pulse of eight notes is the sole conveyor of "dire circumstances." One might also credit the piano's droning, desolate fifths, each of which is preceded by agonizing tritone appoggiaturas, with creating the aura of exhaustion and hopelessness.

Perhaps more troubling is the authors' implication that certain musical figures convey specific, apparently encoded

images or emotions, as in the “mordents and trills [that] capture both the intensity of the poetry and the religious fervor that permeate the text” of Schubert’s *Ave Maria* (p. 61). The authors might have specified that in such cases they are describing their own interpretation and that theirs is but one of several possibilities, a general problem with anyone writing about text-music relations. Ascribing the “persona” in Brahms’ *Wie Melodien* as “expressive of contentment” (p. 94) is another case in which the authors assume but a single interpretation, for one could argue just the opposite: the poem and its musical setting are quite restless.⁷

One could argue that it is those analytical observations that are aligned with the poetic text that are most easily linked with performance, creating a sort of triangle of analysis, text-music relations, and performance implication. By not invoking such a construct, the authors occasionally miss opportunities to illustrate clear performance implications, as in their discussion of vocal timbre in Schumann’s *Mondnacht*. The song begins with the left and right hands of the accompanist in registral extremes. Rather than looking on the eventual reduction of registral extreme as an opportunity for text-music interpretation, they simply observe that “the dichotomy is repeated . . . with less extreme spacing but with similar effect” (p. 85). Schumann may have intended to use the piano as a simple means of preparing the upcoming kiss

⁷ The protagonist is actually in somewhat of a quandary, striving to discover the essence of that which moves the soul. To this end, he muses about which among the arts is best able to evoke emotion. In the first two stanzas he reflects on music and on prose, respectively, concluding that the first is too amorphous and the second too precise (*wie Frühlings-blumen blüht es und schwebt wie Duft dahin . . . Doch kommt das Wort und fasst es und Führt es vor das Aug*). In the climactic third stanza he comes to realize that it is verse (*Reime*), the fusion of musical rhythms and the sentiments of prose, that ultimately moves the emotions most. This deliberative process is reflected both motivically and tonally in Brahms’ setting as he tonicizes each pitch of a surface linear motive as the song unfolds. The order of development is from the outer edges of the motive inward; the arrival on the central pitch occurs at the moment of enlightenment in the poem.

of heaven and earth made possible by heaven's descent; that is, the initial low B and high C# are literally fused as a vertical second immediately before the relevant line of text is sung.

The final chapter, "Different Settings of a Single Text: Comparison of Compositional Style," draws together many of the concepts presented over the course of the book. The chapter opens with Schubert's, Schumann's and Wolf's settings of Goethe's *Wer sich der Einsamkeit ergibt*. The authors immediately launch into specific issues of rhyme scheme, the forms in which the composers cast the poem, and musical issues of linear descent and harmonic change rather than to set the timeless and tragic scene of incest, pregnancy, and the Harper's life of torturous guilt and wandering. Yet such knowledge of the devastating effects of the Harper's all-consuming guilt would surely impact a singer's conception of the song. Nor do they explore how each composer responded to this drama in his musical setting. Thus, there is no way to establish a basis of comparison for the three settings. Such a comparison could also lead the student to discover some striking similarities among them and to suggest connective interpretations. The section concerning implications for performers, in which the authors draw vivid correspondences between harmonic and poetic progressions, is the highlight of the chapter.

In this landmark publication, Stein and Spillman have certainly achieved their goal of "encourag(ing) a deepened sensitivity to both the music and the means of conveying poetic ideas through musical expression" (p. xiv). Historical context, poetic and musical form and their internal harmonic, melodic and motivic structures, the means by which analysis might inform performance and the problems involved in projecting this in performance are only some of the varied and thorny topics that they explore. Writing a book that embraces such disparate and difficult issues takes courage, and making the effort to reach a broad audience is commendable. Despite the weaknesses addressed above, *Poetry and Song* succeeds in many respects and will surely spawn lively exchanges between the performer, the pedagogue, the analyst and the historian.

As Elly Ameling notes, “*Lied* does cast a spell, and its ideas and desires do indeed speak to people everywhere” (p. xi). Undergirded by remarkable musical settings, these texts speak not only of love, nature, magic and spiritual ecstasy but also of alienation, infidelity, mortality and suicide. Thus they present a manifold view of human experience; knowing that such sentiments were central to life in the nineteenth century as in our own and are made permanent in a repertoire that can integrate ultimate suffering with sublime beauty is somehow reaffirming, for in order to live fully we must experience the entire range of such emotions.