THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEITMOTIF IN GERMAN ROMANTIC OPERA FROM WEBER TO WAGNER

A Thesis

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By

Patricia Ann (Miller) Dawson, B.S.

The Ohio State University

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Approved by

Robert Livingston

Adviser
Department of Music

PREFACE

This paper is a study of the development of the leitmotif. It traces changes in the purpose, extent, and method of the usage of dramatically significant recurring music during the early Romantic era. In the operas of Weber the presence of recurring motifs and themes represents only one of many ways of achieving unity and clarity of expression. By the time of Wagner's Ring Cycle there were definite rules set down by Wagner himself in his Opera and Drama, outlining the prescribed usage of the leitmotif. In other words, as Grout has stated, "Weber's use of the technique represents one stage of a process that reached its logical culmination in the thoroughly worked out leitmotif system of Wagner's music dramas."[1]

The analyses are based on piano scores. Thus, it is entirely possible that a motivic idea which was present in the original orchestral score might have been missed because it was not included in the piano score. This was not felt to be a serious problem, since the study aims at typical uses of motifs and makes no attempt at exhaustive cataloguing.

The author would like to express her gratitude for the thoughtful guidance of her adviser, Dr. Herbert Livingston.

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[1]Donald Jay Grout, A History of Western Music (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1960), 560.

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DEVELOPMENTS IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY OPERA LEADING TO THE USE OF THE LEITMOTIV

Donald Jay Grout has stated that

> at the beginning of the eighteenth century it is possible practically to perceive one single operatic type which dominated all western Europe except France--a type which, despite variations in different countries and composers, showed certain fundamental common features everywhere.[1]

This "single operatic type" could be called the "aria opera" which was made up of a series of arias divided by recitative passages. Each aria expressed a single mood, and these arias were intentionally static. Numerous aria types were defined by eighteenth century writers on opera.[2] Each aria was thematically independent of all the others in the opera. This style of opera did not involve the use of recurring music for dramatic effect.

Another important characteristic of the opera of this period was the subordinate position of the orchestra. It was used as an accompaniment to the singers and generally heard by itself only in ritornellos. When the orchestra was assigned more than routine accompaniment patterns the inter-play between voice and instruments was based on the

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[1]Donald Jay Grout, A Short History of Opera (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), I, 179.

[2]Grout, 185.

thematic material of the particular aria. The material of the ritornello also belonged to an individual aria, not to the opera.

In the latter part of the century opera composers seemed to be striving for "free, simple, unaffected expression of human feelings".[3] Gluck in his Orfeo, 1762, and Alceste, 1767, dispensed with unnecessary ornamentation in music and libretto. As a further step in Iphigenie en Aulide, 1774, there is a "greater rapidity and decisiveness of the action; it is a drama of events rather than a series of comparatively static pictures".[4] Gluck's last important work was Iphigenie en Tauride, 1779.

> Of the many fine details of the orchestral accompaniment in the course of the opera, one in particular may be mentioned: Orestes, left alone after his friend Pylades has been arrested by the temple guards, falls in a half stupor; in pitiable self-delusion he tries to encourage the feeling of peace which descends upon him momentarily, . . . But the accompaniment, with a subdued, agitated sixteenth-note reiteration of one tone, and with a sforzando accent at the first beat of every measure, betrays the troubled state of his mind, from which he cannot banish the pangs of remorse for his past crime. It is perhaps the first occurrence in opera of this psychological device of using the orchestra to reveal the inward truth of a situation.[5]

Mozart's approach to opera writing was very different from that of Gluck. "His genius and training led him to

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[3]Grout, 232.

[4]Grout, 240.

[5]Grout, 244.

conceive of opera as essentially a musical affair, like a symphony, rather than as a drama in which music was merely one means of dramatic expression."[6] He gave to the orchestra in his operas greater importance than it had had before.

Mozart was unsurpassed in his ability to understand the emotional content of the libretto and in his power to characterize musically both persons and situations. With these changes the stage was set for the appearance of a systematic use of recurring music for dramatic purposes.

The first significant example of leitmotiv opera was French--Mehul's Ariodant, performed in 1799. The opera has one basic motif which permeates the entire work. "The composer called it 'cri de fureur'--which, developed symphonically, dominates the whole lyric drama."[7]

The use of recurring music in opera was important for two reasons: first, it gave an opera further unity. Second, this device of recurring music added a new clarity of meaning to the drama, a means of expressing through the music what the text alone could not do so effectively. One method of obtaining unity was to use a chorus at the beginning of an opera and to repeat the same chorus at the close. Examples of this use may be found in Der Triumph der Liebe by

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[6]Grout, 275.

[7]Paul Henry Lang, Music in Western Civilization (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1941), 791.

Karl Stegmann, 1796, and Fr. H. Himmel's Die Sylphen, 1806.[8] Some composers used the same thematic idea to close one act and to open the next. Alfred Lortzing does this in Zar und Zimmermann. As a result of these uses of recurring music, the old established opera form began to change. As recurrent music was employed to a greater extent in an opera, the thematic boundaries between scenes and between acts began to break down. Gaps in the musical-dramatic movement from start to finish of the opera began to be filled. In 1778, in Georg Benda's Der Holzhauer, a recurring motif is used to represent an emotional situation.[9] Appearing the same year was Rosamunde by Anton Schweitzer in which there is a recurring musical idea which serves as a remembrance of a person in the opera.[10] In Mozart's Le nozze de Figaro, 1786, Figaro in Act II repeats twelve measures of the Cavatina number III, "Se vuol ballare".[11]

During this period from about 1778 to 1820 many other German composers used the device of recurring music. A few of them were:

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[8]Karl Wörner, "Beiträge zur Geschichte des Leitmotivs in der Oper," Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft, XIV (1931), 151-ff.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

Abt Vogler in Lampedo, 1779. This was the first example of the systematic use of the leitmotif in Germany. Vogler used a recurring theme for the funeral march and another to represent love.[12]

Beethoven in Fidelio, 1805. A theme from the first Finale is repeated later in the opera.

Joseph Weigl in Schweitzerfamilie, 1812.

Louis Spohr in Faust, 1813. The witches have a characteristic theme.

Konradin Kreutzer in Der Taucher, 1813. The scream of Charybdis is musically characterized.

E.T.A. Hoffmann in Undine, 1814. The music heard in the Finale, number 14, when Undine disappears, recurs when she reappears.

Franz Schubert in Vierjährigen Posten, 1815. An expanded memory motif is used.

Louis Spohr in Zémire und Azor, 1819. A sequence of chords is repeated.

Thus, by the time of Weber the use of recurring music was not new. Methods of use were many and varied, but a

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[12]Ibid. Each of the seven examples following the Vogler example was also located in the Wörner article.

definite tendency toward more and more use of such recurrences becomes obvious in German opera from this time on.

> It is interesting to note that as early as the second decade of the 19th century composers were well aware of the important development implicit in the novel device later known as "Leitmotiv". This new technique, already employed by Mehul at the turn of the century, first appeared as a consciously applied structural device in Hoffman's Undine and Spohr's Faust (both 1816) and was immediately commented upon by Weber with great critical perspicacity. Hoffman's work seemed to him "all of one piece," while he praised Faust because "aptly and accurately arranged, a few melodies thread themselves quietly through the whole fabric and give it inner cohesion . . ."[13]

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[13] Georg Kaiser (ed.), Sämtliche Schriften von Carl Maria von Weber, quoted in Ernest Sanders, "Oberon and Zar und Zimmermann," Musical Quarterly, XL (October, 1954), 522-523.

CHAPTER I

RECURRING MUSIC FOR DRAMATIC EFFECT IN THE OPERAS OF CARL MARIA VON WEBER

The operatic works of Carl Maria von Weber are an important milestone in the history of the German Romantic opera. In his later works, Weber was influenced by Hoffman's Undine and Spohr's Faust. He found in their use of recurring themes and orchestration a basis for his new romantic opera.

The three operas for which Weber is best known are Der Freischütz, Euryanthe, and Oberon, and they will be examined to show Weber's contribution to the development of the leitmotivic treatment of recurring motifs.

Weber made use of recurring music for dramatic purposes in his other operas as well. In 1810, Sylvana was finished. Weber musically characterized one person in this drama, Krips the count's squire, who is a cocky fellow, and the music he sings demonstrates this as much as the words to which it is set. This musical characterization is part of the idea which was later called leitmotif.[1]

Abu Hassan, 1811, a one-act comic opera, also reflects Weber's interest in recurring motifs. The first theme of

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[1]William Saunders, Weber (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1940), 183.

the overture returns in the first duo and again in the final chorus.[2]

Following the completion of Der Freischütz in 1820, Preciosa was written. Saunders, Weber's biographer, states that "the Leitmotiv principle is here utilized in its crudest and most obvious manner."[3] One motif was used and repeated to characterize a dramatic situation. Another motif was used to represent love.

Der Freischütz, Euryanthe, and Oberon were written between 1820 and 1826. Weber was not alone in his use of recurring music during these years. Karl Wörner gives an extensive listing of examples of recurring music in Romantic opera, and among these examples are:

Joseph Weigl's Baals Sturz, 1820. The words, "Nun seh' ich, oh Freunde, die Bäume grunend beide mit goldner Frucht geschmückt" from Act II are repeated with the same music at the end of Act III.[4]

Franz Schubert's Fierrabras, 1823.

Louis Spohr's Berggeist, 1825. There is music characterizing the Berggeist.

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[2]Karl Wörner, "Beiträge zur Geschichte des Leitmotivs in der Oper," Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft, XIV (1931), 151 ff.

[3]Saunders, 212.

[4]Wörner, 151 ff.

Felix Mendelssohn's Hochzeit des Camacho, 1827.

A repetition of the chorus rounds out the opera, occurring first at the beginning and then at the end of the work.

In each of these examples a musical motif is repeated with dramatic significance at least once during the action of the opera.

Der Freischütz - 1820

The plot of Der Freischütz is founded on an old forest legend of a demon who tries to get huntsmen to exchange their souls for his magic bullets which never miss their mark. A ranger of Duke Ottokar of Bohemia named Caspar has already sold himself to the devil, Samiel, and needs to find a new victim or give himself over to the forces of evil. He settles on Max, who is a candidate for head ranger of the Duke and is very depressed over his difficult competition. He manages to interest Max, and they meet at the Wolf's Glen to cast the magic bullets.

Agatha and Max are to be married following the shooting contest, and only because of a bridal wreath given her by a holy hermit does Agatha escape death from the final magic bullet which Samiel directs her way. So Caspar is taken by the wrathful Samiel instead; Max confesses his guilt and is penitent. He is finally forgiven, but has to

serve a year of probation before he may take the post of head ranger or marry Agatha.

William Saunders, in his biography of Carl Maria von Weber, states that the leitmotif present in Weber's preceding works was strangely absent in Der Freischütz.[5] There are, however, several recurring motifs. Siegfried Goslich calls the principle motif in the opera the "Samielmotiv".[6] Emile Haraszti refers to it as the Gaspard (Caspar) motif.[7] Whether the motif in question is that of Samiel or Caspar is of little consequence. The "forces of evil" might better describe the motif, the evil of which Caspar is the instrument and Samiel instrumental.

The overture to Der Freischütz, as was common in opera at this time, is based on thematic material which occurs during the course of the opera. Thus, it is not surprising

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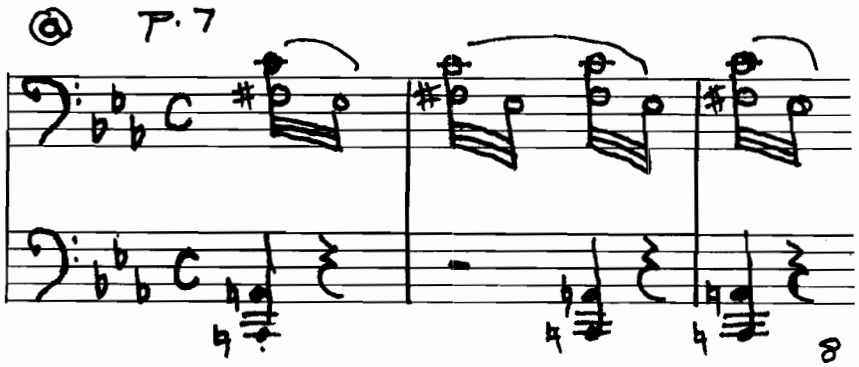
[5]Saunders, 201.

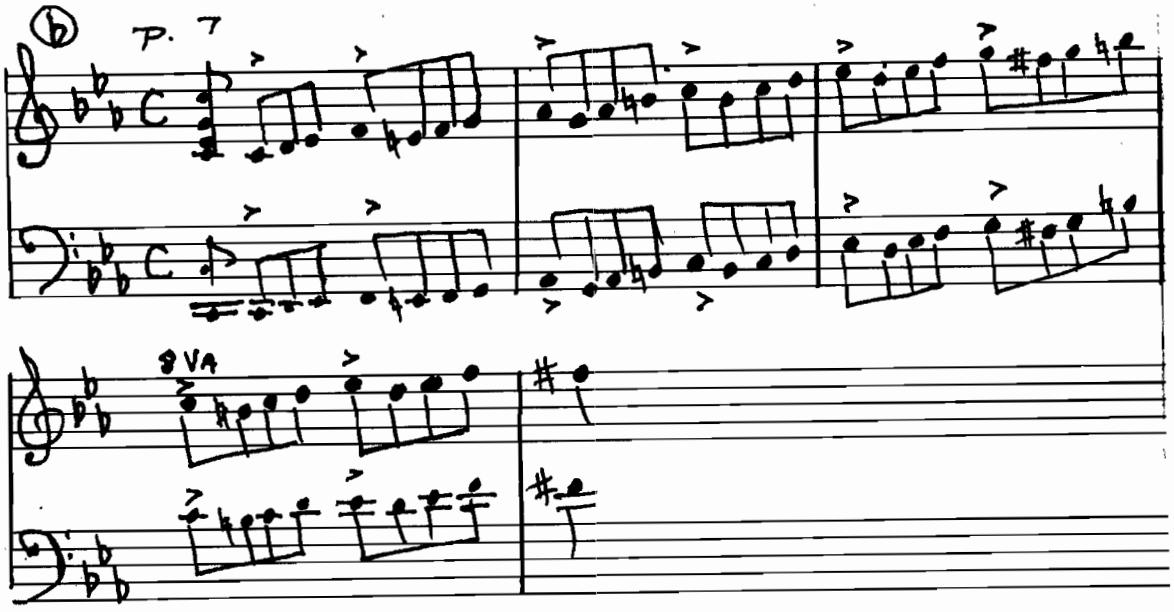
[6]Siegfried Goslich, "Leitmotiv," Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, ed. F. Blume, IIX (1949--), 587.

[7]Emile Haraszti, "Le problème du leit-motiv," Revue Musicale, IV (August-October, 1923), 46.

that we first come into contact with the motif of the "forces of evil" in the overture.



The music of Example b represents Max's despair, fear, and torment, which provide an opening for Caspar and his evil plan.



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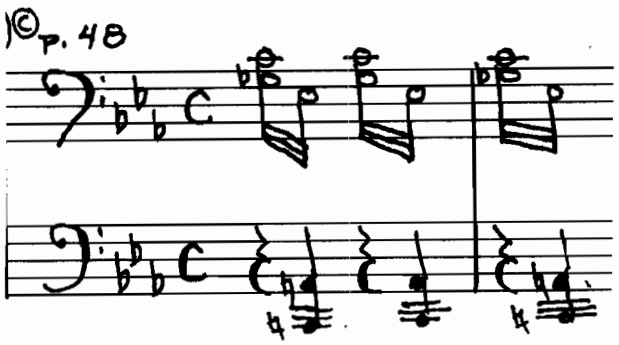
[8]Carl Maria von Weber, Der Freischütz . . . , Artur Bodanzky (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc.). All page numbers for musical examples cited refer to this edition.

The "forces of evil" motif follows the motif of Max's despair which recurs several times. All other recurring motifs or themes in the opera will be discussed individually, but since these two seem inseparable musically and dramatically they will be discussed together. The motif of Max's desperation was followed immediately by the forces of evil motif in the overture. An even firmer association is made between the two motifs when they make their first appearance in the action of the opera together, the forces of evil motif preceding Max's motif this time.

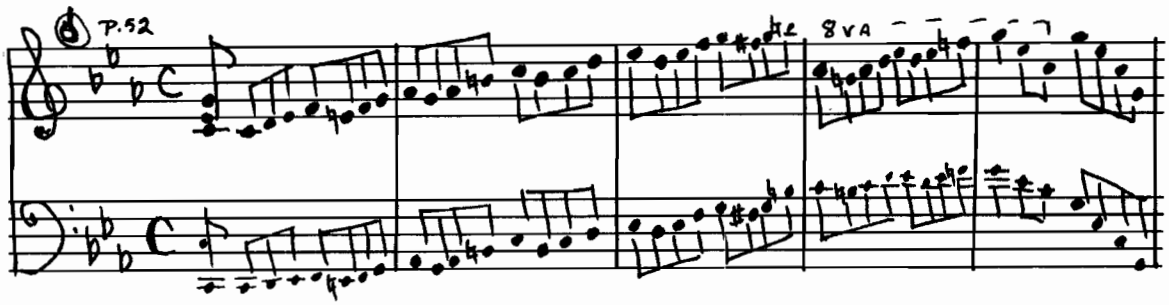
Weber introduces the forces of evil motif at his first musical opportunity (Samiel's appearances up to this time have been only in the spoken dialogue) in the scene where Max, alone and dejected, is joined by Samiel, Act I.



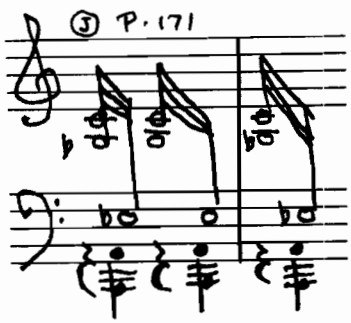
Max seems to feel his presence, "What evil power is closing round me?" though he does not actually see Samiel. The fact that Max is more vulnerable at this time of despair is musically indicated by the contact maintained between the two motifs. Caspar's aria "Schweig, schweig! damit dich Niemand

warnt" urges Samiel to help him "when he (Max) despaireth." This is a further dramatic association between the two ideas--Max's despair and Samiel's evil.

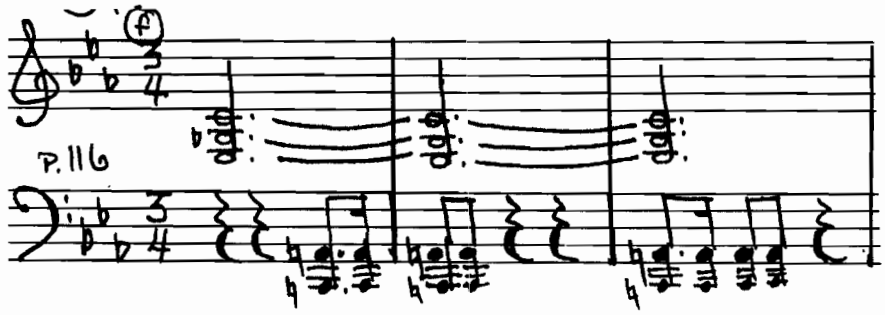
As Max continues his lament the motif of desperation and failure appears in the orchestra.



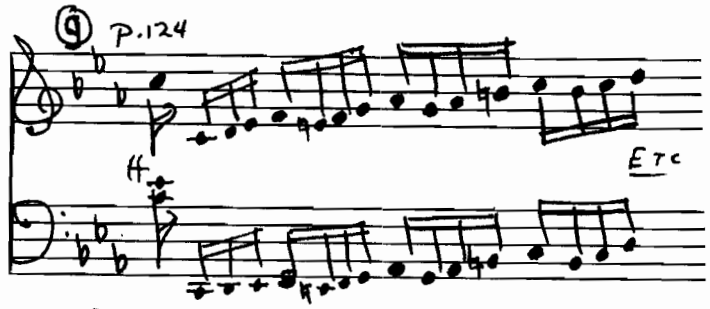
The next appearance of the forces of evil motif is in the Wolf's Glen as Caspar calls for Samiel to appear to help him.



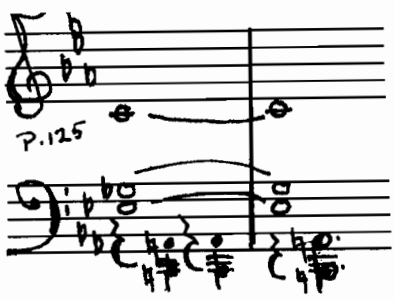
The same idea in slight variation, identical chordally, varied rhythmically, appears as Samiel pronounces the curse of the freeshot.

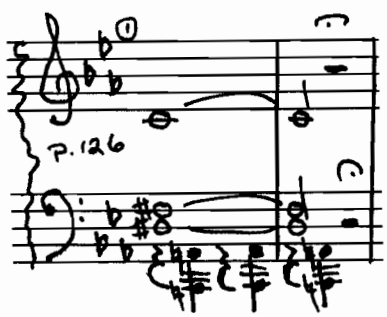


During this same scene the motif of Max's desperation reappears when Caspar causes a vision of Agathe plunging into an abyss to appear to Max.

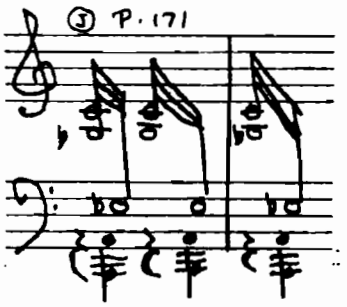


In his desperation Max makes his final decision to go through with his deal with Caspar. The forces of evil motif recurs again as Caspar calls on him to aid him in his evil deed of casting the seven magic bullets.

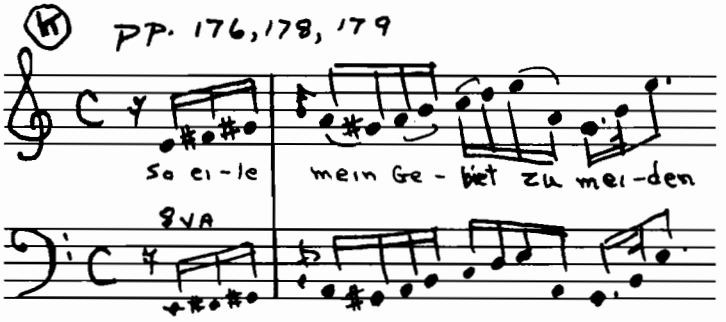




The last appearance of the forces of evil motif occurs when Samiel comes for Caspar's soul.

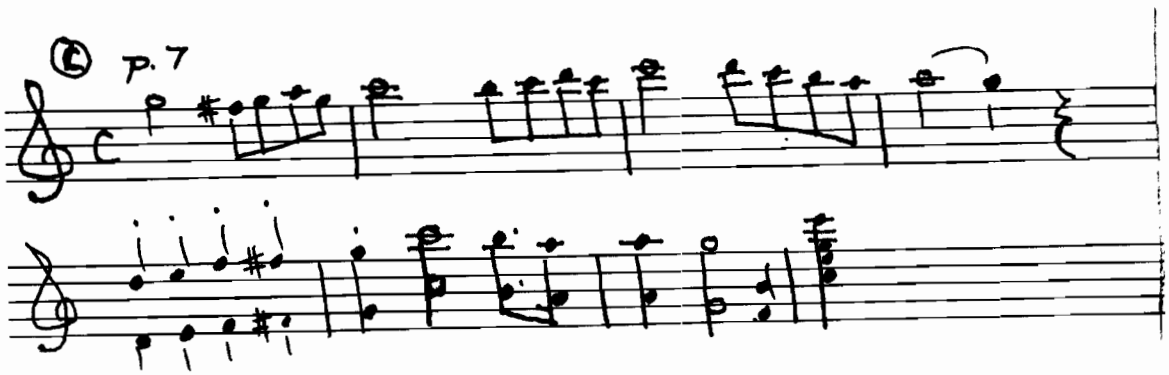


And now for the last time is heard Max's theme of complete dismay and regret as Ottokar banishes him from love, country, and joy.

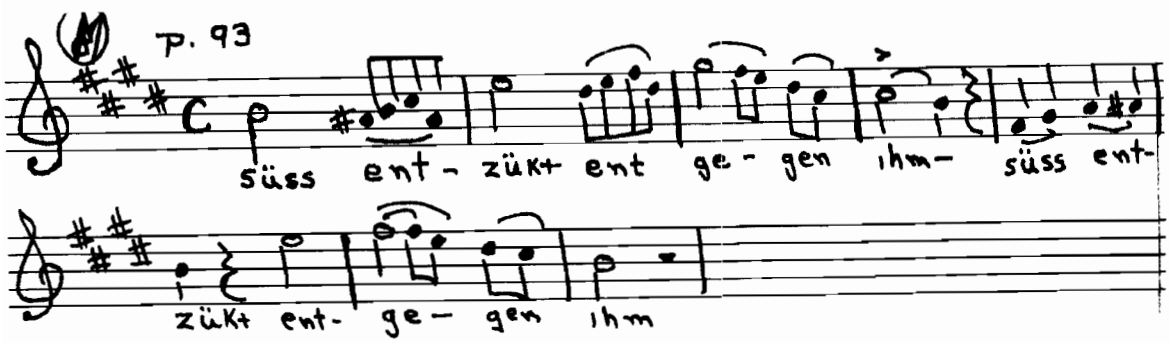


This occurrence of the motif in the vocal line is the only example of any motif other than that of the "forces of good" discussed below appearing anywhere but in the orchestra. The motif disappears with the forgiveness of the hermit.

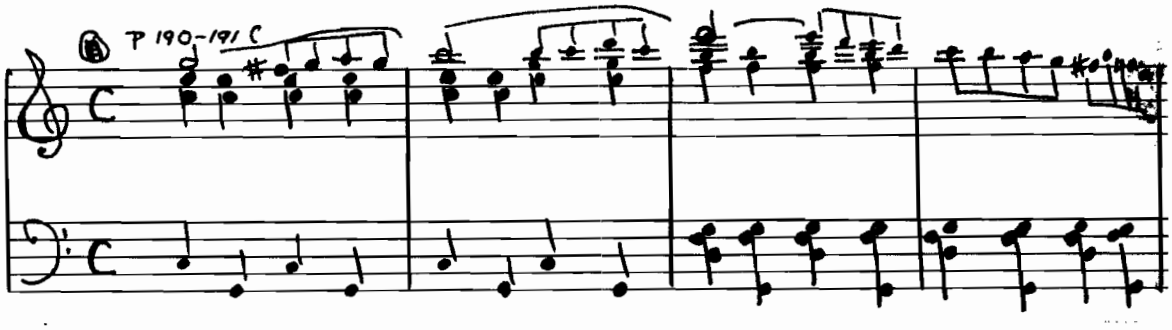
The third example of recurring music of major importance is a theme that permeates the whole overture and finally closes it brilliantly and triumphantly.



This theme is of great importance, and the fact that it is heard last and most frequently in the overture is indicative. Within the opera, it is heard only twice. It appears first when Agathe believes that Max has been successful in his practice shots the day before the contest itself, and she is rejoicing in his victory, praising heaven, and exulting in their coming joy at last.



When Max returns he reveals the terrors to come. It is only after Max is forgiven his yielding to evil and in this way the forces of evil are destroyed for him, that this theme again rings out, expressing the general joy of all and especially of Agathe and Max.



This theme can be called the "forces of good" which ultimately rule out despair, fear, and all Samiel's opportunities to influence Max. It is the only theme in the opera which always (except in the overture) begins in the vocal line. The theme resembles not so much the Wagnerian leitmotif, which is usually a "small, flexible figure designed for frequent detailed reference and for spinning into a complicated symphonic web", but rather the recurring theme of Verdi, which is generally a "climactic repetition of fuller phrases" for stronger emphasis.[9] Such a theme would lose its effect if used too often in the course of the opera.

Another motif from earlier in the opera recurs in the scene in the Wolf's Glen. The motif appears first in Caspar's drinking song, "Hier im ird'schen Jammerthal", immediately following his words, "Ruddy Bacchus be my God, Lord of every nation."

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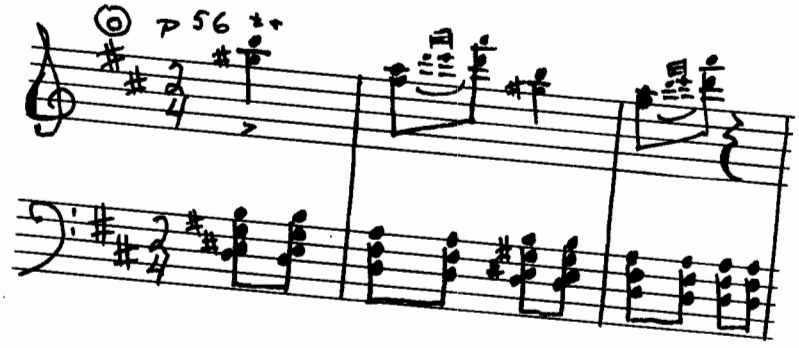
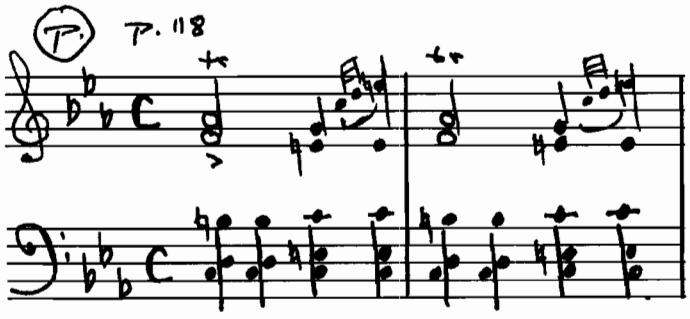
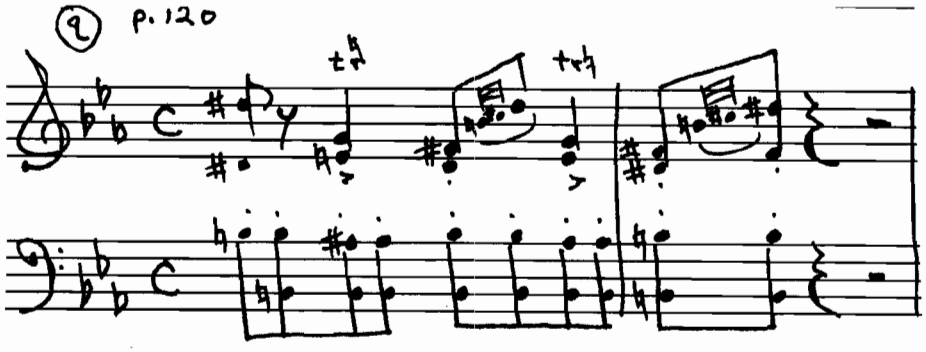
[9]Joseph Kerman, Opera as Drama (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), 155.



This short motif recurs in the Wolf's Glen as Caspar takes a drink, asking Samiel to speed its effect.



It appears once again when Max is approaching the Wolf's Glen with much trepidation. Its meaning is not clear in this context, and any one interpretation would be arbitrary; however, it is suggestive of Caspar whom Max is planning to meet.



The two contrasting musical ideas, the one representing evil, the other representing good and joy, augment the meaning and depth of the opera, contribute to musical unity, and enhance the continuity of thought and action. The conflict is intensified by the use of this musical counterplay.

Max's desperation becomes poignant through the use of the motif which describes his emotions. As mentioned above this motif was first closely associated with the forces of evil motif in the overture. Its first appearance in the opera follows close after the motif of the forces of evil. Weber could not have indicated more clearly that Max's weak moment was Samiel's opportunity.

The forces of evil motif and the motif of Max's despair represent early steps toward the leitmotif of Wagner. The close association maintained between the musical ideas and their dramatic counterparts indicates Weber's intention to characterize an idea or a person musically. Furthermore, the repetitions are almost identical, never disguised or hidden.

Euryanthe - 1823

The story of Euryanthe opens in the court of King Louis of France. County Adolar praises the beauty and goodness of his betrothed, Euryanthe. Count Lysiart sneers at the chastity of women and asserts that he could win Euryanthe.

Adolar angrily agrees to a wager with Lysiart in spite of the King's objections.

Lysiart is joined in his conspiracy by a captive maiden, Eglantine, who is secretly in love with Adolar. Adolar and Euryanthe share a secret concerning Adolar's dead sister, Emma, whose ghost cannot find rest until the tears of one innocently accused shall be shed upon her ring. Unfortunately Euryanthe confides the secret to Eglantine. Eglantine gets Emma's ring and gives it to Lysiart to use to convince Adolar that Euryanthe has been unfaithful. Adolar is convinced of Euryanthe's guilt, and he vengefully takes her into the woods to kill her. Euryanthe is rescued by the King and returned to court where Eglantine and Lysiart are about to be married. Eglantine remorsefully admits her guilt whereupon Lysiart stabs her. Euryanthe is now proven guiltless, and she and Adolar are reunited. The soul of Emma finds rest at last when Euryanthe's tears fall on her ring.

Euryanthe represents a great forward step by Weber toward "a new style of German opera which was destined to revolutionize the whole idea of operatic form and idiom and to be the precursor of music-drama conceived on completely new lines of development and achievement."[10] The

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[10]Saunders, 207.

music of the opera is unbroken by spoken parts, Weber's first and only attempt to abandon the German singspiel.

Several composers including Wagner and Schumann were influenced by Euryanthe.[11] In Wagner's Lohengrin Telramund and Ortrud bear a definite resemblance to Eglantine and Lysiart. The change in the mode of the Elsa motif in Lohengrin is similar to the change which takes place in the Emma motif discussed below. Schumann expresses his admiration for Euryanthe when he states, "'Euryanthe is richer, more varied, deeper, grander, than all the rest of Weber's works.'"[12] Schumann modeled his Genoveva after Euryanthe.

There are three recurring musical ideas which are truly important and which contribute a great deal to the effectiveness of the drama. All three motifs represent characters of the opera; however, two of the characterizations are completely different from anything that may be found in either Der Freischütz or Oberon. They are the motifs so aptly characterizing Emma, Adolar's dead sister, and Eglantine. The third musical idea, very heroic in character, represents Adolar.

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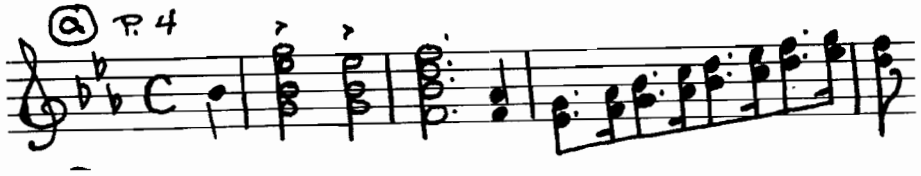
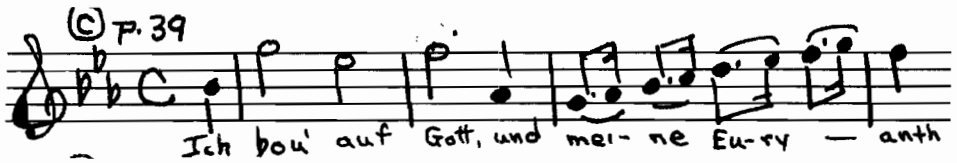
[11] Saunders, 208.

[12] Saunders, 208.

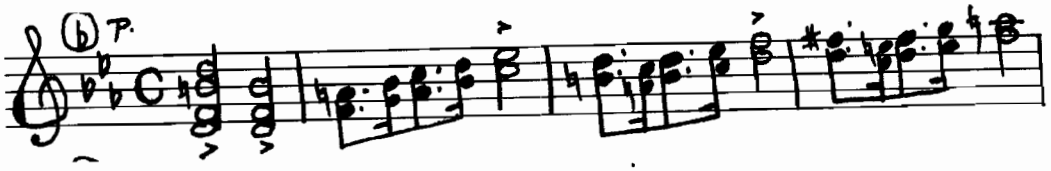
This theme of Adolar is heard first in the overture.



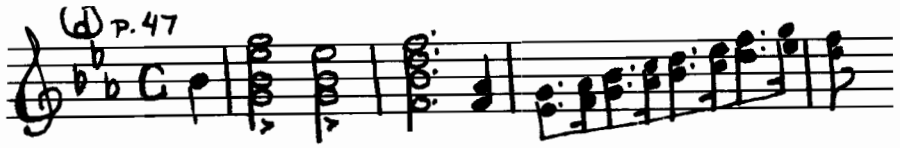
It is developed throughout the overture in this manner.[13]



The theme is first sung by Adolar in Act I as he declares his trust in Euryanthe's faithfulness.



Adolar sings the theme again in this scene, a virtually identical repetition (with the exception of the last two measures); even the words are unchanged. The orchestra repeats the theme at the close of the scene.



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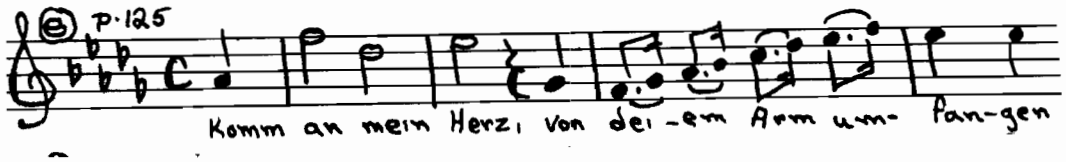
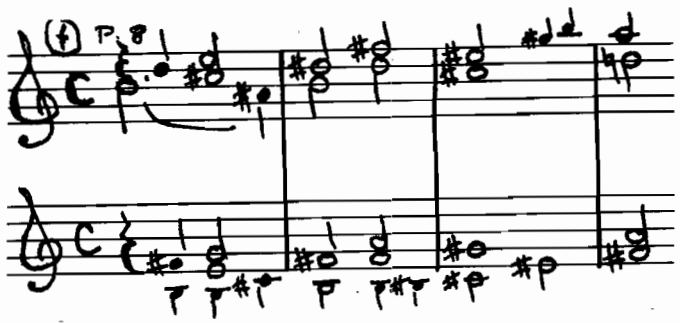
[13] Carl Maria von Weber, Euryanthe . . . (Vienna: S.A. Steiner und Comp.). All page numbers for musical examples cited refer to this edition.

In Act II Adolar again sings the theme, this time expressing his disbelief that Euryanthe could have been unfaithful as Lysiart has charged.



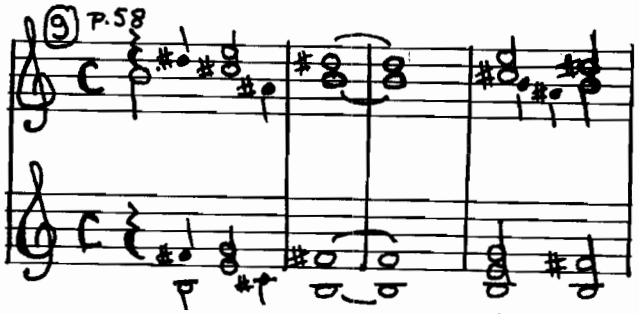
This theme which always recurs in its entirety resembles the Verdi recurring theme.

In the overture the "tomb motif" or the motif of Adolar's sister Emma is first heard.

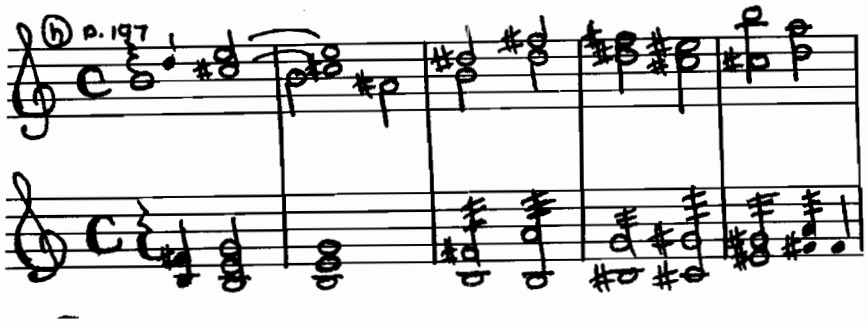


Emma's predicament is the key to the development of the drama. She has appeared to Adolar and Euryanthe, confessing that upon hearing of the death of her lover she killed herself by drinking poison from her ring. Neither she nor her soul can find rest until someone who is innocently accused shall wet the ring with tears. Euryanthe has promised Adolar that this will remain their secret.

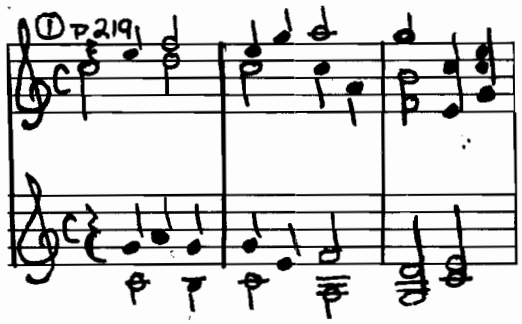
In Act I as Euryanthe reveals to Eglantine her secret about Emma, the motif is heard in the orchestra.



The motif doesn't reappear until Act III as Eglantine is about to be married to Lysiart. She is having some misgivings and deep feelings of guilt.

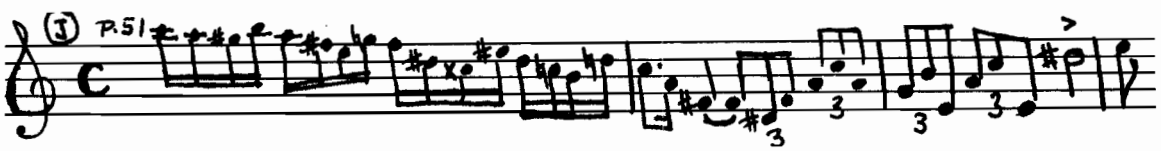


After Lysiart and Eglantine have been found out and Euryanthe and Adolar reunited, the motif is heard again. This time its former strange unrestful harmony is dissolved into a succession of simple chords in the major mode, beautifully suggesting that at last Emma can find eternal rest because the tears of the innocent Euryanthe have fallen on her ring.

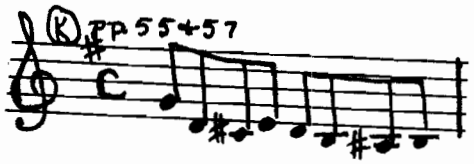


In this motif Weber not only characterizes Emma in her unhappy situation, but the motif undergoes a change suggestive of the change Emma herself has experienced. The expressive changing of the mode of the motif is a foretaste of Wagner's motif for Elsa in Lohengrin, which changes from the major to the minor mode after Elsa has betrayed Lohengrin's trust in her.

Eglantine is well characterized by a tangled weaving succession of notes, first occurring in Act I, as she begins her attempt to pry from Euryanthe her sacred secret.



This motif occurs again and again throughout the opera, whenever Eglantine or her treachery is suggested; first as she assures Euryanthe that her secret is safe.



The motif permeates Eglantine's aria in Act I, as she rejoices in her success in getting Euryanthe to confide in her.

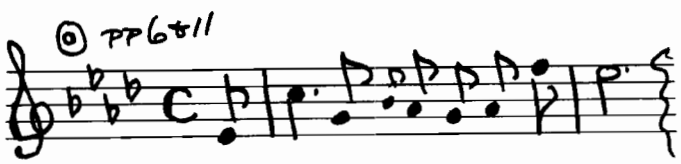
In Act II Euryanthe is misjudged by Adolar as a result of the scheming of Eglantine and Lysiart, and the motif appears.

As Euryanthe tells the king how Eglantine betrayed her trust the motif recurs, Act III.

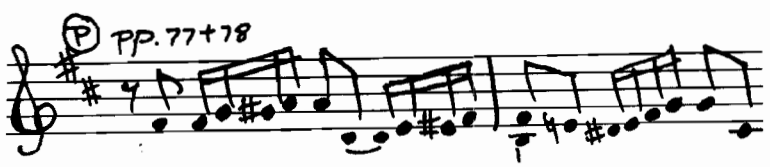
In Der Freischütz the themes of good and evil represent rather general ideas including several characters of the opera (Caspar and Samiel provoking the forces of evil motif, and Agatha, Max and their final joy bringing on the

opposing theme) which are contrasted for effect. Now, with the Eglantine motif, Weber characterizes an individual and the individual's motives in music. Neither he nor any of his predecessors had ever established so firmly this method of musical characterization which Wagner would eventually use. This motif and the tomb motif, more than others in the Weber operas approach the leitmotif of Wagner. Both, however, belong solely to the orchestra.

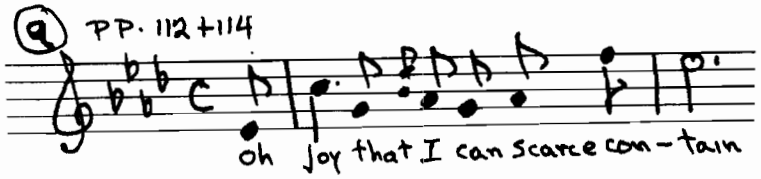
During the course of the opera there are two suggestions of motifs which reappear, but seem incidental. Euryanthe is represented by the first motif, heard initially in the overture.



In the Finale of Act I as Lysiart and Euryanthe prepare to appear before the king the motif is suggested, but not really reproduced.

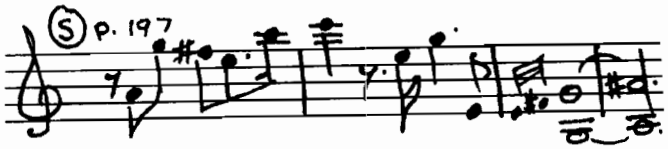


Adolar sings the motif in Act II as it appeared in the overture.



The second example is a very short motif connected with Eglantine's scheming. It is heard first in a duet sung by Lysiart and Eglantine in Act II.

It is somewhat altered, but still similar in Act III, where Eglantine becomes so troubled with her feelings of guilt.



Neither of these motifs is a clear enough repetition nor well enough associated with anything or anyone to indicate its use by Weber as a means of either characterization or unification.

Oberon - 1826

The story of Oberon opens in fairyland. Oberon, the fairy king, has quarreled with Titania, and has sworn he will not be reunited with her until he finds two lovers who will remain faithful to one another through trial and

temptation. Sir Huon of Bordeaux and his bride to be, Rezia, the daughter of the Caliph of Baghdad, are subjected to his test. After fighting Rezia's suitor in her father's palace, Huon starts out for Bordeaux with Rezia. They are shipwrecked by a terrible storm, and Rezia is captured by pirates. Huon manages to find her, but encounters still more problems. Finally Oberon decides their constancy has been sufficiently proven, and he returns them to the court of Charlemagne.

After his attempt at grand opera was poorly received, Weber returned to the old style. This opera, like Der Freischütz, is a German Singspiel, with intermittent spoken parts.

Many writers have revised Oberon in an effort to have it heard and enjoyed by modern audiences. The Bodanzky edition of Oberon which is used for this analysis is also used as the basis for some present-day performances. Bodanzky has written musical settings for the spoken parts. These recitatives contain many repetitions of motifs Weber uses. In this analysis these recitatives will be ignored.

Weber used two "supposedly authentic melodies, which he took from two books he had borrowed from the court library in Dresden",[14] for the purpose of giving Oriental color to

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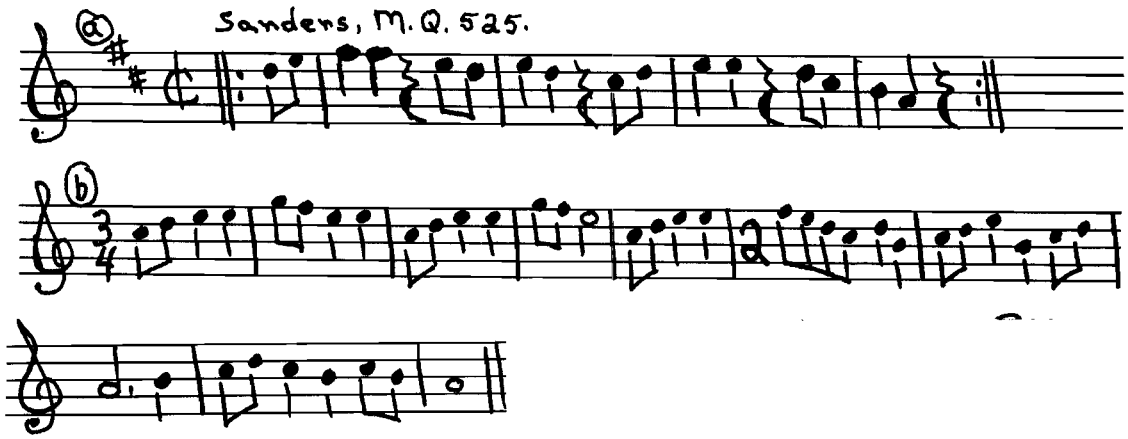
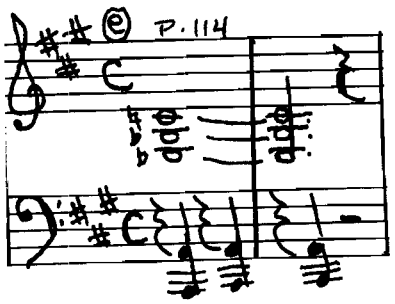
[14]Ernest Sanders, "Oberon and Zar und Zimmermann," Musical Quarterly, XL (October, 1954), 524.

his work. The melodies are of Turkish and Arabian origin.



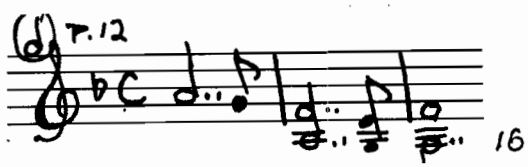
Both of the melodies begin with the three-note figure which permeates the entire opera, from the first three notes in the overture to the dance in the grand finale. In Euryanthe Weber characterized several specific individuals musically. In Oberon this three-note motif is associated with several related ideas: the Orient, the realm of fairies and elves, all that is exotic and supernatural in the work.[15]

As stated above the overture begins immediately with the statement of the horn motif.

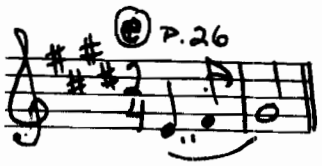


[15] Ibid., 525.

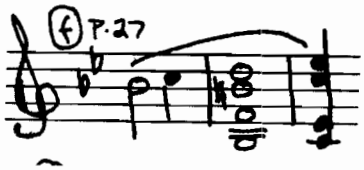
The inverted motif occurs as Oberon first appears in the Elves' chorus.



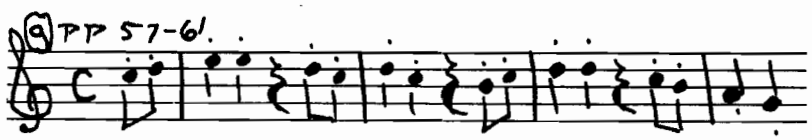
As Rezia appears in a dream to Huon the motif is present.



Oberon then awakens Huon and gives him the horn, "drum numm das Horn: Sein Ton ruft Hilfe in der Not," followed by the motif.



The next occurrence of the motif is an exact reproduction of the first of the Oriental melodies discussed earlier. It appears in the Slaves Chorus, the finale of the first act.



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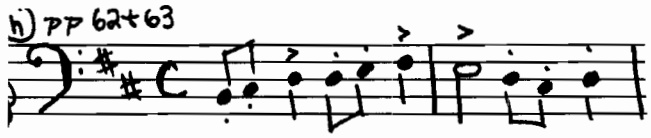
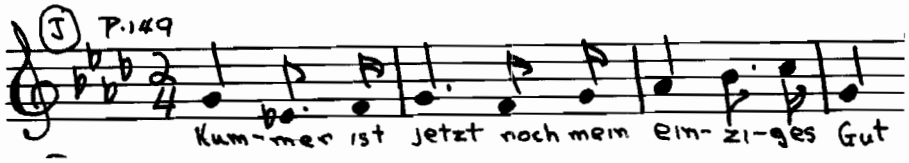
[16] Carl Maria von Weber, Oberon . . ., ed. Artur Bodanzky, (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc.). All page numbers for musical examples cited refer to this edition.

The underlying theme of the Chorus at the beginning of Act II which takes place in the banquet hall in the palace of Harun-al-Raschid has definite similarities to the above melody.

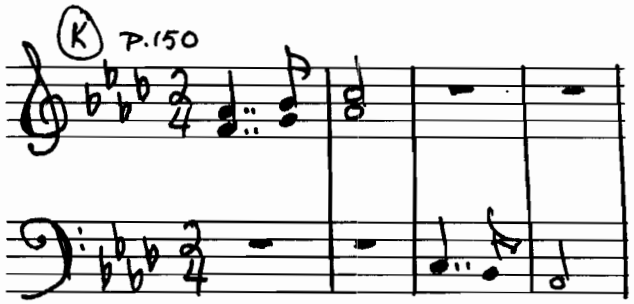


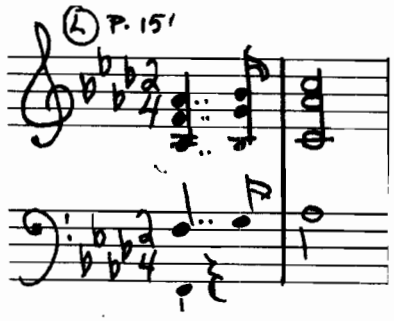
Hints of the three note motif may be observed in Fatima's song, "An dem Strom des Bendemir".

and again in the Cavatina sung by Rezia.

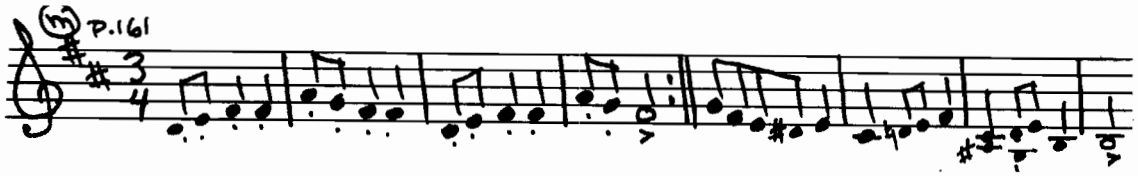


These are suggestions of the motif which are very clearly brought out by the orchestra in interludes later in the Cavatina.

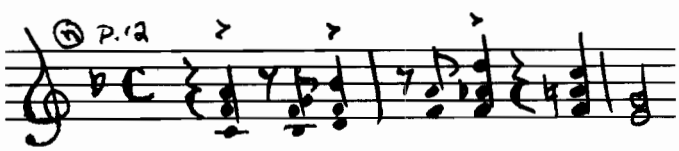




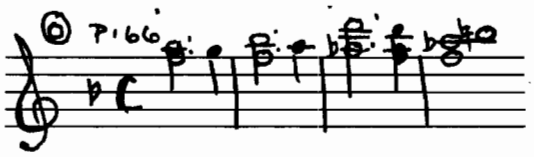
In the Finale of Act III Weber uses the second of the Oriental melodies quoted above, though with some rhythmic alterations.



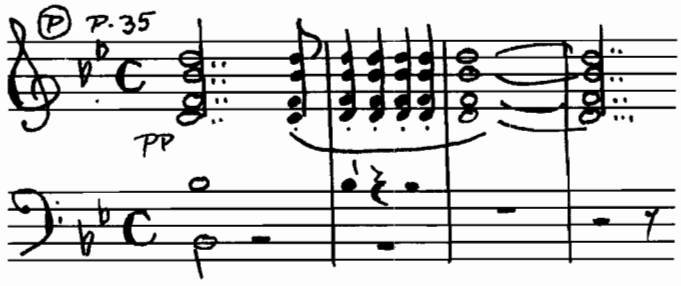
In addition to the horn motif which is the main dramatic and unifying idea of the opera, there are various other shorter and less frequently heard motifs. There are, for example, two motifs related to Oberon. The first appears near the beginning of the Elves Chorus in Act I.



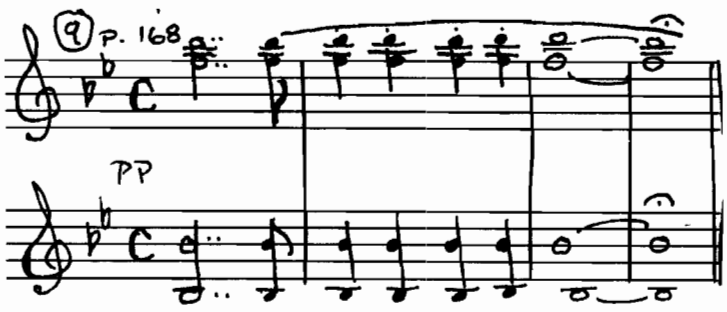
This phrase is only fleetingly repeated in a somewhat altered form during Oberon's last appearance.



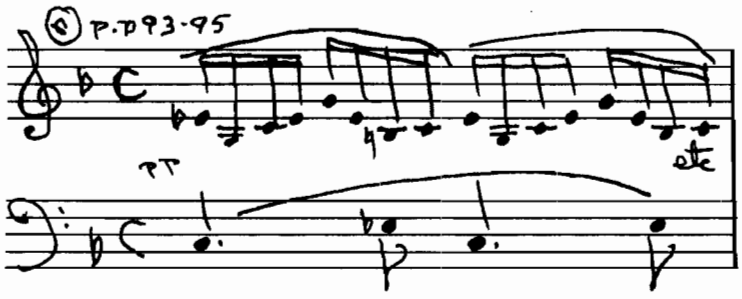
The second motif accompanies Oberon's disappearance along with his flowery couch in Act I.



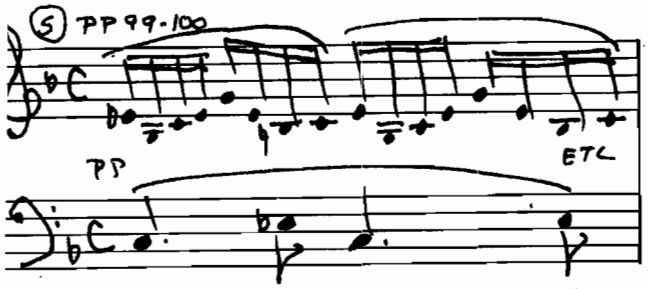
and again as Oberon makes his last exit in the opera.



The last motif is that representing the storm.



This idea recurs as Rezia, now recovered from her experience during the storm, sings her aria "Ozean!" reflecting on the changeableness of the ocean.



Although the use of recurring music is obvious and certainly dramatically purposeful in this work, it does not compare with the advanced use found in Euryanthe. The three note motif supplying the Oriental color of the opera gives a feeling of musical unity as well as dramatic impetus, but it is not as well defined in meaning or form as the motivic material in both of the preceding works. Perhaps most notably omitted is the musical characterization of any of the individuals in the drama, as was present in Der Freischütz and Euryanthe. None of the characters in this opera become as real to the listener as, for instance, Samiel, Emma, and Eglantine did in the former works.

CHAPTER II

RECURRING MUSIC FOR DRAMATIC EFFECT IN THE OPERAS OF HEINRICH MARSCHNER

"The musician who began most naturally in his imitation of Weber was Heinrich Marschner (1795-1861)."[1] Weber had introduced to the public Marschner's Heinrich IV und Aubigné with the belief that the composer would eventually be highly respected.

Marschner had hopes of taking Weber's place as Music Director of the Dresden court opera, and when this did not take place Marschner went to Leipzig. Der Vampyr and Der Templer und die Jüdin were brought out there. Hans Heiling followed his appointment in Hanover in 1831.

Hans Heiling is generally regarded as Marschner's best operatic work, and it will be examined in detail as representative of this composer's style. There is substantial evidence of recurring music in his other works.

In Der Vampyr, 1828, Malwina in the Duet Number 19 sings the words, "He who carries the fear of God in his pious heart . . ." The same words are repeated at the end of the opera with the same music as was sung before.[2]

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[1]Alfred Einstein, Music in the Romantic Era (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1947), 116.

[2]Karl Wörner, "Beiträge zur Geschichte des Leitmotivs in der Oper," Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft, XIV (1931), 151ff.

Der Templer und die Jüdin, 1829, has an interesting example of use of the chorus as an active part of the drama. Every time the Saxons come into the action by deeds of war, the chorus repeats the same theme.[3]

The repetition of both text and music is used in an amusing way in Der Bäbu, 1837. The fakirs sing their, "Wah, wah, wah," and later the lawyer, pretending to be stupid, sings the same motif, "Wah, wah, was kann ich sagen?"[4]

There were a number of other composers who used this technique during the period of 1828-1837. A few examples discussed by Karl Wörner are:

Peter Joseph von Lindpaintner in his Vampyr, 1828. A recurring motif is used to represent an emotional situation.[5]

Franz Glaser in Des Adlers Horst, 1832. The chorus is used in repetition; the first occasion is sung by a chorus of men, and the recurrence is a chorus of women in prayer. Also, his Der Rattenfänger von Hameln, 1837, contains a repetition of both text and music to represent a decree made by the council.

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid. Each of the three examples following Lindpaintner example was also located in the Wörner article.

Wilhelm Taubert in Kirmess, 1832. Music sung by the chorus is used to round out the opera by appearing at the beginning and at the end of the opera.

Karl August Krebs in Agnes, der Engel von Augsburg, 1833. A motif is used to express an emotional situation.

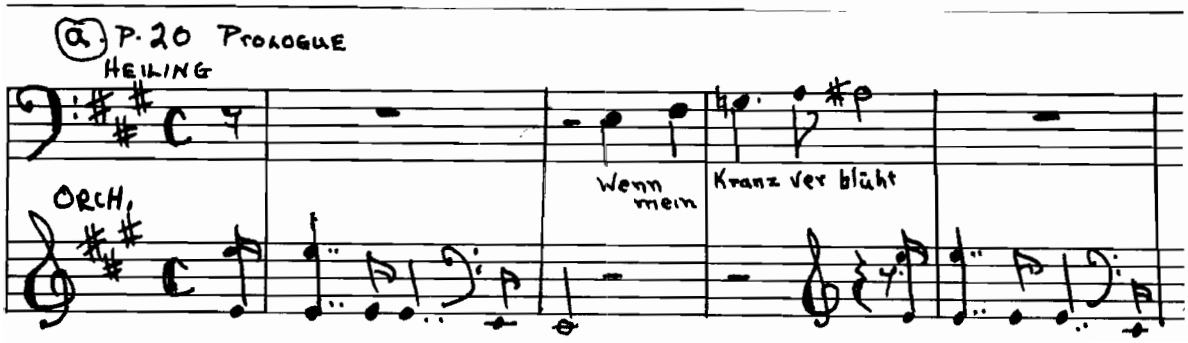
Hans Heiling - 1833

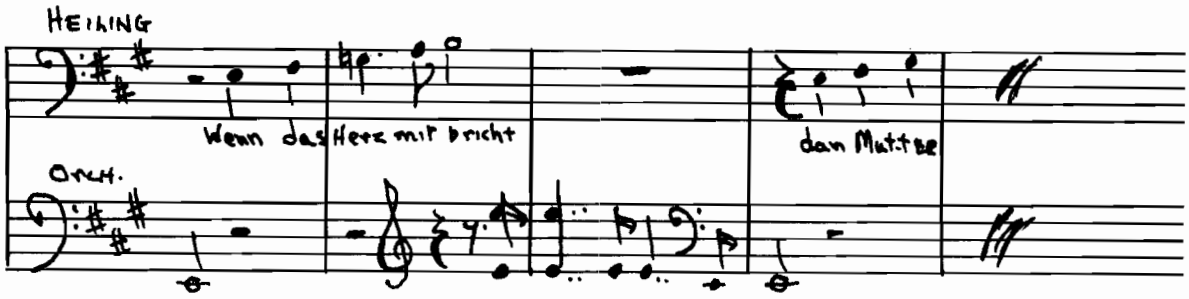
The story of Hans Heiling resembles the Lohengrin plot, and the opening in the realm of the dwarfs and gnomes is reminiscent of Weber's Oberon. Hans Heiling is the unwilling king of the fairies. He wishes to give up his kingdom and become mortal so that he may marry Anna. The queen, his mother, and all the chorus of gnomes predict the failure of such an ambition. Nevertheless, Heiling does leave.

Anna and Heiling encounter numerous difficulties. He is extremely jealous and fearful about her love, and she becomes suspicious of his past. Konrad is also interested in Anna and distrusts Heiling. In time Anna feels that the burden of Heiling's jealousy is too much to bear. Konrad becomes more and more appealing to her. Heiling's mother, the queen of the fairies, tries to persuade, and then to threaten Anna into giving up Heiling in order to save his happiness. The queen reveals Heiling's secret to Konrad, who then decides that he must save Anna from Heiling. Anna

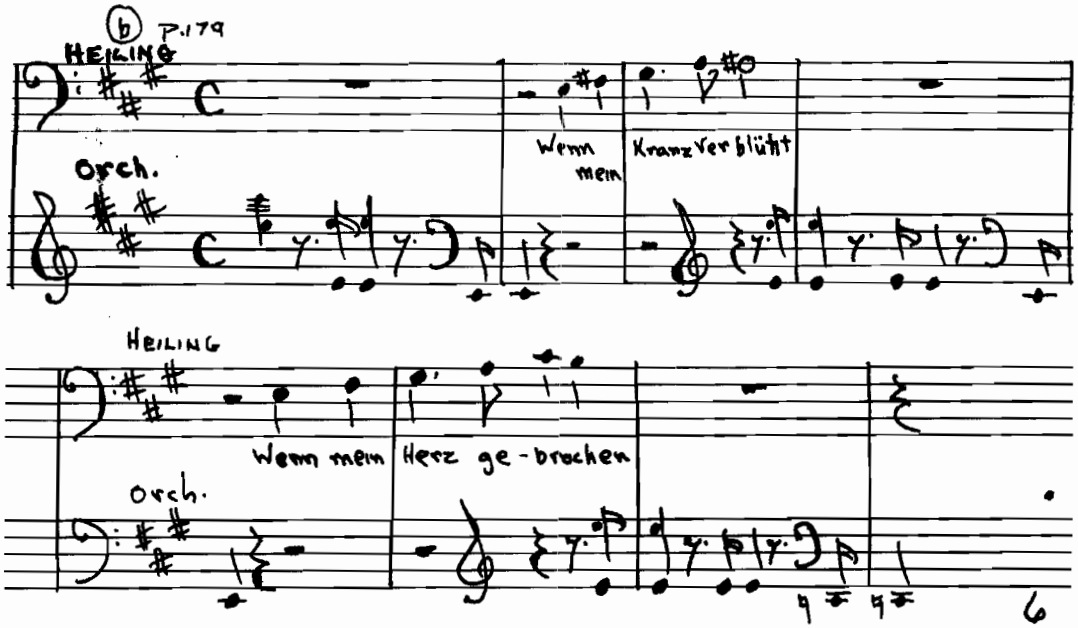
now feels certain she never did love Heiling. Finally Konrad reveals to Anna in front of Heiling the fact that Heiling is an earth spirit, the king of the spirits of the mountains. Heiling becomes angry, and only the queen prevents him from taking his revenge on Anna and Konrad on their wedding day. Then, at last, Heiling returns to his kingdom.

The first example of a theme which recurs later appears in the Prologue. Here the queen is trying to persuade Heiling not to leave the elf kingdom. Heiling replies: "When my wreath wilts, when my heart breaks, then, Mother, then perhaps. O I do not wish it--I do not wish it." He already seems to doubt the possible success of his excursion into mortality.





In the Finale of Act III the theme recurs. Its repetition is emphasized by the use of the same text, as Heiling admits defeat to his mother, "When my wreath wilts, when my heart breaks--."



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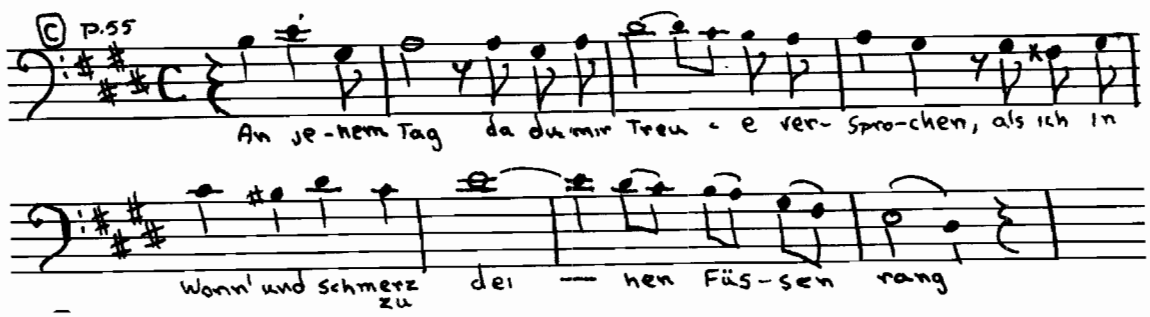
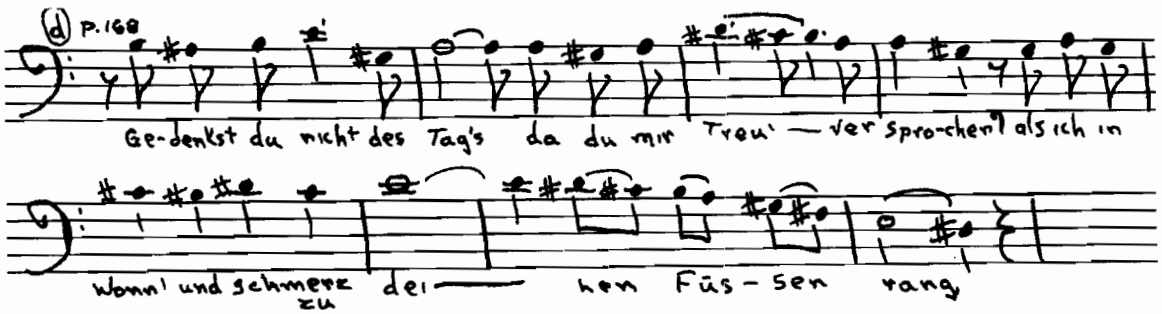
[6]Heinrich Marschner, Hans Heiling (Leipsig: C. F. Peters). All page numbers for musical examples cited refer to this edition.

Here the second occurrence of the theme serves as a further admission of defeat on the part of Heiling as he reminds himself and his mother of the circumstances under which he said he would return to his kingdom. The theme is heard only twice in the opera, but its dramatic purpose is plain and effective in reminding the listener of Heiling's stubborn statement of his terms as he argued with the queen in the Prologue.

In Act I Heiling sings of his love for Anna, "On the day when you promised me your loyalty . . . then the morning dawned in my breast and for the first time my soul's yearning was quieted." Fearing her faithlessness he almost threatens her as he pledges his love.

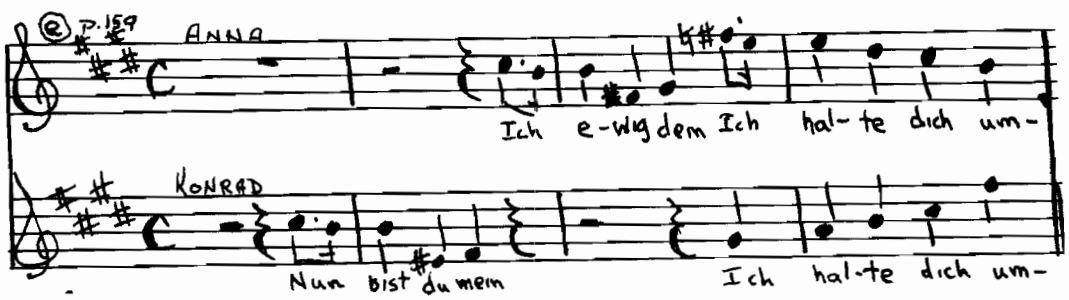


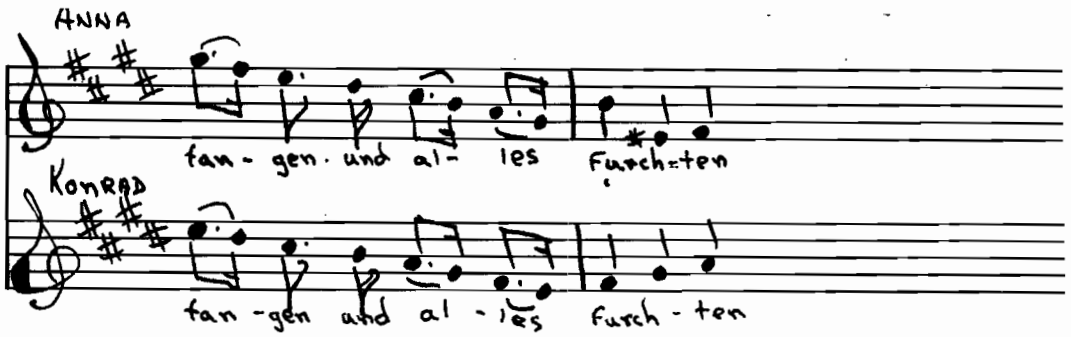
In the Finale of Act III, Anna tells Heiling that she is going to marry Konrad. Heiling reminds her, "Don't you remember the day when you promised your loyalty? Why did you break your trust?" The theme recurs almost in its original form, a definite reminiscence of Act I.



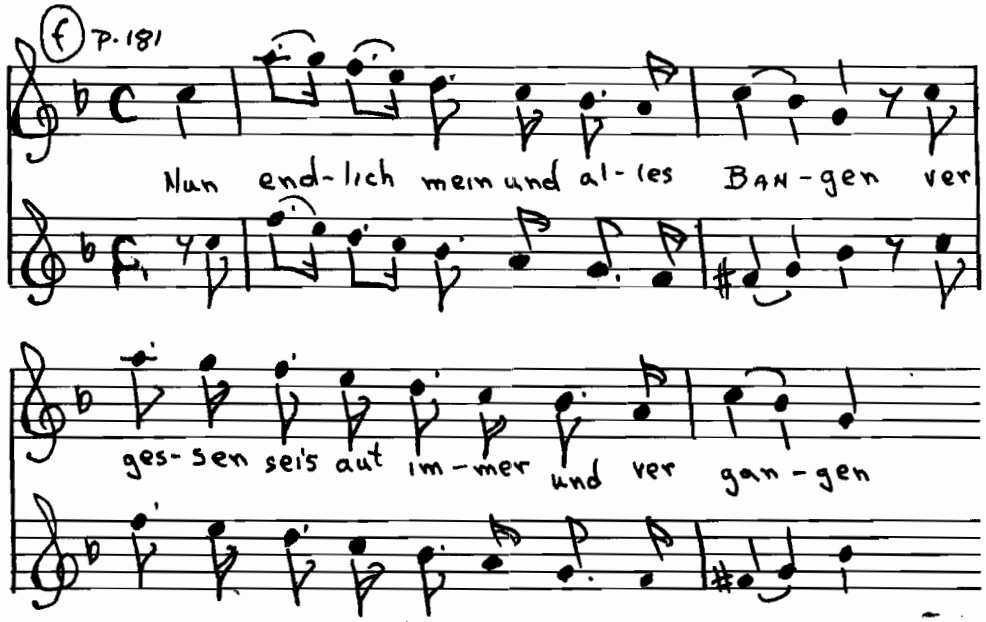
The theme is composed of several phrases and thus is too long to be considered a forerunner of the Wagner leitmotif. Rather it resembles the Verdi usage discussed in the analyses of Der Freischütz and Euryanthe. This musical reminder gives added force to Heiling's words, which themselves ask Anna, and the listener, to think back to the first appearance of the theme, and Anna's promised loyalty.

Another example of a recurring theme is first heard in Act III as Anna and Konrad affirm their love. The theme is heard several times during their duet.

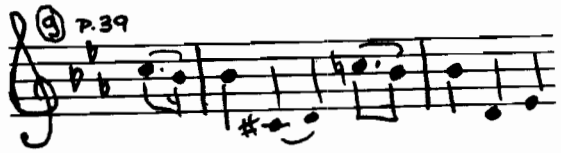




In the Finale of Act III after Heiling has left, the second part of the theme recurs, "Finally sorrow is over . . . ," sung again by Konrad and Anna. The theme represents the love of Konrad and Anna.



The beginning section of this theme was suggested earlier in the opera, Act I, as Heiling waited for Anna to come,



and right after she arrived.

The motif hints at Heiling's distrust and serves as a premonition of the ultimate failure of his relationship with Anna. The intervals are not identical; only suggestive, but the rhythm is the same, and the musical idea is definitely and obviously there. This usage represents an early attempt at expressing a sort of presentiment musically. The small motif in question is also Marschner's most subtle use of recurring music in this opera. Both examples discussed above are rather long themes, and are repeated almost identically.

Nowhere does Marschner use such carefully reworked motivic material as does Weber in both Euryanthe and Oberon. Furthermore, no individual is characterized musically through recurring music. Rather, the musical repetitions are only second references to specific ideas. New here,

however, is the purposeful employment of a sort of presentiment motif for which Wagner later laid down specific definitions in Opera and Drama.

CHAPTER III

RECURRING MUSIC FOR DRAMATIC EFFECT IN THE OPERAS OF ALBERT LORTZING

Albert Lortzing wrote a series of comic operas, quite different from the works presented thus far, "effective in the theater, indestructible on the German stage, highly unromantic and in fact rather bourgeois and philistine."[1] They were popular at the time when Wagner's works began to dominate the German operatic stage. The second half of the nineteenth century saw a growing prejudice that Lortzing's work was only popular and not of lasting value. However, in Germany Zar und Zimmermann has now regained much of its former high standing for what it is--comic opera in the Singspiel style.

The use of recurring music is common in Lortzing's operas. Zar und Zimmermann and Der Wildschütz will be examined as representative of his operatic style.

Lortzing in his Hans Sachs, 1840, uses a motif to represent an emotional idea. The music and text Sachs sings to the crowd when he is defeated in the singing contest are a recurrence of material from an earlier Aria he sang.[2]

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[1]Alfred Einstein, Music in the Romantic Era (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1947), 118.

[2]Karl Wörner, "Beiträge zur Geschichte des Leitmotivs in der Oper," Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft, XIV (1931), 151 ff.

In the opera Casanova, 1841, each of the four times the commander is mentioned the same figure appears.[3]

In his one grand opera, Undine, 1845, Lortzing gives Undine three different motifs. Kuhleborn is given a motif which appears in two forms, and still another motif is used to represent the water-world.[4]

Waffenschmied, 1846, has a motif which recurs, associated with the words, "I would gladly give glory and riches for you and your love."[5]

Numerous other instances of operas in which recurring motifs were used between these years of 1840-1847 may be found. A few examples from Wörner's listing are:

Franz Lachner's Catharina Cornaro, 1841. The festive entrances of the Venetian ambassadors are musically characterized.[6]

Konradin Kreutzer's Edelknecht, 1842. The reminiscence of a person in the opera is produced musically.

Friedrich von Flotow's Alessandro Stradella, 1844. The bell chorus is repeated. Flotow's Martha, 1847, also has recurring music.

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

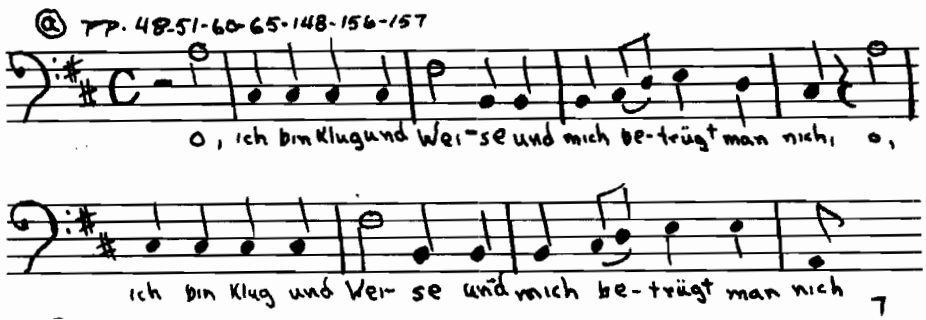
[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid. Each of the two examples following the Lachner example was also located in the Wörner article.

Zar und Zimmermann - 1837

The scene of the opera Zar und Zimmermann is Sardam in the year 1698. The story is about an adventure of Peter the Great, who was fond of visiting foreign ports in disguise to learn shipbuilding. At Sardam he meets Peter Ivanoff who is in love with Marie, the Burgermaster's daughter. Marie is a flirt and likes to tease Peter into jealousy. Peter pretends he is the Zar in hiding in order to further his cause with Marie. Ambassadors of other countries find out that the real Zar is in Sardam. Confusion ensues, but in the end Peter Ivanoff marries his Marie, and the Zar returns to Russia.

The most prominent theme in the opera is the oft-repeated phrase of the foolish Burgermaster, van Bett. Again and again we hear him boast, "Oh, I am wise and clever, and no one can deceive me." The phrase occurs six times in various scenes in the first and second acts.



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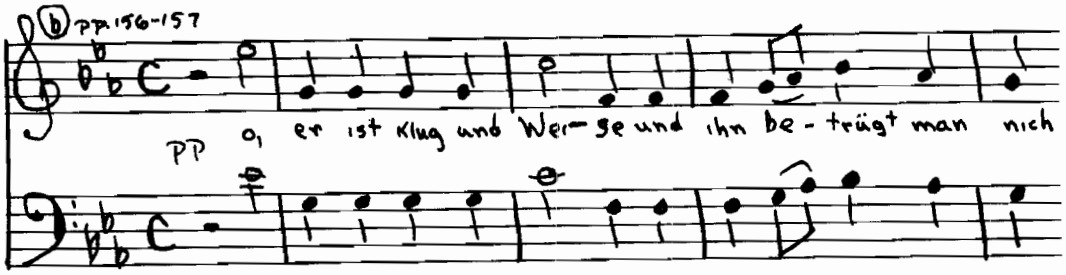
[7]Albert Lortzing, Zar und Zimmermann (Leipzig: C.F. Peters). All page numbers for musical examples cited refer to this edition.

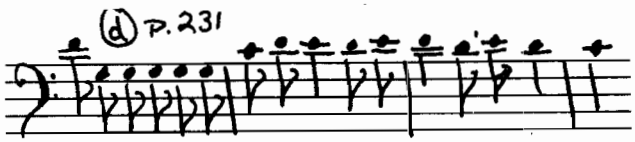
The most amusing of these repetitions is the last one where the extent of van Bett's cleverness has been revealed, quite unhappily for him. Marie, M. Browe, the Marquis, Ivanoff, the Zar, and Lefort chide him with one last chorus, "Oh, he is wise and clever, and no one can deceive him," to which van Bett angrily returns, "Silence!"



The theme wonderfully characterizes the conceited major, and its continual repetition is effective in reminding us of van Bett's foolish pride.

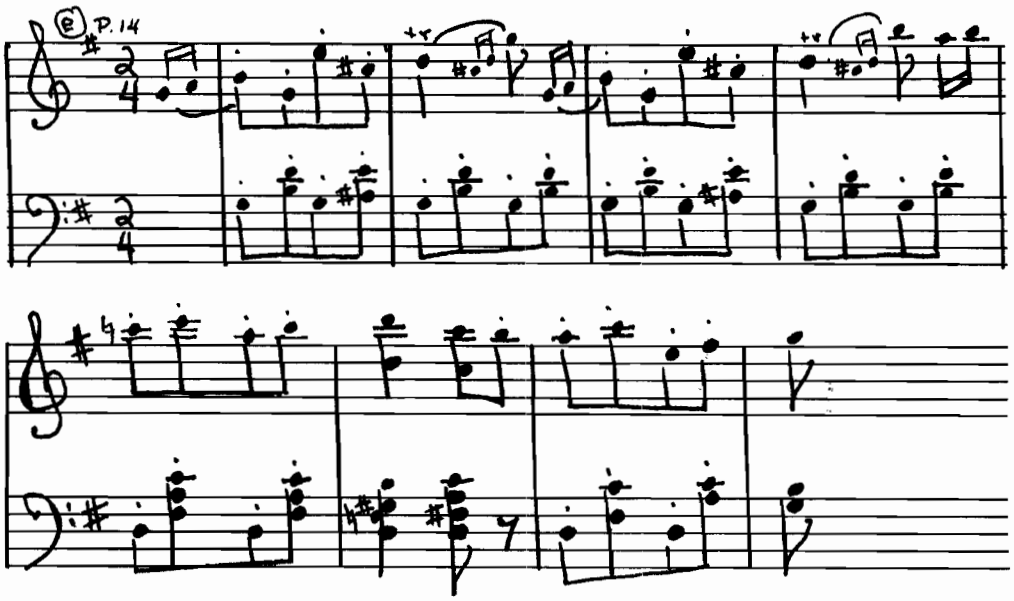
In Act I, Scene 1, the Zar sings a gay tune about the life and work of a carpenter.

The theme recurs as a part of the Zar's reminiscence of his experiences as a carpenter when he is on his ship ready to leave for Russia.

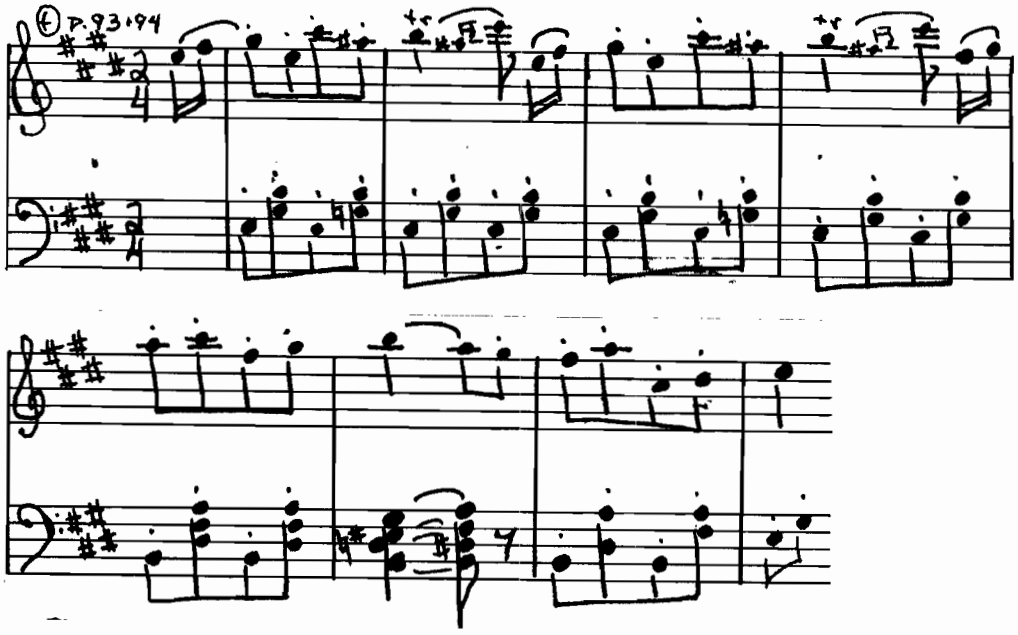


Lortzing appreciated the value of recurring motives perhaps more in their effect on the unity of an opera as a whole than the dramatic possibilities. While the above theme is a definite reminiscence, it serves well to bind the work together. The opera practically opens with the first appearance of the theme, then its recurrence all but closes the action in the Finale.

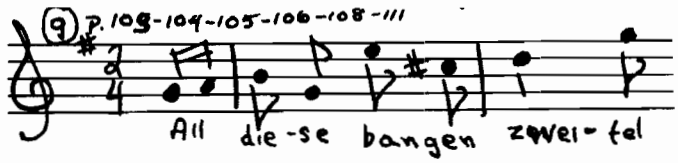
Lortzing uses another motif in what appears to be strictly a means of unification. The motif is prominent in the overture.



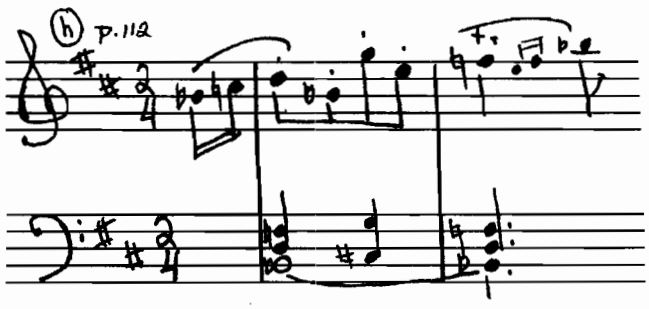
It then constitutes a large part of the Finale of Act I, to be heard first in Scene 15 where it is associated with the music which is heard coming from the Theater.



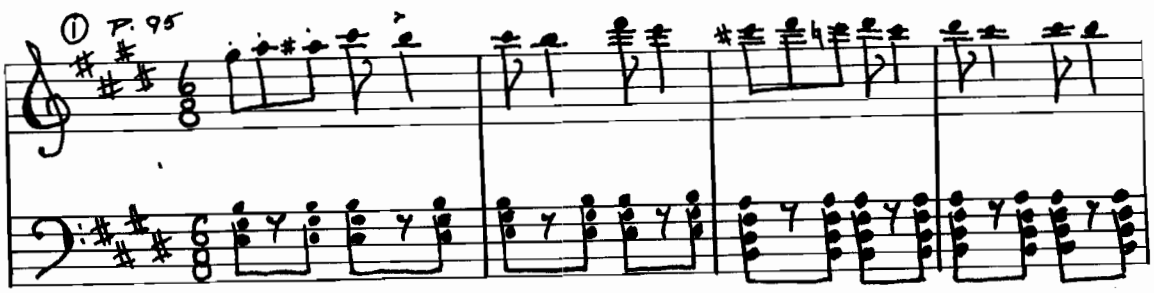
In Scene 16 the motif is predominant.



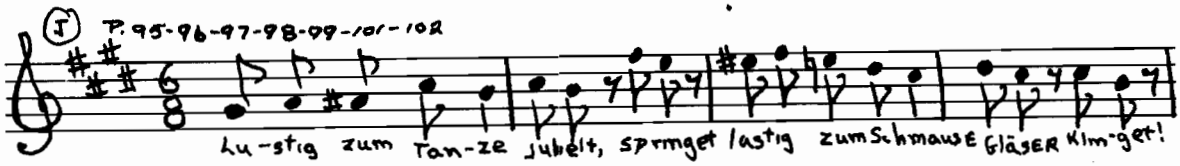
Then the curtain falls on Act I. At the very beginning of Act II the motif is heard briefly in the orchestra.



Another unifying motif appears at the close of Scene 15,



and constitutes the dance music heard in the following scene.



The occurrence of this motif serves a dramatic purpose too, as the first example accompanies the appearance of the bride and bridegroom and the carpenters, all dressed and ready for the dance. The dance actually begins then in the next scene, with the same music.

Here we have seen Lortzing use one theme to bind his work together, presenting it at the beginning of the opera

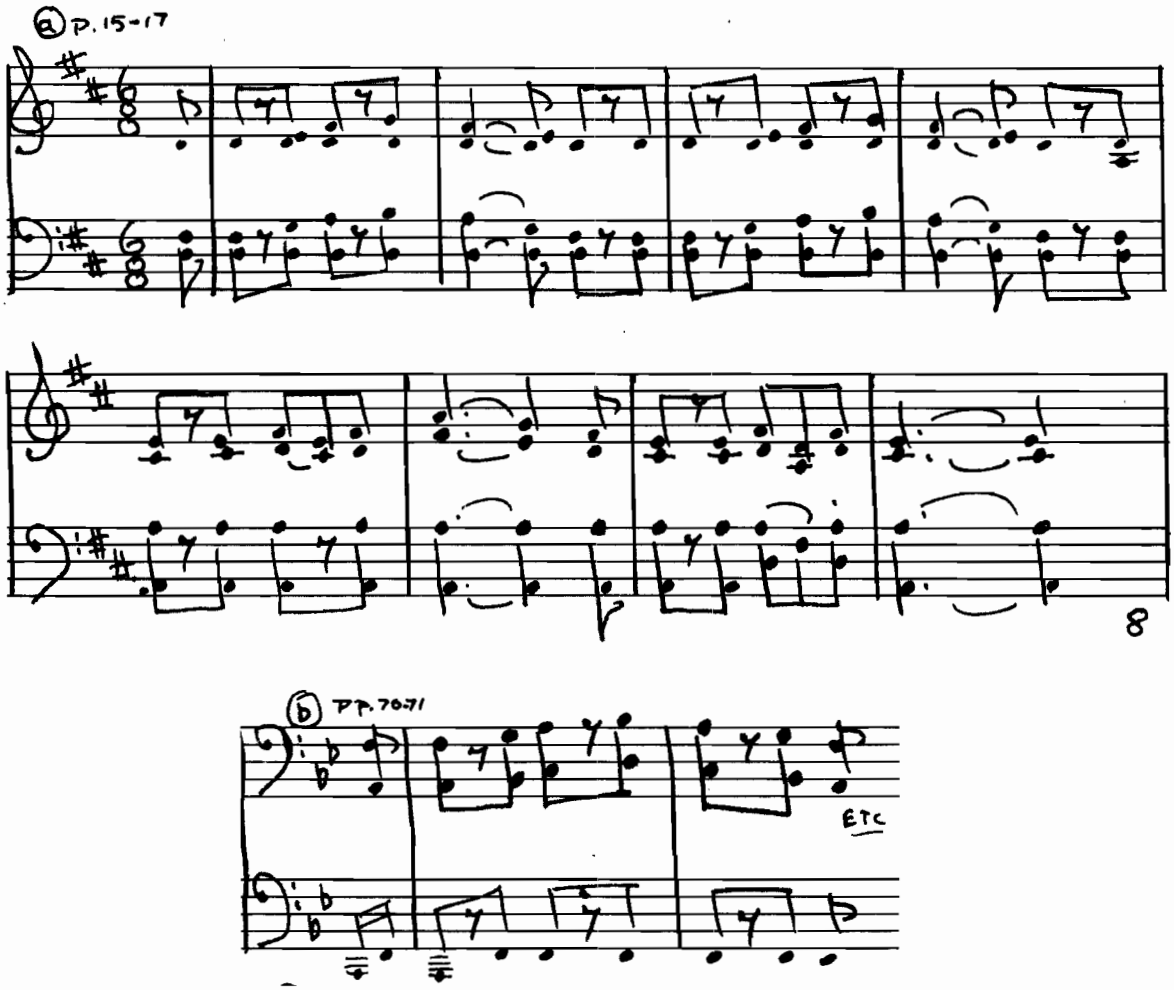
and recalling it at the close. The burgermaster's theme also serves the purpose of unification, as it is heard over and over throughout the work. And the motif discussed in examples i and j bridges the gap between two scenes. In each of these three cases there is a dramatic import as well: in the first a reminiscence occurs, in the second a characterization is built, and the dance is musically depicted in the third. Each of these recurring musical ideas, therefore, helps in two distinct ways to make the work more easy to follow.

Der Wildschütz - 1842

The story of "The Poacher" revolves around the belief of the Count and a foolish schoolmaster, Baculus, that the latter has shot and killed a deer on the Count's property. The Count in angry retribution takes away Baculus' job as schoolmaster. This adds to the already precarious state of Baculus' relationship with his very youthful bride-to-be, Gretchen, who seems to be marrying the middle-aged Baculus for fear of being considered an old maid. After much hilarious confusion caused by a Baron disguising himself as the Count's groom and a Baroness and her lady disguising themselves as young male students and in various other ways, Baculus is finally cleared of guilt and reinstated as schoolmaster. Baculus, the counterpart of von Bett in Zar und Zimmermann, finally discovers that even though he

had aimed at one of the Count's deer, he had missed and hit his own donkey instead!

In the overture is presented the theme of a Hunting Song which will be heard in Act I, Scene 9.



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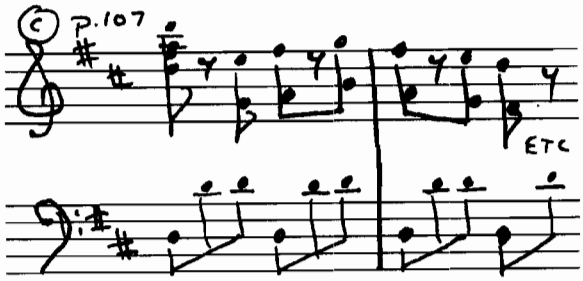
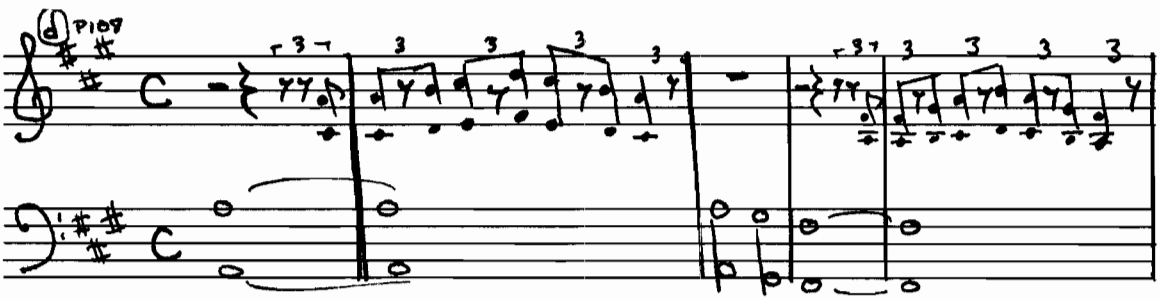
[8] Albert Lortzing, Der Wildschütz (Leipzig: C. F. Peters). All page numbers for musical examples cited refer to this edition.

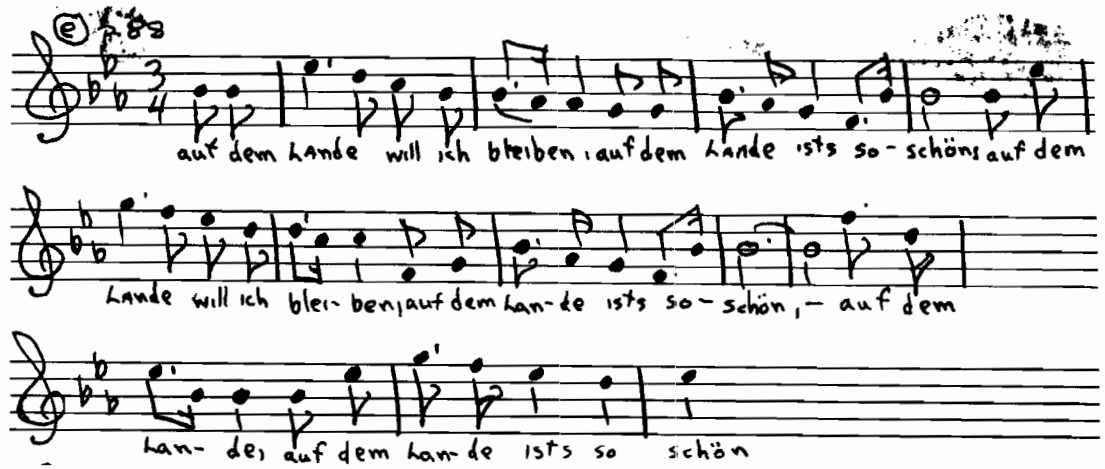
The theme concludes the music of Act I, Scene 13. The dramatic relationship is rather remote. The hunters did appear at the beginning of Scene 13, but the appearance of the theme at the end of the scene seems to be a unifying factor.



At the beginning of Act II, the theme occurs once again, somewhat briefly. The reason for the appearance of the motif is the presence of the hunters.

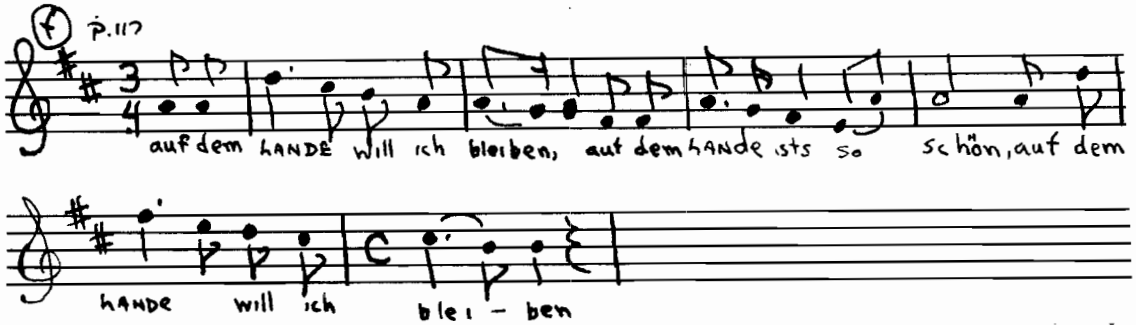


Second in appearance is a motif sung by the Baroness in Act I.



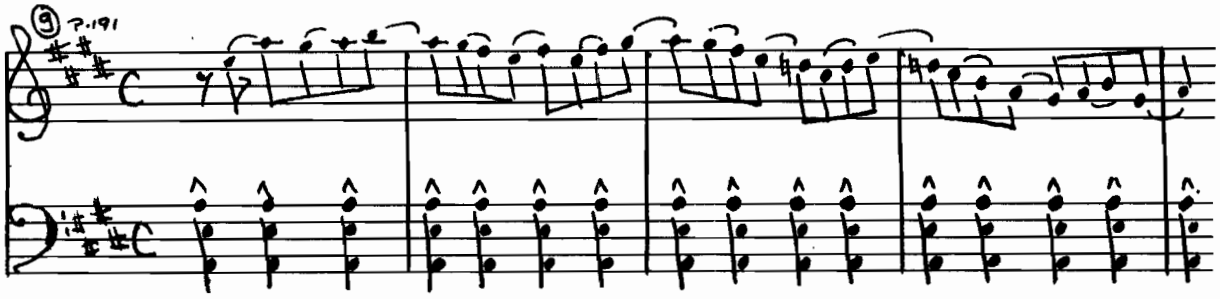
She is disguised as Gretchen in a plot to try to assist Baculus in getting his job back from the Count. Baculus, however, believes her to be a young male student playing the part of his Gretchen. To enhance her pose as a country girl, the Baroness sings, "In the country I want to stay." The theme is sung again later in the same scene.

In Scene 3 of Act II the Baron, disguised as the Count's groom, has fallen in love with the Baroness, disguised still as Gretchen. The Baroness, or Gretchen, is heard backstage still maintaining that she wants to stay in the country.

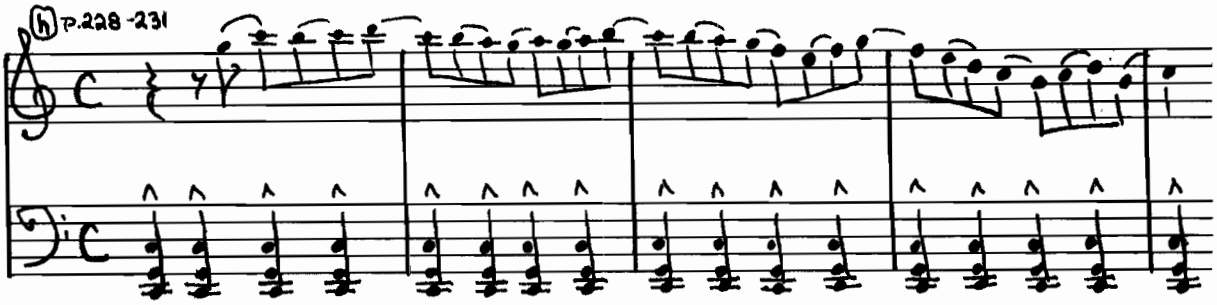


In Zar und Zimmerman we hear von Bett repeatedly sing his song praising his cleverness. The effect on the opera is humorous, and we begin to wait for his next moment of conceit. Similarly, the countess' little song points up the humor of the absurd situation in which she and the other characters have maneuvered themselves.

In the first scene of Act III the Count, thinking about the coming party celebrating this birthday, sings, "Soon the happy throng of the village inhabitants will come." A four-measure dance-like motif follows:



It reappears in Scene 15 when the people actually gather and is used extensively in the accompaniment to the first chorus of the Finale.



This motif resembles the leitmotif more than any others found in these two Lortzing operas, because it has a definite dramatic purpose. Here is an example of the words as well as the music forecasting a later event in the opera. This example is a much more open use of musical prediction than was seen in Marschner's Hans Heiling. There the music seemed to foretell what Heiling himself only presumably feared and did not actually put into words.

The greatest difference between Lortzing's use of recurring music and that of Weber and Marschner is Lortzing's directness and complete openness. There is nothing subtle about these operas, dramatically or musically.

CHAPTER IV

THE LEITMOTIF IN GENOVEVA BY ROBERT SCHUMANN

Genoveva was first performed in 1850, the same year as Wagner's Lohengrin. The opera was a failure, partly because it departed radically from the tradition of the early Romantic opera. Its music is continuous as long as the action is unbroken.

> It was not Wagner alone who took the road leading from Romantic opera to Romantic music drama, in which the aria is resolved (or, one might say, dissolved) into the scene, the recitative and arioso passages equalized (or diluted to insipidity), the individual scenes tied together by the symphonically conceived orchestra, and the whole opera united by the motif of reminiscence which, latter was more and more refined into the leitmotif.[1]

Chronologically Schumann's opera comes at the midway point between Wagner's The Flying Dutchman, 1841, and Tristan and Isolda, 1860. Lortzing's Casanova was finished the same year as The Flying Dutchman, and Tannhauser was completed in 1845. Thus Wagner, Schumann, and Lortzing were producing operas during the same years. They all used recurring music with dramatic significance, but in three different ways because their attitudes toward the composition of opera were so different. Lortzing was a prolific composer of comic opera. His practical attitude toward his

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[1]Alfred Einstein, Music in the Romantic Era (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1947), 119.

writing caused him to be more interested in entertainment than in the theoretical development of the leitmotif device in his operas. Schumann, for whom opera composition was only an incidental interest, was a speculative composer. He was not ready, however, to take the final step in his use of the leitmotif technique. He criticized Wagner's Lohengrin poem because it lacked clearly defined subdivisions. According to Wagner, when he reread the poem dividing it arbitrarily into "arias," "duets," "recitatives," etc. Schumann's doubts were assuaged.[2] Wagner was a bold innovator who had no such qualms about changing the existing opera form. He was totally absorbed in the theoretical exploration of problems and possibilities of the theater.

The story of Genoveva opens when Bishop Hidulfus despatches the Christian warriors. Siegfried says goodbye to Genoveva. As he leaves Genoveva faints in the arms of Golo, who kisses her. Margaretha notices this and decides to play on Golo's feelings.

In Siegfried's absence the servants begin to get out of hand. Golo tries to comfort Genoveva and declares his love for her. Genoveva repulses him, and he swears revenge. He hides Drago in Genoveva's room, and Margaretha assures Golo that she will poison Siegfried on his way

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[2] Jack M. Stein, Richard Wagner and The Synthesis of the Arts (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1960), 56.

home. Golo then encourages the servants to burst into Genoveva's room where they kill Drago, whom they believe to be Genoveva's lover.

Golo and Margaretha convince Siegfried that Genoveva has been unfaithful by showing Siegfried "the truth" in Margaretha's magic mirror. Siegfried tells Golo to kill Genoveva. Golo leaves her murder to three servants who lose their nerve. Siegfried appears, led by a repentent Margaretha. Genoveva and Siegfried are reconciled, and they return to the castle where Hidulfus blesses them.

Genoveva was produced in 1850, the same year as Wagner's Lohengrin. Moreover, both works were written in 1848, and both are concerned with legends from Brabant. Schumann's work, unfortunately, was not a success.

Schumann makes use of reminiscence motifs for both dramatic impetus and purposes of characterization. There is disagreement as to which motif is characteristic of whom in the opera, but that there are such motifs is not disputed. Newell Jenkins states that the leitmotif which was later thought of only in reference to the works of Wagner is found in this opera in "full bloom"[3] Gerald Abraham, speaking of the same opera, says:

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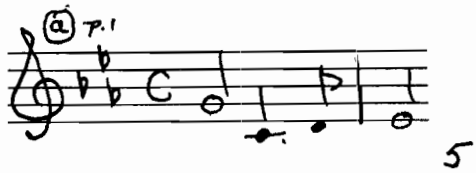
[3]Newell Jenkins, "Florence Production of Schumann's Genoveva Brings Revelation of its Worth as Music and Drama," Musical America (July 7, 1951), 6.

> One of the most interesting features of this operatic style, the one afterwards developed so vigorously by Wagner that he was long popularly credited with its invention, was the free use of thematic reminiscence mainly to make dramatic points but also to some extent for the purpose of characterization. Schubert in Fierrabras and Weber in Euryanthe, a quarter of a century earlier than Genoveva, had employed characteristic themes, simple and transformed, and the Wagner of Tannhauser had surpassed them only in broad theatrical effectiveness; it was only later that he was to arrive at the full symphonic treatment of characteristic themes. And it is only in theatrical effectiveness that Schumann's use of such themes is inferior to Wagner's at the same period.[4]

The musical characterization of Golo is more complete than that of any other person in the opera. Three motifs are related to him. The first of these appears in the overture.



[5]

The motif recurs many times during the overture and serves as the basis of the development section.

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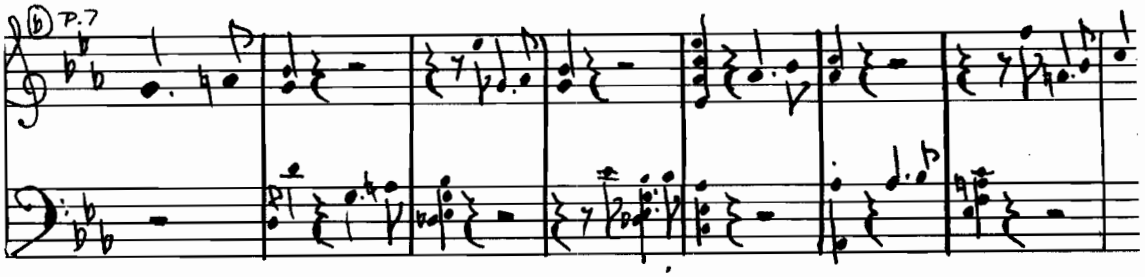
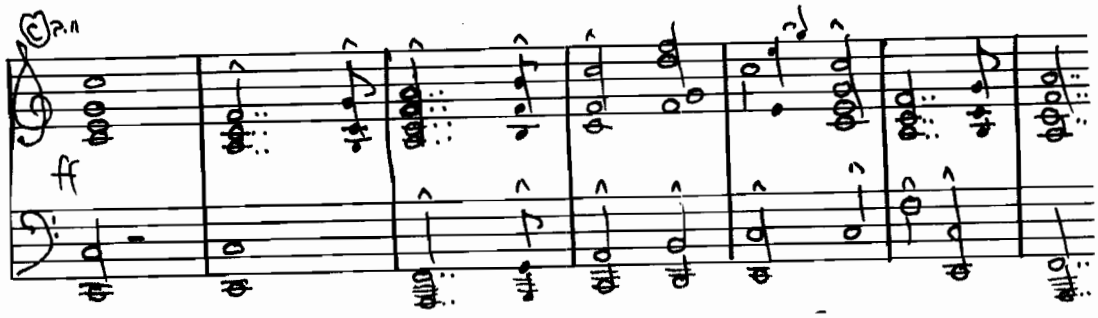
[4] Gerald Abraham (ed.), Schumann, A Symposium (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), 278.

[5] Robert Schumann, Genoveva. . . (Leipzig; C. F. Peters). All page numbers for musical examples cited refer to this edition.

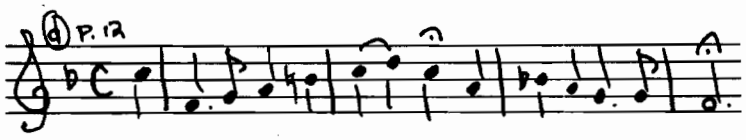


It finally forms a triumphant conclusion to the overture and sets the stage for the opening chorus of Act I.

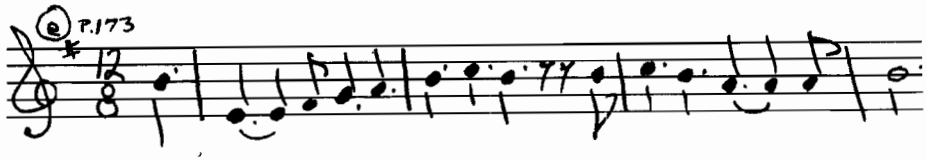


In this occurrence of the motif the interval between the third and fourth notes is modified to a whole step as compared to a half step in its original form. This change alters the feeling of the motif, removes its menacing sound so descriptive of Golo. Instead of characterizing Golo, in fact, it prepares the listener for the hymn for Siegfried's departing troops which opens the first act. In this instance Schumann has taken material from a previously introduced motif and reworked it for the purpose of producing a smooth transition from the overture to Act I.

This chorale opening the action of the opera

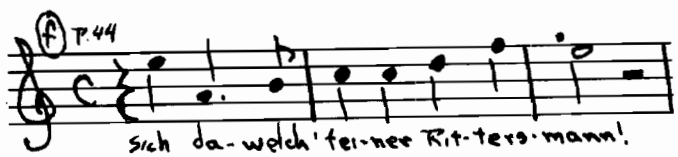


is heard again briefly in Act IV, after Genoveva has been rescued, and the evildoers have either been killed or have repented.



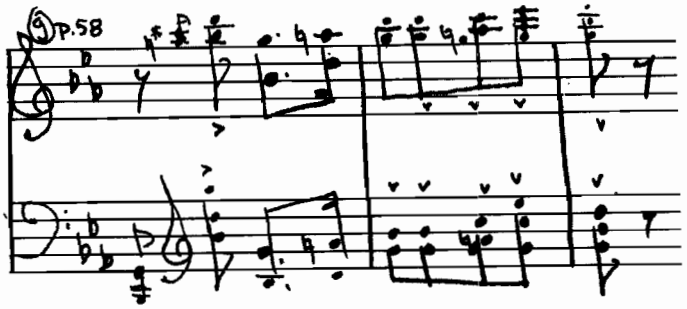
In both instances Hidulfus, Bishop of Treves is giving his blessing: in the first, to the Christian warriors; in the second, to Genoveva and Siegfried and the repentent malefactors.

The motif in its more original form is sung by Margaretha in the Finale of Act I as she sarcastically speaks of Golo's gallantry toward Genoveva.

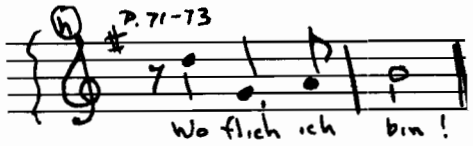


The motif originates in the vocal line, and its meaning is established as relating to the deceit of Golo and Margaretha.

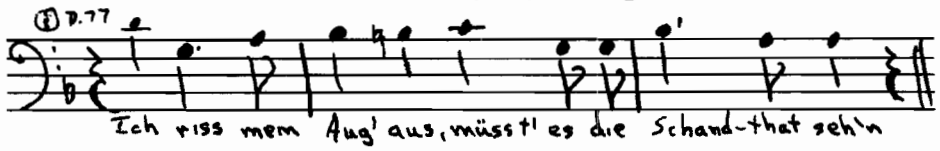
In the second act the motif is played by the piccolos and clarinets during the servants chorus.



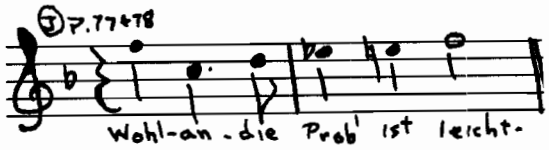
Genoveva is worried about what may happen while Siegfried is away, and the motif suggests Golo's part in the treachery which will take place. The motif is sung by both Golo and Genoveva in their duet, Act II, after Golo has shocked Genoveva with his trickery and wickedness. Her words "Where can I flee from you!" express her hopeless subjection to Golo's scheming.



In the same act as Golo arranges to get Drago into Genoveva's bedroom on the pretence of testing her faithfulness to Siegfried the motif is sung by Drago.

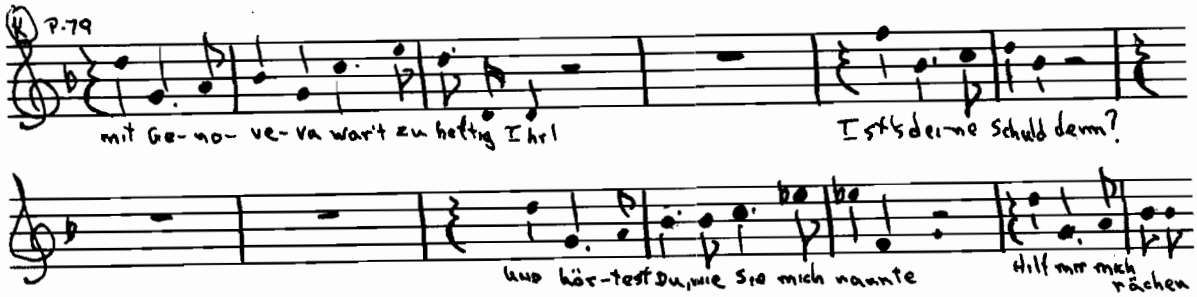


Again Golo's scheme is suggested musically while Golo tries to convince Drago that Genoveva's innocence must be proven.



These examples are modified, the initial interval being changed to a fourth, but the rhythm is the same, and the suggestion is strong.

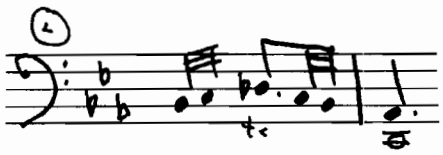
Margaretha and Golo alternately sing the motif as Margaretha provokes Golo's anger until he finally cries, "Help me to get my revenge!"



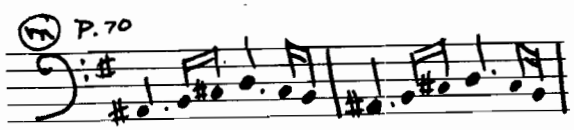
This motif is truly a leitmotif. It originates in the vocal line which clarifies its dramatic meaning, and it is used later always to represent Golo's treachery. It occurs often enough to be considered a leitmotif. Schumann's use of the motif, however, differs from Wagner's practice in that it appears in many guises, as though Schumann didn't want it to be too obvious. As will be seen in Chapter V Wagner wanted his motifs to be immediately recognized in

order to explain further the dramatic import of the situation in which the motif appeared.

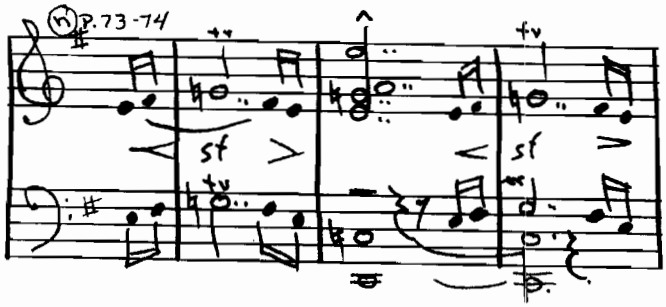
The second of Golo's motifs seems to represent his hatred for Genoveva. It occurs at the beginning of the Overture immediately following the first motif associated with Golo, and the two motifs are used together again several times later in the Overture.



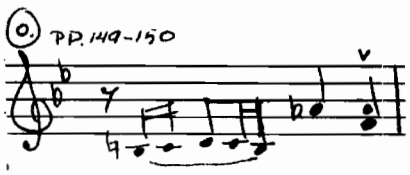
During the opera the motif is heard in Act II, in the orchestra as Golo calls Genoveva an enchantress and explains how he has managed to trick her to get revenge for her lack of love for him.



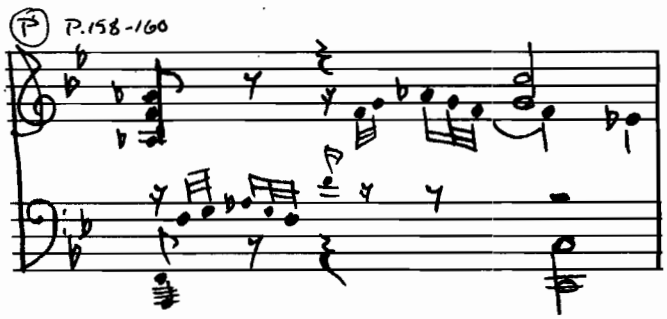
Later in the same scene Genoveva calls Golo "ehr loser Bastard," after he has tricked and taunted and threatened her beyond her endurance. This provokes the motif again and again.



Not until Golo comes to Genoveva for the last time in the woods where he intends to leave her to die is the motif heard again. He taunts her with Siegfried's ring and sword which signify authority from Genoveva's husband himself to do away with her.

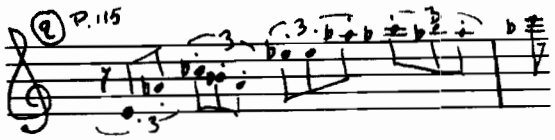


Golo leaves, and as the would-be murderers try to drag Genoveva from the cross where she is praying, the motif comes the last time.

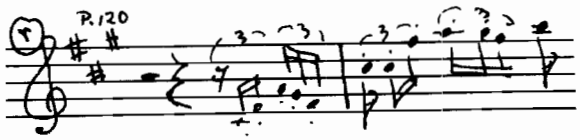


This motif is heard only in the orchestra, and its meaning can only be guessed from its position in the drama. The music is more expressive than Golo's words could ever be. Its most dramatic use is in the scene where Genoveva declares so vehemently her profound disgust with Golo, Example o. Here the motif recurs over and over, as if Golo's anger were spilling over in its intensity.

A third motif is related to Golo's scheme with Margaretha. It is heard in the orchestra in Act III when Siegfried reads the false letter Golo has brought him. The motif permeates the scene where Siegfried's anger with Genoveva mounts, and he gives Golo his ring and sword.



Again it is heard in the Finale of Act III while Margaretha is sleeping and as she tells of her curious dream.



Another motif which occurs in the opera seems to represent "Satanic influence"[6] and involves Golo and Margaretha, but more closely the latter, since she is a witch. Golo sings

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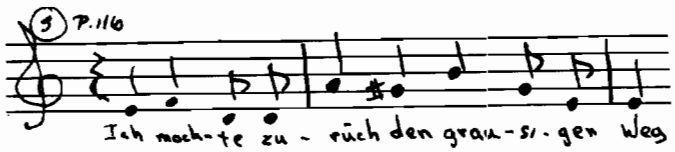
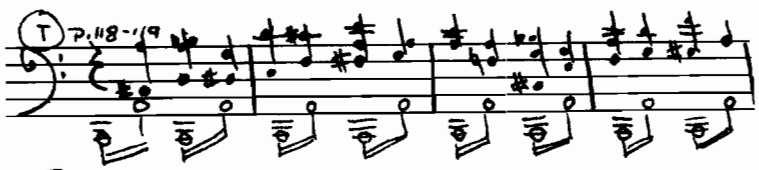
[6]Gerald Abraham, 279.

this motif in Act III as he takes Siegfried's sword in order to do away with the supposedly faithless Genoveva and thus achieve revenge.

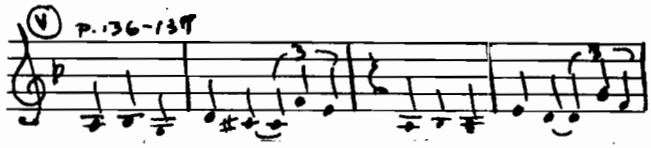


The orchestra reiterates the motif several more times in the same scene.



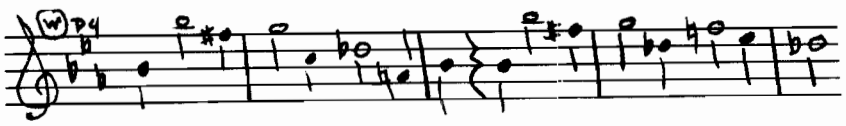
At the end of the mirror scene, the close of Act III, Siegfried is further deceived, this time by Margaretha's witchery. Margaretha causes him to see Drago and Genoveva in her magic mirror. As the orchestra states the motif Siegfried cries, "Scoundrel, Drago! Golo, avenge me!"

The motif is also heard here sung by the invisible chorus. Finally the theme is rhythmically altered and accompanies the threates of the ghost of Drago to Margaretha. The ghost foretells that in seven years' time she will have to tell Siegfried the truth and will be punished severely.

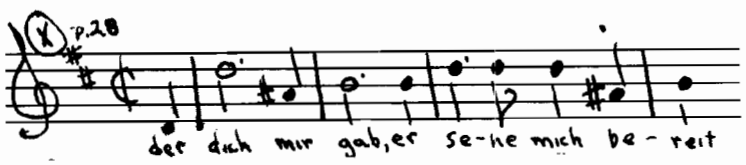


Again we see a recurring motif which originates in the vocal line and is then given over to the orchestra, appearing again and again to represent a specific idea. Again the motif is disguised and altered to a point where it is not immediately recognizable.

Genoveva's motif threads through more of the opera than any other. It is introduced in the overture.



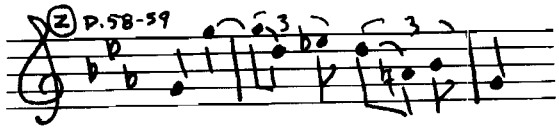
The motif occurs in Act I as she sings her farewells to her husband as he leaves on his journey.



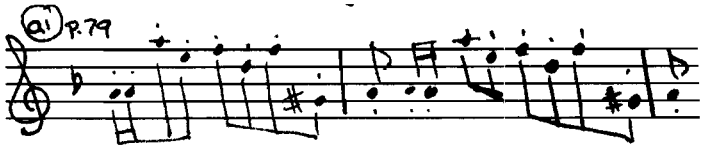
It is contrasted with Golo's first motif throughout the Finale of Act I where Margaretha taunts Golo about his attention to Genoveva. Also notable is the change in the theme. It sounds like Genoveva as Margaretha sees her--an object of scorn. It will be heard again in this same

mocking way.

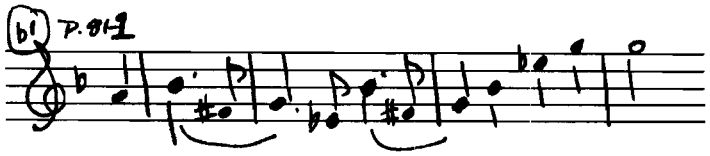
The motif is again contrasted with Golo's in the drinking song in Act II.

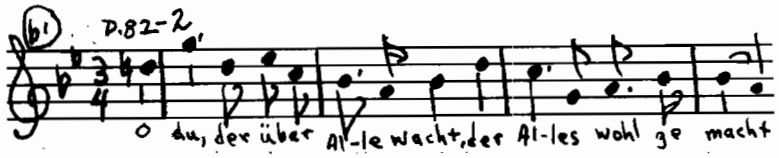


A new cynical and sharply accented version of the motif occurs at Margaretha's entrance in Act II after the duet between Golo and Drago. It alternates and is combined with Golo's first motif. Margaretha tells Golo that she has been listening and has heard Golo trying to arouse Drago's suspicion about Genoveva.

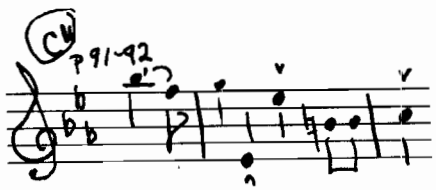


Shortly after this a purer version of the motif is heard, first in the orchestra and then sung by Genoveva as she expresses her fear of Margaretha and Golo and prays for protection.

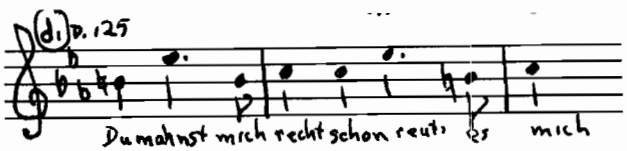




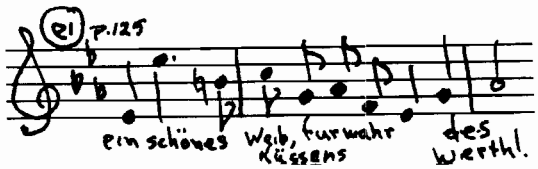
Toward the close of Act II the more lyrical form of the motif is heard contrasted with the cynical version when Genoveva tries to calm the servants. Both versions are heard in the orchestra, but only the cynical version, reflecting their unrest and suspicion, is sung by the servants.



In the Finale of Act III, Siegfried sings a passage reminiscent of the version heard in Example c'. He expresses his doubt in Genoveva and his trust in the honesty of Margaretha and Golo.



Margaretha then sings her mocking version, and repeats the words she sang in the Finale of Act I, "Ein schones Weib, furwahr des Kussens werth!" (c.f. Ex. z).



The motif occurs again as Margaretha unveils her magic mirror.

Whether or not Schumann meant for these recurrent motifs to be noticed as such is difficult to say. It is certain that Schumann purposely used basic motivic material to keep his opera more unified. He does the same type of reworking of musical themes in his keyboard music to obtain unity.

Schumann's way of reworking his motivic material is very different from that of Wagner. Whereas Wagner tries to make his motifs obvious, and they always recur in an almost identical form though in varying surroundings, Schumann seems bent on disguising them, so that they become apparent only after considerable familiarity with the opera. He achieves this obscurity by slightly altering the repetition of the motif, sometimes melodically, sometimes

rhythmically, but never so much that its identity is lost. This treatment may be observed in each motif discussed above. Thus it is questionable whether his manipulation of motifs has real dramatic impetus.

CHAPTER V

THE LEITMOTIF IN THE OPERAS OF RICHARD WAGNER

> To the wonderfully expressive symphonic idiom of the classic and early romantic era Wagner could now add an infinitely more flexible and modernized orchestral technique, of which he will remain one of the greatest wizards of all times. And this modern orchestra takes command, imperiously and with complete disregard for restrictions from any quarter, expressing itself completely and translating unequivocally the composer's intentions and feelings even when those on the stage are hindered from doing so by the limits set by the action and the drama. The orchestra tells the truth always.[1]

The three operas selected to represent Wagner's part in the development of the leitmotif were The Flying Dutchman, 1841, Lohengrin, 1848, and Tristan and Isolda, 1860. The Flying Dutchman was Wagner's first major contribution to opera literature and was still in the operatic tradition of its predecessors. It contains arias, duets, trios, etc., but there are also indications of what is to come in Wagner's later works. Lohengrin is the first opera in which Wagner uses the motif of reminiscence more than once. In Tristan and Isolda the leitmotif has been taken over almost completely by the orchestra. The motif of reminiscence has

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[1] Paul Henry Lang, Music in Western Civilization (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1941), 884.

nearly disappeared. Wagner here considered leitmotifs as "orchestral themes to be treated musically as part of a symphonic web."[2] Wagner describes the motifs in the orchestra during the third act as "'restlessly emerging, developing, combining, separating, then again reuniting, growing, diminishing, finally clashing, embracing and well-nigh engulfing one another.'"[3]

The use of the leitmotif in Tannhauser, 1845, is similar to the usage discussed below in The Flying Dutchman.

In the early operas of The Ring of the Nibelungs, 1854-1874, Wagner's use of the leitmotif is similar to that found in Lohengrin. About half of the motifs in The Rhinegold fit his description of motifs of reminiscence. In Acts I and II of Siegfried most of the leitmotifs originate in the orchestra. Act III of Siegfried and The Twilight of the Gods, composed ten years later, show a shifting away from reminiscence motifs with increasing emphasis on motifs occurring in the orchestra.

The orchestra of The Mastersingers, 1867, "supplies a running commentary on what is being acted and sung without

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[2]Jack M. Stein, Richard Wagner and The Synthesis of the Arts (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1960), 145.

[3]Richard Wagner, Sämtliche Schriften und Dichtungen, quoted in Jack M. Stein, Richard Wagner and The Synthesis of the Arts (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1960), 145.

ever being, in the Opera and Drama sense, subordinated to it."[4] The orchestra has become as important as the stage. Recurring motifs are related to the action in more subtle and less consistent ways than they were in Lohengrin. For instance, the knight, Walter von Stolzing, is on the stage throughout the entire second act, and yet the theme associated with him appears after the midpoint of the act, when he is presented to the mastersingers. Of interest too is the fact that this same motif is polyphonically developed following its introduction and as Walter takes part in the singing contest.

The leitmotif was used with a very high degree of freedom in Parsifal, 1876. Here, as in Tristan and The Mastersingers, leitmotifs are used almost as symbols. This fact takes away the limitations of usage set up in meeting the requirements of the definition of a motif of reminiscence. All but one of the motifs in Parsifal originate in the orchestra and are not at all like the reminiscence motif.

In the Wagner operas the occurrences of the various motifs are too numberous to list and are unnecessary for the purpose of this paper. Complete listings of the motifs of these operas may be found in such books as Edward Terry's A Richard Wagner Dictionary, and Lothar Windsperger's Das buch der motive und themen aus sämtlichen opern

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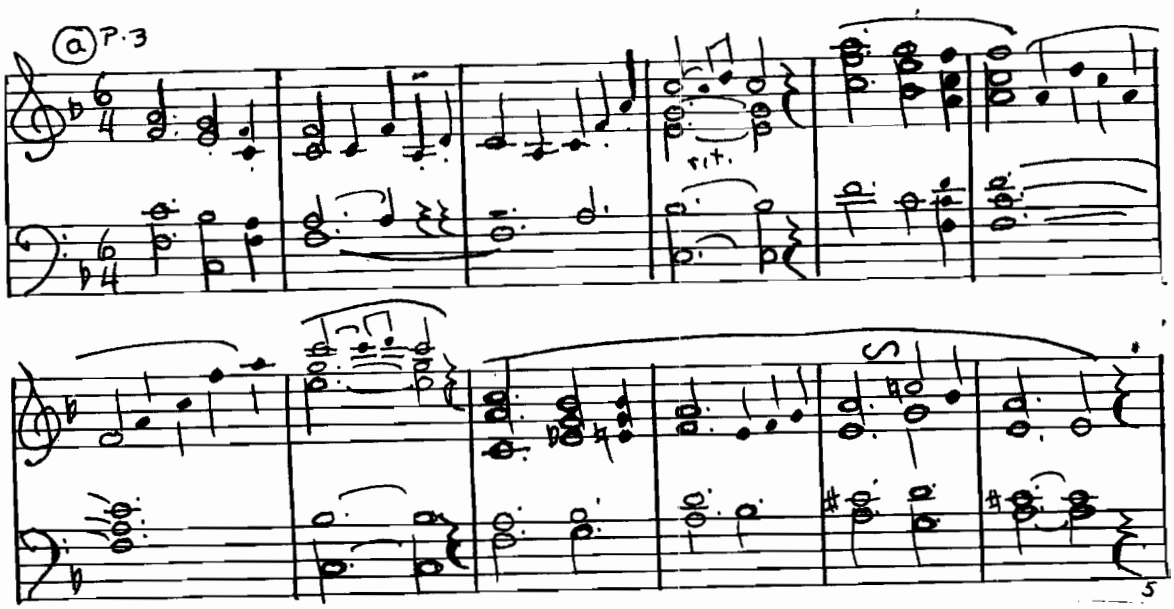
[4] Stein, 177.

und musikdramen Richard Wagner's.[5] In the following analyses, one motif of special importance has been selected from each opera and some of its different uses discussed.

The Flying Dutchman - 1841

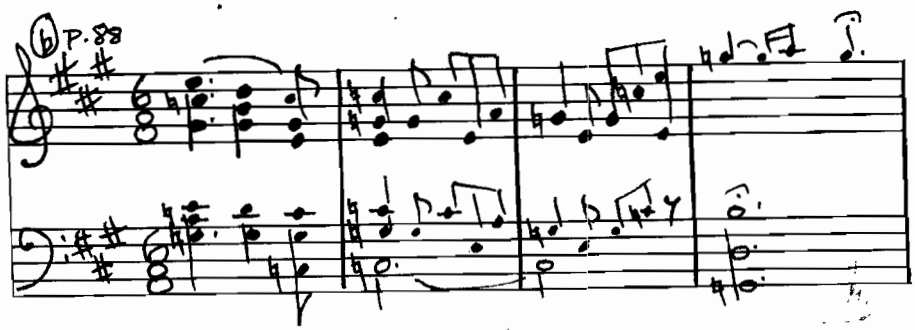
In The Flying Dutchman one motif clearly foreshadows the motif of reminiscence of Wagner's later works. The motif is commonly known as the Redemption motif, and its appearance always suggests the idea of the salvation of the Dutchman through a perfect love. Its most interesting occurrences are discussed here.

The motif is heard first in the overture.



[5] Edward Terry, A Richard Wagner Dictionary (New York: The H. W. Wilson Co., 1939). Lothar Windsperger, Das buch der motive und themen aus sämtlichen opern und musikdramen Richard Wagner's (Mainz: B. Schott's söhne, 1931).

In Act I Senta hums the motif to herself during the spinning chorus.



Her thoughts are occupied with the portrait of the Dutchman at which she gazes. Here the listener is given some idea of the meaning of this motif. The dramatic import of the motif is not clearly defined until Senta sings her Ballade, in which she tells how the Dutchman may be saved by someone who will love him faithfully.

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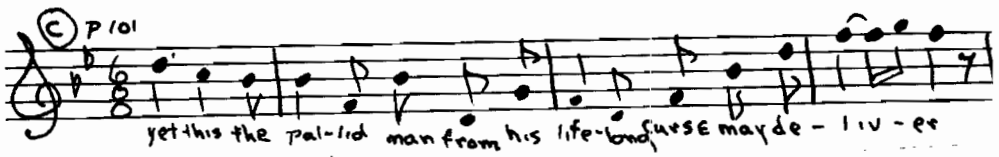
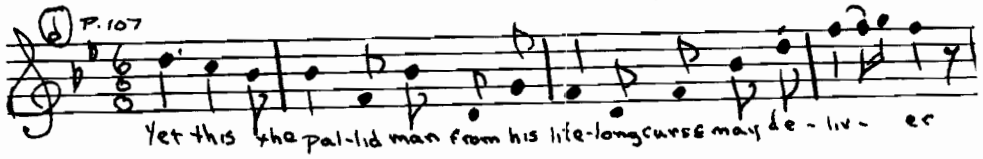
[6] Richard Wagner, The Flying Dutchman (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1897). All page numbers for musical examples cited refer to this edition.

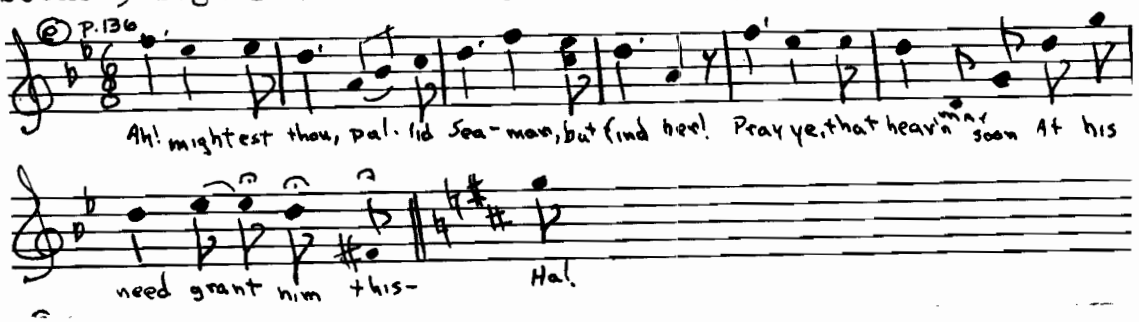


Thus the motif originates in the vocal line and associates itself very clearly with a dramatic idea. The appearances in the orchestra from here on are obvious in their meaning.

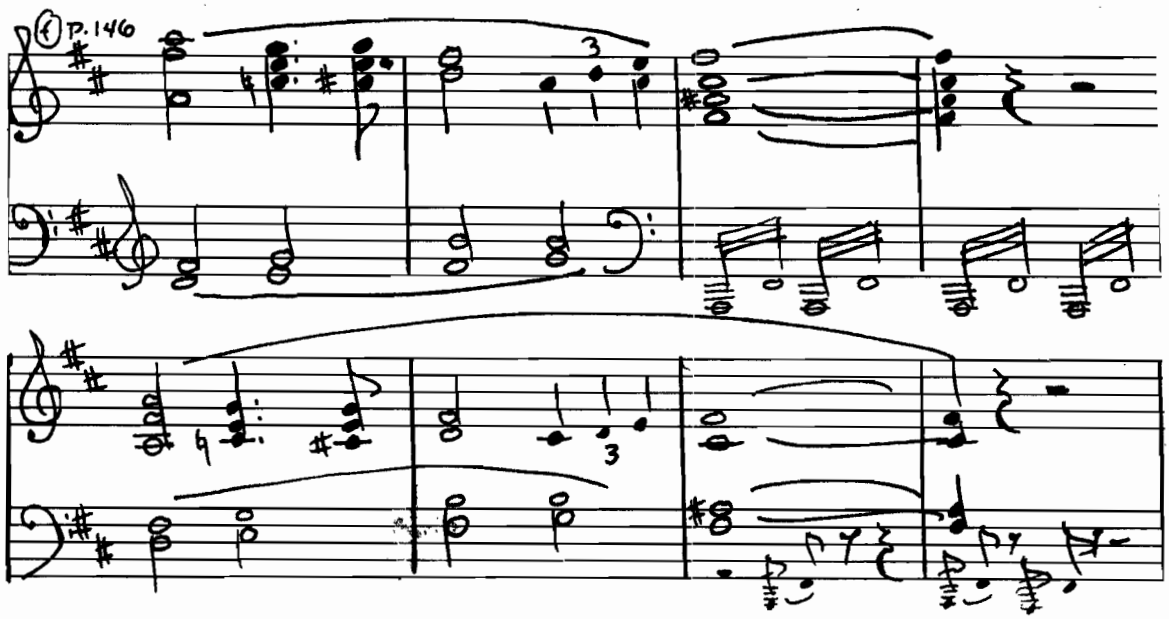
The motif is sung once again in the same scene by the chorus of maidens. They reflect on Senta's story and wonder who will be so faithful as to save the Dutchman from his endless journeying.



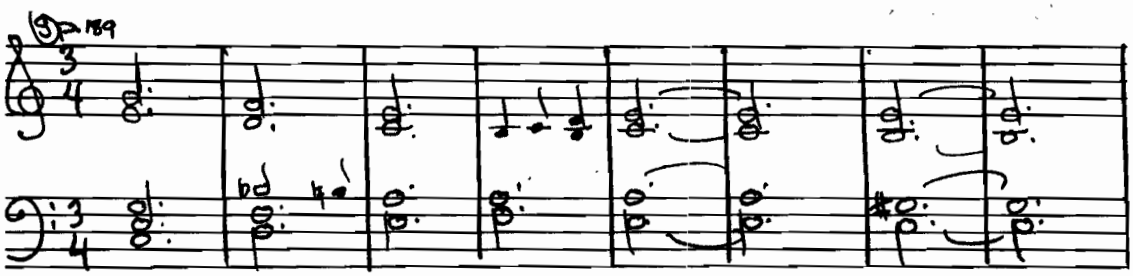
At the conclusion of Scene 8, Act II, Senta sings the motif again. Eric has just told her of his dream, and Senta feels that she must be the one who will give her faithful love to the Dutchman. The motif ends just as Scene 9 begins and the Dutchman enters.



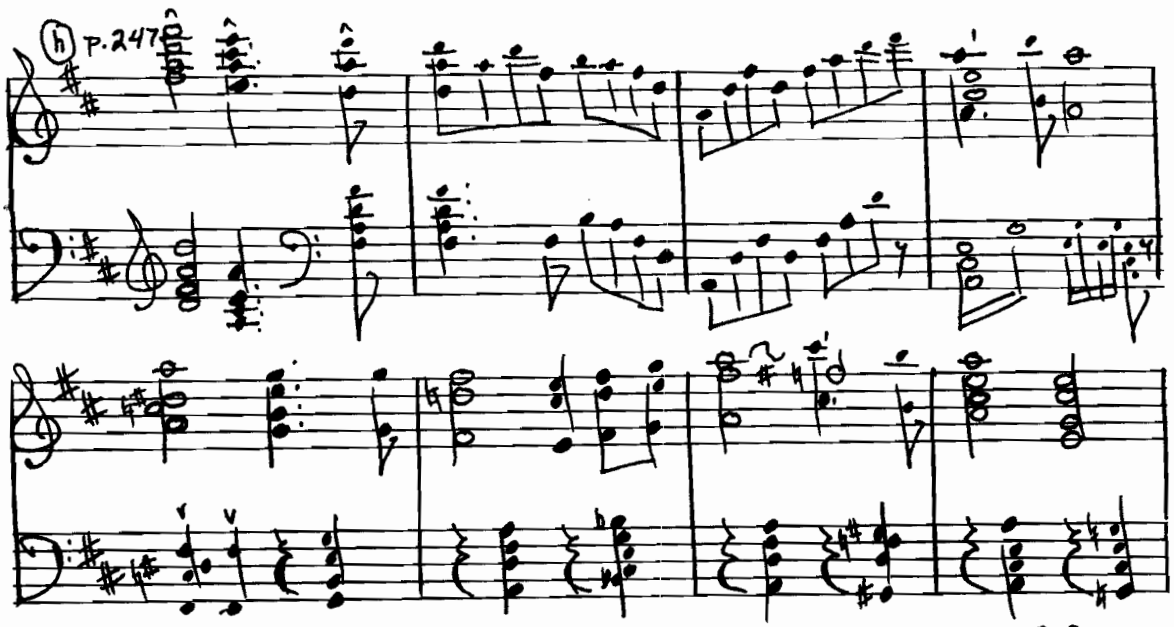
At the close of Scene 10, the Dutchman and Senta are left alone. Senta has recognized him and realizes the awful importance of her part in their love. The Dutchman must be wondering if Senta's love represents his redemption, and as they gaze at one another, the motif is heard in the orchestra.



There is an interesting repetition of this musical idea in Act III when the sailors of Daland's ship and the maidens try to arouse the Dutchman's sailors to join in their fun and feast. The chorus declares that the Dutchman's sailors must be dead, and then they begin to wonder if the ship is not that of the legendary Flying Dutchman.



In the Finale of the opera, after Senta has flung herself into the sea to save the Dutchman, the motif rings out at a very fast tempo, jubilantly proclaiming the redemption of the Dutchman.



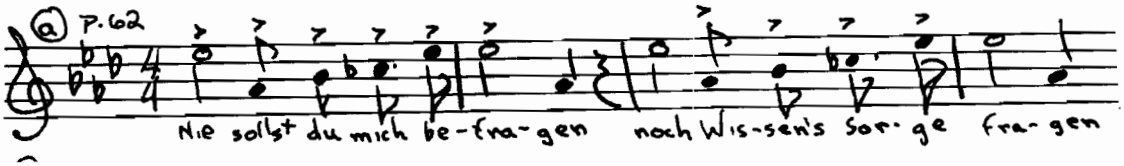
The use of motifs in The Flying Dutchman differs from Weber's Euryanthe only in extent. The Redemption motif, however, is the first motif of reminiscence to be so clearly

defined up to this point. It should also be mentioned that the motif of the Dutchman recurs continually throughout the work, whenever the Dutchman or his ship is suggested. This is a more extensive use of a motif than has yet been seen.

Lohengrin - 1848

Lohengrin contains approximately equal numbers of purely orchestral leitmotifs and motifs of reminiscence. The "Verbot" motif is the central motif of the opera, and it is a prototype of Wagner's definition of the motif of reminiscence in Opera and Drama.[7]

The motif first appears in the vocal line, sung by Lohengrin after his entrance in Act I. "Never, as thou dost love me, aught shall to question move thee, from whence to thee I came, or what my race and name."



[8]

The text and music are repeated almost immediately for further emphasis as Lohengrin tries to impress Elsa with the solemnity of her oath.

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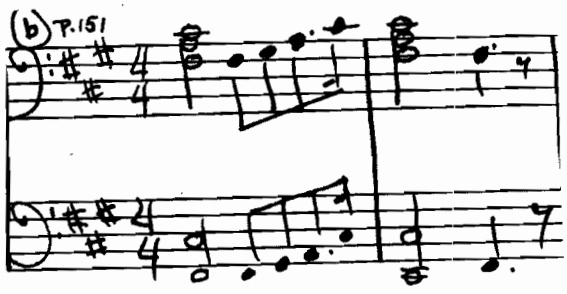
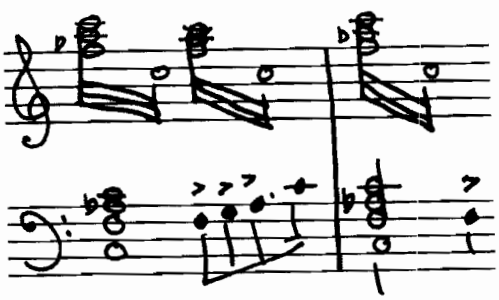
[7]Stein, 57.

[8]Richard Wagner, Lohengrin (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1897). All page numbers for musical examples cited refer to this edition.

In Act II there is an important presentation of the motif. Ortrud is trying to create doubts in Elsa's mind about Lohengrin's origin and his secrecy about himself. As Elsa's faith first begins to waver the motif is heard like a warning from the orchestra.

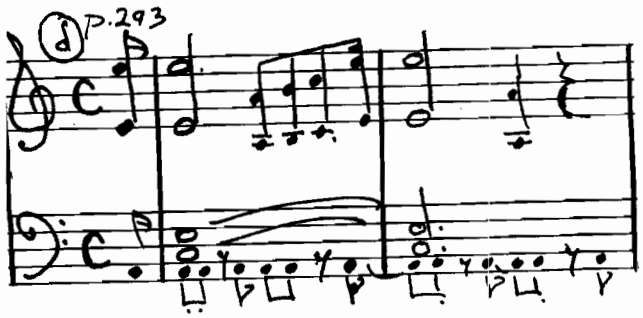


By the close of Act II Elsa becomes terrified at her own doubting. As she and Lohengrin are conducted by the King to the entrance of the Minster, Elsa sees Ortrud who lifts her arm against Elsa with an expression of certain triumph. Elsa in terror turns away, and the motif is heard loudly in the orchestra.

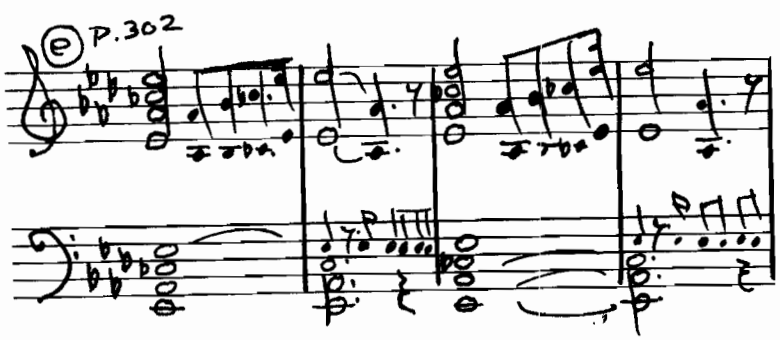


When Elsa and Lohengrin are alone in Scene 2, Act III, Elsa's curiosity becomes too much for her, and she questions Lohengrin directly about his name and his country.

Lohengrin sadly sends her to the King, assuring her that he will join them and reveal everything to them. Elsa is speechless, and as the curtain falls the motif is heard again.



The last appearance of the motif is in the third scene of Act III, immediately preceding Elsa's entrance and Lohengrin's narrative explaining his story and origin. The orchestra plays the motif softly, reminding the listener of Elsa's failure to keep her promise.



In Lohengrin some of the more interesting examples of the "Verbot" motif have been discussed. It is a reminiscence motif like the Redemption motif of The Flying

Dutchman, but it is shorter and completely unchanged in its recurrences. Also after Lohengrin sings it twice with the same text, it is taken over completely by the orchestra. About half of the motifs present in the opera are reminiscence motifs. In this study Lohengrin represents the peak of the use of this type of recurring music.

Tristan and Isolda - 1860

The use of leitmotifs in Tristan and Isolda is very different from that in Wagner's earlier works. Here there are no reminiscence motifs; rather, Wagner uses relatively few, short motifs, many of which are very similar. These motifs provide material suitable to the type of symphonic development that characterizes the music of Tristan.

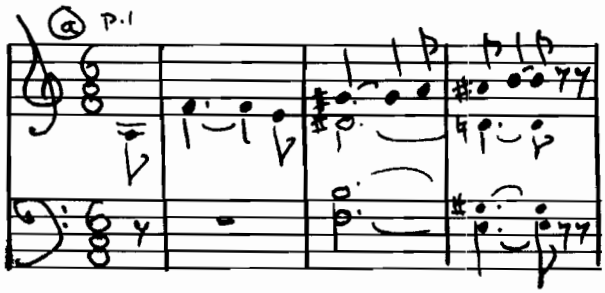
In his text Wagner simplified the outer action of the drama as much as possible. He removed all unnecessary characters and events from the legend. As a result emphasis is placed on the psychological aspects of the drama, expressed by the orchestra through the extensive development of musical motifs.

Speaking of his new theoretical attitudes in writing Tristan and Isolda, Wagner writes in his essay, Music of the Future,

> I will allow the strictest demands growing out of my theoretical assertions to be made of this work, not because I shaped it according to my

> system, for I had completely forgotten all theory; but because here at last I moved with the utmost freedom and with utter disregard of any theoretical scruple, to such an extent that while I wrote I had the sense of far surpassing my system. Believe me, there is no greater satisfaction for the artist than this feeling of total lack of reflection which I experienced in writing my Tristan.[9]

One of the most important musical ideas of the opera occurs in the opening measures of the overture.



[10]

The bracketed motif is here tied together with the motif representing Tristan. This idea permeates the entire opera and is extensively developed and expanded. Samples of the motif will illustrate the technique of handling leitmotifs typical in Tristan and far-removed from the concept of the motif of reminiscence described in Opera and Drama.

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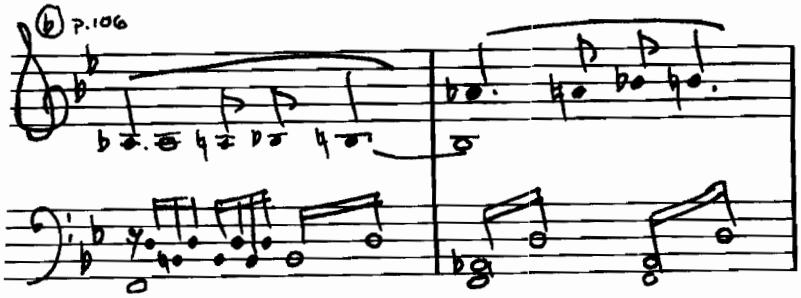
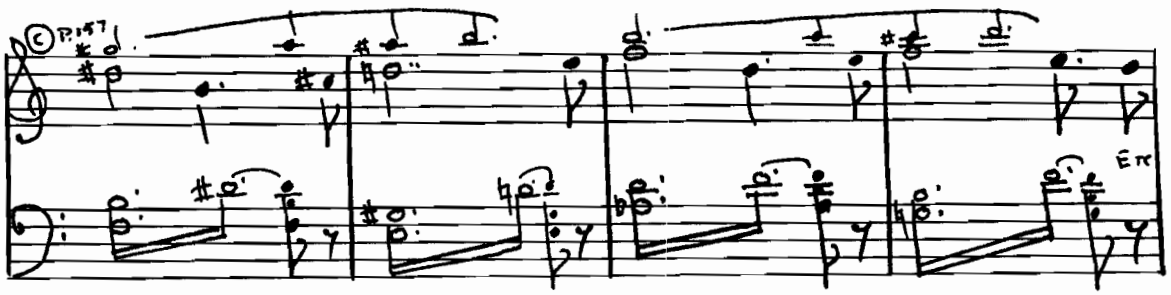
[9]Richard Wagner, Sämtliche Schriften und Dichtungen, quoted in Jack M. Stein, Richard Wagner and the Synthesis of the Arts (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1960), 154.

[10]Richard Wagner, Tristan and Isolda (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1906). All page numbers for musical examples cited refer to this edition.

The motif is heard in the beginning of Act II as Isolda waits excitedly for Tristan. It is played at a fast tempo, indicating Isolda's eagerness, and its harmonization is completely unlike the example heard in the overture.

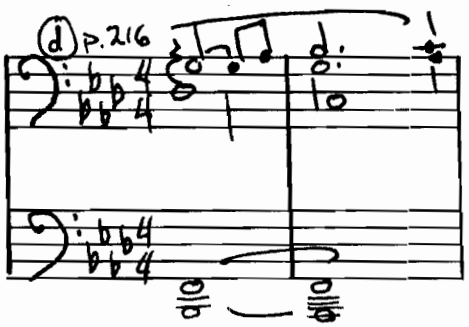


Example c is also from Act II. Tristan and Isolda have met in the garden. The motif precedes their love duet.

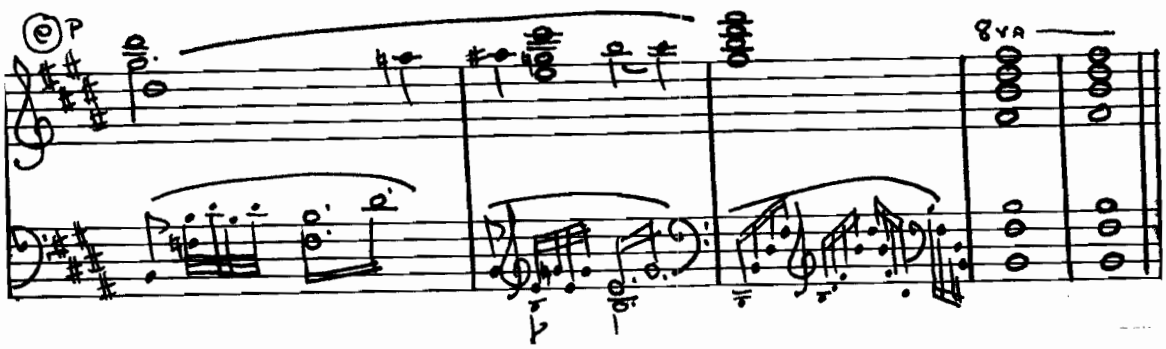


This appearance of the motif is of special interest in that the top line is the Isolda motif, repeated twice with the same harmonic structure as in the overture. The lower line is another motif. The two voices combine in measures 5 and 6 in an ascending chromatic scale.

Somewhat different in rhythm and harmonic structure, the following example shows a variation of the original motif. It is presented in the beginning of Act III describing the gloom and loneliness of Tristan alone on his island. As in the overture the motif is repeated three times.



The final occurrence of the motif is heard at the conclusion of the opera.



The motif is resolved here and represents the only completed statement of the motif in the entire opera, as Tristan and Isolda are at last united in death.

In the works of Weber and his contemporaries, musical motifs used for dramatic significance were incidental to

the structure of the opera. In Wagner's Tristan and Isolda the development of dramatically significant motifs pervades the entire structure. Whereas in the earlier history of the leitmotif, association and memory were necessary to the dramatic significance of a motif, the leitmotifs of Tristan have become symbolic. Many of the motifs from earlier operas were relatively long. Now in Tristan the motifs are short and are constantly developed symphonically. Sometimes several different motifs are worked together. The early use of motifs concerned outer action. Wagner's motifs in Tristan deal with inner moods, and their use is introspective.

These changes in the use of the leitmotif concurred with and were dependent upon the increased importance of the orchestra in Wagner's later operas.

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