

STANISŁAW MONIUSZKO ACADEMY OF MUSIC IN GDAŃSK

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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION (Artistic Work with its description)
prepared as part of the procedure for the award of the academic doctoral degree
in the field of arts, in the artistic discipline of art of music

Supervisor:
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ARTISTIC WORK

Inspirations from the Philosophical Thought of Richard Wagner (1813–1883)
in the Works of Hugo Wolf (1860–1903)
– as Exemplified by Selected Songs

1. H. Wolf, *Paraphrase Uber
Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg von Richard Wagner*
for solo piano, 12:45

2. H. Wolf, *Abendlieder*
for voice and piano to poetry by N. Lenau, 8:59

3. H. Wolf, *Wanderers Nachtlied* from *Sechs Gedichte von Scheffel,
Mörike, Goethe und Kerner* No. 5
for voice and piano to poetry by J.W. Goethe, 2:21

4. H. Wolf, *Nimmersatte Liebe* from *Mörike – Lieder* No. 9
for voice and piano to poetry by E. Mörike, 2:10

5. H. Wolf, *Verborgenheit* from *Mörike – Lieder* No. 12
for voice and piano to poetry by E. Mörike, 2:22

6. H. Wolf, *Im Frühling* from *Mörike – Lieder* No. 13
for voice and piano to poetry by E. Mörike, 4:09

7. H. Wolf, *Gebet* from *Mörike – Lieder* No. 28
for voice and piano to poetry by E. Mörike, 2:10

8. H. Wolf, *Weyla's Gesang* from *Mörike – Lieder* No. 46
for voice and Piano to poetry by E. Mörike, 1:41

Performers:

Paweł Antkowiak – tenor

Julia Wolańska-Gajda – piano

The recording was made at the Chamber Music Atelier on October 2–3, 2025

Recording engineer: Michał Gajda

DESCRIPTION OF THE ARTISTIC WORK

**Inspirations from the philosophical thought of Richard
Wagner (1813–1883) in the work of Hugo Wolf (1860–1903)
– as exemplified by selected songs**

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Introduction

In my case, the process of preparing materials and researching a bibliography on Hugo Wolf was preceded by a work of his, which I included in my repertoire. It was so interesting, even intriguing – both literary and musical – that it sparked a desire to explore other compositions by him.

Exploring subsequent works and delving deeper into Wolf's work sparked a desire to explore the repertoire more closely – both from a performance and listening perspective. During this time, I became convinced that this was undoubtedly the same style and method of creating an artistic work known as a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (a holistic work of art), a term used in the context of Richard Wagner's oeuvre, particularly the stage dramas.

For the most part, all available information about Hugo Wolf is encyclopedic. However, for me, due to the emotional and philosophical depth conveyed by his works, this knowledge seemed too superficial. I was interested in Hugo Wolf as a person and everything related to "humanity" in his case: where he was born, where he was raised; his family, siblings, friends, school... In other words, everything that influenced his way of thinking and perceiving the world. This aspect, in my opinion, had a decisive influence on his work.

Delving deeper into the composer's roots and biography was driven by the desire to find answers to questions that have accompanied me from the beginning, when I began preparing the artistic work, and now, as this work is being created – a description of the recorded electronic medium.

The question is: at what point in Hugo Wolf's life and creative activity did he become a continuator of Richard Wagner's creative philosophy? What caused this state of affairs? Was Wolf aware of this? Did he perceive his work in precisely these terms, outlined by Wagner?

I have no doubt that Wolf's approach to words, which he "embellished with sound," was most influenced by Richard Wagner.

I also have no doubt that Wagner, whose work I became acquainted with – having performed at the Bayreuth Festival for almost a decade – had by far the greatest influence on Wolf.

I am also convinced of the thesis that Wolf identified with Wagner's views on art and that this is heard in his compositions. To provide a broader context for describing the recorded artistic work, which, together with this work, constitutes a doctoral thesis in the artistic discipline of musical arts, it seems appropriate to discuss the concept of the synthetic work of art as embodied by Richard Wagner. The first chapter is therefore devoted to this topic. It describes, among other things, the role of Romanesque opera and Wagner's views on the concept he practiced.

Chapter Two: Hugo Wolf – a profile of the composer in the context of Richard Wagner's creative philosophy, was prepared based on numerous sources that allowed us to describe his personal experiences, spiritual state, and the impulses that influenced the composer's creative endeavors.

We learn most about Wolf from his letters to his closest friends, including Melanie Köchert, with whom the composer shared a close relationship and deep trust, his friend Oskar Grohe, and Emil Kauffmann, the music director at the University of Tübingen, who became a trustworthy figure for Wolf. Reading these letters allowed me to become acquainted with Wolf's everyday problems, reflections, doubts, and views on what he was composing at any given time. His reflections on the works I was preparing as an artistic work, which, together with this description, constitute my doctoral dissertation, were interesting and extremely valuable to me.

By researching the literature on issues that interested me not only in relation to the topic of my thesis, I came across many new musical and musical-related topics that were previously unknown to me. They undoubtedly enriched my knowledge and, while working on the discography, provided many unexpected artistic experiences.

Did Hugo Wolf himself see himself as a continuator of Richard Wagner's creative philosophy? Did Hugo Wolf intend for others to perceive his work in this way? – the materials I managed to access, as well as the composer's surviving correspondence, unequivocally confirm that the answer to both of the above questions is affirmative. Dietrich Fischer-Diskau, in his work entitled *Hugo Wolf: Leben und Werk (Hugo Wolf: Life and Work)*, states:

“Wolf's musical reality is based neither on aesthetic nor musicological judgments”.¹

¹ „Wolfs musikalische Wirklichkeit kümmert sich weder um ästhetische noch um musikwissenschaftliche Urteile“, in: D. Fischer-Dieskau, *Hugo Wolf: Leben und Werk*, Berlin 2003, p. 15. Unless otherwise stated, all translations from English and German were made by the author of the work, Paweł Antkowiak.

In preparing the artistic work, my "guide(s)" were renowned performers of both operatic vocalism and vocal chamber music. I must mention here Fritz Wunderlich, Dietrich Fischer-Diskau, Ian Bostridge (as a non-German-speaking vocalist – which gave me insight into many technical and linguistic issues related to the performance of Romantic period songs, in which he specialized), and Eberhard Büchner (a chamber music competitor), to whom I had the opportunity to be a student and to whom I owe much in terms of the performance of German-language repertoire, including the so-called Mozartian repertoire. Of course, I also listened to many other performers "for illustration."

Performing large parts of the operatic repertoire for many years poses difficulties when it comes to returning to chamber music. However, a song as a small work—in Hugo Wolf's case, a "finished" work, charged with emotion and the necessary vocal technique—requires experience, gained after many years of practice and experience, including life experiences—which ultimately has a decisive impact on the credibility of the performance.

The aforementioned performers are excellent "vocal technicians," whose capital is the language and culture in which they grew up. This does not mean that a performer from outside this cultural and linguistic environment cannot prepare an excellent vocal production from the Romantic period and German vocal lyricism of the 19th century—Ian Bostridge, mentioned above, is an example. However, this is a much more labor-intensive and often "breakneck" task. Referring to *bel canto* technique is definitely not enough. This technique, which has its roots in Italian culture and is mainly "proven" in Italian musical literature, is not the one that is expected in reference to works from the German-speaking world.

During the Romantic period, the concept of the German song "das Lied" arose – similarly to the French *chanson*, the Italian *canzone*, the English *song*, and the Polish *song*. This is primarily related to the linguistic context.

In contemporary musicology, the meaning of the word "das Lied" is narrowed even further to the phenomenon of German lyrical song from the Romantic period. The song became "the fruit of an inspired moment,"² as Professor Mieczysław Tomaszewski writes, and which is directly related to the specificity of performance.

Pure *bel canto* technique will not find favor in German lyric poetry. The required technique is difficult to define unequivocally. It is a combination (based on *bel canto*) of the so-called German school with the Mozartian style, based on the intonation and

² M. Tomaszewski, *Studia nad pieśnią romantyczną*, Kraków 1997, p. 210.

pronunciation of the German language, the imposition of vowels and consonants. Above all, the word itself is intended to evoke cantabile (songiness), and this results in the expression of feelings.

Taking up the topic that resulted in this recorded artistic work and this description meant in-depth study of German-language musical literature, particularly Romanticism and Neo-Romanticism. This entire preparation process was influenced by my long-standing work in German theaters, including a decade at the Wagner Festival in Bayreuth, where I became familiar with virtually the entire operatic repertoire of Richard Wagner. Contact with authorities in this field: vocalists, conductors, and pianists, was also crucial.

This artistic work, presented in this way, which, together with this work describing it, constitutes my doctoral dissertation, is the result of my many personal experiences and choices.

Chapter I

Richard Wagner – the Concept of the Synthetic Work of Art

1.1. Realizing Ideas within Existing Musical Norms

Wagner consciously demonstrated his struggle for artistic coherence and identity, both in his writings and in his musical dramas themselves, offering himself as his own critic – an artist full of awareness and control.³

*"The integrationist aspirations, the ever-present striving for synthesis, correspond to the need to evoke holistic concepts. Such a concept is Gesamtkunstwerk, commonly used to designate a work composed of various types of art."*⁴

For the purposes of this dissertation, I am interested in the concept of Gesamtkunstwerk in relation to the work of Richard Wagner. This concept appeared in Wagner around 1850, and – as musicologists emphasize – Wagner himself protested against his life's work being confined solely to this concept. Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling wrote in his Philosophy of Art:

*"I merely observe that the most perfect combination of all arts, the combination of poetry and music through song, poetry and painting through dance, a re-synthesized composition, is the most complex [!] theatrical phenomenon, such as the drama of antiquity [!], of which only caricature [!] remains, opera remains."*⁵

³ A. Glauert, *Hugo Wolf and the Wagnerian inheritance*, Cambridge University Press 1999. Amanda Glauert is a senior lecturer at the Royal Academy of Music and has contributed articles to the New Grove Dictionary of Opera, Wagner in Performance (Yale University Press) and The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

⁴ Regarding the definition of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, see: H. Szeemann, *Vorbereitungen*, in: *Der Hang zum Gesamtkunstwerk Europäische Utopien seit 1800*, Aarau-Frankfurt/M 1983 [Exhibition catalogue Zürich, Düsseldorf, Vienna 1983], p. 16–21.

⁵ „Poesie und Musik durch Gesang, von Poesie und Malerei durch Tanz, selbst wieder synthetisiert die componierteste [!] Theatererscheinung ist, dergleichen das Drama des Altherthums [!] war, wovon uns nur eine Karrikatur [!], die Oper geblieben ist“, w: G. Westernhagen, *Wagner: A Biography* (trans. W.M. Whittall), vol. I, Cambridge 1978, p. 146–147.

The term "Gesamtkunstwerk" has been and continues to be used in art history in reference to various "collective works." Elżbieta Gieysztor-Miłobędzka, in her article "In Defense of "Wholeness," explains the concept of "Gesamtkunstwerk" based on the writings of Richard Wagner:

"Collective work = coexistence of arts – an understanding based on the intellectual, aesthetic concept of "correspondence of arts," with origins dating back to ancient times in the Horatian ut pictura poesis (Latin: poetry should be like a painting).

Synthetic work = a supra-genre fusion of arts/elements, in which they are a means to convey a transcendental vision – an understanding that assumes material, ideational, and emotional unity, with Romantic origins. The first way of understanding a comprehensive work can be called the "collective-aesthetic concept," the second – the "synthetic-metaphysical concept." This is the latter way in which its creator, Richard Wagner, understood the Gesamtkunstwerk."⁶

Amanda Glauert, in her article "Music of the Future? The Nature of the Wagnerian Legacy," wrote:

"When in 1900 the famous Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick called Mahler, Strauss, and Wolf "Musical Secession," he could not have found a less sympathetic group of companions. Wolf believed that Strauss's music influenced madness, Mahler hated Wolf's songs for their emphasis on "declamation," while Strauss and Mahler respected each other across a chasm of mutual incomprehension. One could say that Hanslick revealed his ignorance of the complexities of post-Wagnerian movements and relied on the simplest cultural distinctions. It is true that Mahler, Strauss, and Wolf can be quickly identified as those who believed in the artist as a revolutionary hero—in contrast to artists who emphasized respect for the past. If Hanslick in 1900 had still defined artistic "Secession" as leaving behind all generally accepted criteria of beauty, demanding freedom to establish one's own standards of truth and value, If they were true, all three would undoubtedly be

⁶ R. Wagner (1849), *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, in: *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen*, Bd. 2, Berlin-Leipzig-Wien-Stuttgart 1939, p. 43–177. See M.G. Dellin, *Richard Wagner mein Denken*, München 1982.

"secessionists." But so would almost every other famous Austro-German composer of the late 19th century, with the perhaps notable exception of Brahms.

*Brahms's music certainly continued to focus on the power of classical forms and technique; but as Schoenberg noted in his essay "Brahms the Progressive," this direct continuity with the past was a complex and individual achievement. In Austria or Germany at the end of the 19th century, all norms of musical expectation were more easily filtered through Wagner than through Brahms, but with confusing consequences for Wagner."*⁷

Agata Kochanowska, in her work "Wenn das Wort dem Ton gehorchen muss." Librettist Richard Wagner (When Word Must Subordinate to Sound. Librettist Richard Wagner) wrote:

*"Musica e parole" is the equivalent of the German word "Musik und Worte" and belongs to a broader context, namely in the phrase "Prima la musica e poi le parole," which in German means: "First the music, then the words."*⁸

This is how Antonio Salieri, the court kapelmeister of Vienna, understood the relationship between text and music. Mozart, who wrote a similar view in a letter to his father in October 1781:

*"...in opera, poetry must be the absolutely obedient daughter of music."*⁹

⁷ A. Glauert, *Wagner*, Journal: Nineteenth-Century Music Review, t. 6, nr 1, June 2009. Edited online by Cambridge University Press: 13 April 2011, p. 113–117.

⁸ „Musica e parole” sind ein Äquivalent der deutschen Wörter „Musik und Worte” und gehören in einen breiteren Kontext, nämlich in den Satz „Prima la musica e poi le parole”, was auf Deutsch so viel, wie „Erst die Musik, dann die Worte” bedeutet”, in: A. Kochanowska, *Wenn das Wort dem Ton gehorchen muss. Der Librettist Richard Wagner und sein Ring des Nibelungen*, Faculty of Modern Languages UAM in Poznań, Poznań 2017.

⁹ „...Bei einer Opera muß schlechterdings die Poesie der Musick gehorsame Tochter sein”, in: L. Schidermair (Hrsg.), *Die Briefe W. A. Mozarts und seiner Familie*, 5 Bände, Band 2, München / Leipzig 1914, p. 127–129.

An opponent of this concept was Christoph W. Gluck, whose statement can be read in the introduction to the opera *Alceste*:

*"I have tried... to restore music to its true purpose, namely, to serve poetry."*¹⁰

Between these two poles of great 18th-century composers, Richard Wagner's realization of the idea of a synthetic work of art, the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, was an extremely difficult process.

1.2. The Dramatic Superiority of Romanesque Opera

What Richard Wagner wrote about in his theoretical writings and how he understood his work translated into what came to be known as a "total work." His stage dramas:

Der Fliegende Holländer (The Flying Dutchman),

Tannhäuser und der Sängerkrieg auf Wartburg (Tannhäuser and the Singers' Tournament on the Wartburg),

Lohengrin,

Der Ring des Nibelungen (The Ring of the Nibelung),

Das Rheingold (The Rheingold),

Die Walküre (The Valkyrie),

Siegfried (Siegfried),

Götterdämmerung (The Twilight of the Gods),

Tristan und Isolde (Tristan and Isolde),

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (The Meistersinger of Nuremberg),

Parsifal

– these are works in which both the art of words and the art of sound are combined into one on the same artistic level. Wagner created the dramatic action as a synthesis of art. With this in mind, he wrote librettos, music, and stage directions (directions for those performing his plays). In doing so, he transformed the expressive capacity of Romantic music and the practical foundations of opera. His mastery of technical means, his treatment

¹⁰ K. Honolka, *Der Musik gehorsame Tochter. Opern – Dichter – Operndichter*, Stuttgart 1962, p. 15.

of the chorus, and especially the orchestra, revealed the composer's mastery and uniqueness¹¹.

Wagner himself began to understand the dominance and dramatic superiority of Romanesque opera over the old-fashioned, out-of-date, "learned" music of young German composers when he was captivated by Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient (1804–1860) in an opera by Vincenzo Bellini (1801–1835). He was first captivated by the sensual frivolity of mood emanating from French-Italian music. He heard it with equal force in the works of Wilhelm Heins (1746–1803) and the authors of the literary movement *Junges Deutschland* (Young Germany), whose writings he admired. The closest of them was Heinrich Laube (1806–1884), with whom he had befriended since 1832. On June 10, 1834, Wagner's first writing appeared in the *Zeitung für die Deutsche Oper* (Newspaper for German Opera), a magazine edited by Heinrich Laube. On June 10, 1834, Wagner's first essay on German opera, *Die Deutsche Oper*, appeared. For many years, among the representatives of modern German literature, Heinrich Heine (1797–1856) exerted the strongest poetic influence on Wagner.¹²

When Wagner decided to continue adapting the *Der Ring des Nibelungen* tetralogy, he wrote in a letter to a friend:

*"The next revolution must absolutely bring an end to our entire theatrical economy: all must and will fall; that is inevitable. Then I will extract from the ruins everything I need. (...) On the Rhine, I will establish a theater and invite you to a great dramatic feast. After a year of preparation, I will complete all my work in four days: with it, I will then present the meaning of this revolution to the public, according to its noblest intentions, for them to discern. This audience will understand me: the present one cannot."*¹³

¹¹ H. Renggli, *Richard Wagner*, in: A. Kotte (Hrsg.), *Theaterlexikon der Schweiz*, tom 3, Chronos, Zürich 2005, p. 2037.

¹² P. Bekker, *Wagner das Leben im Werke*, Deutsche Verlags – Anstalt 1924.

¹³ „Die nächste Revolution muß notwendig unsrer ganzen Theaterwirtschaft das Ende bringen: sie müssen und werden alle zusammenbrechen, dies ist unausbleiblich. Aus den Trümmern rufe ich mir dann zusammen, was ich brauche. (...) Am Rheine schlage ich dann ein Theater auf, und lade zu einem großen dramatischen feste ein: nach einem Jahre Vorbereitung führe ich dann im Laufe von vier tagen mein ganzes Werk auf: mit ihm gebe ich den Menschen der Revolution dann die Bedeutung dieser Revolution, nach ihrem edelsten sinne, zu erkennen. Dieses Publikum wird mich verstehen: das jetzige kann es nicht“, in: R. Wagner, *Über die Benennung ‚Musikdrama‘* (1872), in: R. Wagner, *Dichtungen und Schriften* (Anm. 6), Bd. 9, p. 271–277.

Through his tetralogy, Wagner sought to disrupt the traditional theatrical system and introduce a prototype for a new type of musical drama, in contrast to traditional opera. He wrote:

*"The entire worldview found its fullest artistic expression," and not only "through music."*¹⁴

Initially, Wagner created the poetics of drama through various motifs from the sagas. An example is *Tannhäuser*, which he composed from the summer of 1843 to the spring of 1845. *Tannhäuser und Sängerkrieg auf der Wartburg* is a compilation: *Über den Krieg von Wartburg* (About the War on the Wartburg) by Christian Theodor Ludwig Lucas (1796–1854); the content of *the Tannhäuser Songs* They date from 1515 and the 13th-century collection of poems, *Sängerkrieg auf der Wartburg* (Wartburg Singers' Tournament).

There are also some references to E.T.A. Hoffmann's short story "Der Kampf der Sänger" (The Singers' Tournament) (from 1818) and to Heinrich Heine's "Die alten, bösen Lieder" (The Old, Bad Songs).

Influenced by the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), Wagner deepened the poetic and moral content and musically enriched it by boldly developing the compositional style later tested in *Tristan und Isolde* (Tristan and Isolde).¹⁵

He did the same with the opera "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg" (The Meistersingers of Nuremberg), which he completed in March 1848. He drew the text of the drama from the epic poem of the same name by the Bavarian author and from the foreword by its publisher, Joseph Görres (1776–1848), who pointed to various related sagas from the Middle Ages. He found some of these in the *Deutsche Sagen* (German Sagas) by the brothers Wilhelm Karl (1786–1859) and Jacob Grimm (1785–1863). He also borrowed motifs from Weber's opera *Euryanthe*, several scenes from Heinrich Marschner's (1795–1861) *Templer und Juden*, Karl Immermann's *Merlin* (1796–1840), and the *Nibelungenlied*.

¹⁴ „Ganze Weltanschauung hat ihren vollendesten künstlerischen Ausdruck“ gefunden, und dies nicht zuletzt „erst durch die Musik“, in: L. Bornscheuer, *Wagner: Der Ring des Nibelungen, ein Meisterwerk des Anarchismus*, p. 12.

¹⁵ F. Muncker, *Wagner, Richard*, in: *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (ADB), part 40, Duncker & Humblot, Leipzig 1896, p. 544–571.

1.3. Equivalence of the Plays

The music for *Lohengrin* also marked another step forward for Wagner. The traditional opera form and old operatic melodies were less evident in it than in *Tannhäuser*. The music served the drama entirely. The purely lyrical song sections were also adapted to the dramatic development of the action; above all, individual melodies were intended for dramatic, expressive declamation.¹⁶

While working on the instrumentation for *Lohengrin*, Richard Wagner "designed" the musical drama *Friedrich der Rothbart* (Frederick I Barbarossa) (1122–1190) in the face of political events in Germany. Convinced that historical and political conditions limited him, he turned to mythical heroes. Based on the Nibelungenlied myth, he wrote the stage drama *Siegfried's Tod* (Siegfried's Death), the libretto for which was ready in the autumn of 1848.¹⁷

After the revolution (Dresden, May 1849), he expected an improvement in the general state of culture and the associated artistic reform. To this end, he devised a reform plan, which he presented to the Saxon Minister of Culture.

It should be emphasized that Richard Wagner participated in the assembly of the *Vaterlandsverein* (Patriotic Association), and his periodical *Die Revolution*, directed against the nobility and the power of money, appeared in *Röckel's Volksblätter* (People's Magazine). However, he was less consistent and radical in his republican aspirations than his comrades, who viewed him as an impractical fantasist loyal to the king.

At this time, he wrote his treatise *Die Wibelungen, Weltgeschichte aus der Sage* – a preliminary stage to his main work *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (The Ring of the Nibelung), the concept of which was developed at the same time as the project for Siegfried. For political reasons, however, an investigation was launched against him. He fled first to Weimar, where he found refuge with Franz Liszt, and then to Zurich on May 29th.

Wagner actively participated in Zurich's musical life. During concerts, he presented selected excerpts from the operas *Rienzi*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Lohengrin*, among others, which proved a success. During this time, he also wrote reformist writings, including *Die Kunst und die Revolution* (1849) [Art and Revolution], *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (1850) [The Artwork of the Future], *Kunst und Klima* (1850) [Art

¹⁶ Ibidem.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

and Climate], and the three-volume work *Oper und Drama* (1851) [Opera and Drama], in which he revealed his views in their fullest detail.

In line with numerous statements by "older thinkers," and especially with Anselm Feuerbach's (1829–1880) work "On the Vatican Appolo," he showed how ancient tragedy cooperated with all the arts to achieve the highest artistic level, how it declined after Greece lost its freedom and in the service of the Church; how it became degenerate and ossified.

A similar thing happened, in his opinion, with oratorios and operas, which served as a source of spiritual uplift for the entire people, and to a small extent, "a pleasure of the senses, reduced to the cheapness of luxury." Wagner expected a rebirth of true art, its most perfect works, and true drama in the future, if one day a "great revolution of humanity" would eradicate slavery in all its forms and set the people free.¹⁸

1.4. Views on the Concept

However, as Thomas Mann argues in *Auseinandersetzung mit Richard Wagner* (Confrontations with Wagner):

“...we can “learn” little about Wagner from Wagner’s writings.”¹⁹

In a theory that many found difficult to take seriously, Wagner postulated a union of the artist of words and sound with poetry and music. The equality and equivalence of both arts, which do not limit each other but complement each other, whose power lies in their unity, without which a “holistic” work of art would not be possible.

Wagner, however, managed to fulfill his theoretical postulates in practice. The author of the tetralogy is considered an artist who devoted his entire life to the art of music. His life's work, among other things, emphasizes the appropriate and artistically satisfying relationship between word and sound.

There are opinions, such as that of Kurt Honolka, that Wagner was governed by the primacy of words, and that in his creative process, the text came first, and only then the music. Wagner also read and published his texts without music, which, in his opinion,

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ „...Man kann aus Wagners Schriften nicht viel über Wagner lernen“, in: T. Mann, *Auseinandersetzung mit Richard Wagner; Wagner und unsere Zeit*, p. 27–28.

meant that they held a special place within the word-sound pair for their author. The work on them, as well as the preparations for them and Wagner's train of thought regarding the preparation of the material and the forms of his poetry, were the subject of numerous letters to friends.

However, the question arises: does this truly indicate the importance of the elements that appeared first, or should this not be overinterpreted, especially in light of the frequently emphasized fact that each of Wagner's words was already created with a premonition of its musical counterpart? Honolka wrote:

“Musical drama was much more inconceivable for [Wagner] than for words to create tone. The weight of importance shifted radically: in a comprehensive work of art in the Wagnerian style, the text determines the musical form. (...) The other side of the coin presents music as a servant. It relinquished its freedom and renounced its birthright.”²⁰

According to this view, in Wagner's musical and literary work, each note is conditioned by the word and its musical form, determined by the poetic imagination.

However, there is a view that the opposite should be argued:

“Wagner's music had such an absorbing dominance that it consumed the text like a carnivorous plant.”²¹

From this perspective, the word barely had a right to its own autonomous existence. Everything was subordinated to sound, the entire creative process, from the moment the idea for the work germinated in Wagner's mind. According to this approach, the text was subordinated to the music and was created solely as a pretext to serve as

²⁰ „Vielmehr war für [Wagner] musikalisches Drama überhaupt gar nicht anders denkbar, als indem das Wort den Ton erzeugte. Die Gewichte verschoben sich radikal: Im Gesamtkunstwerk Wagnerscher Prägung bestimmt der Text musikalische Form. (...) Die Kehrseite der Medaille zeigt die Musik als dienstbare Magd. Sie hat sich ihrer Freiheit begeben und auf ihre Erstgeburtsrechte verzichtet“, w: K. Honolka, *Der Musik gehorsame....* op. cit., p. 19.

²¹ „Wagners Musik war „von so einsaugender Dominanz, daß sie den Text verdaute wie eine fleischfressende Pflanze“, in: M. Gregor-Dellin, *Richard Wagner. Sein Leben – Sein Werk – Sein Jahrhundert*, München 1980, p. 807.

a framework for the composition. In such a case, the lyrics would have to be of low quality, lacking any meaning independent of the music, which they certainly weren't.

It should be noted here that the very concept of a total work as a work of art was not introduced or invented by Wagner. The term "Gesamtkunstwerk" first appears in 1827 in Eusebius Trahndorff's writing under the title "Aesthetics or Worldview and Art." It wasn't until 22 years later that it was used by Wagner. It is unknown, however, whether Wagner adopted it from Trahndorff or whether he was even aware of its existence.

Generally, however, the authorship of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* philosophy is attributed to Wagner, who popularized it, focused on its nature and general conditions, without naming and rarely using the concept of a total work.²² However, he was preoccupied with this phenomenon and therefore described it in detail.²³ The term is also often used in a much narrower sense than its creator intended. Wagner postulated the unity of all arts, three of which he explicitly mentioned: the art of dance (first and foremost!), the art of music, and the art of poetry. In *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, Wagner wrote:

*"Has fashion or custom allowed us a true form of writing and speech: "tichten" for the revival of poetry, so we win in the combined name of the three primordial human arts, dance, sound, and poetry, a beautifully characteristic sensual image of the character of these three united sisters, that is, perfect alliteration, as it is in our own, primordial language."*²⁴

In the general use of this term, the art of dance is omitted, as it has virtually no reference to Wagner's works, and thus the term is limited only to the word-sound relationship.

²² R. Wagner, *Die Kunst und die Revolution*, in: W. Golther (Hrsg.), *Richard Wagner. Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen in zehn Bänden*, Band 3, Berlin – Leipzig – Wien – Stuttgart 1913, p. 12.

²³ Ibidem, p. 156, 159.

²⁴ „Gestattete es uns die Mode oder der Gebrauch, die echte und wahre Schreib- und Sprechart: tichten für dichten, wieder aufzunehmen, so gewännen wir in den zusammengestellten Namen der drei urmenschlichen Künste, Tanz-, Ton- und Tichtkunst, ein schön bezeichnendes sinnliches Bild von dem Wesen dieser dreieinigen Schwestern, nämlich einen vollkommenen Stabreim, wie er unserer Sprache ursprünglich zu eigen ist“, in: ibidem, p. 102.

For Wagner, the complete work of art he envisioned was:

“...the child of music (woman) and poet (male begetter).”²⁵

Wagner therefore demanded the fusion of music and poetry into a single whole. However, the ideal required the unity of poet and composer. The composer therefore asked himself:

“Should we think of the poet and musician as two persons or just one?”²⁶

Wagner opted for the second possibility:

“For me, the emphasis is on the union of poet and musician; as a mere (mere) musician, I could not be of much importance.”²⁷

The turning point for Wagner, as scholars claim, and Wagner himself speaks of his personal union of musician and poet, came when he began working on *The Flying Dutchman*:

“From then on, my career as a poet begins, from the moment I created opera texts.”²⁸

²⁵ „...Ein Kind von der Musik (dem Weib) und dem Dichter (dem zeugenden Mann)“, in: ibidem, p. 316–319.

²⁶ „Ob wir uns Dichter und Musiker in zwei Personen oder nur in einer zu denken haben sollen“, in: ibidem, p. 208.

²⁷ „Bei mir ist der Akzent auf die Vereinigung des Dichters und des Musikers zu legen, als bloßer Musiker hätte ich nicht viel zu bedeuten“, in: A. Mielke (Hrsg.), *Richard Wagner. Sämtliche Briefe*, Band 21, Briefe des Jahres 1869, Leipzig 1988, p. 421.

²⁸ „Von hier an beginnt meine Laufbahn als Dichter, mit der ich die des Verfertigers von Operntexten verließ“, in: R. Wagner, *Eine Mitteilung an meine Freunde*, w: W. Golther (Hrsg.), *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen*, Bd. 4, p. 266.

Wagner began to be an artist who performs a "total work":

*"...they are one; because each knows and feels what the other knows and feels. The poet is a musician, the musician a poet: now both are complete, perfect artists."*²⁹

According to Elżbieta Gieysztor-Miłobędzka in the previously cited article entitled "In Defense of "Wholeness"...", Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* encompassed three factors that determine the existence of a work of art: the creative process – the work itself – and its perception/participation. This concept stemmed from the Romantic understanding of art, the artist, and the type of art he created. The work was realized o in its execution, its functioning, and its reception. The creative-perceptual model of Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* was modified in art history to be "one-sided." Szeemann thus turned his attention to the creative act, not the work itself (context), as the subject of art history.³⁰ Aesthetics in the 1970s responded to this situation in the artistic world: interest in the process of creation and realization increased. Sircello advised then to "think about the work of art from the perspective of its creation,"³¹ while Eco recommended "giving interest not to what is created, but to the way in which it was created."³²

Gesamtkunstwerk "bypasses" the divisions into genres, forms, and content that persist in art history and eliminates the division between "artificial (synthetic) *Gesamtkunstwerk*"—as in Wagner's works—and "natural *Gesamtkunstwerk*"—the coexistence of the arts.

In any case, *Gesamtkunstwerk* – comprehensive, complete works, presenting a balance of art forms used in their formula, maintaining a balance between words, music, and image – can be seen and heard on the festival stage in Bayreuth, where their creator and proponent of this creative philosophy found a place for their presentation and confrontation with the audience.

²⁹ „...[s]ie sind eins; denn jeder weiß und fühlt, was der andere weiß und fühlt. Der Dichter ist Musiker geworden, der Musiker Dichter: jetzt sind sie beide vollkommener künstlerischer Mensch”, in: R. Wagner, *Oper und Drama*, Band 4, p. 159.

³⁰ H. Szeemann, *Vorbereitungen*, in: *Der Hang zum Gesamtkunstwerk. Eurapische Utopien seit 1800*, Aarau-Frankfurt/M 1983 [Exhibition catalogue Zürich, Düsseldorf, Vienna 1983], p. 16–21.

³¹ G. Sircello, *Mind and Art: an Essay on the Varieties of Expression*, Princeton 1971.

³² U. Eco, *Innovation and Repetition: Between Modern and Post-Modern Aesthetics*, „Daedalus” 114:1985 (Fall), p. 183.

Chapter II

Hugo Wolf – a profile of the composer in the context of Richard Wagner's creative philosophy

2.1. Introduction

Hugo Wolf (born March 13, 1860, in Slovenj Gradec, Slovenia; died February 22, 1903, in Vienna) is the only known European composer of the 19th century whose popularity and recognition are based almost exclusively on his song compositions (approximately 300 works).

He was born at a time when song writing already had a rich history, encompassing works by Carl Loewe, Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, and Johannes Brahms, among others. At a time when works were being written within the concept of "das Lied," narrowed to the phenomenon of German lyrical song.³³ Despite this, or perhaps precisely because of it, Wolf believed in the originality of poetry and sought to present verse in musical form.

In terms of the subject matter of the artistic work and its description, that is, the "Wagnerian elements" in Wolf's work, two collections of his representative works are of particular interest: the *Mörike Lieder*, which initiated the so-called mature period in his work, and the *Spanish Liederbuch*, which presents his originality in full bloom. In these collections, as well as in the *Gedichte von Goethe*, one can find a characteristic monumentalization of form and the most artistically complete works with so-called post-Wagnerian musical articulation.

To understand Wolf's work, which is relatively "orderly" in terms of its content, it is necessary to examine the conditions in which it was created.

The composer's correspondence is extremely valuable in this regard. The question of his well-being, including his current location and work, which dominates his letters, allows for insight into the "duality" that characterized his life and career.

The circumstances in which Wolf found himself at a given stage of his life and career offered a range of alternative choices, and these, in turn, and his reactions to them, ranged from creative ecstasy to profound anxiety and periods of artistic paralysis. In many cases, his decisions seem to oscillate between extremes. Indecision and anxiety were states that constantly accompanied him. In many cases, his work is the product of conflicts

³³ M. Tomaszewski, *Studia nad pieśnią romantyczną*, Kraków 1997.

between his internal creative impulses, reinforced by what he perceived as the best direction for his career, and his perception at a given stage of his career. Examples of these conflicts include "Wagnerian tendencies" and the desire to create large-scale works, and an innate tendency toward concentrated expression focused on the level of words, in the context of the "post-Wagnerian" cultural trend.

Wolf's internal struggles with his creative potential, his expectations for himself, and his perception of himself in his works, compounded by the psychological problems that plagued his adult life, led to a final duality: on the one hand, doubt, and on the other, sudden self-confidence. These states caused cycles of long periods of compositional drought, followed by almost manic outbursts of creativity.

Wolf's letters reveal the balance of personal doubts and hopes that underlie both extremes. The ambiguous balance of these feelings, often expressed in idiosyncratic ways, indicates what was ultimately important and meaningful in his life.

The biographical context, anecdotes, comments, and references to faith, religion, doubts, and hopes contained in Wolf's available correspondence to friends and family members do not provide clear answers to all the questions that arise, but they do present a spectrum of his thinking. This ranges from his self-characterization as an "unbeliever" to the use of biblical allusions to present his struggles. These include manifestations of reliance on God, a personal sense of sin and guilt for Christ's suffering, and even direct requests from friends to pray for "Him."

2.2. Youth and Early Work

Wolf was raised Catholic. His devout mother regularly took him to church services. This upbringing became deeply ingrained in his psyche, even though he later declared his abandonment of the faith. As a Catholic and a resident of Styria, his musical training was not based on Lutheran chorales, but was primarily influenced by Italian music, including hymns and opera. His father, the owner of a tanning factory, was also a good musician. He founded a family band, in which Hugo was obliged to participate. He also began learning violin and piano early.

One of the most important conflicts in Wolf's life until his musical maturity was related to his father's strong desire for him to achieve academic success and pursue a career outside of music. Although Wolf firmly pursued musical fulfillment, he consistently refused to yield to the authorities of institutions that could have helped him achieve this.

His stay at the Graz Gymnasium lasted only six months. (Wolf was a poor student, good only at music.) Playing the organ at the Benedictine monastery was not enough to meet academic standards. He continued his studies at the Marburg Gymnasium, from where he declared in a letter to his father, "I must devote myself to music."³⁴

Wolf finally entered the Vienna Conservatory in 1875, but for "discipline violations," he was dismissed after only two years. He later commented that he was forgetting more than he learned and never formally returned to school.

Nevertheless, his time at the Conservatory gave him the opportunity to meet Gustav Mahler, with whom he became friends, to see *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, and to meet their creators, Richard Wagner.

After being expelled from the Conservatory, he supported himself by giving piano and violin lessons, and working as a proofreader. During this time, he also studied music independently. It was during this period that he made his first compositional attempts in the style of Mozart: the *Sonata*, Op. 1 for piano (unfinished) and *Variations* Op. 2, dedicated to his father.

He met many patrons along the way who saw creative potential in him. Among them, the Lang family: he gave piano lessons to Melanie Köchert (née Lang). This contact developed into a long-standing intimate relationship with Melanie, who has been compared to the love story of Wagner and Mathilde Wesendonck.

A brief encounter with Johannes Brahms, who recommended he study counterpoint, led to, or rather, solidified, his dislike of him, despite his earlier admiration for his chamber music and the songs from the *Magelone* cycle.

By this time, Wolf was already struggling with mental problems, which are believed to have stemmed from the illness (syphilis) he had contracted. Thanks to numerous contacts and patronage, he obtained the position of second conductor at the Stadttheater in Salzburg, which he resigned from a year later due to dissatisfaction and returned to Vienna.

Wolf's optimism for the future is reflected in a confident letter dated January 4, 1882, written in response to his father's desperate letter regarding his difficult employment situation as Kapellmeister in Salzburg:

³⁴ E. Newman, *Hugo Wolf*, London: Metchuen & Co., 1907, p. 6.

*“Dear Father! Your sad letter truly frightened me. Who is so desperate? Courage! Courage! One must face all adversities. Well, unfortunately, everything has conspired against me – I only want to tell you that only now am I realizing my strength. Now I am happy, I am in my element. I want to erase my bad luck and set a lucky star. Don't be sad, there's no need.”*³⁵

In 1882, he went to Bayreuth for the first time, where he saw *Parsifal* (as he did in 1883, 1888, and 1891). In 1889, he attended performances of *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. In 1883, he met Franz Liszt, who recommended that he compose larger works. As a result, in 1885, he completed the symphonic poem *Panthesilea* after H. von Kleist, begun in 1882.

Thanks to the influence of Melanie's husband, H. Köchert, he began a three-year collaboration with the fashionable weekly *Wiener Salonblatt* as a music critic. He then became involved in the dispute between Brahms and Wagner supporters, siding with the latter.

Frederic Austin wrote:

*“He recounted how, during this time, he painstakingly analyzed the works of Bach and Beethoven, the songs of Schubert and Schumann, and practiced technics in general. He studied and read extensively, and thanks to his strong and developed literary tastes, he managed to obtain a nomination as music critic for the Vienna Salonblatt.”*³⁶

At this time, he was particularly drawn to Schumann's songs, whose influence is strongly visible in the music of the first phase of his compositional career, which included compositions set to poetry by favorite poets of the time, such as Goethe and Heine.

³⁵ F. Austin, *The Songs of Hugo Wolf*, Proceedings of the Musical Association, 38th Session (1911–1912), p. 161.

³⁶ H. Wolf, *Eine Persönlichkeit in Briefen. Familienbriefe*, 55–56, Trance, Walker, H. Wolf, *A Biography*, 2d ed., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 124–25.

Wolf's youth ended with the death of his father in May 1887. His grief was immeasurable, as he expressed in a letter to Marie Lang:

*"Does it matter to me whether my songs are published now? No success can make me feel any more... and pleasure."*³⁷

Several years later, Wolf continued to express his sadness over the loss of his father. A letter to his sister Käthe:

*"In the silent churchyard" – this was the only song that the Father's loving hand had given him. And now he lies in the silent cemetery and none of my songs can reach him. Oh, why do I continue composing if he cannot hear it? – he who lived and breathed only music, for whom my music never resonated, to whom my song never spoke!!!"*³⁸

In a letter dated October 22, 1887, to Melanie Köchert, with whom he already shared a close relationship, Wolf lamented, comparing his depression, anguish, and creative doubts in the context of his father's death and his resignation as a music critic for the Wiener Salonblatt with a biblical reference in which he places himself between sin and redemption:

*"I practice patience and renunciation, I have become foolish. My exclusive interest focuses on variations of the seven last words of the Redeemer, sometimes not extending beyond the first: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*³⁹

Thanks to the encouragement and support of his close friend Friedrich, Wolf finally regained hope and the desire to compose, as Dolf Lindner describes:

³⁷ F. Walker, *Hugo Wolf, a Biography*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 197.

³⁸ Ibidem.

³⁹ A. Dorschel, H. Wolf, *With personal testimonies and pictorial documents*, Rowohlt 1985, p. 64.

*“The prospect of presenting his work to the public awakened in Wolf a new, incredible desire to create. Like an animal, like a mother, he followed his instincts and sought a quiet, secluded place to “give birth.” His eyes and hopes were fixed on the Werner home in Perchtoldsdorf, where he often stayed during the happy years of 1880 and 1882.”*⁴⁰

2.3. A Mature Career

Wolf eventually entered a compositional trance, during which he composed fifty-three *Mörike Lieder* in 1888, which Mosco Carner describes in his book as the "Poetic Supremacy Act of 1888."⁴¹ The year 1888 was the most significant in Hugo Wolf's career, marking an extraordinary leap in his compositional development that ushered in a phase of mature artistry, particularly in the genre of vocal music.

Regarding this extraordinary year in Wolf's life, Edmund von Hellmer, Hugo Wolf's publisher (*Familienbriefe*) and close friend, wrote:

*“In 1888, with a sudden leap, Wolf achieved the full potential of his artistic significance and originality.”*⁴²

Undoubtedly, 1888 was a decisive year for Wolf. It was in this year that his recognition as a composer began to grow significantly. A conceptual change occurred: songs began to be called *Gedichte* instead of *Lieder* (*Lieder – Gedichte*).

Rosa Papier, a famous mezzo-soprano of the time, performed two of Wolf's songs for the first time in a public concert in Vienna on March 2, 1888.⁴³

Two collections: *Sechs Lieder für eine Frauenstimme* (Six Songs for Female Voice) and *Sechs Gedichte von Scheffel, Mörike, Goethe und Kerner* (Six Poems by Scheffel, Mörike, Goethe, and Kerner) were published in the same month.

⁴⁰ D. Lindner, *Hugo Wolf: Leben–Lied–Leiden*, Wien: Bergland Verlag, 1960, p. 60.

⁴¹ M. Carner, *Hugo Wolf Songs*, Londyn: BBC, 1982, ps. 5.

⁴² „Mit dem Jahre 1888 erreicht Wolf gleichsam mit einem plötzlichen Sprunge die volle Höhe seiner künstlerischen Bedeutung und Originalität“, in: H. Wolf, *Eine Persönlichkeit in Briefen. Familienbriefe*, p. 78.

⁴³ H. Wolf, *Vom Sinn der Töne*, ed. Dietmar Langberg, Leipzig: Reclam-Verlag, 1991, p. 5.

From February to November, Wolf composed fifty-three *Lieder–Gedichte von Eduard Mörike*; in August and September, 13 *Lieder–Gedichte von Eichendorff*; and from the end of October to the end of the year, a collection of twenty-five *Lieder-Gedichte von Goethe*. On December 15th, Wolf gave his first public performance as an accompanist with the famous Wagnerian tenor Ferdinand Jäger.

Work on the *Spanish Liederbuch* began a year later, in 1889. Wolf's work with Eduard Mörike's poetry began during his profound mental state between hope and despair about the future and lasting creativity.

We learn of his underlying doubts in a letter dated February 22nd to his friend Edmund Lang:

*"I have just written a new song. A divine song, I tell you! Absolutely divine, wonderful! By God! It will soon be over, for my skill is growing day by day. How far will I go? I shudder to think of it." I feel my cheeks glisten like molten iron with excitement, and this state of inspiration is for me exquisite torment, not pure happiness. Today I sketched practically an entire comic opera at the piano. And I believe I could write something truly good of this kind. But I'm afraid of the effort. And I'm too cowardly to be a decent composer. What future awaits me? This question torments and occupies me both in waking and in my dreams. Do I have a calling? Am I truly one of the chosen? God forbid. That would be a lovely "fish kettle." I think I'm crazy."*⁴⁴

A few hours later, Wolf wrote to Lang again:

*"The days really do seem to repeat themselves. No sooner had I sent my letter than I picked up Mörike than I wrote the second song in 5/4, and I must say that 5/4 has rarely been so aptly employed as in this composition. Now congratulate me or curse me, I simply ask you."*⁴⁵

These examples, taken from Wolf's personal correspondence, are representative of his transformations and his oscillations between hope and doubt regarding the work and its reception.

⁴⁴ F. Walker, *Hugo Wolf, a Biography*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 202.

⁴⁵ Ibidem.

This time, Wolf proudly writes to his friend Werner in a letter dated February 24th about his composition to Mörike's poetry:

*"It's only seven o'clock now, and I'm as happy as a king... When you hear this, the devil will gladly take you away."*⁴⁶

The next day, however, he wrote to Marie Lang about his doubts about the composition of another poem by Mörike:

"Today two new songs came to my mind, one of which sounds so strange that I'm very afraid of it. God help the unfortunate people who will one day hear it!".⁴⁷

Just a week after completing *Goethe's 51st Lieder* (October 21, 1889), Wolf began working on the *Spanish Liederbuch*. He composed forty-four *Geistliche Lieder* and *Weltliche Lieder* between October 28, 1889, and April 27, 1890, with a six-week break "in einem Krampf von Freude und Stolz" (*in a struggle of joy and pride*).⁴⁸

Walker describes Wolf's work on the *Spanish Liederbuch*:

*"Twenty-six of these songs were composed over the next two months, in a state of inspiration similar to that during which the Mörike and Goethe cycles were composed. Working on no fewer than five different pieces, he completed two songs in a single day."*⁴⁹

After composing nine of the *Spanish Lieder*, Wolf announced to his sister Käthe that he would compose a total of forty-four songs—the exact number of songs included in this collection."⁵⁰ On April 16, 1890, while composing the *Spanish Liederbuch*, Wolf wrote

⁴⁶ F. Walker, *Hugo Wolf, a Biography*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 203.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 204.

⁴⁸ E. Decsey, *Hugo Wolf*, 4 vols., Leipzig, Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1903-06, vol. II, p. 30.

⁴⁹ F. Walker, *Hugo Wolf, a Biography*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 222.

⁵⁰ Ibidem, p. 222–223.

enthusiastically to his supporter and friend from Mannheim, Oskar Grohe, about his hope for ultimate success, given the then-fashionable trend for Spanish works:

*"The Spanish flutes (the magnificent cycle by Heyse and Geibel) are giving me a lot of work; you will get to know me from a completely new perspective thanks to these works; perhaps they will be the best thing that has flown from my pen so far."*⁵¹

In another letter, this time to Strasser, we find Wolf euphoric, certain of the uniqueness of his work, while working on the *Spanish Liederbuch*. The letter, dated March 23, 1890, reads:

*"I am working with the power of a thousand horses from dawn to dusk, non-stop. What I am writing now, dear friend, I am already writing for posterity. They are masterpieces." For now, however, only songs, each surpassing the other. Music experts unanimously say that since the days of Schubert and Schumann, there has been nothing like them. So you can imagine what songs they are like; perhaps in the near future you will be able to hear wonderful things about me. I tell you: I am now climbing to the top... May I be allowed to do only this."*⁵²

However, a year later (1890), Wolf lamented, deeply doubting recognition as a Liederkomponist (literary composer), in a letter to Emil Kauffmann, music director at the University of Tübingen and a friend in whom he had great confidence:

⁵¹ „Jede Menge zu tun, mir die Spanier (ein großer Zyklus nach Heyse und Geibel) vom Halse zu schaffen. Sie werden ein diese Gesänge mich von einer ganz neuen Seite kennenlernen; dürfte auch das beste sein, was bis jetzt aus meiner Feder geflossen“, in: A. Dorschel, *Hugo Wolf: Mit Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten*, Rowohlt 1985, p. 64.

⁵² „Ich arbeite mit tausend Pferdekräften von früh bis in die Nacht, ununterbrochen. Was ich jetzt aufschreibe, das, lieber Freund, schreibe ich auch schon für die Nachwelt. Es sind Meisterwerke. Einstweilen allerdings nur Lieder von denen eins das andere übertrifft, darüber es unter Musikverständigen nur eine Stimme gibt, dass seit Schubert und Schumann nichts ähnliches da war – so magst Du dir vorstellen, was das für Lieder sind vielleicht aber kannst Du doch in Bälde über mich noch Wunderdinge vernehmen. Ich sage Dir: mit mir geht's jetzt riesig in die Höhe... lass mich nur machen“, in: E. Decsey, *Hugo Wolf*, 4 vols., Leipzig, Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1903–1906, vol. II, p. 31.

*“The most flattering recognition as a “literary composer” saddens me to the depths of my soul. What else does that mean than reproach for always composing only songs, a genre with little risk, which I haven’t fully mastered, because it only contains the beginnings of dramatic creation. So I wasn’t even a decent poet! God help me!”*⁵³

Regarding the pause in his creative activity, Wolf’s letters from the summer and autumn reflect depression and exhaustion. A letter to Grohe from May 1891 reads:

*“I feel, both physically and mentally, completely exhausted. I have no idea of composing anymore. God knows how it will end. Pray for my poor soul.”*⁵⁴

In a letter to Kauffmann dated June 1, Wolf lamented:

*“It seems to me, and I think about it with pleasure, that I am approaching the end of my life. I cannot write songs for another thirty years... I am almost finished.”*⁵⁵

A letter to Grohe dated June 12:

*“It is the end for me as a composer. It seems to me that I will never write another note. I feel as stupid and dry as I have ever felt in my life. I completely despise myself.”*⁵⁶

During this time, Wolf arrived in Bayreuth, where he wrote a letter to Melanie Köchert, lamenting that he had slept through part of the first and third acts of *Parsifal*, his favorite opera:

⁵³ „Die schmeichelhafteste Anerkennung als Liederkomponist betrübt mich in die innerste Seele. Was anders will es denn bedeuten, als eben einen Vorwurf, daß ich immer nur Lieder komponiere, daß ich doch nur ein kleines gerne beherrsche und dieses nicht einmal vollkommen, da sich in ihm ja nur Ansätze zum dramatischen Schaffern vorfinden. Also wäre ich nicht einmal ein ordentliche Lyriker! Gott besser’s!“, in: H. Wolf, *Vom Sinn der Töne*, p. 135.

⁵⁴ F. Walker, *Hugo Wolf, a Biography*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 291.

⁵⁵ Ibidem.

⁵⁶ Ibidem.

*"I hardly eat anything... I no longer have a clear idea of what sleep means... I can't say much about "Parsifal," because I only attended half-hearing and half-seeing. Apparently, it was very good, and probably it was. Tristan today. God, don't let me fall asleep! Thank God you're not in Bayreuth right now. Soon I'll become human again and enjoy eating, drinking, and sleeping—oh, sleeping! To hell with all intellectual pleasures when the body is tired."*⁵⁷

Letters to loved ones reveal Wolf's characteristic division between his deep anxiety and his outward appearance. They also contain wit and sarcasm. Especially in his mature years, Wolf often expressed his suffering and despair.

Wolf's letter to Kauffmann from April 26, 1893, reflects his dejection and bitterness about the stagnation in his creativity, with rich ironic symbolism, expressing his frustration with a line from the poem "Mörike Im Frühling" (*In Spring*)⁵⁸ and his feeling of being completely abandoned and rejected by God and for the rest of creation:

*"I cannot describe what I suffer from this constant inactivity. I would like to hang myself from the nearest cherry blossom branch. This wonderful spring, with its secret life and movement, worries me unspeakably... This "ich sehne mich und weiss nicht recht nach was" drives me mad... Everywhere, this dizzying lust for life, fertility, creation, and I, even as the humblest grass of the fields, one of God's creatures, cannot participate in this celebration of resurrection..."*⁵⁹

Finally, in November, Wolf moved to Perchtoldsdorf, hoping for the inspiration his earlier stay there had provided, but in vain.⁶⁰ Instead, on December 28, 1894, Wolf met Engelbert Humperdinck and attended a performance of *Hansel and Gretel*.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, p. 292.

⁵⁸ The piece *Im Frühling* is part of an artistic work.

⁵⁹ F. Walker, *Hugo Wolf, a Biography*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 322.

⁶⁰ D. Lindner, *Hugo Wolf: Leben–Lied–Leiden*, Wien: Bergland Verlag, 1960, p. 86–87.

This experience brought to the fore his strong desire to compose an opera, which had been instilled in him by the dramas of Wagner he had previously seen.⁶¹ Referring to Wolf's unwavering desire to compose opera, Andrea Dorschel explains:

*"During his concentrated work on the great song cycles, he still dreamed of opera."*⁶²

Wolf "shouted" in a letter to Kauffmann:

*"Opera, only opera!"*⁶³

After completing twenty-five songs to words by Goethe, Wolf wrote in a letter to his mother:

*"What will 1889 bring? This year there must be an opera."*⁶⁴

After the premiere of H. Ibsen's *Fest auf Solhaug*, for which Wolf had written the music at the request of the Burgtheater in Vienna, in late 1890, he announced:

*"I believe now more than ever that I am called to compose operas."*⁶⁵

In January 1895, Wolf wrote to Grohe:

⁶¹ Ibidem, p. 87.

⁶² „Bereits in die konzentrierte Arbeit an den großen Liederzyklen hatte sich immer wieder der Traum vor der Oper gedrängt“, in: A. Dorschel, *Hugo Wolf: Mit Selbstzeugnissen...*, p. 88.

⁶³ „Die Oper und immer wieder die Oper!“, in: H. Wolf, *Vom Sinn der Töne*, ed. Dietmar Langberg, Leipzig: Reclam-Verlag, 1991, p. 134.

⁶⁴ „Was wird das Jahr 1889 bringen? In diesem Jahre muss die Oper“, in: H. Wolf, *Ein Persönlichkeit in Briefen...*, p. 80.

⁶⁵ „Ich glaube nun mehr denn je, daß ich zum Opernkomponisten berufen bin“, in: H. Wolf, *Vom Sinn der Töne*, ed. Dietmar Langberg, Leipzig: Reclam-Verlag, 1991, p. 155.

*"A miracle, a miracle, an unheard-of miracle has occurred." The long-desired opera text has been found; it lies completely complete before me, and I am burning with the desire to continue my musical healing."*⁶⁶

Finally, Wolf returned to intensive composing, working on his first opera, *Der Corregidor*. Walker describes his restored creativity as follows:

*"On April 1, Wolf moved back to Perchtoldsdorf and threw himself "like a madman," as he himself said, into composing his opera."*⁶⁷

Wolf expressed his enthusiasm for the work and his anxiety for his life to Melanie Köchert, drawing on the metaphor of resurrection and God's providence:

*"I'm almost starting to fear for myself, because it seems to me that in the short time I've been here, I've become a different person. Let's hope a better one... I'm also still confused by the first intoxicating impressions of this sudden change. Tomorrow I'll have more newsand, God willing, I'll write something beautiful and beautiful."*⁶⁸

*"I suppose you're surprised I write letters at all, but apart from my sister, I haven't written to anyone here yet. It wouldn't be possible, because now I work non-stop from seven in the morning (I get up at six) until dusk falls, and often far into the night... Tomorrow, God willing, it's time for the conclusion of Act II."*⁶⁹

After writing several more extraordinary works, including the *Italian Liederbuch*, Part II (24 songs completed in 1896) and *Three Songs of Michelangelo* (March 1897), which are considered a kind of testament to the composer, in September 1897 Wolf was hospitalized while composing his second opera, *Manuel Venegas*.

Despite a brief creative phase after his recovery, he had to return to a psychiatric facility and remained there until February 22, 1903, where he died after a five-year period

⁶⁶ F. Walker, *Hugo Wolf, a Biography*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 372.

⁶⁷ Ibidem, p. 375.

⁶⁸ Ibidem, p. 376.

⁶⁹ Ibidem.

of creative stagnation. The immediate cause of death was pneumonia, preceded by a stroke, in as a result, he lost his speech and the ability to write and recognize his surroundings.

Herman Hefele (1885–1936), a distinguished German Romanist, literary historian, cultural critic, and professor of history, listed Hugo Wolf in his book on cultural history as one of twelve selected personalities, among Petrarch, Goethe, Schiller, Michelangelo, and Dante. In his work "The Law of Form" (*Letters to the Dead*), he wrote in a letter to Hugo Wolf:

*"With the instinct of a brilliant artist, you turned to vocal music and sought your own style. Musical creativity with the strongest spiritual weight."*⁷⁰

Wolf's work flourished in bursts of almost obsessive intensity. After its culmination and the creation of five major songbooks: *Mörike*, *Eichendorff*, *Goethe*, *Spanish*, and *Italian Liederbuch I*, Wolf's mental problems became more apparent. The result was depression caused by the partial success of his only completed opera, *Der Corregidor*, in 1897 – its length had to be adjusted and numerous corrections had to be made to the score.⁷¹

Werner, a close friend and admirer of Wolf, who accompanied him on his last visit to Perchtoldsdorf in July 1898, recalls:

*"It seemed that the poor man felt free here for a moment again."*⁷²

These were the composer's last happy moments. Wolf was once again in the place where his creative maturity had appeared almost ten years earlier in *Mörike Liederbuch*.

⁷⁰ H. Hefele, *Das Gesetz der Form*, Eugen Diederichs in Jena, 1928, p. 47–57.

⁷¹ E. Newman, *Hugo Wolf*, London: Metchuen & Co., 1907, p. 133–140.

⁷² „Es schien, als ob der Arme hier in der Freiheit für einen Augenblick sich selbst wiedergefunden hätt“, in: W. Reich, *Hugo Wolf – Rapsodie; aus Briefen und Schriften*, Zürich: W. Classen, 1947, p. 69.

2.4. Essential Features of Wolf's Compositional Style

Masco Carner describes the style of composition. Wolf's compositional work as an intense creativity that emerged—more or less enthusiastically received—in a particularly short period (less than a decade), including occasional "barren" periods:

*"Wolf is a 'Stauungskomponist' (composer of 'overload'); the creative impulse did not come to him (as happened with most great composers) in a steady, more or less continuous stream, but was dammed up for months, even years; until the internal 'pressure' increased so strongly that it burst the dam and released these impulses in a sudden, powerful flood."*⁷³

Thanks to Wolf's particular poetic sensitivity and extraordinary care in selecting poetry, the distinctive feature of each composed collection is the individuality. Although there are stylistic features generally associated with "Wolf's song," the individuality of his compositional style, particularly from his mature period, is clearly visible in the *Mörike Lieder* and the *Spanish Liederbuch*.

The most representative features of these collections are: declamation, chromaticity, the treatment of dissonance, and the shifting role of the piano part. All of these features can be found particularly clearly (and also) in the characteristics of Richard Wagner's work.

2.5. The Significance of the Poetic Text

According to Wolf's motto: "Prima le parole e poi la musica" (*First the words, then the music*), the words are the essence of his songs.⁷⁴ Wolf was absorbed in the essence of the poem before attempting to implement any musical layer. He saw himself as a servant of the poet's intentions. In this respect, Richard Wagner was his own poet.

Wolf's practice

⁷³ M. Carner, *Hugo Wolf Songs*, Londyn: BBC, 1982, p. 12–13.

⁷⁴ Ibidem, p. 5.

*"was to extract every significant word in every line, while at the same time not allowing this process to be disrupted by a purely musical interest in a given phrase."*⁷⁵

The compositions of *Mörike Lieder* initiated the process through which Wolf became known as *Komponist des Dichters* (the poet's composer).

Susan Youens states:

*"He cared more for poetry, served it more, and delved deeper into it than other song composers."*⁷⁶

Amanda Glauert wrote:

*"Wolf the musician became an almost hypothetical figure, because one of the most common ways to describe the success of his songs was 'Wolf wurde zum Dichter' (Wolf became a poet)."*⁷⁷

Ernest Newman, in turn, characterized the poet-composer as follows:

*"It is obvious that the musician lives the life that the poet lived. Writing musical phrases will unconsciously reproduce the same variety of forms and moods found in the poems." This is precisely what happened with Wolf. When he composed for Goethe's poetry, he was Goethe, not Mörike or Geibel, and Goethe not just in one respect, but in all."*⁷⁸

One of Wolf's significant biographers, Ernst Decsey, explains this from a different perspective:

⁷⁵ E. Newman, *Hugo Wolf*, London: Metchuen & Co., 1907, p. 160.

⁷⁶ S. Youens, *Hugo Wolf and his Mörike Songs*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. X.

⁷⁷ A. Glauert, *Hugo Wolf and the Wagnerian Inheritance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 49.

⁷⁸ E. Newman, *Hugo Wolf*, London: Metchuen & Co., 1907, p. 187.

“Here we come to the most important law of Wolf’s art: the sensitivity of text to music. He does not want to “improve” a work with a beautiful melody. The law of textual sensitivity is nothing other than the law of truth.”⁷⁹

Eric Sams, in turn, argues:

“For Wolf, the dominant mood of the poem is what defines his entire art form, the Lied. The musical ideas suggested by the words are contained in the arrangement of these words for voice and piano, both to ensure overall unity and to highlight details, for example, when specific words or phrases are emphasized by musical means to achieve specific effects. The overall impression is therefore one of diversity within unity.”⁸⁰

As Siegfried Schmalzriedt explains:

“Wolf did not call his compositions for Mörike’s poetry songs, but rather “Eduard Mörike’s poems for voice and piano,”⁸¹

emphasizing the importance of both the role of the poet and his poems in the work, and the role of the piano as an expressive force equal to the voice.⁸²

Wolf expressed his musical ideas by subordinating himself to words to achieve the full expression of the poem, or as he wrote to Humperdinck in 1890:

⁷⁹ „Hiermit kommen wir zum obersten Gesetz der *Wolfischen Kunst*: es ist die Textempfindlichkeit der Musik. Er will nicht mit einer schönen Melodie ein besseres Dasein vortäuschen. Das Gesetz der Textempfindlichkeit ist nichts als das der Wahrheit“, in: E. Decsey, *Hugo Wolf, Das Leben...*, p. 132–133.

⁸⁰ E. Sams, *The Songs of Hugo Wolf*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 2008, p. 3.

⁸¹ „Wolf hat seine Mörike – Vertonungen selbst nicht als Lieder bezeichnet, sondern absichtsvoll als „Gedichte von Eduard Mörike für eine Singstimme und Klavier“, in: S. Schmalzriedt, *Hugo Wolfs Vertonung von Mörikes Gedicht “Karwoche” Realistische Züge im spätromantischen Lied*, Archiv für Musikwissenschaft 41 (1984), p. 42–53.

⁸² M. Carner, *Hugo Wolf Songs*, Londyn: BBC, 1982, p. 7.

*"Above all, to show that poetry is the true source of my music."*⁸³

2.6. The Role of the Piano Part

By referring to his song collections as "poems for voice and piano," Wolf declared an equal partnership between the voice and piano parts. The role of the piano gained importance in Wolf's mature songs, along with the growing synthesis of words and music. Here we have a clear reference to the creative philosophy of Richard Wagner.

Mosco Carner notes that Wolf's piano parts:

*"are certainly not 'unpianistic,' as often described, but very specific, idiosyncratic (unique, distinctive), often intricate, and difficult. With the exception of some quasi-orchestral passages, they are always adapted or derived from the nature of the piano."*⁸⁴

Eminent pianist and teacher Martin Katz states:

*"Wolf's name on the program brings both joy and terror to all accompanists. Joy because Wolf can synthesize music and text in a way that allows both spheres to emerge. Terrifying because, if one is precise, the technical execution of even the simplest passages is a real challenge. As a pianist, I must grapple with its complexity and attempt to enter his intricate world of mind—sometimes attempting to portray four characters, three forces of nature, and a narrator—all in one song!"*⁸⁵

Carner draws a comparison, tracing Wolf's artistic development in this area:

"...in his early period, Wolf displays a penchant for crossing his arms and a virtuosic style, similar to Liszt and Chopin, whom he admired. In his mature songs, he is primarily interested in the musical substance of

⁸³ R. Rolland, *Romain Rolland's Essays on Music*, ed. D. Ewen, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1948, p. 357.

⁸⁴ M. Carner, *Hugo Wolf Songs*, Londyn: BBC, 1982, p. 10.

⁸⁵ H. Wolf, *Letters to Melanie Köchert*, New York: Schirmer Books, 1991, Martin Katz's foreword.

*the song inherent in the piano part, consistent with the formal principle
of absolute music.*"⁸⁶

Thus, we come back to the issue of Wolf's adherence to the style and aesthetics of Wagnerian musical drama.

2.7. Declamation

Declamation is another element of the Wagnerian style and aesthetics of the "finished" work in Wolf's oeuvre. His art embodies the principle of declamatory style. He employed a declamation technique that allowed for its clear and precise expression, often flowing in isolation (independently) from the rest of the musical texture.

A hallmark of Wolf's mature style, particularly in *Geistliche Lieder*, is an extraordinary attention to the poets and the lyrics, meticulous prosody, and a post-Wagnerian flexibility of psychologically profound vocal declamation.⁸⁷

Wolf used declamatory melody and rhythm to enable a clear presentation of the words of the poetry and to enable the singer to express the emotional impact of the text. More importantly, Wolf's declamatory style of vocal composition preserves poetic language with minimal verbal breakdown and emphasizes rhythm, melodicity, and the lack of expressive continuity between the vocal melody and the piano accompaniment.⁸⁸

2.8. Chromatics and Dissonance

Another element of Wolf's musical syllabus is extended chromaticism, which he employed in the ornamentation of the melody and as an element of functional tonality.⁸⁹

To understand Wolf's use of chromaticism is to understand his composition in his mature years, beginning with the *Mörike Liederm*, and especially in the *Geistliche Lieder* and the *Spanish Lieder*. Wolf understood and utilized the Wagnerian method of chromaticism, employing a declamatory form in his songs.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ M. Carner, *Hugo Wolf Songs*, Londyn: BBC, 1982, p. 10.

⁸⁷ Sams/Youens, *Hugo Wolf, §7: Mature songs*, The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, vol. 27, ed. S. Sadie, New York: Grove, 2001, p. 477.

⁸⁸ L. Kramer, *Hugo Wolf: Subjectivity in the Fin-de-Siècle Lied*, in *German Lieder in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. R. Hallmark, New York: Schirmer Books, 1996, p. 187.

⁸⁹ L. Gorrell, *The Nineteenth-Century German Lied*, Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1993, p. 294.

⁹⁰ M. Carner, *Hugo Wolf Songs*, Londyn: BBC, 1982, p. 7.

Wolf's use of chromaticism is not merely an expressive device but serves a purely musical need to reinforce the poetic structure.

In a letter to Emil Kauffman written in May 1890, Wolf addresses the issue of dissonance:

“The accusation that I have committed chains of unresolved dissonances leaves me completely unmoved, for I am able to prove that each of my dissonances, however bold, can be justified by the most serious criteria of harmonic theory.”⁹¹

Unlike other composers of his time, Wolf consistently employed his arsenal of harmonic devices to suit the mood of the poem. This is a trait that was truly essential to his artistic integrity.⁹²

Wolf's intuitive use of chromaticism and dissonance is confirmed in numerous scholarly sources.

2.9. The Place of Hugo Wolf's Songs in Vocal Literature

Because of their display of a highly refined sense of style and intellectual concentration, Wolf's songs have been characterized as the "caviar of song literature."⁹³

Wolf was a fervent admirer of the Wagnerian style, which had a profound influence on his music. However, he went beyond simply incorporating Wagnerian techniques into his own style and developed them into a more condensed, miniature form, characteristic of his own. With Wolf's songs, the German Lied achieved the ultimate synthesis of poetry and music, a complete fusion of music and text.⁹⁴

Wolf's undisputed achievement was the "compression of large-scale dramatic music" within the miniature framework of German lyric poetry, thus creating new sources of expressive power in the song form.⁹⁵

⁹¹ „Der Vorwurf: ungelöste Dissonanzenreihen zu begehen, konnte mir nichts anhaben, und zwar aus dem einfachen Grunde, weil ich im Stande bin nachzuweisen, wie nach der strengsten Regel der Harmonielehre jede meiner noch so kühnen Dissonanzen zu rechtfertigen ist“, in: H. Wolf, *Vom Sinn der Töne*, ed. Dietmar Langberg, Leipzig: Reclam-Verlag, 1991, p. 130.

⁹² E. Sams, *The Songs of Hugo Wolf*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 2008, p. 9.

⁹³ E. Brody, R. Fowkes, *The German Lied and Its Poetry*, New York: New York University Press, 1971, p. 260.

⁹⁴ C. Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Style and Literature*, Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2006, p. 111.

⁹⁵ E. Sams, *The Songs...*, p. 2.

Sams representatively defines Wolf's Lieder:

*“Just as Schubert distilled the essence of classical opera and oratorio (Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn) into the first romantic song, thus creating a new genre, so Wolf condensed the dramatic intensity of modern (i.e., Wagnerian) musical drama into voice and keyboard, injecting fresh life and power into the “Lied” form and enhancing its expressive vocabulary to a grandeur that has never been equaled since.”*⁹⁶

A year after Hugo Wolf's death, Max Reger wrote in his *Süddeutschen Monatshefte* (1904) *Hugo Wolfs künstlerischen Nachlaß* (The Artistic Legacy of Hugo Wolf):

*“The treasures that this God-beloved musician left us simply lie there; we can reach out and claim them with enthusiasm and admiration. But we must not forget that we have received not only precious songs, but also that he gave us valuable creations in almost every field of musical endeavor. The almost completely unknown works that became available to the public after his death will surely meet a better fate than at the beginning. For he, the creator, has passed away, thus fulfilling the main condition, and these works should be performed, applauded, and cheered.”*⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Ibidem.

⁹⁷ „Die Schätze, die dieser gottbegnadete Musiker uns hinterlassen hat, liegen da und brauchen nur mit Begeisterung und freudigster Bewunderung gehoben zu werden. Doch vergesse man dabei nicht, daß wir nicht nur kostbare Lieder und Gesänge von ihm besitzen, sondern, daß er uns fast auf jedem Gebiet der musikalischen Production wertvollste Schöpfungen geschenkt hat. Diesen fast gänzlich unbekannten Werken, die erst seit dem Tode ihres Autors der Öffentlichkeit zugänglich sind, wird sicher ein besseres Los beschieden sein, als es im Anfang seiner Lyrik vergönnt war. Denn er, der Schöpfer, ist hinübergegangen, und damit die Hauptbedingung, daß man diese Werke aufführe, beklatsche und bejubele, erfüllt“, in: F. Grasberger, *Hugo Wolf: Letters to Melanie Köchert*, New York: Schirmer Books, 1991, p. 32.

Chapter III

Description of the works recorded on electronic media

Creating an Artistic Work

3.1. Paraphrase from Richard Wagner's "The Meistersinger of Nuremberg"

During Hugo Wolf's studies at the Vienna Conservatory, Richard Wagner himself came to Vienna. The occasion was a performance of his two operas, *Lohengrin* and *Tanhäuser*, at the Vienna Hofopoe. Wolf then had the opportunity to meet the master in person. The performances made a huge impression on him and became a profound experience, as he wrote in letters. He also had the opportunity to present Wagner with his two piano pieces, Op. 1 and 2.

In 1882, Wolf traveled to Bayreuth for the first time, where he saw *Parsifal* (as he did in 1883, 1888, and 1891); in 1889, he attended performances of *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. On April 6, 1883, Wolf met with F. Liszt, who recommended composing larger works, which had a stimulating effect on Wolf.





Example 1. Hugo Wolf, *Paraphrase Über Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg* von Richard Wagner, bars 45–59

After another visit to Bayreuth, Wolf once again worked with extraordinary intensity.

Up to that point, Wolf had written primarily piano pieces, modeled on the music of R. Schumann (*Humoresque in G minor, Aus der Kinderzeit*). He viewed this stage as essential practice in technique and form. Studying the works of his most important composers: Beethoven, Schumann, Liszt, and Wagner, he acquired increasing skill and self-discipline. He significantly changed the role of the piano—from an accompanying one to a commentary—resulting from his desire to apply the principles of the Wagnerian orchestra. This applies both to the leitmotif technique and the richness of textural approaches.





Example 2. Hugo Wolf, *Paraphrase Über Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg* von Richard Wagner, bars 150–166

Wolf's form is characterized by gradual, free-form recompositions. Influences from instrumental fantasy, operatic monologue, dramatic scene, and ballad-like narrative are noticeable. He treats the work's architecture as a large-scale dramatic form, a substitute for opera, the only musical genre that, according to Wolf, could guarantee recognition for the composer.

Only in Wolf's songs do we find the most complete artistic works, for in them he synthesized what Wagner, Liszt, and Bruckner had created in the fields of musical drama, program music, and symphony, and through brilliantly harmonized sound techniques, he embodied the idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

Almost from the outset, Wolf's ambition was to create an opera that would guarantee the maximum artistic fulfillment.

He placed F. Liszt and R. Wagner at the highest pedestal as his ideal. It was this legacy that became his greatest challenge. Based on this premise, he composed two paraphrases of Wagner's operas: *Die Walküre* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.

The piano piece that opens the work, the *Paraphrase Über Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg von Richard Wagner*, forms the foundation and source of inspiration for this grand musical form. This period of song composition follows, constituting the essence of Wolf's oeuvre, based on the Wagnerian philosophy of *Gasamtkunstwerk*.

The image displays a musical score for piano, consisting of five systems of staves. The first system shows measures 251-254, featuring a treble staff with trills (tr) and a bass staff with a forte (ff) dynamic. The second system begins at measure 255, showing a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a steady accompaniment. The third system continues the melodic development in the treble and the accompaniment in the bass. The fourth system starts at measure 260, with a forte (ff) dynamic marking, showing more complex melodic figures in the treble. The fifth system ends at measure 265, with a final cadence in both staves. The score is written in a standard musical notation with various dynamics and articulations.

Example 3. Hugo Wolf, *Paraphrase Über Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg von Richard Wagner*, bars 251–266

3.2. *Abendbilder*

The *Abendbilder* consists of three odes by Nikolaus Lenau (1802–1850). It is the pseudonym of the German-speaking Austrian poet Nikolaus Franz Niembsch Edler von Strehlenau, born in Schadat (now Lenauheim in Romania).

The original text by N. Lenau is as follows.

Abendbilder

(1)

Friedlicher Abend senkt sich aufs Gefilde;
Sanft entschlummert Natur, um ihre Züge
Schwebt der Dämmerung zarte Verhüllung, und sie
Lächelt, die holde;

Lächelt, ein schlummernd Kind in Vaters Armen,
Der voll Liebe zu ihr sich neigt; sein göttlich
Auge weilt auf ihr, und es weht sein Odem
Über ihr Antlitz.

(2)

Schon zerfließt das ferne Gebirg mit Wolken
In ein Meer; den Wogen entsteigt der Mond, er
Grüsst die Flur, entgegen ihm grüsst das schönste
Lied Philomelens

Aus dem Blütenstrauche, der um das Plätzchen
Zarter Liebe heimlich sich verschlinget:
Mir zichorcht am Busen des Jünglings ihrem
Zaubergeflöte.

Dort am Hügel weiden die Schafe beider
Traulichen Gemenges in einer Herde,
Ihre Glöcklein stimmen so lieblich ein zu
Frohen Akkorden.

(3)

Stille wird im Walde; die lieben kleinen
Sänger prüfen schaukelnd den Ast, der durch die
Nacht dem neuen Fluge sie trägt, den neuen
Liedern entgegen.

Schon versinkt die Sonne; des Waldes Riesen
Heben höher sich in die Lüfte, um noch
Mit des Abends flüchtigen Rosen sich ihr
Haupt zu bekränzen.

Schon vertummt die Matte; den satten Rindern
Selten nur enthallt das Geglock am Halse,
Und es pflückt der wählende Zahn nur lässig
Dunklere Gräser.

Und dort blickt der schuldlose Hirt der Sonne
Sinnend nach; dem Sinnenden jetzt entfallen
Flüt und Stab, es falten die Hände sich zum
Stillen Gebete.

The author's translation of the poetry is as follows.

Nightscares

(1)

A quiet evening falls over the fields;
nature gently falls asleep,
a soft veil of dusk hangs around her features,
and she, gracious, smiles;

She smiles, a sleeping child in the arms of her father,
who leans lovingly over her; his divine
eye rests on her, and his breath flows
across her face.

(2)

Now the distant mountains dissolve with the clouds
into the sea; the moon emerges from the waves
and greets the meadow, and it is greeted
by Philomela's most beautiful song.

From a flowering bush that secretly entwines
the place of tender love
in the arms of her lover, she listens
to the magic flute.

There, on the hillside, both their flocks of sheep graze,
close together in the same pasture.
Their little bells ring
in charming harmony.

(3)

Silence falls in the forest;
the dear little singers, testing the branch that
carried them through the night, testing it for new flights
and new songs.

Soon the sun sets, the forest giants
reach higher into the air to
adorn their heads for a moment
with fleeting roses.

The meadow now grows quiet; the well-fed oxen
gently jingle the bells around their necks,
and only idly nibble
the darker grasses.

There, an innocent shepherd gazes at the sun;
heavily, he loses his flute and staff
and folds his hands
in silent prayer.

The *Abendbilder* was composed two months before Wolf's seventeenth birthday, in March 1877. The piece's score even includes a telling note: "Composition began on Thursday, January 4, 1877, at 10:00 p.m. and ended on February 24, 1877, at 10:00 a.m.". It seems that "Abendbilder" is the first work in which the young Hugo Wolf reveals his fascination with Wagner's music.

"Abendbilder" is a unique piece because the young composer weaves three separate odes by Nikolaus Lenau into a continuous narrative. It evokes the atmosphere of a classical landscape. The piece begins with a pianissimo piano part to describe the "peaceful evening" that falls "in the fields" and the gently falling asleep nature.

The musical score for "Abendbilder" is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line (treble clef) and piano accompaniment (grand staff). The tempo is marked "Sehr langsam" and the dynamics are "pp". The lyrics are: "Fried - li-cher A-bend / Peace - ful the e-evening". The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "senkt sich aufs Ge - fil - de; / falls on hill and val - ley, / sanft ent-schlummert Na-tur, / Na - ture's self drops a - sleep; / um ih-re Zü-ge / beneath the veil of".



Example 4. Hugo Wolf, *Abendbilder*, bars 1–18

In the next section of the piece, the listener imagines "distant mountains," a "meadow," and a bush that becomes a "place of tender love" for two shepherds, whose sheep graze "close together in one pasture." And only their small bells emit the charming sounds of a beautiful harmony.

Herde, ihre Glöcklein stimmen so lieblich ein zu frohen Akkorden.
 pasture, while the tinkles of the bells unites in airy harmony.



Example 5. Hugo Wolf, *Abendbilder*, bars 71–89

The piece is filled with an extraordinary peace, resulting, among other things, from the fact that its action takes place in the bosom of nature, which provides a sense of security. The music is consistent with the mood of the text, harmonious, with the main emphasis focused on the piano part.

In the third section of the piece, just before the shepherd's prayer, the young Hugo Wolff pays tribute to his master through a quote featuring a phrase of Wagnerian high notes in the strings, taken from the opera *Lohengrin*.



Example 6. Hugo Wolf, *Abendbilder*, bars 135–139



Example 7. R. Wagner, *Lohengrin*, overture – a fragment that Hugo Wolf quoted in *Abendbilder* in bars 135–139

3.3. *Wanderers Nachtlied*

Poetic text *Wanderers Nachtlied* by J.W. Goethe is as follows.

Der du von dem Himmel bist,
Alles Leid und Schmerzen stillest,
Den, der doppelt elend ist,
Doppelt mit Erquickung füllest;
Ah, ich bin des Treibens müde!
was soll all der Schmerz und Lust?
Sußer Friede,
Komm, ach komm in meine Brust!

The author's translation is as follows:

Wanderer's Night Song
You who are from heaven,
You still all suffering and pain,
Doubly unhappy,
Doubly refreshing,
I am weary of fighting!
What does all this pain and longing mean?
Sweet peace,
Come, oh, come to my breast.

Wanderer's Night Song is a song composed by Hugo Wolf in 1887. It appeared in the collection entitled *Sechs Gedichte von Scheffel, Mörike, Goethe und Kerner*. This was the second of two collections published the same year.

Wolf's style and its "Wagnerian" character are particularly recognizable here due to his use of two main idiomatic features (linguistic constructions specific to a given language) that characterize Wagner's work. In turn, the leitmotif and chromatic harmony were integral to what became known as the Wagnerian idiom or Wagnerian style.

Like Wagner, Wolf uses the leitmotif to suggest the various psychological and emotional elements that poetry can evoke. An element of adoration, anxiety, mirth, or humor—all have a specific rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic component.

The meticulous care Wolf devoted to each poem is evident in his devoted adherence to the requirements of the poem. Rhythm and flow of language became crucial factors for Wolf in handling the melodic line. This concern for poetry resulted in musical forms that did not always conform to traditional ones.

Wanderer Nachtlied is an early song by Wolf, in which the composer is still developing the style that will eventually become closely identified with him.

The opening four bars not only establish the mood of the poem but also contain the core melody upon which the entire song is based.

The established tempo: "Sehr langsam und ruhig" (*Very slow and calm*) and the motif of pulsating fifths suggest reflection and contemplation. Meanwhile, the augmented fifth in the second bar represents a pattern Wolf will use in other songs to express strong emotions.



Example 8. Hugo Wolf, *Wanderers Nachtlied*, piano part, bars 1-4

The vocal part appears in the following bars. The first two bars constitute a pattern of sequence, repeated in a modified way in the following bars, which leads to the note f^2 .

leise

Der du von dem Him - mel bist, al - les Leid und Schmer-zen stil - lest,
 Thou who down from Heaven art sent, who our grief and suff'r - ing heal - est,

cresc.

Example 9. Hugo Wolf, *Wanderers Nachtlied*, bars 5-8

As the voice takes the lead in the piece, the piano's chordal backdrop continues to rise, regardless of the vocal line. Accompanying, pulsating chords spread upward and end on the tonic in bar 9.



Example 10. Hugo Wolf, *Wanderers Nachtlied*, bars 9-10

The vocal line increases the tension created by the chromatic changes in the piano part, delaying the resolution. Wolf creates a sense of fulfillment when the voice finally sings *f*.



Example 11. Hugo Wolf, *Wanderers Nachtlied*, bars 11-12

The piano melody and poetry suddenly express the weariness caused by contemplating the hardships of life. The vocal line descends depressingly on the words: "Ah, ich bin des Treibens müde" (*I am tired of fighting*).



Example 12. Hugo Wolf, *Wanderers Nachtlied*, bars 13-16

The ambiguous key of G minor modulates on the words "Was soll all der Schmerz und Lust?" and establishes a harmonic trend towards a new key.



Example 13. Hugo Wolf, *Wanderers Nachtlied*, bars 16-18

When the first accompaniment phrase ends in bar 22, the voice repeats the words "süßer Friede" (*sweet peace*). The word "Friede" concludes the second accompaniment phrase.



Example 14. Hugo Wolf, *Wanderers Nachtlied*, bars 22-24

In bar 24, the narrator's final statement, the last line of the poem, begins.



Example 15. Hugo Wolf, *Wanderers Nachtlied*, bars 24-26

The voice has a final phrase when it joins the piano in the sequential fragment "Komm, ach komm in meine Brust"; it echoes during the piano's postlude. The final word of the piece follows: "Brust."

Example 16. Hugo Wolf, *Wanderers Nachtlied*, bars 27-32

The harmonic pattern of this song is somewhat unusual, even for Hugo Wolf, whose sense of tonality proved more orthodox in most of his other compositions. Perhaps because it is an early work, its means of expression were still limited compared to the nature of the musical expression found in his later works.

3.4. *Nimmersatte Liebe*

The original text of *Nimmersatte Liebe*, by E. Mörike, is as follows:

So ist die Lieb! So ist die Lieb!
Mit Küssen nicht zu stillen:
Wer ist der Tor und will ein Sieb
Mit eitel Wasser füllen
Und schöpfst du an die tausend Jahr,
Und küssest ewig, ewig gar,
Du tust ihr nie zu Willen.

Die Lieb, die Lieb hat alle Stund
Neu wunderlich Gelüsten;
Wir bissen uns die Lippen wund,
Da wir uns heute küßten.
Das Mädchen hielt in guter Ruh,
Wie's Lämmlein unterm Messer;
Ihr Auge bat: nur immer zu,
Je weher, desto besser!

So is the Lie, and the war also so,
Wie lang es Liebe gibt,

And anders war Herr Salomo,
Der Weise, not to be silenced.

The author's translation of the German poetry is as follows.

Insatiable Love

Such is love! Such is love!
Not to be silenced with kisses:
What fool would want to fill a sieve?
With nothing but pure water?
And if you drew water for several thousand years,
And if you were to kiss forever and ever,
You would never satisfy love.

Love, love has every hour
New and strange desires;
We bit our lips until they hurt,
Because we kissed today.
The girl remained calm,
Like a lamb under the knife;
Her eyes pleaded: "Come on, come on!
The more it hurts, the better!"

Such is love! And so it was
Since love exists,
Mr. Solomon was different
A wise man, he didn't fall in love.

The opening piano bars set the song to a playful mockery. This continues until the vocalist convinces us that trying to satisfy with kisses is definitely insufficient – because that's what love is (*So ist die Lieb*).



Example 17. Hugo Wolf, *Nimmersatte Liebe*, piano part, bars 1-2

Further on in the song, syncopated, ambiguous interjections appear in the piano part.

zart (tenderly) immer erregter (with increasing animation)

küß - ten. Das Mäd - chen hielt in gu - ter Ruh, wie's Lämm - lein un - ter'm
burn - ing. The maid - en like a lamb held still, that feels the blade de -

pp cresc.

Mes - ser; ihr Au - ge bat: nur im - mer zu, je we - her desto
seen - ding, she drank in kiss - es with the thrill of pain and rapture

ritard. -

fritard. dim.

Example 18. Hugo Wolf, *Nimmersatte Liebe*, bars 28-35

Kisses lead to bites and the moment when the girl goes like a lamb to the slaughter (*Wie's Lämmlein unter'm Messer*). The girl's eyes say: *Go further, the more it hurts, the better!* (*Nur immer zu, / Je weher, desto beßer!*). These words are accompanied by a dramatic downward leap in the shape of the melody.

The song ends with the thought that King Solomon was wise and He didn't fall in love at all.

Although Mörike may have had such boyhood experiences and then recorded his feelings in verse, we cannot be certain of such experiences in Wolf. His sexual initiation occurred at the age of 18 in a brothel. It also resulted in a contraction of syphilis, which ultimately drove the composer mad and caused his early death at the age of 42 in 1903.

Between February 16 and May 18, Wolf composed 43 songs based on Eduard Mörike's poems, working in solitude at a friend's house on the edge of the Vienna Woods. In October and November, he then composed another ten songs based on Eduard Mörike's poems.

A letter to his friend Edmund Lang from February 22, 1888, gives an idea of Wolf's state of mind at the time:

"I have just written a new song, a divine song, I tell you... I feel my cheeks glisten like molten iron with excitement."

Wolf evokes the remembered storm—both literal and metaphorical, in a restless piano accompaniment, and underscores the changes throughout the story with a key shift for each verse of "Nimmersatte Liebe."

a tempo, mit Humor (with humour)

und an-ders war Herr Sa - lo - mo, der Wei - se, nicht ver -
not e - ven So - lo - mon the sage, in oth - er wise made

a tempo

liebt, und an-ders war Herr Sa - lo - mo, der Wei - se, nicht ver -
love, not e - ven So - lo - mon the sage, in oth - er wise made

a tempo

rit.

f *ff* *p*

liebt.
love. (Julia von Bose)

Example 19. Hugo Wolf, *Nimmersatte Liebe*, music in the style of a student song, bars 41-53

With a light touch, the composer depicts the pleasure and masochistic pain of sexual love; Then, with the repetition of the words "Und anders war Herr Salomo, der Weise, nicht

verliebt" (*Wise King Solomon did not fall in love*), the music transforms into a kind of student song, as if in recognition of the famous Solomon's "carnal appetite."

From adoration to bitterness, from good humor to fury, from fiery fervor to quiet ecstasy: love has a multitude of moods and forms, and song serves them all.

Wolf began dabbling in love songs in his teens. He continued this theme throughout his compositional life; his last completed work is the deeply spiritual love song "Fühlt meine Seele."

These compositions are mostly written with a wink; often full of adoration, sometimes comic. Some show the darker side of Eros.

Lovers must sometimes pay a terrible price for passion – as Wolf himself knew all too well.

"Nimmersatte Liebe" is Hugo Wolf's most erotic song.

3.5. *Verborgenheit*

E. Mörike's original poetry reads as follows.

Lass, o Welt, o lass mich sein!
Locked in nothing with Liebesgaben,
Laßt dies Herz alleine haben
Seine Wonne, Seine Pein!
Was ich traure, weiss ich nicht,
Es ist unbekanntes Wehe;
Immerdar durch Tränen seehe
Ich der Sonne liebes Licht.
Oft bin ich mir kaum bewusst,
And die helle Freude zücket
Through the Schwere, so mich drücket
Wonniglich in my chest.
Lass, o world, o lass mich sein!
Locked not by Liebesgaben,
Laßt dies Herz alone haben
Seine Wonne, Seine Pein!

The author's translation of the poetry is as follows.

Isolation
World, let me be!
Don't tempt with gifts of love,
Leave this heart alone
With its delight, its pain!
Why I grieve I don't know,
It's an unknown sadness;
Always through a veil of tears

I see the beloved sunlight.
 I am often unconscious,
 And bright joy flashes
 Through this burden that weighs me down
 Beauty in my chest.
 World, let me be!
 Don't tempt me with gifts of love,
 Leave this heart alone
 With its delight, its pain!

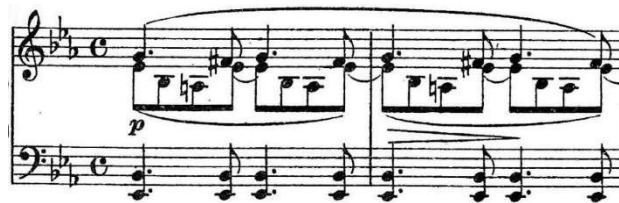
"Verborgenheit" was one of Hugo Wolf's most popular songs during his lifetime, and remains so to this day. Perhaps it was the sentiment for poetry: "Leave me alone," about the world, or the beauty of the vocal line that caused it:



Example 20. Hugo Wolf, *Verborgenheit*, vocal line, bars 3-4

The text tells the story of a man who is unhappy but doesn't know why. He seemingly enjoys his sadness and therefore wants to be alone.

The piece begins with a two-bar introduction. The fifth in the bass, carried monotonously in the first verse, expresses the endless time of a boring world.



Example 21. Hugo Wolf, *Verborgenheit*, fifth in bass, bars 1-2

In contrast, two counter-melodies move around the vocal melody in the treble clef. The vocal line and the upper voice in the piano part use quarter-note movements. The second piano voice, meanwhile, uses eighth notes, which weave all three melodies. Each of these contains a disturbing chromatic figure composed of two notes on the text "o, Welt," which again expresses the grayness of the world.



Example 22. Hugo Wolf, *Verborgenheit*, bars 3-4

In bar 11, the accompaniment changes. It becomes a series of chord progressions that constantly increase in intensity, culminating in bar 26, when the voice sings "Woniglich in meiner brust," and the vocal line cascades down a major chord in E-flat major.



Example 23. Hugo Wolf, *Verborgenheit*, bars 26-27

This piece contains three fragments that contain remarkably vivid musical imagery. In bars 17 and 18, where The sun is shining, the change to a major key causes the sun to break through the clouds of sadness.



Example 24. Hugo Wolf, *Verborgenheit*, bars 15-17

In bar 24, syncopation has a dramatic effect when discussing pain and depression. In *Woniglich* (bar 26), the sun breaks through the clouds of depression as a ray of hope.

und die hel - le Freu - de zü - cket durch die Schwe - re,
 on - ly then a ray - of glad - ness, sent from Hea - ven,

so mich drü - cket, wen - nig - lich in mei - ner Brust.
 cheers my sad - ness - lights the gloom with - in my breast.

ff mf p rit.

Example 25. Hugo Wolf, *Verborgenheit*, bars 22-27

Verse four begins in bar 28 and is identical to verse one in text and structure.

Lass, o Welt, o lass mich sein!
 Tempt me not, O world a - gain -

pp p

Example 26. Hugo Wolf, *Verborgenheit*, bars 28-29

This song is one of the few *Mörike-Lieder* composed in ABA form. The A section is slow and represents the poet's hopelessness. Part B (verses 2 and 3) contrasts with this both in text and tempo. The essence of this composition lies in its harmony, especially in the second and third stanzas.

In all of Wolf's work, one must note the painterly aspect alongside the expressive, which often influences the choice of key: for example, the spring-like, serene A major, the tragic A minor, the playful G major.

For Hugo Wolf fans, *Verborgenheit* tops a long list of favorite songs.

The Romantic era brought new emotions and expressions to music, art, and literature. Poetry became a more recognizable literary form. It became a source of inspiration for the creation of songs by outstanding composers of the period, giving rise to the "age of German song." Wolf added to this unparalleled color and passion.

3.6. *Im Frühling*

Eduard Mörike is famous for presenting a different understanding of life's most important matters in his poems: time, memory, and creativity, and *Im Frühling* is one of the best examples of this. It is a work full of a slow and ecstatic longing for spring. Its semantic layer in the original German is as follows:

Im Frühling

Hier lieg ich auf dem Frühlingshügel:
Die Wolke wird mein Flügel,
Ein Vogel fliegt mir voraus.
Ach, sag mir, alleinige Liebe,
Wo du bleibst, dass ich bei dir bliebe!
Doch du und die Lüfte, ihr habt kein Haus.
Der Sonnenblume gleich steht mein Gemüte offen,
Sehnend,
Sich dehnend in Lieben und Hoffen.
Frühling, was bist du gewillt?
Wann werd' ich gestillt?
Die Wolke seh' ich wandeln und den Fluss,
Es dringt der Sonne goldner Kuss
Mir tief bis ins Geblüt hinein;
Die Augen, wunderbar berauschet,
Tun, als schliefen sie ein,
Nur noch das Ohr dem Ton der Biene lauschet.
Ich denke dies und denke das,
Ich sehne mich und weiss nicht recht nach was :
Halb ist es Lust, halb ist es Klage;
Mein Herz, o sage,
Was webst du für Erinnerung
In goldnen grüner Zweige Dämmerung?
– Alte unnennbare Tage!

Below is the author's translation of E. Mörike's poetry.

In Spring

Here I lie on a spring hill:
The clouds become my wings,
A bird flies before me.
Ah, tell me, my only love,
Where are you, that I might be with you!
But you and the wind have no home.
Like a sunflower, my soul has opened,
Longing,
Expanding
In love and hope.
Spring, what do you want?
When should I calm down?
I see the clouds passing by, the river too,
The sun kisses its golden glow
Deep in my veins;
My eyes, wonderfully enchanted,
Close, as in a dream,
Only my ears still listen for the buzzing bee.
I ponder this, ponder this,
I long for what—I cannot say:
It is half joy, half lamentation;
Tell me, heart,
What memories are you weaving?
Into green-gold leaves?
—Bygone, unnamed days!

The thoughts of a lonely, "poetic persona" "about this and that" (*Ich denke dies und denke das*) amidst the spring beauty of nature seem random, but they lead to the recognition that the past will never return, only poetry can recapture glimpses of what has irretrievably passed.

Wolf's 53 Möricke Songs, completed in 1888, demonstrated his exceptional compositional talents, and the Romantic poetry, full of colorful characters – elves, witches, virgins, forgotten maids, a hunter, a rider, and the wind itself, gave Wolf an excellent opportunity to create the perfect "musical setting" with his characteristic late Romantic style.

Ich denke diess, und denke dass, ich sehne mich, als weiss nicht recht nach was: halb ist es Lust, halb ist es Klage – I think about this and that, I miss you, but I don't know exactly why: half is joy, half is pain.

Ich
My

den - ke dies und den - ke das, ich seh - ne
in - most thoughts I can - not tell, a long - ing

sehr ausdrucksvoll

mich, und weiss nicht recht, nach was: halb ist es
vague with - in my heart doth dwell: half joy - ful

Example 27. Hugo Wolf, *Im Frühling*, bars 70-81

Wolf, dreamily, doesn't stop at quiet meditation, longing for spring. The voice and piano "circulate" around the narrator's detached thoughts. In the long, winding melodic lines, we stand with open hearts: *wie die Sonnenblumen* (like sunflowers); we hear the buzzing of bees in our ears and wonder when our longing will be calmed, when we will be with our one and only love.

Der Son - nen - blu - me gleich steht mein Ge - mü - te of - fen,
As sun - flow'rs to the sun my heart to thee un - fold - eth,

Example 28. Hugo Wolf, *Im Frühling*, long melodic lines, bars 24-26



Example 29. Hugo Wolf, *Im Frühling*, meditation in the vocal line, bars 62-65

Although it was a bit chilly, it is still May – the month of magic. The warm and intoxicating feeling of the first warm rays of spring sunshine dispels memories of a frosty winter. Flowers bloom. Burning eyes and feverish longings reawaken in the spring heart. Thus, "Im Frühling" becomes a sensual song about unrealized longing. At the same time, it is one of Hugo Wolf's few so-called symphonic songs. The characteristic accompaniment strives to fulfill the role of a "Wagnerian" orchestra.

leidenschaftlich
sich deh - - - nend in Lie - - - - - ben und
and hop - - - ing, when thee — it be -

p wieder ruhiger
Hof - - - - - fen. Früh - ling, was bist du ge -
hold - - - - - eth. Spring - time, say what is my

willt? wann werd' ich ge - - - stillt?
fate? how long must I wait?

dim. *pp*

Example 30. Hugo Wolf, *Im Frühling*, accompaniment as a "Wagnerian" orchestra, bars 29-40

Like Wagner, Wolf emphasizes drama and the full connection of music and text. In this way, his songs become miniature operas.

In the instrumental part, the composer uses layers of voices that, throughout the piece, give the impression of striving for a block-chord acclamation that resounds in the final phrase: "Alte unnennbare Tage!"



Example 31. Hugo Wolf, *Im Frühling*, block-chord acclamation, bars 94-98

Hugo Wolf is not without reason called a composer for vocalists. Lush phrases are complemented by an instrumental line that attempts to replace the orchestral accompaniment, while block chords fill the colorful poetry, supported by frequent, mood-related tonal shifts in the vocal line.

3.7. *Gebet*

The original text of E. Mörike's poetry, titled "Gebet," is as follows:

Herr! schicke, was du willst,
 ein Liebes oder Leides;
 Ich bin vergnügt, dass beides
 aus deinen Händen quillt.
 Wollest mit Freuden
 und wollest mit Leiden
 mich nicht überschütten!
 Doch in der Mitten, doch in der Mitten
 liegt holdes Bescheiden.

The author's translation of the German poetry is rendered in the following words:

Prayer
 Lord! Send what you want,
 love or suffering;
 I rejoice that "both"
 pour from your hands.

You do not want pleasure
and you do not want to overwhelm me with suffering!
So within, so within
lies gentle moderation.

Of all Mörike's poems, "Gebet" was one of the most popular among 19th-century composers before Hugo Wolf. By that time, there were 132 versions of this work, and 150, most of them long forgotten.

Wolf's composition is still one of the most frequently performed songs from Mörike's collection.

The poem displays discrepancies in its religious perspective, due to its two different sources. Research reveals that two stanzas of this poem (lines 1-4, "Herr!... Hands on my quilt" and 5-9, "Wolvest mit Freuden... Liegt holdes Bescheiden") derive from two different sources.

The idea for the first stanza of the poem may come from a letter from Flad, Mörike's spiritual advisor. Many of Flad's words and phrases in his letter seem to foreshadow Gebet, from the verb "vergnügt sein" to the explanation at the end, reminiscent of "Liebes oder Leides."

The second stanza, in turn, comes from the novel "Maler Nolten." Words spoken by Nolten's lover, Agnes, shortly before her suicide: "Who is mad? No one is mad. Providence is merciful. This is what I said in my morning prayer today: "Do not overwhelm me with joys and sorrows! In the middle lies gentle moderation." Eleven years after the novel's publication, on April 21, 1843, Mörike separated this single stanza from the prose and rewrote it under the new title "In Demuth" (*In Humility*). Three years later, he added a small prayer before it: two stanzas numbered Gebet 1 and 2.

At the beginning, the protagonist attempts to recite the Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done," followed by: "Earth as it is in heaven"—but this raises doubts. The greatest (will) beginning in the second stanza, the divine and human wills in "conflicting purposes," are placed and repeated in the next verse, concluding with the appeal "Mich nicht überschütten" (*They do not overwhelm me*). Wolf emphasizes the word "mich" (I), signifying it with a sforzando. Here, the composer seems to emphasize human will in confrontation with God's will.



Example 32. Hugo Wolf, *Gebet*, bars 20-21

The piano part, in the word *überschütten* (overwhelmed), transforms the slow bass line into a chorale, joined by the right hand in the next bar: *Doch in der Mitten*, which develops towards a violin melody line marked *zart und ausdrucksvoll* (delicate and expressive). The phrase "in der Mitten," with the word "Mitten" each time set as an *appoggiatura* (an ornament in which an additional note is added before the main note, an interval of any length, often a second, higher or lower), a "sighing" figure, a traditional musical motif, signifies that Mitten is the object of longing.



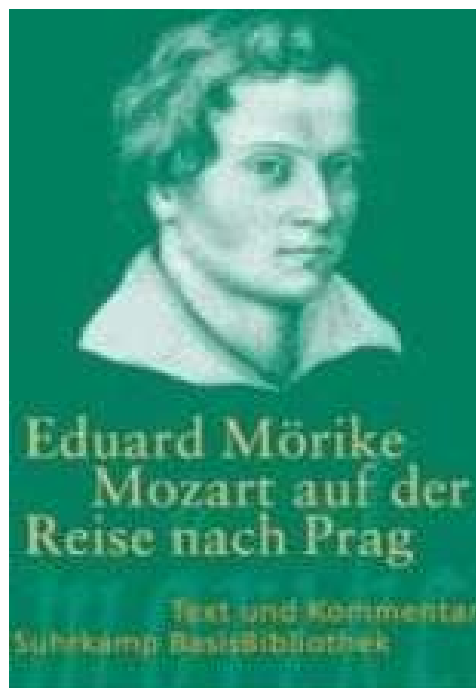
Example 33. Hugo Wolf, *Gebet*, "Mitten" an apoggiatura, bars 23-26

A balanced and calm poem, Wolf's repetition of the phrase "Doch in der Mitten" disturbs its balance. However, the famous final phrase, "holdes Bescheiden," is associated with pardon. It is a kind of equality in the division of sorrows and joys. The violin cantilena of the piano melody in the postlude (usually concluding some form of work) demonstrates Wolf's intention: the law In Chopin's style, the hand rises into the high range, and then descends in the postlude in a long, ppp, plagal (church-like) cadence.



Example 34. Hugo Wolf, *Gebet*, violin cantilena of a piano melody, bars 26-34

Entering religiosity and introducing it into "privacy" is the domain of "German Romanticism," to which Mörike's poetry can be assigned. His musical ideal, however, lies more in the Classical period (*Mozart on the Journey to Prague*).



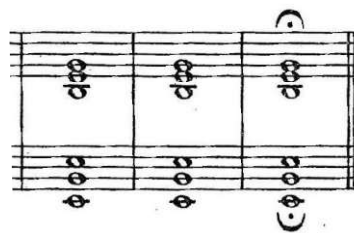
Example 35. Eduard Mörike, *Mozart on the Journey to Prague*

In the playing of the right hand (with crossed voices) of the accompaniment and the singing voice, each tone is actually "placed" in the center of the corresponding opposing voice, as an acknowledgment of archaism or dialect.



Example 38. Hugo Wolf, *Gebet*, bars 23-26

The initially evoked "fatalistic" acceptance of fate: *Liebes oder Leides* (love or suffering) finds its expression in *holdes Bescheiden* (beautiful modesty). The syncopated, descending song (while the piano ascends with chromatic progressions) ends on the leading note D sharp¹, which means it abandons the resolution on the tonic (note e¹) and leaves it to the accompaniment. Perhaps the three-times playing of the final chord is a hidden allusion to the Holy Trinity?



Example 39. Hugo Wolf, *Gebet*, bars 32-34

The above description highlights the fact that there is no clear boundary between words and music. It can be said that Mörike's poetry can only be understood if one knows it in the form of a composition – with Hugo Wolf's music.

3.8. *Gesang Weyla's*

E. Mörike's poetry in its original German version looks as follows:

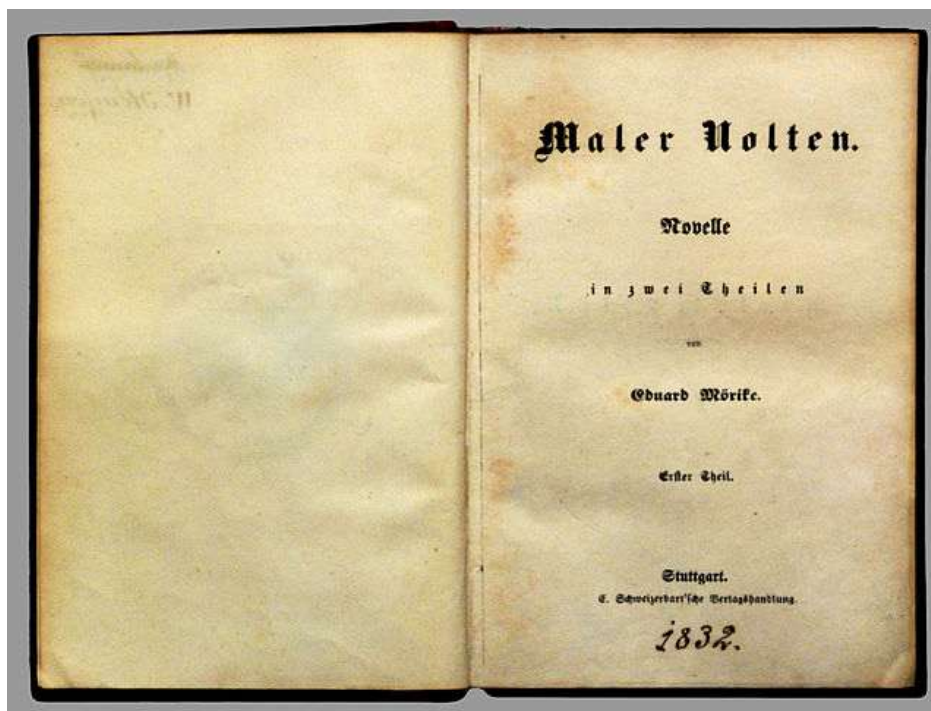
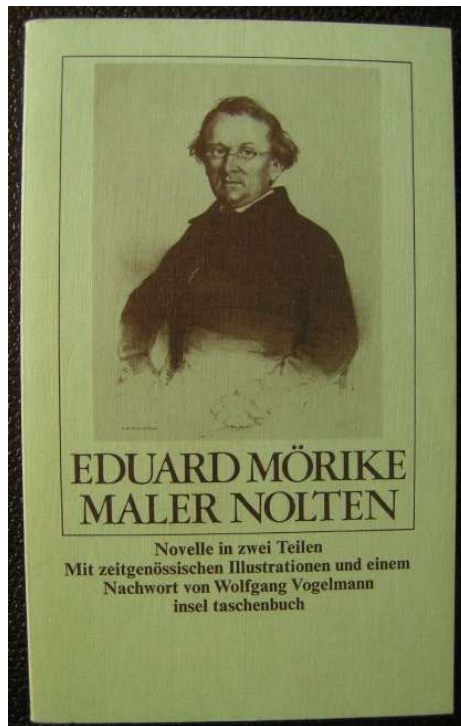
Du bist Orplid, mein Land!
Das ferne leuchtet;
Vom Meere dampfet dein besonnter Strand
Den Nebel, so der Götter Wange feuchtet.
Uralte Wassersteigen verjüngt um deine Hüften,
Kind!
Vor deiner Gottheit beugen sich Könige,
die deine Wärter sind.

The author's translation of the poem allows us to read it as follows.

Weyla's Song
You are Orplid, my land!
Glistening in the distance,
from the ocean rise your sunlit shores,
mists refreshing the cheeks of the gods.
The primordial waters rise, rejuvenating around your hips,
Child!
Before your divinity, the kings kneel,
who are your honor guard.

During his student days, Eduardo Mörike and his friends conceived a vision of *Orplid*, a fantasy island in the South Pacific, emerging from the ocean, shrouded in mist that deposits life-giving moisture. *Weyla* personifies the main river of this Atlantean island, acting as a protective goddess.

The poem is a metaphor for creative renewal. The island's remoteness is also symbolic, as it exists in the imagination of its culture and history of artistic invention. Little is known about it. It comes from fragments that Mörike later used in his novel *Maler Nolten*, begun in 1830; published but never completed, it inspired the poet for the rest of his life.



Example 40. Eduard Mörike, *Maler Nolten*

Orplid's motifs appear in a play performed by *Nolten* the painter and his friends, some of whom are not truly friends at all. The novel tells the story of dreams, art, wandering, sexuality, and betrayal. Each ends in madness and/or death. These themes connect with real events in Mörike's life. As a young man, he met a mysterious woman whom he named *Peregrina* (a name meaning wandering). She was probably a gypsy, and it seems she also had some religious obsession. She disappeared, leaving Mörike steeped in extreme fascination. Hence the connection to *Maler Nolten*, where *Nolten* is haunted by a mysterious curse: love and art, mixed with danger and delusion.

The introduction to Hugo Wolf's *Gesang Weyla's* (1888) recreates the sounds of the harp, an illusion to the classical j ancient times, where gods moved among mortals in strange landscapes.



Example 41. Hugo Wolf, *Gesang Weyla's*, harp imitation, bar 1

A noble mood hovers in the song. The voice rises above the word "Land" (earth), as if surrounded by a halo. The depth and richness of the word "Uralte" (ancient, from before our times) emphasizes "Ur." Wasser (water) appears as a life-giving force that endures forever.

"Uralte Wasser steigen" – three words in one phrase, each meaningful, carefully marked.

Example 42. Hugo Wolf, *Gesang Weyla's*, bars 10-11

The last king *Orplid* is dead, but the goddess Weyla is eternal. Even kings must kneel before *Deiner Gottheit* (Your divinity), because the land of *Orplid*, its vision, is the most magnificent of all.

Vor dei-ner Gott-heit beu-gen sich
Be-fore thine al-tar bend-ing, great

Kö-ni-ge, die dei-ne Wä-ter sind.
kings, thy vas-sals, thron'g thy mar-ble fane. (Marie Boileau)

Example 43. Hugo Wolf, *Weyla's Gesang*, bars 13-19

Weyla's Gesang in Hugo Wolf's Mörike Lieder cycle is one of the songs in which the "quality" of the poetry is absolutely equal to the "quality" of the composition. At the beginning, we are not really presented with a melody. The text is recited on a single tone, on the note b1, creating and creating, as it were, an aural space. The horizontal, declamatory dimension creates the feeling of traveling far away, beyond the sea, where the *Island of Wonders* is visible on the horizon. The effect is further emphasized by the long extension of the first tone.

Langsam und feierlich.
Du bist Orp-lid, mein Land! das
Hail sa-cred isle! dear land! far

Example 44. Hugo Wolf, *Gesang Weyla's*, text *mein Land*, bars 1-3

Bar 6 brings another recitation, this time on a repeated d2 note, reminiscent of the changed perspective in which the island now appears. The rhythm here is constant (regular eighth notes) – this is in contrast to the beginning, where the rhythm is interpreted individually. Generally speaking, the piece's unusual feature is that the length of the meter is interpreted differently:



Example 45. Hugo Wolf, *Gesang Weyla's*, bar 6

One could detect an erotic anthropomorphism (attributing human characteristics to natural phenomena, animals, and objects), in which the island (or rather *Inselberg*: hips – their slopes, "sides") is compared to a female figure. The mysterious creative energy used for artistic inspiration and the mysterious mystical marriage lead to the birth of the strongly emphasized word *Kind!* (child).



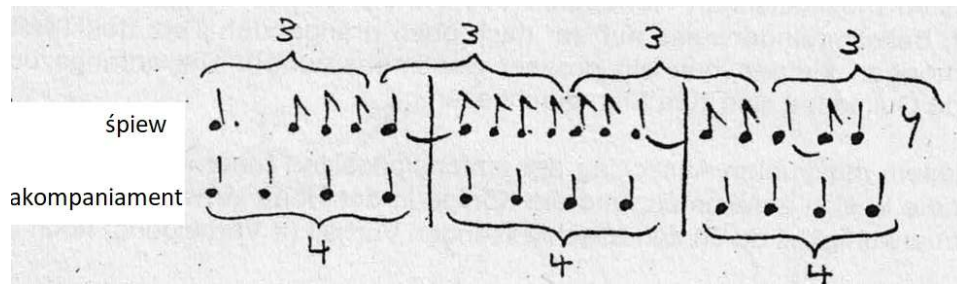
Example 46. Hugo Wolf, *Weyla's Gesang*, bars 10-12

The meaningful ambiguity of individual verbal images is particularly evident in this expression. Is it addressed to the child to whom the poet is recounting the saga of Wonderland, or does he mean Orplid himself (the seemingly "correct" variant, as *Weyla* is "island mother")?

The poet often achieves his goal through apparent illogicality, for example, the rising of water, which, according to the laws of nature, should flow downward. Similarly,

the poem ends with a paradox that heightens the unreal sublimity: the kings who are guardians bow.

In measures 7, 8, and 9, the composer introduces a very refined metric nuance: the normal bar character of the accompaniment (4/4) is contrasted with a modified hemiola (a rhythmic formula in which two measures in simple triple meter are performed as three measures in simple duple meter):



Example 47. Hugo Wolf, *Weyla's Gesang*, modified hemiola



Example 48. Hugo Wolf, *Weyla's Gesang*, rhythmic "refinements," bars 7-9

The intended and achieved "uncertainty" explains the "vagueness" of the fog: *der Nebel*, while the long syncopations emphasize the greatness of the gods: *der Götter*.

The composer achieves a special effect through the late entry of the syllable *-tet* in the word *feucht*. It's astonishing that these rhythmic "refinements" maintain the traditional four-bar meter, which gives the song its essential formal coherence.

The musical climax of the piece is the word "Könige" (*kings*) on the note g₂—the highest note of the piece, after which the melody breaks. It's as if the kings on high are transformed into guardians in the depths, whose submission is emphasized by a musical "bow."



Example 49. Hugo Wolf, *Weyla's Gesang*, bars 16-19

In the original version, the song is in the key of D-flat major (baritone). Why didn't Wolf compose this piece in the key of E-flat major (tenor)? It's difficult to say. This begs the question: what was the composer's vocal range?

The piano chords in the piece seem very simple at first glance, but upon closer inspection, they reveal themselves to be very sophisticated and multi-layered. It must not be forgotten that (as the title suggests) the song should be understood as a song of the River Goddess; therefore, the arpeggio can be interpreted as an expression of wave motion: the undulations of the sea's surface, on the horizon of which an island appears. At the end, however, one seems to hear Apollo's lyre. Each slowly recited syllable has its own carefully considered timbre, which acoustically conveys the mood of this magical land. The words carry their meaning solely through sound, which the reciter or singer should "reproduce" with the utmost care (tasting the text and sound).

Conclusion

Hugo Wolf's work and its transformations in relation to the work of Richard Wagner constitute the scope of information needed to confirm the thesis presented in the topic. Scholarly materials leave no doubt that Hugo Wolf subordinated his work to the philosophy of *Gesamtkunst*, which he embraced after "encountering" the work of Richard Wagner and its proponent himself.

Despite Wolf's illness and premature death, I maintain that his work can be analyzed based on stylistic, not just genre, transformations.

Prosodic errors (intonation, accent, and rhythm of speech) and "common" compositional devices of the Romantic style, which he used in his early creative period, during which he was clearly influenced by the work of Robert Schumann (at that time, he wrote mainly piano pieces: *Humoresque in G minor*, *Aus der Kinderzeit*), constitute the first stage in which he experienced, made mistakes, and became aware of his technical shortcomings. During this period, he studied the works of his most important composers: Beethoven, Schumann, Liszt, and Wagner. He also tried his hand at larger instrumental works, but although unsuccessful (*Symphonies in B-flat major* and *G minor*), he never returned to composing music solely for piano. *The String Quartet in D minor*, which he composed in stages, although also unsuccessful – mainly due to textural and technical complications – reveals a deep inspiration from Wagner's music. Here, one can hear strings in the high register and harmonization reminiscent of *Lohengrin*, as well as the "leitmotiv" (*recurring motif*), a reminiscence of a motif characteristic of Wagner. The next string piece also features the use of 11-note structures (*Intermezzo*).

Wolf tried his hand at a symphonic poem (*Penthesilea*), concluding that absolute music was an anachronism, its potential ending with Beethoven's symphonies, and that music unconnected to words or a programmatic idea was incomplete in its expression. This heralds his stylistic transformations, which became manifest in his song compositions. It was in them that his mastery and compositional genius were revealed.

He was able to easily and intensely empathize with the essence of a poetic message, penetrating the poet's intention. His visual imagination (*Weyla's Gesang*) and his special selection of poetry, which included works by J.W. Goethe, N. Lenau, A. von Chamisso and J. Eichendorf point to an "addiction" to words (high-ranking poetry)

and respecting them as much as music, which was undoubtedly the first phase of Richard Wagner's *Gesamtkunst* philosophy.

The first clear symptoms of this formula can be heard in a collection of songs written in 1878: *6 Gedichte von Scheffel, Mörike, Goethe und Kerner* (with the song "Zur Ruh, zur Ruh," likely composed as an elegy after Wagner's death). It should be noted that in this collection, Wolf uses the term "Gedichte" for the first time, not "Lieder," which can be read as "musical poems" (not songs). This indicates a change in the character of his works and the composer's approach, which assumed the equality of poetry and music, singing and accompaniment, with a characteristic lack of integrity between the vocal and piano parts. The piano part can exist without the vocal part, and similarly, poetry set to this music speaks to the listener even without it. This is undoubtedly a reference to the form of Wagnerian drama, in which an endless symphony can be heard from the orchestra pit, emphasizing or balancing the emotional message of the action and the words flowing from the stage. In the case of H. Wolf's work, this formula is expressed on a miniature scale. An example is the composition "Wanderers Nachtlied" set to the poetry of J.W. Goethe.

The most important formal and expressive concepts of the "complete work" trend are complemented in Eduard Mörike's collection of songs to poetry. In selecting poetry, as E. Dziębowska writes in the PWM *Encyclopedia of Music*, Wolf "concentrates on the visual aspect and psychological depth," which I believe can be clearly heard in the other examples of the works discussed. The piano part, the rhythm, the poetic motif, which he transforms into a sonic motif, the idea of harmonic texture, and the declamatory nature of the vocal part transform the cantilena as we have understood it into a kind of recitative characteristic of Wagnerian dramas. The vocal parts contain difficult intervals, which are not helped by the commentary accompaniment, which takes the form of Wagnerian orchestral arrangements. To this end, Wolf expands on pianistic devices: interludes and postludes, onomatopoeic elements, arpeggios imitating the sounds of the harp (the previously mentioned *Weyla's Gesangs*), lute, or guitar (*Wie lange war schon, Der Musikant, An die Äolsharfe*), imitates the sounds of birdsong and the buzzing of bees, employs dotted rhythm and piano figurations imitating sea waves (*Die Nacht*), and uses tremolo to convey wind or storms (*Lied vom Winde*).

Although the painterly aspect often complements the expressive aspect, while the musical style influences the choice of key, it is primarily harmony that constitutes the fundamental function the composer uses to convey his ideas, mood, and imagery.

Free tonality, the use of two different keys, for example in the piece "Im Frühling," becomes a means of conveying a psychological state.

The elusiveness of key, chromatic progressions, dissonances, and semitones—all of this contributes to "harmonic radicalism, further emphasized by the increased chords resulting from the possibility of expanding the relationships of thirds" (a point also noted by E. Dziębowska), as in the piece "Nimmersatte Liebe."

However, Hugo Wolf's greatest achievement is miniatures—short songs characterized by intensity, conciseness, and a kind of understatement, using few means—an example of which is the piece "Gebet."

It is in songs that Hugo Wolf achieved what Richard Wagner created in the field of musical drama and program music. By embodying the ideas of *Gesamtkunst*, he became a continuator of his compositional legacy in this form of creative expression.

Wolf's work symbolically closes the era of Romantic song. By harmonizing the sound layer with the poetic text and employing the means of expression used, it enters the era of modernism in a previously unheard-of way.

In view of the above, it must be stated once again that Hugo Wolf undoubtedly stands as the "song continuator of Richard Wagner's legacy."

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