12.1   Moritz von Schwind, *A Symphony* (1852), oil on canvas, 168.8 x 100 cm.
Neue Pinakothek, Munich

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# Schwind's "Symphony": Beethoven, Biedermeier, and the Cruelty of Romance

*Cordula Grewe*

It begins with the overture to a large-scale fresco, a *Symphony* (Figure 12.1 and Plate 6).

In the next few days, I will have sent the modern drawing, have a look at it …
I have worked at it for a long time, until it has become fully and completely
perfected. The costume is not as cumbersome as is usually believed, but the
inaction of our time could drive one to despair. … The whole should be thought of
as the wall of a music room dedicated to Beethoven, … and thus is fittingly based
on a piece by Beethoven: Fantasy for Piano, Orchestra and Choir in C, the only one
orchestrated in this manner and thus recognizable in the picture, moreover written
on the music book of a female singer. Upon this foundation, the whole little story
proceeds in four economical steps, which are analogous to the four stereotypical
parts of a symphony—symphony, andante, scherzo, and allegro: rehearsal of the
musical piece in a home theater, with a cobbled-together orchestra and a similarly
assembled choir, during which a female singer who stands up for a small solo (oh
bold action!) attracts the attention of a young man—an encounter without further
approach—a small masquerade ball, at which our pair confess their feelings,
and in conclusion a moment from their honeymoon, where the delighted man
shows his wife the small castle in which they are going to live. In accordance with
the choir, which is an ode to nature's joys, the entire composition is surrounded
by forest and air (the four winds), [while] the adjoining decorations feature the
various times of the day, the benefits of swimming and the dew of the mountains,
the pleasures of travel and the like. Ganymede as the symbol of the awakening
spring forms pretty much the center. This might sound rather dry and might in
the end be better left unsaid, but it cannot be done any other way. I would prefer
if somebody else made up a story for me based on the picture, so I could see that
the effort of engagement would not be too much for the viewer. But don't make
yourself a picture from this description, it will look entirely different anyway."[2]

Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* is not a symphony. A novella about modern
romance does not count among the proper material of history painting.
Pictorial cycles are supposed to re-narrate texts, not fabricate them. And
free associations are the realm of instrumental music, not of the discursive

patterning at work in a chorus, especially not in one as added-on and ancillary as the choir in Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy*.[3] The paradoxes do not end here. As we read Schwind's vivid, detailed description of his "musical drawing," we begin to conjure up the composition. Yet just when we have formed a concise idea, when the demanding work of an ekphratic visualization is already done, the painter commands us to wipe clean the slate of our imagination because we, like words, must fail in this endeavor. Schwind's revoked affirmation of an analogy between word and image is not chance occurrence. It reflects the even greater enigma that structure preceded content in a piece that seems so utterly driven by its plot. Long before Schwind came up with his Biedermeier love story, he had sketched out the abstract arrangement and rhythmic organization of the pictorial fields, and he had done so via another analogy, this time with instrumental music. What do we make of this? Or, perhaps more aptly, how do we make sense of this?

To uncover the complexity and multifaceted meaning of Schwind's "modern drawing," we need to fine-tune our ears to its nuances and productive contradictions. Such fine-tuning is already called for when we digest the original title, a title for once provided by the maker himself on the occasion of the canvas's premiere at the Munich Art Association: "Project for the Wall Decoration of a Music Room. With Use of the Fantasy for Piano, Orchestra, and Choir of Beethoven's Op. 80."[4] Many were deaf to the subtlety of this caption, like the famous music critic Eduard Hanslick. He got it wrong on three counts when he, in 1854, wrote:

We are indebted to the highly imaginative painter M. von Schwind for a very attractive illustration of the Fantasia for Piano op. 80 by Beethoven. The artist has grasped the separate movements as interrelated events involving the same central characters and has represented them pictorially. Just as the painter extracts scenes and figures from the tones, so does the listener classify them as feelings and events. Both interpretations have some connections with the tones, but not a *necessary* one. And scientific laws have to do only with necessary connections.[5]

However, Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* is not a symphony, Schwind's picture is not an illustration, and finally, the project is all about "necessary connections."

Certainly, the necessary connections in Schwind's *Symphony* are not, as Hanslick rightly noted, tonal in nature but mathematical. Thus it is not surprising that the music critic, whose own work was about tonal relationships as the basis for the temporal structures of musical form, would reject Schwind's approach. Indeed, one must note that the idea of musical form at work here is somewhat limited, a four-part structure with contrasting segments, and not really specifically musical. Nor is it true to the particular format of the fantasy for piano it refers to, which flaunts a rebellious negation of proportioned composition that, if taken seriously, would undermine precisely the geometry the painter constructed in its name. These observations all point to an essential element of the *Symphony*. Schwind did not paint Beethoven's piece, as Hanslick suggested, if we understand this in terms of subservient illustration. He *made use* of it, as clearly stated in the picture's caption, and

this he did selectively and freely. Schwind's *Symphony* is all about form, and herein lies its ingenious relationship to the possibilities of instrumental music. Once envisioned as unmovable fresco, the large-scale canvas adapts, comments upon, and ultimately makes visible what the form of such music without words is about. But having done so, it turns around, strangely, to fill the abstract form with narrative, thus reintroducing the kind of textuality expelled from its assembly. Even here, Schwind insists on independence, for his plot does not illustrate a preexisting source but only exists as pictorial sequence. The noteworthy fusion of abstract formal invention and loquacious genre painting creates an ironic "thrown-together mess," to quote E.T.A. Hoffmann's epithet for the Romantic novel, which simultaneously asserts and undermines conventions—academic, Romantic, and otherwise.[6] As smooth as the picture might look, a series of fissures is constitutive for its program. In the liminal spaces thus opened up, traditional textuality, with its linear progression, yields to a reversability of reading, or at least the possibility of such, top to bottom and bottom to top. It is here that the cyclical form borrowed from music generates its most unexpected and advanced effects.

Finished in 1852, the picture is quintessentially Romantic, insofar as it pursues an ironic form of narrative and structures painting after music. Yet it is also a rebuttal of the core ideas of the early Romanticism it thus evokes. The *Symphony* rethinks structure in terms of not metaphysics, but pictorial narration, social networks, and music as bourgeois performance. The last aspect is key. Music in Schwind is as much structural as motivic. Because of this double function, his composition hardly addresses the *paragone* of the arts, nor is it prone to the dream of synesthesia, that obsession of Modernist artists and art historians. Instead, the design consciously works *with* and *as* analogy—just like Schwind himself, as the opening quote reminds us, had intended. As such, *The Symphony* is a provocative intervention in the fervent debates about the sublimity of music and the (in)capacity of the visual arts to adapt its non-mimetic possibilities.

## Absolute Painting

In facing the question "How does spirit manifest itself?" Wassily Kandinsky simply answered, "By sound," which he saw as the main feature of the universe.[7] Music emerges as the model of absolute painting. This, by reducing the traces of mimetic representation to infinitely small residues, unleashes painting's intrinsic powers to communicate and produce inner feeling through the expressive means of line, color, and surface alone. This metaphysical striving made Kandinsky a consummate heir of early Romantic thought, which first had articulated the potential of painting to become a presentiment of the absolute through an adaptation to music. The orientation towards music was an act of emancipation. Painting no longer had to represent *something*; henceforth, it could produce meaning *as such*, meaning

now located in a universal but abstract emotion. Universal but abstract meant that the feeling evoked no longer reflected the *concrete* emotion of a *specific* person at a *particular* moment. Instead, it captured emotion as such, not the grief felt by Agamemnon in the face of Iphigenia's sacrifice, but grief itself.[8] Bound to the human figure and a narrative told through pantomime and mimic, traditional history painting could not fulfill this new requirement. Thus, the call for pure, absolute painting achieved through its musicalization prepared the ground for the rise of landscape painting from a lower genre to the new master signifier. And pushing even beyond landscape, the Romantics arrived at the arabesque, an ornament dismissed by Neoclassicism as mere embellishment but now understood as meaningful cipher, as hieroglyph. An inversion took place, as what once was marginal became the center.

Music had prefigured this reversal of the aesthetic hierarchy. While the eighteenth century had favored vocal music for its better communication of content, the nineteenth century witnessed the exaltation of instrumental music as a fuller embodiment of the new ideal of pure transcendence. Even before E.T.A. Hoffmann articulated this belief in his path-breaking piece of music criticism, his essay "Beethoven's Instrumental Music" of 1813, German critics had advocated instrumental music as less material and thus purer.[9] They supported this argument by drawing an analogy between instrumental music and the pictorial arabesque.

In 1801, for example, a musical dilettante by the name of Friedrich Triest, in daily life a preacher in Stettin, drew a direct parallel between "compositions without music" and Raphael's arabesques. Both were "independent games without purpose," Triest maintained, but as such, both had a cultivating effect.[10] We hear the lessons of the Königsberg philosopher Immanuel Kant, when Triest aligns this edifying outcome with a strictly aesthetic purposiveness. Shortly afterwards, the composer and music publisher Hans Georg Nägeli reiterated Triest's idea when he compared Bach's Keyboard Suite no. 6 in E Minor (BWV 830) with a garland of Raphaelesque arabesques, describing both as organized chaos.[11] If the eighteenth century had condemned the arabesque to a subordinated existence as mere decoration, the nineteenth century celebrated its liberation from any determination external to its own intrinsic and strictly aesthetic purposiveness. Like music, and more concretely, like instrumental music, the arabesque now stood for absolute art.

The artist who like no other translated the era's fascination with absolute music into visual imagination was Philipp Otto Runge. His painting *Lesson of the Nightingale* (1804–05) was to become "the same as what a fugue is in music," while his sought-after engraving cycle *The Four Times of the Day* (1805) was built upon the compositional principle of the symphony (Figure 12.2). "Through this I have learned to understand that such a thing happens equally in our art," said the painter, "namely, how much one facilitates one's tasks if one grasps the compositional technique that informs the whole of a composition and allows it, varied, again and again to shine through the whole."[12] Runge's analogy between artistic design and symphonic composition was first and foremost
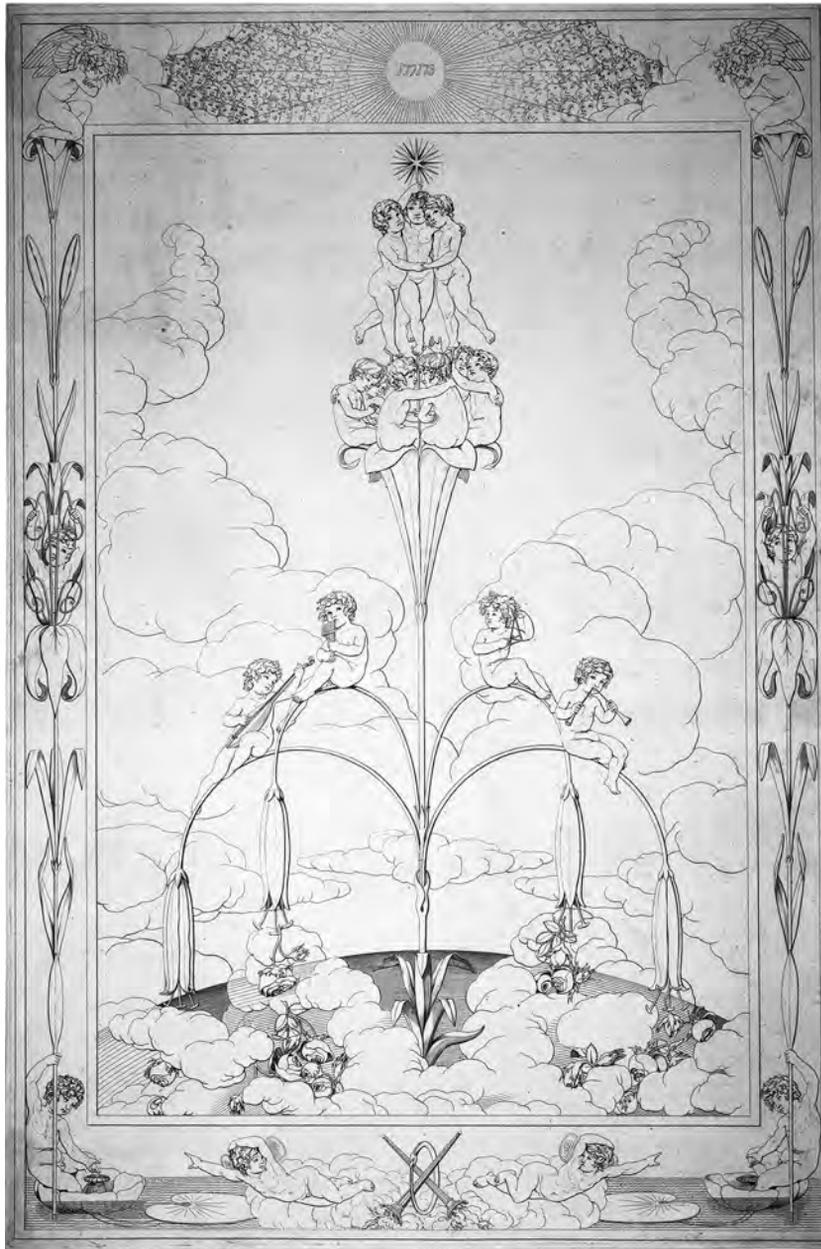
12.2    Philipp Otto Runge, *The Morning*, first plate of *The Four Times of Day* (1805), first edition, etching, plate: 71.1 x 47.9 cm; sheet: 72.4 x 48.9 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art

metaphorical. It activated the equation of symphony with the harmony between nature and universe, as well as a sense of sublimity and solemnity.[13]

In a letter to his beloved brother Daniel, Runge asserted the symphonic nature of his compositions on January 30, 1803. "You'll certainly see that I, by wanting to make merely carefree decorations, have produced against my will only the most sublime composition I have ever made; for all four pictures

belong precisely together, and I have treated them exactly like a symphony."[14] Accordingly, he attuned the cycle's four-part structure concretely to the basic components of his musical model. He also, although not systematically, adapted the structure of the individual image to the corresponding musical movement. Of the four prints, *The Morning* is perhaps the most concentrated attempt at a close translation (Figure 12.2). The tempo of the allegro recurs in the rhythmic sequence of a mathematically constructed geometry, which builds up to a buoyant upward movement of rectangles and systematically decreasing circles. The emptiness of the two large rectangular fields flanking the central lily, with its abundance of genie figures, evokes a sense of lightness and lightheartedness, also apt for an allegro's mood. Runge did not achieve such careful compositional correlation in all four of his prints, nor did he try. But he successfully differentiated the respective atmospheres of *The Four Times of Day* so that the cycle indeed evokes the changing tempi—and thus the temperaments—of the symphony's four movements.

Although Runge's figurative outlines are a far cry from Kandinsky's radically abstracted color feasts, the two artists share a similar approach to the musicalization of art. Key is the creation of an emotional analogy. This was vital to Runge's conception. Whether cosmic allegory or personal mythology, each part of an image was composed in relationship to a principal musical idea, perhaps best understood as an emotional leitmotif. The musical metaphor functioned as the grand matrix of all other choices, from the individual colors and their combinations, the shapes of the lines and their melody, and the composition's overarching structure to the iconographical motives and the story lines they create. Ultimately, the analogy of music and painting was only the starting point for an expanded vision whose supreme goal was the all-moving *Gesamtkunstwerk*.[15] There is much more to be said about Runge's complex work; but for the purpose of this essay, it may suffice to emphasize the quintessentially mystic and metaphysical nature of this version of art's musicalization.

The twentieth century has celebrated Romanticism for its proto-modernist qualities, and the twenty-first century has followed suit. In the search for the origins of abstraction, a painter such as Philipp Otto Runge has been praised as a visionary whose attack on aesthetic hierarchies would be mirrored in E.T.A. Hoffmann's radical valorization of Beethoven's instrumental music as a revelation of the infinite.[16] Not for the first time, but with particular emphasis and enthusiasm, early Romanticism had defined the essence of music as the immeasurable, infinite, incomprehensible.[17] From this perspective, John Constable, in 1824, associated "paintings without subjects" with music.[18] For the Romantic generation, such abstraction could only be considered in terms of stylized mimesis, ornaments, arabesques, or landscapes without staffage. Only in the twentieth century would a Kandinsky or a Franz Marc be able to translate what a man like Johann Wolfgang von Goethe had imagined as "*Farbenbilder*"—as color pictures—into the expressive movement of (almost) pure color fields and bold lines.[19]

In such modernist manifestations of Romantic principles, the setting tends towards an articulation of radically simplified ciphers so that the imprint of a concert, as in Kandinsky's *Impression III*, is dominated by the juxtaposition of large, unmodulated color fields—blood red, jet black, and sunshine yellow— brought into vibration by slashes of agitated lines, some black, some white, and some blue. The abstract movement of color is only sparsely interrupted by remnants of reality. A series of thumb-like shapes, heads reduced to small, roundish tops, rush in at the left. These are figures from the audience, we assume, whom the music's power has set into motion, not unlike a patch of reeds at a river ruffled by a hot summer breeze or the violent blast of an autumn wind. The effect of Kandinsky's composition is one of virtuous dynamism, an immediate address of our sensory apparatus and its emotional chords.[20] To that end, the structured rhythm of Runge's symphonic plates has yielded completely to a sweeping, vibrant crescendo.

Modernists have been fascinated by this genealogy of the Romantic musicalization of the pictorial. Yet we might remember that Runge's vision, like the artist himself, was short-lived. Schwind's adaptation of Beethoven points to an important excursus with a very different set of rules. It testifies to a fundamental redefinition of what musical form might mean for painting. As reality breaks into utopia, art becomes affirmative and a form of communication that glues together a fragmented society—at least that is the utopian vision.

### Breaking Boundaries

In contrast to Runge, Schwind was a talented musician, and his letters abound in astute reviews of musical performances. Music was a kind of staple food for him, of which every man, as Schwind pronounced, "needs a daily mouthful."[21] Nonetheless, he had shed the metaphysical inflection of early Romanticism. Certainly, Schwind still agreed on the necessity of creating an analogy between music and painting. However, the nature of this analogy differed decidedly from Runge's nature-based mysticism. It was free of philosophical depth or religious overtones, and instead was concerned with practical matters, especially issues of creative autonomy and genre hierarchy. Schwind's goal was no longer to approximate painting to music. Music fascinated him as a resource of reform, its object nothing less than the possibilities of pictorial arrangement.

Scholars have for a long time emphasized the importance of formal considerations for Schwind's musical work. In this context, Werner Busch has identified a fundamental ambivalence as the core of Schwind's arabesque: "On the one hand, it should be self-explanatory, on the other, gesture beyond itself; it does not seem able to do either task justice."[22] Schwind knows of the early Romantic faith in the mediating and reconciliatory power of the arabesque, and he feels the urgent need for both. However, the painter

does not—cannot—believe in the healing effect of this aesthetic operation anymore. His treatment of the arabesque becomes a reflection of the painter's disturbed relationship to his audience, marked by the discrepancy between subjective artistic sentiment and social reality, a disturbance that Schwind, in quintessential Romantic fashion, equated with alienation from nature.[23] A profound sense of estrangement underwrites Schwind's artistic experiments; and yet, experiments they are nonetheless, not merely nostalgic reprisals of what once was or anemic rehearsals of the status quo. A project like *The Symphony* stages a rebellion against institutionalized traditions, academic norms, and the regulations of ordered categories. This rebellion is no less profound for being launched from a conservative position, particularly one still steeped in Romantic Idealism with its drive toward self-realization and self-fulfillment. Indeed, a vanguard mentality among conservative thinkers is itself an honorable Romantic tradition.[24]

In his attempt to break the borders holding in the profession he practiced, namely, the art of painting, Schwind frequently resorted to the other arts when drawing up his arguments for the necessity of painting's emancipation. In this, music played a particularly significant role. In her seminal study of music as the model of art between 1780 and 1915, Andrea Gottdang has explored this important aspect of painting's "musicalization" in depth, and my account is profoundly inspired by her research.[25] Above all, we share a sense of Schwind's ambitions at reform as an alternative path to the trajectory from Runge to Kandinsky, one less Modernist but not less modern. Music—and not only in its disembodied form as pure composition, but also as lived experience and actual practice—was critical for Schwind's propositions of how to free himself (and thus painting) from conventions and paralyzing restrictions, and *The Symphony* exemplifies this work of redefinition in a paradigmatic manner.
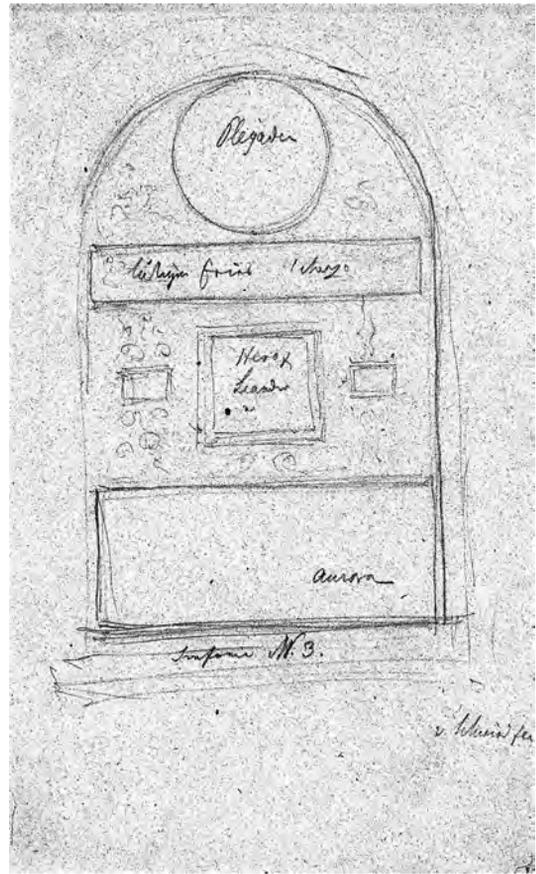
## The Value of Autonomy

Like the early Romantics or later Hegel, Schwind ranked painting below music; yet unlike theirs, his reasons were not aesthetic.[26] The painter believed fully and firmly in the equality of the arts. Painting was not inferior because of the medium's specific capacities. Responsible for the disadvantages suffered by the art of painting was rather the unwillingness of the public and patrons to grant the painter those freedoms that the composer had enjoyed for centuries. Schwind liked to point to an anecdote about Frederick the Great, the famous Prussian king, and his court musician, Carl Heinrich Graun, who allegedly countered the meddling of his royal patron by exclaiming, "Hold on, Your Grace, in my score, I am king!" This was how it had to be for Schwind. "*Aut rex aut nihil*. I cannot think one way today and tomorrow another upon command."[27] In contrast, patrons kept meddling in the visual arts, very much to painting's detriment. The other deadly force was the

academy. Passionately, Schwind denounced this time-honored institution for limiting painting to a pitifully small array of genres and forms. What a discrepancy to music with its plenitude of types! Not coincidentally, Schwind turned to Beethoven as the ultimate embodiment of the creative lawbreaker. Making use of Beethoven in this way was a declaration of seizing liberty in invention. Not surprisingly, autonomy was an integral part of the *Symphony* project, and its design indeed preceded its commission.[28]

**Form First**

Content came last. This simple but alluring fact illumines the radical nature of Schwind's approach. Long before Schwind's romance had been set to the *Fantasie für Clavier, Orchester und Chor von Beethoven op. 80*, the project's symphonic structure had been worked out (Figure 12.3). The caption, *Symphony no. 3*, points to Beethoven's *Eroica* as Schwind's initial inspiration.[29] The specificity of the plot is clearly secondary to the design process. The symphony begins with Aurora as the first movement, followed by the myth of Hero and Leander as the adagio and a tondo with the Pleiades as the last movement, which leaves the Scherzo unnamed and, summarily called "a merry frieze," available as a vague placeholder. In contrast, the composition is already laid out with exacting precision. The ease with which Schwind then conferred this structure onto a new content—his self-invented romance—asserts the implicit dominance of form over content. The design of the *Eroica* prefigures almost exactly *The Symphony*'s final format. Only subtle refinements are registered, as in the adagio, where Schwind reduced the side panels of the original layout to a more self-contained square, and a simplification of the final movement, where the visually more agitated combination of tondo and spandrels yields to the more expansive and calmer purity of an uninterrupted semicircle. The effect is dramatic. In contrast to Kandinsky's concert impression, *The Symphony* does not initiate abandonment to a subjective musical sentiment. Instead, first and foremost, it provides the structure.

Schwind conceived of the pictorial form of his musical structure in a twofold manner, making it both internal and work-specific *and* outward and reception-oriented, a means to effect perception. Accordingly, the composition's upward



12.3 Moritz von Schwind, *Symphony no. 3*, pencil on paper, 33 x 20.3 cm. Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich

tectonic movement firmly configures the work itself (its format, content, and sequential logic), simultaneously steering its reception and thus the experience of the audience. Form turns out to be the work's essence, the ground of its production, of its production of meaning, and of the audience's formation of an associative relationship with it. The true subject of Schwind's *Project for the Wall Decoration of a Music Room* is instrumental music's formal law.

## The Laws of Form

Despite the triumphal procession of instrumental music in the early nineteenth century, it had met originally with suspicion and bewilderment, being dismissed as inarticulate and insubstantial. For a man like Immanuel Kant, the association with the arabesque was a negative one, because he saw both as devoid of meaning.[30] Only the productions of Mozart and Beethoven would silence the doubts about the capacity of instrumental music to unite and reign over variety. Once the artistic nature of instrumental composition was accepted, its proponents, including Christian Gottfried Körner in 1795, advocated its power to subsume the most manifold expressions under a general law of form and thus to represent a musical character.[31] It is this formal law that fascinated Schwind. "Weary of the arbitrariness and formlessness that has caught on in the practice of the arabesque, yet on the other hand convinced of the necessity of compositions assembled from multiple pictures, I have seized on something that music has developed to the utmost degree, the four-part form of which the Quartet, Sonata, or Symphony consists."[32]

If early Romanticism nourished the desire to express the immeasurable, infinite, incomprehensible, indeterminate of music in pictorial notation, Schwind's *Symphony* follows an altogether different ambition. It seeks, rather, to translate into pictorial structure the determinacy of music, the clarity and descriptiveness of a wordless score—in short, to make visible the invisible essence of the tonal artwork. The picture aims, as Wilhelm Seidel has so aptly observed, "to represent the different characteristics of the events it develops, and thereby to reproduce the context that unites them."[33] Schwind undertakes the task to reconstruct, to replicate, in a certain sense even to build to scale the very principle of symphonic order.

Accordingly, as in instrumental music, the word—or, more precisely, the text—no longer determines the format, form, or meaning of the pictorial invention. It occupies a subservient function, elicited as a medium and means to arouse the emotional effect of the specific segments as predetermined by the design. In this sense, *The Symphony* is highly abstract. In this abstraction, it must be seen as an immediate reaction (as well as a contribution) to the era's overarching contestation of the academic hierarchy of genres and, in particular, the parameters of traditional history painting. Schwind pursued this challenge by working through seriality. With his musical inclination, he could find inspiration for this strategy in the Romantic rethinking of the

symphony's sonata form. In the age of Mozart and Haydn, the symphony was not yet a genre whose hallmark was the crossing over of themes among the different movements. It was the revered idol of Schwind's piece, Beethoven, who began experimenting with that more cyclic form, which reached its apotheosis in Brahms. Schwind certainly participated in these innovations.[34] His recourse to a four-part structure—prefigured in instrumental genres such as string quartet, sonata, or symphony—opened up a model he found suitable to the set of problems that moved and motivated him most deeply, the formal problems of cyclic painting.

The abstract foundation of Schwind's modern musical drawing can be best understood against the shift in music appreciation signaled by Hanslick's 1854 manifesto *Das Musikalisch-Schöne*. This seminal, and in its time sensational, publication mapped out an important shift from the listening subject, the emotions and ideas stirred up in her, to the artificial object itself, its form and movement, and it was this shift that Schwind also performed in the visual arts. It is thus not without irony that Hanslick was blind to the pictorial revolution in Schwind's symphonic project, so sympathetic to his own aesthetic.

The abstract foundation of Schwind's modern musical drawing also alerts us to the complex relationship of the work to the musical piece it makes reference to, Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy*. Schwind was well aware of the fact that Beethoven's piano piece is not a symphony. Indeed, he counted on the astonishment of his audience when it noticed that Beethoven's composition was not divided in four parts at all but flowed in one breath.[35] Indeed, this tension between musical structure and musical reference in *The Symphony* was not random, but rather a potent, highly conscious, and inherently significant strategy. Around the same time that Schwind finished the oil version of his music chamber project, he also contemplated a picture dedicated to Mozart's opera, *The Magic Flute*.[36] Once again, neither the format nor the plot of the chosen source regulates the pictorial design. Instead, the logic of the opera is inscribed into the corset of a symphonic layout. The work's form and its source thus enter into a productive dialogue, as the design's format reshapes the experience of the opera as pictorial production.

## The Four Movements of Schwind's *Symphony*

To translate symphonic composition into a new form of narrative painting, Schwind recreated its basic structure in three interrelated steps: first, through the four-part structure of the entire picture; second, through the variety of rhythms in each section; and finally, through the changes in the mood that permeates each individual episode, as the succession of fields weaves together a happy-ending romance between a young singer and a rural aristocrat. In the letter to Franz von Schober quoted at the opening of this essay, Schwind himself established the analogy between the four parts of his story and "the four stereotypical parts of a symphony—symphony, andante, scherzo, and allegro [sic]."

12.4   Moritz von Schwind, *Performance of Beethoven's Choral Fantasy*, detail from *A Symphony* (1852), oil on canvas, 168.8 x 100 cm. Neue Pinakothek, Munich



12.5   Moritz von Schwind, *Encounter without Further Approach*, detail from *A Symphony* (1852), oil on canvas, 168.8 x 100 cm. Neue Pinakothek, Munich



Indeed, the static nature of the initial scene, its symmetric composition and expansive format, fulfill the function of a symphony's first movement to create a stable beginning, fairly fast but weighty in content and feeling (Figure 12.4).[37] The juxtaposition of the divided choir with the rise of the orchestra as its counterpoint roughly mirrors the diagrammatic form of the sonata, with the contrast between the arrested singer in the blue dress—the picture's heroine—and her yellow-clad pianist counterpart as the visual and iconographical incarnation of a sonata's basic premise, namely, the contrast and drama between two or more themes and tonalities. The movement *to* and *of* the next episode, "encounter without further approach," reflects the slow and solemn character of an andante (Figure 12.5). The transition from the substantial horizontal rectangle of the first scene to the much smaller, almost square format of the second visualizes the transition from the opening allegro

12.6 Moritz von Schwind, *Ball Scene*, detail from *A Symphony* (1852), oil on canvas, 168.8 x 100 cm. Neue Pinakothek, Munich



12.7 Moritz von Schwind, *Honeymoon*, detail from *A Symphony* (1852), oil on canvas, 168.8 x 100 cm. Neue Pinakothek, Munich

to the andante of a symphony's second movement. The content supports the andante's more quiet nature, for Schwind shows, in his own words, "an encounter without further approach." Rapidly, this movement leads to the merry and lively scherzo of a ball scene (Figure 12.6). An elegant sequence of three vignettes, the low rectangular partition adapts the symmetrical shape of an ABA-form characteristic for this symphonic movement: two scenes of a masquerade ball enfolding the lovers' tender embrace. The finale then stretches again across the painting's entire width, as is appropriate for the pendant of the first movement (Figure 12.7). The happy ending also satisfies the demands of a symphony's fourth part to be cheerful, gay, and content, and the semicircular closure even recalls the shape of the rondo.

Many of Schwind's contemporaries accepted the painter's proposition. In a review of 1866, Michael Teichlein praised the "felicitous choice of formats," a praise followed by a congenial interpretation, which provides a succinct summary of my own extrapolation. The first movement is expanded and elevated; Teichlein stated, "the finale resembles the first movement in solemn breadth," while in between, "the scherzo of a masquerade ball rustles as an elongated compressed rectangle, with the melodic trio, as an explanation, at its center."[38]

### The Particular, the Universal, and the Arabesque

Schwind called the result of his compositional efforts a "musical novella," and his terminology seems an apposite choice. After all, "novella" fittingly denotes the picture's narrative mode, whose emphatically contemporary setting and exceedingly private content align with genre painting. It also evokes the utterly concrete nature of what is represented, the story's highly individualized nature, which Schwind assured not least through the inclusion of numerous portraits among the members of the orchestra and choir. Some of them are obscure today, but the prominently placed likeness of his close friend Franz Schubert might still be immediately recognizable even to today's viewer. His contemporaries would certainly have identified the singer with little effort as Karoline Hetzenecker, a famous performer who, at the time of the painting's execution, was adored as Munich's nightingale.[39] The emphasis on portraiture and the realism of the depiction reflects the specificity and autobiographical element of the design. But Schwind would not have been a Romantic, which he was, after all, had he not wanted to generalize the particular. He assigned this task to the arabesques, which, as a running commentary, frames the specific story with universal meaning.

As with Runge's *Times of the Day*, Schwind's marginal drawings evoke a syncretic religious sphere, uniting Christianity and antiquity in the statues of Saint Cecilia and Venus while linking human life to nature's rhythm, the times of the day, and the ages of men. The bounded figures of Amor and Psyche symbolize love as fettered by the rules of polite society, while the figure of Ganymede, abducted by Jupiter, denotes the moment of deliverance by an Awakening Spring. We might recall Schwind's own description for a detailed summary of the border's content. "In accordance with the choir, which is an ode to nature's joys, the entire composition is surrounded by forest and air (the four winds), [while] the adjoining decorations feature the various times of the day, the benefits of swimming and the dew of the mountains, the pleasures of travel and the like. Ganymede as the symbol of the awakening spring forms pretty much the center."

However, more important than the similarities between Runge's and Schwind's visions are their differences. The cosmic has yielded to the affirmative, as the arabesque no longer signals an infinite relation between all elements; nor does it perform a parergonal inversion of frame and tableau in terms of hierarchy and meaning production. Indeed, the arabesque returns, as Werner Busch has shown, to "a mere ornamental form."[40] Neither the ornamental arrangement of the borders nor the design's exacting form grant the arabesque the structural power it held in early Romantic writing or, for that matter, in Runge's print cycle. Schwind's description clearly indicates this loss when he identifies a text—the chorus's "ode to nature's joys"—as the arabesque's ground of origins. If the design frees itself from history painting's reliance on a poetic source, the subordination to an illustrative function returns in the decorative embellishment. The taming of Romanticism in Biedermeier culture becomes manifest in the taming of the arabesque.[41]

The contained quality of Schwind's decorative framework reflects the insurmountable distance between a prosaic present and the Romantic homesickness for a union with nature. Schwind still charges nature with redemptive powers; love's blossoming is accompanied and reflected by the vitality of an intricate thicket, one enlivened by the sounds of flora and fauna, in particular the melodic chime of bird song. The forest scene highlights the central place that nature holds in the adagio, where it forms the *locus amoenus* of the lovers' encounter, albeit an encounter, as Schwind had characterized it, "without further approach." Nature and music are still one. However, this oneness does not transcend mere metaphor. In its strictly ornamental subordination, the forested borders no longer grant us self-assertion through a fusion with the universe. They withhold the promise of the nature mysticism that enlivens Runge's *Four Times of the Day*. The utopian hope for a new golden age has given way to a pragmatic integration of music-making into daily life. Identity formation is still at the core of this Biedermeier musicalization of painting, yet now in terms of social being and citizen, not of some essential mystical core.

To understand the psychological depth and political resonances of this particular aspect, we must be reminded that choral singing was not simply a private amusement. Seen as edifying, participatory, and a source of collective agency, communal singing was closely associated with the forging of national identity and, thus, with the generation, in the act of unified artistic performance, of the identity of a country united only by culture.[42] Schwind's portrayal emphasizes this element of community formation as part and parcel of the individual's self-realization, and he does so not least through the insistently amateur make-up of the concert rehearsal, "a cobbled-together orchestra and a similarly assembled choir." While the individual ultimately triumphs over the group experience—in Beethoven's op. 80 and Schwind's *Symphony* alike—the body politics of chorus and choir nonetheless resonate through the entire composition. Seeking autonomy, the painter explores the public importance of the private sphere, and, in doing so, he seeks to rescue the possibility of higher meaning within a bourgeois-aristocratic setting. The prosaic has escaped the Romantic operation by which poets like Novalis had hoped to poeticize contemporary society, if not modernity itself. The result is the embourgeoisement of the arabesque.

In defense of Schwind, one may point to the innovative side of his Biedermeier *Gesamtkunstwerk*. While Runge's analogies remain structural plays of philosophical import, Schwind's picture aligns a realistic event to a particular piece of music. This particularity was important, and Schwind had specifically chosen Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* because he believed that its unusual orchestration would make it immediately recognizable to the audience. Painting and music are equals, precisely because they exist separately and only come together, as loving companions, in their medium-specific reality.

### The Arabesque's Unexpected Return (Rethinking the Choir)

Yet nothing is ever as simple as it looks in Romantic art, not even in its tamed version. In the return to ornamental containment, the arabesque contaminated the center from which it was once again expelled. After successfully wrestling the organizational potential from the arabesque so as to charge the core design with its power instead, Schwind reintroduced an arabesque moment right at the composition's very foundation. The *Symphony*'s first movement is an arabesque.

A subversive inversion takes place as the poem sung by the choir not only delivers the text on which the arabesque border decorations are modeled, but actually indicates its own arabesque nature. Indeed, in both Schwind's picture and Beethoven's composition, the chorus of spirits is an anomaly, a performance with no self-generated thematic material or agency.

Once again, the title indicates a rupture of norms and the productive incoherence it creates. The first edition of Beethoven's composition, from 1811, advertises the piece as "Fantasie für Klavier mit Begleitung des ganzen Orchesters und Chor." The English translation does not capture the provocative element hidden within this phrasing; "Fantasy for piano with accompaniment of the entire orchestra and chorus" does not reflect the exclusion of the chorus from the genitive phrase. The chorus is not part of the fantasy, nor is it part of the accompaniment.[43] "The chorus is quite literally tacked on," Ryan Minor observes, "neither included in the fantasia nor its accompaniment."[44] The spiritual journey evoked by the choir in the composition's final moments,

hat ein Geist sich aufgeschwungen
hallt ihm stets ein Geisterchor.

(once a spirit has soared aloft
a chorus of spirits always resounds for him.)

receives an uncanny affirmation in the ghostly quality of the piece's "magnificent finale," as Beethoven called it. The *Geisterchor* emerges as a kind of apparition, intangible and elusive in its shifting appearance, and as such, a manifesto on the two meanings of the German word *Geist* (as in *Geisterchor*), an ensemble of *ghosts* as much as of *spirits*. The sheer vocal presence of Beethoven's chorus, whose quality is, as Minor highlights, one of re-sounding rather than sounding, "introduces an emptiness behind the chorus's music, as if the choral voices were themselves a purely sonic apparition, a visitor from somewhere else. If the vocal soloists occupy a more liminal space of multiplied human agency—it is they, in Beethoven's setting, who refer to the 'music of our lives'—the chorus sings solely from a position external to those lives, and indeed to the rest of the work."[45] In early Romantic arabesque theory, most powerfully embodied in the writings of Friedrich Schlegel, this external quality qualifies Beethoven's "chorus of the spirits" as arabesque. In turn, the use of the chorus as the foundation of symphonic stability infuses a

subversive quality to the entire notion and law of form so carefully set up as the work's abstract logic.

The arabesque beginning of a highly ordered structure gestures towards a back and forth, towards the systematic stability and poetic fluctuation at the core of Schwind's creative work. *The Symphony* lives off a productive undermining of any strict border between periphery and center, chaos and order, multitude and isolation, and, ultimately, universality and particularity. The artist's neat explanation hides this complexity, which, however, came to the fore in his contemporaries' difficulties to *read* the picture without further promptings. Schwind had anticipated this difficulty. To Franz von Schober he confessed that the reading of the *Symphony* might demand some effort on the part of the viewer.[46] The challenge to established modes of communication was not without its price. The power of the symphonic structure was its capacity to subsume the most manifold expressions under a general law of form and thus to represent a musical character. Yet the audience had to undergo a learning process before it could tap into this power. This was true for instrumental music as much as for Schwind's cyclic painting.

**Epilogue**

In typical Biedermeier fashion, Schwind's solution is simultaneously backward and forward-looking. On the one hand, the narrative structure of the romance between a famous (female) singer and an affluent (land-owning) suitor challenges the early Romantic utopia of music's transcendental power. As social practice, the performance of Beethoven indeed emerges as the vehicle for the demise of creativity, as the fulfillment of love in marriage terminates the career, and thus the musical presence, of the story's heroine. Romance is deadening, and this cruel irony translates into a victory of realistic narration over the liberating logic of the abstract arabesque.

One could now interpret this victory and the return to ornamental containment as the not-yet moment (in the story of the emergence of abstraction) where the returns to narrative, and this particular one of love and marriage, frustrate the earlier Romantic aspirations to absolute music as a means to "liberate" art from bourgeois realism.[47] For this reading to hold true, however, one must subscribe to a certain set of values firmly inscribed, like the apotheosis of abstraction over figuration and (bourgeois) realism, in the teleology of modernism. Yet the belief in a sequence of avant-garde idioms, which, in ever increasing rapidity, create a spiral of new yet soon-to-be obsolete styles, does not account for the complexity of modernity marked by the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous; nor does it consider the possibility or shape of emancipatory spaces carved out within, or even through, conservative positions. Acknowledging the existence of a conservative avant-garde or the creative potential even of rearguard movements does not imply that one subscribes to their ideology. It does mean, however, that one makes

allowances for the necessity to explore what it might mean to be modern beyond a modernist or a politically progressive framework.[48] This, in turn, requires the scholar to steer free of either the Scylla of (self-)identification of author with her subject or the Charybdis of anachronistic judgments in taste. Schwind and his oeuvre certainly show that things are rarely as clearcut as they seem.

The *Symphony* intones the deadening power of romance and the victory of realistic narration over the liberating logic of the abstract arabesque with notable smoothness and deceptive light-heartedness. Yet while Schwind was the scribe of this modern truth, he nonetheless resented it. When the real Karoline Hetzenecker took leave of the stage in 1849 to retire into married life, the artist poured his regret into a series of allegories that in one way or another lamented the audience's loss. In a critical recasting of the antique tradition, Schwind transforms Hymen, the god of marriage ceremonies, into a warden who leads the handcuffed singer away from her public.[49] And while the cage that awaits her might be gilded, it is certainly one of enforced, not golden, silence. The possibility of a reversed reading, which, explored in the coda of this essay, opens up an exit from privacy and married togetherness into group activity and semi-public performance and thus celebrates separation as a path to freedom, might be an effect of Schwind's discontent, albeit probably an unconscious one. It certainly encourages an unexpected return of the arabesque's subversive power.

If Schwind resented the gender politics of his story, he also took an unconventional stance towards the textual nature of his work. First, the *Symphony*, like much of Schwind's other work, is an innovative attack on the traditional hierarchy of genres. Symphonic composition, infused with the unruliness of Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy*, becomes the matrix for a provocatively unconventional fusion of genre, history painting, and ornament. The result is a "musical novella" whose storyline stands for itself. This brings me to my second point, Schwind's desire to substitute picture for word. This desire had been constitutive for German Romanticism, but mainly in the area of book illustration. John Flaxman's outlines after Homer, Aeschylus, and Dante, much more successful in Germany than in his native England, had blazed a trail followed by numerous German printmakers and illustrators around 1800.[50] Inspired by these precedents, Runge plotted "to write a novel or another kind of story purely in pictures."[51] The young artist, interrupted by a premature death, never got around to putting his idea into action. However, his remark points to a crucial feature of the outline format, its capacity to create dense sequences suited to providing a comprehensible account of a narrative by themselves. Schwind took up the challenge to translate this seriality from the small scale of the printed page to the monumentality of painting (and even wall decoration). As a result, his multi-panel canvases are much closer to the narrative strategies of the comic strip than to the textual format of traditional fresco, an interesting crossover that is particularly powerful in a work like his *Cinderella* (Figure 12.8). Accordingly, his *Symphony*

does not *illustrate* a preexisting text; it rather invents a self-sufficient narrative in need of no further explanations.

Textuality remains the backbone of history painting, but history now encompasses genre and the narrative techniques of book illustration. As such, it undermines those proper limits separating painting and poetry drawn by recent aestheticians, most famously in the fervent *Laocoön* of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing.[52] Unexpectedly, Schwind transforms nostalgia into an emancipatory force. And this act of liberation—a liberation from academic norms and the straightjacket of modern aesthetics—had a notable effect on the critical reception of the artist's work. His contemporaries accepted Schwind's symphonic scheme not only for those pictures immediately inspired by music. Without any prompting, they willingly applied it to other works as well (Figure 12.8). Accordingly, Moritz Carrière also interpreted Schwind's daring elevation of fairy tale to history painting in musical terms. The four large panels of *Cinderella*, the critic maintained, are just "like the four movements of a symphony … the first is the powerful euphonic entrance. … Now follows like a glorious allegro the ball scene shimmering with lights; the moonlight in the garden reminds us of the Adagio, … and at the discovery of Cinderella the long trumpets belt out a resounding finale."[53]

With an abstract formalism at its core, Schwind's particular musicalization of painting thus constructed a new kind of pictorial narration that emancipated art from its traditional relationship to poetry. More importantly, it prefigured an emphatically structural approach to the effect of images and the production of meaning that, in no lesser terms than Runge's, articulates principles only brought to fruition in abstract and non-objective art.

12.8   Moritz von Schwind, *The Fairytale of Cinderella* (1854), oil on canvas, panel, 152 x 480 cm. Neue Pinakothek, Munich

### Coda: A Final Subversion

Obsessed with the laws of form, Moritz von Schwind underestimated the arabesque's resilience to complete domestication and its constant potential for inversion. Or perhaps, as suggested earlier on, the Romantic nature of his art and thinking became manifest precisely in this clandestine but potent return

of arabesque subversion. So far, our reading of *The Symphony* has followed art-historical convention. It has begun at the bottom of the page, at the arabesque's root, just like Schwind, whose explanation, quoted at the beginning of this essay, explicates this technique. However, the image itself does not configure a reading from the bottom up as either inevitable or absolutely necessary. The alternative is possible as well. Without the fetters of preconceived norms, the viewer might as well begin at the top, thus reading the story in the opposite direction.[54] From this perspective, the married couple does not leave society. Instead, the pair reintegrates, step by step, into communal life, with the ball as the first move, followed by a restful walk, and, as the magnificent finale, the performance of the Beethoven concert. In this version of the story, the last scene suggests an increased separation between the couple, which opens up exclusive togetherness to the broader circle of friends and family. Most importantly, this storyline restores the heroine's musical agency, even suggesting that distance, if not separation, from a partner is necessary for creative freedom (in general) and female emancipation (in particular). One might note here that Schwind himself never married.

The notion of thematic inversion comes to mind, as in a fugue, with Schwind's arabesque rewriting itself in an overturning of its own fate. As the narrative flow reverses its direction, the isolation of the individual (or, as in this case, the heroic couple) yields toward a collective activity, the communal music-making. Agency and autonomy return, but now no longer as the nostalgic lament of a lonely character, the hero. They are the fruit of participatory practice and communal achievement.[55] In this version, a very different vision of the *Geisterchor* arises: the apparition of an age of art and liberation.

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## Notes

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2     "Dieser Tage lass ich auch die moderne Zeichnung abgehen, sieh sie an … Ich habe lange daran herumgearbeitet, bis sich das gehörig abgerundet hat. Das Kostüm ist nicht so widerhaarig als man gewöhnlich glaubt, aber die Handlungslosigkeit unsere Zeit könnte einen zur Verzweifelung bringen. … Das Ganze wäre zu denken als die Beethoven betreffende Wand eines Musikzimmers, … und basiert daher billig auf einem Beethovischen Musikstück: Fantasie für Klavier, Orchester und Chor in C, das einzige, das so instrumentiert, also im Bild zu erkennen, überdies noch auf dem Notenheft einer Sängerin angeschrieben ist. Auf diesem Boden bewegt sich das ganze Geschichtchen billig in vier Teilen, die den vier stereotypen Teilen einer Symphonie—Symphonie, Andante, Scherzo und Allegro—analog sind: Probe des Musikstücks auf einem Haustheater, von einem zusammengerafften Orchester und eben solchem Chor, bei welcher die Sängerin eines kleinen Solos, die aufsteht, o kühne Handlung! die Aufmerksamkeit eines jungen Mannes erregt—ein Begegnen ohne Annäherung—ein kleiner Maskenball, auf dem unser Paar seine Gefühle ausspricht, und zum Schluss ein Moment der Hochzeitsreise, wo der beglückte Mann seiner Frau das Schlößchen zeigt, in dem sie wohnen werden. Übereinstimmend mit dem Chor, der ein Lobgesang auf die Freuden der Natur ist, ist das Ganze umgeben von Wald und Luft (den vier Winden) und in den verbindenden Verzierungen sind die Tageszeiten, die Wohltaten des Bades und des Gebürgstaues, die Lust des Reisens u. dgl. Angebracht. Ganymed als Sinnbild des erwachenden Frühlings bildet ziemlich trocken den Mittelpunkt. Das mag ziemlich trocken klingen und wäre am Ende besser nicht gesagt, aber es ist nicht anders zu machen. Mir wäre es lieber, man erzählte mir eine Geschichte davon, so sähe ich doch, daß einem die Mühe nicht zu groß war, selbst mitzuarbeiten. Mach' Dir kein Bild davon nach diesem Geschreibe, es sieht doch anders aus." Moritz von Schwind to Franz von Schober, Munich, 14 December 1849, in Otto Stoessl, *Moritz von Schwind: Briefe* (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1924), 253–5; quote 253–4.

3     My discussion of Beethoven's composition is inspired by Ryan Minor, "Choral Fantasies from Beethoven to the *Vormärz*," in *Choral Fantasies: Music, Festivity, and Nationhood in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 8–32.

4     Anonymous, "Kunstverein XII. Ausstellung," in *Der Bayerische Landbote* 198 (1852): 680–81; see also Andrea Gottdang, *Vorbild Musik: Die Geschichte einer Idee in der Malerei im deutschsprachigen Raum, 1780–1915* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2004), 263–4.

5     Eduard Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful: A Contribution towards the Revision of the Aesthetics of Music* (1854), trans. Geoffrey Payzant (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1986), 37.

6     Cordula Grewe, "Portrait of the Artist as an Arabesque: Romantic Form and Social Practice in Wilhelm von Schadow's *The Modern Vasari*," *Intellectual History Review* vol. 17, no. 2 (July 2007): 99–134, esp. 104–5; quote 329.

7     Jerome Ashmore, "Sound in Kandinsky's Painting," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* vol. 35, no. 3 (Spring 1977): 329–36.

8     Gottdang, *Vorbild Musik*, section "Farbe und Formen in Bewegung (Colors and Forms in Movement)," 81–5.

9     Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann, "Beethoven's Instrumental Music, 1813," in *European Romanticism: A Brief History with Documents*, ed. Warren Breckman (New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2007), 126–31.

10    Friedrich Triest, in Gottdang, *Vorbild Musik*, 154, who also discusses in depth the notion of the arabesque as visible music, 154–62.

11    Hans Georg Nägeli, *Johann Sebastian Bach: Nach dem autographen Manuskript der Zentralbibliothek Zürich*, ed. Günter Birkner, *Neujahrsblatt der Allgemeinen Musikgesellschaft Zürich auf das Jahr 1974*, no. 158 (Zürich: Komm. Hug, 1974): 9–10 (composed between 1801 and 1805, the essay was never published).

12   Philipp Otto Runge, in Siglind Bruhn, *Musical Ekphrasis: Composers Responding to Poetry and Painting* (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2000), 88.

13   Gottdang on Runge, *Vorbild Musik*, 165–214; here esp. 178.

14   "Du siehst wohl, daß, indem ich nur so leichte Decorationen machen wollte, ich wider Willen gerade das größte von Composition hervorgebracht habe, was ich noch gemacht; denn alle vier Bilder gehören genau zusammen und ich habe sie ganz bearbeiten wie eine Symphonie." Philipp Otto Runge to Daniel Runge, Dresden, 30 January 1803. In Philipp Otto Runge, *Hinterlassene Schriften*, 2 vols, ed. Johann Daniel Runge (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), vol. 1, 31–3; quote 33.

15   While musicologists tend to reserve the term *Gesamtkunstwerk* for the concept's canonical realization by Wagner, its origins are quintessentially Romantic; for the case of Runge, for example, see David A. Morgan, "The Cosmology of Philipp Otto Runge and its Influence on his Interest in the *Gesamtkunstwerk*" (M.A. thesis, University of Arizona, 1984); see also Juliet Koss's inspiring study *Modernism after Wagner* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010). A more extensive discussion of Runge's musical painting and further secondary literature can be found in Gottdang, *Vorbild Musik*.

16   See the exhibition catalogue *Aux origines de l'abstraction, 1800–1914*. Musée d'Orsay, 3 November 2003 to 22 February 2004 (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2003), as well as Julie Ramos, *Nostalgie de l'unité: paysage et musique dans la peinture de P.O. Runge et C.D. Friedrich* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2008).

17   Wilhelm Seidel, "Die Symphonie von Moritz von Schwind," in *Der Text des Bildes: Möglichkeiten und Mittel eigenständiger Bilderzählung*, ed. Wolfgang Kemp (Munich: Edition Text + Kritik, 1989), 10–34; quote 30.

18   Charles Rosen and Henri Zerner, *Romanticism and Realism: The Mythology of Nineteenth-Century Art* (New York: Viking Press, 1984), 34.

19   Seidel, "Die Symphonie von Moritz von Schwind," 30.

20   Wassily Kandinsky, *Impression III (Concert)*, 1911, Städtische Galerie im Lehnbachhaus, Munich; figure in Gottdang, *Vorbild Musik*, color plate 6, 454.

21   "Einen Mund voll Musik muß der Mensch täglich haben." Stoessl, *Moritz von Schwind: Briefe*, 511.

22   Werner Busch, *Die notwendige Arabeske: Wirklichkeitsaneignung und Stilisierung in der deutschen Kunst des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Mann, 1985), 104; also Werner Busch, "Conservatism and Innovation in Moritz von Schwind," in *Art in Bourgeois Society, 1790–1850*, ed. Andrew Hemingway and William Vaughan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 252–67.

23   Busch, *Die notwendige Arabeske*, 104.

24   Another highly influential example for such an "avant-garde of the counter-revolution" is the Lukasbund (or Brotherhood of St. Luke), the nucleus of the Nazarene movement; see Cordula Grewe, *The Nazarenes: Romantic Avant-Garde and the Art of the Concept* (University Park: Penn State University Press, forthcoming), esp. Chapter 3, "Avant-Garde."

25   Gottdang, *Vorbild Musik*.

26   Gottdang, *Vorbild Musik*, 254–6.

27   "Halten zu Gnaden, in meiner Partitur bin ich König. *Aut rex aut nihil*. Ich kann nicht heute dahin denken und morgen dahin auf Kommando." Moritz von Schwind to Franz von Schober, Munich, 22 June 1853, in Stoessl, *Moritz von Schwind: Briefe*, 32?–2?; quote 326.

28   Schwind's search for a patron who might finance the realization of his idea in fresco began only after he had finished his "modern … musical drawing." Gottdang, *Vorbild Musik*, 263–4.

29   Andrea Gottdang, "Von der 'Eroica' zur 'Chorphantasie': Moritz von Schwinds 'Symphonie'," in *Bonner Beethoven-Studien*, ed. Ernst Herttrich (Bonn: Verlag Beethoven-Haus, 2006), vol. 5, 95–113.

30   Seidel, "Die Symphonie von Moritz von Schwind," 10–11.

31   Marlene Schmidt, *Zur Theorie des musikalischen Charakters* (Munich: E. Katzbichler, 1981), 67–9.

32   "Überdrüssig der in dem Arabeskenwesen einreißender Willkühr und Formlosigkeit, andererseits von der Notwendigkeit der aus mehreren Bildern bestehenden Zusammenstellungen … überzeugt, habe ich nach der in der Musik zur höchsten Entwicklung gelangten Form der 4 Stücke gegriffen, aus denen Quartett, Sonate, oder Symphonie bestehen;" in "Zwei Briefe von Moritz von Schwind an Ernst Rietschel," edited by Friedrich Thöne. *Niederdeutsche Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte* 1 (1961): 250.

33   Seidel, "Die Symphonie von Moritz von Schwind," 12.

34   I want to thank Emma Dillon for her insights on this issue.

35   Moritz von Schwind to Konrad Jahn, Munich, 2 March 1850, in Stoessl, *Moritz von Schwind: Briefe*, 261–2.

36   Figures in Seidel, "Die Symphonie von Moritz von Schwind," nos. 6, 7, 22.

37   I want to thank Emma Dillon for her expertise and inspiration in discussing the symphonic nature of these sections.

38   The first movement is expanded and elevated, Teichlein stated, the finale resembles "an pathetischer Breite dem ersten Satz," in between, "rauscht das Scherzo eines Maskenballs in einem langhingedehnten, schwülgedrückten Viereck, in dessen Mitte die Erklärung das melodische Trio," in Gottdang, *Vorbild Musik*, 273.

39   The singer's life indeed mirrored that of her fictive counterpart, as she, too, married into the rural gentry, in this case a judge. However, Hetzenecker's life was not the immediate model of Schwind's romance, although we might note the uncanny parallel. Indeed, the real life story only unfolded after Schwind had already constructed his not-so-ideal case of Biedermeier social life. For an identification of the romance with the singer's private life, see, for example, Gerhard Pommeranz-Liedtke, *Moritz von Schwind: Maler und Poet* (Wien/Munich: Schroll, 1974), 27; for a refutation of this thesis, see Gottdang, *Vorbild Musik*, 268, and "Von der 'Eroica' zur 'Chorphantasie': Moritz von Schwinds 'Symphonie'," 108, esp. n. 33.

40   Busch, "Conservatism and Innovation in Moritz von Schwind," 265.

41   Virgil Nemoianu, *The Taming of Romanticism: European Literature and the Age of Biedermeier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

42   Minor, *Choral Fantasies* (forthcoming).

43   Georg Kinsky and Hans Halm, *Das Werk Beethovens: Thematisch-bibliographisches Verzeichnis seiner sämtlichen vollendeten Kompositionen* (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 1955), 213.

44   Minor, *Choral Fantasies* (forthcoming).

45   Minor, *Choral Fantasies* (forthcoming).

46   Gottdang, *Vorbild Musik*, examines in depth the difficulties that Schwind's contemporaries had with the task of inventing the story on the mere basis of the picture itself.

47   I am citing here a comment by the peer reviewer of my essay, whose suggestions and comments helped me greatly to sharpen my argument, even if through constructive disagreement with the position taken by the anonymous reader.

48   I provide a more expansive exposition of this approach and the implication of a conservative avant-garde or an "avant-garde of the counter-revolution" for the writing of nineteenth-century art history in my forthcoming book *The Nazarenes: Romantic Avant-Garde and the Art of the Concept* (see also footnote 23).

49   Seidel, "Die Symphonie von Moritz von Schwind," 22–5, esp. Figures 9 and 10.

50   See my forthcoming essay "Outline and Arabesque: Simplicity and Complexity in German Prints," in the exhibition catalogue *The Enchanted World of German Romantic Prints, 1750 to 1850* (working title), Philadelphia Museum of Art (forthcoming fall 2013).

51   On 31 December 1799, Philipp Otto Runge wrote to his brother Daniel that he wanted to "einen Roman oder sonst eine Geschichte in lauter Bildern zu schreiben," in Philipp Otto Runge, *Hinterlassene Schriften*, 36–8; quote on 38.

52   Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laokoon oder Über die Grenzen der Mahlerey und Poesie … Mit beyläufigen Erläuterungen verschiedener Punkte der alten Kunstgeschichte* (Berlin: C.F. Voss, 1766).

53   Moritz Carrière maintained that the four large panels of *Cinderella* are just "wie die vier Sätze einer Symphonie … : das erste ist der kräftige wohllautende Eingang. … Nun folgt wie ein prachtvolles Allegro die lichterschimmernder Ballscene; die Mondnacht im Garten gemahnt an das Adagio […], und beim Wiederfinden Aschenbrödels schmettern die langen Trompeten selber ein schallendes Finale;" in Gottdang, *Vorbild Musik*, 273.

54   A powerful instance for a reversed reading of the painting occurred in a graduate seminar at Columbia in 2011, where none of the students started at the bottom. Instead, the group unanimously began at the top.

55   Minor, *Choral Fantasies* (forthcoming).

6    Moritz von Schwind, *A Symphony* (1852), oil on canvas, 168.8 x 100 cm.
Neue Pinakothek, Munich