



**“Robert Schumann and the German Revolution of 1848”**

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Let me open by thanking Alexander Platt and Joan Parsley of Ensemble Musical Offering, for inviting me to speak with you tonight.

I also thank the Wisconsin Humanities Council for their support of this event.

With tonight's concerts, we are marking at least three major matters:

Wisconsin's Sesquicentennial, having become the 30th state on May 29, 1848;

The German Revolution of 1848, which ultimately had important ramifications for life in far away Wisconsin, especially Milwaukee;

and, the great composer, Robert Schumann, with music he composed at the time of these events.

How can we put these together?

What did Robert Schumann have to do with the Revolution of 1848 or the notion of "revolution" in general?

As a historian, my effort to explain this will not involve much detailed analysis of Schumann's works.

Instead, I will summarize the biographical and historical circumstances of their creation, and assess their place in the ongoing cultural revolution that we know as "modern life."

First, let me run through some basic biographical information about the composer.

## Who was Robert Schumann?

### Basic Biography

Robert Schumann was born in Zwickau, Saxony in 1810; he died in an asylum in Endenich, near Bonn, in 1856.

The son of a bookseller, he early showed ability as a pianist and interest in composing as well as literary leanings.

In 1821 he went to Leipzig to study law but instead spent his time playing music and writing poems.

After a spell in Heidelberg, ostensibly studying law but actually concentrating on music, he persuaded his mother that he should give up law, and in 1830 he went to live and study with Friedrich Wieck back at Leipzig.

He soon had trouble with his hands, perhaps due to a machine

the *Davidsbündlertänze* ('Dances of the League of David', an imaginary association of those fighting the Philistines),

*Carnaval* (a mix of pieces with literary or other allusive meanings, including one on the notes A-S-C-H after the place another girl friend came from),

*Kreisleriana* (fantasy pieces around the character of a mad composer devised by the Romantic genius, E. T. A. Hoffmann)

and *Kinderszenen* ('Scenes from Childhood').

In 1834 Schumann founded a music journal, the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*; he was its editor and leading writer for ten years.

The publication attacked what Schumann felt were the shallow musical practices of the day and Philistinism in general.

On the positive side, he recognized the brilliance of Chopin and, later, Brahms.

His writings embody the most progressive aspects of musical thinking in his time.

Sometimes he wrote under pseudonyms, Eusebius (representing his lyrical, contemplative side) and Florestan (his fiery, impetuous one).

His criticisms could take the form of debates between these and other voices.

This use of multiple voices gave his articles unprecedented nuance.

In 1835 he realized that he was in love with Friedrich Wieck's daughter, Clara, who was only sixteen at the time.

Her father, although he liked Schumann, opposed the union, to say the least: he wanted more financial security for his daughter, and to continue guiding her career as a virtuoso pianist.

Wieck did his best to separate them, waging an ugly battle of defamation against Schumann, attacking him especially for his Romantic *Studentleben* (dreamy, alcoholic, sexually adventurous).

They pledged themselves in 1837 but were much apart and Schumann went through deep depressions.

In 1839 they went to court to make Wieck's consent unnecessary

After many struggles they finally married in 1840.

During 1840, Schumann achieved what some consider his greatest work.

In that year he composed 138 songs, many in groups and cycles, including *Frauenliebe und -leben* ('A Woman's Love and Life') and *Dichterliebe* ('A Poet's Love,' to verse by Heine).

In 1841, Schumann turned to larger forms:

He wrote symphonies and a piece for piano and orchestra for Clara that later became the first movement of his Piano Concerto.

Then in 1842, when Clara was away on a concert tour (he disliked being in her shadow and remained at home -- this was far better than the experience he later had when he did accompany her on an extended tour of Russia), he turned to chamber music, and wrote his three string quartets and the Piano Quintet.

In 1843, he turned to choral music, working at a secular oratorio and at setting part of Goethe's *Faust*.

He and Clara moved to Dresden in 1844, but he was increasingly plagued by periods of depression.

In 1847 he agreed to work as conductor of the Dresden Liedertafel.

With this group he conducted a mix of drinking songs, sledding songs, and patriotic songs.

By October 1847 he resigned because the gig offered too little by way of actual musical inspiration.

But in January 1848 he established instead the Verein fuer Chorgesang.

This was a more competent version of the choral society. They did Bach, from *St. John's Passion*; Beethoven, the *Kyrie* from *Missa Solemnis*; Mendelssohn, Palestrina, and his own works.<sup>1</sup>

These minor posts are important to us because they involved him directly with the culture of Male Choirs which was a very important component in the political discourse of the day.

In 1850 he took up the post as director of the orchestra in Düsseldorf.

He was at first happy there, writing his Cello Concerto and the Rhenish Symphony.

But the post worked out badly because of his indifferent conducting.

In 1852-3 his health and spirits deteriorated.

In 1854 he began to suffer hallucinations; he attempted suicide and entered an asylum, where he died in 1856, almost certainly of the effects of syphilis.

## Basic Reputation

In general, Schumann is known as one of the great Romantics:

*“a principal figure of the early romantic movement in 19th-century music.”*

*“One of the most typical of romantic composers”*

Romantic life, work habits, etc.

These generalizations only barely suggest what we should mean when we refer to someone as a “Romantic.”

Beneath this matter of fact biography lies an intense life of work, dream despair, etc.

Poetry, criticism, diaries.

Fantasy, dream.

Casting friends (with new names) as fanciful, romantic characters: Summary of Davidsbund (King David, vs. the Philistines).<sup>2</sup>

Madness

Tell story of his last day:

Voices,  
Effort to write down angelic music,  
Karnaval,  
Leap into Rhine.

Most importantly: reputation of music as difficult to follow and understand! “Fractured,” “disoriented,” “irresolute,” etc.

Later we will further address the deeper significance of Schumann “Romanticism.”

But let me now review the basic history of the German Revolution of 1848.

## What was the Revolution of 1848?

Vormärz: Before March

Metternich’s Restoration

After Napoleon Bonaparte’s defeat, the victorious European powers met at the Vienna Congress (1814-15) to establish a new European order for peace and stability.

Under the leadership of Austria’s Chancellor Metternich, this treaty was meant to turn back the clock of history and restore and conserve as much of the pre-war order as possible.

The positions of ruling monarchs were to be strengthened and liberal ideas threatening to undermine them were to be eradicated.

Strict censorship radically suppressed every notion of a free press.

Reform movements

The Biedermeier population in general cared little about politics.<sup>3</sup>

Biedermeier culture has been referred to as “repressive sentimentality.”<sup>4</sup>

It consisted of Idealistic concentration on comfort and the “classics” instead of developing a critical approach toward social, political, even psychological realities.

It was against this sort of attitude in particular that Karl Marx railed.

Still, intellectuals increasingly felt the lack of individual rights, as compared with those achieved in England (1688), the United States, and France and began to voice their discontent.

Gradually, people of all sectors were becoming more aware and involved.

Censorship and repression were only temporarily effective.

These measures pushed political impulses into other areas: including religion, scholarship, and the arts.

This is why poetry (and music) became so political, or were perceived as such. Germans could not express their concerns through political channels such as parties and parliaments, so they found other means.<sup>5</sup>

Scholars, philosophers, and poets like Fichte and Arndt spread liberal ideas through their literary works.

An indication that these ideas were catching on was the growth of the *Burschenschaften* (student associations) at German universities.

Later extremely conservative institutions, these were liberal groups at the start of the century.

The student festival at Wartburg castle in Saxony in October 1817 was their most important demonstration.

The students chose black, red, and gold as the colors for their flags, ribbons and caps.

These were the colors of the uniforms of an infantry unit of volunteers which had distinguished itself in the wars against Napoleon.

Black, red and gold were also the colors used for the flag of the Deutsches Reich in medieval times.

In 1819, Karl Ludwig Sand, one of these students, murdered August von Kotzebue, a popular poet and writer because of his conservative views. As a result, censorship was tightened and all universities were placed under close state supervision.

At the same time, another patriotic and liberal movement, the *Turner*, developed

Led by Friedrich Ludwig Jahn.

Emphasized communal gymnastics and singing together in order to develop sense of comradeship and unity.

On May 27, 1832, approximately 30,000 people, many of them students and Turner, gathered at the Hambacher Fest to voice their demands

for a liberal, unified Germany,  
for freedom of the press,  
for the lifting of feudal burdens,  
for religious tolerance--  
and even, for proclamation of a republic.

Metternich's counter reaction was extreme. Secret police, censorship, etc. intensified.<sup>6</sup>

In 1837 the Göttingen Seven, seven professors from the University of Göttingen--among them the famous Grimm brothers -- protested the annulment of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Hanover and were promptly fired.

In 1840 hope for reform rose with accession of Friedrich Wilhelm IV to the Prussian throne -- to no avail.<sup>7</sup>

He was considered intelligent enough to see the need for change.

But he reneged on an earlier promise to allow a constitution in Prussia.<sup>8</sup>

Disappointment with him was intense: expectations had been heightened and he let them down.<sup>9</sup>

In the meantime, continuing industrialization, , led to the formation of a working class which mostly lived in utter poverty and misery.

In an uprising in June 1844, weavers in Silesia demanded a raise of their “starvation wages.”

They were told “to eat grass,” and the revolt was put down by the Prussian army.

Events like these added another dimension to the pre-March (Vor-märz) era: demands for relief of social problems which eventually grew into the socialist and communist movements.

By March of 1848, Germany was a tinderbox waiting for a spark.

### The March Revolution

This spark appeared in the form of the French Revolution of February 1848.

Citizen-King Louis Philippe was overthrown and the Second Republic was proclaimed.

This uprising immediately spread to Germany.

Events began rolling on February 27 in Mannheim, where an “Assembly of the People from Baden” demanded a bill of rights.

Similar resolutions were adopted in other areas.

Strong popular support for these movements forced rulers to give in to many of the demands almost without resistance.

Liberal governments were installed, for example in Saxony on March 16, in Bavaria on March 20.

However, overall success of the Revolution depended upon the two major German states, Austria and Prussia -- and things looked good, initially.

In Austria, Chancellor Metternich had to step down on March 13 in the face of a popular uprising and went into exile in England.

In Prussia, King Friedrich Wilhelm IV, who had declined to grant a constitution because he would “not allow a scrap of paper to come between him and his people,” changed his tune.

On March 17, Friedrich Wilhelm gave in to the demonstrators’ demands, including free parliamentary elections, a constitution, and freedom of the press.

When this was published, a huge crowd wanted to show its gratitude by celebrating in front of the king’s palace.

But, two shots were fired by the troops--by accident, and into the air--but the damage was done.

People felt they had been tricked and the celebration turned into a riot.

Barricades were erected and fierce fighting erupted, leaving 254 civilians dead before troops were ordered to retreat.

On March 19, once again a crowd gathered in the front of the palace.

They loaded some of the victims onto a cart and paraded it past king and queen shouting “Take your hat off.”

The king complied.

On March 21, he paraded through the streets of Berlin wearing a black, red and golden sash.

This humbling of the monarch marked the initial success of the Revolution, but much more had yet to be done.

## The National Assembly meets in Frankfurt

On May 18, 1848 a National Assembly -- the first freely elected German parliament -- opened its session in Frankfurt.

The Assembly intended to create a modern, liberal constitution as the foundation for a unified Germany.

However, disillusionment soon set in.

A major setback occurred because of problem of Schleswig-Holstein.

These two territories with a predominantly German population were associated with Denmark, which made moves to annex them.

Prussia went to war to prevent this but soon agreed to an armistice.

But the National Assembly, on a wave of nationalistic emotions--since its goal was to create a state to include all Germans--voted against the treaty.

After realizing that it could not change Prussia's mind, the National Assembly reversed its vote, thereby heavily damaging its reputation.

In response, a crowd tried to break up the National Assembly and install a more radical.

The Parliament had to be rescued by troops of the very rulers whose powers it sought to curtail.

Finally, *after* five months, discussions on the future constitution started.

Some major questions had to be decided:

Should the united Reich be a hereditary monarchy, have an elected monarch, or even become a republic?

Should it include Austria, (Gross Deutschland--Grand Germany), or exclude Austria, with leadership falling to Prussia (Kleindeutschland--Little Germany)?

These were extremely complex problems that were, arguably, only “resolved” by the outcome of the Second World War.

The difficulties experienced by the Parliament were not unexpected.

Meanwhile, however, events outside of Frankfurt began to overtake the discussion.

Austria’s government was rolling back liberal achievements by military force.

On March 7, 1849 the Austrian Emperor imposed a constitution of his own making, declaring Austria, Hungary, and the Italian provinces to be an indivisible entity.

The multi-national Hapsburg Empire obviously could not be a part of a German nation-state, much less lead it.

By the fall of 1848, moreover, the Prussian aristocrats (among them Otto von Bismarck) and generals had regained power in Berlin.

Friedrich Wilhelm immediately rejoined these old powers who promised to restore him to his former position.

In November he dissolved the new Prussian parliament and installed a constitution of his own.

But, although the achievements of the March Revolution were thus rolled back in Austria and Prussia, discussions in Frankfurt continued, increasingly out of touch with reality.

On March 28, 1849, the draft of the constitution was passed.

The new Germany was to be a constitutional monarchy, and the office of head of state (Kaiser) was to be held by the King of Prussia.

### The Revolution fails

On April 2, 1849, a delegation of the Parliament met with Friedrich Wilhelm IV in his residence in Berlin and offered him the crown of the Emperor under this new constitution.

Friedrich Wilhelm told the delegation that he felt honored but could accept the crown only with the consent of his peers, the other monarchs.

In a letter to a relative in England, he wrote what he really thought of the crown that had been offered to him--that he felt deeply insulted by being offered "from the gutter" a crown, "disgraced by the stink of revolution, baked of dirt and mud."

Deeply disappointed, the National Assembly faded.

Its most progressive and radical faction retired to Stuttgart where they held out until being dissolved by the military.

This fanned armed uprisings by workers, farmers, artisans and some students around Germany -- especially in Baden and Dresden.

These radical insurrections were short-lived, however.

The local military, aided by the Prussian Army, put them down quickly.

## Dresden in 1849

It is important to note that the violence in Dresden, famous because people like Richard Wagner and Robert Schumann were present, took place *now*, in April and May of 1849: at the *end* of the process, not at the start!

This took place a month *after* Friedrich Wilhelm had refused Frankfurt Parliament offer of German crown.

In the words of a contemporary, activist, this was merely an effort to retain the “last scanty remnants of the gains of the so-called revolution.”<sup>10</sup>

In the the end, the German Revolution failed.

The old feudal, militaristic order was reestablished, although with some liberal trimmings.

The middle classes made their peace with this order, as it tended to profit from it and feared the potential radicalism of the lower classes.

Workers and farmers, still the vast majority of the population, were too disorganized and leaderless to do anything further.

## Emigration

Many Germans who had hoped for the success of the German Revolution were unwilling to return to a life under the restored authoritarian regimes and chose emigration--mostly to the United States, and many to Milwaukee.

Exile to Milwaukee

As you know, Milwaukee was already a German center before 1848.

In fact a “Drei-Cents Verein” was founded in the city in 1848 to raise funds for the revolutionary effort:

Each supporter was asked to contribute 3 cents.

They sent \$21.64 abroad in spring of 49. Too little, too late!

The impact of the “48ers” really started AFTER the revolution.

First Milwaukee Turnverein founded in March, 1850, by 48ers.

Hans Balatka, a 48er from Bohemia, founded Milwaukee Musikverein in 1850.<sup>11</sup>

## What did Robert Schumann Have To Do With Politics and The Revolution of 1848?

### Story of flight in 1849

In 1849, when fighting actually broke out in Dresden, the Schumanns hid in the house, alarmed by the sound of shooting and of bells ringing in all the towers.

When volunteers came to their neighborhood looking for men who could serve in the militia, Schumann ran into the house to hide. Clara, convinced that they 'wanted to take him,' made some excuses.

After the coast was clear, the two of them, with their oldest daughter Marie, ran to the train station and escaped. (Clara had quickly made arrangements for the housekeeper to stay with the other children.) Their flight took them by train to outlying villages.

Two days later at 3 a.m., Clara, who was nearly seven months pregnant, returned to Dresden, accompanied by two other women. They walked 'across the fields, under continuous cannonading,' encountering scythe-armed rebels along the way. She made it to their house, where, as she wrote, '*I found the children still asleep, tore them out of their beds immediately, had them dressed, packed a few important items, and in one our we were together again, outside in the fields.*'

Clara added that '*my poor Robert had also spent some anxiety-filled hours,*' but was happy to see them. In fact, Schumann had gone right ahead with his creative work and maintained his concealment for the rest of the month.

During the violence, Schumann was working primarily on his *Album for the Young* (op 79).

As Clara noted, he was able to 'cast an air of supreme peacefulness over all these songs, they all remind me of spring, joyful as the blossoms.'

He explained to Ferdinand Hiller the odd way his creativity was inspired by the revolution and fighting in 1849: '*This has been my most fruitful year--as if the outer storms have driven me more into myself. Thus I've found a counterweight against the terrible things which broke in from the outside.*'

Thus does it seem, on the surface, that Schumann was no "revolutionary" and had almost no awareness of the events of 1848 and 1849.

He did, however, compose music that had something to do with all these "terrible things."

### Works of the 1848 Revolution

In 1847, BEFORE the March Revolution, he wrote three songs for the Liedertafel "on nationalist-democratic texts," which you will hear tonight.

Der Eidgenossen Nachtwache [The Confederate Nightwatch] (Eichendorff)

Freiheitslied [Freedom Song] (Rueckert)

Schlachtgesang [Battlesong] (F. G. Klopstock)

As I said earlier, it is significant that he was part of Liedertafel movement at all.

This alone can partly explain his motivation for doing such popular work.

Some patriotic songs would have been part of his responsibility. It really was his "job" at the time.

**DURING the Revolutionary year, Schumann composed three more “revolutionary songs” for male voices. They included:**

*Zu den Waffen* (To Arms!) (Titus Ulrich)

*Schwarz-Rot-Gold* (The colors adopted by the democrats) (Ferdinand Freiligrath)

*Freiheitssang* (Freedom Song) (J. Fürst) wind band ad lib.

**Alexander and I were not able to find the music for these pieces, but I did find reference to part of the text to the second, by Freiligrath.**

*Powder is black  
And Blood is red  
But yellow's the hue  
Of the flickering flame.*

Another “Black, Red, Gold” poem from Mar. 1848 put things even more directly: Black = death to tyrants; Red = our blood; Gold = freedom.

**Just by writing on this theme he was clearly making a political gesture.**

**DURING AND AFTER the revolutionary events of 1849 in Dresden, Schumann wrote the Four Marches, Op. 76,**

**Four “Barricade” Marches Op. 76 (1849)**

**He composed the first march while returning to Dresden after taking refuge, and the others during the next few days.**

**The emotion with which he wrote these pieces is shown in his remarks in a letter to his publisher with a special request to print its significant date in the largest possible figures!**

“You receive herewith some marches -- not the old Dessauer type -- but, rather, republican. It was the best way I could find to express my excitement--they have been written with real fiery enthusiasm.”

Again, in a letter to Liszt: “I enclose a novelty -- four marches -- I shall be pleased if they are to your taste. The date they bear has a meaning this time, as you will easily see. O time -- O princes -- O people!”<sup>12</sup>

*Sechs Gedichte von N. Lenau und Requiem, Op. 90 (June 1850)*

**Unrelated to 1848, except as sign of his association with political poets.**

**Nikolaus Lenau**

Lenau an Austrian.

“Sensitive spirit roused to wrath” by Metternich system.

Lenau was devastated by the political reaction he went to America in 1832, only to experience disappointment once again.

He returned to write poems calling for “liberty of conscience and in life.”

Breakdown in 1844; in asylum until death (1850?).

**Even if he did not always choose the openly political of Lenau’s works -- or those of Freiligrath, Eichendorff and especially Heinrich Heine --, setting any of them, even the innocuous ones, was a coded message of affiliation.**

**Under Metternich he could not have openly set the activist poetry, especially not for public performance. This would, we must remember, have meant arrest.**

**It is not impossible that Schumann’s settings seemingly non-political love poems -- were to be understood (among fellow reformers at least) as safe signs of support for radicals like Heine and Lenau.**

These are the obvious ways in which Schumann related to the political developments of his day. We could close our discussion here.

Still, it is not in overtly political action and statements that we should exhaust our search for indications of Schumann's contribution to "progress" in his day.

Far deeper were the revolutionary aspects of his art in general.

## Schumann as Cultural Revolutionary

Schumann's effort to link literature and music

When we refer to Robert Schumann as "Romantic" composer, What should we really mean in terms of his creativity?

Above all, scholars hold that Schumann is "romantic" because he explicitly viewed musical creations as "literary products," as poetic and philosophical constructs.

We think this information helps us to understand his "romantic" style better, but we must keep in mind that the romantic literature that fascinated him was not that of Jane Austen, not even of Emily Bronte, but of German writers like E.T.A. Hoffmann, Joseph Eichendorff and especially Jean Paul.

Their "romantic" agenda was much more complicated than most readers realize today.

We tend to underestimate the "romantic" movement in general, as a reactionary escape from the modernizing forces of the Enlightenment.

But many scholars have recognized the very "modern" elements involved in their stance.

Theirs was in many senses a response against the problems of science, technology, and an emerging "market" culture -- the same things that

have worried and burdened sensitive souls for the last two centuries!

Discuss Romantics as “modernists.”

Against Reason, Romantics emphasized intuition, dreams, fantasies, and nightmares, driven by aspects of what we refer to as the Subconscious or the Id.

Against the arguments of Scientists who assumed that all aspects of the universe were structured rationally, Romantics insisted that behind all premature sense of order is primal chaos.

Their focus on the issue of chaos underlying modern life, was a response to what they saw as the excessive confidence among Enlightened thinkers who tried to simplify and categorize all things.

Above all, Romantics desired to protect some “private space” (in dreams, fantasies, and art!) where the individual could enjoy some spiritual and creative liberty through contact with their own subconscious, free from the demands of Reason!

This agenda is the link between Romantics and thinkers we really consider “modern” such as Nietzsche and the Existentialists.

Theories of the Romantic Novel

Some considered the Novel to be the principle the means to achieve all of these aims.

But German Romantic novels were not the “linear narratives” we are used to.

In the German Romantic novel, all forms and genres (prose and poetry) are mingled and intertwined, to make possible the most manifold complexity, the primal, most individual form of romantic poetry.

Their story lines were developed only to emphasize the marvelous and unusual rather than normal workings of causality.

## Examples

### ETA Hoffmann's *Murr the Cat*

#### The Seven League Boots scene in Chamisso's *Strange Story of Peter Schlemihl*

**But perhaps the most celebrated of such novels at the time was Jean Paul's *Flegeljahre* (four volumes, 1804-05).**

This was Schumann's favorite: recommending it to Clara, he called it 'a book akin in kind to the Bible.'

It is the story of twin brothers, Walt Vult.

Walt typifies the shy dreaming poet; Vult the man of action, a vigorous figure.

Here we have the identical balancing of complementary personality characteristics that stamp Schumann's own self portraits: Eusebius and Florestan.

#### **The novel begins with the reading of a will.**

Walt is the recipient, but only after fulfilling certain conditions.

These are aimed at giving him education to life, but in odd ways--such as proofreading for the bookseller, tuning pianos for a day, tending a garden for a month, being a notary for a year, being a schoolmaster, and finally becoming a parson.

This complicated external plot introduces variety and constant shifts = a sense of the "primal chaos" so important to Jean Paul.

At the same time, within the text, the two brothers are cooperating on a novel. Its title is Hoppelpoppel, a name for scrambled eggs mixed with meat and potatoes.

So we have a novel within a novel.

Walt writes about love and summer days.

Vult counters with satires on talking in concerts, on the pretenses of aristocrats, etc.

The climax, especially for Schumann, is the great Masked Ball Scene toward the end of Book Four.

In Jean Paul's words, "A Masked Ball is perhaps the summit of what playful poetry can do for life. ...The external is merely dress but the internal is sound and delight, so here men make poetry of themselves and life."

## Schumann's obsession with Jean Paul

**In many ways, Schumann led his life in imitation of what he read in Jean Paul's books, especially this one!**

**He invented himself along lines he discovered in Jean Paul's prose.**

Imitations of Jean-Paul's own Doppelgaenger literary technique, Eusebius and Florestan! The Davidsbuendler!

Diaries recording every dream, fantasies, sexual encounter, etc.

the sequence of aesthetic projects in his career,

even his relationship with Clara

**All can be tied to close models in Jean Paul's life and work."**

## Application in Music

**Moreover, Schumann asserted that he learned more from Jean Paul about counterpoint than from anyone else."**

### **Best example: the work for piano, Papillons (op. 2)**

Terms of early reception: "Bizarre... grotesque... Emblems of incomprehension..."

In many ways, these criticisms of Schumann continue to represent how people respond to him: we miss in many of his works the structure expected in "classical" music.

*Papillons* based directly on the Masked Ball Scene in Jean Paul's *Flegeljahre*

Schumann underlined several passages in this chapter, numbering each in accordance with the supposedly corresponding movements in *Papillons*.

As he constructed *Papillons* according to Jean Paul's "primal chaotic" principles

In the words of a leading musicologist, "*Papillons* reveals fragmentary, descriptive, and evocative musical references which are organized into a loose musical narrative that communicates the inner reaction of the composer. In the many transitions within each piece the player's own expressive response is given room."

## Schumann as Revolutionary Modernist

The last phrase of this assessment, “giving room” to expression is all important here.

My thesis is that Schumann’s creative, musical fantasies are “political” because they are free.

As we have seen, “progressive” forces since the 18th century, including the ongoing scientific and industrial revolutions, threatened to subsume individuals under a culture of “getting and spending,” to use Wordsworth’s phrase.

The only counter to this mechanization of society in mid-century Germany, Biedermeier culture, amounted to a form of repressive sentimentality.

It is against these aspects of “modernity” that Schumann waged his ongoing revolutionary efforts, not just its open political forms.

With Jean Paul’s concepts as his main weapons, he fought to establish “personal space” for individuals otherwise trapped in the increasingly technological, market driven culture of the nineteenth-century West.

He fought to liberate man’s capacity to fantasize in music and literature: at the keyboard and with a pen.

In the long run, his contribution to “modernist expression” is probably more important than any practical political reforms undertaken in 1848.

To a great degree he did sacrifice himself for the revolutionary effort.

Unwilling to compromise and provide his audience with “easy” pieces, as even his talented wife requested, he accepted a career that offered far less fame and popularity than someone of his gifts might have expected.

It might even be asserted that his breakdown was brought on in part by the mental exhaustion he suffered because he did not relent in his struggle against Biedermaier Philistinism.

In many ways, he did end up exiled, but unlike those in Milwaukee, in a mental asylum.

His efforts bridge periods of offensive attacks against middle-class values that occurred at the beginning and at end of his century, and became central to twentieth century thought.

I think we can legitimately assert a continuum running from Jean Paul through Schumann to Nietzsche to Existentialism to Postmodernism.

Thus, it is legitimate to relate Schumann not only to the Revolutions of 1848, but to the ongoing revolutionary experience of modern life up to 1998 and beyond -- even, I might say especially, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

<sup>1</sup>\*Daverio, Schumann 00397

<sup>2</sup>\*Brown, Schumann 00058

<sup>3</sup>The term used to describe this period of comfortable, but stagnant and sleepy, inward-looking and narrow-minded society.

<sup>4</sup>\*Fulbrook, Concise 00112

<sup>5</sup>\*Sheehan, 1770-1866 00616

<sup>6</sup>\*Sheehan, 1770-1866 00610

<sup>7</sup>\*Sheehan, 1770 1866 00621

<sup>8</sup>\*Legge, Rhyme 00142

<sup>9</sup>\*Sheehan, 1770-1866 00623

<sup>10</sup>\*Legge, Rhyme 00532

<sup>11</sup>\*Johnson, Hildegard Binder, "Adjustment to the United States" in Zucker, A. E., *The Forty-Eighters: Political Refugees of the German Revolution of 1848* (New York, Russell & Russell, 1950) (53-60).

<sup>12</sup> (Cited in Chissell, Joan, *Schumann* (London: J. M. Dent 1948, 1977, 87)