

CHAPTER 8

RHYTHM

8.1 Introduction

Rheinberger's use of rhythm in his secular a capella works is dictated by an adherence to the atmosphere and feeling of the text. Rhythm plays an important role in determining a certain atmosphere in the music. The following quotation by Dickinson (1988:96) illustrates this importance:

One has only to think what a composer has to do to a poem: he has to destroy or at best modify its natural rhythm. He cannot possibly adhere to its actual meter. He then has to translate it into another medium. His only excuse for doing such a thing is that he feels he can recreate its atmosphere and feeling in the language of music. And here he can, if he's a good enough composer, heighten its emotional impact. He may even be able to bring out and stress certain rhymes and assonances that will enhance the actual words, but it remains a risky undertaking on which one hesitates to embark.

The natural inflection of the words and phrases, and the composer's perception of their musical interpretation, are two inseparable parameters. In this chapter it will be shown that Rheinberger succeeds in representing the inflection of the words and his own perception in a purposeful cohesion, obtaining movement both in the music and in the mood of the setting.

8.2 Metre

A vital first decision that has to be made when setting words to music concerns what the metre must be, as it contributes to the character of the setting. Every

time signature is distinctive, and together with rhythm and tempo is significant in establishing the mood of the setting.

Rheinberger favoured simple metre, in units of crotchets. Only three of the 62 songs are written in compound time (Op 2/3: 6/4; Op 108/6: 6/4; Op 170/2: 12/8). Metre changes occur in only four of the 62 songs. Since the text plays a deciding role in the choice of metre, it is strange that Rheinberger did not make use of metre changes more frequently. However, Rheinberger succeeds with the help of other musical variables in serving the needs of the text.

In “Die lieben Todten”, Op 52/4, a through-composed song, the middle section is in 2/4 against the 3/4 of the first and third sections. The change of metre is used primarily for text illumination and to establish contrast in the different sections within the work. The middle section’s text portrays a different atmosphere than the first and last sections of the composition: “Verklung’ne Kinderträume tauchen aus Nacht, sie tauchen aus Nacht und Trümmerschutt empor, umgaukeln dein Gemüth und hauchen, hauchen vergess’ne Laute dir in’s Ohr.” (Fading children’s dreams come forth from the night, they reach up from the ruins of the night, ensnare your soul and whisper, whisper forgotten sounds into your ear). The fact that the middle section (11-28) is set as a small fugato adds further interest to this example. The relative unrest that the melodic activities of the fugato cause, helps to elucidate the unpleasantness of the text.

The reason for the change of metre in “Abend am Meer”, Op 124/1, is unclear. “Abend am Meer” is a strophic song, and the change of metre occurs in both the stanzas. The last two bars of “Letztes Gebet”, Op 186/8 (Ex 8-1), are changed from 2/4 to 4/4. This is done to accommodate a “written out” *ritardando*.

Ex 8-1 “Letztes Gebet”, Op 186/8 (43-48)



43 *f* *più lento.* 45 *p* *pp* 47

schen Ge - fah - ren den frei - en Geist zum Him - mel auf.

schen Ge - fah - ren den frei - en Geist zum Him - mel auf.

schen Ge - fah - ren den frei - en Geist zum Him - mel auf.

f *dim.* *p* *pp*

schen Ge - fah - ren den frei - en Geist zum Him - mel auf.

The most successful application of metre change occurs in “Feierabend”, Op 170/4 (40.2), to represent gaiety (Ex 8-2). The phrase “Stund’ um Stunde fliehet und wir singen fröhlich Lied um Lied” (hour after hour flies past and we joyfully sing song after song) can be broken up into two sections. The first section is in 3/4 “Stund’ um Stunde fliehet”, and the second in 2/4, to represent the cheerfulness of the text “und wir singen fröhlich Lied um Lied” .

Ex 8-2 "Feierabend", Op 170/4 (39-46)



39 *f* Stund' um Stun - de flieht und wir sin - gen fröh - lich *dim.*

41 *dim.*

Stund' um Stun - de flieht und wir sin - gen fröh - lich *dim.*

Stund' um Stun - de flieht und wir sin - gen fröh - lich *dim.*

Stund' um Stun - de flieht und wir sin - gen fröh - lich *dim.*

43 *p* Lied um Lied, weit - hin klin - get uns - re Wei - se

45 *f*

Lied um Lied, weit - hin klin - get uns - re Wei - se

Lied um Lied, weit - hin klin - get uns - re Wei - se

Lied um Lied, weit - hin klin - get uns - re Wei - se

Lied um Lied, weit - hin klin - get uns - re Wei - se

8.3 Arsis rhythm

The only example of the application of an arsis rhythm is found in Op 2/4 (18-19), where it is used on the words "wie" (how) and "und" (and) (Ex 8-3). To view the use of arsis rhythmic figures with those two words in the musical extract only, would be insufficient. It is applied to create a joyful mood, as dictated by the surrounding text: "Wie junges Grün und Sonnenschein muss bei dem Lenz das Wundern sein" (like young greenery and sunshine come with spring, so must amazement be there).

Ex 8-3 “Wanderlied”, Op 2/4 (18–21)



18 20

Andern: wie jun-ges Grün und Son-ne-schein muss bei dem Lenz das

8.4 Descriptive rhythmic figures

The use of specific rhythmic figures is a particularly distinguishing facet of a composer’s vocabulary and perhaps never more so than when setting words to music.

In the context of the 62 secular songs for mixed a capella choir, descriptive rhythmic figures would be those not frequently used in a particular composition. They occur momentarily or for a short phrase only, to emphasise a specific word or text-phrase. Descriptive rhythmic figures are used discreetly by Rheinberger according to the needs of the text. Rhythmic features are chosen to correlate with Rheinberger’s interpretation of the text.

A fine example (Ex 8-4) is found in “Die Wolken”, Op 170/2 (14). The time signature is 12/8, and with the help of duplets, a stroll, “wandern über Berg und Thal” (walking over hills and valley), is represented.

Ex 8-4 “Die Wolken”, Op 170/2 (13-15)



Bo - gen wandern ü - ber Berg und Thal Wei - che

Bo - gen wandern ü - ber Berg und Thal. Wei - che

Bo - gen wandern ü - ber Berg und Thal. Wei - che

Bo - gen wandern ü - ber Berg und Thal. Wei - che

Music can be divided into movement in time (rhythm) and movement in space (pitch). Movement in time is the most commonly recognised of the two, but movement in space is also used by composers to help link a specific descriptive value to a rhythmic figure. In “Guter Rath”, Op 170/6 (5-9) (Ex 8-5), the bass part’s simultaneous movement in time (3/4) and space creates a temporary waltz-effect – “es wälzt sich um und um” (it turns around and around).

Ex 8-5 "Guter Rath", Op 170/6 (4-12)



trun-ken sein, — es wälzt sich um und um, — es trun-ken sein, — es wälzt sich um und um, — es trun-ken sein, — es wälzt sich um und um, — es trun-ken sein, — es wälzt sich um und um, — es wälzt es

wälzt sich um und um, — stürzt rauschend sich ins Thal hin- wälzt sich um und um, — stürzt rauschend sich ins Thal hin- wälzt sich um und um, — stürzt rauschend sich ins Thal hin- wälzt sich um und um, stürzt rau- schend, rau - schend sich ins Thal hin-

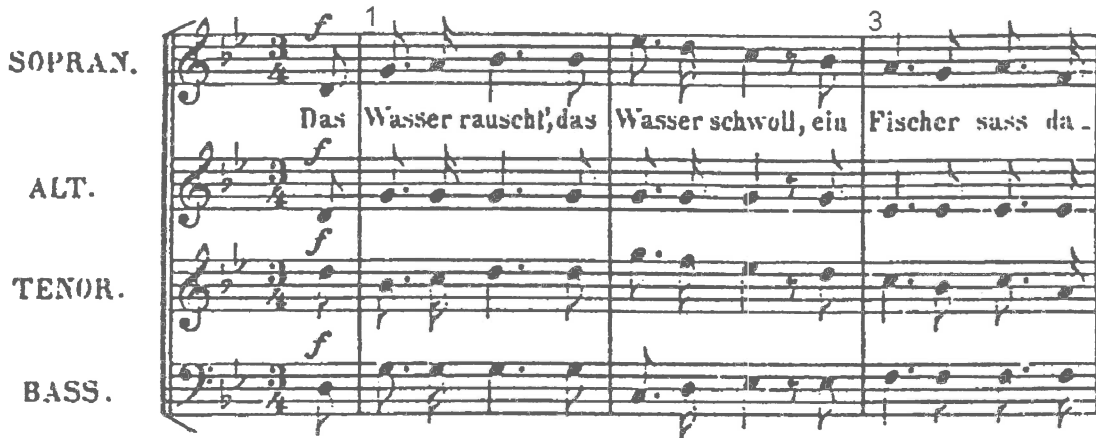
8.5 Dotted rhythms

In the secular songs for mixed a capella choir momentum or rhythmic propulsion benefits the most from the use of dotted rhythms.

In a capella choral music the use of dotted rhythms against regular rhythms is important for the forward movement of the music. In every song the use of dotted rhythms in this context can be found. The following two examples illustrate how dotted rhythms are applied for text clarification.

“Der Fischer”, Op 2/2 (Ex 8-6) contains dotted rhythms to help represent the energy suggested by the text: “Das Wasser rauscht’, das Wasser schwoll” (The water chums and rolls).

Ex 8-6 “Der Fischer”, Op 2/2 (0-3)



Musical score for "Der Fischer", Op 2/2 (0-3). The score is for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The lyrics are: "Das Wasser rauscht, das Wasser schwoll, ein Fischer sass da." The music features dotted rhythms and dynamic markings like *f*.

In “Wanderlied”, Op 2/4 (6-12), youthfulness and positive feelings are represented through the use of dotted rhythms (Ex 8-7). The title of the song, “Wanderlied” (Hiking song), already sets a light mood, and the text phrase “nun ist die schöne Frühlingszeit, nun geht es an ein Wandern” (now is the beautiful springtime, now we can start to hike) further invites a cheerful setting, which Rheinberger adheres to through the use of the indicated dotted rhythms.

Ex 8-7 "Wanderlied", Op 2/4 (4-12)



Wandern, nun ist die schöne Frühlingszeit, nun geht es an ein

Wandern, nun geht es an ein Wandern. Bald ist's allein und

Bald ist's allein

8.6 Repeated rhythms

The use of repeated regular rhythmic figures is isolated in the secular songs for mixed a capella choir. Three significant examples can be found. A repeated rhythmic figure is usually applied to represent peacefulness. The finest example is found in "Abend am Meer", Op 124/1 (Ex 8-8) where the indicated repeated figure together with the tempo-indication *Langsam und zart* (slowly and tenderly) provides feelings of tranquillity as dictated by the text: "Alles so stille: der Himmel, das Meer" (Everything is peaceful: the sky, the sea).

Ex 8-8 "Abend am Meer", Op 124/1 (0-5)

Sopran. *p* 1
Al . les so stil . le: der Him . mel, das Meer; Al . les in
Alt. *p*
Tenor. *p*
Bass. *p*
Al . les so stil . le: der Him . mel, das Meer; Al . les in
3 5
Frie . den lieb . lich und hehr, Licht an dem Him . mel und Licht in der
Frie . den lieb . lich und hehr, Licht an dem Him . mel und Licht in der

In "Das Mühlrad geht im Lindengrund", Op 124/2 (Ex 8-9) the turning of a millwheel is imitated in the bass by the illustrative rhythmic figure, used in an interval of a 5th.

Ex 8-9 “Das Mühlrad Geht Im Lindengrund”, Op 124/2 (0-5)



Sopr. *p* 1 3 5
Das Mühlrad geht im Lindengrund, das Wasser rauscht vom

All. *p*

Ten. *p*

Bass *p*
Das Mühlrad geht im Lindengrund, das Wasser rauscht vom

Das Mühlrad geht im Lindengrund, das Wasser

8.7 Syncopation

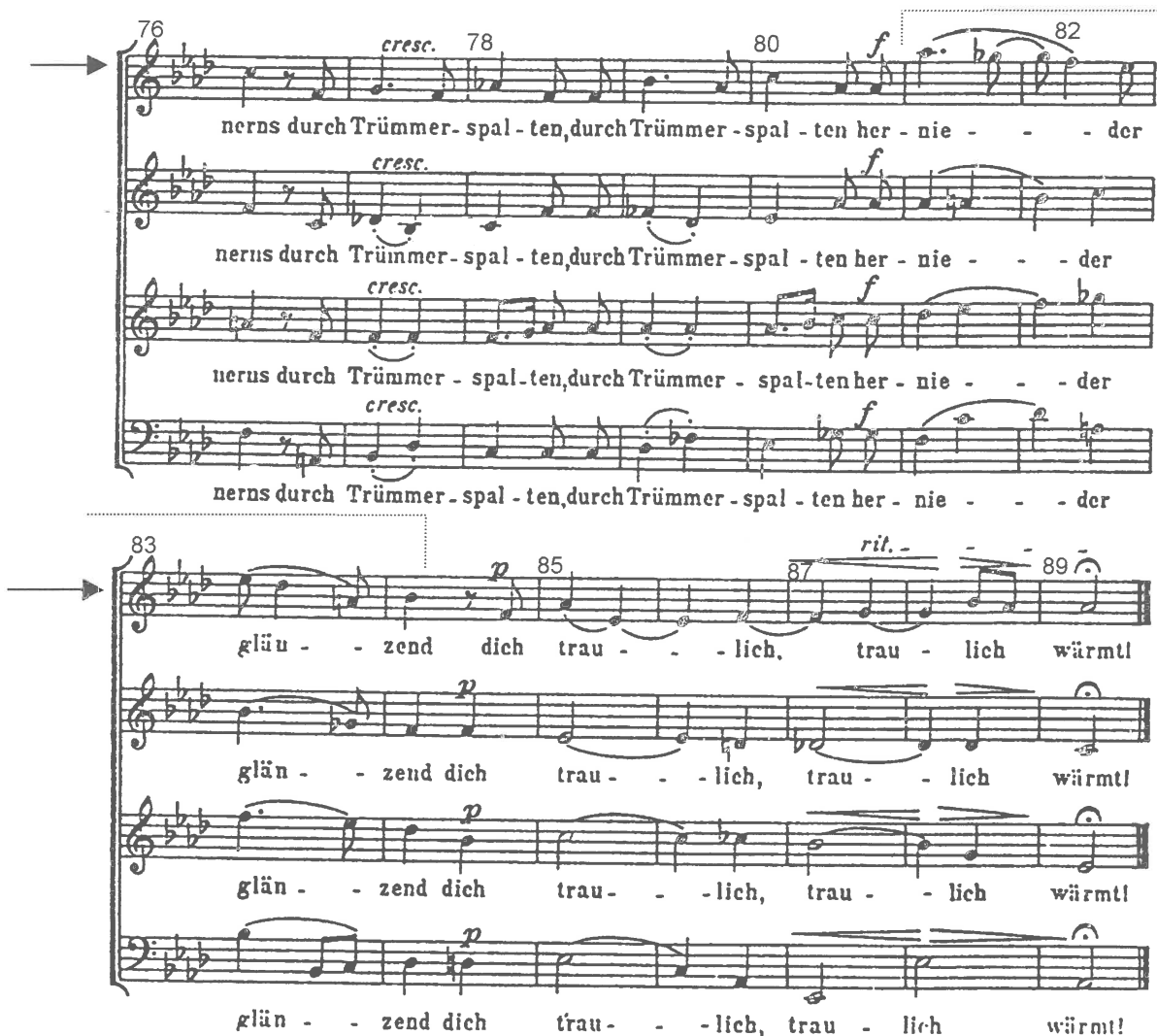
Composers use syncopation to achieve a certain effect, because it deliberately disturbs the normal pulse of metre, accent and rhythm. In vocal music, syncopation can be used to interpret excitement, to increase tension and volume, or it can contribute to a prevailing serious mood. It can also be used to accentuate a specific word.

Rheinberger never used syncopation as extensively as described in the previous paragraph. In the secular songs for mixed a capella choir it is used judiciously to emphasise important words. The most eminent examples are found in Op 24/1(3), Op 80/3 (16-20), Op 108/1 (14), Op 108/6 (58-62), Op 186/4 (42) and Op 186/8 (32-34).

Not only does the syncopation serve to emphasise important words, but it provides rhythmic momentum and makes the melody more interesting. An engaging example is found in “Rhapsodie”, Op 186/5 (81-89), where the soprano moves to a notable extent in syncopation against the other, more rhythmically conservative, voices (Ex 8-10). The unsteady effect of the syncopation, together

with harmonic unrest (the presence of secondary dominants, e.g. bars 76.2.2, 82.2, 84.2 and 86.2), helps to accentuate the text “wo nur ein Strahl des Erinnerns durch Trümmerspalten hernieder glänzend dich traulich, traulich wärmt!” (where a ray of remembrance shines through gaps in ruins and warms you constantly).

Ex 8-10 “Rhapsodie”, Op 186/5 (76-89)



76 *cresc.* 78 80 *f* 82
 nerns durch Trümmer - spal - ten, durch Trümmer - spal - ten her - nie - - - der
cresc.
 nerns durch Trümmer - spal - ten, durch Trümmer - spal - ten her - nie - - - der
cresc.
 nerns durch Trümmer - spal - ten, durch Trümmer - spal - ten her - nie - - - der
cresc.
 nerns durch Trümmer - spal - ten, durch Trümmer - spal - ten her - nie - - - der

83 85 87 *rit.* 89
 glü - - zend dich trau - - - lich, trau - lich wärmt!
p
 glän - - zend dich trau - - - lich, trau - - lich wärmt!
p
 glän - - zend dich trau - - - lich, trau - - lich wärmt!
p
 glän - - zend dich trau - - - lich, trau - lich wärmt!

Normally syncopation is only partial, i.e. it occurs in one part only, while other parts maintain and emphasise the normal pulse of the metre. The displacement of accents in the entire texture often creates an effect of blurring or shock.

Rheinberger uses it in three instances: “Das Mühlrad Geht im Lindengrund”, Op 124/2 (41-43); “Hoffe”, Op 170/1 (1-8); and “Rhapsodie”, Op 186/5 (25). In the last case (Ex 8-11), Op 186/5 (25), the question “Seele, wo hast du dein Ziel gefunden?” (Soul, where have you found a target?) is highlighted through the use of syncopation.

Ex 8-11 “Rhapsodie”, Op 186/5 (20-29)



20 22 *f* 24

Al - les und stets ge - bun - den, See - le, wo

cresc.

Frei ü - ber Al - les und stets ge - bunden, See - le, wo

cresc.

Frei ü - ber Al - les und stets ge - bunden, See - le, wo

cresc.

Frei ü - ber Al - les und stets ge - bunden, See - le, wo

25 27 *f* 29

hast du dein Ziel ge - fun - den? Gestirne und Son - nen

hast du dein Ziel ge - fun - den? Gestirne und Son - nen

hast du dein Ziel ge - fun - den? Ge - stirne und Son - nen um -

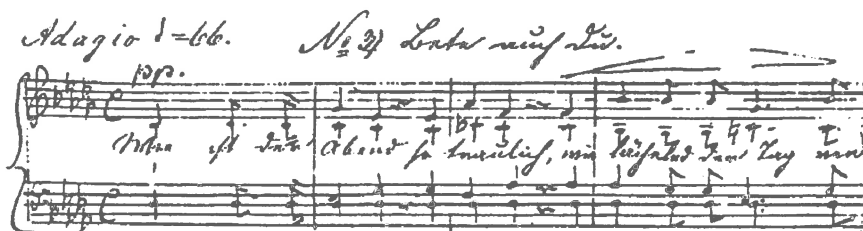
hast du dein Ziel ge fun - den? Gestirne und Son - nen

8.8 Tempo indications

With the exception of two sets of songs, Op 108 *Am Strome* and Op 124 *Waldblumen*, Rheinberger did not give metronome indications to the secular

songs for mixed a capella choir. Publishers added metronome indications to the rest of the songs for mixed a capella choir. It seems that Rheinberger approved all the additions, as no reference could be found in his correspondence with his publishers (Wanger & Irmén 1982-1986). Ex 8-12 shows the first three bars of Op 108/3 in Rheinberger's own handwriting; the tempo and metronome indications are attractive in his old style German handwriting.

Ex 8-12 "Bete auch du", Op 108/3 (1-3), in Rheinberger's handwriting



Tempo indications in Italian or German were indicated for all the songs by Rheinberger himself. All the metronome indications given to the songs in the published versions of the compositions fit his tempo indications. Some of Rheinberger's tempo indications in German are very imaginative and precise and must be considered as guidance to the interpreter. Some interesting examples are the following: *Langsam und zart* (slow and tender) in "Zum neuen Jahr", Op 31/4 and "Abend am Meer", Op 124/1; *Langsam und weihevoll* (slow and solemn) in "Sommernacht", Op 124/6; *Mässig langsam und ausdrucksvoll* (moderately slow and expressive) in "Die lieben Todten", Op 52/4; *Langsam im Volkston* (slow and in folk style) in "Es glänzt die laue Mondennacht", Op 31/1 and "Frühling ohne Ende", Op 52/1; and *Frisch bewegt* (quick moving) in "Sonntags am Rhein", Op 52/3.

Tempo is vital for the message and atmosphere that a song wishes to convey. The value of important examples of tone painting could be lost if a wrong tempo is chosen. It is clear that Rheinberger had a pre-conceived tempo for every song.

8.9 Tempo changes

Rheinberger uses indications for tempo changes conservatively. Most of these indications can be found at the end of an important section or at the very end of a song. In songs where a *ritardando* or *ritenuto* is not indicated at the end, it is either implied by the music, or a more specific indication is given such as *più lento* (more slowly) in “Zwei Liebchen”, Op 108/5, “Sonntagsfrühe”, Op 186/2 and “Letztes Gebet”, Op 186/8; *breit* (broad) in “Sonntags am Rhein”, Op 52/3, “Zweites Wanderlied”, Op 124/5 and “Guter Rath”, Op 170/6); *meno mosso* (less movement) in “Herbstlied”, Op 170/8; and *maestoso* (majestic) in “Rhapsodie”, Op 186/5 and “Rheinisches Tanzlied”, Op 186/6.

The end of “Sonntags am Rhein”, Op 52/3 (Ex 8-13), where Rheinberger wrote *breit* (broad), has as text “Das fromme, treue Vaterland in seiner vollen Pracht, mit Freud’ und Liedern allerhand vom lieben Gott bedacht!” (The pious, loyal motherland with all its glory, is kept in thought by God with songs and joy). The nationalistic character of many works from the Romantic period is displayed in this example. The indication for a broader tempo, together with a broad chorale-like style in which the text is set, supports the patriotic flavour of the words.



Ex 8-13 "Sonntags am Rhein", Op 52/3 (56-71)

56 *breit.* 58 60 62
land! Das fromme, treu.e Va . ter . land in sei . ner vollen Pracht,
land! Das fromme, treu.e Va . ter . land in sei . ner vollen Pracht,
land! Das fromme, treu.e Va . ter . land in sei . ner vollen Pracht,
land! Das fromme, treu.e Va . ter . land in sei . ner vollen Pracht,
land! Das fromme, treu.e Va . ter . land in sei . ner vollen Pracht,

64 *p* *f* 66 *pp* *poco rit.* 68 70
— mit Freud'und Liedern aller . hand vom lieben Gott be dacht!
— mit Freud'und Liedern aller . hand vom lieben Gott be . dacht!
— mit Freud'und Liedern aller . hand vom lieben Gott be . dacht!
— mit Freud'und Liedern al . ler . hand vom lieben Gott be . dacht!

Artists performing the songs for mixed a capella choir by Josef Rheinberger can rely on the indications for change of tempo by Rheinberger himself. These must be seen as supportive to the text, and as a means towards successful interpretation.

8.10 Triplets

Triplets are used very discreetly in the secular songs for mixed a capella choir to illuminate a word or important text phrase, to make a melody more interesting or to extend a musical phrase.

The finest example (Ex 8-14) of triplets used in support of the text is found in “Bete auch du”, Op 108/3 (26-29) where a certain broadness is added to the musical phrase, rendering the beauty of the heavenly sky – “Im Strom spiegelt sich der blaue, prächtige Himmelsdom” (In the stream the blue majestic sky is reflected).

Ex 8-14 “Bete auch Du”, Op 108/3 (25-31)



25

Im Strom spiegelt sich der blaue, prächt-ti-ge Himmels-

27

Im Strom spiegelt sich der blaue, prächt-ti-ge Himmels-

Im Strom

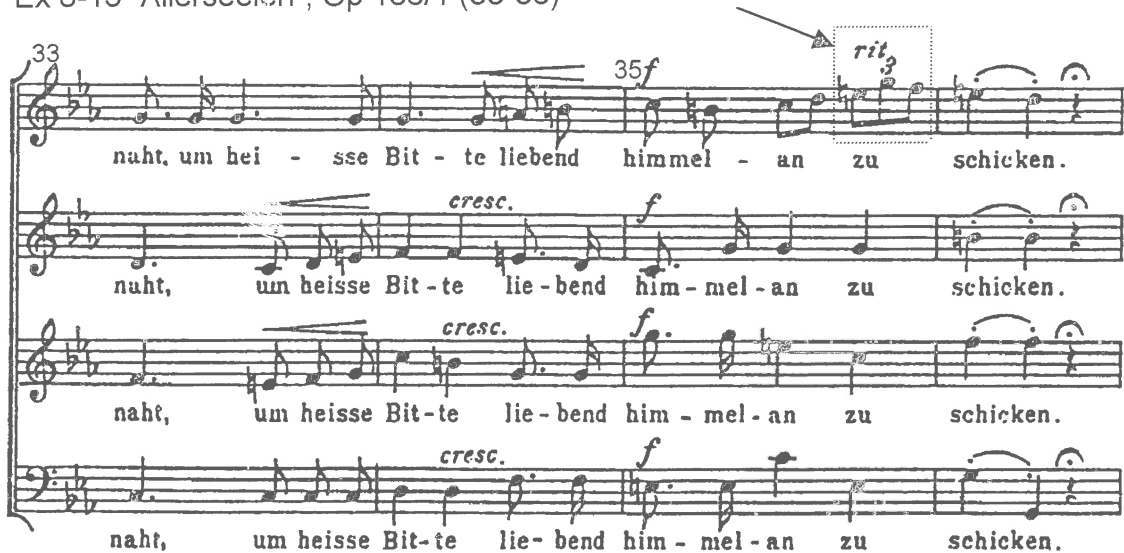


The image shows a musical score for the piece "Bete auch Du". It consists of four staves: two vocal staves (Soprano and Tenor) and two piano accompaniment staves. The score is in 3/4 time and begins at measure 28. The lyrics are: "dom, der prächtigen Himmels dom. Und Alles betet lebendig um". The piano part features triplets and dynamics such as *pp* and *ppp*. The vocal parts also feature triplets and dynamics such as *pp* and *ppp*.

Other significant occurrences of triplets can be found in "Bete auch Du", Op 108/3 (9) and "Dennoch singt die Nachtigall", Op 170/5 (20-21 and 43). The soprano and tenor melodies in "Dennoch singt die Nachtigall", Op 170/5 (2-4) (Ex 5-12), benefit by their embellishment with triplets. The melodies could have had the same rhythm as the parallel moving alto and bass parts, but, by using triplets as embellishment, the focus falls on the soprano and tenor melodies.

In "Allerseelen", Op 186/1 (35) (Ex 8-15), Rheinberger uses a triplet to broaden (expand) the music naturally. It is used in combination with an indication for a *ritardando*.

Ex 8-15 "Allerseelen", Op 186/1 (33-36)



33
naht, um hei - sse Bit - te liebend himmel - an zu schicken.

35 *f*
naht, um heisse Bit - te lie - bend him - mel - an zu schicken.

cresc.
naht, um heisse Bit - te lie - bend him - mel - an zu schicken.

cresc.
naht, um heisse Bit - te lie - bend him - mel - an zu schicken.

cresc.
naht, um heisse Bit - te lie - bend him - mel - an zu schicken.

8.11 Conclusion

Metric and rhythmic characteristics found in Rheinberger's secular works for mixed a capella choir show a unique sensitivity to the qualities of the German language. Rheinberger's use of rhythm in the secular a capella works is dictated by an adherence to the atmosphere and feeling of the text. There is rhythmic variety that moves with the melodic lines and the text that is being sung.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

The foregoing style analysis of the secular choral works for mixed a capella choir by Josef Rheinberger (1839-1901) brought about quite a few conclusions as regards Rheinberger's choral style. These conclusions are summarised in this chapter.

9.1 Text and text-setting

Rheinberger used a wide variety of poets, of whom only a few are well known for their poetry. He did, however, set to music poems by some of the most notable poets of his age: Goethe, Mörike, Reinick and Heyse. Some poems chosen by Rheinberger are unfortunately not always of a high literary quality; Rheinberger's sublime music communicates the universal ideas that can be found in the poetry without drawing attention to the weakness of the poem itself. Rheinberger showed a delicate response to the sound of the words as well as to the word meaning, both significant considerations in his settings.

Rheinberger's songs for mixed a capella choir indicate his favouritism for clarity and restraint. Text repetition is widely used in the discussed works; however, it was used intentionally, emphasising a significant phrase, or featuring in the formal structuring of the work.

Rheinberger favoured syllabic text-setting. It contributed to the clarity he wanted to achieve and was used both when the voices moved in free contrapuntal lines, and together in familiar style.

Melismas are used in a highly conservative manner. Syllabic procedures, with two-note figures (of which the interval and direction vary according to melodic or expressive requirements) and occasional melismas, are characteristic of the analysed works.

The meaning and natural inflections of the words are Rheinberger's prime concern, resulting in sensitive choral expressions.

9.2 Form

Rheinberger's trained craftsmanship is apparent from a formal analysis of the secular songs for mixed a capella choir. The form of every song is specifically text-related.

The majority of the songs are in strophic form. Although through-composed, binary and ternary works also appear. Rheinberger succeeds in designing a form for every song, according to the textual and musical needs, neglecting neither. Josef Rheinberger's succinct control of form is one of his prominent characteristics.

9.3 Texture and compositional techniques

Homophonic and polyphonic textures alternate and overlap with fugato and canon, found in a number of works. Rheinberger's use of imitation contributes to the strengthening of the horizontal structure of the phrases. The use of polyphony by Rheinberger can be described as fleeting interpolations in otherwise homophonic compositions. Contrary motion of voice parts is a common procedure used by Rheinberger, resulting in cohesion, yet contrast. Augmentation and diminution seldom occur.

9.4 Harmony

Rheinberger's obvious dependence on a fixed tonal centre is distinct, and the works as a whole reveal his discerning harmonic insight. Rheinberger's belief in the logic of tonality manifests in the use of the triad as fundamental premise. The latter can be described as the most conservative characteristic of his harmonic style. Additionally, all of the works begin and end in the same key, and he uses simple traditional cadence formulas that strengthen the tonal cohesion of the songs.

Rheinberger uses chords in mediant relationships as one way of portraying contrasting thoughts in a poem. The chosen harmonic rhythm for a song stays constant throughout. Acceleration of harmonic rhythm is found only at cadence points.

A harmonic analysis of Josef Rheinberger's secular works for mixed a capella choir shows his predominant use of conservative harmonic principles. His harmonic writing appears to be instinctive, assured and confident. Harmonic language, considering all 62 songs, is stable, with very little exploring of dissonance.

9.5 Melody

Significant in Rheinberger's secular works for mixed a capella choir are the following melodic characteristics:

- ◆ The use of the falling melodic line and stepwise movement.
- ◆ The meaningful employment of interval leaps with a balance between conjunct and disjunct movement. An interval analysis clearly shows Rheinberger's preference for the use of smaller intervals.

- ◆ An imaginative union of melodic and poetic rhythm, yet each stands effectively without the other. Rheinberger's deep interest in language and literature is evident from the extreme care he takes with the metric and rhythmic aspects of his settings. The natural speech rhythm and metre are followed as closely as possible and any forced manipulation for the sake of musical expression is seldom found.
- ◆ The melodic material provides a basis for structural cohesion, while firmly embedded in traditional tonality with the occasional chromatic influence.

9.6 Rhythm

Metric and rhythmic characteristics found in Rheinberger's secular works for mixed a capella choir show a unique sensitivity to the qualities of the German language. His use of rhythm in the secular a capella works is dictated by an adherence to the atmosphere and feeling of the text. There is rhythmic variety that moves with the melodic lines and the text that is being sung. His choice of metre was conservative, with simple metre, in units of crotchets, being most common. Compound metre occurs in only three of the 62 songs, with metre change barely used.

Descriptive rhythmic figures are employed judiciously according to the needs of the text. The music's momentum or rhythmic propulsion benefits the most from the use of dotted rhythms.

Triplets are utilised very discreetly to illuminate a word or important text phrase, to colour a melody or to extend a musical phrase. The use of triplets against two-note figures, the only example of a polyrhythmic figure, is noticed. Syncopation is put to use, however very seldom prominently.

Tempo indications are indicated at the start of each song, either by Rheinberger himself or by his publishers. Indications for tempo changes are conservatively applied.

9.7 Evaluation of the didactic worth of the choral works

Rheinberger's secular songs for mixed a capella choir are a valuable contribution to the choral repertoire. As can be seen from the analysis, no extensive demands are made of the choral conductor in terms of score reading and interpretation. The biggest challenge lies in the rendition of the intentions of the composer and the poets, interpreting the text and bringing out its beauty. The music never intrudes on the nature and poetic beauty of the text, and it is this fact that makes the works suitable in school settings, and for any amateur mixed choir.

The voice as instrument is treated with the utmost understanding and sympathy. The harmonic style is not particularly difficult; and extended harmony is not used. Rheinberger's choral writing requires good intonation and sufficient skill to sing the sometimes chromatic parts, but otherwise poses no unusual obstacles.

The fact that most of the choral writing is homophonic makes it even more appropriate for an amateur choir, as polyphonic choral music calls for a higher level of skill.

9.8 Recommendations

It is necessary for the conductor of Rheinberger's secular works for mixed a capella choir to have a thorough understanding of the word text, as a conductor who knows a choral work's poetry is brought closer to the work. Just as an understanding of harmony enhances the conductor's ability to judge musical

phrasing, climax, and sectional weight, so can the conductor's understanding of the poet's text enhance the expressive presentation of the musical work. Unquestionably, a conductor can perform any of Rheinberger's secular songs for mixed a capella choir without understanding the poetry. But a genuine knowledge of the relationship between the text and the composer's compositional process will invariably bring the conductor into a more intimate relationship with the composition. This intimacy and understanding translate into better performances.

Choral conductors/educators have a responsibility to train choristers not only as fine singers, but as literate musicians. That means including music such as Rheinberger's secular songs for mixed a capella choir, which constitute accountable settings of creditable texts with educational values.

The secular songs for mixed a capella choir by Josef Rheinberger are a useful contribution to the mixed choir repertoire and provide the conductor searching for unknown, refreshing works to include in a programme, with a comprehensive choice.