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Theme and variations in Schubert's *String Quartet no. 14, # 2*

How Schubert exploits theme and variation form to create a relationship between the movement and his lied "Death and the Maiden" that spans more than just the harmonic level.

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In *String Quartet no. 14*, known colloquially as the “Death and the Maiden” quartet, Franz Schubert presents us with four movements of pure musical genius. The second movement, *Andante con molto*, is a movement of particular brilliance. The piece, a theme and five variations with coda, draws its theme directly from Schubert's 1817 lied *Der Tod und das Mädchen* (*Death and the Maiden*). So beautiful and powerful is the piece that it has become the defining movement of the string quartet – as can be inferred from its colloquial naming. What is particularly interesting about the movement from an analysis standpoint is the way in which it is tied so tightly to the piece upon which it is based. The movement can be seen to reflect the lied on two distinct architectonic levels: the harmonic and melodic level, and the human interpretive level (by which I mean the way in which we interpret the mood and create expectations from the music.) Schubert achieves this strict adherence through the skillful use of musical momentum and dashed expectations throughout the movement's variations in order to recreate the tension that is present in the song but on a much grander scale.

In this paper I will analyze the theme of the quartet's second movement (referred to as “the movement” for simplicity; I will compare it alongside “the song” often) and its five variations and coda in order to identify the processes that Schubert uses to generate the variations and how they reflect the emotive nature of the song from which they are drawn. We will see how momentum is created as the piece evolves, and discuss how this momentum is used to reflect the feeling of the source material but on a grander scale. In order to make such observations, we must first understand the source material in its entirety. Insight into this matter will help us in our quest to identify the sources of emotion and musical tension and release in the theme.

The lied

The original *Death and the Maiden* is a lied – a German song cycle – composed by Schubert in 1817 for solo voice and piano accompaniment. The song is a setting of a text of the same title by German poet Matthias Claudius. In the text, which can be read in figure 1 below, a young maiden desperately begs Death to spare her soul, arguing that she is too young to die. Death replies calmly, telling the maiden that he is a friend, that he does not come to punish her and that she will sleep softly in his arms. The poem can clearly be split into two sections with distinct feelings – that of the fearful maiden and that of the reassuringly calm Death.

<u>Original German:</u>	<u>English translation:</u>
Das Mädchen: Vorüber! Ach, vorüber! Geh, wilder Knochenmann! Ich bin noch jung, geh Lieber! Und rühre mich nicht an.	The Maiden: Pass by! Oh, pass by! Go away, fierce man of bone! I am still young, go my dear! And do not touch me.
Der Tod: Gib deine Hand, du schön und zart Gebild! Bin Freund, und komme nicht, zu strafen. Sei gutes Muts! ich bin nicht wild, Sollst sanft in meinen Armen schlafen!	Death: Give me your hand, you beautiful and delicate form! I am a friend, and am not come to punish. Be of good cheer! I am not savage, You will sleep softly in my arms!

Figure 1: Original German and English translation of Der Tod und das Mädchen by German poet Matthias Claudius¹.

The text does not lend itself readily to multiple interpretations, so its musical setting can be imagined relatively easily. Schubert chooses to split the song into three contrasting sections: a slow, funereal introduction played solely by the piano; a fast, distressed section with the maiden singing her words with piano accompaniment; and finally Death's return: a calm, slow section ending with a recapitulation of the introduction but now in the parallel major key. We shall look at each section in greater detail as doing so will give us a better understanding of how the movement derives from it. It is especially important to inspect the introduction of the piece, as it is lifted verbatim for use in the movement's theme and appears repeatedly throughout the movement.

The introduction to the song, shown below in figure 2, sets a morbid tone. Schubert uses dense chords played in the bass register to illicit a mood of sorrow. Harmonic reduction of the chords identifies the structure to be a highly simplistic I-V-I harmony, with many chords easily explained as neighbor note or passing chords. A reductive analysis is shown in figure 2 for completeness.

¹ Wikipedia contributors, "Death and the Maiden (song)", *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_and_the_Maiden_%28song%29 (accessed May 8, 2008)

Figure 2: Harmonic analysis and subsequent reduction of opening theme from the lied *Death and the Maiden*.

As we can see from the above figure, the harmonic structure of the introduction is simply two measures of I, followed by a measure of V, followed by a return to I. This is then repeated in its entirety. The steady bass line of scale degree I, then V, then I, lends a funereal feel to the introduction. The relatively stagnant harmonic motion that is heard can be attributed to the long prolongations of the I and V chords through the use of neighbor and passing chords. Furthermore, there is relatively little shape (spatially) to the music, which is always a hint that there is not much at play.

One part that stands out clearly is the melodic line, which cuts through the dense mass of chords with its distinctly sorrowful tone. The line can be extracted as shown below:

Figure 3: Melody heard in opening theme from *Death and the Maiden*.

This line stands out above all for its relatively fluid motion (when compared with lines in other voices), but reduction identifies that actually there is very little going on. We can treat the F on the third beat of measure 2 as an upper-neighbor of the E that is part of the V chord in the first beat of measure 3. The D in measure 3 is a passing tone down to the raised 7th scale degree, which itself is the leading tone back to scale degree 1 on the first beat of measure 4. This reduction shows us unequivocally that the introduction to the piece is based around the tonic scale degree, and further helps us explain why we hear such little motion in the slow, solemn introduction to the piece.

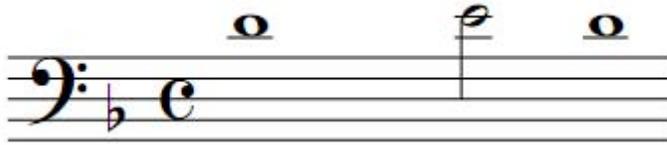


Figure 4: Reduction of melody from opening them from Death and the Maiden. Relative melodic importance is conveyed by beat duration.

Before we carry on, let us briefly note another motive that stands out in starker contrast than the melody does. This motive can be heard in the inner voices and is reproduced below:



Figure 5: Melodic motive heard in inner voices during the introduction to Death and the Maiden.

Remember this motive – the movement will place more importance upon this minute motive than the song does.

Following the solemn introduction, the song takes an abrupt turn as the maiden's voice enters with an air of panic. The music speeds up from its initially slow pace not only through Schubert's written instruction "*etwas geschwinder*" (quickly), but also through his introduction of eighth notes – a stark contrast against the half and quarter notes of the preceding introduction. The harmonic structure of this section is not of vast significance for our forthcoming analysis of the movement, as it does not bear much resemblance to any part of the movement's theme. But we can observe that the underlying harmony remains simple: I in mm.9-10, V in 11, I in 12, followed by a diminished seventh chord (importantly the first in the piece) resolving in m.14, and so on. There is no highly complex harmonic pattern here; Schubert keeps it simple and effective. Finally, as the Maiden's words run out, the music slows in measure 16 as half and quarter notes return to the accompaniment to the words "go my dear! And do not touch me."

Measure 22 begins Death's response to the maiden's pleas. As expected, Schubert again slows the harmonic rhythm in order to create a solemn effect. The vocal line, having been in upper registers with much motion when singing the words of the maiden, now resides firmly on a low D (scale degree 1),

highlighting Death's calm and reassuring demeanor as expressed in the poem – "I am a friend, and come not to punish". As Death continues his words, the music mutates by m.37 to the parallel major of D. The introduction is then recapitulated in the new key of D major. Schubert makes this shocking transform from D minor to D major in order to emphasize the words of Death ("You will sleep softly in my arms") and to show that Death is not a foe but a friend. This mutation into the parallel major is extraordinarily important as it will show up verbatim in the movement's theme and variations.

Our overview of the song highlights a number of important points to bear in mind when studying the quartet movement that bears the piece's name. Firstly, we will see that the theme of the quartet takes a form extremely similar to the form of the song. This is true not only from a structural standpoint between variations, but also when considering the piece as a whole when looking at a more interpretive level. (How do parts tie together? How are they related? These questions will soon become answerable.) Secondly, we note the mutation from the tonic minor to the parallel major at the end of death's speech. This will occur in the theme's music, as well as all subsequent variations (barring one, where Schubert dashes our expectations in the name of expression.) Finally, we note the extraordinarily simple harmonic language used throughout the piece, yet the emotion that is invoked is strong. There are not highly dissonant chords (aside from a diminished seventh) which might have been used to force an emotional response, etc. This simple and clear harmonic language is a recurring point that we shall see throughout the movement's theme and subsequent variations.

Let us begin our analysis of the movement by presenting the necessary parallels between the structure of the song and the structure of the movement's theme. The following paragraphs are summarized visually in figure 6, below.

The theme can be split up into three structurally distinct parts: an A music, and a repeated BC music. The A music is nearly a direct transposition of the introductory music of the song, as shown in figure 7. The B music, from mm. 9-16, is a noticeably agitated and emotional section, paralleling the maiden's reaction to death in feel, but paralleling death's calm response to the maiden in harmonic language. (This might be a trick played by Schubert purposely in order to smooth out the edges between sections of the original piece for use in the movement.) The C music, from mm. 17-24, is a calmer section, which contains the signature mutation to the parallel tonic major, G-major, by its completion in m.24. The C music is harmonically equivalent to the second half of death's reply in the original song, where he attempts to reassure the maiden that he means her no harm.

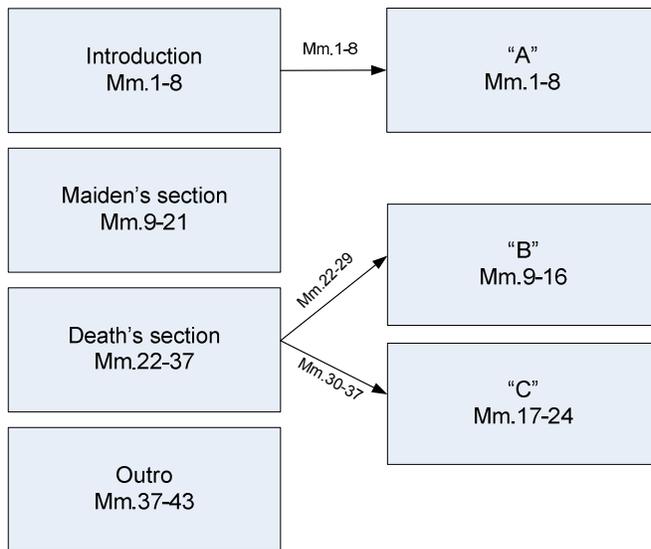


Figure 6: A diagram showing the mapping of the structure of the original lied to the theme of the movement. The lied is shown on the left, and the movement is on the right.

Figure 7: A diagram showing how the theme's A music is direct transposition of the introduction of the song. The theme is shown in the top image and the original source material is shown in the bottom image.

Importantly, note that it appears that the maiden's music has been entirely cut from the theme of the movement. This might appear to void our argument about the extraordinary similarities between the

form of the song and the form of the movement. In actuality, this strengthens our argument, as the influence of the song can be heard on the music of the movement even in its absence. Though harmonically the B music is based upon Death's music from mm.22-29, different chord voicings and stresses add the nervous feel of the maiden's music that has otherwise been cut. The emotion of the absent maiden's music is now wrapped up in the B music. This is a key point for our argument, as we will see that the B music is increasingly important in propelling forward the momentum of the piece through its increasingly tense variations.

Having identified and understood the relationship between the structure of the theme and the structure of the original song, let us proceed to a harmonic analysis so that we may better understand the harmonic makeup of the theme and the variations that follow. We have already done a reductive harmonic analysis on the A music, so let us continue with an analysis of the B and C music. Figures 8 and 9, below, show analyses of the B and C music, respectively.

Our background work has left us with a solid framework that we can build upon in order to better understand the structure of the piece. Now that we have a basic harmonic analysis of the theme under our belts, we are equipped to understand the variations and how they relate back to the original lied upon which the movement is based. In the following pages we will investigate each of the variations in turn.

Variation 1

The first of the five variations, beginning in m.25, is significantly lighter and more "airy" than the theme. This effect is created by the newfound space created by the reductive techniques Schubert applies to the theme in order to create the variation. Figure 10, overleaf, shows a musical excerpt of the A music of the second variation. As we can see, the cello line has been significantly reduced when compared to that of the theme. Nearly all notes have been reduced to eighth notes; other than that the rhythm and pitches of the notes are unaltered (until the pickup upon the repeat in m.32).

G min: VI i6 iv V VI iv i6
 B flat maj: vi vii⁷/V V V₇ I

sus

Figure 8: Harmonic analysis of the movement's B music in its theme.

E flat maj: I V I₆ V I V_{4/3} I V I
 G major: V_{6/5}/V I₆ V_{4/3}/V V_{6/5}/V I_{6/4} V₇ I

E flat maj: I V V_{4/3} I
 G major: V_{6/5}/V V_{4/3}/V V₇ I

Figure 9: Harmonic analysis of the movement's C music in its theme.

G min: I I V I

Figure 10: Excerpt of the first variation a section

Further space is added in the variation due to violin 1's excursion into the upper registers, passing B natural – previously the highest note in the piece (m.24) – in its first measure (m.25). The notes played in the violin 1 line are essentially arpeggiations of the chords being played. Of further significance is the fact that violin 1 plays a syncopated rhythm, playing exactly where the cello does not (aside from in m.28 when the two are playing simultaneously), further adding to the airy nature of the variation.

Violin 2 and the viola expand their respective melodic ranges and their motion increases beyond that displayed in the theme. Their triplet bowing breaks down each quarter note into triplets, adding a refreshing swing to the variation. The bowing and expanded range help them fill the harmonic void left by violin 1's upper register ornamentation.

The B music sees these new traits continue, aside from now the first violin plays more arpeggiated lines, and is less ornamental in its playing. This creates a more tense, emotional and less airy section when compared with the A and C music of this variation. Crescendos and decrescendos coupled with dissonance placed prominently in the upper registers (for example, the D-flat in violin 1's music in measure 38) further add to the tension of this movement. The C music continues the stylistic variations of the A and B music, but now the violin returns to playing a lighter, airy style as it had in the A music.

We can conclude that the first variation has already been used to build momentum in the movement. The syncopated rhythm and reaches into the upper registers both contribute to a feeling of increased activity and, as we have mentioned, an even more strained tone. We can't draw any conclusions about the rest of the piece yet – we must first look at the remaining variations to extract any patterns that might emerge.

Variation 2

The second variation in the piece starts with a significant structural change, as the melodic voice drops down into the cello line and the viola takes over the job of providing a steady bass voice. The effect of this is to create an even more emotional sound throughout the variation – cello playing in upper registers is notoriously used to illicit emotional response due to its weak, airy tone.

The A music sees Schubert again apply reductive techniques to the first violin's part. Whereas in the first variation violin 1 played eighth notes with eighth note rests preceding many of the motives, the violin now finds itself playing sixteenth note motives, with sixteenth note rests. Reduction shows these notes to be different from notes played in previous variations or the theme itself, but essentially we see the first violin as embellishing the harmonic structure created by violin 2, the viola and the cello.

Careful inspection of the cello line throughout this variation shows it to be a pseudo-reduction/composite of melodic threads that have appeared earlier in the movement. In fact, this line is the important, for it is the first time that a clearly identifiable melody is played in any single instrument, without the voice jumping between different parts. Figure 11, below, shows how the line is composed of a composite of earlier lines.

Figure 11: Example of how the cello line is composed of threads of previous lines in the A sections of variation 2 compared with the theme. Note that the B section is much more clearly a composite.

With the cello busy playing the melody, the viola is resigned to playing the bass line, which it does with little harmonic modification of the original line, but significant rhythmic modification. This new rhythmic motive consists of an eighth note, an eighth note rest, and two eighth notes, as shown below in figure 12. The high voice that the bass line is now in contributes to the light, ungrounded feeling of this variation.



The B music of variation 2 continues with the instruments playing similarly to how they did in the A music. The violin begins playing a more arpeggiated line, albeit through the use of similar motives to those that it played in the A music and one or two pure arpeggios (m. 64 springs to mind.) The cello also plays a juxtaposition of melodies exhibited in the original theme, as it had in the A music. This structure is outlined below in figure 14. Like variation 1, Schubert uses dynamic markings (crescendo, decrescendo) to make the music ebb and flow, thus creating emotive feelings in the B music.

The image shows a musical score for the cello line in variation 2 of Schubert's String Quartet no. 14, #2. The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of two flats and a common time signature. It consists of five staves. The first staff is the cello line, and the other four staves are the violin line. Red boxes highlight specific melodic motifs in the cello line, and arrows point from these boxes to corresponding motifs in the violin line, illustrating the source of the material from the theme's B music.

Figure 14: Cello line in B music, highlighting the source of the material from the theme's B music.

Finally, as was the case in the C music, the violin returns to playing in a fashion similar to how it did in the A music. Again, the cello continues its job of debuting the melody, playing another juxtaposition of melodic threads heard from the theme's C music. Having presented two previous figures detailing this technique, the figuration is left to the reader.

Variation 2, due to its reductive nature, clearly increases the momentum of the piece. (Adding notes will tend to do that.) The harmonic language has remained the same, but the pure increase in note

count and the introduction of a unified melodic line have both added to the increased tension and momentum in the piece.

Variation 3

After the light, relatively spacious and airy structures of variations 1 and 2, Schubert shocks the listener with variation 3's juxtaposition of thick, muddy textures and returns to airy, open passages. Before we look specifically at the music, let us make a key observation: the music represents the culmination of the momentum that has been building up in the previous two variations. Through his reductive techniques in the previous two variations and the techniques he applies in the third, Schubert is constantly increasing the momentum of the piece and the emphasizing its sorrowful tone. By doing so, Schubert is emphasizing the part of the lied that was not harmonically included – the tense, nervous music of the maiden. We already argued that the B music in the theme wrapped up the sorrowful, nervous nature of the missing music, but now we can see that indeed the entire piece is representative of it as well. Looking at the music in this third, powerful variation should reinforce this view.

The A music has all four instruments playing a densely harmonized motive in fortissimo that sounds like a train chugging past the listener. Figure 15, below, shows this dense texture. This texture gives way after 4 measures to a lighter one with violin 1 and cello playing light, dreamy lines while violin 2 and the viola continue to play in the rhythmic motive introduced earlier in the A music.



Figure 15: Music from the first 4 measures of variation 3's A music.

The B music contains many rests, but a strong, emotional set of motives. The cello and violin both play motives of the form shown below in figure 16 with great gusto, the triple-stops creating moments of great stress release as they outline the harmonies of each measure. Further release is added to these moments by the preparation each receives from the quarter note that occurs before it on a weak-beat, preparing it for resolution on a strong beat. Finally, we hear that violin 1 is “echoing” the cello, and we hear violin 2's upwards melodic progression as being the thread that ties the two together, thus creating an effect that has the harmony of the measure move upwards through the voices. As always, the B music plays at a higher



Figure 16: Motivic form of cello and violin 1 parts in the B music of variation 3.

As the violins and cello work to create massive moments of tension and release, violin 2 contains a line that is a patchwork of the theme's original parts, serving double-duty as both melodic line and harmonic maintainer. The viola serves to harmonize this line.

The C music, as always, begins by mimicking the style of the A music. However, this time the music is played *pianissimo*, and only violin 2 and viola 1 have the nearly constant rhythmic motive at first. The cello plays a bass line similar to that in the theme, but severely reduced in mm.89-92 to be merely 8th and 16th notes. By m. 93, all parts begin to build up to recommence playing the harmonic “train-like” motive heard in the A music to the harmonic structure of the theme's C music. A crescendo

helps build tension until fortissimo is reached in m.95, after which *another* crescendo is signaled prior to the end of the music in m. 96.

Let us note at this point a unique property of this section: thus far, all C music we have seen followed the same harmonic pattern as the theme. However, variation 3's C music does not resolve to G major in its final measure; rather, it is left playing an extraordinarily loud, registerally wide G-minor chord. This chord does not resolve to G major, though it could be heard to do so in m.97 as the upcoming modulation to G-major for variation 4 is prepared by having all instruments resolve in union to a single G note. (The cello plays it one octave lower.) This is an excellent proof of the buildup of momentum – we are now so deeply engulfed in sorrowful, fast music, that the established pattern of resolution to G major has been totally consumed.



Figure 17: Final two measures of C music of variation 3, showing the lack of resolution to G-major.

Variation 4

Variation 4 is far and away the most different variation in the entire piece. Schubert stuns the listener after the extremely dense, pattern-breaking music of variation 3 by introducing an extraordinarily light variation in the parallel major. It is the only variation to be in a different key from the theme.

Schubert dashes the listener's expectations which, for good reason, might have expected an even brisker movement, given the historical increase in momentum between sections. We can rest assured that this short foray into a seemingly foreign key with foreign harmonic language is merely a prolongation of the inevitable G-major resolution of the preceding section, allowing us to continue our argument of the structural influence of the lied upon the movement.

For all its differences, reduction of the A music of variation 4 exposes some points of interest. Firstly, as figure 18 shows, we still have the identifying motive of the entire piece sounded between the cello and the viola. The neighbor note motion is easily identifiable, even if it is in a major key.



alteration in m. 107 and the fact that it has been transposed to E-minor. Violin 2 and the cello share the duty of filling out inner voices, and violin 1 ornaments with the arpeggiations that have become so common in the B music.

Finally, the C music enters with a modulation to C major in m.113 and brings with it the first real change in harmonic language in the piece. The section certainly starts in C: we note the use of F-natural explicitly in the place of F-sharp, as well as the score's C-natural markings to remind the player not to play C-sharp following the modulation. In this tonality we can identify m.114 as a ii chord – assuming the G in the cello to be a drone that lasts from m.114 to m.118 – followed by a predominantly dominant seventh chord in m.115 moving to V/V in G major by m. 117 through modulation in m.116, resolving to V and finally I by m.120. This harmonic analysis can be seen in figure x below. Note the differences in harmonic language from the C music of the theme until four measures before the C music's closing measure, where it returns to the common V/V-V-I that we've seen in all previous variations. Measure 120, after the repeat of the BC music, provides the context for modulation back to G-minor by presenting nothing more than the note G in all four voices.

We can argue that Schubert used variation 4 to prolong the piece. After all, could we really expect more momentum to be introduced after the thickly textured third variation? By giving the listener breathing room in the fourth variation, Schubert makes the return to G-minor in variation five ever more potent and exciting as he prepares to close the piece.

Variation 5

The fifth and final variation juxtaposes some of the common techniques that Schubert has thus far employed when creating the preceding variations. The A music has the second violin and viola restating their parts from the theme, with a voice exchange occurring between them. The cello plays a repeating ostinato jumping from G two octaves below middle C to G an octave below middle C and back again. The cello never moves from this motive, thus it can be reduced as a G drone and excluded from our harmonic analysis, revealing that the harmonic language indeed remains the same as it had in the theme for this portion of the piece. Figure 20 shows an excerpt of the music from this section, highlighting the cello ostinato. Finally, the first violin plays a reduced version of its line – a very long G – two octaves above middle C. After two bars this gives way to a repeated motive focusing heavily on G and D (further reasserting the tonicity of G when coupled with the bass drone) that hints at what is to come in the B section. Figure 21 shows the motive that can be heard in the violin part.



Figure 20: Ostinato in cello line in A music of variation 5.



Figure 21: Violin 1 line in beginning of A music in variation 5.

In stark contrast to the A music, the B music opens with all three upper strings playing in a dense texture featuring the motive introduced by violin 1 in the A music. The three parts serve to harmonize the line of the cello, which plays a line extremely similar to that of the original theme's B music, but embellished by reductive processes with passing tones between each subsequent note in the line. Of particular note is the line in the cello in m.130, shown in figure 22, for the lowest note in the piece (also heard in the B music of variation 3) is approached by a stepwise staccato motion. The resulting effect, when coupled with the fact that the note is not only low, but is the longest duration of the lowest note in the piece, is to place great emotional intensity on this root of the minor IV chord which it creates. I believe that the listener will hear the momentum of the piece, suspended in variation 4, to return with great force at this extraordinary point, thus I believe it to be the moment that the momentum has been building to.

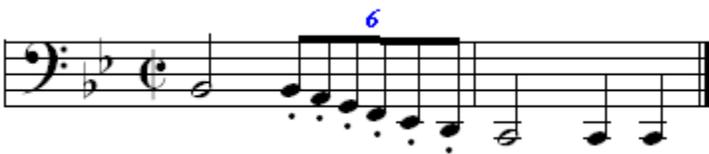


Figure 22: Cello line in m. 130. We hear the lowest note in the piece at this point.

The B music flows into the C music and we are greeted with a curious variation the likes of which we previously have not encountered. The cello enters a pattern of playing a low note, then jumping off in eccentric fashion to play a rhythmically complex motive in the upper registers (a change of clef is required in the music) and then jump down abruptly to begin over again. The viola takes the duty of playing a consistent line, presenting an ostinato jumping from B-flat to that an octave above and back

again – a parallel to the cello's A-music G ostinato. (Note how often we have seen correspondence between the A and C sections throughout this piece.)

During the relatively eccentric parts of the C music (mm.137-141), we can observe that the harmonic language is not entirely clear. For instance, on the downbeat of m. 138 we have a G, B-flat, C and G (moving to A-flat) sounding together. However, if we accept the B-flat ostinato in the viola to be a drone, we can see that the second half of the first beat of measure 1 actually resolves to F, A-flat, C, outlining an F-minor chord. The previous note can be heard as a suspension of the motion from the previous measure.

Finally, the C music returns to relative normalcy in m.141 with the cello's return to playing the bass line of the original C music. The harmonic progression from the theme's closing C music is heard, and a resolution to G-major is observed in m. 144. At this point, we see that the BC music of variation 5 actually does not repeat. This is the only variation to do so, and presumably the cause for this is to allow room for the extended coda that follows.

The coda of the piece, beginning in m.144, draws its material from the B and C music of the original theme. Indeed, the reductive relationship between the music of the coda and the theme is transparent in the second violin, viola and cello lines. The violin plays triplets around tones similar to those that it played in the theme but, as always, its line shows the most variation of any of the lines. The violin is used to great ornamental effect to open up the upper registers above the solemn, slow parts below it.

Aside from the viola, which plays a repeated rhythmic motive centered on B and then A, all three strings restate their parts from the C music of the theme beginning in measure 153. There are a few examples of reduction – in m.154, for example, the half note on the first beat consumes the following quarter note in order to become a dotted-half note – but these are, again, entirely transparent and are left to the reader to investigate.

In the final measures of the piece, Schubert again draws directly from the lied. Measure 160 has the music resolve to G-major – as has occurred throughout the piece at the end of C music – and immediately flow into a restatement of the A music, played up an octave and in the new tonic center of G-major. This is exactly how Schubert ends the song – with a restatement of the introduction in the parallel major – and brings closure to the entire movement, whilst reasserting the relationship between the movement and the song unequivocally.

Conclusion

Our detailed investigation of Schubert's *String Quartet no. 14, Andante con molto* has shown us the great extent to which the piece is based upon Schubert's 1817 lied *Death and the Maiden*. We have shown this relationship at a cosmetic level – the harmonic language is virtually lifted directly from the lied – but also at a higher, interpretive level. We have shown how Schubert uses increasing momentum between variations (and dashed expectations in the fourth variation) to embellish the morbid, sorrowful tone set out in the original lied. We have also seen how momentum in the B music is used to create a structural presence for music that is harmonically absent when compared to the original lied (the maiden's part.) This is really quite a profound technique – Schubert has mutated a harmonic passage into purely expressive embellishments. The B music is thus one of the most important and interesting parts to look at, and we have consistently treated it as such.

When all is said and done, the second movement of Schubert's *String Quartet no. 14* may appear nothing more than a beautiful piece to many a listener. But to those interested in understanding why this is the case, we have shown that the piece is so much more than a simple set of theme and variations – it achieves the extraordinary task of breathing new life to the maiden, harmonically absent, through the music of Death. The piece thus gives an entirely new meaning to the concept of Death, and his dear victim, the maiden.