

THE EVOLVING ROLE OF MUSIC IN THEODOR STORM'S NOVELLAS

by

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Abstract

The texts of Theodor Storm (1817-88) engage with the role of the artist and works of art in society during the latter half of the nineteenth century. While the role of painting and writing has already been analyzed in this regard, the function of music in Storm's work has not been hitherto researched to any great degree. Musicians, however, feature prominently among the artists he portrays. They encounter various artistic and personal difficulties that this dissertation analyzes both through close readings and from a literary-historical perspective.

The analysis focuses on three novellas entitled *Ein stiller Musikant* (1875), *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"* (1879), and *Es waren zwei Königskinder* (1884), which illustrate the changing role of music in the lives of the protagonists. In order to show the development of economic and social changes that took place after the 1848 Revolution and during the *Gründerzeit*, the texts are analyzed in chronological order. This thematic study argues that the reflection on music can be interpreted as a specialized reflection on the topic of the artist in general, which, in itself, is a prominent theme in Romanticism. Taking into account how Romantic notions of life and art lost their appeal both during and as a result of the forces of industrialization, the study shows how music, first presented as a nurturing and comforting force in the *Biedermeier* era, becomes progressively less important, and, in the end, loses its appeal as artistic salvation.

The novellas use music as a literary technique in order to comment on education, both musical and academic, with particular emphasis on girls' education. In addition to transcending gender and social barriers, as well as establishing a continuity of sorts between the past and the present, music also serve as a psychological tool to suggest or express feelings or a state of mind. In the same vein, physical features and instruments are used in the characterization of the

protagonists, while also reflecting ethnic stereotypes common to both literature and greater society at the time.

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Statement of Originality

I hereby certify that all of the work described within this thesis is the original work of the author.

Any published (or unpublished) ideas and/or techniques from the work of others are fully acknowledged in accordance with the standard referencing practices.

Marie-Thérèse Ferguson

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List of Abbreviations (Primary Literature)

- BTSKG** *Der Briefwechsel zwischen Theodor Storm und Gottfried Keller.* Ed. Peter Goldammer. Berlin: Aufbau, 1967. Print.
- TSBH** *Theodor Storm – Briefe in die Heimat aus den Jahren 1853-1864.* Ed. Gertrud Storm. Berlin: Curtius, 1914. Print.
- TSES** *Theodor Storm – Erich Schmidt Briefwechsel.* Ed. Karl Ernst Laage. 2 vols. Berlin: Schmidt, 1976. Print.
- TSPH** *Theodor Storm – Paul Heyse Briefwechsel: Kritische Ausgabe.* Ed. Clifford Albrecht Bernd. 3 vols. Berlin: Schmidt, 1969. Print.
- TSSW** *Theodor Storm: Sämtliche Werke in vier Bänden.* Ed. Karl Ernst Laage and Dieter Lohmeier. 4 vols. Frankfurt a. M: Deutscher Klassiker, 1987/88. Print.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Theodor Storm (1817-88), a poet and a canonical novelist of German Realism, spent most of his life in Husum, a small port town in Schleswig-Holstein. The bulk of his prose output consists of novellas. Densely atmospheric, his earlier work makes use of lyrical language and exhibits many *Biedermeier* characteristics. Over time, Storm's writings took on an increasingly Realist character. From very early on, the thread throughout his oeuvre is the unavoidable passage of time and an engagement with immortality through art. One of the techniques he used in his endeavor to recapture the past was to give his novellas a frame structure, within which the characters reminisce. A further constant in his writings is the protagonists' quest for happiness, which they seldom find.¹ In Storm's work, these overall themes recur in a variety of topics, often under the guise of historical novellas. Among the most important of these topics are the decline of the nobility, the marked differences between social classes, family conflicts, and the role of heredity. But Storm's texts, notably with respect to the lament of transience and the question of art and immortality, reflect on artists and on their place and their role in society. His first novella, *Immensee* (1850) is known as a *Künstlernovelle*, the first of many. Its main protagonist is a poet who chose to live for his art rather than become a "useful" member of society (i.e., a burgher), losing his sweetheart to his rival in the process. This novella became an instant bestseller and has been the subject of many scholarly studies ever since. *Eine Malerarbeit* (1867) and *Aquis Submersus* (1876) feature two very different painters. The one in *Eine Malerarbeit* does not have

¹ For a more detailed introduction to Storm and his oeuvre, see Fritz Martini, *Deutsche Literatur im bürgerlichen Realismus, 1848-1898* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1981) 630-61.

the necessary talent to become a great artist, but finds his calling and happiness in teaching a young aspiring painter and building a “family” around him. In this text, the painter expresses his sadness, and later on his new-found contentment in two different paintings that sum up his frame of mind. In *Aquis Submersus*, a painting contains a riddle solved with the help of a diary found long after the painter has died. The story revolves around the painting and prominently reflects on art and transience. In both cases, works of art play an important role in the respective plots. This also holds true for *Psyche* (1875), where a sculptor deals with the unsettling feelings caused by rescuing a naked girl from drowning by creating a sculpture of her. He subsequently marries her – an exception in the *Künstlernovellen*, where most artists renounce their love and remain unmarried. In yet another novella, *Pole Poppenspüler* (1874), a puppeteer realizes that there is no longer any future for him as an errant artist. Thus, he renounces his nomadic life and settles down in a small town, thereby becoming an acceptable member of bourgeois society.

A comparable group of Storm’s texts feature musicians, and music is a presence in many of his novellas. In fact, art – particularly paintings and music – plays an important part in the daily life of many of his protagonists. The role of paintings has caught the attention of a number of scholars. David Dysart, for one, has made a detailed study of pictures in *The Role of the Painting in the Works of Theodor Storm* (1992).² To my knowledge, however, no similar studies have been made with regard to the role of music in Storm’s works,³ and yet, be it a dance tune

² David L. Dysart, *The Role of the Painting in the Works of Theodor Storm* (New York: Lang, 1992).

³ With the possible exception of Helen McKinnon’s doctoral thesis entitled *The Role of Music in the “Novellen” of Theodor Storm*, diss., U of Sydney, 2005, in which she takes a very broad view of “music” that includes sounds in nature, bird songs, and the musicality of Storm’s poetic and prose output. See also Hiroyuki Tanaka’s article entitled “Theodor Storm und die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts,” *Theodor Storm und das 19. Jahrhundert: Vorträge und*

played by a single instrument in *Der Schimmelreiter* (1888) or a formal concert in a mid-size German town in *Ein stiller Musikant* (1875), music occupies a place in many lives and in numerous situations in the texts. I would contend that what inspired this reflection on music was not only Storm's love of music, but also the strong musical culture that permeated life in Germany at the time. In *Deutsche Geschichte: 1866-1918*, Thomas Nipperdey points to the privileged place of music in the arts.⁴ He writes that in nineteenth-century Germany, music was "Kernbereich der ästhetischen Kultur der bürgerlichen Welt . . . Sie wirkt am weitesten und intensivsten . . . In ihr vor allem meinen die Deutschen sich selbst zu finden; mit ihr allein haben die Deutschen im Bereich der Künste international Geltung, ja bis zur Jahrhundertwende die Führung" (741). In Storm's oeuvre, it is undeniable that music speaks to the heart of many protagonists from all walks of life. However, the names of major German composers of the nineteenth century, as well as the importance of the *Neudeutschen*, whose most famous advocate was Richard Wagner (1813-83), are never mentioned. Nor is the contemporaneous *querelle* between the followers of Richard Wagner and Johannes Brahms (1833-97), for example. But

Berichte des Internationalen Storm-Symposiums aus Anlaß des 100. Todestages Theodor Storms, ed. Brian Coghlan and Karl Ernst Laage (Berlin: Schmidt, 1989) 145-50. Tanaka describes briefly Storms's involvement with music and various forms of music making in the nineteenth century, particularly *Hausmusik*, and mentions some of the novellas that feature such performances. Kurt Stephenson comments on the type of music depicted in Storm's body of prose, with particular emphasis on its specific North-German characteristics, in "Musik in der Dichtung von Theodor Storm," ed. Kurt Gudewill and Uwe Haensel, *Beiträge zur Musikgeschichte Nordeuropas: Kurt Gudewill zum 65. Geburtstag* (Wolfenbüttel, 1978) 25-38.

⁴ Thomas Nipperdey, *Arbeitswelt und Bürgergeist*, vol. 1 of *Deutsche Geschichte, 1866-1918* (München: Beck, 1990).

while Storm's characters are remote from the important musical debates of the time, this does not prevent music from playing an important role in their lives.

Music and musicians inspired many German authors throughout the nineteenth century, as they continue to do so right up to the present. They were a topic of choice for Romantic writers, who saw in music a language that could express what could not be said in words. First among them is E. T. A. Hoffmann (1776-1822), an author who inspired Storm and whose influence on the novellas analyzed in this dissertation will be shown. Furthermore, the numerous allusions to Hoffmann's writings made it possible for Storm to use some techniques and images common in Romantic novels without prejudice to the Realist nature of his stories. One of Hoffmann's protagonists, the Kapellmeister Kreisler of *Kreisleriana* (1810-14), is a seemingly mad composer at odds with his patrons and society at large. He is the embodiment of the artist who strives to live for his art, at a time (i.e., the *Spätromantik*) when it had become increasingly difficult to do so. This was even more the case during the era of Realism, when Storm was at his most active. Contrary to Hoffmann, however, Storm did not choose composers as protagonists for his *Musikernovellen*, but, rather, an array of would-be professional and amateur musicians who reflect the musical mosaic of the time.

My purpose here is to study the evolving role of music in Storm's novellas. I will restrict my analysis to three "music novellas," as I call the group of texts: *Ein stiller Musikant* (1875), *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"* (1879), and *Es waren zwei Königskinder* (1884). The protagonists' main occupation in these novellas is music. Up until now, these texts have gone largely unnoticed in scholarship, with the possible exception of *Ein stiller Musikant*, which has been, to a large extent, widely considered for its biographical content. Indeed, the main protagonist of this particular novella, Valentin, was strongly inspired by Storm's own son, Karl,

who struggled with his music studies and lived out his life as a piano teacher in a small town.⁵ One of the reasons for the neglect of the two other novellas I have chosen to analyze could be that Storm himself did not rate *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"* and *Es waren zwei Königskinder* highly. As he wrote to his colleague Paul Heyse (1830-1914):⁶ "Die Novelle 'Zur Wald- u. Wasserfreude', die ich zwei Mal in's Reine arbeitete u. endlich was Andres wurde, als ich anfangs wollte, wird Deinem scharfblickenden Augen den Beleg geben. Ich denke nemlich, daß die 'Rundschau', die so viele schlechte Novellen druckt, sie nicht verschmähen wird."⁷ In another correspondence, Storm tells his friend Erich Schmidt (1853-1913)⁸: "In Betreff der 'W(alld und) W(asser) Fr(eude)' meine ich noch schließlich, daß das Einzelne eigentlich leidlich gut ist, daß es aber als Ganzes nicht genügt."⁹

I content, however, that both *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"* and *Es waren zwei Königskinder* should be studied because they give a voice to a variety of regular individuals who loved and played music, other than the great virtuosi and composers who shaped music in nineteenth-century Germany. Furthermore, I believe that the role of music in Storm's oeuvre deserves more attention, if for no other reason, because music meant so much to him, and because music and musicians, like other arts and artists, both have their place in the social

⁵ For more on this subject, see chapter 3.

⁶ Paul Heyse was a German writer who received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1910. He was one of Storm's closest friends.

⁷ This passage appears in a letter dated 3 Nov. 1878. See *Theodor Storm – Paul Heyse Briefwechsel: Kritische Ausgabe (TSPH)*, ed. Clifford Albrecht Bernd (Berlin: Schmidt, 1969) 1: 39.

⁸ Erich Schmidt was a historian and a professor of German language and literature.

⁹ This passage appears in a letter dated 12 Jan. 1879. See *Theodor Storm – Erich Schmidt Briefwechsel (TSES)*, ed. Karl Ernst Laage (Berlin: Schmidt, 1976) 1: 108.

panorama that he created. The object of my dissertation, therefore, is to demonstrate the importance and the role of music in Storm's writings, thereby filling the gap in current scholarship.

In what I would qualify as a thematic study from a literary-historical perspective, I examine the power of music in the lives of the protagonists, but not necessarily in society at large. To this end, I have devoted one chapter to each of the above-mentioned novellas. I have also adopted a chronological approach for the following three reasons. First, Storm has progressed from a decidedly *Biedermeier Stimmung* in *Ein stiller Musikant* to a more Realist style of writing in the other two novellas under consideration, which, I would argue, informs his choice of protagonists. The second reason has to do with the dramatic difference in the way the lives of the protagonists unfold. In *Ein stiller Musikant*, for example, Valentin finds a means for coming to terms with various difficulties and is described as leading a contented life. By contrast, Realism does not shy away from the hard truths of life when Kätti vanishes without a word of explanation in *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"* and Marx, a distraught music student, puts an end to his life in *Es waren zwei Königskinder*. The dramatic progression is notable and can be seen as a reflection on the growing challenges of life with the shift from the *Biedermeier* period to Realism. The last reason for a chronological approach is the diminishing power of music in the lives of the protagonists as the dramatic intensity of each novella increases: music sustains Valentin throughout his life, is instrumental both in Kätti's happiness and later heartbreak, and fails to give Marx something to hold on to in his darkest hours. These three reasons will be developed over the course of the following chapters.

While the role of music is the main focus of my analysis, I will also examine other relevant topics that have some bearing on the protagonists' lives, and that are in some way linked

to music. First among these topics is education, which is featured in all three novellas, be it musical education in *Ein stiller Musikant* and *Es waren zwei Königskinder*, or education in broader terms, as in *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"*. In the latter, the reader gets a good idea of the types of schooling received by boys and girls in the latter half of nineteenth-century Germany, especially if they belonged to different social classes. Another recurring theme in Storm's oeuvre and in the novellas studied here is social status. Finally, I will point out that even though Storm is one of the key figures of German Realism, he nonetheless makes extensive use of Romantic elements and literary techniques without prejudice to Realism. I will argue that these elements reinforce the Realist nature of his novellas and help to shed light on the ways that life changes with the emergence of an industrialized society where economic usefulness takes the lead. I will also explain that Romanticism and Realism are not necessarily mutually exclusive in the three novellas under study, but, rather, merge into each other and thus show that they respectively foreshadow and echo one other. Decidedly, however, Storm does not advocate leading a life based on the ideals of Romanticism, a movement that had started to decline in the wake of the Revolution of 1848. Rather than using the above-mentioned secondary topics (i.e., education, difference in social status, and use of Romantic elements and techniques) as the focus of individual chapters, I have chosen to examine them as they are presented in each novella, endeavoring to show that they all contribute within different sets of circumstances to a weakening of the power of music as time progresses and society evolves.

The protagonists of the three novellas are very different from one other, even though two of them, Valentin and Peter Jensen, share some physical traits and psychological characteristics. This diversity allows the author to deal with a variety of issues, ranging from the plight of an artist whose aspirations are not matched by his abilities (*Ein stiller Musikant*) to the tragic fate of

a music student who can no longer cope with life and commits suicide (*Es waren zwei Königskinder*). Between these two very different life trajectories, we find Kätti (*Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"*), a gifted young girl who is at odds with her circumstances and sees her dream of a different life ruined twice by life's realities.

As previously mentioned, I will devote one chapter to each novella under analysis. These chapters are preceded by one of a more general nature, in which I look at Storm and his relationship with other writers with whom he regularly corresponded, exchanging comments on both their writings and his own. The poets and the authors who inspired Storm from an early age and influenced his literary output are also mentioned, with particular focus on the aforementioned Hoffmann, a versatile artist not unlike Storm who tried without much success to make a living as a professional musician. Storm, however, remained an amateur, albeit committed to both his choirs for the duration of his life. In the preliminary chapter, I will look at the role of music in Storm's life, particularly as a choir conductor, an occupation which he took very seriously. I will also make some remarks on the choral groups – *Liedertafel* and *Gesangvereine* – that were popular in the nineteenth century, and on the type of music they performed. As a focal figure of nineteenth-century music, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-91) was a composer that both Hoffmann and Storm admired. In my analysis, I will comment on some of the aspects of Mozart's personality and music that, I believe, made him appealing to Storm, with the result that they found their way into *Ein stiller Musikant* and in *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"*. The last part of the chapter contains a brief look at *Der arme Spielmann* (1848) by Franz Grillparzer (1791-1872), a novella that, according to some scholars,¹⁰ bears a strong

¹⁰ Josef De Cort makes a particularly strong case for this resemblance in his article "Zwei arme Spielleute: Vergleich einer Novelle von F. Grillparzer und von Th. Storm," *Revue des langues vivantes* 30 (1964): 326-41.

resemblance to Storm's *Ein stiller Musikant*. For my part, I will concentrate on what distinguishes Grillparzer's Jakob from Storm's Valentin, particularly with respect to their attitude vis-à-vis music. The chapter will conclude with some reflections on two other novellas, *Im Schloß* (1862) and *Eine Halligfahrt* (1871); while they do not qualify as *Musikernovellen*, at least to my way of thinking, they serve to endow music with a function that is found nowhere else in Storm's oeuvre.

In chapter 3, I will analyze *Ein stiller Musikant*. Here, we will see that music is informative with respect to the psychological aspect of this text and that it plays a pivotal role in the lives of Valentin, the main protagonist, and of Signora Katerina, a former diva who nurtures Valentin's musical talent. It is also a constant presence in Valentin's life. Seen through his eyes, it becomes an object of devotion. Great attention is given in the text to Valentin's physical description and to his humility. Besides revealing a lot about his psychological makeup, his attributes are also used to emphasize the power that music exerts over him. Furthermore, music is the chosen means for showing his abusive relationship with his father. The trauma caused by Valentin's inability to perform a difficult passage in a sonata and his father's reaction foreshadow a similar occurrence during a concert later on. By contrast, music is the basis of nurturing relationships with the women in Valentin's life. Another important function of music in *Ein stiller Musikant* can be summed up as "a means of overcoming the transience against which [Storm] struggled."¹¹ Every time a piece of music is played, its composer is, in a way, brought back to life. In this text, the composer kept "alive" through three generations of musicians is Mozart. The novella also contains a discussion of the choral scene of the time that is reflected in its musical panorama, together with the description of a concert that the narrator

¹¹ Dysart 151.

attends with a friend at the end of the story. Additionally, this panorama would not be complete without some mention of folk songs that were an integral part of the German musical landscape in the nineteenth century. Finally, music in the lives of women is explored in the novella, the most important among the three women featured being Signora Katerina, a former diva who performed for Mozart and passes on all her knowledge and musicality to Valentin, thereby keeping alive the spirit of the composer. All in all, the three female protagonists give the reader a good idea of the limited musical paths open to women during the nineteenth century.

Chapter 4 is devoted to *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"*. As scholars consider this novella to be one of the least successful in Storm's oeuvre, it has received little attention so far. However, I believe that it is important for the study of the role of music in ordinary people's lives in nineteenth-century Germany, and is of particular interest here because the main protagonist is a young woman. In Storm's other *Künstlernovellen*, as in the two other novellas under study in my dissertation, the professional artists are all men, with the exception of Signora Katerina in *Ein stiller Musikant*. The text analyzed in this chapter is set in the *Gründerzeit*, the time of the foundation of the second German empire following Prussia's victory over France after the war of 1870-71. Not only did this victory give rise to national pride, it also marked Germany's "catching up" on industrialization and economic development. In *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"*, music takes on roles that are different from those in *Ein stiller Musikant*, starting with Kätti, a young woman whose physique conjures up the image of a Gypsy and who displays considerable musical talent. Her musicality, her desire to learn to play the guitar, and the earnestness she brings to the performance of a Mozart sonata with her musical partner all serve to emphasize the second-rate education provided in girls' schools at the time. Different aspects of music are illustrated in the pieces that Kätti performs, and even more so by the instruments

she plays. Both the pieces and the instruments contribute toward her characterization. In this novella, the piano is seen as the instrument of choice of the bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century, a social class to which her father aspires. By contrast, the guitar symbolizes freedom and the lifestyle of errant musicians; it is also the instrument that Kätti prefers. Finally, folk songs are used as a means of expressing feelings and longings that Kätti cannot put into words. The role of music for the male protagonists in the novella is less prominent. For the young scholar Wulf Fedders, music is nothing more than a passing interest, quickly replaced by scientific pursuits. For Herr Zippel, Kätti's father, a restless small entrepreneur with big dreams, music serves as a pretext for bragging about his "Genie".¹² It is also a means of attracting patrons to his establishment, stressing the utilitarian side of Zippel's character. In this regard, the text shows that Wulf Fedders and Herr Zippel are both men of their time.

Es waren zwei Königskinder is analyzed in chapter 5. Based on a true story, it depicts the life of four music students who dedicate themselves to music through discipline and hard work. Most of them take this fact for granted, but the main protagonist, Marx, suffers under the strain. Indeed, we read between the lines that his parents decided on music as a profession for their son early on in his life. Far from being nurturing, music contributes to his frayed nerves, together with his French heritage on his mother's side, a new element introduced in this novella that alludes to the anti-French sentiment pervasive in Germany after the Franco-Prussian war. The text also illustrates the evolving role of music, which, in Marx's case, marks its decline. It also shows the place music enjoyed at the time in the life of ordinary people, like the description of a night escapade during which the students, posing as *fahrende Sängler*, are fed and given coffee

¹² This term has nothing in common with the exceptional gifts attributed to great artists. Herr Zippel, who always thinks big, simply exaggerates his daughter's talent.

by appreciative listeners. In this episode, music provides a common ground between the students and people belonging to different social classes. Back in town, students study at the conservatory in order to become soloists. There, they must spend many hours of practice each day in order to become virtuosi, raising once again the question of the opposition between soul versus virtuosity in the performance of music. In this novella, Marx deviates from Storm's usual binary code inasmuch as he does play with virtuosity *and* soul while he is happily in love.

Folk songs also play a part in *Es waren zwei Königskinder*. To that end, the title of the novella is a line taken from a popular ballad. It foreshadows the events of the plot, not to mention the ballad itself, which Marx's friends sing one night upon his demand. This ballad is his way of letting them know that he is in love. After this episode, it becomes a means of communication between the friends and serves as a leitmotiv throughout the story.

As we shall see, music in all three novellas serves as a means of drawing a psychological portrait of certain characters (Valentin, Kätti), while hinting at a few societal and economic realities (*Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"*). Furthermore, the act of music making draws together people who have otherwise not much in common (particularly in *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"*), and creates an unspoken understanding between them. This instantaneous power of uniting people for a common purpose in Storm's work (i.e., the performance of a piece of music) is simply not present in other forms of art. Furthermore, the act of performance evokes a musical heritage, and thus a link with the past. In that respect, music is one factor that develops the relationship between Romanticism and Realism. It helps express in a veiled way the feelings of the protagonists, taking on a life of its own when the players are experiencing strong and unusual emotions. It also serves as a pretext for portraying a Romantic way of life no longer considered viable in a Realist text (*Es waren zwei Königskinder*).

Chapter 2

A Literary and Musical Background to Storm's Music Novellas

A reflection of his artistic disposition and interests, Theodor Storm's novellas were often inspired by situations that arose in his professional and personal life. The three novellas to which I will turn my attention – *Ein stiller Musikant*, *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"*, and *Es waren zwei Königskinder* – reflect Storm's deep love of music, a fact that has generated scant analytical attention in scholarly research, but one that is well documented in Storm's biographies. I will begin this chapter by exploring, in general terms, Storm's literary output within the context of his time, with particular emphasis on those writers whose influence is felt in the three novellas under analysis. Next, I will turn to Storm the musician and draw a portrait of him that informs my interpretation of his music novellas. Finally, I will situate the novellas within the broader context of the important music novellas written during the nineteenth century. My analysis will include a brief discussion of two of Storm's stories whose musical content is relevant to my investigation, even though they do not, in my opinion, qualify as music novellas *per se*.

Storm in His Time

Theodor Storm's literary career spans a period of over fifty years, starting with the poetry he wrote in his teenage years. Between 1848, when he wrote his first novella *Marthe und ihre Uhr*, and 1888, when he completed *Der Schimmelreiter*, he penned some fifty novellas, as well as fairy tales and miscellaneous fragments and articles. All while, he carried on a voluminous correspondence with writers such as Gottfried Keller (1819-90), Paul Heyse, Theodor Fontane (1819-98), and Ivan Turgenev (1818-83), to name but a few, and with publishers, friends, and

family members. Conspicuously absent from this list are musicians;¹³ indeed, music as a topic of discussion seldom comes up in his letters. Most references are linked to Storm's own musical endeavours, both with his choirs and at home, and with his children's musical studies.

Storm's writings evolved greatly over the years. Before turning to prose, he wrote poetry, including well-known and liked works such as "Die Stadt" (1851) and "Knecht Ruprecht" (1862). Numerous poems were set to music by contemporaneous and modern composers alike. The most famous of these – Johannes Brahms, Alban Berg (1885-1935), and Max Reger (1873-1916) – were attracted by the sheer musicality¹⁴ of Storm's poems.¹⁵ This fact alone is worth mentioning, given the importance of music in Storm's life and the various roles it plays in many of his novellas.¹⁶

¹³ According to an e-mail from Elke Jacobsen, archivist of the *Theodor-Storm-Gesellschaft*, Storm did not correspond with any composers, with the exception of the noted conductor, pianist, music teacher, and composer Carl Reinecke (1824-1910), who was the director of the *Gewandthaus* Orchestra in Leipzig from 1860 to 1895. See Jacobsen's e-mail correspondence of 21 June 2013.

¹⁴ Commenting on music and poetry, John T. Hamilton writes that "music exerts a strong attraction on poetry, at least in one particularly prominent, pan-European aesthetic tradition" (168). See *Music, Madness, and the Unworking of Language* (New York: Columbia UP, 2008). Hamilton cites the musicality in the works of Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-98), Paul Verlaine (1844-96), and Stefan George (1868-1933); I would venture to add Storm's own oeuvre to this list.

¹⁵ Some of these poems set to music can be heard on *Songs After Poems by Theodor Storm*, perf. Ulf Bästlein, baritone, and Charles Spencer, piano (MDG, 2003) CD.

¹⁶ On this topic, Hiroyuki Tanaka lists the novellas in which music plays an important role (147) and discusses the musicians who have set Storm's poems to music (149). See "Theodor Storm und die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Theodor Storm und das 19. Jahrhundert: Vorträge und Berichte des Internationalen Storm-Symposiums aus Anlaß des 100. Todestages Theodor Storms*, ed. Brian Coghlan and Karl Ernst Laage (Berlin: Schmidt, 1989) 145-50.

Storm began writing prose as the *Biedermeier* era came to a close. The influence of Adalbert Stifter (1805-66), a prominent writer of this period, is keenly felt in Storm's early novellas. To begin with, the writings of both authors are apolitical, but have to be seen nonetheless in their respective political context. In essence, they promote social order and harmony, moderation in all endeavours, and the superiority of all things small over big, a philosophy stated in the introduction to *Bunte Steine* (1853) and dubbed "das sanfte Gesetz." This "law" informs Storm's early novellas, including *Ein stiller Musikant*, as late as 1874 and 1875, inasmuch as Valentin, the main protagonist, fits Stifter's description of something that is "big": "Ein ganzes Leben voll Gerechtigkeit Einfachheit Bezwungung seiner selbst Verstandesgemäßheit Wirksamkeit in seinem Kreise Bewunderung des Schönen verbunden mit einem heiteren gelassenen Sterben halte ich für groß."¹⁷ All of this applies, with the exception, perhaps, of a peaceful death, which is not mentioned in the story. Fritz Böttger puts it another way in *Theodor Storm in seiner Zeit*, contending that "während der Periode der Restauration war es Brauch gewesen, im Unscheinbaren und Ärmlichen die besonderen Schönheiten aufzuspüren" (256). I will come back to this point in chapter 3.

As a *Gymnasiast* in Lübeck in 1835, Storm became acquainted with the writings of Heinrich Heine (1797-1856), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), and Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff (1788-1857). A few years later, during his last stay in Kiel as a student, he went on to discover Eduard Mörike (1804-75). In *Meine Erinnerungen an Eduard Mörike*,¹⁸ Storm

¹⁷ This statement can be found in the preface to Adalbert Stifter's *Bunte Steine*, in *Werke und Briefe: Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Alfred Doppler and Wolfgang Frühwald (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1997-2000) 2.2: 12.

¹⁸ All quotes by Storm are taken from *Theodor Storm: Sämtliche Werke in vier Bänden (TSSW)*, ed. Karl Ernst Laage and Dieter Lohmeier, 4 vols. (Frankfurt a. M: Deutscher Klassiker, 1987/88), unless otherwise indicated.

calls the poet as “de[r] letzte Lyriker von zugleich ursprünglicher und durchstehender Bedeutung, der während [s]eines Lebens in die deutsche Literatur eingetreten ist” (4: 471).

Thereafter, Storm considered Mörike, Heine, and Eichendorff the greatest German poets who ever lived. In November 1850, Storm even began a rather one-sided correspondence with Mörike, some fifteen years older, visiting him in Stuttgart in August 1855.

From a literary point of view, Storm was very much steeped in the nineteenth century, showing a keen interest in contemporaneous poets and writers, some of whom, like Keller, he never met, but with whom he corresponded. Along with others, he knew personally Heyse and Fontane, two prominent writers of the time, and exchanged ideas with them. He also counted Turgenev, with whom he spent some time in the spa town of Baden-Baden, among his friends and admirers. In their correspondence, these writers commented on their own and on each other's work with a great deal of openness and a keen critical sense. Sometimes, the writers sent their works to one other before they were published in popular journals like *Die Gartenlaube*, as well as in book form. Additionally, Storm's letters show that he was an avid reader and frequently read aloud most of what he published during his lifetime to his family and friends. Moreover, Storm possessed an extensive library – for example, he prided himself on owning all of Keller's first editions. He also read works from the past and foreign novels in translation.

As a literary movement, Realism was already widespread in Europe – France, England, and Spain – before it reached Germany. For their part, German writers developed their own brand of Realism, concentrating on novellas, as opposed to other European novelists of the same period who composed lengthy novels, with Émile Zola (1840-1902) and Charles Dickens (1812-70) as prime examples. Storm's writings have little in common with those of European

Realists.¹⁹ In fact, they are more influenced by authors of the *Spätromantik*. As Franz Stuckert notes in *Theodor Storm: Sein Leben und seine Welt*, “seine eigentliche Liebe gehörte doch den Spätromantikern Hoffmann und Eichendorff” (435). Storm liked the magic of Eichendorff’s “poetic world,” even though the world he portrayed in his own writings does not possess this characteristic, as is evident in *Zur “Wald- und Wasserfreude”*. There, the would-be vagabond Kätti does not find life on the road nearly as poetic as she imagined, and is brought back home in a pitiful state by a former acquaintance travelling in the region. This novella demonstrates that the Romanticism to be found in the works of Eichendorff no longer works in the *Gründerzeit*.

However, the Romanticism of E. T. A. Hoffmann is still possible in Realism, as many of Storm’s novellas and fairy tales attest – *Ein stiller Musikant* and *Zur “Wald- und Wasserfreude”* are no exceptions. Since, I would argue, Hoffmann is the Romantic author who most influenced Storm, I will use him as an example to explore the Romantic elements that Storm included in his writings. A brief look at the lives of both writers will provide a better appreciation of Hoffmann’s influence in the novellas under consideration in my dissertation, and help determine how and to what extent Storm the Realist was inspired by this writer of the *Spätromantik*.

I will start by outlining a few common biographical facts that shaped Storm’s and Hoffmann’s literary careers. Both were multitalented artists who, except for a brief period in Hoffmann’s own life, did not live off their art, but, rather, earned a living as jurists. Both spent

¹⁹ Ingo Meyer addresses this issue in detail, comparing the writings of Wilhelm Raabe (1831-1910), Fontane, and Storm to those of the Spanish, English, and, particularly, French Realist writers. See *Im “Banne der Wirklichkeit”?: Studien zum Problem des deutschen Realismus und seinen narrativ-symbolistischen Strategien* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2009).

some years in exile: Hoffmann in two cities under Prussian jurisdiction,²⁰ and Storm in Berlin and in Heiligenstadt, two Prussian cities. While in Heiligenstadt, Storm found solace in music,²¹ and took it upon himself to enrich the city's musical life with the creation of a *Musikverein*. Hoffmann, a "regierungsrätlicher 'Musikus'" (Safranski 163), composed many pieces and became somewhat of a local celebrity, taking an active part in the musical life of the city he resided in at any one time. Hoffmann and Storm were, however, operating on two different musical planes. All his life, Storm was – and would remain – an amateur musician who derived much pleasure from music making, using it in part to educate the citizens of Heiligenstadt and Husum. By contrast, Hoffmann's dream was to succeed as a composer and to make a career of it. He eventually stopped composing music "in notes" and wrote "[g]edichtete Musik," as Dorothee Sölle remarks (259), adding that "only in his writings and [with] his protagonists [was] he able to create new forms of music and new possibilities to express oneself" (258). Sölle also states that Hoffmann's position was indeed unique, because, as a writer, he could draw on a corpus of Romantic writings, while as a composer, he was himself one of the precursors of Romantic music (25). Back in Berlin in 1814, Hoffmann was already well known as a writer. Contrary to Storm who had begun writing poetry and was drawn to telling and writing stories from a young age, Hoffmann was a musician first and foremost who took to literature almost by accident. In *Von Lessing bis Thomas Mann*, Hans Mayer declares, "[ü]berhaupt sind die ersten Erzählungen

²⁰ For more on Hoffmann's exile in Posen and Plock, see Rüdiger Safranski's *E. T. A. Hoffmann: Das Leben eines skeptischen Phantasten* (München: Hanser, 1984).

²¹ After receiving a piano from his parents, Storm wrote the following on 6 Apr. 1860: "Für unser gutes solides Klavier, sage ich Dir, lieber Vater, noch oft in meinem Herzen Dank. Es steht selten einen Tag ganz unberührt. Die Musik ist wieder die Begleiterin meines Lebens." See *Theodor Storm – Briefe in die Heimat aus den Jahren 1853-1864 (TSBH)*, ed. Gertrud Storm (Berlin: Curtius, 1914) 143.

Hoffmanns nur als Schöpfung eines Musikers möglich. Wir erleben die Geburt eines Dichters aus dem Geiste der Musik” (218).

I would argue that Hoffmann the musician inspired Storm as much as Hoffmann the writer did, and that it is no coincidence that Storm has Mozart and his hero *Don Giovanni* play a role in the lives of his protagonists, just as Hoffmann does. But, whereas Hoffmann’s main musical protagonists – the figure of the stranger in *Ritter Gluck* (1809) and the temperamental Johannes Kreisler character – are composers who arguably possess some characteristics of their creator, Storm’s musicians are not composers, but, rather, mere amateurs or aspiring musicians who lack the necessary talent to become soloists. In shaping their protagonists, both authors were influenced by their personal musical abilities and aspirations, as well as by the time and the society in which they lived. But for Hoffmann and other composers like him, the ground was beginning to shift. Innovative composers like Hoffmann himself and Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) had begun to introduce new ideas and to replace classical composers – Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-87) and Mozart in particular – on the music scene. Hoffmann admired Beethoven’s music, particularly as it contained a strong element of longing for the “Reich des Ungeheuren und Unermeßlichen” (Hoffmann 1: 534), a characteristic that all Romantic authors ascribed to music as being the art above all arts. Hoffmann’s protagonists are not Beethoven, however, and the author does not describe their music – with the exception of *Ritter Gluck* – but, rather, the incompatibility between them and society. As Rüdiger Safranski remarks:

Schon die Ausgangssituation [in *Johannes Kreislers, des Kapellmeisters, musikalische Leiden*] gibt in Umrissen die ganze Problematik: der einsame Künstler, der sein Publikum nicht versteht und der es gerade darum provoziert;

der vor ihm flüchtet und der es gleichzeitig in die Flucht schlägt; der in seinen Diensten steht und doch sich ihm himmelhoch überlegen weiß. (231)

There can be no comparison on a musical level between Hoffmann's and Storm's protagonists. The latter – perhaps with the partial exception of Valentin in *Ein stiller Musikant* – do not have a Romantic conception of music, in that they do not turn it into an object of veneration and longing. In human terms, however, both Kreisler and Kätti of *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"* feel equally ill at ease with the people who surround them. Kätti is forced by her father to play in his *établissement*, where she has to perform at the piano and sing to entertain his guests. Storm's stories are set later than Hoffmann's, at a time when the cult of virtuosi such as Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840) and Franz Liszt (1811-86) was at its height and left its mark in the concert halls of Europe. This phenomenon is reflected in *Ein stiller Musikant* and *Es waren zwei Königskinder*. Here, the two aspiring pianists do not make it on the big stage and deal in very different ways with their circumstances: Valentin, the "stille Musikant," retreats to a small town and leads the quiet life that was encouraged during the *Biedermeier* era; Marx cannot face the many pressures in his life and commits suicide, a realistic ending in the face of too many obstacles.

Storm the Realist drew inspiration from Hoffmann the Romantic and did so because of the decidedly realistic side to the latter's writings. His stories, like *Der goldene Topf* (1814), for example, begin in places that everyone can recognize, and contain many detailed and realistic descriptions, before wandering seamlessly into a fantastic sphere where ordinary objects become the product of the imagination. This leads Sölle to write, "Den reinen Romantikern verdächtig, bleibt er [Hoffmann] den realistisch Gesonnenen erst recht unheimlich, fratzenhaft und grotesk" (261). I would argue that the opposite holds true for Storm the Realist author. To be sure, many of his novellas and fairy tales, including two of the music novellas under consideration here,

contain episodes and characters that would not be out of place in a work from the Romantic school. In *Ein stiller Musikant*, for example, the story begins with the apparition to a very reasonable narrator of the long-dead Valentin; in *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"*, the reader comes face to face with a snake as well as an old woman living in the forest, to name but two Hoffmannesque influences. Just as it is impossible to dissociate the musician from the writer in Hoffmann, it is my contention that the same holds true for Storm, albeit to a lesser extent, with regard to the novellas analyzed here and in the following chapters. I shall now turn my attention to Storm the musician.

Storm the Musician

Theodor Storm was an extremely versatile musician who played the piano, had a “silvery” tenor voice, and founded two choirs.²² Hermann Fey describes him as “nicht nur ein leidenschaftlicher Musikliebhaber und ausgezeichnete Sänger, sondern zugleich ein passionierter und vorbildlicher Chordirigent.”²³ The choir he founded in Husum – the *Theodor Storms Chor* – survives to this day. He even tried his hand at composing and took harmony classes with two of his children.²⁴ An accomplished pianist, Storm never attended the conservatory and was a self-taught choral conductor. Very early on, he was exposed to music at his grandmother’s house, playing a green lacquered piano, which, according to his daughter

²² A description of Storm’s musical talent can be found in various biographies of Theodor Storm appearing in the *Bibliography* of this dissertation.

²³ Hermann Fey, “Der volkstümliche Chorgesang in Schleswig-Holstein,” *Festschrift zur Hundertjahrfeier des Sängerbundes Schleswig-Holstein* (Lübeck: Schmidt-Römhild, 1962) 79. In his work, Fey paints a lively picture of Storm at the centre of both the musical and the cultural life in Husum.

²⁴ For more on the subject, see Hermann Fey’s “Theodor Storm als Komponist,” *Schriften der Theodor-Storm-Gesellschaft* 6 (1957) 38-53.

Gertrud, was a decided rarity in those days.²⁵ There was not much music in Husum when Storm was growing up, and not much culture either, for that matter. He came in contact with a more “refined” society as a student at the *Katharineum* in Lübeck. There, he was a frequent guest at the soirées of Henriette Nölting (1800-88), the wife of the Swedish consul, who had a passion for the arts. Jochen Missfeldt describes the evenings at her house in his biography of Storm: “Die Konsulin spielt Klavier, Storm singt mit seinem Tenor, Geibel mit seinem Bariton.”²⁶ Later on, when Storm entertained at his house, he continued the habit of music making and poetry or prose reading. In Heiligenstadt, for example, he organized “römis[ch]e Abende,” events that brought together some twenty families: “Bei einfachster Bewirtung ergab sich ein vielseitiges geselliges Leben, es wurde musiziert, gesungen, gespielt und vorgelesen.”²⁷ As Hiroyuki Tanaka points out, Storm was, in this regard, “ein Repräsentant des musikalischen Bürgertums,” whose life and musical activities developed “im engsten Zusammenhang mit der bürgerlichen Musikkultur seiner Zeit.”²⁸ The pieces he chose to perform with his choirs attest to this. Works of Gluck, Georg Friedrich Händel (1685-1759), and Mozart figured regularly on the program of his concerts, alongside those of contemporaneous composers. Gluck and Händel are particularly interesting in this instance: Gluck because he reformed opera in order to give it greater simplicity, and Händel because his oratorios were in tune with the sensitivity of the English

²⁵ Gertrud Storm, *Vergilbte Blätter aus der grauen Stadt* (Regensburg: Hebbel & Naumann, 1922) 14.

²⁶ See Jochen Missfeldt, *Du graue Stadt am Meer. Der Dichter Theodor Storm in seinem Jahrhundert: Biographie* (München: Hanser, 2013) 53. Just two years older than Storm, Emanuel Geibel (1815-84) was, from a young age, a celebrated poet and a favourite of Henriette Nölting. While Storm did not think much of Geibel’s poetry, he considered him a rival for the rest of his life.

²⁷ Franz Stuckert, *Theodor Storm: Sein Leben und seine Welt* (Bremen: Schünemann, 1955) 75.

²⁸ Tanaka 145.

public to moral, religion, patriotism, and politics. The libretti, which the public could purchase before concerts, were based mostly on biblical texts, and characters were often allegories for kings and important political figures of the time. The same holds true for political events.²⁹ On the musical side, Smith mentions that “Handel and his librettists made the chorus a major constituent of oratorio, distinguishing Handelian oratorio from other contemporary literary and musical forms” (62). She adds, “[t]he use of a chorus in his oratorios may be partly a response to current opinions; it certainly reflects them” (63). The vibrant bourgeois musical culture of the nineteenth century in Germany and elsewhere had its roots in the preceding century and in the active part that members of the bourgeoisie took in the performance of oratorios given by choral societies and massed choirs during choral festivals. John Butt³⁰ qualifies Händel’s oratorios as “supremely accessible,” (214) and adds that they “also provided a forum for religious music outside the context of the liturgy, one that allowed a substantial cross-over with theatrical music” (215). This is also true for oratorios from other composers.

As a newly minted *Unterggerichtsadvocat*, Storm settled in Husum in 1842. Even though he had received no formal training in music, he taught singing to young ladies, which gives an indication of the state of music education in the remote northern state where he lived. The following year – at just twenty-six years of age and with virtually no experience in conducting – he created a mixed chorus. Storm chose the musical format not only for his own satisfaction, but also for a higher purpose. Indeed, mixed choruses were understood to be excellent means of

²⁹ For more on Händel’s oratorios and their significance in the eighteenth century, see Ruth Smith’s *Handels’s Oratorios and Eighteenth-century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995).

³⁰ John Butt, “Choral Music,” *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002) 216.

musical and individual *Bildung*. As Stuckert explains, “In ihm [dem Gesangverein] suchte er die mannigfachen musikalischen Kräfte der Stadt, die meist im Dilettantismus steckengeblieben oder sich in Kleinigkeiten verzettelten, auf ernsthafte künstlerische Aufgaben zu sammeln.”³¹ Storm preferred mixed choruses to the traditional *Liedertafeln* or men’s choirs, which had been very popular in German-speaking countries since Carl Friedrich Zelter (1758-1832) founded the first one in Berlin in 1809. John Butt³² describes these choirs as “an elite all-male glee-club that required its members to be poets, composers, or singers” (216). However, the *Liedertafeln* did not remain elitist clubs. Carl Dahlhaus, who also mentions their original esoteric character in *Nineteenth-Century Music*, explains that “being men’s choral groups they tended, socially and artistically, to the middle and lower stylistic rungs.”³³ The *Liedertafeln* that Storm alludes to in *Ein stiller Musikant* belong to this category. Their members smell of beer and sing nationalistic songs.³⁴

³¹ Stuckert, *Sein Leben* 47.

³² Butt 216.

³³ Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trad. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: U of California P, 1989) 161.

³⁴ Alongside the *Liedertafeln*, other choirs played an important role in the education of workers in the nineteenth century, as James Garratt explains in *Music, Culture and Social Reform in the Age of Wagner* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge U, 2010) 197-215. Liberal workers’ associations viewed music as a way of educating workers and bringing them closer to the bourgeoisie. By contrast, the radicals saw music as a way of politicizing the working class. Since worker education societies considered choral singing as one of the most important means of elevating the working class (204), notes Garratt, it was placed at the heart of the workers’ own cultural program (205). Choral singing was also seen as an effective form of political communication (214). Garratt mentions that the “working men’s choral movement” has been largely ignored “in the nineteenth-century musical discourse” (197). In this regard, Storm is in line with the thinking of his time. I mention this fact here because it constitutes an important

Storm's *Gesangverein* contributed greatly to Husum's musical and cultural life. His programs were well rounded and somewhat ambitious: in 1844, the second year of its existence, the choir performed Mozart's *Requiem* (1791). The composers most often featured were the aforementioned Mozart, Gluck, and Beethoven, as well as Brahms, Joseph Haydn (1732-1809), Franz Schubert (1797-1828), Robert Schumann (1810-56), Josef Rheinberger (1839-1901), and lesser-known composers such as Ferdinand Hiller (1811-85) and Storm's cousin Ludwig Scherff (1839-?).³⁵ Storm also showed little interest in the *Neudeutsche Schule* (the New German School), of which Liszt and Wagner were two of many representatives.³⁶ Tanaka ventures the opinion that "'romantisch-klassizistisch' dürfte auch der gemeinsame Nenner jener Kompositionen sein, die bei ihm und seinem Chor beliebt waren. Zum Teil könnte man auch von musikalischem Biedermeier sprechen."³⁷ The same ambitious programming considerations guided Storm in his choice of music for the choir he founded during his self-imposed exile in Heiligenstadt, which, according to Stuckert, was conducted "mit künstlerischer

aspect of the role played by music in the nineteenth century, which Storm totally ignores. In his writings, music plays a role in the life of individuals, not in social or political movements or associations.

³⁵ Ludwig Scherff's date of death is not known. He emigrated to Chile, where his whereabouts were unknown. See e-mail correspondence from Elke Jacobsen, Theodor-Storm Gesellschaft, 7 Jan. 2015. For more information on the programs of Storm's *Gesangverein*, see Karl Ernst Laage, *Theodor Storm: Eine Biographie* (Heide: Boyens, 1999); Robert Wendt, *Die Musik in Theodor Storms Leben* (Greifswald: Abel, 1914) 81-90; Hans Jürgen Sievers, "Zur Geschichte von Theodor Storms 'Singverein,'" *Schriften der Theodor-Storm-Gesellschaft* 18 (1969) 89-105.

³⁶ See Wendt 80-81. Dahlhaus also states that Wagner subordinates text and music to what is happening on stage: "Wagner . . . proposed that the theatrical event . . . itself constituted the work of art, with literature and music serving as its handmaidens" (*Nineteenth-Century Music* 196). Storm put music first and foremost, which might explain why he did not bother with Wagner's music drama.

³⁷ Tanaka 147.

Gewissenhaftigkeit und größtem Eifer.” Stuckert adds that “[d]er Verein setzte sich – für die damalige Zeit etwas ganz Ungewöhnliches – aus Menschen aller Schichten, vom vornehmen Adligen bis zum einfachen Handwerker,³⁸ zusammen.”³⁹ This may not, however, have been as unusual as Suckert declares at the time Storm resided in Heiligenstadt, since mixed choirs were well established by the 1840s. Storm took rehearsals and performances seriously, and the choir members demonstrated their dedication in return. After his last concert with his choir in Heiligenstadt, Storm wrote the following comments to his parents:

Gestern Abend hielten wir noch Concert, ‘Die Zerstörung Jerusalem’s,’ worauf wir fünf viertel Jahr geübt haben. Als ich zuletzt den vollen prächtigen Chor von über fünfzig Sängern, den ich gestiftet, dirigierte, als so aller Blicke an meinem Stäbchen hingen, und die Tonwellen nun zum letztenmal aus begeisterter Menschenbrust brausend hervorströmten, da mußte ich mein Herz in beide Hände fassen, um nicht in Tränen auszubrechen. Auch ich sang noch und sang aus meinem bewegten Herzen und mit mächtiger Stimme: ‘Du wirst ja dran gedenken, denn meine Seele sagt es mir.’

³⁸ By the eighteenth century, nobles and burghers shared common interests in collecting works of art and attending concerts at the same venues. For more on the subject, see Michael North, *Material Delight and the Joy of Living*: *Cultural Consumption in the Age of Enlightenment in Germany* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008) 169-71.

³⁹ Stuckert, *Sein Leben* 75.

Es war eine lautlose Stille. So, nachdem eben der volle Chor ausgebraust, zu singen und so gehört zu werden, ist ein der glücklichsten Momente des Menschenlebens.⁴⁰

Indeed, music was a continuing source of joy and solace for the author. After the death and burial of his wife, he sat at the piano and played for hours before taking up his pen to write a poem. His daughter Gertrud put it this way: “Von der Gruft ins vereinsamte Haus zurückgekehrt, setzte mein Vater sich ans Klavier und spielte stundenlang sich zur Erlösung geistliche Melodien.”⁴¹ In times of crisis and difficulty, Storm sought refuge in music in order to escape reality, as he once confided to his father-in-law.⁴² He took great interest in past and present musicians, as the programs of his concerts make plain. Yet, he commented little on music or composers in his correspondence, except to mention the pieces that his choir performed and the arias and the songs that he himself sang. Rather, he expressed his views on music and music making through the protagonists of his music novellas. In them, he drew a picture of the place and the role of music in restricted segments of society, and in the lives of characters that possess various musical talents, all during a time frame from the *Biedermeier* era to the 1880s. If we look at the composers who were active in the German-speaking realm at that time, we find giants like the previously mentioned Schumann and Brahms, along with Liszt and Wagner, who followed on the heels of Beethoven, Schubert, and Frederic Chopin (1810-49). Yet, only Chopin rates a

⁴⁰ Excerpt from Storm’s letter to his father dated 10 Mar. 1864. See *TSBH* 218. The oratorio is a composition by Ferdinand von Hiller (1811-85), at the time a very successful composer, conductor, and music critic.

⁴¹ Gertrud Storm, *Vergilbte Blätter* 96.

⁴² “Am 5. 2. 1851 schreibt er an den Schwiegervater: ‘Ich wühle mich jetzt ganz in Mendelssohnsche Musik ein, um nur nichts anderes zu hören.’ (Ungedruckt, Schleswig-Holsteinische Landesbibliothek).” Qtd. in Stuckert, *Sein Leben*, 460n28.

mention in one of the novellas studied here: *Es waren zwei Königskinder*. Furthermore, a piece by a nameless composer of the time, performed during a concert at the end of *Ein stiller Musikant*, does not meet with the approbation of the audience. Apart from the short time he spent in Berlin as a student, as well as the three years he lived in Potsdam without receiving a salary, Storm lived out the rest of his life in small towns that never saw great virtuosi like Liszt, for example. Even though musical scores were widely available – Storm made use of them with his choirs – he did not experience the works of the great masters in the concert hall. Likewise, the protagonists of his novellas.

The composers and the pieces alluded to in Storm’s music novellas belong squarely to the “classical” period, which covered the second half of the eighteenth century. During that time, the most important intent of music, be it operas, *Lieder*, or instrumental music, was to convey feelings, which was a way for the ordinary burgher to escape day-to-day life and to express himself. Peter Gay states in *The Naked Heart* that music “virtually enforces the primitive physical appetites . . . because its effects travel back to the deepest taproots of human experience.” He links it with erotic sensations that have their roots in memories of childhood.⁴³ Mozart in particular practiced the art of expressing and perfecting feelings in his operas. In their study of the changes that affected styles in the arts, literature, and music in the eighteenth century, changes that were linked with shifts in society, Leo Balet and E. Gerhard⁴⁴ declare that

⁴³ See Peter Gay, *The Naked Heart: The Bourgeois Experience, Victoria to Freud* (New York: Norton, 1996) 22-25.

⁴⁴ Leo Balet and E. Gebhard, *Die Verbürgerlichung der deutschen Kunst, Literatur und Musik im 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Gert Mattenklott (Frankfurt a.M: Ullstein 1972). The page numbers given in this dissertation are from the first edition published in 1936, since I was unable to obtain the second edition. Leo Balet was a Dutch citizen who emigrated to the United States in 1938. He was an art and music critic. E. Gebhard is a pseudonym for Eberhard

“Für Mozart . . . bildet der Ausdruck des menschlichen Gefühls den künstlerischen Kernpunkt. Die Musik bleibt für ihn Anfang und Ende . . .” (378-79). The same held true for his instrumental music, of which Balet remarks, “Mozarts Gabe, menschliche Gefühle und Empfindungen mit einem Maximum an Intensität und einem Minimum an klanglichen Mitteln auszudrücken, macht alle seine Instrumentalmusikwerke zum Höhepunkt der gefühlsbereichenden Musik der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts” (401-02).⁴⁵ To be sure, Mozart and his music played a crucial role in the ongoing development of musical styles. Furthermore, his music is front and centre in *Ein stiller Musikant* and in *Zur “Wald- und Wasserfreude”*. In *Zur “Wald- und Wasserfreude”*, the spirit of Mozart, the true genius, accompanies Sträkelstrakel and Kätti as they practice a Mozart sonata. Herr Zippel refers to his daughter Kätti as his *Genie*, which is ironical here, considering the incongruity of the implied comparison. Yet, much like the two musicians in the novella, Mozart knew hardship and heartbreak, and some part of him never really grew up, as Wolfgang Hildesheimer points out on numerous occasions in his biography on the composer.⁴⁶ In *Mozart and His Operas*, David Cairns states that Mozart’s picture in the nineteenth century was a rosy one: “Mozart was put on a pedestal – but as an instinctive genius, the unconscious childlike creator of music whose very flawlessness spoke of superficiality . . . Mozart was not allowed to have grown up; he was trapped in the image of ‘the marvellous boy’.”⁴⁷ In *Mozart and*

Rebling (1911-2008), a pianist and music scholar. It was brought to my attention that Gert Mattenklott’s introduction to the 1972 edition contains information on their approach to the *Verbürgerlichung* of society and of the arts.

⁴⁵ Balet and Gebhard examine in some detail the expressiveness and sensibility in Mozart’s operas, as well as their overall novelty (373-409).

⁴⁶ Wolfgang Hildesheimer, *Mozart* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1977) 36, 81, 116, and 122.

⁴⁷ David Cairns, *Mozart and His Operas* (Berkeley: U of California P, 2006) 7-8.

Posterity,⁴⁸ Gernot Gruber mentions that Otto Jahn (1813-69), the author of a monumental biography on Mozart that “provides the foundation for all Mozart scholarship,” planned to write a *Kleiner Mozart* “for use as a reader amongst the general public,” and subscribed in his description of Mozart to “what was prevalent in belletristic writings of the time” (150). It is not known if Storm was acquainted with Jahn’s work. He could have been through Theodor Mommsen (1817-1903), who was a friend of both men. However, Storm was an avid reader and likely aware of the way in which Mozart was generally described in literature, as well as in Jahn’s biography. I will explore in subsequent chapters to what extent the image of a small and childlike Mozart⁴⁹ informs the characterization of protagonists who perform Mozart’s music in *Ein stiller Musikant* and in *Zur “Wald-und Wasserfreude”*.

Mozart lived at a time when most composers and performers were employed by a noble patron or a prince of the Church, but “Obrigkeithörigkeit und Servilität waren ihm fremd, Adel und Orden gleichgültig.”⁵⁰ In this regard, he is comparable to Storm, who was open in his dislike of the nobility, describing its inevitable downfall in several of his novellas. As he grew older, Mozart rebelled against having to compose to please a benefactor or to conform to the musical tastes of the Viennese public. Thus, the hero of *Don Giovanni* (1787), a rakish count who, in the “normal” order of things, should have had his way in everything with the characters that are his social inferiors, is instead opposed by them, as indeed by the characters of his own social class, as Wolfgang Hildesheimer has pointed out. This did not go down well in Vienna, where the

⁴⁸ Gernot Gruber, *Mozart and Posterity*, trans. R. S. Furness (London: Quartet, 1991) 150.

⁴⁹ This perception of Mozart has since been revised and rejected. For more on the subject, see Hermann Abert, *W. A. Mozart*, trans. Stewart Spencer, ed. Cliff Eisen (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2007).

⁵⁰ Hildesheimer 19.

opera was not a success. In fact, Hildesheimer argues that the opera marked the beginning of Mozart's ruin. Storm mentions Mozart's opera in two novellas, in all probability because of the beauty of the music, but also because the plot and the way Mozart worked with the libretto likely resonated with him. I would venture to say that, in *Don Giovanni*, Mozart created a "realistic" opera long before Realism became a literary genre. Not that the story itself corresponds to Realism in the nineteenth-century sense of the word, but, as Hildesheimer explains, because Mozart painted in equal parts the beautiful and the ugly without ever taking sides. "Er [Mozart] richtet niemals, auch dort nicht, wo fast alle Gestalten außer dem Protagonisten nichts anderes in Kopf und Sinn haben, als den Protagonisten zu richten: im 'Don Giovanni.' In absoluter Wertfreiheit und jenseits aller Moral vertritt er die Prinzipie sowohl des Positiven als auch des Negativen."⁵¹ Edward Joseph Dent actually uses the word "realistic" in *Mozart's Operas: A Critical Study* when he characterizes Mozart's music. "[Mozart] knows all depths of human emotion, but he is always Italian and strictly *realistic* [ital. Mine]; his music is often complex in the extreme, but invariably clear. He has no mystifications and no sense of symbolism, apart from certain conventions of religious music which might by a stretch be called symbolic."⁵² For his part, Hermann Abert has a different opinion regarding symbolism. With regard to Mozart's operas, he states:

[Mozart's] work is . . . like an extraordinary natural spectacle whose only aim was the fullest deployment of all its available forces. It was a fact that these forces were as powerful and elemental as they were varied and that, thanks to his tremendous creative gifts, they merged to form a harmonic whole that constitutes

⁵¹ Hildesheimer 161.

⁵² Edward Joseph Dent, *Mozart's Operas: A Critical Study* (1913), 2nd ed. (London: Clarendon Press, 1991) 186-87.

the greatness of this unique man. Only in this way was he able to lend all his characters a symbolic value while retaining their individual stamp and elevate them to the level of universal types.⁵³

As we can see, Realism and symbolism are not mutually exclusive in Mozart's work. I would argue that the same can be said of Storm's work, particularly in his later novellas, and that the choice of the multi-faceted Mozart as prominent composer in two of his music novellas is symbolic, as I will explain in the following chapters. Furthermore, the presence of Mozart – and of Haydn, in *Ein stiller Musikant* – as musical anchors in Storm's music novellas is consistent, I believe, with the notion prevalent in the nineteenth century that one form of music evolved from another, as opposed to supplanting preceding ones, as was previously the case,⁵⁴ therefore providing a measure of continuity. Gruber mentions that, when Austria appropriated Mozart as a national symbol in the middle of the nineteenth century, "Mozart served as an intermediary and had a particular historical function – he was the link between the Baroque and the nineteenth century, between Italian and German opera."⁵⁵ The enduring character of Mozart's music is linked, I would contend, with Storm's preoccupation with death and immortality. Storm rejected the Christian belief of life after death, yet wanted to be remembered by posterity. He had no way of knowing if that would be the case while he was in the process of writing, even though he was well known and respected as a poet and a writer of fiction during his lifetime.⁵⁶ Mozart was no

⁵³ Abert 741.

⁵⁴ On this topic, see Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music* 24.

⁵⁵ Gruber 36.

⁵⁶ Stuckert addresses this issue on the last page of Storm's biography, contending that the author was one of the most widely read German writers of the nineteenth century, as his oeuvre contains a human dimension that resonates in

longer popular in Vienna toward the end of his life – although not in the rest of Europe – but the Romantics turned him into almost a cult figure. Hildesheimer stresses the same when he declares that “Mozart als Devotionalie ist eine Erfindung der Romantik.”⁵⁷ Since then, the composer’s popularity has never abated. In *Ein Stiller Musikant*, Mozart’s music represents a link between the past, the present, and the future; it also stands as a symbol of the continuity of life and as a source of joy and of human communication. Yet, Dahlhaus sees more than a simple link between eras. Indeed, he views the composer’s music as something universal – an exceptional quality in its time – and as transcending “the distinction between popular and esoteric music” or, in other words, between “highbrow” and “lowbrow” styles.⁵⁸ On a different plane, the protagonists in Storm’s music novellas transcend the distinction between styles of music, while taking pleasure in all of them. Besides harbouring a great love for classical music, Storm himself was also fond of folk songs from an early age and peppered his novellas with them. In *Ein stiller Musikant* and *Zur “Wald- und Wasserfreude”*, his characters put them on equal footing with classical music in terms of enjoyment and even go so far, like Kätti, as seeing folk songs as a reward after practicing a Mozart sonata. The role of folk songs as a means of expressing either what the protagonist feels without going into a detailed description (in Kätti’s case) or foreshadowing a

other times and with other peoples. He concludes, “Und so scheint es sich für den Dichter, der an eine Unsterblichkeit in religiösem Sinne nicht zu glauben vermochte, im zeitlichen Bereich doch zu erfüllen, was seine tiefste Sehnsucht war: nicht vergessen zu werden” (*Sein Leben* 453).

⁵⁷ Hildesheimer stresses that Mozart had become a cult object for the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813-55), who wanted to create a sect to honour him (21). For a detailed account of Mozart’s reception after his death, see Gruber’s *Mozart and Posterity*.

⁵⁸ Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music* 35-36.

tragic event (in *Es waren zwei Königskinder*) will be analyzed in the following chapters of this dissertation.

I will now turn my attention to a few musician/music novellas that predate Storm's own and might have influenced him, and will briefly discuss two of his novellas – *Im Schloß* (1862) and *Eine Halligfahrt* (1871) – in which music plays a substantial role and contributes to the evolution of place and function of music in Storm's oeuvre.

Musikernovellen

Given Storm's lifelong love of music, it seems only natural that it inspired him to write about musicians and the many roles attributable to music. To be sure, Storm's music novellas form part of a long list of *Musikererzählungen* that span the last three centuries. In the nineteenth century, they were particularly numerous between 1830 and 1840,⁵⁹ a time during which German composers and writers pitted German music against Italian music, all in an effort to establish German national music as part of a national identity. However, the number of *Musikererzählungen* diminished greatly after that time because, as Jörg Theilacker declares, the 1848 Revolution had heralded the possibility of a German State, and music was no longer germane to the political discussion (169). It can, however, be argued that stories about music and

⁵⁹ For more information, see Jörg Theilacker's "Männer – Phantasie – Hirngeburt: Gescheiterte Musiker in Novellen des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Die Chiffren Musik und Sprache: Neue Aspekte der musikalischen Ästhetik IV*, ed. Hans Werner Henze (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1990) 154-72. This chapter also contains a list of the most important *Musikernovellen* of the nineteenth century. Theilacker includes in his list Storm's *Ein stiller Musikant* and *Es waren zwei Königskinder*. However, he leaves out *Zur "Wald-und Wasserfreude"*, which, I would argue, is a musician story in its own right, even though the protagonist Kätti does not enjoy the same musical education as the male protagonists of the two aforementioned novellas.

musicians written before and after 1848 did not serve so much a political purpose as a social one, when writers set out to enlarge their scope beyond the nature of music and of musical compositions in order to show the struggles of musicians, particularly those of performers. The social component is generally more present in the stories focusing on the composer and the performer rather than on the music itself – with the exception of Hoffmann, who concentrates on both, and of Mörike, who imagines a rather idyllic day in the life of Mozart – in order to show artists at odds with social norms at the beginning of the century, and with society at large as time progressed and industrialization brought about important changes in people’s lives. The title of Theilacker’s article “Männer – Phantasie – Hirngeburt: Gescheiterte Musiker in Novellen des 19. Jahrhunderts,” particularly the word “gescheitert” (“failed”), refers to the difficulties faced by musicians, in part because music had become more and more of a consumer product like any other, or, in Safranski’s words, “die Kunst prostituiert sich, indem sie sich verkauft. Es gibt da ein dramatisches Mißverhältnis zwischen dem, was die Kunst für den Künstler und dem, was sie für das gewöhnliche Publikum bedeutet” (423).⁶⁰ Consequently, musicians found it increasingly difficult to fit in. Indeed, the musician had lost his status, like Storm’s protagonists who are “überwiegend Musiker, deren Scheitern im Musikalischen auf ihre (potentiellen) Fähigkeiten in anderen Bereichen verweist. Zunehmend stehen all die gescheiterten Musiker, Dilettanten, Versager, Nicht-mehr-Musiker im Zentrum der Texte, werden zum Prototyp der Künstlererzählungen des 19. Jahrhunderts” (Theilacker 156-57). The same holds true for Storm’s novellas under analysis in the following chapters.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the content of *Musikererzählungen* varied greatly. The earliest one with the greatest impact was *Herzergießungen eines kunstliebenden*

⁶⁰ In the context of this passage, *Kunst* refers to music.

Klosterbruders, composed by Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder (1773-98) in 1797 and published the same year by Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853). Here, the main protagonist, Joseph Berglinger, places music above all else; unfortunately, he is unable to translate his high ideal and his love of music into his own compositions. He dies shortly after finishing his only successful work, a Passion piece. Berglinger is the first in a long list of failed musicians. Theilacker says that after the publication of Wackenroder's text, "die Schleusen [öffnen sich], und es ergießt sich ein breiter Strom von Musikererzählungen durchs 19. Jahrhundert" (155), ranging from obscure to well-known writers. The most prolific author of music and musician stories was Hoffmann. A few composers – Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826), Schumann, and Wagner among them – also wrote musician stories. By and large, however, those stories were penned by writers, some of whom were amateur musicians or music enthusiasts, such as Heinrich von Kleist (1777-1811), Franz Grillparzer, and Storm himself.⁶¹

Kleist's *Die heilige Cäcilie oder Die Gewalt der Musik* (1810) concentrates, as its title suggests, on the powerful effect that music exerts on human emotions. In the story, a congregation of nuns is saved from destruction at the hands of a mob of iconoclasts who are opposed to Catholicism, all because the four brothers leading the rabble fall under the spell of a mysterious composition that is sung during the service. The brothers become insane, and the sounds that emanate from their mouths have nothing to do with what they want to sing. As Reinhard Kiefer puts it in the afterword of *Musiknovellen des 19. Jahrhunderts*:

Die Musik ist eine janusköpfige Kunst. Einerseits spendet sie 'wunderbare[n] himmlische[n] Trost,' verursacht 'unaussprechliche Rührung,' ist 'Himmel des Wohlklangs.' Andererseits wird sie, wenn die Brüder jeweils um Mitternacht das

⁶¹ For more on the titles of music and musician stories compiled by Theilacker, see n56.

Gloria der Messe zu singen beginnen, zum ‘schauerlichen Gebrüll,’ zum Signal vollendeter Enthumanisierung. (332)

Many scholars have drawn a parallel between Grillparzer’s novella *Der arme Spielmann* (1848) and Storm’s *Ein stiller Musikant*.⁶² I will deal here at some length with *Der arme Spielmann*, as the parallels that have been drawn between the protagonists of both novellas do not form part of my argument in chapter 2. However, this short discussion is necessary in order to show, in part, where Storm was coming from, and how he put his own stamp not only on the depiction of a decline in social standing, but also on a possible way of coping with the discrepancy between artistic aspirations and artistic talent. Whereas music comes down from heaven for Berglinger, it is the musician who plays God in *Der arme Spielmann*. Indeed, there seems to be no end to the many faces of music and musicians in the novella. Playing God does not equate, however, with being holy. The *Spielmann*, whose name is Jakob, plays dissonant accords that are not sweet music to the ears of the narrator, who describes what he hears as a “höllische[s] Konzer[t],” and after a while manages to recognize the so-called thread in the labyrinth, “gleichsam die Methode in der Tollheit” (Grillparzer 3: 156). Both Valentin and Jakob are down on their luck and have not fulfilled the hopes their fathers had for them. Additionally, they do not win the hand of the girl they love, and neither ever marries. As far as music is concerned, however, one cannot compare Valentin’s aptitudes to Jakob’s, who seems to be

⁶² For more on the subject of parallels, see Robert Pitrou, *La vie et l’oeuvre de Theodor Storm (1817-1888)* (Paris: Alcan, 1920) 504; Herman Meyer, *Der Sonderling in der deutschen Dichtung* (München: Hanser, 1963) 219-20; Boyd Mullan, “Characterization and Narrative Technique in Grillparzer’s *Der arme Spielmann* and Storm’s *Ein stiller Musikant*,” *German Life and Letters* 44:3 (1991): 188-97; and Josef De Cort, “Zwei arme Spielleute: Vergleich einer Novelle von F. Grillparzer und von Th. Storm,” *Revue des langues vivantes* 30 (1964): 326-41. De Cort engages in a very detailed analysis of the parallels between the two novellas in order to prove his contention.

lacking in many. Indeed, Valentin has a respectable career as a piano teacher, and later acquires some notoriety with one of his own compositions. The daughter of his former sweetheart performs it during concerts, along with Mozart arias. Furthermore, the approach of the two protagonists to music and their relationship with it are vastly different. For his part, Jakob does not realize how badly he plays. He *performs* (ital. mine) what he hears in his head, not what is on the page. As for playing God, the sounds he draws from his instrument are no more musical than those that come out of the mouths of the four brothers in Kleist's *Die heilige Cäcilie*. As Heinz Politzer derisively puts it, "[d]as 'Himmelsgebäude' seiner Einbildung erweist sich bei näherer Betrachtung als ein elender Haufen von Schutt. Ausgeschüttet, ertönt die Fülle des Wohllauts als Abfolge haarsträubender Dissonanz" (375). Storm's Valentin, on the other hand, plays well enough to attempt a Mozart sonata during a concert, acquitting himself respectably by his own account (3: 297), until he senses that the audience is distracted, causing him to lose both his concentration and his nerve. After this disastrous concert, he stops playing altogether. Unlike Jakob, who never realizes what a torture his violin playing is for everyone else but for himself (Politzer 376), Valentin is under no illusions about his talent and constantly berates himself. In the end, he prefers not to play at all, rather than doing injustice to the music.

Both Grillparzer's and Storm's relationships to music differ significantly from one other. Grillparzer lived in Vienna, a city where music reigned supreme, and where the great classical composers – Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert – had or still resided and worked during his lifetime. Grillparzer came from a very musical family on his mother's side,⁶³ wrote extensively about music, and shared with Hoffmann, and later Storm, a great admiration for

⁶³ For more details on Grillparzer's family and musicality, see Alfred Orel's article "Grillparzers Verhältnis zur Tonkunst," *Grillparzerstudien*, ed. Oskar Katann (Wien: Gerlach & Wiedling, 1924) 278-98.

Mozart's music. Unlike Grillparzer and Hoffmann, however, Storm did not write about music outside the context of his novellas. His interest lay more in performing and in educating choristers and audiences alike.

These two different approaches to music are reflected in *Der arme Spielmann* and in Storm's music novellas. There is some music theory when the narrator describes Jakob's playing (3: 155), but nothing of the sort in Storm's writings. Instead, in *Der stille Musikant*, mention is often made of the quality of the voice, such as "clear soprano" or "mit einer scharfen Tenor Stimme" (2: 194). The inspiration for both novellas also differs greatly. Grillparzer based Jakob on an old violin player he used to see at the inn where he took his meals, and possibly under the influence of the idealized painting entitled "Der alte Geiger" (1828) by the famed Austrian painter Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller (1793-1865) (Poltzer 373-74). Storm's Valentin is, by the admission of the writer himself, the protagonist he invented to show his son Karl that it was possible to survive as a music teacher in a small town after one had given up hope for a more illustrious career. At the beginning of *Der arme Spielmann*, music is played in the *Brigittenau*, an open field at the outskirts of Vienna, by a motley crew of variously challenged characters: "[e]ine Harfenspielerin mit widerlich starrenden Augen...[e]in alter invalider Stelzfuß...[e]in lahmer, verwachsener Knabe, er und seine Violine einen einzigen ununterscheidbaren Knäulen bildend" (3: 151). And then, there is the old man, Jakob, and his violin, who, although he has a musical score in front of him, interprets it in such a way as to make it unrecognizable. Poltzer sees Jacob's inward looking when he plays the violin as a break between artists and the people. He says that "[d]er Bruch zwischen Künstler und Volk, zwischen dem Musikanten, der seinen inneren Stimmen nachlauscht, und der Gesellschaft, in die er sich begeben hat, ist vollkommen und offenbar" (376). He goes even further by positing that "Musik ist in höchster Not" and that it

no longer speaks to anyone, be it the grandees of this world or the burgher (376). Politzer's is a very pessimistic interpretation of a novella written by a man who had a profound love and knowledge of music. Even though it is true that Jakob's life goes from bad to worse, he does not see it that way, for the simple reason that his music making allows him to cope with his trials, and that gives him a way to express his spirituality and his faith in God. Therein lays a fundamental difference between the two novellas. Music is not a means of communication with God for Storm's Valentin who, instead of "playing God," stops playing altogether after his failed performance. One could argue, however, that he, too, internalizes the music he never stops loving, keeping it to himself. In this way, he comes to terms with the losses he has suffered.

It is not known for certain if Storm ever read *Der arme Spielmann*. Josef De Cort argues the strong probability that he did and that he wrote his own novella along the same lines (326-27). Whatever the case may be, I would contend that the roles have been inverted, in that Grillparzer's tale, written during the *Biedermeier* era, is a far more realistic portrayal of musicianship than Storm's and does not contain a rosy outlook on life. Jakob ekes out a miserable living, lives alone for all intents and purposes, and dies a tragic death by drowning. By contrast, Storm's Valentin could be the protagonist of a *Biedermeier* story. He leads a modest life, wanting for nothing, and finds satisfaction in teaching and in reading. This is a far cry from the situation in Storm's other novellas. In *Der Stille Musikant*, Storm is not interested in giving an accurate portrayal of living conditions in the *Gründerjahre*; instead, he wants to show his son Karl that there is some future for him yet, thereby taming his own anxiety.

Theilacker's list of music novellas and George C. Schoolfield's book *The Figure of the Musician in German Literature* conclusively demonstrate that most *Musikererzählungen*, and, I would venture to say, those which influenced Storm, appeared in the first half of the nineteenth

century. After that, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and Wagner were the towering personalities in the fields of philosophy and music. Nevertheless, Storm did not concern himself with Nietzsche's writings nor with Wagner's music. There is, to my knowledge, no reference to Nietzsche in Storm's voluminous correspondence, and only rarely to Wagner.⁶⁴ Storm's idea of music, as derived from his works, differs so significantly from Wagner's that any influence, however distant, can be excluded. Nor did he write another *Musikernovelle* after *Es waren zwei Königskinder*, therefore eschewing the popularity that musicians enjoyed in German literature after Wagner's death. Schoolfield writes that at that time, Germany "stood at the forefront in creative music," and continues:

The average German had come to realize that his country held the musical leadership of the world, just as it had held the intellectual leadership during the age of Goethe. The conception of the musician as a chosen being, formalized by Nietzsche and embodied by Wagner, had received general acceptance, penetrating not only into other cultures but also into the broad masses of the German reading public. This public expected the musician to be a "genius," abnormal, unhappy, but nevertheless consecrated, a person to whom all privileges were to be granted.

(107)

Storm's *Musikererzählungen* are at distinct variance from this general pattern. In the novellas discussed in detail in the following chapters, Storm is primarily interested in ordinary

⁶⁴ In a letter dated 15 Nov. 1853, we read, "Vorgestern sah ich Wagners Tannhäuser, im Ganzen vortrefflich." See *Theodor Storm – Theodor Fontane Briefwechsel* (Berlin: Schmidt, 1981) 62.

amateur musicians and music students, and Herr Zippel's "genius" in "*Zur Wald- und Wasserfreude*" has nothing in common with the "genius" that Schoolfield refers to.

Before I turn to the three novellas featured in the following chapters, I would like to add a brief analysis of two other novellas that feature amateur musicians: *Im Schloß* and *Eine Halligfahrt*. The role of music is not the main element in these two stories, but it is nonetheless important in the lives of the protagonists. Never again would Storm attribute to music such a positive role as in *Im Schloß*, or such a Romantic aura as in *Eine Halligfahrt*. The musician in *Im Schloß* is Arnold, a private tutor engaged by a noble family to instruct their sickly son. The boy's older sister, Anna, is a proud individual, raised by an aunt to behave like young ladies of her class. While still in her guardianship, Anna joins a *Gesangverein* where the classes mix freely, something the aunt would dub "mauvais genre." The young lady herself keeps company with noble women only, going so far as to deignfully remark, "Ich hätte von den Übrigen kaum einen Namen anzugeben vermocht. Später waren dann die Bedienten zeitig da, um uns nach Hause zu geleiten" (1: 497). In this short passage, Storm's example of the *Gesangverein* proves that classes did not really mix; they simply congregated in the same room to sing. To put it bluntly, music did not contribute to the disappearance of social barriers. However, it does so imperceptibly in the case of Arnold and Anna. The latter is learning a Schumann duet with a friend, and asks Arnold to provide the piano accompaniment. He is by far their superior in music matters, and repays Anna for her presumption by deliberately making her undergo a strenuous practice. Recalling the scene, Anna writes, "[U]nerbittlich wurde jeder Einsatz und jede Figur wiederholt, wir sangen mit heißen Gesichtern; es war, als seien wir plötzlich in der Gewalt unseres jungen Meisters" (1:501). Music was the art that, in those days, could give a person of inferior birth some power over members of the nobility. In this particular novella, it is also

instrumental in bringing Arnold and Anna together, giving Arnold a medium, under the guise of a folk song, to express his love for her. At the end of the story, the social barriers between them tumble down and they get married. Although music is only a small element of this novella, it has more power than in any other novella Storm wrote later. From then on, the power and the influence of music in the lives of Storm's protagonists would grow steadily weaker.

Written two years before *Ein stiller Musikant*, the novella *Eine Halligfahrt* presents music that lives on as a memory. Like Valentin, the cousin portrayed in the novella has stopped playing altogether, but under very different circumstances. And whereas the narrators in two novellas to be analyzed in the following chapters conjure up the memories of dead people, the cousin here proclaims, "Man soll die Toten ruhen lassen," and calls his violin case "ein Särgelein" (2: 49). The few pages in which the cousin writes about music contain a mixture of Romanticism and Realism. The text can be characterized as Realist, because, contrary to what happens in the three novellas analyzed hereafter, he names the composers and the titles of the pieces performed during a *Hauskonzert*. The composers are Beethoven, Schumann – he lets the reader guess their names from the clues he provides – and, finally, Ludwig Spohr (1784-1859). Conspicuously absent are composers from the classical period, yet a portrait of Mozart presides over the concert. The Romantic element is, in part, a direct allusion to Eichendorff's poems set to music by Schumann, and to the fictional character, Johannes Kreisler:

[Kinder] sangen . . . von den Liedern des neuen großen Komponisten, durch welchen Eichendorff's wunderbare Lyrik zuerst in der Musik ihren Ausdruck erhalten hat. Ahnungslos schwebten die Jungen Stimmen über dem Abgrund dieser Lieder. – Ich weiß nicht, ob der Kappellmeister Johannes Kreisler davongelaufen wäre. (2: 65)

The spirit of Romanticism, however, is mainly embodied by the violin itself. It is a fine specimen, crafted in the *Atelier Cremona*, that the cousin inherited from an Italian musician and the narrator inherited in turn from him. According to the cousin's will, the violin can only be bequeathed, not sold. The reason is that the violin possesses a power that can only be set free by the right performer. The cousin describes it in these words: "So wie ich die Geige mit meinem Bogen anstrich, da sang es und schwoll es an zu einer Gewalt, die mich selbst erbeben machte. Das war nicht ich allein, der diese Töne schuf; ein geistig Erbteil war in dieser Geige, und ich war der rechte Erbe, der es mit eigener Kraft vermehrte" (2: 63). This kind of magic connected with an instrument is unique in Storm's oeuvre and quite relevant here, for the simple fact that the performer experiences a level of playing that is not attained again in the novellas analyzed hereafter. The above quote undeniably belies its Romantic heritage; "es" is undefined, left to the interpretation of the reader. What is clear is the connection between the power of the music produced by this instrument and the power that is present in Kleist's *Die heilige Cäcilie*, a power that cannot be explained in words but only suggested by words like "Gewalt" and "erbeben." Another relevant point in the passage quoted above is the "geistig Erbteil" that provides continuity between the past, the present, and the future. It is one of the author's preoccupations dealt with in various ways, as will be seen in the following chapters. In conclusion, I will quote another passage directly linked to a theme that is found in the three novellas examined in my dissertation. "Und meine Geige sang, oder eigentlich war es *meine Seele* [ital. mine] . . . ich fühlte, wie die Funken unter meinem Bogen sprühten; und lange, lange hielt ich sie Alle in atemlosem Bann" (2: 66). After this masterful performance, the cousin in *Eine Halligfahrt* stops playing the violin for reasons unexplained, joining the ranks of Storm's "stille Musikanten."

In this introductory chapter, I have drawn a general picture of the literary landscape that preceded Storm's own, with particular emphasis on Hoffmann, whom I used as an example to argue that Storm was influenced by Romanticism. I also dwelt on Storm's love of music and on the role that music played in his personal life, given that it informs his *Musikernovellen* in so many ways. Finally, I briefly analyzed a few important music novellas from which Storm may have drawn some inspiration, and two of his own novellas that preceded the works that I will examine in the following chapters, in order to determine the uniqueness of the role of music in Storm's oeuvre. I will now turn my attention to *Ein stiller Musikant*, the novella in which music is arguably the main protagonist.

Chapter 3

The Power of Music in *Ein stiller Musikant*

Ein stiller Musikant is the story of Christian Valentin, a music teacher who lives in his small hometown in Northern Germany at the time the narrator meets him. He moved away after his father's death, but following a disastrous concert during which he fled in the middle of a piano sonata by Mozart, he returned to his birthplace. He does not own a house in town, "aber eben vor dem Tor doch [seiner] Eltern Grab" (TSSW 2: 301). He settles there, eking out a living by giving piano lessons to middle-class and underprivileged children. One of his students is the daughter of a woman he could have married in the past. Yet the fateful concert and his ensuing flight prevent the marriage. Subsequently, he leads a quiet and seemingly contented life until his death.

Theodor Storm explains his motivation to write the novella in a letter dated 13 October 1875, addressed to Paul Heyse,⁶⁵ to whom he had already sent the manuscript. It would seem that his son Karl, at the time a student at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Stuttgart, had written him a desperate letter regarding his lack of technical ability at the piano and his doubts about his future.⁶⁶ Storm gives his son two answers. The first is a letter, in which he expresses his empathy and tells Karl that his lack of concentration is probably inherited from him; the second answer is the novella under study in this chapter, since the text ostensibly shows a possible path to a modest and contented life. In the above-mentioned letter to Heyse, Storm comments: "Daß Ihnen

⁶⁵ TSPH 1: 91-93.

⁶⁶ For more details, see Karl Ernst Laage's explanatory notes to *Ein stiller Musikant* in TSSW 2: 874-75.

mein stiller Musikant gefallen, hat mich recht gefreut. Er ist auch aus den heiligsten Tiefen meiner Seele. Der stille Musikant ist mein heißgeliebter Junge, den ich mit Traumesaugen in seiner Zukunft angeschaut.”⁶⁷ Storm even calls the text “heilig” in a letter to his publisher Westermann (8 April 1875),⁶⁸ proudly describing it to Albert Nieß as “eine meiner besten Prosadichtungen” (1 January 1877).⁶⁹ However, the novella is not just a literary solution to Karl’s uncertain future. In fact, it digresses from the situation more than it truly reflects it. In an article entitled “Die Entstehung von Theodor Storms Novelle ‘Ein stiller Musikant’,” Walter Herrmann mentions several points of departure between the novella and autobiographical facts. To begin with, the author was not a strict father, and Karl, never as shy as the character Valentin, had several siblings (636-37). In a letter to Heyse, Storm writes: “In Einem unterscheidet er [Karl] sich von seinem Traumbild; er is doch zäher; und das wird vielleicht die Sache anders wenden.”⁷⁰ Furthermore, by starting the story as a fairy tale, and by having the narrator remember his old friend, now deceased, the author distances himself from the main character and uses his own concern as the basis of a literary work. In *Theodor Storm: Sein Leben und seine Welt*, Franz Stuckert points out that the novella is “künstlerisch vollständig objektiviert,” inasmuch as “[a]lle autobiographischen Einzelheiten sind in den epischen Vorgang eingeschmolzen und auf das feinste mit dem Ganzen abgestimmt” (323). I would argue that Valentin’s lack of combativeness in his personal and artistic life reflects the time period during

⁶⁷ Storm refers to his son Karl as his “stiller Musikant” in subsequent letters to his many correspondents.

⁶⁸ Quoted from “Wirkung und Würdigung” in *TSSW* 2: 880.

⁶⁹ Boyd Mullan explains that Storm’s pride likely stems from “the intensely personal nature of his story. See “Characterization and Narrative Technique in *Der arme Spielmann* (1848) by Franz Grillparzer and Storm’s *Ein stiller Musikant*,” *German Life and Letters* 44:3 (1991): 187-97.

⁷⁰ See letter dated 13 Oct. 1875 in *TSPH* 1: 92.

which the novella takes place (*Biedermeier*), along with the diminishing role of the arts as a driving force in society.

Ein stiller Musikant is the first of three novellas in which the main protagonists are more or less proficient musicians, and in whose life music plays an important, if not decisive, role. Valentin does not have a career as a soloist, but, nevertheless, devotes all his adult life to music as a teacher.⁷¹ He is introduced by a heterodiegetic narrator who, later on in the novella, allows Valentin – the homodiegetic narrator, to tell his life story. Through a close analysis of the text, I intend to explore the way in which the narrator uses Valentin’s physical appearance and musings about his life to draw the portrait of a musical and artistic man whose resilience is rooted primarily in music, as well as in the arts in general. Next, I will turn to the realist description of the musical landscape during Valentin’s life and after his death, including the place and the role of women with musical skills. Finally, I will examine to what extent the various protagonists are representative of the time during which the novella takes place, as well as the importance of music in social life.

The term *Traumsaugen* sets the dreamlike tone of the novella, which begins like a fairy tale: the narrator, sitting at dusk by a fire, lets his imagination wander and sees a familiar apparition. It is Valentin’s ghost, dressed in a shabby little black coat, which floats past him and returns into the fog. The ghost returns often and, it seems, is in great need of the love that the narrator feels he ought to give him. Valentin was not a successful musician, but a simple piano teacher. His worn black coat implies that he was probably a man of very modest means. Judging

⁷¹ In *Theodor Storm: Die zeitkritische Dimension seiner Novellen* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1971), Ingrid Schuster notes that Storm tries to portray “passives Kunstverständnis” and a successful career as a teacher in such a positive way that they appear to have the same value as music performed by talented musicians (10).

by the narrator's reaction to the apparition, one can assume that Valentin led a solitary life deprived of affection. Through this apparition, the narrator briefly introduces the reader to a fantasy world,⁷² before bringing him back to reality in the following paragraph through a factual description of his first encounter with Valentin, the man. Indeed, the two dashes at the end of the first paragraph clearly indicate that the narrator does not want to dwell on the mood of melancholy triggered by the apparition. With that, the novella begins.

Valentin's physical characteristics – he is a small man with sparse blond hair and pale blue eyes, with a childish smile that lights up his unhandsome face⁷³ – merit some attention, not only in themselves, but because they are also present in other characters in Storm's oeuvre.⁷⁴ The narrator is particularly struck by Valentin's smile, which he describes as “ein wahres Kinderlächeln” (2: 280), “sein[] herzlich[es] Lächeln” (2: 290), “das stille kindliche Lächeln, das ihn so sehr verschönte” (2: 302), and “ein frohes, fast ein wenig schlaues Lächeln” (2: 304). That

⁷² This technique was first used by E. T. A. Hoffmann in *Ritter Gluck* (1809), as Angelika Waschinsky points out in *Die literarische Vermittlung von Musik und Malerei in den Künstlernovellen des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt a. M.: Lang, 1989) 44.

⁷³ Jochen Missfeldt is of the opinion that Storm “versteckt das wahre Gesicht der wichtigsten Person dieser Novelle. Er will nicht sehen, spricht nur von seinem *Kinderlächeln* und nimmt nur *sein wenig schönes Antlitz* war” (354; ital. orig.). Missfeldt, however, does not elaborate as to what this “true face” might be. I would argue that Valentin's smile can be seen as a positive physical feature, a sort of antidote to his sad musical experiences. See *Du graue Stadt am Meer. Der Dichter Theodor Storm in seinem Jahrhundert: Biographie* (München: Hanser, 2013).

⁷⁴ Valentin shares some physical and psychological traits with Sträkelstrakel, the tailor and amateur violin player in *Zur “Wald- und Wasserfreude”*. They are both small in stature, with blue eyes and thin blond hair. Valentin has a psychological disability that prevents him from applying himself; Sträkelstrakel has a physical disability that impacts his walking. More will be said about him in chapter 4.

smile, much more than the eyes,⁷⁵ seems to reflect Valentin's personality. It appears whenever Valentin talks about things or people he likes, such as books, the greeting quotes he pins to his door, Ännchen, his former landlord's daughter, and the field of violets that plays an important role throughout his life. For Valentin, a childlike smile is not seen in a negative light, quite the contrary. It enhances his appearance, as the narrator states several times, and also indicates that he has not lost his capacity to enjoy things and to trust others, despite the many traumatic episodes of his life.⁷⁶ I would argue that Storm gives us a living portrait of Valentin, as opposed to the many paintings that appear throughout his oeuvre,⁷⁷ and the numerous allusions to the smile keep the portrait alive, unlike the fixed image of a person on a canvas. Additionally, the smile is a physical manifestation of the music, silent to the outside world, which is so alive in Valentin's heart and mind.

His room, "sein Stübchen" (2: 281), reflects his personality in its simplicity and friendly atmosphere, and gives a hint of Valentin's background, which he himself does not allude to, unless asked. Unassuming and old fashioned, both in his musical and his literary tastes, which he

⁷⁵ David L. Dysart writes that "[a]ll Storm's writings, including his letters, bear witness to his high regard for the eye as the mirror of the soul" (51). See *The Role of the Painting in the Works of Theodor Storm* (New York: Lang, 1992).

⁷⁶ The smile could also imply that Valentin possesses a wisdom and a resilience that are inherent in children, as illustrated by the poem he wrote after the painful scene with his father. It does not mean, however, that Valentin's mind is childish; indeed, his accounts of past events in his life amply demonstrate that he has a fine mind. From a different perspective, one could also argue that Valentin smiles whenever he is embarrassed or saddened by certain memories, for example, when the narrator asks him what became of Ännchen (302). On the topic of laughter/smile and embarrassment, see Helmut Plessner's *Lachen und Weinen: Eine Versuchung nach den Grenzen menschlichen Verhaltens* (Bern: Francke, 1950) 144-49.

⁷⁷ For more on this topic, see Dysart's monograph.

mildly derides, as well as pragmatic, he declares regarding his modest lodgings: “[E]s [his room] ist schon recht für einen alten Junggesellen; man soll sich nur keine dummen Gedanken machen!” (2: 281). At first, Valentin does not appear as a musician, but, rather, as a collector of books, an activity that he shares with the narrator, who has seen him many times about town without paying any particular attention to him (2: 280). Throughout his life, Valentin does not want to be noticed; in fact, the only time he appears in public marks a tragic turning point in his life. From the start, Storm’s choice of words to characterize Valentin and his surroundings is revealing, because they do not paint the picture of a successful artist. The adjective “bescheiden” (modest) applies both to the man and to his lodgings, and “schüchtern” (timid), “verlegen” (embarrassed), and “ängstlich” (fearful) apply to Valentin first when he speaks of his mother and then talks about playing the piano (2: 282). To round out this introductory portrait comes Valentin’s surprising confession that he does not play Haydn’s *Die Jahreszeiten* (1801), but only reads the score, like a book. A “stiller Musikant,” indeed.

Valentin adds a few facts about himself that reinforce the impression of modesty and self-effacement created by the narrator. To begin with, he teaches at his pupils’ homes, claiming that he cannot demand of them to go to him (2: 282). He also implies that he is not good enough to teach the president’s children, and his own student, the daughter of a schoolteacher, lives at the back of the house. When Valentin mentions that he wants to teach her singing, he presents himself merely as a channel and explains that he owes all he knows to a former diva who performed for Mozart (2: 284). No matter how often the narrator tries to have him take some credit for what he does, Valentin always belittles his contributions and praises someone else instead.

However, his taste in music and literature is “keineswegs ein niedriger.” He likes poetry, particularly “die klaren Frühlingslieder Uhlands⁷⁸ oder . . . die friedhofstillen Dichtungen Hölty’s” (2: 281),⁷⁹ two poets whose names the narrator mentions in the same breath as those of Haydn and Mozart.⁸⁰ He also likes paintings and possesses two “Lessing’schen Waldlandschaften,”⁸¹ as well a “woherhaltene[s] Klavier and a “treffliche Kreidezeichnung” (2: 282) of his mother, all of which point to a more affluent past than his current life. The reader is no better informed about what Valentin plays on the piano. He plays a few bars here and there to illustrate what he is saying about his favourite composers (2: 282), who remain unnamed, and

⁷⁸ Johann Ludwig Uhland (1787-1862) was a German poet who, along with Eduard Mörike, defined the *schwäbische Romantik*. A master of the *Ballade*, he looked to the Middle Ages, folk traditions, legends, and folk songs for his poetry. For more details, see Friedrich Sengle’s *Biedermeierzeit: Deutsche Literatur im Spannungsfeld zwischen Restauration und Revolution, 1815-1848*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1971); and Benno von Wiese’s *Deutsche Dichter der Romantik: Ihr Leben und Werk*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Schmidt, 1983) 563-88.

⁷⁹ Ludwig Christoph Heinrich Hölty (1748-76) was a German poet. Both he and like-minded students created the *Göttinger Hain* for the purpose of discussing mainly poetry and publishing their own poems. Hölty wrote odes, hymns, and elegies. See Sengle, as well as notes at the end of *Der Göttinger Hain*, ed. Alfred Kellertat (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1984) 401-46.

⁸⁰ Mozart set some of Hölty’s poems to music.

⁸¹ Storm also owned two forest landscapes by the painter Carl Friedrich Lessing (1808-80), a nephew of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-81); the portrait mentioned here is an allusion to a drawing of his first wife, Constanze, as Laage mentions in his commentaries (*TSSW* 2: 882, n282.4). In the sources for the novella, Laage also points out that Storm based Valentin on his son, Karl, and on himself (879). Missfeldt goes even further, stating that one discovers “etwas ‘Storm’” in the narrator, the father, and Valentin. He says that “die drei Männer [sind] dicht ineinander verwoben mit in- und demselben starken, insbesondere von Musik durchzogenen Lebensband. Schwer also wiegt das Gewicht des Autors in dieser Novelle” (351).

the welcoming notes he writes to himself and posts on his door – either a quote or a musical phrase – are also anonymous (2: 283). Thus, Valentin is somewhat shrouded in mystery, an impression that echoes the rather enigmatic title of the novella and remains in keeping with his lifelong self-effacement. The narrator is interested in Valentin precisely because the latter does not want to draw attention to himself, and because he senses that behind his childlike features and resigned attitude, as well as his stubborn refusal to play the piano, lies something deeper and more intriguing to be uncovered, something that sets him apart and makes him a *Sonderling*. Over the course of the story, the narrator learns that Valentin has felt pressured,⁸² first by his father's insistence that he perform at a level he was not capable of, and then by the superior talent of other people, something that made him feel inadequate.⁸³

⁸² In *Der "Asoziale" in der Literatur um 1800* (Königstein: Athenäum, 1979), Anke Bennholdt-Thomsen and Alfredo Guzzoni contend that such pressure (*Unterdrückung*) leads to *Asozialität* (28), that is, "ein Abweichen von etwas, das als Maßstab gilt" (21). One could safely assume that, under normal circumstances, a piano teacher would not abstain from playing his instrument.

⁸³ Scholars such as Boyd Mullan ("Characterization and Narrative Technique in Grillparzer's *Der arme Spielmann* and Storm's *Ein stiller Musikant*") and Josef De Cort ("Zwei arme Spielleute: Vergleich einer Novelle von F. Grillparzer und von Th. Storm") have compared Storm's Valentin with Jakob, the main protagonist in Grillparzer's *Der arme Spielmann*. De Cort concludes his comparison by stating that "[g]emein ist beiden Autoren die Figur des Sonderlings, eines Menschen, der nicht wie alle anderen ist" (341). In her article "German Realism's Proximal Others: Franz Grillparzer's *The Poor Fiddler* and Theodor Storm's *Ein Doppelgänger*," Katra A. Byram examines what arouses the narrator's curiosity in Grillparzer's *Der arme Spielmann*, arguing that it is not so much the music Jakob plays, but, rather, the language he speaks, because it stands in sharp contrast with his appearance and the way he plays. She states that Jacob exhibits a "disturbingly deviant and cultural behaviour," which sets him apart and defines him as a linguistic "other" (51). See full article in *Realism's Others*, ed. Geoffrey Baker and Eva Aldea (Newcastle u. Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2010). By the same token, one can draw a parallel here and argue that

Valentin smiles and laughs during his encounters with the narrator, but this does not mean that he is entirely happy being a second-rate piano teacher, as the narrator points out on one particular occasion: “Ich habe bisher geglaubt, Sie seien nicht weniger glücklich als wir anderen Menschen” (2: 290). This is because he perceives himself as a failed musician as far back as his adolescence and blames himself for it, so much so that he stopped playing the piano altogether after his disastrous and only appearance on stage as a soloist. Valentin expresses his regrets in moderate terms, often with a hint of sarcasm directed at himself, so as to maintain the impression that all is well. However, in an exchange between him and the narrator, he mentions that he could have given lessons in the house where he used to live with his parents, but that he declined for the following reason:

‘Ich fürchtete, ich könne einmal auf der Treppe drinnen einem armen blassen Jungen begegnen, einem Menschen, aus dem nicht viel geworden ist.’ – –

Er schwieg. (2: 290)

This short passage proves that Valentin has never fully recovered from the harsh treatment he received from his father, and that he remains, deep down, the adolescent who thought he could not succeed as a musician because of a “weakness in the head” (2: 285). As Wolfgang Tschorn states in *Idylle und Verfall: Die Realität der Familie im Werk Theodor Storms*, “[d]ie resultierende Angst vor dem Falschspielen verhindert eine glanzvolle berufliche Karriere” (97). The passage quoted above also expresses Valentin’s low self-esteem. His statement is reinforced by the double dash and the narrator’s final comment: “Er schwieg.” These two words by themselves constitute the next line, something that emphasizes the meaning of this silence. With

Valentin’s refusal to play the piano sets him apart as a “musical other,” and that he exhibits a “deviant musical behaviour,” particularly since he makes his living as a piano teacher.

these few simple words, Storm creates the almost spooky atmosphere of self-fear in which Valentin lives out his adult life, and which recurs during the traumatic scene of the concert, where Valentin sees his father standing next to him and gestures at grabbing his *Schattenhand* (2: 298). There is a direct link, I would argue, between the perceived presence of Valentin's father on the stage and his own ghost appearing to the narrator in the very first paragraph of the story. It seems that Valentin had a premonition that he would never find peace, even after death. Storm uses some techniques of the *Schauerroman* to give life to Valentin's fears. For example, Valentin relates the concert scene himself, causing the reader to experience his panic directly or, to quote Horst Conrad,⁸⁴ "der Leser [ist] dem Irrationalen unmittelbar konfrontiert" (51). Furthermore, at the beginning of the novella, the reader is confronted right away with the supernatural "in der bürgerliche[n] Wohnstube" (Conrad 66) of the narrator. Storm makes sure that the irrational moments are made quite believable for the reader, to whom they are presented as a matter of fact.

The narrator perceives Valentin's state of mind perhaps better than Valentin himself. The latter tries to convince himself that he is satisfied with his life by saying, "[M]an soll sich nur keine dummen Gedanken machen" (2: 281, 290), and, in so doing, attempts to brush off any regrets that come to the surface. For example, the narrator says, "Schon längst hatte ich bemerkt, daß diese . . . Phrase ihm gleichsam als *Riegel* (ital. mine) diene, um alle vergeblichen Hoffnungen und Wünsche von sich *abzusperren* (2: 290; ital. mine). "Riegel" and "abzusperren" are strong words for describing Valentin's partly successful endeavours to put the past behind

⁸⁴ In this book, Horst Conrad explains the elements of the *Schauerroman* that Romantic authors used in their writings. See *Die literarische Angst: Das Schreckliche in Schauerromantik und Detektivgeschichte* (Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann, 1974) 21: 51-70.

him. To be sure, they bring to mind the image of a cell or prison, suggesting that Valentin is his own jail keeper.⁸⁵

As Valentin relaxes with a long pipe over a glass of punch in the narrator's lodgings, he divulges more of his past – and more regrets. For the first time, he alludes to the fact that he could have been a good musician – better than the newly minted court pianist who took lessons with the same teacher as himself – if only his hands and his brain had worked together. He even shows his hands, “die schulgerechten Klavizymbelschläger” (2: 291). I think that what he means here is that he would have played with more feeling, with more soul than the other, and that he might have achieved success had he possessed more self-confidence, as the narrator suggests. Ingrid Schuster argues that Storm introduces the conflict of virtuosity versus “soulful” playing in order to counter a weakness in his novella, adding that “naivem Kunstverständnis und ‘seelenvollem’ Vortrag stellte er intensive Schulung und rein technische Brillanz gegenüber” (10). This point is very important for Storm, and not just as a means to “counter a weakness in a novella.” Indeed, he comes back to it repeatedly, something that will be discussed in the following chapters, as well.

Having drawn the portrait of a man who is outwardly unassuming and very modest, I now want to turn to the deeper reason behind Valentin's self-deprecation and lack of confidence in his musical talent: his relationship with his father, which centres on music making. There are two crucial moments in Valentin's life, when his artistic and his personal lives are intimately entwined: the incident with his father and the fiasco on stage, the latter, in a way, a parallel scene

⁸⁵ Similarly, Storm uses words from a different semantic field – war and battle – to describe life at a music conservatory from the main protagonist's point of view in *Es waren zwei Königskinder*. I will elaborate on this point in chapter 5.

to the first one. Even before he begins speaking of his father, he mentions his “Kopfschwäche” (2: 285), to which he attributes the two debacles in his life – implying that he himself is to blame for his failings. This is an attempt to exonerate his father, one that is, however, only partly successful in view of the facts that Valentin relates. Immediately after mentioning his affliction, he draws a portrait of his father that goes a long way toward explaining why the latter flew into such a rage when Valentin stumbled on a difficult passage of a piano sonata by Muzio Clementi (1752-1832). It seems that he was playing four hands with his father and got confused in the Rondo movement. Instead of showing patience, his father had a violent reaction and struck his son for the very first time in his life (2: 286). Even as he relives this painful scene, Valentin does not directly say that his father struck him, but, rather: “. . . bei all seiner Heftigkeit, ich hatte nie von meinem Vater einen Schlag erhalten. Es mag ihm wohl sonst noch etwas im Gemüt gelegen haben; denn jetzt, da ich schon fast kein Knabe mehr war, wurde er so von seinem Zorn hingerissen.” (2: 286) This outburst also sheds a light on Valentin’s subsequent professional life. Music was not Valentin’s passion, but, more precisely, his father’s only love. Just before the statement above, Valentin tells the narrator that he became a musician because music was played at his parents’ house, and that it could have become his real profession, had his head not given him trouble.⁸⁶ Valentin then explains that he bursts into tears whenever he hears a sudden loud noise, like the first time he heard the organ, confessing, “Das war nicht die Gewalt der Musik” (2: 285). One cannot help wondering if Valentin was truly destined to become a musician, or if he went along with it because of his father’s wish, keeping in mind that the latter had been his primary music teacher when he was a child. That Valentin sighs at this point in his story could be

⁸⁶ This is also the case in *Es waren zwei Königskinder*, where Marx was “destined” by his parents from childhood to become a musician. I will further expand on this point in chapter 5.

attributed to his powerlessness at overcoming his weakness, as he sees it. However, it could also be the expression of unspoken and repressed regrets concerning the free choice of a profession, or the fact that Valentin does not regard his profession as a real one. All this is linked with the instruction he received from his father, which might very well have been a big mistake, as Valentin himself expresses in a veiled way: “– Es wäre vielleicht besser von einem Anderen geschehen. – –” (2: 285). Herein lies, I would argue, the source of Valentin’s sad, not to say tragic, story. For it lies not only “in dem unlösbaren Zwiespalt zwischen seiner höheren Erkenntniß und Empfindungen u. andererseits seiner eng begrenzten practischen Fähigkeit, die er vergebens zu überwinden sucht,”⁸⁷ but also in the figure of a strict, impatient, and sometimes violent father. He feels strongly the absence of his dead mother, who, unlike her husband, understood that her son was not lazy.

Right after expressing doubts as to the wisdom of having been taught by his father, Valentin defends him by saying that he (the father) could not help his impatience and his violent temper. Both father and son are unable to remedy their weaknesses, a fact that renders their relationship difficult and has a long lasting effect on Valentin, although he is not conscious of it most of the time. Even years after it happened, the episode of the Clementi sonata still stirs deep emotions in Valentin as he relates it in the strongest of terms to create a dramatic effect: the place where he stumbled is a “verhängnisvolle Stelle”; his father was “von seinem Zorn hingerissen”; and Valentin had a feeling in his chest “als solle das Blut über [s]eine Lippen stürzen” (2: 286). His intense suffering after his father strikes him has the unexpected effect that he then played the piece without any difficulty, as if under a magic spell that soon dissipated (2: 287). At that moment, young Valentin was no longer in control, neither in his playing nor of himself. Indeed,

⁸⁷ *TSES* 2: 45-50.

he presents himself as having been the object of exterior forces that took hold of him, yet what actually happened is that his muscles simply took over. When he recovered from the shock, the confidence he felt soon gave way to his old fear (2: 287). Sadness overwhelmed him; he cried out to his dead mother for help and wept bitterly.

This episode remains etched in Valentin's memory long after he has forgiven his father, even after his death. In a way, it is relived during the concert that changed his life forever. In all probability, Valentin has never talked about it since, and he needs to drink a glass of punch before mustering enough courage to continue telling the story to the narrator. The "schon alternd[e] Mann" (2: 289) relates the incident in a neutral way, but his body language betrays the emotion he still feels so many years later. The narrator states, "Er hatte meine beiden Hände ergriffen; seine blassen Wangen waren leicht gerötet" (2: 292). Valentin talks about the role that Signora Katerina and Ännchen played in his decision to perform a Mozart sonata during the concert, and again uses a gentle self-deprecating humour to undermine the praise he received from them: "[E]in harmloses Kind . . . die alte musikalische Seele . . . dann noch Ännchens Wachtelhund . . . das war ein Publikum, wie ich es brauchen konnte" (2: 296). Only once does he concede that he played the first movement of the sonata well after invoking Mozart's spirit. Yet again, during this brief moment of harmony, he presents himself as a facilitator, rather than the musician who brought out the beauty of the piece: "[D]enn mich erfüllte nichts als die Schönheit des Werkes und der begeisterte Drang, die Freude des Verständnisses auch Anderen mitzuteilen" (2: 297). Then comes the dramatic turn of events brought about by fate: while performing a Mozart sonata during a concert, he becomes aware of the presence of a famous organ player he thought he had avoided, just when he is about to play the difficult passage, the "heikle Stelle" (2: 298). Valentin is unable to retain his composure and to assert himself. He sums up the situation

by saying, “Es war ein betäubender Schlag,⁸⁸ der mich getroffen hatte. – Was konnte ich dem Manne, dem großen Künstler, mit meinem Spiel noch bringen!” (2: 298). Crippled by self-doubt, Valentin is his own worst enemy.⁸⁹ Up to this point, he had been playing happily, and one can assume that the audience was appreciative. But Valentin did not have it in him to stand up in his mind, and consequently with his fingers, to a figure of authority. Reacting with panic, he exclaims:

[D]ann überfiel mich eine ratlose Gleichgültigkeit; zugleich eine seltsame Entrückung in längst vergangene Zustände. Mir war auf einmal, als stehe das Klavier auf seinem alten Platz im elterlichen Wohnzimmer; auch mein Vater stand plötzlich neben mir; und statt in die Tasten griff ich nach seiner Schattenhand. (2: 298)

This quote and the preceding one are the keys to Valentin’s psychological state regarding his own musical talent and his behaviour in the presence of a figure of authority. Mullan argues that Valentin, like Jakob in *Der arme Spielmann* by Franz Grillparzer, is the “. . . victim of an innate hypersensitivity which is exacerbated by the psychological trauma of a classic Oedipal conflict with a dominant father” (188). He states further that “Valentin . . . cloaks his Oedipal fear of the father with expressions of love and gratitude . . . and . . . remains permanently unable to assert

⁸⁸ The word *Schlag* brings to mind the slap that Valentin received from his father. This time, for Valentin the grown man, the blow is psychological, but every bit as traumatizing.

⁸⁹ This situation is the direct consequence of what Malte Stein calls a “Beziehungstrauma” caused by the episode of the Clementi sonata. According to him, this trauma cripples Valentin not only as an artist, but also in his relationship with women. See Malte Stein, “Vom Stillwerden des Musikanten Theodor Storms Erzählung *Ein stiller Musikant*, oder: Wozu braucht der Mensch Selbstobjekte?” *Storm-Blätter aus Heiligenstadt, Peter Goldammer zum 85. Geburtstag* (Heiligenstadt, 2006) 23-34.

himself in day-to-day life against any male authority figure” (190). In fact, Valentin makes the link between the anonymous organ player and his father, and between his inability to play when his father stands behind him, as well as when a talented musician is in the audience. Yet again, he is overcome by a state of mind he cannot control.⁹⁰ Furthermore, he is transported to another time and another place, with his father being at once tormentor and comforter.⁹¹ The word “Schattenhand” is instructive here because of its ambiguity. It is a shadow hand because the father is dead, but it could also be seen as one that is linked to dark powers, bringing unhappiness. But the shadowy hand does not help Valentin this time. Without a doubt, this second utter failure seals his fate: he will never play the piano again.⁹² Even so, this does not mean that he stops loving music. For him, it offers the only way to find peace and to avoid the reoccurrence of the painful moments of “Nichtkönnen.” After the concert, Valentin finally accepts “the gap between his artistic aspirations and his artistic talents.”⁹³

⁹⁰ I see a parallel here between Valentin’s state of mind when he is overwhelmed by his inability to perform a piece, and the effect that some paintings have on their viewers in Storm’s other novellas. Dysart posits that paintings exercise “a power of attraction . . . and a considerable power of deception” (43) and gives examples of how the author expresses “the involuntary ‘mir war es,’ ‘es überkam/überwältigte mich’” (45), which is exactly how Storm describes the way Valentin feels when he is transported to a place outside of reality, whether this place is good or bad. These “out of body experiences” equate, I would argue, to a deception, simply because they remove him temporarily from the painful situation in which he finds himself.

⁹¹ This scene brings the reader back to the first paragraph of the novella, where the spirit of Valentin appears to the narrator.

⁹² Missfeldt calls the description of this concert “eine Textpassage von höchster psychologischer Raffinesse” in which Storm uses his own knowledge and experience of performing for an audience (353).

⁹³ These words, quoted from Paul Fleming’s *Exemplarity and Mediocrity: The Art of the Average from Bourgeois Tragedy to Realism* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2008), also apply in *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* (1774) by Goethe,

But the parallelism between the two scenes does not end there. Both times, Valentin seeks refuge in nature. As a child, after hearing his father's soothing words "[m]ein armer, lieber Junge!" (288), he finds in nature an enchanted place filled with flowers that speak and bees and birds that sing, and he feels "wie ein Seliger in diesem Duft und Sonnenschein" (2: 289). He wants to forget his father's violent temper and cruel behaviour, and seems to succeed. Backstage, however, he remembers his father's words, and inevitably the incident that preceded them comes to his mind, too. He felt bad as a child, but he is "ganz vernichtet" (2: 298) as a man. The place he flees to this time would not be incongruous in any Romantic story and reflects his state of mind. It is dark and spooky and nature there is stark – he sits on a rock under a bare tree from which water drips.⁹⁴ And then, the water starts to run "unaufhörlich, eintönig, zum Schlaf verlockend wie ein Wiegenlied" (2: 299). It is a hypnotic sound, the "verführerisch[e] Melodie der Wellen" (2: 299) that reminds him of a song by Franz Schubert and makes him yearn for peace: "Immer bestickender in Schubert's süßen, schwermütigen Tönen drang es mir ans Herz" (2: 299).⁹⁵ The sonorities in this passage evoke both the harsh aspect of nature (e.g., "reißend,"

where the hero recognizes that his hand cannot draw what he feels in his soul (77). It is not my intention to take my analysis in a new direction here, but I would contend that there is, indeed, a parallelism between what the two protagonists' artistic souls want to achieve, and their inability to do so.

⁹⁴ Here is yet another element borrowed from the *Schauerroman*: the spooky countryside that contributes to a general mood of fear. Conrad mentions that the "'[mimetic] response' zwischen Stimmung und Landschaft . . . [verhilft] im Schauerroman den Örtlichkeiten zu einer außergewöhnlichen Präsenz" (24-25). I would argue that this is precisely the case in this specific passage of the novella.

⁹⁵ The same thoughts of suicide, also by the water, come to Brunken in Storm's novella *Eine Malerarbeit* (1867). Like Valentin, he pushes them away.

“scharf,” “finster”) and the soothing effect of the running water, rendered mostly by the vowels “ö” and “ü,” and by the gentle rhythm of the sentences (2: 299).

While Storm does not write Romantic novellas *per se*, he goes back, nonetheless, to Romanticism to provide added psychological dimension and to show human experience and subjectivity. Nor is this particular story a tragedy, although it contains tragic elements. It is, rather, the realistic tale of a man who experiences partial failure and whose idea of music has a romantic, not to say naive, edge, a point which is illustrated by his remark about a young “Leipziger Doktor” who teaches piano in the “good” houses in town. Asked if he knows him well, Valentin replies, “O nein, nicht weiter; aber ein solcher Musiker muß auch ein guter Mensch sein!” (2: 283). Valentin equates musical talent with goodness, an unproven and unrealistic assumption, which reflects his own modest and forgiving nature. The Realistic man in him, however, does not ascribe to the Romantic ideal of the artist. He comes to terms not only with the lack of technique and his “weak head,” but also with his straitened social and economic circumstances. To that end, he makes the best of his modest earnings as an average piano teacher and manages to survive, despite the severe competition among music teachers at the time, while never losing his great love of music, even though he has endured so much because of it. Seen through a Romantic lens, he is indeed a failure because he never achieved the high state of accomplishment and ecstasy that musicians were supposed to reach, according to Romantic ideals. Seen through a Realistic lens, however, Valentin does the best he can with the gifts he has received from nature, despite the traumas he has had to overcome. Indeed, music stays with him and nurtures him to the end.

The story takes a decidedly Realistic turn when Ännchen rouses him from his *rêverie* while he is contemplating suicide and brings him back to reality. His return is sudden and made

audible in the first sentence of the next paragraph: “Da hörte ich Schritte aus der Ferne, und plötzlich, wie wach geworden, sprang ich auf” (2: 299). Valentin, fully awake and realizing where his thoughts have taken him, pulls himself together and rejects any thoughts of suicide because, in his words, he “war eines tüchtigen, praktischen Mannes Sohn, an so etwas durfte [er] auch jetzt nicht denken!” (2: 299). Therein lays one of the reasons for his failures. Valentin cannot see himself for who he is, but remains throughout his life his father’s son, first and foremost, unable to free himself from paternal authority, even after their relationship has improved and after his father’s death. Indeed, the latter was firmly anchored in bourgeois society where suicide was frowned upon. The reader is left questioning who Valentin really is and what he would have become, had he been able and willing to free himself from his father’s influence and actually believed in himself. Instead, he berates himself even further when he tells Ännchen that he had taken on something for which God had not given him the necessary talent (2: 300). This is simply not true; he had played the concert piece many times before, and would probably have done so again during the concert, had he not been distracted by the presence of someone he considered superior to himself. The last straw was the news that the court musician and onetime fellow music student was coming to town as a music teacher. It is little comfort for Valentin that the young man in question had probably not succeeded at court. The fact remains that this young man possessed a technical ability that Valentin simply lacked. He tells the narrator, “Ich wußte wohl, ich mußte gehen” (2: 301). And so he went, even though he had established a good reputation as a music teacher and choir conductor.

Not only did Valentin flee the stage and the concert hall, he also fled the town, thereby giving up any happiness he could have known with Ännchen, along with a chance to stand up to

adversity.⁹⁶ He returns to his hometown for a reason that may seem strange – because his parents’ grave is there. This is yet another sign that he has not completely grown up, both as an artist and as a man, placing himself as he does under the protection of his deceased parents. This can also be interpreted as a last link to Romanticism, in that he sees the relationship with his parents as ongoing after death, but no longer in a threatening way, as in the case of his father. The rest of the story could qualify as *Biedermeier* with a touch of Realism, as previously mentioned, particularly in contrast with the above-discussed scenes. Valentin has resigned himself to playing uncle to Ännchen’s daughter and ends his narration by proclaiming, “Nicht wahr, das Leben ist ganz leidlich mit mir umgegangen?” (2: 302).

Valentin’s personal and musical struggles show how difficult it is for a moderately gifted musician to lead a satisfying life and to keep one’s self-respect. A very important point here is the fact that Valentin was first taught to play the piano by his father. Education is a recurring topic in Storm’s oeuvre and certainly in the three novellas examined in this dissertation.

Valentin’s father wanted his son to succeed and Valentin wanted to please him, first as his pupil, and then subconsciously for the rest of his life. Being the pupil of one’s father is not easy, particularly when a “weakness” prevents the child from becoming fully proficient. So, since his

⁹⁶ One could interpret Valentin’s abdication, in both his musical and his personal life, as a symbol of the despondency felt by liberals and by artists after the 1848 Revolution, when they realized that the promises of the *Vormärz* would never be fulfilled. As Gert Sautermeister declares, the situation in the *Nachmärz* offered no hope, something that was also felt in people’s private lives (45). Artists are given to scepticism and melancholy (58), and their survival becomes difficult. See “Heine und Baudelaire – eine vergleichende Lektüre,” *Nachmärz: Der Ursprung der ästhetischen Moderne in einer nachrevolutionären Konstellation*, ed. Thomas Koebner and Sigrid Weigel (Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1996). Indeed, artists had to compromise with their dreams and aspirations, just like Valentin does.

childhood, music is for Valentin a source of both joy and unhappiness, particularly because he sees himself as a failed musician, and because his love life and his social life are, thus, directly impacted. In his previously mentioned article,⁹⁷ Mullan states that Valentin and Grillparzer's Jakob "have artistic aspirations that outstrip their practical abilities and suffer failure or fiasco as musicians." He goes on by arguing that "their failure in love and society . . . is not due to their musicianship," but, rather, to their relationship with their dominant fathers (188). This may be true for Grillparzer's Jakob, but it is not my intent here to pursue this idea in great detail.

However, inasmuch as it is a fact that Valentin has a dominant father, Mullan's assertion does not ring entirely true. To be sure, Valentin does have a "Kopfschwäche" that prevents him from performing as well as he would like to, exacerbated by the past behaviour of his father who, contrary to his mother, does not want to recognize it, believing his son to be lazy. I would argue that Valentin's "failure in love and society" has its roots in his inability to be a superior artist, an inability that was made worse by the painful scene of the Clementi sonata, after which his father never again exhibited any violent behaviour. The adolescent Valentin was traumatized by his father's reaction, and the fact that he is not able to recover from this trauma in his adult life is due to his psychological makeup. But I would posit that he loses Ännchen because of a musical fiasco and his propensity to belittle himself. As for his "failure in society," one can nuance the expression and soften it with the adjective "partial," simply because Valentin is far from being as remote from society as Jakob. As a piano teacher, he makes a living that allows him to have a modest room of his own and even to buy a piece of land, the "Veilchenplatz." Furthermore, he teaches children from the middle class and from families who cannot afford to pay much.

Valentin uses the word "mittellos" to characterize these families but does not elaborate, leaving

⁹⁷ See f 80.

the reader to wonder whether he was paid at all. If this is the case, he performs acts of charity that are to his credit and certainly do not fit the profile of a “loser.” Furthermore, Valentin is not a recluse and has carved for himself a place in society, albeit a modest one.

However, there is more to the “still[e] Musikant” than appears on the surface. He has a modest career as a music teacher, but this does not mean that his taste in music and in other arts is second rate. He admires Haydn, a composer whose music is “marked by the rationalism of the eighteenth century, at once circumspect and recklessly cheerful.”⁹⁸ The chosen work here, *Die Jahreszeiten*, is an allegory of what each of life’s “seasons” brings to the lives of human beings. The fact that Valentin chooses such a piece to lift his spirits, not only musically (he declares, “man muß so etwas haben bei dem steten Elementarunterricht,” (2:282)), but also psychologically, shows that he is not as resigned as one might think. Indeed, the musical quotes “aus irgend einem älteren Tonwerke” (2: 283), pinned to his door to welcome him when he returns home after a tiring day, serve the same purpose. Even more than Haydn, Mozart is at the centre of Valentin’s musical life and, just as the composer does for Signora Katerina, he also represents in the novella a link between the past, the present, and the future. Indeed, Valentin plays an important role in passing on to Marie what he learned from the Signora. However, his efforts eventually lead to a dead end because Marie herself, after a brief success as a singer, fades into anonymity (2: 310), just as Valentin enjoys a brief posthumous moment in the limelight when she performs his song. As for Schubert, Valentin teaches his “moments musicals” (sic) to Marie, but more importantly, his music plays both a soothing and a dangerous role in the protagonist’s life. When thoughts of suicide go through his head, he hears a song from the cycle *Die schöne Müllerin* (1824) inviting him to sleep, falling under its spell: “[I]mmer bestrickender

⁹⁸ See Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music* 32.

in Schubert's süßen, schwermütigen Tönen drang es mir ans Herz" (2: 299). For this brief moment, music appears as an alluring place of repose where Valentin can find eternal peace.

As we have seen, music holds certain powers for Valentin. First, he believes it capable of bringing out the goodness in people. About a young music teacher he does not know particularly well, he states that "ein solcher Musiker muß auch ein guter Mensch sein" (2: 285). During the same conversation with the narrator, Valentin mentions one of his students in these terms: "Das ist auch so ein goldenes Herz und ein Musikgenie dazu" (2: 285). For him, there is a correlation between high moral and high aesthetic values, which he expresses with "golden" words bordering on kitsch. Realistically speaking, his first statement would be difficult to prove. Morality and aesthetics aside, he has, of course, another reason to think that the girl in question is "ein goldenes Herz" since she is Ännchen's daughter, but this fact does not minimize the influence of music on her personality.

As mild-tempered and naive as he may seem, Valentin has some definite views on the contemporaneous musical field. His assertions reflect what was happening on the choral music scene in German-speaking states at the time. He does not seem to approve of the new music schools or "Konservatorien,"⁹⁹ which did not yet exist when he was young. He calls them "Dinger," a term with derogatory overtones, as seen in the following passage: "[D]ie Dinger, die man Konservatorien nennt, gab es derzeit wohl noch nicht in unserem Deutschland" (2: 291). By contrast, the conservatory is the institution of choice for musical studies in *Es waren zwei Königskinder*. Valentin does not elaborate, but, rather, opposes them to his own "tüchtige(n)

⁹⁹ The first European music conservatory opened in Paris after the French Revolution in 1795; the first in a German-speaking country opened in Vienna in 1817. See Jim Samson, ed. *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge UP, 2002) 82-84.

Klaviermeister” who gave him a solid musical education. He is more precise when he talks about the “Liedertafeln”;¹⁰⁰ indeed, his body language, “indem er heftig an seiner Pfeife sog und große Dampfringe vor sich hinstieß” (2: 293), as well as his words, show that he does not think very highly of them. His description in this regard is quite humorous: “[D]er ewige Männergesang!¹⁰¹ Es ist als ob ich Jahr aus, Jahr ein nur immer in den unteren Oktaven spielen wollte! Auch war gar bald der Geruch der Bierbank von ihnen unzertrennlich” (2: 293). However, notwithstanding the smell of beer, he praises the enthusiasm and the quality of its members, and above all the democratic process that allows men of all social backgrounds to come together in order to share their love of singing: “Es war eine bunte Gesellschaft: Handwerker, Kaufleute, Beamte; sogar ein Nachwächter, der ein ordentlicher Mann und ein außerordentlicher Bassist war, wurde aufgenommen.” He adds, “Und das mit Recht; denn die Kunst scheint mir so heilig,¹⁰² daß die Erdenunterschiede in ihr keine Geltung haben können. –” (2: 294).¹⁰³ This is a very strong

¹⁰⁰ The first *Liedertafel* was founded in Berlin by Carl Friedrich Zelter (1758-1832) in 1809. For more information on the subject, see Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music* 48, as well as the section “Choral Music as a Form of Education” 160-62; also Samson 215-19.

¹⁰¹ Storm founded a “Singverein” for mixed voices in Husum in 1843. He believed that music should be accessible to women and men alike. In fact, Valentin’s humorous description of his “Liedertafel” reflects Storm’s views on this matter.

¹⁰² Thomas Nipperdey writes that art was put on a pedestal in the nineteenth century: “. . . es entsteht – mit dem Abschwächen der kirchlichen Bindungen – eine sekuläre Kunstfrömmigkeit, eine quasi-religiöse Verehrung der Kunst . . .” See *Arbeitswelt und Bürgergeist*, vol. 1 of *Deutsche Geschichte, 1866-1918* (München: Beck, 1990), 693. In the same vein, Peter Gay talks of “the worship of music” and “the cult of the virtuosos like Niccolò Paganini and Franz Liszt,” which he equates with “a collective mania.” For more, see *The Naked Heart* 423.

¹⁰³ This statement reflects Storm’s own view on art. According to Fritz Böttger, “Kunst besaß für ihn [Storm] einen Nimbus, der so stark leuchtete, daß davon selbst das Halbtalent mit angestrahlt wurde. Eine solche Apotheose

statement coming from a man who presents himself as a humble second-rate musician and teacher. It shows that there is passion and idealism simmering in him, even though he takes great pains to repress his emotions, and that he is sensitive not only to music, but also to other forms of art. At this juncture, we should not forget that he was born into a well-established bourgeois family, and, I would argue, had already internalized the cultural and aesthetic values of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, which explains why he puts art on a pedestal.¹⁰⁴ At the time the story was set, industrialization had come to German-speaking lands, and even though technical progress had made the dissemination and purchase of printed material and sheet music easier than ever before, art in general was losing ground to the preoccupation of making money. There is a ring of religious fervour in Valentin's statement that echoes the high esteem in which Storm himself

fragmentarischer Begabung schuf Storm in seiner zweiten Künstlernovelle." See *Theodor Storm in seiner Zeit* (Berlin: Nation, 1958) 254-55. This is certainly the case in *Ein stiller Musikant*.

¹⁰⁴ Valentin intimates that music helps erase social differences because of its holy nature. Pierre Bourdieu takes another view on the matter in *La distinction: Critique sociale du jugement* (Paris: Minuit, 1979). Here is what he says about music and social classes: "S'il n'y a rien par exemple qui, autant que les goûts en musique, permette d'affirmer sa 'classe', rien par quoi on soit aussi infailliblement classé, c'est bien sûr qu'il n'est pas de pratique plus classante, du fait de la rareté des conditions d'acquisition des dispositions correspondantes, que la fréquentation du concert ou la pratique d'un instrument de musique 'noble'. . . Mais c'est aussi que l'exhibition de 'culture musicale' n'est pas une parade culturelle comme les autres: dans sa définition sociale, la 'culture musicale' est autre chose qu'une simple somme de savoirs et d'expériences assortie de l'aptitude à discourir à leur propos. La musique est le plus spiritualiste des arts de l'esprit et l'amour de la musique est une garantie de 'spiritualité'. . . Etre 'insensible à la musique' représente sans doute, pour un monde bourgeois qui pense son rapport avec le peuple sur le mode des rapports entre l'âme et le corps, comme une forme spécialement inavouable de grossièreté matérialiste" (17-18). The most important point is that musical education and concert attendance are not universally available, a fact that was certainly true at the time when Valentin lived in his small town.

held not only music, but art in general.¹⁰⁵ Not everyone, however, shares Valentin's artistic taste or his comprehension of music; indeed, there are those who understand only "trumpet music" (2: 297), as he puts it, and he dismisses them as not being a threat to him. This is an interesting remark in an otherwise totally apolitical text. Storm wrote *Ein stiller Musikant* in 1875, four years after the end of the Franco-Prussian war, an event that marked the rise of Prussia as a military power. Brief as it may be, I believe that Storm is making a veiled reference to the growing militarism in Prussia, cloaked in the guise of a musical judgement relating to the past. While Valentin's relationship with his father was an unequal one that did not lead to success, it did not cloud Valentin's judgement when it came to analyzing the musical scene of the time. However, it indirectly affected his relationship with Ännchen, the young woman he loved, because he felt that he had let her down and had no other choice than to leave town. After moving back to his hometown, he remained a bachelor for the rest of his life. In my opinion, there is a link between Valentin's physical stature, his musical disposition, and his sexless life; the same can be said for Sträkelstrakel in *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"*, and, to a certain extent, Marx in *Es waren zwei Königskinder*. First, Valentin and Sträkelstrakel have similar physical features and are depicted as mild tempered and modest. Furthermore, they share a love of music and find solace in it. Other artists in Storm's oeuvre, such as the painter Brunken in *Eine Malerarbeit* and the sculptor in *Psyche*, show passionate feelings and react to them. By contrast, the two musicians – and, one can add, the violin-playing cousin in *Eine Halligfahrt* – do not exhibit such passion. It appears that music and libido do not coexist in these characters, a fact which stands in stark contrast to the power attributed to music in the eighteenth and nineteenth

¹⁰⁵ Besides being a writer and a musician of respectable talent, Storm was also a keen collector of paintings and books.

centuries, particularly with regard to a sensuous response to music.¹⁰⁶ Music is Valentin's main preoccupation and principal activity as he grows up, and provides the means to make a living thereafter. However, it is my contention that his incapacity to rise above the challenge of the Mozart sonata and to quieten the voices in his head, and, generally speaking, his propensity to give in to his perceived weakness of the head, equates to a musical and an emotional emasculation.¹⁰⁷ The fact that he remains celibate and stops playing the piano altogether can be interpreted as proof. Music does not inspire him to assume a combative attitude, particularly where other musicians are involved. One could venture to say that in this story, music is representative of art in general, not to mention the place of the artist in society during the *Biedermeier* era. At that time, there was renewed censorship after the various failed revolutionary movements of 1848, and artists were forced to curb their enthusiasm for reform and liberal ideas. Thus, the arts as a political force and the men who represented and practiced them were weakened, too. At the time Storm wrote *Ein stiller Musikant*, the main driving force in German-speaking states was industrialization. Members of the bourgeoisie were endeavouring to become wealthy and to close the social and economic gap between them and the aristocracy. At this juncture in history, art, according to Thomas Nipperdey, "versprach Zuflucht angesichts

¹⁰⁶ On this subject, see Nicola Gess's *Gewalt der Musik: Literatur und Musikkritik um 1800*, 2nd ed. (Freiburg i. Br.: Rombach, 2011). Here, she discusses the ambivalent attitude of Goethe, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), and Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) toward music. On the one hand, music is considered as "reine Form" by virtue of its nature, and on the other, is viewed with suspicion because it could "als sinnlichste der Künste dem autonomen Hörer gefährlich . . . werden" (61). The music critics of the time saw Italian opera as being licentious and leading to excesses of the senses.

¹⁰⁷ Missfeldt says that Valentin perceives his lack of talent as guilt and "büßt sie ab mit Liebesunfähigkeit und einem kläglichen Leben" (352), which equates to the same thing.

eines zerspaltenen wie eines formlosen Lebens.”¹⁰⁸ But the life of the artist, for whom conditions have changed drastically, had become increasingly difficult and lonely.¹⁰⁹

We have seen, so far, how Valentin, an unassuming individual and a moderately gifted artist, has come to terms with the traumas caused by his relationship with his father. He has resigned himself to a modest and sexless life, yet he is sustained by his love of music and remains an acute observer of musical developments in his part of the world. I am now going to turn to the women who play a role in his life, representing three generations living in distinctly different times. Apart from the narrator who appears to be a man, Valentin interacts for the most part with women, no doubt because he feels threatened by men since the Clementi sonata episode. Women, it seems, are beholden to him and want him to succeed. Storm presents us with an interesting choice: a young, naive, and enthusiastic girl and an old prima donna, both who show more resolve and personality than Valentin ever does.

Ännchen, and even more so Signora Katerina, play an important role in Valentin’s personal and musical life. They represent two extremes – Ännchen is a spirited young girl with a whole future ahead of her, whereas the Signora is long past her prime and lives with memories of her past successes. Valentin alludes to the fact that he, at some point, had entertained the thought of marrying Ännchen, and would probably have done so if he had not fled the town where they both lived after the concert fiasco. She cares enough for him to pursue him in the middle of the night.¹¹⁰ She also expresses a naive and genuine admiration, which nurtures Valentin and helps

¹⁰⁸ Nipperdey 695.

¹⁰⁹ For more on the difficulties faced by artists at that time, see Nipperdey 696-97.

¹¹⁰ Schuster considers *Ein stiller Musikant* as a story with no psychological depth, and the protagonists as almost devoid of feelings. She says that “das Mädchen Anna hat Valentin klaglos aufgegeben” and talks about Valentin’s

him play with enthusiasm (2: 296). Later on, he finds some happiness in teaching her daughter who, like her mother, possesses a great musical talent. Ännchen, however, steadfastly refuses to take singing lessons from the “Kunstsängerin.” She can sing operatic arias and folk songs equally well, according to Valentin, and qualifies her God-given talent as “Naturgaben.” She sings mostly folk songs and “töricht[e] Lieder” (2: 295) that she finds beautiful and that show off the versatility of her voice. However, she has no musical ambitions and simply delights in being able to sing, even though she is conscious of her gifts. Ännchen is a simple girl who perceives the beauty of music and who has no prejudices or preconceived ideas about it. She loves folk songs that the more sophisticated elite of the time regarded as music unworthy of the concert hall, even though they were popular among the people and favourites during house concerts.¹¹¹ Romantic writers, as well as composers like Schubert and Schumann, had contributed to their

“heitere[n] Verzicht auf Anerkennung und Liebe” (17). For my part, I would claim that Ännchen’s tears (2: 301) and her empathy attest to the fact that Valentin’s departure pains her deeply. As for the “heiter[e] Verzicht,” the fact that Valentin was so shaken after the concert that he contemplated suicide, and that he stopped playing the piano altogether, shows that there is nothing “cheerful” in his decision to leave town and to give up Ännchen.

¹¹¹ Hermann Bausinger explains that nineteenth-century bourgeoisie was very interested in *Volkspoesie* and *Volkskultur*. However, he qualifies the latter by saying, “Es war eine gefilterte, von allen Ballaststoffen gereinigten Volkskultur,” (137) and that the interest in it was “produktiv-ästhetisch” (136). See “Bürgerlichkeit und Kultur,” *Bürgerlichkeit und Kultur im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Jürgen Kocka (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987) PDF file. Classical composers such as Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) who set *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1808) to music, as well as Bedřich Smetana (1824-84) and Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904), all used popular tunes and dances in their compositions.

revival. By contrast, collectors gathered them for both musical and political reasons.¹¹² Ännchen is not fleshed out as a character, but plays an important role in Valentin's life inasmuch as she provides him with support and encouragement, and opens his heart to love. Storm uses her naive admiration for Valentin in order to contradict the latter's negative views of his own talents. For example, precisely when she sings folk songs and "ihre hübschen und törichten Lieder" (2: 293), he shows a marked talent for improvisation as he accompanies her on the piano; basking in this admiration that he qualifies as "einfältig," he becomes more assured and thinks less of what he perceives to be his shortcomings. From a musical point of view, Ännchen precedes another young woman who is equally at home with classical and popular tunes, that is, Kätti in *Zur Wald – und Wasserfreude*. Unlike Kätti, however, Ännchen conforms to what was then expected of young women at that time by marrying a schoolteacher and, most likely thereafter, singing only to her daughter. However, the same cannot be said of Signora Katerina.

As previously mentioned, the Signora, as Valentin calls her, differs from Ännchen in every respect. She seems old to the young Valentin; she remains faceless, the most striking features about her being the red shawl she always drapes herself in, the little box full of mints that accompany her everywhere, her thin hands covered with rings, and, of course, her horrible voice. Besides the role she plays in Valentin's life by helping and moulding him musically, she also provides an important link to the literary and the musical past. Scholars have pointed out the fact that Storm was inspired by Demoiselle Meibel in E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Die Fermate*

¹¹² Storm himself was partial to folk songs. When he was still a student in Kiel, together with his friends Theodor Mommsen (1817-1903) and Tycho Mommsen (1819-1900), he collected sayings, songs, tales, and legends of his homeland. See Stuckert, *Sein Leben* 38.

(1819),¹¹³ another coloratura soprano who, however, could still sing reasonably well at an advanced age. With their eccentric appearances and voices past their prime, the two singers are representative of an art – the bel canto – that gave way in the early nineteenth century to instrumental music, especially under Beethoven’s influence. By contrast, Signora Katerina can no longer sing. Time and time again, Valentin makes this very clear, without mincing his words, as seen in the following examples: “ihr[e] zerbrochen[e] Sopranstimme, was mir damals höchst abscheulich klang”; and she “schmetterte ihre großen Arien herunter” when “die Wut des Gesanges sie befiel” (2: 295).¹¹⁴ There is nothing artistic in her voice, at least outwardly, but passion inhabits her, and to Valentin, who feels and plays music with his soul, she still possesses a great musical talent. He tells the narrator, “Sie glauben nicht, was für Musik in dieser alten Seele steckte! – . . . wenn wir Beide allein waren, so hörte auch ich, in meinem Trieb zu lernen, mehr ihre Seele als ihre Kehle” (2: 295). The important idea here is “Seele”; the Signora’s success in her youth was due to more than her vocal capabilities (i.e., “Kehle”), in that she felt the music with her entire being. This is an important point for Storm, who returns to it in the much later novella *Es waren zwei Königskinder* in 1884. In *Ein Stiller Musikant*, Storm puts the

¹¹³ See notes to *Ein stiller Musikant* in *TSSW 2*: 878. Missfeldt also makes a link with Hoffmann, but with regard to another story: “Wieder greift [Storm] zu E. T. A. Hoffmann; mit der wunderlichen Gestalt der Katerina, einer alten Sängerin, kommt eine bizarre Note in die Novelle; von ihr ist immer mal wieder die Rede, und der Leser hat mit ihr auch deswegen E. T. A. Hoffmann im Sinn, weil der ‘Kater Murr’ in der Katerina steckt” (352).

¹¹⁴ This brings to mind, I would argue, the singing of the four brothers in *Die heilige Cäcilie oder die Gewalt der Musik* (1810) by Heinrich von Kleist (1777-1811), because of the ugliness of the sound produced in both cases (Kleist qualifies their voices as “entsetzlich” and “grässlich”; 303), as well as the almost destructive forcefulness with which the brothers, on one hand, and Signora Katerina, on the other, sing. In fact, she is the only protagonist in Storm’s oeuvre to give some idea of the powerful effect that music can have on a performer.

artist's inner feeling for music ahead of virtuosity, perhaps in an attempt to comfort his son, and he does it again in *Zur "Wald-und Wasserfreude"* and *Es waren zwei Königskinder*. This goes against the cult of the virtuoso that developed in the nineteenth century. The Signora was capable of singing from the soul and of being a great singer, at a time when vocal music was considered superior to instrumental music.¹¹⁵ She then passes on what she learned from Mozart to Valentin, who, in turn, does the same with his own pupil, Marie.

But there is more to the Signora than her past glory and her musical soul. Since her physical description is reduced to a red shawl, thin hands covered with rings, and a croaky and somewhat frightening voice, she conjures up the image of a gypsy on one hand, and of a witch on the other, both of which are not incompatible with her past as a diva, particularly with regard to the construct of the gypsy in the nineteenth century,¹¹⁶ and to the quasi-demonic power that was attributed to music, particularly vocal music, well into the nineteenth century.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ In *Es waren zwei Königskinder*, we see that Marx can also play the piano with flawless technique and great depth when he is happily in love. Generally speaking, though, Storm seems to think that one fact excludes the other.

¹¹⁶ The red shawl and the rings evoke the attire of a gypsy woman in popular imagination. The colour red, a symbol of love and passion, is found again in the ribbon that Kätti wears in her hair in *Zur "Wald-und Wasserfreude"*. However, since the text does not contain a description of Signora Katerina's physical features, the association is left to the reader's imagination.

¹¹⁷ See Gess's *Gewalt der Musik*, where she goes back to Plato and Aristotle in her study of the power of music over human beings, and of the role of music in education. Her main focus is the manner in which philosophers and writers of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries perceived music, along with the pitfalls it contained for the unsuspecting listener. Italian and French operas were seen as particularly sensuous and dangerous by the proponents of a more sober German music.

Signora Katerina takes the only avenue that was open at that time to women who wanted to be professional musicians, that is, to be an opera singer. Female concert artists like Clara Schumann (1819-96), who went on performing as a married woman, were the exception. Generally speaking, women singers stopped performing as soon as they got married; opera singers may have been admired as artists, but were treated by society as a notch below respectable. In *Ein stiller Musikant*, Signora Katerina is shown when she is past her prime and leading a very modest life. Her singing voice is torture for her listeners; she herself is a caricature of a somewhat extravagant old lady. Both her voice and her appearance point to an element of the grotesque, common in Romantic novels and not at all uncommon in Realist novels and novellas. In Signora Katerina's case, the grotesque element is reinforced by the contrast between her body, marked by the ravages of time, and Ännchen's beauty and youth.¹¹⁸ She also fits the type of the eccentric artists who, as Wolfgang Johannes Kayser asserts in *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, "are distinguished by their odd outward appearance, strange and uncontrolled facial expressions, and eccentric movements" (105). Signora Katerina conforms to this type, but with a twist: her face is never described, a fact that turns her into a symbol of those other women who chose to dedicate their lives to art. It is my contention that the author wants to shine a light on strongly held beliefs in contemporaneous society, according to which the Signora chose the wrong path and should have become a respectable married woman instead. This is not, however, the narrator's opinion. Signora Katerina appears laughable, but only on the surface; for Valentin, she is still, deep inside, the great artist she was in Mozart's time, a woman capable of giving of herself and of unselfishly nurturing talent in a young artist like him. For him, she is the realist

¹¹⁸ Kayser distinguishes between three groups of grotesque figures: those who contrast in appearance, the eccentric artists, and the "demonic" characters whose appearance and behavior are grotesque" (106-07).

equivalent of the good fairy or the kind godmother so common in fairy tales. I would argue that, because she is shown at a vulnerable time late in her life rather than in her prime, her situation highlights the difficulties faced by unmarried women who led an unconventional life for the love of their art, only to be totally forgotten when they stop performing.

Signora Katerina's artistry is passed along to Marie through Valentin. Her passionate nature is thus tamed, but Valentin's moderating intervention does not alter the essence of the singer's teachings, a point which the narrator confirms when he says, "Die ganze Kunst der alten Signora Katerina sang mit Glockenstimme aus diesem jungen Menschenkind" (2: 310). Marie begins as a child with piano lessons from Valentin and then takes singing lessons, developing into a successful singer. At the end of *Ein stiller Musikant*, the narrator imagines her as a mother who no longer performs in public and sings only to her children. There is no physical description of Marie at first; rather, the reader hears her own interpretation of Schubert, then her voice "von besonders reinem Klange," then once again the piano played "in vollkommener Sicherheit" (2: 303), so that we get an auditory impression of her before she comes into view. When her appearance is finally revealed, it happens that she shares physical characteristics with other protagonists in Storm's oeuvre: "das schlanke, etwas blasse Mädchen mit dem glänzend braunen Haar" (2: 305). In Storm's novellas, these traits are associated with an artistic disposition (as will be seen with Kätti of *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"*) or with women of a passionate nature, like Anna in *Im Schloss*, Leonore in *Auf der Universität* (1863), and the gypsy girl in *Immensee*. Marie, however, is no gypsy. During the concert where the narrator sees her again long after the Sunday afternoon they had coffee together in Valentin's room, she looks pale and wears her hair in "ein Paar dunklen Flechten an den Schläfen" (2: 307), which conjures up the image of a good girl and forms quite a contrast with the somewhat dramatic appearance of Signora Katerina. The

direct link with Mozart lives on through her as she sings a soulful aria from *Don Giovanni* (1787),¹¹⁹ to the great appreciation of an elderly gentleman who declares, “Das war der Mozart, wie ich ihn in meiner Jugend hörte” (2: 308). This short scene is crafted in such a way as to show, with just a few strokes, the differences in singing styles and musical tastes between Mozart’s time, which lives on in the old gentleman’s memory, and the time during which the concert takes place, represented by the gentleman’s nephew. To the latter, the modern listener, Marie’s singing sounds somewhat strange and autodidactic (2: 307); judging by the reaction of the audience, other listeners share his views. Furthermore, the program likely reflects what one could realistically expect to hear at such a concert in those days. The pieces that Marie performs are chosen to showcase her versatility and, indirectly, Valentin’s gifts as a teacher. The first, an aria sung by Elvira in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, begins with a slow and dramatic recitative in which she pours out her wretchedness, and then sings of her love for Don Giovanni. In contrast, Valentin’s own composition is at once sweet and happy (2: 308). The performance of the song is set up very carefully; it comes after a contemporary piece that the audience neither understands nor appreciates. The young singer walks on stage with a conquering attitude that the narrator describes as follows: “Ihr Antlitz trug einen schalkhaften, fast siegesbewußten Ausdruck, und mir kam der Verdacht, sie wolle den modernen Geigencancan durch ein noch entschiedeneres Bravourstück der vox humana aus dem Feld schlagen” (2: 308). The listeners and the readers are ready for just about anything, but what follows is not “Geigencancan.” To begin with, there is only the piano and the singer. The introduction of the piece is simple and sweet sounding, then the song begins “mit der stillen Gewalt der Menschenstimme” (2: 308). This last quote is interesting for three reasons: first, the use of the word “still,” an echo of the title of the novella,

¹¹⁹ See Laage’s commentary in *TSSW* 2: 885.

although it has a different meaning here; second, the juxtaposition of “still” and “Gewalt,”¹²⁰ two words that evoke opposite states of mind or behaviours; and finally, the singling out of the human voice as a powerful means of expression, as opposed to the non-inspiring violin quartet. The song is a composition of Valentin, and the lyrics, a poem he wrote in his youth. The narrator describes what he sees and hears in a very sentimental way: “. . . eine Begeisterung, eine hingebende Liebe sprach aus ihrem jungen Antlitz; und jetzt in unaussprechlich süßen Tönen erschollen die letzten Worte” (2: 309). Both he and the audience alike are moved by the piece, and the old gentleman who loves Mozart “hatte, ohne daß ich [the narrator] es bemerkte, [the narrator’s] Hand ergriffen und drückte sie jetzt aufs Zärtlichste. ‘Das ist Seele, – Seele!’ sagte er” (2: 309). This old man could be a reincarnation of Valentin himself, for under the impulse of the emotion he is feeling, he makes the exact same gesture that Valentin did when telling his story – he grabs the narrator’s hands – and uses the word “Seele” to characterize Marie’s singing, the very same word that Valentin uses for Signora Katerina.

Even though Marie can sing classical and modern music with the same ease – “sie stellte . . . für eine kurze Zeit die neue und die alte Musikwelt einander in hellem Streite gegenüber” (2: 310) – her training with Valentin is rooted in the past, and, if the concert described is any indication, this is where she excels. The musical landscape of *Ein stiller Musikant*, as illustrated by the pieces that the protagonists perform, reflects, as Schuster points out, “eine Zeit, in der eine künstlerische Tradition zu Ende ging” (2: 18). The classical musicians so dear to Valentin are being replaced by composers and virtuosi such as Paganini, Chopin, and Liszt. The changes in musical tastes reflect the evolution of a society bent on embracing technological advances, which

¹²⁰ The word “Gewalt” is often associated with various effects that music can have on composers, interpreters, and listeners. For example, Kleist uses it in the title of his *Cäcilie* novella.

are inevitably accompanied by changes in the cultural sphere. The works that Valentin performs in his youth are carefully chosen, inasmuch as they are not insurmountable for a pianist of his abilities and have to be felt with the soul, not merely well executed technically, in order to touch the listener. One of the composers mentioned in the story is Clementi, a contemporary of Mozart and Beethoven, who had a great career in England as a virtuoso pianist and composer, and who was also widely admired throughout Europe. Among other pieces he composed numerous sonatas, as well as studies for the pianoforte. Mozart, the other composer whose music plays a key role in the lives of the protagonists, was regarded in the nineteenth century as a composer belonging to the Classical school (as opposed to the Romantic school). Remarkably, no mention is made of Beethoven, a musical giant at the time the story is set. It is my contention that his music would probably have been too revolutionary for Valentin, a man who is ruled neither by his passions nor by his desires. I would argue that one can draw a parallel between Valentin's life, in which he manages to establish a balance allowing him to come to terms with his heartbreaks and his disappointments, and the "High Classic equilibrium," as described by Rey M. Longyear in *Nineteenth-Century Romanticism in Music*: "[t]his High Classic equilibrium implied at one end of the scale a certain invisible 'floor' which maintained a minimum level of competence and interest, but also an equally palpable yet invisible 'ceiling' . . . which restricted the amount of individual expression and the extent of the emotions which could be presented" (309). Similarly, Valentin keeps his emotions in check as he tells his life story, never once breaking through the "invisible ceiling" that hovers over his life and prevents him from giving free rein to his feelings.¹²¹

¹²¹ In contrast, poets like Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) and Charles Baudelaire (1821-67) in particular were ruled by passions that inspired many of their poems. For more on this topic, see Sautermeister's comparative analysis of

Storm ends *Ein stiller Musikant* with a detailed and humorous description of a concert that would not be out of place today with regard to the audience's reception of a new composition. Since the concert takes place in an important middle-German town with an orchestra of some fame, it is probably representative of what was happening on the musical scene at that time.¹²² While the narrator makes no comment on the *Hebrides Overture* (1830) by Felix Mendelssohn (1809-47), both he and the old gentleman sitting next to him are equally enraptured by an aria from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, which is followed by the "Kunstversuche des Vereins" (2: 308; ital. org.), as the narrator's friend mockingly puts it. The "lebend[e] Meister" is not identified, which is another way of implying that his music, which lacks soul, is of no consequence whatsoever after Mozart's. I would argue that the reception of Valentin's simple song is somewhat enigmatic, for how could a piece with such naive lyrics from a totally unknown composer have such an impact on the audience? Perhaps the old gentleman gives the reason why when he exclaims, "Das ist Seele, – Seele!" (2: 309), recognizing in the song the influence of Mozart. The answer lies perhaps in Herman Meyers's *Der Sonderling in der deutschen Dichtung*. There, we can read: "die Ehrenrettung des stillen Musikanten, dessen Liedkomposition ebenso späten wie stürmischen Beifall findet, rechtfertigt diesen auch als Künstler. Die Hauptsache ist . . . : die mitleidige Bejahung der abseitigen Lebensform eines von der Brutalität des Lebens ausgestoßenen, innerlich reinen Menschen."¹²³

Heine's and Baudelaire's poems in "Heine und Baudelaire – eine vergleichende Lektüre" 43-78.

¹²² For a description of concerts throughout the nineteenth century, see Gay 4: 11-35. In the beginning, the audience was not always silent during performances; this came about only gradually as it was imposed by German conductors.

¹²³ Herman Meyer, *Der Sonderling in der deutschen Dichtung* (München: Hanser, 1963) 219-29.

At the time the novella was written, contemporaneous composers were not appreciated; music teachers like Valentin eked out a modest living, and former divas like Signora Katerina lived the rest of their lives poor and forgotten. Storm paints a fairly diverse picture of the musical world at the time he set his story. They are the young virtuoso player who becomes a court musician, only to reappear later as a piano teacher and potential competition for Valentin; another piano teacher who, according to Valentin, must be a good person because he is such a good musician, probably implying that he plays with his soul, contrary to the former court musician; and the famous organ player whose unexpected arrival sets the audience abuzz during Valentin's performance. These three characters have no direct part in the story, but, rather, illustrate various levels of musicianship and social status, along with the taste of the public at large. Then as now, musicians, like writers, had to take this taste into account if they wanted to be well received and successful. As a consequence, informed judgement is pushed aside.

Marie, Ännchen's daughter, is Valentin's pupil and more: she calls him "uncle," feels for him an affection that is mutual, and provides him with a sense of family that nurtures him.¹²⁴ The beauty of her voice also inspires him to return to a happy moment in his childhood and compose a song so moving that the audience first greets it with silence, then with thunderous applause. One could say that this is Valentin's posthumous moment of glory, a moment that compensates for the sense of failure that plagued him all his life.

In *Ein stiller Musikant*, music is the harbinger of sorrow and joy, and, on the whole, is a positive force in the lives of the protagonists, particularly Valentin's. It sustains him, both

¹²⁴ In a similar vein, Brunken in *Eine Malerarbeit* teaches a promising young man and welcomes him, as well as his sister and her daughter, into his home, thereby creating a family that his physical deformity prevents him from having.

physically and emotionally, and puts him in contact with people who want the best for him – which could be said for his father, too, in his own way. Music is a surrogate for love, a constant companion that helps Valentin bury his regrets. We will see that music plays very different roles in the novellas studied in the following chapters.

Chapter 4

Hopeless Aspirations in *Zur “Wald- und Wasserfreude”*

In this chapter, we move away from the resigned world of a man who finds solace in music and enter the less-resigned world of a young woman who eventually breaks away from a milieu in which she feels increasingly like a stranger. Storm’s music novella from 1879, *Zur “Wald- und Wasserfreude”*, tells the story of a young woman named Kätti.¹²⁵ She is the only daughter of Hermann Tobias Zippel, a rather restless *Gründerzeit* entrepreneur, whose sole aim in life is to launch new ventures in order to earn ever more money. At the beginning of the novella, he owns a bakery and pastry shop. He also has a lodger, Wulf Fedders, a young student in his last year at the local *Gelehrtschule* or preparatory school. At her insistence, the young man teaches Kätti how to play the guitar. A few years later, in the second part of the story, Herr Zippel and his daughter move to another town, where he has bought an old-fashioned tavern to transform into a year-round attraction. Kätti has grown into a beautiful young woman who plays the piano and the guitar. She sings to entertain the patrons of her father’s establishment, together with her musical partner, the tailor Peter Jensen, nicknamed Sträkelstrakel.¹²⁶ Having made the acquaintance of travelling musicians passing through her town, she joins them on the road, taking nothing with her but the guitar that Wulf left behind for her after finishing school. The

¹²⁵ As Storm writes in a letter to the painter and author Hermione von Preuschen (1854–1918), he drew inspiration from a thirteen-year-old girl he once saw during a business trip with his son Ernst, a girl he refers to as “das reine Tingelmädchen.” See Franz Stuckert, *Theodor Storm: Sein Leben und seine Welt* (Bremen: Schünemann, 1955) 348. The occurrence is also mentioned in a letter to Erich Schmidt, 25 May 1878, *TSES* 1: 93, where Storm adds his son’s answer: “Ja, sie hat auch die schwermütigen Vagabonden-Augen,” along with his own comment, “Das thats.”

¹²⁶ Storm invented this name to imitate the sound of made by the violin (see *TSSW* 2: 1006, n600).

young man, now a newly minted *Doktor*, happens to be travelling in the area and discovers Kätti at an inn where he stops for a meal. Rescuing her from her seemingly unhappy life with the travelling musicians, he returns her to her father. Wulf Fedders rents a room again from Herrn Zippel in order to rest and to further his studies. Kätti falls in love with him, although he has already given his heart to a pretty blond and blue-eyed major's daughter. After Kätti hears him declare his love to the young woman, she vanishes without a trace. Wulf, on the other hand, lives happily ever after with his wife and four children.

Written just three years after *Ein stiller Musikant*, the novella *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"* is set in the *Gründerzeit* or Wilhelminian era. This was a transitional period during which capitalism and industrialization were gaining a foothold in Germany, and new values had not yet completely replaced the old ones.¹²⁷ This is reflected to some extent in the story analyzed in this chapter. It might seem like an oversimplification, but I posit that Herr Zippel, a small entrepreneur, represents the spirit of progress and development of the time, as well as the will to rise above the lower stratum of the bourgeoisie. The tailor represents the artisan class, whose situation was becoming increasingly dire as factories progressively took over the manufacture of goods. Set against this economic and social background, *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"* has a more Realist character than *Ein stiller Musikant*, but contains, nevertheless, many allusions to Romanticism and *Biedermeier*.

In the preceding chapter, we saw how music sustained the hero of *Ein stiller Musikant*, Christian Valentin, a man who suffered traumatic setbacks. Even though he stopped playing the piano after fleeing the stage in the middle of a Mozart sonata, he still gave music a predominant place in his life through teaching and nurturing a student who, unlike him, went on to perform in

¹²⁷ For a historical background on this period, see Thomas Nipperdey's *Arbeitswelt und Bürgergeist*.

public to great acclaim. In the next chapter, the focus will be on *Es waren zwei Königskinder*, where we will learn about the life of male music students of the nineteenth century. For its part, *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"* stands apart from both of these novellas for two main reasons. First, it lacks both a frame and a reminiscing homodiegetic narrator. Instead, the extradiegetic narrator tells the story as it unfolds, addressing the reader directly. This, in my opinion, gives the novella a feeling that is true to life. The second reason lies in the fact that the main protagonist is a young woman. It is my contention that this a more important difference, for the reason that education, the relevance of musical instruments as symbols of specific life styles, and differences in social status are portrayed in such a way as to highlight the limited choices available to women at the time the story takes place (broadly speaking, the nineteenth century). Furthermore, even though Kätti does not tell the story herself – in fact, she says very little over the course of the novella – I would argue that the narrator places himself firmly on her side, indirectly giving her a strong voice through her musical performance and her atypical behaviour, an uncommon occurrence in Storm's oeuvre.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ The idea that Storm gives Kätti a voice is further elaborated in Irmgard Roebing's book *Theodor Storms ästhetische Heimat: Studien zur Lyrik und zum Erzählwerk Storms* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2012). I am referring in particular to the chapter entitled "Storm und die weibliche Stimme: Das Weibliche als der Andere in Storms Novelle *Im Schloß*" (229-43). Even though Kätti does not write about her life as Anna does in *Im Schloß*, I think that her passive resistance to her father when she refuses to provide music for his patrons, along with her ensuing disappearance, are equally effective means of expression. It is my contention that, by taking her future into her own hands, Kätti opposes the patriarchal world represented by her father and hints, in Roebing's words, at "eine grundsätzliche(re), von der Zukunft noch zu definierende und einzulösende *Andersheit* zur patriarchalen Welt" (243).

In this chapter, I will focus on education, a topic which is more developed in *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"* than in *Ein stiller Musikant* and which sheds a light on the differences between genders and social classes when the novellas were written. In *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"*, the emphasis is on music, an important element in the education of young women at the time.¹²⁹ Indirectly linked to education is Kätti's repeatedly mentioned dark and sometimes intriguing beauty, which leads me to explore the implicit connection with the image of Gypsies in nineteenth-century literature and their close connection to music in this discourse. I will then turn my attention to the instruments featured in the novella, along with their role in the characterization of the protagonists. Indeed, musical instruments contributed to the way people were perceived in nineteenth-century bourgeois society. In this novella, the guitar, for example, is associated with life on the road and, hence, something that is not respectable. Associations like these demand an analysis of the way in which Storm makes use of various instruments to characterize the protagonists. This, in turn, leads to examining life on the road for itinerant artists and the way music is perceived in a small town. I will conclude with some remarks on the use of Romantic techniques in this Realist novella.

Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude" is viewed by scholars as one of Storm's least successful novellas, perhaps because Storm himself was never completely satisfied with it. As he wrote to Paul Heyse, "Etwas liegt an der Kleinheit des Stoffes, es müßte Alles aus der Luft

¹²⁹ Nipperdey mentions that schools, particularly those frequented by the "höheren Töchter," favoured an education centred on languages and music, as well as proper behaviour (561). Reinhard Wittmann agrees, maintaining that "der Unterricht scheint im musischen Bereich einen Schwerpunkt gehabt zu haben" (252). See Max Bücher et al., ed. *Realismus und Gründerzeit: Manifeste und Dokumente zur deutschen Literatur, 1848-1880* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1984).

herabgesponnen werden.”¹³⁰ In the same vein, he confided to Erich Schmidt that “es ist ein Compositions-mangel da: die erste Hälfte ist auf eine frische Vagabundengeschichte abgesehen, und es folgt in der zweiten die sentimentale Geschichte eines eifersüchtigen Mädchenherzens.”¹³¹ However, scholars agree that this novella contains a social critique of the time.¹³² They also make various comments about Kätti that are sometimes contradictory. Stefan Schröder builds an argument around the title of the novella by linking the blond and blue-eyed major’s daughter with water, in which he sees a symbol for eroticism, and the dark-haired and dark-eyed Kätti with the forest, a place where magic takes place in fairy tales. He argues that Kätti, seen as a forest nymph, can be understood as emotionality and sensual perception personified,¹³³ which causes her to stand in stark contrast to her surroundings and the way of thinking of the time in which the story takes place. Contrary to Schröder, Mareike Börner, in *Mädchenknospe – Spiegelkindlein*,¹³⁴ associates Kätti with water, particularly with a mermaid – *Undine* – and draws a parallel between Fouqué’s Romantic heroine Undine and the “unromantische(n) Romantikerin Kätti Zippel.”¹³⁵ She argues that water is Kätti’s natural element and compares her repeatedly with Andersen’s Little Mermaid, only to come to the conclusion that Kätti cannot take refuge in a mythical world because “das Zeitalter der

¹³⁰ Letter from Storm to Paul Heyse, 3 Nov. 1878, in *TSPH* 2: 39.

¹³¹ Letter from Storm to Schmidt, 18 Jan. 1879, in *TSES* 1: 107-08.

¹³² Stefan Schröder gives a short overview of the secondary literature on *Zur “Wald- und Wasserfreude”* in his article “Von Feen und Nixen” published in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 117: 4 (1998): 547.

¹³³ Schröder 561.

¹³⁴ Mareike Börner, *Mädchenknospe – Spiegelkindlein: Die Kindfrau im Werk Theodor Storms* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2009).

¹³⁵ Börner 180. *Undine* was written by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué (1777-1843) in 1811.

romantischen Undine gehört unwiderrufflich der Vergangenheit an.”¹³⁶ Moving away from the notions of forest and water, Louis Gerrekens¹³⁷ compares Kätti to the heroine of the drama *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn* (1808) by Heinrich von Kleist (1777-1811), placing her squarely in the world of the fairy tale. Unfortunately for Kätti, there is no happy ending to her love for Wulf Fedders; “la petite princesse dans son genre” (*TSSW* 2: 626) does not marry her “count” because “die Gesellschaft läßt einen dem Märchen nacheifernden Ausgang nicht mehr zu.”¹³⁸ My analysis adds another possible association to the many characterizations of Kätti that link her to music. Kätti bears a resemblance to the image of the Gypsy, an image that was popular not only in German literature, but also throughout Europe in the nineteenth century.¹³⁹ At first, she is described as a scrawny thirteen-year-old with dark skin, two long black braids, and dark or black eyes. The narrator contrasts her appearance with that of the blond and blue-eyed Wulf Fedders, and with the equally blond and blue-eyed major’s daughter.¹⁴⁰ Nowhere in the text is it explicitly stated that Kätti could have Gypsy blood in her veins. However, Wulf’s reaction to her in certain

¹³⁶ Börner 199.

¹³⁷ Louis Gerrekens, “Funktionen von Intertextualität in ‘Zur Chronik von Grieshuus’ und ‘Zur Wald- und Wasserfreude,’” *Stormlektüren: Festschrift für Ernst Laage zum 80. Geburtstag*, ed. Gerd Eversberg, David Jackson, and Eckart Pastor (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2000) 59-78.

¹³⁸ Gerrekens 75.

¹³⁹ For general information on the image of the Gypsy in German literature and the popular imagination in the nineteenth century, see Nicholas Saul’s *Gypsies and Orientalism in German Literature and Anthropology of the Long Nineteenth Century* (London: MHRA, 2007).

¹⁴⁰ Storm created his own brand of Gypsy-like girl, the *Zithermädchen*, in his early novella *Immensee* (1849). Like Kätti, the *Zithermädchen* has black eyes and black hair, but she is much bolder in her dealings with the students who visit the tavern where she performs than Kätti is with Wulf. A flirty individual, she plays the zither, accompanied by a violin player in a drinking establishment, and she also sings.

circumstances indicates that she, sometimes unwittingly, has the effect of a *femme fatale* on him, as the narrator pointedly remarks when he says, “die eigentliche Schönheit des Mädchens [machte] ihn fast verstummen” (2: 610).¹⁴¹ In his work *Gypsies and Orientalism in German Literature and Anthropology of the Long Nineteenth Century*, Nicholas Saul argues: “[O]ne line of realists (he uses Storm and Stifter as examples) exploits a very restricted range of the spectrum of association afforded by *Zigeunerromantik*, its semantic potential either as code of the mythical *femme fatale* or as a symbol of aesthetic beauty – as a resource for reflection on gender and art” (47-48). Kätti fits this mould, as she possesses an aesthetic beauty that draws Wulf Fedders’s thoughts in a direction that he does not want to follow. On another occasion, when he promises Kätti to help Jensen get his violin back, “blieb [er] wie *gefangen* (ital. mine) in der Glut der stummen Dankbarkeit, die aus den dunklen Augen ihm entgegenströmte” (2: 616). The major’s daughter is also impressed by Kätti’s appearance, remarking, “Vraiment, une petite princesse dans son genre” (2: 626). This remark certainly fans the reader’s curiosity about Kätti.

In popular and literary imagination, Gypsies passed (and often still pass) for beautiful people and gifted musicians; it is this association that also links Kätti’s physical appearance to her musical talent.¹⁴² She could serve as an example for Heinrich Grellmann’s description of a typical Gypsy woman of the era, except that, even though she is talented, she is no “brilliant,

¹⁴¹ All quotes from *Zur “Wald- und Wasserfreude”* are taken from *TSSW*, vol. 2.

¹⁴² Saul is heavily indebted to Heinrich Grellmann (1756-1804), a self-styled Romany ethnographer at the end of the eighteenth century. According to Saul, his views still carry substantial weight today. For more on Grellmann’s ideas, see Grellmann’s book *Die Zigeuner: Ein historischer Versuch über die Lebensart und Verfassung, Sitten und Schicksale dieses Volks in Europa, nebst ihrem Ursprunge* (Dessau/Leipzig, 1783).

improvising musician,” particularly on the violin.¹⁴³ Could she have inherited her Gypsy-like physical characteristics from her mother, about whom nothing is said,¹⁴⁴ or is she simply the type of protagonist that often appears in Storm’s writings, seemingly with no hidden intentions?¹⁴⁵ The novella does not answer this question. What her appearance implies, however, is that she is unfit to receive a traditional education such as was the norm for girls at the time the story takes place, even in the field of music for which she shows undeniable talent. Unfit or not, she is “eine berufen schlechte Schülerin” (2: 589) who is attentive only during geography lessons, because her teacher had travelled in many countries and “seine Vorträge gewannen zuweilen den Ton der Sehnsucht in die weit’, weite Welt” (2: 589). I would add that Kätti’s dark beauty enforces the underlying notion that she is an outsider in her school as well as her surroundings, and that her restlessness, in turn, paves the way for her desire to run away.

¹⁴³ Saul: “. . . the Gypsies as a nation are unusually artistically talented, producing gifted, erotically tantalizing dancers among the young women and brilliant, improvising musicians of both sexes. In particular, Grellmann hails their virtuosity on the violin . . .” (6).

¹⁴⁴ I believe that the mystery of Kätti’s origin, considering that nothing is known about her father’s past and that her mother is dead, not to mention her disappearance at the end of the story, places her squarely in the realm of the Gypsy. As Klaus-Michael Bogdal explains, nineteenth-century Gypsies were shrouded in mystery and believed to live in dark, secret places where they simply disappeared (178). For a more detailed analysis, see part 2 of Bogdal’s book “Das neunzehnte Jahrhundert,” *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner: Eine Geschichte von Faszination und Verachtung* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011) 177-303.

¹⁴⁵ Storm wrote about the *Zithermädchen* in *Immensee*: “[I]ch habe kein Zigeunermädchen gemeint, sondern nur ein Mädchen, deren Gesicht an die feinen Zügen der Zigeunerinnen erinnert” (qtd. in *TSSW* 2: 1030, n305). In Kätti’s case, however, it is more than her face that evokes Gypsy characteristics. Indeed, her slender and graceful body, along with her somewhat erratic behaviour, reinforce this analogy.

Throughout the novella, Kätti does not stay in the same place for very long, least of all at school and during her piano lessons. The way education is presented in the story provides both an explanation for her restlessness and a social critique of the time. Not only were profiteers of all stripes at work, but girls' education, especially for girls like Kätti who did not belong to the bourgeoisie, was severely limited and sharply different from the education that boys received. The scene is set in the first few pages of the novella. Kätti goes to the "beste Mädchenschule" (2: 589),¹⁴⁶ but, in contrast, the *Primaner* Wulf Fedders, who rents a room in her father's house, is a student at the *Gelehrtenschule*. The discrepancy in the style and level of education is implied in the names of the two schools in question ("Mädchenschule" or "girls' school," and "Gelehrtenschule" or "preparatory school"). The best school for girls is not a scholarly establishment; it merely prepares the girls for their future role as wives and mothers. However, Herr Zippel still sends his daughter to this school and pays for private piano lessons, which proves that he wants to give her the best education possible for a girl of her background. That having been said, he himself does not have a high opinion of the school, saying to his daughter: "Ja, ja, die alte Schulmamsell mit ihrem Strickstrumpf, mit ihrer trockenen gelben Jungfernase, was weiß auch die –" (2: 592). Herr Zippel berates his daughter for skipping school, while admitting, in the same breath, that there is not much there to hold her attention. Wulf Fedders, by comparison, translates the works of the historian Thucydides into German and writes essays.

¹⁴⁶ In *Gender, Feminism, and Fiction in Germany: 1840-1914* (New York: Lang, 2006), Chris Weedon draws a picture of feminine education as seen by traditional men and women, contrasting it with what the early feminists of the day wanted girls to learn and achieve (see chapter 3, "Education and the Right to Work" 43-66). Jennifer Drake Askey describes how *Töchterschulen* prepared girls to fulfill their future role in the domestic sphere and become "nationalist" citizens in *Good Girls, Good Germans* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2013).

Even if Herr Zippel were stricter with Kätti and insisted that she no longer skip school, there is not much to learn to advance her gift for music and her desire to widen her horizons. In Kätti's defence, one could say that her eccentric father, a widower, does not help her settle down. His physical appearance borders on caricature, as does his drive to transform a traditional country inn into what he considers a fashionable establishment. Both his origins and his level of education are unknown. What is repeatedly pointed out is his obsession with making money and his tendency to exaggerate, particularly concerning his daughter's musical talent. For example, he often refers to her as his *Genie*, which both prevents him from seeing that talent itself is not enough to be a good musician and from taking her musical education seriously. Additionally, his moods can swing in an instant, from anger to tears when Kätti plays the accompaniment to his favourite song. In the absence of a mother, he cannot provide his daughter with maternal guidance, or paternal guidance, for that matter. His daughter has no one to confide in and is left alone to deal with her longings, her awakening sexuality, and, at the end, her very wretchedness. Whatever she knows is mostly self-taught, with the possible exception of her piano playing.

In the novella, differences in education and social status exist not only between men and women, but also among men, as in the case with Wulf Fedders and Peter Jensen. Storm begins by contrasting their appearance. The young *Doktor* enjoys walking and dancing; he has “[eine] stattliche Gestalt und einen Backenbart” (2: 613). Jensen suffers from a physical disability, along with a stature and personality traits that make him appear very childlike. The narrator uses the adjective “klein” and the suffix “chen” repeatedly in his description of the violin player (2: 600-04), so much so that one almost forgets that he is a middle-aged man. Furthermore, the fortune of both men in love could not be more different. Two young women, Kätti and the blond major's daughter, vie for Wulf's attention, with unequal chances. Despite her dark beauty and her

willingness to improve herself, Kätti cannot bring him to override the prejudices inherent to his social class. In his depiction of the two men, as in other instances, Storm uses binary codes¹⁴⁷ to underline the difference in social and in academic status. Wulf Fedders, tall and successful, comes from a privileged background and takes part in the advance of science and industrialization. By contrast, Peter Jensen is small and disabled.¹⁴⁸ He stands at the lower end of the social and economic structure, a poor artisan and struggling artist.¹⁴⁹ As a child, Kätti understood neither the importance of education, nor deeply rooted social prejudices. Both are brought home to her four years later by Wulf's behaviour towards her. It is only then she understands that in order to be part of the society to which he belongs, one has to play by the rules. Stung by the different ways in which he treats the major's daughter and herself, she decides to show him what she can do: "Freilich, sie hatte nichts gelernt, sie konnte nicht französisch mit ihm sprechen, in der Schule war sie immer faul gewesen. Aber sie besaß noch ihre Bücher; es war noch Zeit, um das Versäumte nachzuholen . . . lernen, lernen! Er sollte sehen, daß

¹⁴⁷ In *Zwischen Romantik und Restauration: Musik im Realismus-Diskurs, 1848-1871* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2001), Martin Geck touches on the use of binary codes in communication to emphasize important differences (13). This technique is already visible in the title of the novella: forest versus water. As mentioned earlier, scholars have associated Kätti with both. Here, Storm opposes the piano and the guitar, and, repeatedly, blond and blue-eyed versus dark and dark-eyed. It is my contention that these pairs of opposites reinforce the fact that there can be no union between the two milieus presented in the novella. We will see in chapter 5 that the opposition of blond and dark takes on a different connotation in *Es waren zwei Königskinder*.

¹⁴⁸ Peter Jensen also stands at the bottom end of the "love ladder," being rejected by Kätti who is herself rejected by Wulf Fedders. He is small and disabled in every respect.

¹⁴⁹ Here, one is reminded of the social position of the court musician, who was looked upon as no more than a servant.

sie Keiner etwas nachgab” (2: 624). She also applies herself to sewing, in the hope of being in a better position to compete with the major’s daughter for the young man’s affection. Impressed by her work, Wulf says to her: “Aber bist du denn nicht mehr die alte Kätti; wer hätte dich früher an den Nähtisch oder an die Bücher bringen können? Und nun? – Wie geht das zu? Oder ist es am Ende gar ein Wunder?” (2: 629). Kätti always had these gifts in her, but did not realize as a child that they, too, were important. She only did that which came to her naturally and provided an escape from her dreary life: music. At seventeen years of age, however, she has a better grasp of life, and is also aware of the barriers erected by social classes between the likes of her and Wulf Fedders, even though she does her best to overcome them. But all her efforts at educating and improving herself do not suffice to bridge the social gap that separates her from Wulf, even though he is strongly attracted to her. He comes from a bourgeois family and his mother is “eine Dame alten Geschlechtes” (2: 636), who makes sure that he is conscious of his background, as the narrator explains: “[T]rotz guten Willens wurde es ihm meistens schwer, ja fast unmöglich, den Menschen ohne Rücksicht auf seinen Ursprung oder die ihm angeborene Vergangenheit zu schätzen” (2: 636). And even though he once said that Kätti is “guter Leute Tochter” (2: 610), he could never bring himself to become “Hermann Tobias Zippel’s Schwiegersohn” (2: 637).

Yet, Kätti turns to him for help with learning French, and more importantly, when still a young girl, to learn how to play the guitar. For Kätti, die “berufen schlechte Schülerin” (2: 589), with a longing for faraway places, has a gift for music.¹⁵⁰ Before discovering Wulf Fedders’s guitar, she had been taking piano lessons. However, just as she lets her mind wander while listening to her teacher talking about the big, wide world, she physically escapes from the piano

¹⁵⁰ Börner links the two together, stating that Kätti attempts to transform her *Fernweh* “indem sie sich in den metaphysischen Charakter der Musik flüchtet” (185).

lessons, leaving the teacher in the lurch in the middle of a piece. The narrator provides the following explanation: “Aber der *schwere* Klavierkasten, der so *fest* gegen die Wand *geschoben* stand, war nicht das Instrument, das ihre eigenste Natur verlangte” (2: 589; ital. all mine). The contrast between the heavy instrument, pushed firmly against the wall, and the slight girl who runs away from her music lessons and who appears throughout the story as if out of nowhere (“es war ihr eigen, plötzlich da zu sein, ohne daß man sie hatte kommen hören”; 2: 593), or disappears without anyone noticing (“und Kätti war wie fortgeblasen”; 2: 593), could not be greater.

More than by her poor school record, however, Kätti is defined by the instruments she plays. The first one she learns, the piano, does not suit her. Here, it symbolizes firmly established bourgeois values, as David Blackbourn has pointed out in his definition of the petty bourgeoisie in society. According to Blackbourn, “[t]he petty bourgeoisie stretched from the margins of the working class, from which some had come and among whom others lived, to the borders with the bourgeoisie proper . . . and might aspire to the gentility of the middle-class family – the piano in the drawing room” (164).¹⁵¹

However, the young girl’s behaviour during piano lessons does not fit the image of a bourgeois daughter who submits to her parents’ will, as was expected by educators at that time – mostly female – and by society at large.¹⁵² Later on, at the inn, the piano does not stand in the living room, but in the area where customers dine and dance, and Kätti’s piano playing becomes

¹⁵¹ See David Blackbourn, *History of Germany, 1780-1918: The Long Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003).

¹⁵² For more on the subject, see Weedon 43-66.

part of the attractions of her father's establishment.¹⁵³ Ironically, the ability to play the piano, something that is part of the life of every girl born in a bourgeois family, becomes for Kätti an object of exploitation on the part of her father. Börner goes as far as to link it to prostitution, declaring that "das Mädchen [muß] sich allabendlich für den eigenen Vater prostituieren."¹⁵⁴ Kätti knows that she will not improve musically as long as she remains at home, and her longing for faraway places will not be fulfilled unless she escapes. At the time the novella was written, very few girls did that for fear of being shunned by their families and by society at large. Kätti has no one to shun her except her father, and she does not yet understand what it would mean for her to live as an errant female musician. Her first attempt at leading a different life ends up pitifully and brings Wulf Fedders back in her life. And it all starts with a guitar.

Right away, the narrator explains that the instrument on which she has set her heart is "[ein] solches, das sie bis jetzt nur in den Händen durchziehender Künstlerinnen gesehen hatte" (2: 589). She sees the guitar in the *Primaner's* room and asks him if he would be willing to teach her a few chords. The important thing for her is not the sound of the instrument or the beauty of the music performed, but, rather, the fact that she has seen it in the hands of wandering female artists, who seem to her to be free to go wherever they please. In her young mind, music and freedom are linked together. Here again, the choice of words emphasizes the difference between the piano and the guitar and the women who play them: the wandering female artist, guitar in

¹⁵³ In contrast, the piano holds little meaning for an old neighbouring farmer who looks at Herr Zippel's transformation in the making. For him, it is "die Sache" and "diesen Ding" (*TSSW* 2: 599). These two words point to the fact that music is powerless to attract the local population to the "improved" inn.

¹⁵⁴ Börner 201. However, in the context of the nineteenth century, it was customary for children to work alongside their parents.

hand, is the opposite of the pianist who sits at her heavy instrument. Piano players, particularly women, belonged at that time to established bourgeois society, playing for their own entertainment and for the benefit of friends and family. By contrast, the guitar players were not settled anywhere; as outsiders, their lifestyle met with criticism in bourgeois circles. The third instrument featured in the novella, the violin, poses an interesting question in that it is played by two totally different characters. Sträkelstrakel is a small, very settled man, who has never left his village until he goes looking for Kätti, and does not understand her longing for distant shores. He plays Mozart and folk songs with great dedication. The other *Geiger*, a tall, good-looking young man, is one of the errant musicians with whom Kätti takes to the road. He does not perform in the novella, but is shown mistreating his instrument, banging it on a table, and then dropping it, even though his livelihood depends on it. I would venture to suggest that the contrasting uses of the instrument can be interpreted as two different attitudes towards music, the first being an appreciation of the art of playing an instrument, and the second, a disregard of the same. Furthermore, the young man's disrespect for his instrument reflects badly on his lifestyle, discrediting other errant musicians.

For her part, Kätti is drawn to the light instrument she can easily take down from where it hangs on the wall. She skips school in order to sneak into the *Primaner's* room in his absence to play it. The guitar that comes into her life with the young Wulf Fedders brings her both joy and sorrow. It gives her joy to learn a few chords on her own and to accompany her father as he sings his favourite song. However, the gift she gives him by learning his song does not come without pain, as her wounded fingers bear witness. Indeed, they are so raw that they bleed. Ironically, the colour of the blood is the same as that of the *Primaner's* cap and of the ribbon that Kätti takes to wearing in her hair after Wulf accedes to her request to teach her everything he knows. The

colour red evokes love and passion,¹⁵⁵ as well as suffering and tragedy, of which her bleeding fingers are a premonition. It is not so much the music itself but the instrument on which it is played that brings Kätti and Wulf together and, as the narrator comments, “somit wurde das erste Ringlein fertig als Glied zu einer feinen unsichtbaren Kette” (2: 594), unbeknownst to either protagonist.

Time and time again, Storm uses all means at his disposal to emphasize the contrast between Kätti and Wulf. Besides their physical appearance and the schools they attend, they take a different approach to music and to the guitar, a difference that is linked to their gender, as well as to the social classes to which they belong, and, consequently, to the education they receive. For the young man “hatte die Gitarre keine weitere Bedeutung als das Vögelsingen, wenn es Frühling ist” (2: 595); he also sings the way birds do, without betraying any particular emotion. Later on, Wulf gives up music altogether, passing it off as a *Jugendtorheit*, in order to pursue his interest in botany, a more “manly” occupation from which he derives both learning and exercise when he does not want to sit at his desk (2: 615). In so doing, he is in harmony with the time in which he lives, where scientific research and industrialization were undergoing a veritable explosion.¹⁵⁶ Later on, Kätti gives up singing for different reasons. Still, music continues to hold a lot of meaning for her. The narrator never directly describes her emotional response to it, only

¹⁵⁵ We are reminded here of the colour of Signora Katerina’s shawl in *Ein stiller Musikant*.

¹⁵⁶ See Nipperdey 226-63. To a certain extent, the arts profited from industrialization: more books were printed and more music scores were produced. The fear was that people would read increasing amounts of *Unterhaltungsliteratur* and listen to *Unterhaltungsmusik*, leading to the decline of more serious literature and music among the German population at large. See also Reinhard Wittmann, “Der literarische Autor,” *Realismus und Gründerzeit: Manifeste und Dokumente zur deutschen Literatur, 1848-1880*, ed. Max Bücher et al. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1984).

suggests it. As a thirteen-year-old, Kätti does not pay attention to the words of the song that Wulf sings for her. Rather, she gives herself entirely to the melody sung in his soft baritone to the guitar accompaniment, and to the “dunkel regenden Empfindung” (2: 595) that it stirs in her. Music stealthily awakens her sexuality and plants the seeds of love in her heart, all the more so because the two young people keep the lessons secret, albeit for different reasons. Kätti fears that the lessons will stop if someone finds out about them. For his part, Wulf does not want it known that he gives guitar lessons to the daughter of the innkeeper, “dem eigenartigen Backfischchen” (2: 596), for fear of his friends’ criticism. When he goes away at the end of school, he leaves Kätti and his guitar behind with the simple words “Für Kätti.” While he turns a page in his life, the young girl continues to link the instrument with him, experiencing her first *Liebeskummer*.

Wulf has gone away, and Herr Zippel and Kätti move to a big village, where Herr Zippel hopes to make his fortune by renovating and running an inn situated on the bank of a river. Soon after they arrive, he discovers his “second genius” (2: 599), a humble tailor named Peter Jensen, alias Sträkelstrakel, who plays the violin. Given his social standing, one can only assume that Jensen has received an elementary education and no musical training, since a musical friend of his once regretted that Jensen had never learned anything. The way he plays, with “ungeschulte(n) Töne” (2: 600), reinforces this notion. Nevertheless, Jensen’s violin playing has earned him the respect of the locals. As a result, Herr Zippel hires him to play with Kätti.

At first, Kätti enjoys making music with him. They share a love of music that creates between them a much stronger bond than between her and Wulf Fedders, as witnessed by her reaction when she learns that the police have confiscated Sträkelstrakel’s violin and that he does not have the necessary money to get it back. Her reaction can be explained by the fact that the small tailor has retained a young spirit, and Kätti, still partly a child herself, has nothing else in

mind than making music with him. Both surrender completely to the music. In one scene, Storm describes the rehearsal that precedes the dedication of the new veranda of the inn. It is a complex scene, because it shows Kätti playing the piano and the guitar as well as singing, while introducing in its entirety the folk song that Wulf Fedders sang for her when he was teaching her how to play the guitar. The two types of music performed and the two instruments that Kätti uses symbolize two lifestyles and two facets of her personality, providing an indication of what her future could have been – and will be.

While playing the Mozart sonata, Kätti uses the skills she learned with her piano teacher. For a moment, the young woman who dreams of faraway places and her willing violin partner look like professional artists ready to perform: “Es war etwas Stilles in der Erscheinung des Mädchens, wie sie jetzt ans Klavier schritt und die Noten auflegte, während der kleine Mann schweigend seinen Platz erkletterte und, den Bogen in Anstrich, erwartend nach ihr hinblickte” (2: 601). Not only is Kätti uncharacteristically poised, she also assumes the role of a teacher in the course of the rehearsal, stopping Sträkelstrakel gently when his playing gets “zu sorglos” and practicing with him “unermüdlich . . . die hapernden Takte . . .” (2: 601) until she is satisfied. In this short scene, one glimpses the musician Kätti could have become with the right guidance. Even though the narrator declares that the guitar is the instrument that best suits her, she is capable of performing on the piano music played in bourgeois houses. In that regard, Mozart’s music could not have been a better choice for the composer, a child prodigy, was also a free spirit like Kätti who did not always play by the rules, but, nonetheless, remained for many years under his father’s authority. Additionally, many of his pieces are playful and light-hearted. The sonata that Kätti and Jensen study is not specified, but I would argue that it is most likely an

early one, given the fact that the author takes great pains to portray the violin player as childlike and the setting as fit for children.¹⁵⁷

In the next scene, Kätti and Jensen look and behave completely differently, almost like two distinct protagonists. They no longer play Mozart, but only folk songs,¹⁵⁸ as a reward, Kätti tellingly declares. They walk about in the room, Kätti, the would-be vagabond with a light step as she plays the guitar and sings, and Jensen, dragging his lame foot sideways. The image is striking: just as her voice bounces back from the walls, Kätti will also hit obstacles that will prevent her from living off her art in a society that, but for a few exceptions, did not tolerate self-made and independent female artists and looked upon them as artistic outsiders. In contrast to Kätti's light step, Jensen's lame foot takes on a new meaning. It becomes a symbol of the difficulty that both women and artists in general experienced at the time the novella was written as they sought to survive in an increasingly materialist environment where the Romantic notions of art were no longer valid. As Mareike Börner observes, "Wie in der Figur des leidenschaftlichen, doch invaliden Musikers Sträkelstrakel versinnbildlicht, hinkt die Romantik dem modernen Fortschritt hinterher."¹⁵⁹ When Sträkelstrakel, unable to understand Kätti's

¹⁵⁷ Sträkelstrakel "[erkletterte] seinen Platz" on the "lackierten Holzbänkchen" (*TSSW* 2: 601). The choice of words here conjures up the image of Mozart as a child, giving the impression that the two players on stage are also children.

¹⁵⁸ As I pointed out in chapter 3, folk songs were an important part of the musical landscape in the nineteenth century. They were performed by men's choruses at public concerts and used to shape the national mythology that paved the way to a united Germany. In this particular novella, however, they take on a more modest role. Indeed, they provide Kätti and her father with an opportunity to enjoy music together, and are for Kätti a means of expressing her longing for a different life.

¹⁵⁹ Börner 201.

longing to leave the place where he happily resides, asks her, “Warum denn in die weite Welt, Mamsellchen” (603), Kätti is unable to put into words what she feels. Instead, she sings a folk song that Wulf Fedders once sang to her, an act that expresses the confusion that has taken hold of both her mind and her heart:

Ein Vöglein singt so süße
Vor mir von Ort zu Ort;
O meine müden Füße!
Das Vöglein singt so süße;
Ich wandre immer fort.
Wo ist nun hin das Singen?
Schon sank das Abendrot –
Die Nacht has es verstecket,
Hat Alles zugedecket;
Wem klag' ich meine Not?
Kein Sternlein blinkt im Walde,
Weiß weder Weg noch Ort;
Die Blumen an der Halde,
Die Blumen in dem Walde,
Die blühn im Dunkeln fort.¹⁶⁰

As a thirteen-year-old girl, Kätti did not pay much attention to the lyrics. Yet, just four years later, they have taken on a new relevance, given her yearning to escape her present

¹⁶⁰ The folk song of the novella is one of Storm's poems entitled “Verirrt”. See *TSSW* 1: 89. It was first printed in the novella, then in 1885 in a volume of poetry. See *TSSW* 1:866.

circumstances and her unconscious love for Wulf Fedders. Although the folk song, later poem, was first published in the novella *Zur "Wald und Wasserfreude"* in 1879,¹⁶¹ it clearly hearkens back to the Romantic era, albeit with a Realist twist. For whereas it alludes to the *Wanderlust* and the freedom of a little bird in the first verse, what follows is suffering and darkness, along with the feeling of being lost in the world ("Weiß weder Weg noch Ort"; 2: 603).¹⁶² In his book *Theodor Storm: Eine Biographie*, Georg Bollenbeck takes a less metaphorical approach; using the poem as a description of Kätti's situation, he calls her "eine Art weibliches Gegenstück zu Eichendorff's 'Taugenichts'."¹⁶³ He explains: "[W]ie dieser . . . besitzt sie die einfache Musikantenseele, die sich an der Gitarre und den volkstümlichen Liedern erfreut, wird sie von dem selben unerschütterlichen Leichtsinn und dem ewigen Traum von Abenteuer, Liebe und Glück getrieben" (2: 286). I contend that Kätti does not possess an unshakeable carelessness similar to *Taugenicht's*, but, rather, that she feels very lonely and trapped, living as she does with her father. On the surface, her first escape displays Romantic characteristics, even if it ends badly and abruptly, but what of her disappearance at the end of the story? Can it also be seen as Romantic, or is it a well-thought-out decision on the part of a woman trapped in a life that she can no longer bear? I contend that it is a bit of both, because while Kätti yields to the appeal of stepping out into the world, she has some money (inherited from a distant relative) and is not

¹⁶¹ See commentary to the poem in *TSSW* 1: 866.

¹⁶² Börner draws a parallel between Undine and Kätti, seeing the latter as a protagonist who refuses to complete the transition between childhood and adulthood. She goes on to acknowledge the soulful longing expressed in the poem, and then declares the state of utter despair described in the song: "[J]ede Clochard-Romantik [wird] desavouiert; das Singen ist vorbei . . . [Das Lied] schildert ein junges Mädchen, das . . . seinen Weg in das Erwachsenwerden finden muß" (186).

¹⁶³ Georg Bollenbeck, *Theodor Storm: Eine Biographie* (Frankfurt a. M.: Insel, 1988) 286.

indebted to anyone. Bollenbeck explains that Storm takes leave of Romanticism in the novella because there is no room for it in the modern age. However, I content that he goes too far when he declares that, seen through the realist lens, “Kättis Musiktalent sich als dürftig, ihr Glückstraum als billig, ihr Zug in der Welt als Misere des Tingeltangels erweist” (287). While Herr Zippel exaggerates when he repeatedly calls her a “Genie,” I would argue that nothing in the text points to a lack of talent, quite the contrary. In fact, it is stated at the beginning of the story that Kätti’s perception of music seemed to be quite advanced for her age (2: 589), and that she is a quick study – “[W]as der junge Lehrer an Griffen und Fingersatz ihr beizubringen wußte, war Alles rasch erlernt worden” (2: 595). She is also referred to as “die junge Virtuosa” (2: 600) who has studied a Mozart sonata with her partner. It is a lack of opportunity rather than a lack of talent that stifles her musical development, the main reason being that she is a woman, and, perhaps even more, that she does not belong to a social milieu in which her talent can flourish. A *Wanderlust* that is nothing out of the ordinary for a man becomes unacceptable for a woman. Kätti does not succeed in finding her way as a human being or as an artist. The singing of the bird that symbolizes music as a way of freeing oneself from ordinary life is no longer heard. As in real life, music has lost the magic powers it once possessed for the Romantics. After the failed 1848 Revolution, when Romanticism gave way to a discourse that favoured “reality,” artists had to find a new place in society, along with new ways of expressing themselves in order to please the tastes of a changing public. Reinhard Wittmann concentrates on the difficult predicament of literary writers who fell in esteem and found themselves forced to compete with second-rate writers who penned mainstream *Unterhaltungsliteratur*.¹⁶⁴ For his part, Martin Geck¹⁶⁵ states

¹⁶⁴ Bücher et al. 197-206.

¹⁶⁵ Martin Geck, *Zwischen Romantik und Restauration*.

that nineteenth-century artists had to embrace the present, declaring, “[D]ie Kunst [hat] den Atem, konkrete Realismus-Programme zu entwerfen und umzusetzen” (47). He also asks the rhetorical question how music, considered “seit jeher als die weltflüchtigste und wirklichkeitsfernste aller Künste” (47), would manage to move with the times. In contrast, Wulf Fedders, a man of progress not given to Romantic musings, reads nothing into the folk song. Indeed, he only sings the first two and the last three lines of the poem, those that express happiness through the singing of the bird and the blooming of flowers. These verses reflect his *joie de vivre*, free from the darker side of life that is hinted at in the verses above, and from his total lack of Romantic longing. By contrast, Sträkelstrakel enjoys performing the verses with Kätti, but does not associate them with a yearning he does not understand. With this song, the text shows how three differently inclined people can react to the same essentially Romantic lyrics.

Storm repeatedly hints at the fact that Romanticism no longer had a place at the time and in the milieu in which the story takes place. Scholars have argued that the novella contains a renunciation of Romanticism, a notion of life and the arts that is no longer possible in the *Gründerzeit*. Fritz Böttger, for example, states in *Theodor Storm und seiner Zeit*¹⁶⁶ that “[i]n der Umwelt oder Nähe der Gründerperiode wirkt die alte Romantik bloß noch wie eine Renaissance- oder Barockfassade vor Börsenpalästen, Post- und Telegraphengebäude, nüchtern, unecht, ungemäß” (287). For her part, Ingrid Schuster sees no way out for Kätti. She writes:

Kätti kann weder in den alten, in Konventionen erstarrten Gesellschaft leben,
noch in der neuen, die nur Geld nachjagt . . . Den Zusammenstoß mit der
Gesellschaft kannte zwar der ‘echte’ Romantiker auch, aber damals konnte man

¹⁶⁶ Fritz Böttger, *Theodor Storm in seiner Zeit* (Berlin: Nation, 1958).

der Gesellschaft noch ausweichen, konnte mit Gleichgesinnten in die Ferne ziehen. Doch diese Zeit ist längst vorbei . . . Für künstlerisch-individuelle Entfaltung und ein ungebundenes freies Leben ist in der Welt kein Platz mehr.¹⁶⁷

Nevertheless, Storm often makes use of a narrative technique found in Romantic works that, as Andrew Webber has pointed out in his article “The Afterlife of Romanticism,”¹⁶⁸ consists in focusing on a partial object rather than the whole story in order to achieve aesthetic satisfaction, particularly regarding ghost stories (33). While *Zur “Wald- und Wasserfreude”* is not a ghost story per se, the narrator sometimes refers to aspects of Kätti’s anatomy in “ghostly” terms – her eyes as “zwei glänzend schwarze Augen” (2: 609) or her hair as “das feine Köpfchen mit dem glänzend schwarzen Haarknoten” (2: 626), rather than to Kätti herself. The same technique is used again in the description of the verandah-dedication rehearsal. Here, the desired effect is not to leave the reader in the lurch by omitting certain aspects, but to show that for a privileged moment, two musicians, Kätti and Sträkelstrakel, fall under the spell of the music and are able to enjoy the freedom that it brings. During the rehearsal, Kätti lets loose a “junge Stimme” (2: 601). Liberated from the body out of which it comes, her voice, an instrument in its own right, functions as the muse that guides and counsels the small musician. For an all-too-short time, Kätti escapes into the world of music, until her voice bounces off the walls and brings her back to reality. A similar technique is used for Sträkelstrakel, but instead of a body part, the narrator chooses the violin bow with the observation “und der Geigenbogen stockte endlich, nachdem er noch eine Weile feurig in die Figuren der nächsten Takte hinausgeschossen war” (2: 601).

¹⁶⁷ Ingrid Schuster, *Die Zeitkritische Dimension* 50.

¹⁶⁸ Andrew Webber, “The Afterlife of Romanticism,” *German Literature of the Nineteenth Century, 1832-1899*, ed. Clayton Koelb and Eric Downing (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005) 23-44.

Sträkelstrakel seems to have lost control over a bow that has taken on a life of its own. The choice of terms is telling here: “stockte” implies a sudden stop in the middle of a fiery rendition by an enthusiastic bow¹⁶⁹ that repeatedly pierces the air like an arrow. In this particular instance, the unassuming tailor totally surrenders to the music in a very “manly” way that contrasts with his habitually humble demeanor. This way of playing is more evocative of the passionate music making of a Gypsy than the normal performance of the self-taught little blond man before us. In this scene, Storm dislodges stereotypes, inasmuch as the exotic-looking girl plays the bourgeois instrument *par excellence*, and the less-than-dashing man chooses the violin. As Börner notes, Storm also shatters clichés about errant musicians that he uses elsewhere in his writings: “[D]as Vagabondentum scheint letztlich zu einem reinen Heiratsmarkt degradiert, auf welchem die jungen Mädchen vor ihren späteren Ehemännern musisch darbielen. Die Kunst ist käuflich geworden, ihr einstiger Zauber profan demaskiert.”¹⁷⁰ For Kätti, the Romantic vision of travelling musicians – life on the road and marriage to a noble man – comes crashing down in the scene where Wulf Fedders meets her again after a four-year absence. Here, she is in the company of two errant musicians who have split from a larger group. The violin player is a “breite muskulöse Gestalt” (2: 612) with a temper and a violent disposition who “stieß mit seiner Geige tönend auf die Tischplatte” (2: 611) and, a moment later, drops the instrument on the table after Wulf enquires how Kätti has come to travel with him and his sister. The latter is “eine Dirne mit harten Zügen” (2: 612) whose instrument is the harp. As Börner explains, not only does the

¹⁶⁹ This image reminds us of the cousin in *Eine Halligfahrt*. Here, the instrument also takes over from the violin player, who becomes a mere conduit for the music.

¹⁷⁰ Börner 201. In *Zur “Wald- und Wasserfreude”*, the young woman who draws a rosy picture of life on the road hopes to marry a Swedish count.

brother-sister duo stand apart from the main group, but Kätti sits by herself in the corner and broods. There is no musical bond between the musicians, only silence.

In Sträkelstrakel, however, who is not given to *Träumerei* like Kätti nor bent on making money like Herr Zippel, a Romantic feel for the music endures. In his own humble way, he pays homage to its beauty, far removed from fashionable places and concert halls where it has become a simple commodity. In “dem niedrigen Stübchen” where he lives “erkl[i]ngen in reinen Tönen die lieblichsten Passagen der Mozart-Sonate” (2: 627). The contrast between his humble dwelling and the exalted passages of the music he plays could not be stronger. At the end of the story, long after Kätti has disappeared from his life, Sträkelstrakel plays at night, “wenn . . . nur die einsame Sternennacht im Flusse widerschien,” in clear tones “einzelne Passagen eines Mozart’schen Adagios” (2: 645). The little tailor never stops playing the violin because it is his way of keeping Kätti alive in his memory, long after she has been forgotten by everyone else. The music of the unromantic tailor is mentioned in a very Romantic way, just as other violin music is described in *Eine Halligfahrt*.¹⁷¹ Kätti sings of her longing for freedom and for love while accompanying herself on the guitar; Sträkelstrakel keeps Kätti’s memory alive by playing the violin. Music helps them express what they cannot or could not say in words. It might have played other important roles, serving, for example, as the basis for some form of communication between Kätti and her father, but they were both too involved in their own fantasy worlds to

¹⁷¹ “Der Mond sei über der stillen Insel gestanden, und während er nach langer Pause heimgerudert, sei in der Nacht und auf dem Meere kein anderer Laut gewesen, als diese geisterhaften, allmählich hinter ihm verhallenden Töne” (*TSSW* 2: 45). In both cases, the music is heard at night, travelling over the water in which the moon and the stars are reflected. Sträkelstrakel’s music is *sehnsüchtig*, the other is *geisterhaft*, but they are both in harmony with the landscape and the nocturnal atmosphere in which they are heard.

pause and reflect on it. Music is but a small and superficial element in Herr Zippel's life; it matters only if it helps bring him money. For Kätti, it plays a more complex role, contributing to her unhappiness when she discovers that the life of an errant musician has nothing to do with her very naive and Romantic notion of it. It is fair to say that the joy of playing a Mozart sonata and performing folksongs with Sträkelstrakel is far outweighed by the unhappiness of these two characters, whose unrequited love grows out of music making. Furthermore, when Kätti is forced by her father to play and sing for his young patrons – many of them young women who went to school with her and do not acknowledge her – music turns into an object of shame, so much so that, like Valentin, she flees and takes refuge in a hiding place. Seen in this light, music plays a negative role in the lives of Kätti and Sträkelstrakel. However, one could also argue that music is for both, but particularly for Kätti, the perfect means of expressing the Romantic side of their personalities. It allows young and immature Kätti to find an outlet for her yearnings, and Sträkelstrakel to express his longing for her after she has vanished.

At this point, I would venture to say that music is simply too important for the author to be restricted to playing a role in the emotional lives of the protagonists. As in *Ein stiller Musikant* and *Es waren zwei Königskinder*, Storm paints a picture of musical life, this time in the countryside, commenting on musical education and on the performance of music. The picture is somewhat limited, since it deals with music in a very narrow segment of the population in a small rural town, but it is, nonetheless, a realistic depiction. Kätti does not have many possibilities to improve herself in her girls' school. No mention is made of her piano teacher's competence, but one gets the impression that Kätti's talent is not nurtured as it should be, since nothing more is said about what goes on during her lessons. As for the guitar, her choice instrument, she is left to learn it on her own after receiving some rudimentary instruction from

Wulf. The prospects for the development of Kätti's musical talents are not great, not the least because her father is blinded by his own conception of what a genius should be, and because he needs her music to attract clients, both factors which prevent him from sending her to a conservatory in a larger town.

For his part, Sträkelstrakel embodies another aspect of music making in a small town. Indeed, the local farmers have long been aware of his talent and of his ability to move people. In the preceding chapter, I posited that Storm sees two main types of musicians: the virtuoso, who possesses a brilliant technique but who plays without soul;¹⁷² and the less-gifted or less-knowledgeable musician who lacks what it takes to become a virtuoso, or who never had any high musical ambition, but who, because his music making is rooted in his soul, has the capacity to move his listeners. In *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"*, however, there is no virtuoso. It is my contention that Sträkelstrakel represents the latter category of musicians, just like Valentin does in *Ein Stiller Musikant*. They are similar, not only physically, but even more so because of their love of music and their humility. Valentin can play very well, and only a deeply rooted psychological blockage prevents him from reaching his potential. As for Sträkelstrakel, he does not take any pride in having taught himself to play the violin and in being able to give a credible performance. Nevertheless, young Kätti, lacking in proper training herself, admires his talent and praises him: "'Peter Jensen!' sagte Kätti feierlich und nannte ihn bei seinem vollen Taufnamen; 'was kann Er geigen!'" (2: 602). The narrator comments that the tailor "brach durch seine ungeschulten Töne etwas, das aus der Tiefe der Menschenbrust zu kommen schien und selbst den kundigen Hörer stutzen machte" (2: 600). Here again, the author hints at the fact that virtuosity itself does not make a good musician, although Storm acknowledges on occasion that

¹⁷² This technique will be developed further in chapter 5.

musicians who possess a dazzling technique can sometimes play with the soul, but they have to be moved by love, as is the case with the cousin in *Eine Halligfahrt*, and with Marx in *Es waren zwei Königskinder*. One can interpret this dichotomy as a veiled criticism by Storm of musical education at the time he wrote his novella, an education that concentrated on virtuosity and failed his son Karl, and indirectly himself, as his ambitions for his son were never fulfilled.

As mentioned earlier, Storm gives Kätti physical Gypsy-like characteristics because, as he himself writes in a letter to Schmidt, the first half of the novella is “eine frische Vagabundengeschichte.”¹⁷³ Like a spiritual vagabond, Kätti is unable to settle down, showing a decided lack of interest in what is taught in her *Mädchenschule* and giving in to her longing to explore new horizons. But Storm has bestowed a musical talent on this nineteenth-century wanderer, setting her apart from the rest. If we look beyond this image, we see the complexity of Kätti’s character and what this young girl stands for at the particular time the story takes place. Being a gifted girl was not easy then, owing to the lack of possibility for any real development, particularly if one was the daughter of an eccentric, well-meaning innkeeper with delusions of grandeur who was not part of the established bourgeoisie. Herr Zippel pays locally for piano lessons for his “Genie,” but does not enquire further to find a teacher who might inspire her not to flee in the middle of a piece. Later on, after buying the inn, he takes advantage of his daughter’s talent in order to attract clients with the music she performs with Sträkelstrakel, a music that serves as background noise or, at best, as dance music for the patrons. No one ever congratulates the players on their efforts. To be sure, Kätti enjoys making music with Sträkelstrakel when they are practising, but it is never mentioned if she likes to provide

¹⁷³ Letter from Storm to Schmidt, 12 Jan. 1879 (*TSES* 1: 108).

entertainment in her father's establishment. One would think not, considering what the narrator observes:

Sie musizierte wohl noch an einzelnen Abenden mit Sträkelstrakel in dem leeren Saale, sie sang und spielte auch wohl einmal, wenn Gäste unter der Veranda saßen; aber sie tat das Eine mehr, um die schüchtern fragenden Augen des kleinen Musikanten zu befriedigen, das Andere nach dem Willen ihres Vaters, dem sie nicht entgehen konnte. (2: 604)

Later on, after she notices Wulf Fedders's attachment to the major's daughter, she stops performing altogether whenever the couple appears with their friends, going so far as to take refuge in a hiding place. Her embarrassment is simply too great. Kätti turns into "eine stille Musikantin," effectively becoming Valentin's soul mate, albeit for different reasons. In the long run, music is not a source of solace for Kätti;¹⁷⁴ rather, it contributes, I would argue, to her feeling of not belonging in her environment, fuelling her naive and Romantic view of a world that she can only imagine.

If Kätti, at the very least, suggests a "Vagabundin" (I would not go so far as to call her a Gypsy), Sträkelstrakel embodies a type reminiscent of the *Biedermeier* era, and is, in this regard, related to Valentin. He is quite satisfied with his life as a tailor and amateur musician, and music is for him a source of joy, not only because he is fond of it, but also because it allows him to be near Kätti, whom he loves more than anyone in the world. Nothing else could have brought them together as music does, and this is enough for him. Her admiration of his talent nurtures him and encourages him to push the boundaries ever more, as with his performance of the Mozart sonata.

¹⁷⁴ According to Börner, music constitutes "eine befriedigende Gegenwelt für Kätti" during her childhood (185).

This alternative world crashes down, however, when Kätti is confronted with the reality of life on the road.

Later on, after Kätti has disappeared, music sustains him and keeps her alive in his heart, allowing her spirit to dwell at night where she once dreamed of and hoped for a better future. It is the only thing left to him when he is reduced to living off the charity of the community.

In essence, Kätti and Sträkelstrakel symbolize two different aspects of music making in the nineteenth century. The small man, able to arouse interest in his music even though he is self-taught, stands for village musicians everywhere, with no musical ambition, who played at dances and local gatherings. In addition, he is poor and humble, resigned to his limited circumstances without ever expressing bitterness. Furthermore, he has a physical disability.¹⁷⁵ Peter Jensen represents, I would argue, a certain category of musician, indeed artist, who, seen from an economic point of view, has no useful place in the bourgeois society of the *Gründerzeit* and is, therefore, an individual of little consequence. His physical disability can be construed as a metaphor for the incapacity of the toiling artist to contribute gainfully to the economy. As if to drive home this point, Storm leaves him to the mercy of the village for subsistence and shelter at the end of the novella.

Thus, Sträkelstrakel is a symbol for the myriad of artists who eke out a living from their art, more often than not because they require gainful employment. Kätti, on the other hand, has no opportunity to make a living because of her youth and of her gender. If one adds to this her dark looks and her father's social standing, it becomes clear that she has no chance to succeed – as an artist or otherwise. This painful fact is made amply obvious by Wulf Fedders, who refers to her twice as the innkeeper's daughter and rejects her as a possible life companion, her main fault being, in his eyes, that she is Hermann Tobias Zippel's daughter. She is in a worse position than Sträkelstrakel, even though she has more talent and more potential than all the men in the story.

¹⁷⁵ In *Ein stiller Musikant*, Valentin's looks are similar to Sträkelstrakel's, and he also has a hidden disability.

She vanishes without a trace, ostensibly because her heart is broken; she also realizes that she has no future as long as she remains with her father. This disappearance is not like the first one, which looked like the Romantic escape of a young girl lured by the prospect of seeing the world and living off her art until she could catch a suitable husband. The second time, Kätti has had time to reflect on the hopelessness of her situation¹⁷⁶ and to think of ways she can escape it. No mention is made of the guitar, so one can assume that she does not take it, having left all her naive illusions behind. Music is not part of her future, which is left to the imagination of the reader.

¹⁷⁶ This becomes evident when she blurts out, after having witnessed a tender moment between the “doctor” and the blond woman: “‘Nur die Wirtstochter!’ rief sie. ‘Die Tochter aus der ‘Wald- und Wasserfreude’!” (*TSSW* 2: 642). This remark has obviously tortured her, even though she welcomed it the first time she heard it.

Chapter 5

Es waren zwei Königskinder: Romantic Realism in the Life of Music Students

Published in 1884, this novella is based on a true story that Storm first heard about from his son, Karl, in 1874. Hearing the story several years later, he transcribed it almost word for word, while giving it what he called a “Fasson,”¹⁷⁷ thereby transforming it into a literary work. The novella begins with two narrators, a technique that Storm often used to lend authenticity to a story. The first one – the heterodiegetic narrator – describes the scene: a mild summer night, with stars in the sky and a man smoking a pipe, all of which put the intradiegetic audience in a good frame of mind to listen to the story. The second – the homodiegetic narrator¹⁷⁸ – reminisces about his life as a young music student at the Stuttgart conservatory in the novella. He is about to tell a story that one member of the audience, a doctor, has previously heard him tell. Indeed, the doctor’s presence acts as a check on the storyteller’s memory, thereby lending the story more authenticity. Marx, the main protagonist, is a music student when the story opens. The son of a respected German intellectual and of a French mother – little else is known about her – he is destined by his parents from an early age to become a concert pianist. According to the narrator, Marx’s French heritage lies at the root of his nervous and sometimes irritable disposition, setting him apart from his happy-go-lucky friends. To make matters worse, Marx has fallen in love with Linele, an artisan’s daughter, whose social status is far beneath his own. Conscious of this painful fact, the young woman puts an end to the affair, upon which Marx slides into a state of depression. Following an evening of drinking, he is accused by a sentinel of disturbing the peace

¹⁷⁷ For more details on the source of the story, see Karl Ernst Laage’s commentary in *TSSW* 3: 892-90.

¹⁷⁸ I will refer to this individual as “the narrator” for the rest of this chapter.

and is thrown into jail, where soldiers cover him from head to toe with soot. Considering this event an irreparable affront to his perceived honour and good name, Marx finds life impossible to bear and commits suicide.

Storm claimed several times that his novella was “light fare,”¹⁷⁹ prompting him to send it to the Stuttgart newspaper *Vom Fels zum Meer*, which he considered less serious than the publications where he normally appeared, the *Deutsche Rundschau* and *Westermanns Monatshefte*. Nevertheless, his son Karl’s original story told ten years previously caught Storm’s attention, and the fact that the protagonists are music students at a conservatory places this frame novella squarely within the topic of my dissertation.

A reference to conservatories in *Ein stiller Musikant* (Valentin calls them “Dinger”; 2: 291) gives a rather negative impression of these formal institutions. In *Es waren zwei Königskinder*, by contrast, the reader gains insight into the unfolding lives of the music students, depending on their individual personalities. It is worth mentioning here that the novella was first published under the rather neutral title of *Marx*, which Storm later replaced with the line taken from the well-known folk song. However, the author did not explain why he made the change. It is my contention that the final title hints at the text’s Romanticism, thereby shaping the reader’s expectations. As we will see, the line from the song plays an important role in Marx’ life, serving as a leitmotiv throughout the story.

¹⁷⁹ For more on this subject, see Storm’s letter to Gottfried Keller, dated 21 Nov. 1884 (“Das ist . . . wohl etwas eine leichte Arbeit”; *BTSKGK* 145); also letters to Paul Heyse, dated 2 Oct. 1884 (“Ich lege auf die Kleinigkeit weiter keinen Wert”; *TSPH* 3: 94) and Erich Schmidt, dated 24 Aug. 1884 (“schreibe jetzt eine leichte Sommerarbeit, nach einem Erlebnis meines Sohns Karl . . .”; *TSES* 2: 99).

Es waren zwei Königskinder consists of two parts. In *Theodor Storm*, Franz Stuckert declares that the story “zerfällt in zwei beziehungslos aneinandergefügte Teile, die nur durch die Einheit der Personen zusammengehalten werden” (379). I will explain later why I think that the parts have more in common than might appear at first sight. At this point, however, I would argue that the first part serves as a Romantic interlude that stands in sharp contrast with the dramatic events which take place in the second, and that both parts include closely intertwined Romantic and Realist elements. As Helmut Schanze remarks in his work *Romantik-Handbuch*,¹⁸⁰ “Romantik und Realismus schließen sich nicht aus. Sie sind auf einander bezogen und beziehbar, will man nicht dem bloßen Systemzwang erliegen” (167). This holds just as true for *Es waren zwei Königskinder*, as I will explain over the course of this chapter. The first part of the novella is a vignette representing a way of life – musicians roaming the countryside in order to earn food and drink with their music making – a tradition that had already disappeared by the age of Realism. The idyll does not last, however, because reality sets in once the students are compelled to return to their studies, as Marx reminds his companions. Nor do the young men live solely for music, as is the case, for example, for Berglinger, a protagonist of Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, and Kreisler, one of the heroes of E. T. A. Hoffmann. In Storm’s novella, the students are not composers; they are merely learning the craft of music in a very systematic way that, as I will show, the narrator explains with precision. The concept of “absolute music,” an art that surpasses all arts because of its ethereal nature and one so dear to Romantic writers like Hoffmann,¹⁸¹ is not featured in this novella. Thus, the narrator does not name the titles of the

¹⁸⁰ Helmut Schanze, ed. *Romantik-Handbuch* (Tübingen: Kröner, 1994).

¹⁸¹ In his review of *Symphony no. 5* by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), E. T. A. Hoffmann writes that “[d]ie Musik ist die romantischste aller Künste . . . Jede Leidenschaft . . . kleidet die Musik in den Purpurschimmer der

pieces the students are working on, except for one vague reference to a work by Frederic Chopin (1810-49). In fact, the music performed is reduced to two songs, one of which – the folk ballad of the title – has survived to the present day. Instead, music is presented as something that requires strict discipline and in-depth study in order to be mastered. Music does not formally serve as structural concept of this novella, having lost its association with Romanticism. Rather, the novella dwells on two main themes: musical education, the difficulties that young aspiring musicians encounter along the way, and Marx's own struggle to fulfil his aspirations in a world guided by bourgeois values. Therein lays the Realist nature of the novella, as it is based on a true story¹⁸² and transcribed almost verbatim, based on Karl's telling of it. The novella does not describe the artists – or the students, in this case – as being at odds with society and having to conform to bourgeois norms.¹⁸³ Instead, the music students are part of the bourgeoisie – one “ist der Sohn eines Musikdirektors aus Basel,” and Marx's father “[lebt] als angesehener Mann in Metz” (3: 296) – and, by all accounts, lead happy and busy lives.

Added to the two main themes is the difference in social status between Linele and Marx, a familiar occurrence in Storm's novellas. In *Es waren zwei Königskinder*, however, the roles are inverted, inasmuch as it is not the “socially superior” protagonist who puts an end to the affair, but, rather, the young woman who feels that she would be a liability for him. A further addition

Romantik, und selbst das im Leben Empfundene führt uns hinaus aus dem Leben in das Reich des Unendlichen.”

See *Sämtliche Werke* 1: 532-33.

¹⁸² Storm mentions this several times in his correspondence, e.g., letter to Keller, dated 7 Aug. 1885, *Der Briefwechsel zwischen Theodor Storm und Gottfried Keller (BTSGK)*, ed. Peter Goldammer (Berlin: Aufbau, 1967) 146-49; and letter to Heyse, dated 19 Mar. 1888, *TSPH* 3:169-71.

¹⁸³ This is also the case in Storm's *Pole Poppenspähler*, where the puppeteer and his daughter are forced to give up their nomadic life in order to be accepted into bourgeois society.

is the presence of Prussian soldiers in Stuttgart, an allusion to Prussia's increased power in the newly formed nation of Germany. Although this point is not developed any further in the novella, I agree with Hugo Aust when he declares that Storm is "ein eminent gesellschaftlicher Autor . . . [whose] realistische[r] Blick den gesellschaftlichen Zügen des modernen Lebens [gilt]." ¹⁸⁴ All of these factors contribute to Marx's difficulties and dilemmas, and while they do not directly stem from the fact that he is a musician, they nonetheless have an impact on his life as a music student and on the quality of his piano playing.

Still, the fact that music is not depicted as transcendental does not prevent the novella from containing Romantic connections. Before I explore this notion in more detail and explain to what extent the text also displays a strong affinity to Realism, I wish to examine the similarities and the differences between the three novellas that are the object of my overall dissertation.

The two novellas examined in chapters 3 and 4 share some vital characteristics: significantly, the main protagonists are amateur musicians whose hopes and dreams are never fulfilled. By contrast, the protagonists in *Es waren zwei Königskinder* are all music students at a conservatory, and the narrator becomes a professional musician later on in the story. I have already pointed out physical and psychological similarities between Valentin in *Ein stiller Musikant* and Sträkelstrakel in *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"*: their small stature, blue eyes and blond hair, a rather resigned personality, and lack of sexual drive. By comparison, Marx looks different; he has dark hair and dark eyes, is subject to restlessness, and feels an ardent love for Linele that inspires his piano playing throughout the duration of their idyll. Valentin and Kätti (*Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"*) both grow up without a mother and have problematic relationships with their fathers. Marx has a French mother from whom he seems to have

¹⁸⁴ Hugo Aust, *Realismus: Lehrbuch Germanistik* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2006) 239.

inherited physical attributes and rather negative psychological characteristics. Contrary to Valentin and Kätti, however, he enjoys a good relationship with his father and speaks of him with tenderness (3: 298), while never losing sight of his father's very high expectations for him. Above all, Marx is both conscious and proud of his father's good name and intent on doing him justice. As far as musical characteristics are concerned, the composers mentioned in *Ein stiller Musikant* and *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"* are usually referred to as Classical composers.¹⁸⁵ In *Es waren zwei Königskinder*, by contrast, Marx plays music by Chopin, widely regarded as an arch-Romantic composer, and the students at his conservatory discuss the music of Wagner – “the narrator [brach] eine Lanze für Wagner, –” (318), a far cry from Mozart and Haydn, and the only time that Wagner is mentioned at all in Storm's oeuvre, even though he was an actual contemporary of Storm and his music had a resounding influence on the German musical scene.

However, all three novellas do have some points in common. The events in *Ein stiller Musikant* and *Es waren zwei Königskinder* both begin at night, when darkness has set in, and the atmosphere created by the burning fire in the first novella, and particularly the star-lit sky in the second, harken back to Romanticism.¹⁸⁶ Each narrator reminisces¹⁸⁷ about the life of a long-

¹⁸⁵ In the previously mentioned review of Beethoven's *Symphony no. 5*, Hoffmann names Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven in the same breath, declaring that “[d]ie Instrumental-Kompositionen aller drei Meister atmen einen gleichen romantischen Geist, welches eben in dem gleichen innigen Ergreifen eines eigentümlichen Wesens der Kunst liegt.” See *Sämtliche Werke* 1: 533.

¹⁸⁶ However, the star the narrator gazes at – Algol – is dubbed the “demon star” by astronomers. This is because it sits inside the head of Medusa, the Gorgon, which can be observed in the constellation Perseus. See “Demon Star,” *Dictionary of Astronomy, Oxford Reference*, Oxford UP, 2015, Web, 14 Jan. 2015. Added to the beauty of the star is an uncanny element linked in the narrator's mind to the untimely death of his friend.

dead friend and feels the presence of his spirit. In both novellas, the Romantic setting quickly makes way for realistic accounts of the narrator's first encounter, first with Valentin in *Ein stiller Musikant*, and then with Marx's fellow students in *Es waren zwei Königskinder*. The main characteristic common to *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"* and *Es waren zwei Königskinder* is their composition: both novellas comprise two parts that are often seen as having little in common with one another, particularly *Es waren zwei Königskinder*. Before I further develop this point, I wish to mention another important similarity, this time in the plot of the story. Both Kätti and Marx are in love and interact with the individual object of their affection. During that time, each plays music: with pleasure, in Kätti's case, and with a great depth of emotion or *Seele*,¹⁸⁸ in Marx's case. When it becomes clear to the protagonists in both novellas that they have lost the person they love – and it must be mentioned here that both relationships fail for the same reason, that is, the difference in social status – they no longer seek solace and comfort in music. This, I would argue, implies that they do not consider music to be an important part of their emotional life. Out of a sense of shame, Kätti stops playing to entertain her father's clients, and Marx, robbed of the profound joy he once felt performing Chopin, reverts to playing "seelenlos, so wie ein Automat" (3: 315).¹⁸⁹ In both novellas, music does not provide the characters with the emotional support that could help them recover from their deception and get on with their lives.

¹⁸⁷ There is an equally Romantic setting in Hoffmann's *Die Serapionsbrüder*, where friends gather by a fire for a reunion after fourteen years of separation.

¹⁸⁸ Referring to the particularly sensitive rendering of a song during a concert in *Ein stiller Musikant*, an old gentleman exclaims, "Das ist Seele – Seele!" (*TSSW* 2: 309).

¹⁸⁹ The term "Automat" brings to mind the machines that increasingly replaced workers during industrialization.

Before having their hearts broken, however, both protagonists derive pleasure from music. In *Es waren zwei Königskinder*, the song “Tropfen von Tau” is the pretext for a night out during which the students enjoy a short break from their studies. As I mentioned previously, some commentators saw nothing more than a vague link between the two parts of the novella. It is my contention, however, that the first part sees further development in the second, for several reasons. At the beginning of the novella, the four students pretend to be *fahrende Sänger*, a nod to the past, like the travelling students in *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* (1826) by Eichendorff. During the students’ night out, music plays the central role: the song performed by the characters is what brings them together, providing them, on a more prosaic note, with free food and drink. Furthermore, music constitutes an important link with the past and represents a Romantic element; the carefree spirit of the scene is also reminiscent of the atmosphere in Eichendorff’s novel. At the end of part one, the narrator finally explains what sets Marx apart from his friends, thus preparing the reader for the events that will take place in the second part. “Es waren zwei Königskinder” is not performed during the first half of the story, but there is, nonetheless, an allusion to it: the students light some candles along the way and let them continue burning after singing their song “[z]ur Freude der Nachtwanderer, die nach uns kommen,” (3: 301), as Franz, one of the students, explains. Indeed, candles play a crucial role in the ballad “Es waren zwei Königskinder”.¹⁹⁰ Here, the king’s son drowns as he attempts to swim to the castle of the daughter of another king, whereupon the candle is suddenly blown out. One night, when his friends are visiting him, Marx lights, as in the folk song, “drei kleine mit Rosen

¹⁹⁰ The second stanza of the ballad “Es waren zwei Königskinder” reads as follows: “Ach Schätzchen, könntest du schwimmen, / so schwimm doch herüber zu mir! / Drei Kerzen will ich anzünden, / und die soll’n leuchten zu dir.” See Otto Holzapfel, *Das große deutsche Volksballadenbuch* (Düsseldorf: Artemis & Winkler, 2000) 209.

bemalte Wachskerzen . . . und klebt(e) sie vor dem offenen Fenster auf die Fensterbank” (3: 313). His window stands opposite the window of Linele, his love interest, with the burning candles a symbol of his love for her and a signal that he would like her to come to him. The song itself, which is not laden with any particular meaning for Marx’s friends, becomes a means of communication between the four friends after that evening.

Throughout the first part of the story, Romantic and Realist elements can be found side by side. I have already mentioned the starlit night during which the heterodiegetic narrator sets to reminiscing. The night the students spend walking and singing is just as beautiful: “[D]ie Juninacht war schön, einige Sterne funkelten über uns . . . unser Terzet strahlte wie ein Stern durch die einsame Juninacht . . . da stieg . . . ein gelber Mond empor; zugleich schlug eine Nachtigall, und ein Schauer zog durch die Obstbäume . . .” (3: 301). The four students pretend to be *fahrende Sänger*, a salute to the past, and a likely reference to what was a way of life for many musicians in the Middle Ages until the Renaissance, when they brought music to the people who donated in kind to thank them, just like the baker and the innkeeper do in the story.

Another link with the past and Romanticism can be found in the well-known *Volksballade* “Es waren zwei Königskinder,” quoted in part in the second half of the novella. Storm also includes the first three bars in the text (3: 313); eventually, the song becomes for Marx a self-fulfilling prophecy.

With its origins in the sixteenth century, the ballad “Es waren zwei Königskinder” recounts the ancient Greek legend of Hero and Leander, two young lovers who find themselves separated by the sea. One stormy night, the light Hero has left burning atop the tower goes out, and Leander, with nothing to guide him through the dark, succumbs to the power of the waves as he swims to join her. Distraught when she discovers her lover’s body, Hero jumps from the

tower to be united with him in death. Ovid told the story in his *Heroides (The Heroines)* 18 and 19, and the theme was taken up once again in various countries during the Middle-Ages and the Renaissance.¹⁹¹ In the ballad, the king's daughter is distressed by her lover's death. She asks her mother for permission to go alone for a walk. The mother resists, but then gives in to her daughter's demand. Asking a fisherman to retrieve her lover's body from the water, the young girl kisses the corpse, whereupon she jumps into the water and drowns. In addition to the first three bars of the song, the first three stanzas are reproduced in Storm's novella, giving those readers who are familiar with the ballad sufficient clues to hazard a guess at Marx's fate.

In *Es waren zwei Königskinder*, Storm has given the reader yet another adaptation of the famous ballad, albeit with a few twists. First of all, there is no water between the lovers of the novella, only a street. Theoretically, it should not be physically difficult for Marx to cross it, but there are unseen obstacles, such as the differences in social status and language between the two lovers. For her part, Linele speaks the Swabian dialect of the region, which Storm took great pains to get right.¹⁹² Unlike the king's daughter, Linele does not write to Marx to tell him to come, but only to warn him that a love affair like theirs is impossible. In the ballad, the king's daughter puts three candles in the window to guide her lover as he swims towards her. In Storm's version, by contrast, Marx reverses the roles and lights three candles, which he then sets in his window. One evening, he invites his friends to sing the first two stanzas of the ballad, after which, the narrator comments: "Unserem Marx standen die dicken Tränen in den Augen, er war

¹⁹¹ For more details on the origins and the various versions of the ballad, see Hilde Kommerell's *Das Volkslied "Es waren zwei Königskinder"* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1931); and Holzapfel's *Volksballadenbuch* 471-72.

¹⁹² Storm turned to Margarethe Mörike (Eduard Mörike's wife) in order to get the dialect right. See editorial notes in *TSSW* 3: 896-97.

völlig ‘verturnt’, wie wir zu sagen pflegten; er drückte uns allen krampfhaft die Hand und warf sich dann in eine Sofaecke” (3: 313). Before this episode, Marx had written in his diary: “Wo ist das Ende? Je ne pourrai jamais la laisser!” (3: 312).¹⁹³ When Linele reveals to him that their love is not possible and hence, stops appearing at her window altogether, Marx quotes the third stanza of the song in which “ein falsches Nönnchen” (3: 315) blows out the candles so that the young man will drown. This figure, an anecdotal “fake nun,” can be seen as the personification of destiny, which one cannot escape.¹⁹⁴ The narrator, however, is quick to point out to his friend that “du selber bist das ‘Nönnchen’” (3: 315), implying that Marx is his own worst enemy because of his tendency toward pessimism. The ballad, which Marx first uses to serenade Linele as she takes refuge behind her window, acquires a deeper meaning for him as she makes him aware of the difference in social status between them. With that, the ballad then takes on a life of its own in his mind. While Linele’s exit from the relationship is not the only factor that pushes him directly toward suicide, the song and its prophetic lyrics could be seen as a contributing factor to that decision.

Using a ballad or a poem in a novel was a technique widely used by Romantic authors, who mixed literary genres in order to produce an *Über-Gattung*.¹⁹⁵ Storm also uses this

¹⁹³ One could attribute this almost melodramatic move to his French heritage. This point is developed later on in the chapter.

¹⁹⁴ For more information about the “Nönnchen” reference, see Holzapfel 472. In this ballad, explains the author, one is helpless in the face of destiny, with the only possible way out being suicide.

¹⁹⁵ Term found in Detlef Kremer’s *Romantik* (Stuttgart; Metzler, 2001) 97. Kremer explains that the Romantic writers wanted to establish the *Roman* (novel) as an *Über-Gattung* that would best express the fragmented universality of Romanticism. I use this term here rather than *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a word closely associated with Richard Wagner’s conception of the fusion of literature and music.

technique, as seen in the preceding chapters, in order to express feelings of which a protagonist is not necessarily conscious, or which he or she is unable to define in words. Yet, this ballad is anything but Romantic in nature and has its place in a realistic story, simply because it does not paint a rosy picture of reality. According to Otto Holzapfel, “Es waren zwei Königskinder” drove people to become passive and to endure suffering as the result of destiny. He then points out: “Die Ballade ist realistnäher (als das Märchen) und in der Einschätzung der Möglichkeiten zur Emanzipation, zur individuellen Befreiung eher nüchtern und illusionslos. Die Ballade predigt ihrer Ideologie nach die Anpassung an bestehende gesellschaftliche Normen, statt sie in Frage oder gar auf den Kopf zu stellen . . .” (472). In the same vein, what starts as lover’s grief for Marx turns into a tragedy after the aforementioned episode with the soldiers, simply because he cannot distance himself from his inflexible sense of honour. Similar to the lover in the ballad, his only possible recourse is suicide, albeit for a different reason. In contrast, the ballad is nothing but a song for Marx’s friends; they do not associate the unhappy love story or the tragic end of the lovers with their friend’s attachment to Linele, nor do they suspect that it foreshadows Marx’s descent into despair. In a playful way, they use the first bars of the song as a signal and a means of communication for day-to-day activities. Technically speaking, this constitutes an effective way of keeping the ballad present in the story and ensuring that it is never far from Marx’s mind.

The Romantic reference in the title notwithstanding, the novella contains numerous concrete details about the conservatory and the life of music students in those days. From the beginning, Fritz, the homodiegetic narrator, explains why he left an unnamed conservatory because the teaching method used there did not suit him – the old director had not moved with the times and rejected the advice of experts – and then starts talking about the school of music in

Stuttgart where he subsequently enrolled. He goes on to name the director of the school and the teaching methods used, adding a little anecdote about Franz Liszt, who supposedly accepted as private students only those who had previously studied there (3: 294). Another realistic element at the onset of the story is the description of the narrator's room, complete with address and pictures of the King and the Queen hanging on the walls. The same pictures are found later on in the *Stube* of the innkeeper. The reader also learns how relationships were formed between students of the era, particularly when it comes to using the familiar "du" as a form of address. The spirit of the time is also captured in the persons of Marx, the *Halbfranzose* (a.k.a. *Lavendel*) and the narrator, the blond *Nordmann* (a.k.a. *Senfkerl*).¹⁹⁶ Their physical descriptions point to regional, indeed ethnic, differences, which are not developed in the story but serve to provide a realistic social and psychological background to the story.¹⁹⁷ Finally, to give the narration a more authentic flavour, the local protagonists speak the Swabian dialect, which Storm took great pains

¹⁹⁶ This is the same binary code – blond versus dark – that Storm used in *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"* to suggest Kätti's alterity .

¹⁹⁷ French and German stereotypes are examined in depth by Ruth Florack in *Tiefsinnige Deutsche, frivole Franzosen: Nationale Stereotype in deutscher und französischer Literatur* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2001). Of particular interest here is part 5 (708-921), containing texts written after the French Revolution of 1789 with stereotypes still valid in the late nineteenth century. Here is an example: "Wo die moralische Überlegenheit des Deutschen behauptet wird, tauchen eben die Muster auf, die sich seit der Frühaufklärung mit 'deutscher Tugend' verbinden: Redlichkeit, Treue, Ernst, Innerlichkeit, Einfalt usw. Das Fremde erscheint im Gegenzug als moralisch minderwertig, da leichtfertig, oberflächlich, eitel, und allzu sinnlich" (704).

to render correctly,¹⁹⁸ thereby avoiding an “extremer Realismus der Sprache” which, according to J. M. Ritchie, Realist authors normally shunned.¹⁹⁹

Besides portraying the students on an evening away from the conservatory, the first part of the novella also informs the reader about the importance of music in the lives of students and ordinary people. At the centre of the students’ lives is music, not only in their devotion to their studies – they practice between seven and eight hours a day – but also during their leisure time. For example, instead of going to a drinking establishment after a rowdy evening spent killing cockroaches in the room of one unfortunate student, they take the piece they have been practicing, “Tropfen von Tau,” on their excursion. At this point, the narrator mentions that the song had been composed for women’s voices, giving this as the reason he has forgotten both the melody and the name of the composer (3: 298). This suggests that the music was somehow second rate and brings to mind the equally second-rate education that girls received at the time.

The escapade related in the first half of the novella also serves to highlight the role of music in the life of ordinary people, like the baker who provides the students with fragrant buns, and the owner of an inn who invites them to enjoy some coffee in his *gute Stube*, both times as a thank you for the students’ singing. In fact, the baker belongs to a *Gesangverein* that performs, as he explains, at patriotic events such as flag dedication ceremonies (3: 305). People of all walks of life who sang in these choirs were part of a *Volksgemeinschaft*, which equated to a nationhood

¹⁹⁸ On this point, see Laage’s explanations in *TSSW* 3: 896-98.

¹⁹⁹ In his article “Ambivalenz des ‘Realismus’ in der deutschen Literatur, 1830-80,” J. M. Ritchie states that Realist authors strived for balance and avoided extremes. This Realism, “eine sorgfältige Kultivierung der Mitte, ein sorgfältiges Vermeiden von Extremen,” applied, among other things, to language (395).

that was an ethnocultural fact.²⁰⁰ He is not a member of the choir for political reasons, however, but because he delivers buns to the singers when they go on excursions, he feels he might as well join them.²⁰¹ While this is a very practical motivation, it does not lessen the fact that the baker enjoys singing and listening to singers. Furthermore, he thinks he knows enough to criticize the performance of the tenor, Marx, unabashedly using his own dialect – “der Tenor kommt mir e bissele schwach für” – whereupon Marx answers: “Das macht der Text, Meister . . . das darf man nur so spinnewebenartig singen, wenn’s nicht zerreißen soll” (3: 304). Clearly, Marx pokes fun at the baker with his nonsensical answer. In another little town further away, the students serenade a girl who is most likely a servant (i.e., she holds a broom), who laughingly blushes. Still further along the way, Marx takes his cohorts to an inn he had visited before, addressing the innkeeper in a very elaborate turn of phrase from the story of the *fahrende Sänger*, which contrasts with the Swabian dialect. The innkeeper first reacts by saying, “Des wär! Ei, was se saget!” after which the narrator teasingly remarks, “sagte der Wirt und schaute uns mit unglaublich dummen Augen” (3: 307). This little scene demonstrates that music is performed and written not only for those who study and understand it, but also for people of all levels of intelligence and aptitude. Music is part of the human makeup; it speaks to the simple soul and the students respond instinctively to the emotions they awaken in their listeners. The narrator mentions that the students sing “nicht ohne Innigkeit” (3: 306) for the young girl standing at the window. It seems to him that they had never performed that song as well as they did for the

²⁰⁰ Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1992) 1.

²⁰¹ In chapters 3 and 4, I mentioned *Liedertafel* and *Gesangvereine*, which contributed greatly to the musical enjoyment and education of various social groups in the nineteenth century. Storm did his part by founding choirs in Heiligenstadt and in Husum.

innkeeper, who looks at them “bewegungslos mit seinen runden Augen” (3: 307), and then cannot contain his enthusiasm and calls both his wife, who once sang like a lark when she was young, and his daughter, who takes piano lessons from the local teacher. Without a doubt, music plays an important role in the daily life of ordinary people and fosters communication between social groups with little in common otherwise. It also brings out a feeling of generosity in those who appreciate it.

After initially resisting the idea, Marx warms up to the students’ night out by pretending to be a singer, demonstrating good humour as he sings lustily with the others. He shows wit in his comment regarding the perceived weakness of the tenor’s performance, and leads his friends to the inn of a *Krugwirt* who showed kindness to him in the past. It is his idea to serenade the young girl with the broom and to address the innkeeper in friendly terms. Yet, this relaxed side of Marx’s personality no longer reveals itself in the second part of the novella. Indeed, as the story progresses, his disposition turns more and more sombre, with music playing a diminishing role in his life as personal difficulties come to increasingly burden him.

Of the various protagonists examined in the previous chapters, Marx is the most musically gifted and the most developed from a psychological point of view. He is a complex character, beginning with his parental heritage and his social status. The narrator, a fellow student at the conservatory, attributes some of Marx’s physical traits – the yellowish tinge to his skin and his dark hair – to the fact that his mother is French, which, in and of itself, is not relevant to the exploration of the role that music plays in the young man’s life, but which is symptomatic of the anti-French bias found in Germany after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. Throughout the story, Marx is referred to as “der Halbfranzose” who smells of lavender and eats snails and garlic (3: 303). To round out this cliché-ridden characterization, he drinks very strong

coffee before playing the piano in the morning and smokes strong tobacco. If he were not of such nervous disposition, this description would also fit the bohemian lifestyle of any number of artists in the nineteenth century, like those as portrayed in *La Bohème* (1896) by Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924), for example. Whether consciously or not, Marx's fellow students perceive him as being different, first of all because of his half-French origin to which they owe his personality and his alterity. But this is not the only thing that sets him apart. Indeed, he fits a type of musician who, as Jörg Theilacker posits in "*Männer – Phantasie – Hirngeburt: Gescheiterte Musiker in Novellen des 19. Jahrhunderts*," are remarkable because of their "*Disparität*," which manifests itself "in der Kleidung, Physiognomie und Körperbewegung, Sprache und Bildung, sowie im sozialen Verhalten und Status" (157). Yet, not all of these categories apply to Marx. While his clothes are never mentioned, for example, we have just seen that his physical appearance sets him apart.²⁰² He displays one peculiar behaviour, which the narrator mentions several times: he grinds his teeth whenever he is upset. Additionally, Marx's language is not particularly noble; indeed, he swears a lot in French, which reinforces the fact that his irritable disposition allegedly stems from his French heritage. Still, he comes from a respected family and is proud of his social status (3: 315).

On top of being shaped by his dual citizenship, or perhaps because of it,²⁰³ Marx is "von krankhafter Reizbarkeit" (3: 310), an irritability that can also have its roots in his artistic

²⁰² In chapter 4, I pointed out that Sträkelstrakel was often described as a small, child-like man, reminiscent of Mozart as a child. Likewise, I argue that one could see physical similarities between Chopin and Marx, particularly their dark hair and the fact that Chopin's father was French.

²⁰³ In an article entitled "Human Migration and the Marginal Man," *American Journal of Sociology* 33:6 (1928): 881-93, Robert E. Park calls a man of mixed blood a "marginal man" (893), and explains that such a man lives in a

disposition. Indeed, he is very insecure and exceedingly sensitive to other people's opinions of him, which constitutes a handicap for any future soloist. From the very beginning of the story, Marx stands out from his fellow students and friends: for example, Walther is a good young man who is universally loved, Franz is the humorist of the group, and the narrator, new to the conservatory, is ready to make new friends. By comparison, Marx's nervousness and restlessness, along with the intensity and dedication he brings to his studies, only serve to set him apart. Here, I would argue that his state of mind expresses the uncertainty of the artist's life toward the end of the nineteenth century, in a society that was increasingly driven by material pursuits. Be that as it may, difficulties like these are part of the learning process. As Storm shows in *Es waren zwei Königskinder*, Marx's preparation for becoming an artist, in this case a musician, is no easy task and necessitates complete dedication on his part. In that regard, the aspiring musician is particularly diligent. After the sleepless night during which he and his friends pretend to be wandering singers, he goes to his piano class in the morning while the others sleep. The narrator comments: "Wie ich später von dem Lehrer hörte, hatte er gerade damals vortrefflich gespielt; aber was es ihm an Nervenkapital gekostet, davon hat er nicht geredet" (3: 310). The implication here is that, when in an altered state of consciousness due to lack of sleep, for example, a musician performs better than he usually does. Yet, the same thing happens to the narrator who, troubled by Marx's strange behaviour before his eventual disappearance, makes the following remarks about his own playing: "[es] ging mir wie Marx nach unserer Sängerfahrt: ich spielte ohne jeden Anstoß, die schwierigsten Passagen flogen mir nur so aus den Fingern, daß der Lehrer mich befremdet und doch höchst beifällig ansah" (3:

relatively permanent state of crisis because he belongs to two different worlds (893). This could be an additional reason for Marx's irritability and moodiness.

326).²⁰⁴ This odd event happens after the narrator recognizes that lack of the proper technique prevented him from playing with deep emotion (3: 314). It goes hand in hand with another statement made in this particular novella: that Marx plays with his soul when he was happily in love with Linele. Like in the other music novellas under consideration in my dissertation, *Es waren zwei Königskindergskinder* identifies two distinct ways of singing and playing an instrument: in a virtuoso manner without soul, and in an emotional way from the soul, which does not require the musician to possess a virtuoso technique. Rather than mentioning this fact in passing, as in *Ein stiller Musikant*, the narrator in *Es waren zwei KönigsKinder* develops the argument over the course of his narration, using Marx to illustrate his point. Of all the protagonists studied so far, Marx is the only one capable of performing in both ways, depending on his psychological frame of mind. The narrator says as much in the following passage:

Marx war von höchstem Fleiße und gewann eine Innerlichkeit des Vortrags, die ich ihm zuvor nicht zugetraut hatte. Zwar im technischen Klavierspiel hatte er . . . mich schon lange überholt; er hatte begonnen, wenn wir allein waren, mir schwierige Sachen ohne Anstoß vorzuspielen; aber es war mir mitunter schwer erträglich geworden, denn ich meinte zu fühlen, daß ihm etwas fehle, *das mit dem Kern und Urquell aller Musik zusammenhing*,²⁰⁵ was ich selber in mir trug, aber derzeit wegen mangelnder Technik nicht zum vollen Ausdruck bringen konnte.

(3: 314)

²⁰⁴ Here is a similar occurrence from *Ein stiller Musikant*. Valentin recalls that, after his father hit him because he stumbled on a difficult passage in a sonata, “es wurde mir plötzlich leicht, die Noten wurden wie von selbst zu Tönen, als wären gar keine weißen und schwarzen Tasten mehr dazwischen, die meine unbeholfene Hand zu treffen hatte” (*TSSW* 2: 287).

²⁰⁵ Ital. mine.

The narrator does not explain what he means by “Kern und Urquell aller Musik,” perhaps because he was too young and inexperienced to put into words what he felt at the time. In this particular novella, technique and feeling are no longer mutually exclusive; rather, technique is at the service of the soulful execution of musical pieces. However, the fact remains that the player has to be in a particular state of mind, a sort of *état de grâce*, in order to play in this manner. Such is the case for Marx as long as he is happily in love. Only then, observes the narrator, does he reach “in den tiefsten Abgrund” when he plays Chopin (3: 314). This state of grace does not last, however. Whenever he is unhappy, Marx soon reverts to his former way of playing, so much so that the narrator remarks, “Du spielst seit einiger Zeit wieder so seelenlos, so wie ein Automat” (3: 315). In two of the novellas analyzed in this dissertation, the protagonists perform well when they suffer from lack of sleep (Marx), are in a state of shock (Valentin), or worried (narrator in *Es waren zwei Königskinder*), not to mention a happy state inspired by love. All of which begs the question: is it possible at all to reach musical perfection when one is in a “normal” state of mind?²⁰⁶ Interpretation, it is implied, is linked to the psychological and emotional states of the musician. No mention is made of the composer’s intent or what the music is meant to convey to the listeners. This, I would argue, greatly reduces the power of music itself, since the expressiveness it can attain and the extent to which it can touch listeners both depend, it would seem, on the mental state of the performer.

Marx’s technical superiority is due, in part, to the fact that he started studying the piano at a very young age, not of his own volition, but, rather, because “er [war] zum Musiker bestimmt

²⁰⁶ In *Zur “Wald- und Wasserfreude”*, the notion of playing mechanically or with “Seele” is never mentioned, perhaps because Kätti, with no great musical ambitions of her own, is forced to play in her father’s inn to entertain clients. Nevertheless, she draws great pleasure from playing folk songs on her guitar.

gewesen” and “[wurde] schon als Kind zu übermäßigem Klavierspiel angetrieben” (3: 311). As a result, he studies “in peinlichster Pflichterfüllung,” whereas his fellow students dedicate themselves to music “in gewissenhafter Arbeit” (3: 310). This explains the question he puts to the narrator upon meeting him for the first time: “Haben Sie denn auch die Nerven zu dem alleinseligmachenden Anschlag mitgebracht? Es kommt hier auf ein Menschenleben nicht groß an!” (3: 297). More suited for an experience on the battlefield, these very strong words betray Marx’s general unhappiness and the way he perceives his education at the conservatory. He makes it sound more like the regimen at a military academy than life at a school of music. Marx’s state of mind is a very far cry from Valentin’s, for example, who finds solace in music despite lacking the talent to be a great musician. By contrast, Marx feels overwhelmed by the whole experience, even though his piano teacher is regarded as “ein wahrer Vater seiner Konservatoristen” (3: 310). Music does not nurture Marx; rather, it drives him to loneliness, and explains in part his frayed nerves and restlessness in body and mind, long before Linele puts an end to their romance and before the soldiers cover him with soot. When it becomes obvious that he is not well and that he is sinking into a depressed state of mind, he goes on playing the piano “um den Lehrern gerecht zu werden,” (3: 321), without finding any comfort in it.

Love and music, love and social status: all play a role in Marx’s life and slow descent into depression. The trigger for his emotional despair, Linele, is not fully developed as a character; it is my contention that her role is that of a catalyst, bringing to the fore some of Marx’s personality traits and shedding light on the social realities of the time. Indeed, she fits the familiar image in Storm’s novellas of a young girl barely out of childhood and belonging to a lower social class. In this particular novella, she is described as a fifteen-year-old blond child (3: 311), who writes with “schulmäßiger Mädchenhand” (3: 317) and has “große(n)

Kinderaugen” (3: 323). Contrary to Kätti in *Zur “Wald- und Wasserfreude”*, who does all she can in order to win the affection of the socially superior Wulf Fedders, Linele, speaking in dialect, does all she can to belittle herself in Marx’s eyes and to put an end to a relationship she feels will lead nowhere, all the while professing her love for him. The last time she sees him, she asks him to come to a garden where he finds her “in einem wüsten, vernachlässigten Winkel”; she stands “neben einer verfallenen Laube und riß wie in Gedanken die gelben Blätter von den Zweigen” (3: 316-17). More than words can express, these gloomy surroundings let the reader know how she feels and what her decision will be.²⁰⁷ Additionally, the adjectives “wüst,” “vernachlässigt,” and “verfallen” also apply to the way Marx feels after learning that Linele has put an end to their romance, largely because, in her words, “dein Vater ist ein fürnehmer Gelehrter, und ich bin nur eine Meistertochter, das paßt nit z’sammen” (3: 317). Young as she is, she knows what his father’s social position means for Marx; thus, she puts her love aside, without knowing the tragic consequences of her selfless act.

Instead of seeking refuge in music, Marx decides to drown his sorrows in alcohol, a decision that will have disastrous consequences. For Marx, born into a respected bourgeois family, has been raised with a sense of duty and honour that he demonstrates both at the conservatory and in other parts of his life. However, his is not a healthy sense of honour; rather, it is one that makes him susceptible to the slightest disapproval or criticism (3: 310) and contributes to his overall nervousness. It also makes him overly conscious of class distinctions.

²⁰⁷ Marianne Wunsch points out that the organisation of space is of particular interest in Realist texts. She states that “Raum bedeutet eigentlich immer mehr, als bloße Handlungskulisse zu sein,” because it reinforces the impression of authenticity. See *Realismus (1850-1890): Zugänge zu einer literarischen Epoche*, ed. Hans Krah (Kiel: Ludwig, 2007) 78.

As the narrator explains, “[E]r litt, wie an prickelndem Ehrgeiz, so auch an einem gesellschaftlichen Hochmut” (3: 315), which, however, he puts aside for Linele. Still, the feeling of shame and the perceived loss of honour after spending a night in a detention cell covered with soot²⁰⁸ prevent him from contacting Linele after she has returned to town. The physical grime may have been washed away, but Marx still feels unclean, declaring, “ich darf das reine Kind mit diesen Händen nicht berühren” (3: 324).

Following this train of events, Marx progressively works himself into a state of psychological frenzy. When the feeling of shame does not abate, he suffers from a sense of persecution mania and sees himself as an object of derision. He tells the narrator: “Aus allen Ecken glotzt es auf mich zu; jeder Gassenbube! . . . Mein Name, mein guter Name als nächtlicher Trunkenbold und Ruhestörer in den Straflisten! Als Bestrafter dem Direktorium des Konservatoriums angezeigt!” (3: 322) Neither his studies nor his friends’ reassurances enable him to put this episode behind him. His life takes on an increasingly Kafkaesque turn as he imagines the authorities are after him. “Die Justiz war ihm gleich einem furchtbaren gespenstischen Raubvogel, der unsichtbar über ihm schwebte, jeden Augenblick bereit, auf ihn herabzustoßen und mit den unentrinnbaren Krallen ihn zu packen” (3: 322-23). Throughout this ordeal, there is no longer any mention of his studies or piano playing. If truth be told, music seems to be gone from his life.

²⁰⁸ The insertion of this episode, which disturbs Marx’s psychological balance, is, according to Friederike Meyer, a technique used in Realism to characterize the dynamics of a protagonist’s psychological state. She explains that a new balance can be established after a disturbing event. If not, she states, “Wird das Ungleichgewicht zu stark gestört, wird ein Ausgleich unmöglich, und die Figur wird als Person eliminiert.” This is what happens in Marx’s case. His already shaky psychological state does not recover from the humiliation he suffered. Friederike Meyer, *Gefährliche Psyche: Figurenpsychologie in der Erzählliteratur des Realismus* (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1992) 128.

While Marx wrestles with his personal demons, his friends carry on with their lives and their studies. With the exception of the night out spent singing for fun and for food, there is nothing in the least Romantic about the life of the students at the conservatory. They attend classes, spend the rest of their time practicing, and live “in frischem Jugendübermut, Jeder für sich in gewissenhafter Arbeit” (3: 310). They even discuss music during their time out with friends, talking “über das letzte Konzert, über den Chorgesang, über die Modulationslehre, die hier ein halbes Jahr in Anspruch nahm” (3: 318). In short, the students live for music, and the narrator considers his fellow students and himself as “normale(n) Menschen” (3: 318), as opposed to Marx. In the real world, music is a very demanding and consuming art, with proficiency acquired only through discipline and hard work. The danger is that one can be so immersed in one’s music making that one does not see or is not able to interpret any warning signs, or simply chooses to ignore them. Thus, the narrator does not realize his friend’s descent into depression, even though he senses that Marx is not “normal” and has often hinted at the fact that he can no longer go through life as things stand. On the day Marx disappears, for example, the narrator is concentrating on his harmony assignments, something that gives him great difficulty. Struggling, he “[kann] augenblicklich nicht [mit einer Harmonieaufgabe] zu Stande kommen, die falschen Quinten quäl(t)en [ihn]” (3: 324). He then goes to his piano lesson at the conservatory, even though he senses that something is wrong with Marx and becomes uneasy. The preceding short quote and the narrator’s assiduity bear witness to the dedication aspiring musicians must show in order to succeed. With inspiration no longer sufficient, art becomes work.

Even though all the characters in this novella are aspiring professional musicians, *Es waren zwei Königskinder* is much less about music and the role it plays in the protagonists’ lives

than in *Ein stiller Musikant* and *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"*. Written much later than the above-mentioned works, it focuses more on Marx the human being rather than on Marx the musician, including his psychological problems. His artistic personality contributes, I would argue, to his acute sensitivity as far as love and honour are concerned, but he himself does not dwell on his studies or his playing. These are simply left to the narrator. The reader is given some insight into the teaching at the Conservatory of Music in Stuttgart and the life of students there, but the plot revolves mostly around Marx's problems. It is quite obvious that he does not find a solution for his troubles, real or perceived, by dedicating himself to music. In this novella, music has lost its power to sustain a person in difficult times. In short, it has become irrelevant to a young man for whom it should have been a driving force.

The last pages of the novella describe how his friends discover Marx's body deep in a forest near the Vogelsangsee. Here, nature, with its innate ability for creating music, has the last word. Indeed, the very name of the lake evokes birds singing, "die letzten Vögel, sogar noch einzelne Drosseln huschten zirpend und krächzend durch die Büsche" (3: 327). The birds make music, and a lone squirrel leads the friends to the place where Marx chooses to die. The description of Marx's body is very realistic, from the flies and ants crawling all over him to the mention of his Sunday clothes, which he had put on to die in a dignified manner and not to bring any shame to the conservatory (3: 329). This last scene shows unequivocally that Romanticism has made way to Realism in a drastically changed artistic and economic world.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

As we have seen, music is present in most of Storm's novellas, from a single musician playing at a village dance to a concert performed in a mid-sized German town. The intent of my dissertation has been to show the evolving "Macht der Musik" in the lives of the protagonists against a shifting social and economic background in the three texts where music plays a prominent role: *Ein stiller Musikant*, *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"*, and *Es waren zwei Königskinder*.

As my study has shown, a very important role attributed to music is the power to comfort and to nurture. This is particularly true in the case of *Ein stiller Musikant*, where music helps Valentin, the main protagonist, cope with psychological traumas, a lowering of social status, and the loss of the woman he loves. Taking refuge in music, which he plays silently in his heart, he also considers it a measure of goodness in others. Music also unites musicians, transcending social distinctions and age barriers when performed in a group and, when performed by a sole musician, becomes a way of expressing varied emotions such as joy, longing, melancholy, and sadness. This rather *Biedermeier* view of music as a refuge no longer holds true in the subsequent novellas analyzed in my study. During the *Gründerzeit*, when the second novella *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"* takes place, the main protagonist Kätti experiences disappointment when she finds out that the life of an errant musician does not live up to her Romantic expectations. Indeed, music alone cannot fill the emptiness she feels in her life, still her longings, or reconcile her with her milieu. However, Storm does not use music in isolation. I have explored to what extent he exploits it as a literary technique in order to comment on musical

education, be it in the form of lessons given in a private setting or pursued at a conservatory, and on education in general, particularly the lack of serious opportunities for study open to girls. By presenting a female protagonist with a gift for music, but unable to develop it because of the milieu she belongs to, the novella *Zur "Wald- und Wasserfreude"* clearly shows how the educational system of the time and society at large failed young girls, particularly gifted ones, and, furthermore, prevented female artists from developing their full potential. For *Es waren zwei Königskinder*, the analysis has also shown that, paradoxically, music exerts the least power in the life of a music student who sees his musical studies as a duty to be performed, rather than an acquisition of knowledge to be enjoyed.

By widening the scope of music used as a literary technique, I have argued that music and the musicians featured in the texts analyzed in my dissertation illustrate how the role of musicians and their place in society had changed since the onset of industrialization. To that end, I have shown how two of the musicians, meek and resigned men, seek refuge in music. One has come down in social status, the other belongs to the lower rungs of society. Each has a physical or a mental handicap, both of which symbolize the diminished importance of professional musicians and artists in general, compared to the emphasis placed on entrepreneurship and scientific research, for example, in the second half of the nineteenth century.

From a literary viewpoint, musical compositions, particularly folk songs, foreshadow the events in two of the novellas analyzed, thereby moving the story forward. Furthermore, I have contended that the numerous allusions to Romanticism in all three texts do not serve to lament the fact that times have changed, but, rather, to reinforce that very fact and to show that in Realism, the artist can no longer pursue lofty and idealistic goals. In the end, Storm denies music the power to enchant, to soothe, and to nurture. In the face of the harsh realities of life, music

does not provide an answer to the longings of a young woman, and it proves incapable of saving a man from suicide. Clearly, it has lost some of its former *Macht*. But while Storm's novellas show the diminished power of music, it was by no means a spent force in literature. Later on, Thomas Mann (1875-1955), an admirer of Theodor Storm, would show the all-consuming and destructive power of music in the life of the tormented composer Adrian Leverkühn, the hero of *Doktor Faustus* (1947).

I have also shown that music plays an incidental role in Storm's texts, appearing in the form of compositions that, apart from folk songs, belong to the "Classical" music period *per se*, as opposed to contemporaneous Romantic music. Indeed, Storm uses these different musical styles as a literary technique in an attempt to recapture the past and soften the transience of life, a lifelong preoccupation that is reflected in many of his novellas. Furthermore, I have argued that the performance of a piece of music brings the spirit of its composer back into the present, creating an illusion of continuity. This is particularly true for Mozart's music, where, in *Ein stiller Musikant*, one of the protagonists was once a diva who sang for Mozart; she serves as a "live" link between the composer, Valentin, and his own student. To reinforce the illusion, two of the protagonists who play Mozart (Valentin in *Ein stiller Musikant* and Sträkelstrakel in *Zur Wald- und Wasserfreude*) exhibit similar physical characteristics that evoke the picture of Mozart as a child in the reader's mind. Presented in the guise of music in my dissertation, art is a constant reminder of the past. Since it endures for generations and continues to elicit various emotional responses, it is a means of helping keep transience at bay and ensuring some continuity between the past, the present, and the future.

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Nineteenth-Century Novelists

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