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A Definitive Sketch for Indeterminate Drafts The Composition of Jean Sibelius's *Die stille Stadt*

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§ Thematic sketches for small works differ notably from those for large scale works: «The opening of the song, was, in effect, testing a formulation that would decisively determine the form of the entire piece», wrote Lewis Lockwood (1973) about Beethoven's sketches for the song *Sehnsucht*. Likewise, Jean Sibelius's first known sketch for the song *Die stille Stadt* (Richard Dehmel), Op. 50 No. 5 (1906), introduces a definitive melodic idea: the strophic, varied theme of the published work. Since the sketch also shows the ending gesture of the vocal part, a plan for the song's form is incorporated. Comparison with other Sibelius song sketches testifies for the similar feature. The drafts – a continuity draft, a complete draft, and a fragment – reveal Sibelius's work on the vocal and piano parts and the dramaturgy of the third stanza. Piano part evolved in four stages, the last remaining as an experiment. In the third stanza, Sibelius added variation in the melodic, harmonic and large scale rhythmic structures. Thus, while the preliminary sketch gives *Die stille Stadt* a potential structural plan, continuity, style and atmosphere for the song are created in the drafts with reflection to the original idea.

§ Gli schizzi tematici per piccole composizioni differiscono sensibilmente da quelli destinati a opere di vaste dimensioni. Scriveva Lewis Lockwood nel 1973 a proposito dello schizzo di Beethoven per *Sehnsucht*: «L'esordio del *Lied*, in effetti, sperimentava una formulazione che avrebbe decisamente determinato la forma dell'intera composizione». In maniera analoga, il primo schizzo conosciuto per il *Lied* di Sibelius *Die stille Stadt* (Richard Dehmel), Op. 50 No. 5 (1906), introduce un'idea melodica definitiva: il tema strofico variato così come lo si riscontra nell'opera poi pubblicata. Dato che lo schizzo, inoltre, presenta anche il gesto finale della parte vocale, il progetto per la forma del *Lied* è già incluso. Il confronto con gli altri schizzi del *Lied* di Sibelius rivela situazioni simili. Gli abbozzi – uno continuativo, uno completo e un frammento – riguardano la parte vocale, quella del pianoforte e la dramaturgia della terza stanza dell'opera di Sibelius. La parte del pianoforte si sviluppa in quattro stadi, di cui l'ultimo resta solo sperimentale. Nella terza stanza, Sibelius aggiunge variazioni alle strutture melodiche, armoniche, e a quelle ritmiche di larga scala. Così, mentre lo schizzo preliminare fornisce a *Die stille Stadt* un potenziale piano strutturale, continuità, stile e atmosfera del *Lied* sono definiti negli abbozzi, con riferimento all'idea originaria.

Introduction

For the discussion on the creative process one of the most intriguing questions concerns the role of preliminary ideas, which set the work forwards. This question has interested both researchers as well as artists. In a famous quote Paul Hindemith has compared the experience of getting the first compositional ideas to «a very heavy flash of lightning in the night»:

Within a second's time we see a broad landscape, not only its general outlines but with every detail. [...] We experience a view, immensely comprehensive and at the same time immensely detailed, that we never could have under normal daylight conditions [...] Compositions must be conceived the same way.¹

To Hindemith this vision, the ability to get these full scaled preliminary ideas, was a norm for genuine creators: «If we cannot, in the flash of a single moment, see a composition in its absolute entirety, with every detail in its proper place, we are not genuine creators» (HINDEMITH 1952, p. 61).

Naturally, the point of view of a manuscript researcher differs significantly. The preliminary ideas most often are found in the sparsest of all sketches: short thematic ideas in one voiced texture, short rhythmic or harmonic ideas, although sometimes, these can also include also more general ideas of structure.

Even though one tends to oppose the demanding romanticism of Hindemith's view, sketches do show cases, where, for example, a short melodic sketch seems to have captured, determined a whole, the essence of a work, which appears completed in the later sources. In such cases, the questions remaining for sketch studies are, how does the determination show up in the drafts, and conversely, what has been left to test in the drafts? These questions are under consideration with the following examination of Jean Sibelius's compositional process of the song *Die stille Stadt*.

A Sketch for *Die stille Stadt*

While working on the symphonic poem *Pohjolan tytär* (Pohjola's Daughter), Op. 49, in 1906, Sibelius made sketches into a sketchbook now found in the National Library of Finland (HUL 0225).² Among the sketches for the symphonic poem appear plans for several songs: on p. [35] appear the following sketches:

¹ HINDEMITH 1952, pp. 60-61.

² The manuscript signa starting with HUL refer to the collection of Jean Sibelius's musical manuscripts in "the National Library of Finland" (formerly known as "Helsinki University Library"), catalogued in KILPELÄINEN 1991, pp. 314-315. Despite the renaming of the library, the signum HUL is being used in accordance with the signa in *Jean Sibelius Works Volumes VIII/2-4, Works for Solo Voice and Piano* 1998, 2000, 2005. For *Pohjola's Daughter* see VIRTANEN 2001.

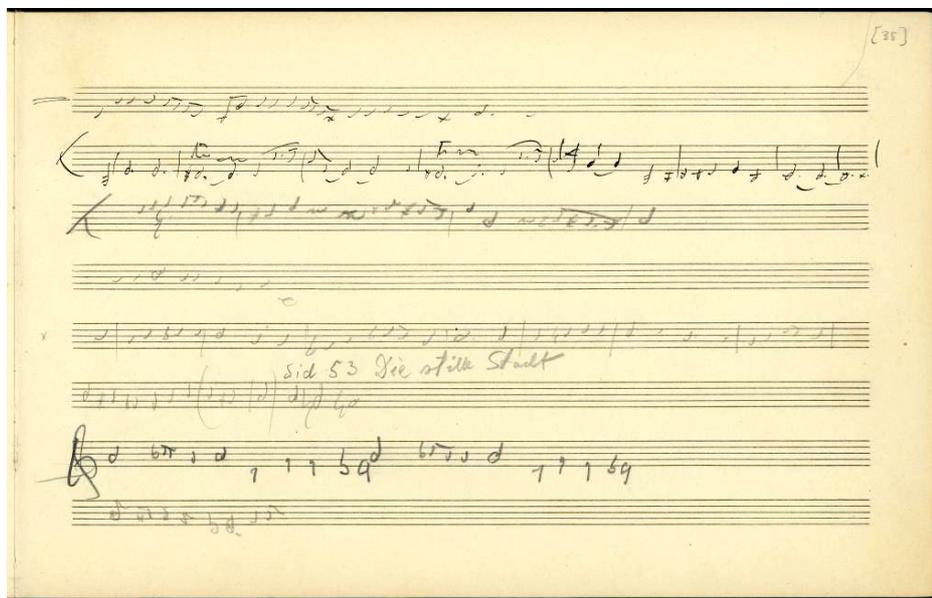


Figure 1. HUL 0225/7, Sketchbook, p. [35].³

The sketch of our interest is found on the fifth and sixth staves: it is a theme of about eight bars with continued notation partly without bar lines, about four bars, written in pencil. Between the staves Sibelius has written «Sid. [= p.] 53 Die stille Stadt». Such page markings, appearing with song sketches, show us, which publication Sibelius read at the time of composition. In the case of *Die stille Stadt*, it was *Deutsche Lyrik seit Liliencron*, an anthology of German contemporary poetry, edited by Hans Bethge, published just a year before, in 1905. There, on p. 53, appears Richard Dehmel's poem.

Among composers *Die stille Stadt* was one of the most popular of Dehmel's poems. In addition to Sibelius it was set by Alma Mahler, Hans Pfitzner, and Kurt Weill among some others. It is a poem of three stanzas with a *Wandrer*-character, though, he is revealed only in the last, third stanza. The first two stanzas create a nocturnal picture of a silent town, covered by mist descending from the mountains. The whole view gets concealed; not a sound can be heard. The third stanza reveals the viewer, the wanderer, who gets terrified under the pressure of disappearing sight. The silent town covered in the mist appears as a *Winterreise*-like metaphor of the closeness of death with a *fin-de-siecle* emphasis on the fear of non-existence. However, the wanderer does not meet a

³³ All manuscript facsimiles have been reproduced from the collection of Jean Sibelius's musical manuscripts in "the National Library of Finland" by the kind permission of "the Owners of Sibelius's Rights".

Leiermann playing the hurdy-gurdy; instead, he sees a little light shining through the mist accompanied by a song of praise, sang by a child.

Sibelius's work on *Die stille Stadt* was part of Opus 50, consisting of six songs for contemporary German poetry.⁴ *Die stille Stadt* became its fifth number. The songs were composed to his new publisher Robert Lienau, with whom the contract was signed less than a year before. The contract gave emphasis to large scale works, but it was no surprise that Sibelius chose to compose songs for Lienau: song composition had been an important part of Sibelius's oeuvre since the end of 1880's. (DAHLSTRÖM 2003, p. 228; TAWASTSTJERNA 1971, p. 33-34).

Formulation that would determine the form

The preliminary sketch for *Die stille Stadt* shows Sibelius's early reaction to the poem. Yet, when the sketch is compared to the published song, one notices a striking resemblance (see Figures 2 and 3). The early ideas have been transferred from the sketch to the song with few alterations, the most notable of which is the change of key. However, there is the same the four bar statement (a), which is immediately repeated one step upwards (a').

Another difference appears in the end of the first stanza. The sketch ends with three descending half notes (b). In the published song these do not appear in first stanza or the second. But their purpose is found in the third stanza. They form the ending gesture of the vocal melody, although again the key differs from the sketch (see Figure 4).

In an overall look at the published song (Figures 3 and 4), we can notice that in addition to the first stanza (bb. 2-12) the sketched theme also appears in the second stanza (bb. 13-22), and also in the last, the third stanza (bb. 24-34), with variation growing towards the end of the song. Thus, in about 1 ½ staves of a sketchbook, the preliminary sketch actually establishes the overall structure of the song: the main statement, principles for its variation and completion.

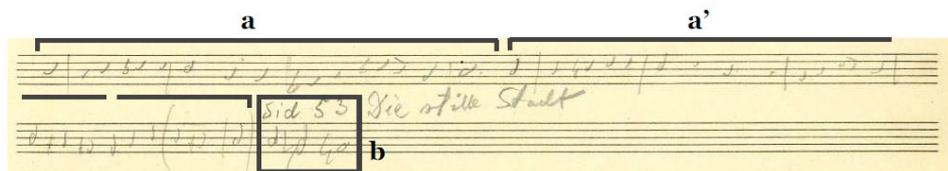


Figure 2. Sketch for *Die stille Stadt*, HUL 0225/7, staves 5-6.⁵

⁴ Sibelius's oeuvre of songs for voice and piano consists of about 110 works composed during 1888-1939, arrangements included. Most of these are settings of poetry in Swedish, his mother tongue, both of Finnish and Swedish poets. 10 are settings of texts in Finnish and the same amount in German, and one in English. See *Jean Sibelius Works VIII/2-4*.

⁵ Figures 2-4: brackets and letters added by the writer.

2

Original-Tonart.
Hoch.

Die stille Stadt.

(Richard Dehmel.)

The Silent Town. — Den stilla staden. — Hiljainen kaupunki.
(Rosa Newmarch.)

Jean Sibelius, Op. 50 No 5.

Andantino. *mezza voce*

a

Liegt ei - ne Stadt im Ta - le, ein
A town lies in the val - ley, The
I sta - den, djupt i da - len, Den
Kau - pun - ki kat - taa laak - son, Pois

una corda con Pedale

a'

blas-ser Tag ver-geht; es wird nicht lan - ge dau-ern mehr, bis we-der Mond noch
pal - lid gloam-ing dies; Too soon its wan - ing gleams will go, But nei - ther star nor
ble - ka dag för - går; Ej må - ne syns vid him - lens kant, Ej stjär - no - ö - gen
pái - rä val - jut saa; Ja het - ken pääs - tä häi - py - neel, On kuu ja kaik - ki -

pp

Ster - ne, nur Nacht am Him - mel steht, Von al - len Ber - gen drücken
plan - et Shall light those dark - ened skies. From ev - ry frowning mountain
blin - ka; Blott dun - kel skymning rår. Från bär - gen da - la dim - mor,
täk - det, Yö tat - vaan ver - ko - aa. Ja us - va vuö - ris - tol - ta

Ne - bel auf die Stadt; es dringt kein Dach, nicht Hof noch Haus, kein Laut aus ih - rem
Heav - y mists de - scend; No roof, no house, no loft - y spire, No light or sound can
sve - pa sta - den in; Allt är där dött, ej hörs där ljud, dess spi - rar, torn ur
kie - rit kau - pun - kiin; Ei kat - ku, har - jat kat - to - fen, Voi pääs - tä al - ta

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S. 9389 V A.

Figure 3. Sibelius Op. 50 No. 5, *Die stille Stadt*, first edition (1906), p. 2, bb. 1-19 (First stanza, bb. 2-12; Second stanza 13-19-).

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Rauch heraus, kaum Tür-me noch und Brü-cken
pierce the gloom, From tower or plash-ing foun-tain.
 töck - nets skrud Blott skym - ta fram som strim - mor.
 sau - hun sen, Ei tor - ni, vir - ran sil - ta.

poco a poco meno piano *rallentando a*
 Doch als den Wandrer grau - te, da ging ein Lichtlein auf im Grund; und
But while the wand'rer shud - ders, Where black as night his path-way dips, He
 På bar - get vandran ströf - var, Han stir - rar ned i - töck-nets grund. Ett
 Kun vie-raan val-tas kau - hu, Nun pilk - ki va - lo - pie - noi - nen, Ja

tempo *poco diminuendo*
 durch den Rauch und Ne - bel begann ein lei-ser Lob - gesang als Kin - der-mund.
sees a light ap - pear - ing, And hears a whispered song of praise, From child- ren's lips.
 Ijus nä matt där skim - rar, Och svagthan hör en af - tonsång U - ber - na - mun -
 al - ta us - van, sau - hun, Sei hil - jaa, lau - loi kii - tos - ta, Säu - lap - so - sen.

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Figure 4. Sibelius Op. 50 No. 5, Die stille Stadt, first edition (1906), p. 3, bb. 20-41 (Second stanza 20-22: Third stanza 24-34).

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In his article «Beethoven's Sketches for *Sehnsucht*» (1973) Lewis Lockwood asked why Beethoven needed to make the various sketches for the opening of *Sehnsucht*. Lockwood was not satisfied with widely, but uncritically accepted view according to which «once commonplace musical thoughts were transformed by gradual steps into artistic substance» (LOCKWOOD 1973, p. 97). Instead, Lockwood looked for the answer from another direction:

The opening of the song, was, in effect, testing a formulation that would decisively determine the form of the entire piece. This is substantially different from those in which he reworks a single subject that can form only a fractional segment of a diversified musical continuum.⁶

In Figure 5 there is a manuscript for the opening of Sibelius's violin concerto (Op. 47): the main theme area of the exposition in the first movement. It shows a typical exemplar of Sibelius's continuity drafts for larger works: the music has been notated mostly in one voiced texture, with additional second voices and chords in structurally important places. The "<" sign in the beginning of the first pair of staves is found in places, to which Sibelius seems to have been satisfied; the musical idea following this sign usually appears also in the next manuscripts and even in a published work. Likewise, the opening of the violin concerto and the first appearance of the main theme is clarified with the last unclear question – see the question mark and footnote sign (*) above the first stave, in the penultimate bar – which is answered to at the bottom of the page (Figure 5). Naturally, the continuity draft does not answer for all the details, but it shows more than a short thematic memo: it gives the structure of the opening of the work, primary theme area in the exposition, thus, guiding the formation of the whole movement.⁷ However, those ca. 40 bars convey less information of the complete movement than the sketch of *Die stille Stadt* of the song.

In the case of songs it is not unusual to find a short sketch, which not only shows the basic thematic material but also strives to determine the structure. In some cases the preliminary sketch shows basic elements of the whole structure. Such appears on *Lasse liten* (Little Lars), Op. 38 No. 2. Unusually, for Sibelius's preliminary song sketch (HUL 1104/2), this also includes a bass line (Figure 6, staves 11-12, again marked with "<", staves 14-15 and 16-17).

⁶ LEWIS LOCKWOOD 1973, p. 102.

⁷ For additional information on the composition of the violin concerto see SALMENHAARA 1996 and TIILIKAINEN 2004.

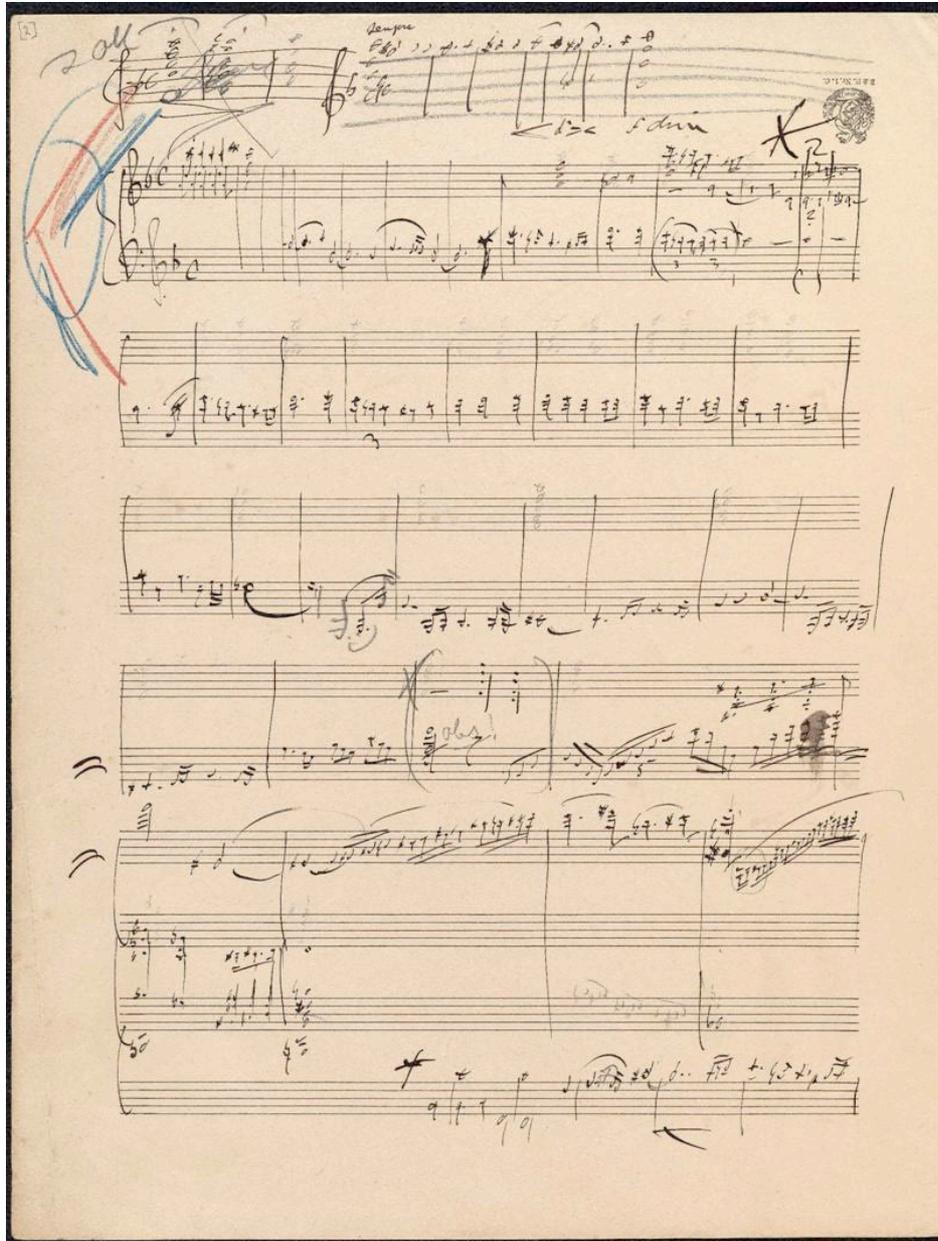


Figure 5. HUL 0443, p. [2] , Opening of the Violin Concerto.

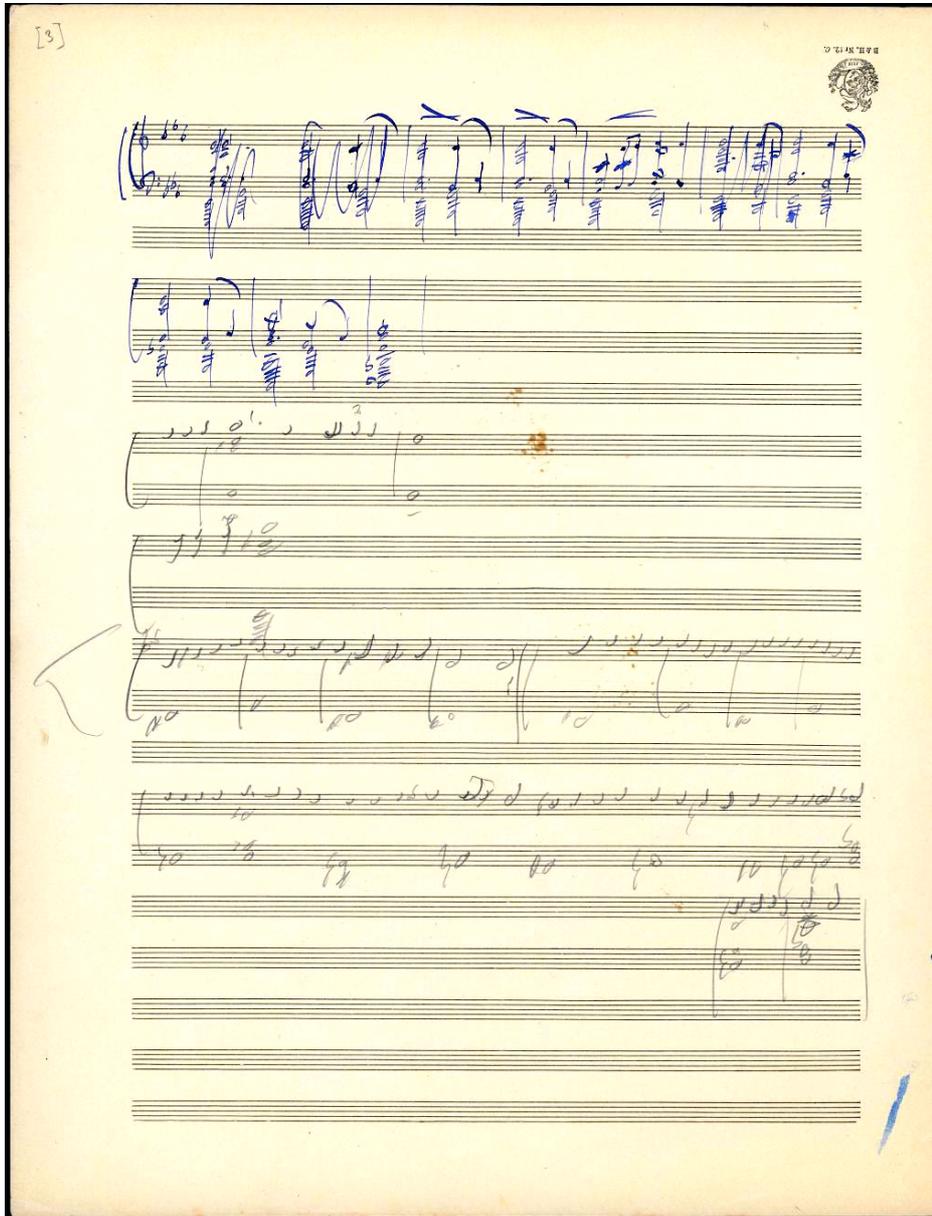


Figure 6. HUL 1104/2, Sketches for *Lasse liten* Op. 37 No. 2.

The upper staves (by the "<" marking) contain the song's beginning: in the completed song the first four bars are repeated, then appear the next four followed by a repetition of the first four bars. The lower staves contain ideas for the middle section of the song, and the song ends with a developed repetition of the upper line. During the compositional work both the themes as well as the song's overall form were somewhat altered from the sketched ideas.

Two other examples appear on a page of sketches (*HUL 1120*, see Figure 7). In the top of the page there are sketches for the song *Harpolekaren och hans son* (The Harpist and his son), Op. 38 No. 4. By letter «a» (on the fourth staves), appear sketches for the first stanza. By letter «c» (seventh staves), there are sketches for the second stanza. At the bottom, on staves 12-16, there is a melodic sketch for the song *På verandan vid havet* (On a Balcony by the Sea), Op. 38 No. 2.⁸ The sketched melody is almost identical with the corresponding parts in the published song.

Thus, in these early jottings for the two songs, Sibelius has determined quite a great deal of their structures. However, in case of the upper, *the Harpist*, the sketch gives thematic ideas only to two of the song's three stanzaic themes (in a song of five stanzas in all). Moreover, part of the sketched material changed considerably during the compositional work. In fact, the first theme of the published work only reminds of the first sketched theme (marked with «a»), since almost all of the details have changed, including the key from G major to E minor. What comes to the second, *the Balcony by the Sea*, the song has a very distinctive chromatic theme, which first appears in the piano introduction and then in the vocal melody in the second stanza – but it is completely lacking in the sketch.

⁸ *Harpolekaren och hans son* (Viktor Rydberg), Op. 38 No. 4, *Jean Sibelius Works VIII/2* 1998, pp. 144-149; *På verandan vid havet* (Viktor Rydberg), Op. 38 No. 2, *Jean Sibelius Works VIII/2* 1998, pp. 137-139.

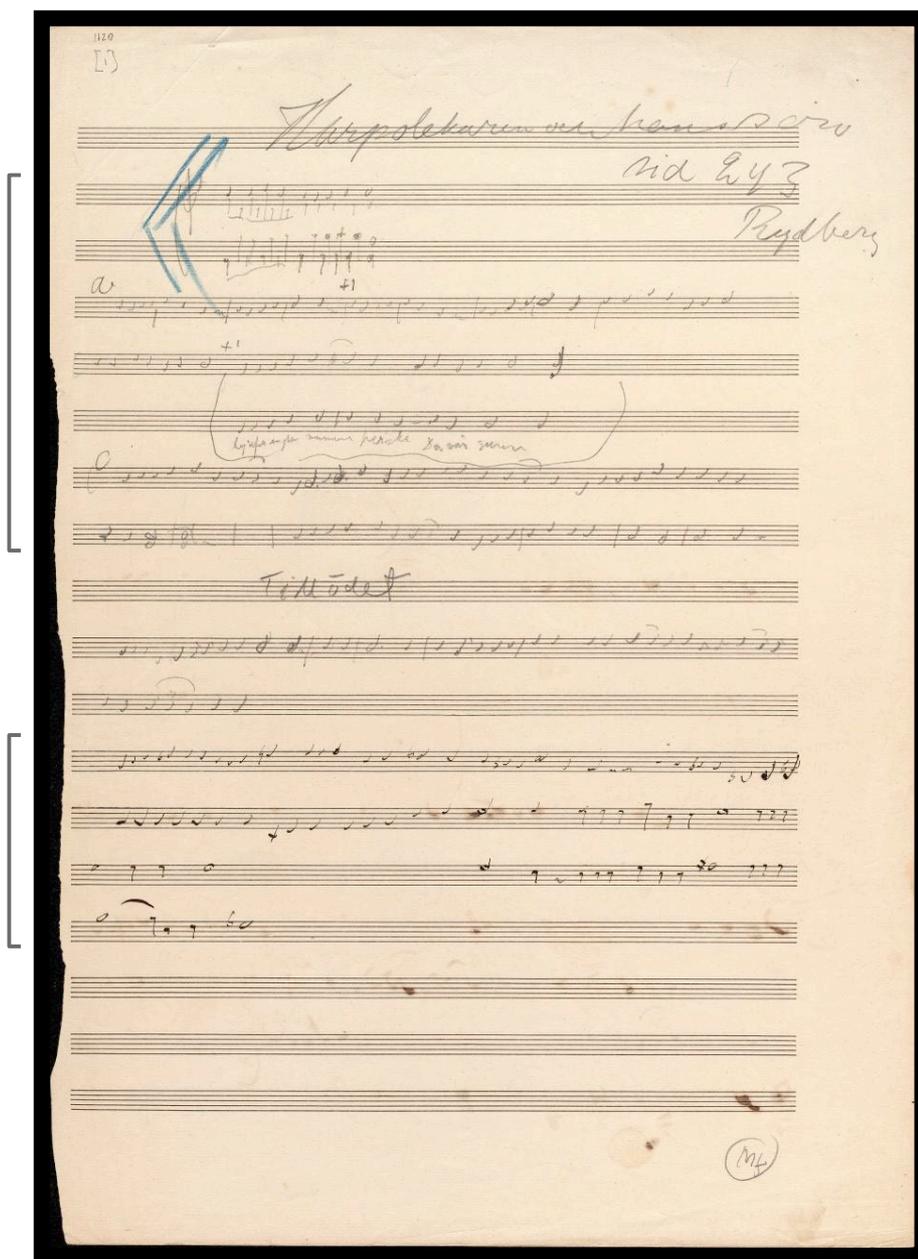


Figure 7. HUL 1120, Sketches for *Harpolekaren och hans son* (upper bracket) and *På verandan vid havet* (lower bracket).

A continuity draft for *Die stille Stadt*

In addition to the sketch (*HUL 0225/7*), there are three other known musical manuscripts for the song. These are the following:

Source	Content
1133	Group of sketches (containing a continuity draft for <i>Die stille Stadt</i>)
1132	Complete draft (planned as a fair copy)
0337/2	Fragment (from a fair copy)

At least one source is known to be missing: it is the autograph fair copy, which also may have served as the engraver's copy (although another copy may have been used for engraving, either autograph or made by a copyist). It is also possible that Sibelius made at least one complete draft after 1132 (an assumption based on the amount and the type of differences between the draft and the published work).

HUL 1133 is a bifolio, containing various sketches on its first page (see Figure 8 and Table 1). The page has the title *Die stille Stadt*, a continuity draft of which covers more than half of the page. *Die stille Stadt* is followed by other identified and unidentified sketches testifying of Sibelius's work for Op. 50. As mentioned the continuity draft of *Die stille Stadt* covers more than half of the page: the first stanza appears on staves 1-6 (bb. 3-13), the second on staves 4-10 (14-23), and the third on staves 8-16 (bb. 23-33) followed by a piano postlude (bb. 34-37). Thus, the formal plan found in the published song is immediately present in this manuscript.

The formal structure consists of simple, repetitious features. As mentioned earlier, the melodic idea begins with a four bar statement, which is immediately repeated. Each stanza ends in a repetition of the latter half of the statement. The second and the third stanzas show the same pattern but with added variation. In the second stanza, the beginning is altered: Sibelius has crossed out first two *a*'s, thus, articulating the second stanza differently from the first stanza (see Figure 8, the upper text line was set by analogy with the first stanza).

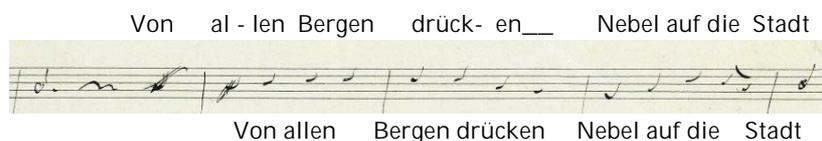


Figure 8. *HUL 0133*, alternative and revised settings for bb. 13-17.

In the third stanza, the variation begins at the end of the first statement with a descending triad with variation added towards the end of the vocal theme.

Comparison with an example made by analogy with the analogous place in the first and the second stanzas (the lower stave in Figure 10) emphasizes the variation:



Figure 9. bb. 27-33, from staves 11 and 14, in HUL 1133 (upper) and by analogy with 10-13 and 20-23 (lower).

In traditional terms, it is question of a form, which is partly strophic and partly through-composed, so-called modified strophic form. This could be designated as A-A1-A2, last of which has a developmental and finalizing character. However, in addition to the repetitive and varied structure, *Die stille Stadt* shows cyclical features. Thus, it is no wonder that the definition of *rotational form*, given by Professor James Hepokoski in his article on the Sibelius's Sixth symphony, could as well be written of *Die stille Stadt's* melodic and stanzaic form:

Rotational form may also be described as a set of rhetorical cycles or waves, in which the end of each rotation reconnects with (or cycles back to) its beginning – that is, to the beginning of the next rotation: hence the circular connotation of the term rotation.⁹

Hepokoski's book about the V symphony of Sibelius introduces the concept by a reference to Finnish folk poetry and another Sibelius song, *Illalle*:

one of the features of the earlier Sibelius style had been the insistent repetition of a short melodic phrase or a set phrases: a momentary withdrawal from linear time in favour of 'circular' stasis. In early Sibelius its grimly determined, repetitive effect often asks to be perceived as an identifier of a Finnish folk ethos, that is, as a 'primitive' renunciation of elaborated periodic or florid structure to embrace the incantatory reiterations of an epic or mythic formulaic phrase. The 1898 song, 'Illalle', Op. 17 No. 6, for example, consists entirely of fourteen statements, some varied, of an eleven-note recitation figure. Even when the characteristic melodic intonations and metric configurations of Kalevalaic recitation are lacking, as they are here, the principle of open-ended, potentially infinite restatements of a reciting-phrase is unmistakable.¹⁰

⁹ HEPOKOSKI 2001, p. 325. *Rotational form* is also one the key terms in Warren Darcy's and James Hepokoski's 2006 *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-eighteenth-century Sonata*, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006.

¹⁰ HEPOKOSKI 1993, pp. 23-24.

1	Stanza I, bb. 3-9/10-13
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	Stanza II, bb. 13-17/18-23
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	Stanza III, bb. 23-24/25-31/32-33
13	
14	
15	Postlude, bb. 34-37
16	A sketch for piano
17	
18	Preliminary sketches:
19	<i>Sei nicht traurig</i> (staves 17-18)
20	<i>Erloschen</i> (staves 19)
21	Unidentified sketches (staves 21-24)
22	
23	
24	

~

Table 1. The contents of HUL 0133, p. [1].

These features of the song *Illalle* also characterize *Die stille Stadt*: it does have a short reciting phrase, which during the song is repeated three times in each stanza either in a direct fashion or it is varied (fragmented). The reciting phrase has a potential to infinite restaments, which feature is emphasised by the potential to modulate infinitely upwards. Clearly the song is governed by a principle of open-endedness. And moreover, not only the reciting phrases but also the stanzas have a cyclical character with each rotation reconnecting to the beginning of the next.

Sibelius's use of rotational form may partly be explained by the composer's reinterpretation of principles of Finnish folk poetry and music. However, *Die stille Stadt* is also deeply rooted in German Lied tradition. Actually, as Professor Erkki Salmenhaara has noticed, the song evokes the *Winterreise*-lied *Der Wegweiser* (Op. 89 No. 20) with «a similar arch of the melody, similar four bar phrases, similar use of Neapolitan harmony».¹¹

The evolving piano part

As seen in the continuity draft, the piano part is almost completely missing. This is very typical to Sibelius's sketches and even longer continuity drafts: they mostly consist of melodic continuities with rare additional notation for harmony, often notated in whole notes, to remind of ideas for harmony or second voices, bass line etc. Also, in HUL 1133 there are some markings for the piano.

As mentioned, the notation in bb. 34-37 shows a sketch for a piano postlude, but also bb. 1-4, 7-8, 11, 13 and 23 contain notation on piano staves (see Figure 8). What is the purpose of those sketches? Obviously, the notation does give a limited idea of the song's harmonic progression, E-flat–F–E -major chord progression with a possible pedal point on *a*.¹² But the notation conveys more information than an *aide-mémoire* for the harmonic progression.

A typical pianistic gesture in Sibelius's solo songs is seen in *The Harpist and his son* (see Figure 11).

Whenever such piano part has been used, it usually has been written in short-hand notation in sketches and drafts. The appearance of the short hand notation is what we see in the *Die stille Stadt* draft. If we then look at the ending of the piece, we can notice that the repetitive pattern continues in the short postlude. It seems possible that Sibelius was planning such a piano part for the whole piece. However, the continuity draft is followed by a side sketch showing a model for a broken chord accompaniment (in Figure 8, on staves 15-16).

The third manuscript stage appears in the complete draft HUL 1132 and the fragment HUL 0337/2. These are also the last extant manuscripts. HUL 1132 (see Figure 12) is defined as a complete draft, because of the vast alterations in pencil and differences compared to the published work.

¹¹ SALMENHAARA 1996, p. 441. Present writer's translation.

¹² Only in the later sources one can see clearly that Sibelius was aiming at a pedal point.

However, the neat hand writing in ink and the layout of the notation show that initially Sibelius had set out to write a fair copy.

The image shows two systems of a musical score for the piece 'Harpolekaren och hans son'. The first system, starting at measure 37, features a vocal line in treble clef with the lyrics 'Da - gen dör, en fuk - tig vind an - das ö - ver' and a piano accompaniment in grand staff. The piano part is marked 'legato' and 'mp'. The second system, starting at measure 40, features a vocal line with the lyrics 'te - - gen, och min gos - ses vä - - na kind' and a piano accompaniment marked 'p'. The piano part consists of a steady triplet rhythm of broken chords.

Figure 11. *Harpolekaren och hans son*, bb. 37-42.

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In the previous draft Sibelius had sketched a repetitive eighth note accompaniment on broken chords. The notation in ink shows the importance of that idea. The broken chord piano part has replaced the original, repetitive pattern of the continuity draft, and it appears throughout the piece.

However, one cannot avoid noticing that this idea got a rival in the new manuscript. Even though the broken chord pattern already created a new character to the piano, Sibelius seems to have striven for more contrast to the steady quarter note rhythms of the voice. His alteration written in pencil introduces a new phrase structure with a cyclical – or should I say – rotational character.

Harmonically piano accords with the vocal part, yet, rhythmically and metrically the vocal part is challenged by the newly sketched piano part in several ways. The most obvious one is the piano's constant triplet rhythm that at first opposes the steady quarter note flow of vocal part. Thus, in the beginning of the work, after almost two bars of flow of the piano's triplets the vocal part's entering would come as a metrical surprise.

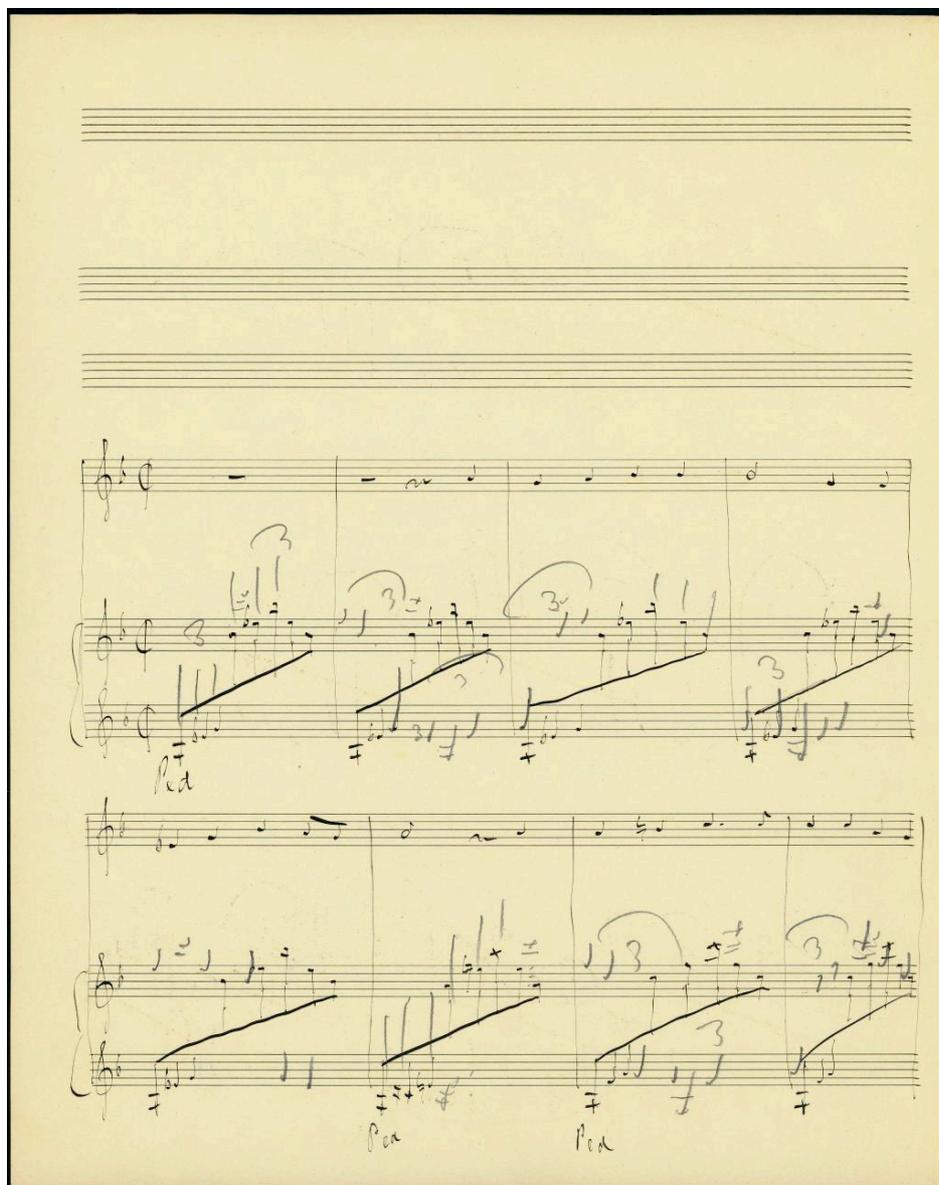


Figure 12. HUL 1132, p. [1].

The triplets consist of a simple ascending-descending movement, or a small scale rotation or wave, on E \flat major chord with *a* at the bottom (see Figure 13). This wave is not in proportion with the basic metre of the melody: it takes little over 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ bars for the movement on the broken chord to rotate back to *a*. After three waves (and five bars) the movement again rotates back

to *a* on a downbeat, thus, creating a larger, second scale rotation. At this place, it might seem that vocal and the piano parts supported each other: piano's second, larger scale rotation begins at the same bar, where the first vocal phrase ends and the second begins. However, in the continuation the disproportion of the two parts leads them further apart creating a semi-isorhythmic structure. Moreover, the basic length of the piano part's rotation is varied: the third rotation takes seven bars – Sibelius seems to have wanted to take third rotation over the change of pedal point at bb. 17-18. Thus, the fourth rotation begins at a new place in relation to the vocal part. Without this lengthening, the fourth rotation would have begun analogically to the second. This kind of contrast and variation continues till the end of the new piano sketches (b. 33).

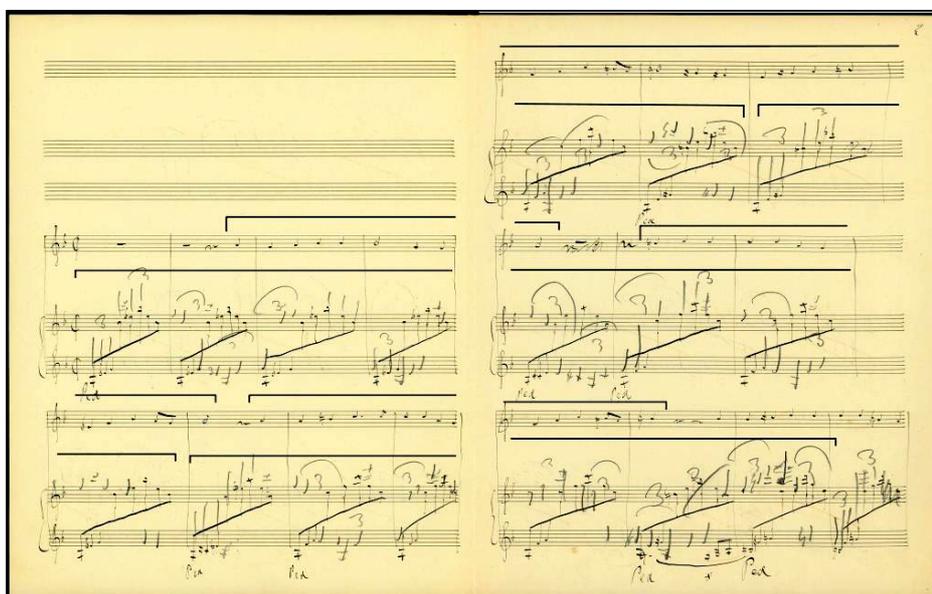


Figure 13. HUL 1132, pp. [1]-2, bb. 1-18, the vocal phrases vs. the sketched piano part rotations (brackets added by the writer).

Sibelius continued sketching almost till the end of the draft; obviously this detailed sketch of 33 bars was not just a sudden, sporadic idea. Surprisingly, the original, arpeggiated accompaniment in ink was restored in the published work. The manuscripts, thus, show three variant types of piano part in four stages: opposite to the repetitive and unvaried chord accompaniment seen in the continuity draft, the pencilled sketches in the complete draft show a varying and spacious texture with a pronounced contrast with the vocal part. Chronologically and also stylistically in the middle of these two appears the piano part based on even broken chords, which first appeared as a side sketch to the continuity draft and was then realized in the complete draft. It does not

contrast the vocal part, it is repetitive and retains the initial idea of chordal accompaniment, but it has the flowing and spacious arpeggio character. Professor Gustav Djupsjöbacka, Lied-pianist and researcher has emphasized the static effect created by the piano, as a resemblance to the poem's slowly pressing mist: «functionally weak veil» that «covers the whole song — von allen Bergen Nebel drücken auf die Stadt [...]» (DJUPSJÖBACKA 1988, p. 36).

Another particular effect of the sketched idea is seen immediately at the first page. As mentioned earlier, the pedal point, on *a* in the first stanza, appeared as a basic idea both in the continuity draft as well as in the short side sketch. In the complete draft, in the original notation in ink, the role of pedal point becomes evident. However, while *a* still appears as the lowest note of the triplets in the pencilled sketches, the effect of the pedal point is noticeably weakened, even dissolved, due to the large ambitus of the gesture, from *a* to *b* ♭², and the slow triplets on half notes. This might have given one reason for abandoning the sketches in favour of the inked notation.

The effort used in working on the piano sketches was not a waste of time. Sibelius seems to have kept this idea in mind: in fact, four years later a similar gesture with unhurried triplets challenges the phrase and metric structures of the vocal part in another song, *Långsamt som kvällskyn* (K.A. Tavaststjerna) Op. 61 No. 1.¹³

The dramaturgy of the third stanza

The continuity draft showed, how Sibelius added variation from the end of third stanza's first phrase on. However, one feature was common to all stanzas: they all were 10 bars long (see Table 2, HUL 1133). The complete draft introduces one new change to the third stanza, which alters this balance considerably.¹⁴

The first phrase appears as before, but the complete draft shows additional and more dramatic changes exactly at the same place, where the variation occurred in the continuity draft (see Figures 8 and 9). Namely, all the durations of the vocal part have been doubled (the continuation on p. 4 appears in Figure 14). The last survived manuscript, a fragment of four bars (HUL 0337/2), shows the same feature. The doubling of vocal durations extends almost to the end of the stanza: only the last three notes remain as

¹³ See *Jean Sibelius Works VIII/3* 2000, pp. 41-43. Perhaps Sibelius realized the demanding weightiness of the sketched gesture, while working on *Die stille Stadt*. Just compare the tempi and interpretation instructions of the two pieces: *Långsamt som kvällskyn* (*Slowly as the night sky*) is to be interpreted in *Lento e patetico*, while *Die stille Stadt* has *Andantino* with *mezza voce* for vocal interpretation. Interestingly, both poems have something in common in their topics: the falling of the night, its appearance on the nature, the shade in *Långsamt son kvällskyn* or the mist in *Die stille Stadt*, through which one cannot see, the last lights and sounds, and finally the person, the experiencer or interpreter, who is revealed by the ending of the poem. Yet, it is question of two very different poems, and likewise, songs.

¹⁴ The third stanza begins on the page 3 (not in shown in figures), staves 4-6, of the complete draft HUL 1132. Continuation on p. 4 appears in Figure 14.

half notes. This change lengthens the third stanza with five bars. Thus, the bars with double durations take 10 bars, which, as mentioned, was the original length of the stanza (see Table 2).

This is the second wide-ranging test leading to a blind alley. As in the case of the newly sketched piano part, the published work is in accordance with the original ideas. As mentioned, in the first case, the change of the piano part lost the strength of the pedal point, one of the initial ideas introduced in the continuity draft. What the doubling of durations loses, it goes all the way back to the preliminary sketch (Figure 1). As mentioned, one of the preliminary sketch's ideas was to end the vocal part with the three descending half notes. That is, the song's steady upward tendency, which creates both a harmonic and melodic tension, is resolved with the last line of the poem. The descending motion continues in the piano's postlude. The doubling of the durations does create a dramatic effect in the middle of the third stanza, but at the same time the original rhythmic contrast of the last three vocal half notes is dissolved (see Figure 14). For some reason, Sibelius did not continue doubling the half notes to whole notes, and because of this, in the draft, the three half notes, originally tranquil, almost appear hasty. On the other hand, if he had doubled them, the problem just would have moved onwards: it would have called for similar alteration for the postlude, and this would have completely changed, even confused, the work's rhythmic and formal balance.

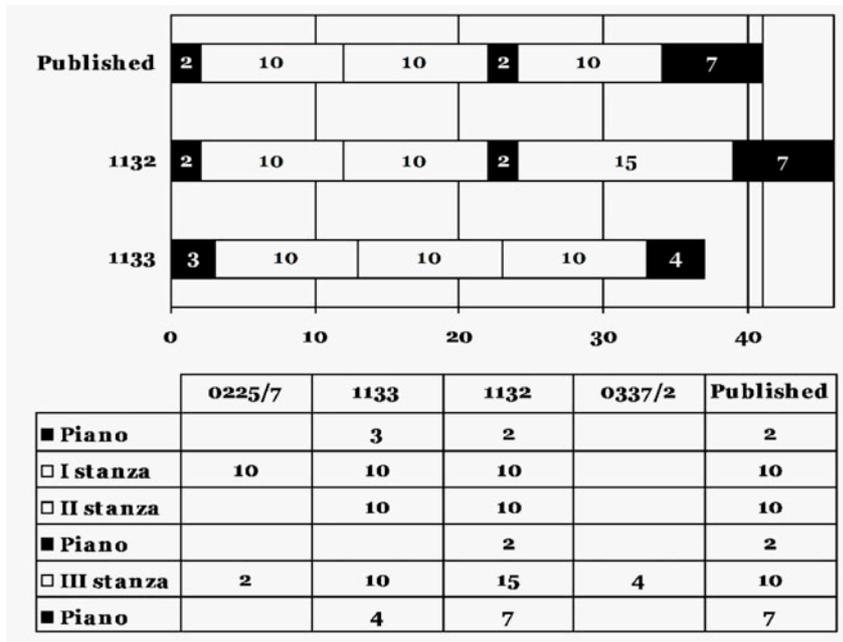


Table 2. The differences between the sources according to their length by bars.

The published work shows that in the end the original idea survived. However, unlike in the case of the triplets, Sibelius has not backed off completely. Instead he has continued working on the idea and altered it to a local expression. Now, at the same place, where the double durations began, there is a marking *rallentando* for the words *Auf im Grund* followed by *a tempo* (see Figure 4, bb. 28-29). This way Sibelius has returned to his original idea, the contrast between the steady vocal rhythm on quarter notes and arrival to the calming half notes at *Kindermund*. At the same time he has succeeded in emphasising the middle of the third stanza as a defining moment, anticipation of the resolution.

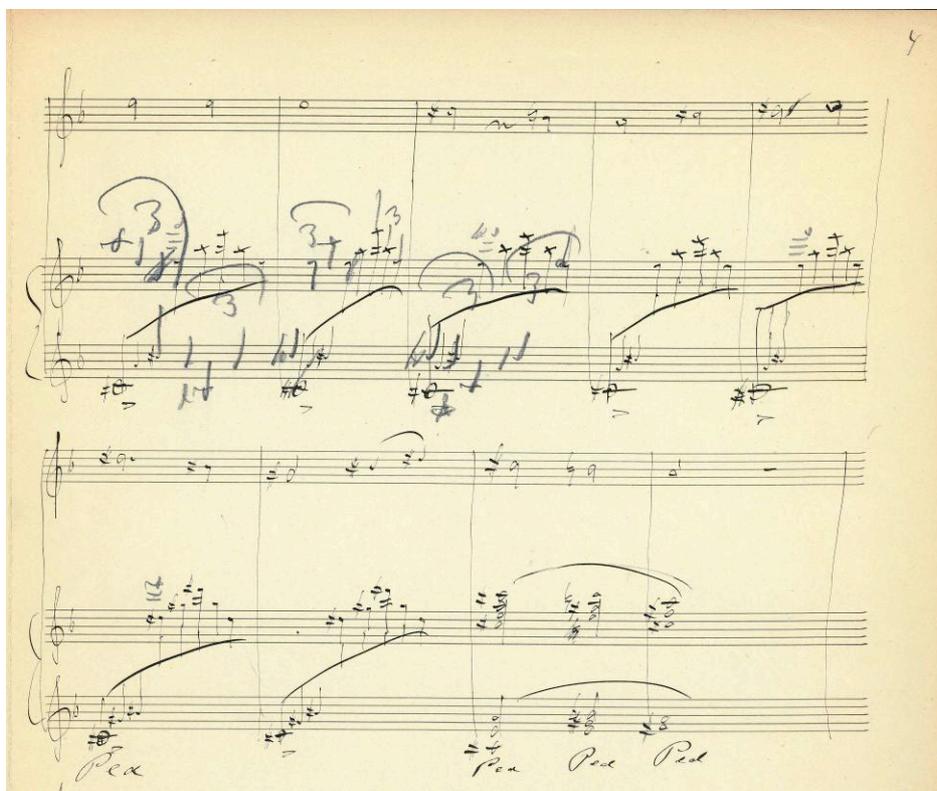


Figure 14. HUL 1132, excerpt from p. 4.

Conclusion

A present day critic appreciates *Die stille Stadt* for the qualities of the completed version: «The song is a masterpiece in the style of Schubert and has many of the fine qualities found in the song cycle *Der Winterreise*, being introspective and deceptively simple. Sibelius uses the sparest means here: a haunting melody against a slow, steady background of arpeggios in the piano

until the slight climax, when the piano changes to chords to evoke a hymn sung by children.» (SIRÉN 1996, pp. 176-177.)

The creative process shows other, varied views. On one hand, the song's birth was straightforward: an identifiable *Die stille Stadt* appears in its first sketch – showing us a glimpse of Sibelius's heavy flash of lightning, in Hindemith's terms. On the other hand, «the haunting melody» is only a part of the whole. The four survived manuscripts show that the completion of the song demanded hard work, testing, and even abandonment of most promising compositional ideas.

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