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Address

c/o Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, Section of Musicology,
University of Copenhagen, Karen Blixens Vej 1, DK-2300 København S

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Niels W. Gade: ‘Gegenwartsmusiker’. On Progressive Epigonality in Nineteenth-Century Music History¹

Siegfried Oechsle

Gade now

Even if Niels Wilhelm Gade’s fame already began to fade in his lifetime, his oeuvre is part not only of Scandinavian but of European musical and cultural history. A Danish composer and conductor, shaped in his early years in his native country, later most notably in Germany, his works were performed, leaving the continent behind, also in the USA and in Australia. In this sense, Gade now may seem more contemporary than ever – as an inhabitant of a space between national territories, but also due to his pursuing of a music-cultural identity that was at the most collaterally affected by national boundaries. In Gade’s lifetime, his bi- or transnational musical authorship had positive consequences. Subsequently, however, in times of aggressive nationalism that also affected the musical discourse, it created negative ones. Since the late twentieth century it has actually led to a growing interest in Gade once again. This is not least evident from numerous recordings, a modern critical edition of his music,² a new biography,³ his correspondence being scholarly edited,⁴ and a catalogue of his works soon to be published.

These efforts not only help preserve European music-cultural heritage. They also provide a basis for a new critical examination of Gade’s music and of the history of its reception. This, in turn, may affect criticism of categories like national canon, epigonality

- 1 The paper is a result of the author’s visiting professorship at the Royal Library Copenhagen in 2017–2018. A shorter version was presented at the ‘Symposium on the Occasion of the 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Niels W. Gade’, Aarhus University, School of Communication and Culture, in March 2017.
- 2 A catalogue of the volumes is found at <http://www.gade-edition.org/>, accessed 17 May 2019. Participating in the edition is also the Royal Library Copenhagen with the *Danish Centre for Music Publication*: <http://www.kb.dk/da/nb/dcm/projekter/gade.html>, accessed 17 May 2019. Outside Denmark the Niels W. Gade-edition is published by Bärenreiter-Verlag Kassel: <https://www.baerenreiter.com/en/catalogue/complete-editions/gade-niels-wilhelm/>, accessed 17 May 2019. See also Finn Egeland Hansen, ‘Niels W. Gades samlede værker. Det hidtil største danske noteudgivelsesprojekt’, *Magasin fra Det Kongelige Bibliotek*, 5 (1990), 5–18; Siegfried Oechsle, ‘Gefeiert, geachtet, vergessen. Zum 100. Todestag Niels W. Gades’, *Dansk Årbog for Musikforskning*, 19 (1988–91), 171–84; Danish version: ‘Fejret, agtet, glemt. Til Niels W. Gade i 100-året for hans død’, *Niels W. Gade Newsletter*, 3 (1991), 3–23.
- 3 Inger Sørensen, *Niels W. Gade – et dansk verdensnavn* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2002).
- 4 Inger Sørensen, *Niels W. Gade og hans europæiske kredse. En brevvæksling 1836–1891*, 3 vols. (Danish Humanist Texts and Studies, 36; Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2008).

and the question of a measurement of progress in the temporal designations of future and past – designations from which, as is well known, conceptual weapons were forged in the musical-aesthetic discourse of the era past 1850.

The established canon of Romantic music still forms a very stable bastion for such endeavours. In permanent selections by market, media and scholarship, it is, strictly speaking, still and constantly worked on.⁵ A line of progress of decidedly German imprint, running from Beethoven via Schubert, Schumann, Brahms and Wagner to early Schönberg, functions as a kind of backbone of this ado. It could soon be notionally ennobled by the term 'discourse'. Mendelssohn and Mahler have long participated in it as what might paradoxically be called 'master-epigones'. Figures like 'Gade, Raff and Rubinstein', though, to quote a stereotyped enumeration by Carl Dahlhaus, belong to the wide domain of 'real' epigones.⁶

For some time now, the composer Gade has partially escaped a music-historical shadowy existence of enumerations and marginalia. However, the widened perspective since the later twentieth century primarily supported studies of institutional and cultural history. But it hardly led to a new consideration of Gade's music as an aesthetic object.⁷ At least in concerts and on the radio the music of Gade, the 'classicist Romantic', could more frequently be heard since his anniversary in 2017. It remains to be seen if and how this attention will continue. In musicology, though, 2017 almost entirely lacked any preoccupation with Gade including a focus on his music.⁸

To deal with Gade's music more thoroughly again would neither have to ignore such historical contexts nor the history of its reception in particular. It might, however, lead to

- 5 Representative for the category of 'canon' are: *MusikTheorie*, 21/1 (2006); Klaus Pietschmann and Melanie Wald-Fuhrmann (eds.), *Der Kanon der Musik. Theorie und Geschichte. Ein Handbuch* (Munich: edition text und kritik, 2013), here esp. Stefan Keym, 'Germanozentrik versus Internationalisierung? Zum Werk- und Deutungskanon des "zweiten Zeitalters der Symphonie"', 482–516.
- 6 The series of names 'Gade, Raff und Rubinstein' occurs a number of times in Dahlhaus as a fortification of Wagner's assumption concerning the symphony's end after Beethoven. Whoever tried to fill the historical gap of the decades 1850–70 with 'a few symphonies by Gade, Raff and Rubinstein' ('einige Symphonien von Gade, Raff und Rubinstein') would, according to Dahlhaus, replace 'music-historical facts' ('musikgeschichtliche Tatsachen') by 'mere statistics' ('bloße Statistik'): Carl Dahlhaus, *Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Neues Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft, 6; Laaber: Laaber, 1980), 197; see also 65.
- 7 Yvonne Wasserloos, *Kulturgezeiten. Niels W. Gade und C. F. E. Horneman in Leipzig und Kopenhagen* (Studien und Materialien zur Musikwissenschaft, 36; Hildesheim: Olms, 2004). The study offers an exhaustive examination of the Leipzig and Copenhagen conservatories' institutional history.
- 8 The symposium in Aarhus (Denmark) was held in cooperation with *Fonden til udgivelse af Niels W. Gades Værker* and Aarhus Universitet at Institut for Kommunikation og Kultur: <http://arts.au.dk/aktuelt/arrangementer/vis/artikel/niels-w-gade-seminar/>, accessed 17 May 2019. In Leipzig, a Gade-symposium was organized by students of the Hochschule für Musik and the Institute of Musicology at Leipzig University: http://www.hmt-leipzig.de/home/fachrichtungen/institut-fuer-musikwissenschaft/chronik-archiv/forschungsarchiv/document_331537/content_item_846172/Gade.pdf, accessed 17 May 2019.

a questioning of deadlocked images, labellings and sovereignties of interpretation. And it could, after all, help not to hypostasize traditional texts of reception in a way that they appear to be absolute authorities of judgement. It is revealing that it was precisely the speaking about his 'Nordic tone' and its characteristic sphere, linked to Gade's career since the Leipzig years, that has at the same time been a main hindrance for a more detailed preoccupation with his music. Gade, the Dane, has indeed been carried along in German musical histories since c. 1920 according to this topos – albeit in the manner of a presence primarily defined by doubt and by questions of notional history and history of thought. The musical foundations, though, for a judgement such as Hermann Kretzschmar's who saw in Gade the founder of a new era of instrumental music after Beethoven, had more and more been lost sight of. According to Kretzschmar, in his *Fourth Symphony*, originating from after his return from Leipzig,

Gade is an excellent vassal of Schumann's and Beethoven's, in that first [*Symphony*], though, he appears as the head and leader of a new era. That C minor Symphony lent the higher instrumental music stimuli of greatest importance.⁹

Instead of seeking shelter under the topoi of the early Leipzig reception, it should be noted in the first place that at the beginning of the 'Gade-story' there was the observance of a musical deviation. Gade sounded different from what up to then was common in the genre of overture and symphony. The course-setting judgement was made by Felix Mendelssohn by choosing the *First Symphony* for the Gewandhaus-concerts' programme in the season of 1842–43,¹⁰ later by the Leipzig public after the work's first performance. It was primarily from this that the 'Leipzig fairy tale' about the sensational triumphs of a hitherto unknown Dane from Copenhagen developed in Gade-literature, especially in its popular offspring.¹¹

9 '...ist Gade ein hervorragender Vasall Schumanns und Beethovens, in jener ersten [Sinfonie] aber erscheint er als die Spitze und der Führer einer neuen Epoche. Jene C-moll-Sinfonie gab der höheren Instrumentalmusik Impulse von größter Bedeutung'; Hermann Kretzschmar, *Führer durch den Konzertsaal, I. Abteilung: Sinfonie und Suite*, vol. I/II (Leipzig: Liebeskind, 1887), cited here after the 6th edn. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1921), 500.

10 See Mendelssohn's two letters to Gade, on 13 January 1843 and 3 March 1843 in Sørensen, *En brevveksling*, Nos. 25 and 30, 82–84 and 92f.

11 See Siegfried Oechsle, *Symphonik nach Beethoven. Studien zu Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn und Gade* (Kieler Schriften zur Musikwissenschaft, 40; Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1992), 55ff.; Sørensen, *Niels W. Gade – et dansk verdensnavn*, 36ff.; Michael Matter, *Niels W. Gade und der 'nordische Ton'. Ein musikgeschichtlicher Präzedenzfall* (Schweizer Beiträge zur Musikforschung, 21; Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2015), 25ff.

'Nordic' tones from Leipzig's sunny side – 'most amiable'¹² works from Copenhagen north

Up to this day, the reception history as to Gade's music has been dominated in an unrivalled fashion by the notion of its presumed 'Nordic character'. This topos was formed in Leipzig and was associated with metaphors such as scent, fog, complexion and tone (though all of them occurred in Denmark at the end of the 1820s already¹³). In this respect, it is consistent that Michael Matter's corresponding study is aligned with this topos. After an exhaustive reconstruction of the cultural Nordic discourse since the Enlightenment – a profound outline indispensable for future dealings with Scandinavian musical history since the eighteenth century – Matter investigates Gade's German reception, starting with his early work and focusing on its 'constant of reception', the 'Nordic tone'.¹⁴ But in doing so, Matter creates the impression that Gade's comedown from an *international* to a *national player* had less been the consequence of his compositional development and his artistic decisions; rather, it seems conditional on a reception which was, practically until the composer's final years, fixated on the stereotype based on the Leipzig early work. According to this view, Gade ultimately becomes a victim of his own early successes. While the sensations of the first compositions were characterized by the invention of new patterns of musical writing, it was just these innovative sounds that evoked the reception's constants. Congealed as a trademark, all following works by Gade were measured by them. If the reception is then understood as centred on this contradiction, a dilemma arises from which Gade could not escape: If his later works lacked features counted among the stereotyped inventory of the 'Nordic tone', the earlier originality had paled or vanished completely. If the composer in turn revisited the musical substance of the 'Nordic tone', the new originality was underexposed or fully absent.

12 '...allerliebenswertigste': with regard to the *Fourth Symphony* op. 20, *Signale für die musikalische Welt*, 43 (1885), 71.

13 In 1828, the poet Johan Ludvig Heiberg in the printed libretto's preface of the 'Singspiel' *Elverhøj* (Elfenhügel), created by himself and Friedrich Kuhlau, mentions Danish and Swedish folk tunes which are supposed to lend the whole thing a fairly national scent or complexion ('at give det Hele en ret national Duft eller Colorit'); *Elverhøi. Skuespil i fem Acter af Johan Ludvig Heiberg*, ed. Ferdinand Printzlau (Copenhagen: Hostrup Schultz, 1828), *Forerindringen* [J. L. H.], IX. Also contained in F.[riedrich or Frederik] Kuhlau, *Elverhøi. Skuespil i fem Acter af J.[ohan] L.[udvig] Heiberg, sat i Musik med Benyttelse af gamle danske Folkeviser ... Op. 100. Klaverudtog af Componisten* (Copenhagen: Lose, 1828; repr. Copenhagen: Dan Fog 1978). Mendelssohn writes from his journey to Scotland in 1829: 'Everything here looks so serious and burly and all lies halfway in scent, or smoke, or fog' ('Es sieht alles so ernsthaft und kräftig hier aus, und alles liegt halb im Duft, oder Rauch, oder Nebel'); Juliette Appold and Regina Back (eds.), *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. Sämtliche Briefe*, vol. 1: 1816 bis Juni 1830 (Kassel: Bärenreiter 2008), 345f.

14 Matter, *Niels W. Gade*; reviewed by Niels Bo Foltmann, *Fund og Forskning i Det Kongelige Biblioteks Samlinger*, 55 (2016), 595–600; and by Michael Fjeldsøe, *Danish Yearbook of Musicology*, 41 (2017), 28–31.

Instead of simplifying matters in a tragic constellation, the perspectives from which they are focused on could be altered more emphatically. One could either, for a change, not start from Gade's time in Leipzig but from the compositional developments of his long years in Copenhagen; or, the receptive topicality of the early years becomes the object of enquiry once more. In the first case, the approach should not be narrowed down to the 'Nordic tone' and its corresponding points of proof in the works. In any case, the historiographical formation of a 'Leipzig School' ('Leipziger Schule') would have to be consulted as a permanent context. Just as the stock price of a single share cannot be observed without examining comparable prices of the market, it would be revealing indeed to take into account the judgements on Gade in connection with the changeable history of Mendelssohn's and Schumann's reception. Moreover, not least influenced by Wagner and his followers of German imperial times, the contents of a Romantic *imaginatio borealis* in its extremes shifted towards an ideology of the Nordic-Germanic with a certain racist undercurrent. This had an impact on Gade's reception as well as Gade's distance to all of this was, in opposition to all musical data, interpreted as Mendelssohn's influence. In an entirely Wagnerian sense, the Danish music critic and Gade-biographer Charles Kjerulf in 1917 spoke of Gade's 'Mendelssohnization' and connected it with a stigma of decadence.¹⁵

Below, the leading category of the 'Nordic tone' dominating the history of Gade-reception will (in reference to Michael Matter's rich and learned study) be examined once more inasmuch as the examination will less be pointed at an illustration of the early sensations, of their musical 'market value' and later 'slump in prices'; rather, a differentiation of discourses involved as well as of compositional potentials and of their patterns of development will be sought after more emphatically. This concerns, to start from Clara Schumann's talk of a 'Nordic national character' ('nordische Nationalcharacter'¹⁶), the theoretical bases of 'character-' or 'tone'-imagery, the distinction of 'Nordic' and 'national' and the compositional models, contained in the musical 'inventory' of the 'Nordic tone'. By differentiating these issues with regard to their context in a history

15 Charles Kjerulf, *Niels W. Gade. Til Belysning af hans Liv og Kunst i Hundred-Aaret for Mesterens Fødsel* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1917), 154ff. The book is defined by anti-German resentments and presents Gade's compositional career as a fight against Mendelssohn's influence, jeopardizing his proper identity. In connection with the reproach of Gade's 'Mendelssohnisierung' ('Mendelssohnization'; *ibid.*, 156), see the author's 'Gefeiert, geachtet, vergessen'. D. M. Johansen's Grieg-biography (David Monrad Johansen, *Edvard Grieg*, Oslo: Gyldendal, 1934, 3rd edn., 1956) is written in a fascinating fashion to a large extent. In its valuation of Gade, however, based on Kjerulf's biography, it reiterates a view brought forward by it, according to which Mendelssohn had if not ruined Gade's Nordic identity, nevertheless weakened it decidedly (Johansen, *Edvard Grieg*, 58ff.). This is why, as through Johansen, Gade's reticent attitude in the face of Grieg's national endeavours was guided by a bad conscience (*ibid.*, 59). Gade's reception in Scandinavia has so far been dealt with in a rudimental way at best.

16 Gerd Nauhaus (ed.), *Robert Schumann. Tagebücher Bd. II: 1836–1854* (Leipzig: DMV, 1987; licensed edn. Basel and Frankfurt/M.: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, n.d.), 259 (Clara Schumann's entry in the 'Ehe-tagebuch' III, March 1843).

of thought and with a view to their compositional/structural constitution, chances are heightened not only to focus on Gade's development in the decade of his work before 1848 but also in the following forty years in Copenhagen – at least in a rudimentary fashion. This interest seems all the more justified, the stronger the history of reception tended to reduce Gade to essentialist stereotypes.

Substance versus construct?

A lot has been written about the speaking of a 'Nordic tone', well documented in the history of reception. Nevertheless, questions and aspects of fundamental scepticism remain. They do not result from a reception that did not refer to concise musical facts. Recently, interrelations of that sort were elaborately constrained by Michael Matter. Doubt rather occurs regarding the question of clarity when it comes to the assignments themselves. Occasionally, such doubt is naively expressed in musicological seminars by way of asking whether there was in fact such a thing as a 'Nordic tone' after all, or if it was not mere 'construction' based on international folklore. History of reception is often understood then as some kind of almost arbitrary imaginary 'projected into' 'the music'. This doubt seems ascribable to Carl Dahlhaus who spoke of the 'prejudice of an ethnic substantiality of national characters'¹⁷ in music. In most cases, however, a complementary note is overlooked according to which music, in any case, is a 'result of categorial formation'.¹⁸ This certainly embraces the category of nationality. It is unacceptable, though, why it should only and exclusively apply to this particular topic. The contradiction between substance and construction/reception always concerns the whole domain of 'Töne und Charaktere' ('tones and characters'), to pick up a frequent phrase of Dahlhaus's. The tension between substantial foundation and clear analytical proof does actually apply to a lot of semantic contents ('Gehalte'), not exclusively to musically relevant north-*imagines* (although clarity must not be confused with unambiguousness). As a haziness of relations is apparently part of the matter itself, a fundamental methodical problem arises: Do the instruments of analysis destroy the object? Indeed, once the musical 'Formmaterie' ('matter of form') is sent through the filters of abstraction until only exact features remain, such as bourdon fifths, Lydian fourths etc., this theoretical condensate does not have much to do with the musical reality of artefacts any more. A substantialist understanding of the 'Nordic tone' cannot be refuted by distilling folkloristic essences from the music, in order to state then that these data did not carry any 'Nordic' information, but were, so to speak, music-culturally fleeting elements. To cite a favourite term of Dahlhaus's instead: The issues in question are 'configurations', connections aggregated most diversely from cultural knowledge of discourse and from

17 Dahlhaus, *Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts*, 33f. ('Vorurteil von der ethnischen Substantialität musikalischer Nationalcharaktere').

18 Ibid. ('ein Resultat kategorialer Formung').

precise musical structures. The primary goal here would be to fathom the transitions of music-culturally exchangeable elements to individual musical formations which are not exchangeable anymore and thus (at least within a temporal limitation) could refer to imaginarily more solid and historically more connected meanings. Of course, these musical-semantic relationships find themselves in historical fluctuation, as production and reception influence each other in mutual dependence.

Where is the north of the 'Nordic tone'?

Hence, the objection according to which the identification of a northern or indeed a regional reference in instrumental music were imperatively tied to verbal supplements could be parried by the fact that also other characters – as the scherzo-like, the elegiac, the sentimental or a 'melancholic tone'¹⁹ – are dependent on paratextual information and on cultural processes of learning, in musical production as well as in auditory perception. This is also true of musical genres with scenic or literary references like the pastoral or the balladic. In addition, the indication of the cardinal direction only very indirectly implies an identifiable geographic direction. It is, in any case, a matter of 'mental maps', imaginarily constructed, in which oppositions of north and south are inscribed, instituted since Rousseau, Herder, Goethe or August Wilhelm Schlegel. This particular north represents foremost the emancipation from an aesthetic hegemony of classicism rooted in the antique south. The discourse mirroring this process is part of the outset of modernity since the late eighteenth century. Accordingly, northern space is conceived of as very wide and historically deep in the first instance.²⁰ A circumspect analysis of the phenomenon 'Nordic tone' would have to focus on the notions connected with the category 'tone' in rhetoric and metaphoric relations as well. Additionally, a further differentiation of the idea of north in history of thought and culture would be advisable, foremost with regard to the epochal caesura of 1850, which is central to Gade.

Varieties of northernness in Gade's oeuvre

Quite different concepts of northernness in cultural history and history of thought are relevant when it comes to Gade's work and its reception:

First, the archaic north, formed by mythical subjects such as Ossian or Edda-poetry. In cultural history it is opposed to the older south with its antique fitting and its classicist

19 To put not only the 'Nordic' but e.g. also the 'melancholic tone' in quotation marks is done here foremost to indicate the questionability of a permanent meta-linguistic marking of the phrase 'Nordic tone'. Sure enough, the ideological charge of the 'Nordic' in the twentieth century may considerably contribute to this necessity of creating distance. But epistemologically as well as music-aesthetically such a special status of the 'Nordic tone' within the wide span of musical tones and characters is hardly justifiable.

20 See Matter, *Niels W. Gade*, esp. 47ff.

reception following Winckelmann. In spite of the manifold sources of inspiration contained in Gade's 'Composition Diary'²¹ dating from 1839–41, he frequents 'the sphere of the north'²² in his first major orchestral composition by way of Ossian-poetry.

Second, the historical north, constituted following Rousseau and notably Herder's theory of 'Volksgeist' ('folk spirit') by referring to legends and fairy-tales, soon also to historic folk melodies. It is from this that the category of 'Volkston' ('folk tone') with its musical branches emerges. In Gade's early work this layer is evident in his use of the Old Danish *Ramund*-tune in the *Ossian-overture* and in the 'Volkston'-song *På Sjølund's fagre Sletter* at the beginning of the *First Symphony*.

Third, the national north in a narrower sense, shaped in Denmark insistently since the 1830s, later in the other Scandinavian countries, too. The art historian Niels Laurits Høyen is an important thinker on these developments later called 'Scandinavism'.²³ During these years the Scandinavian milieu is subject to a differentiation in the course of which Denmark advances to becoming the south of the thus imagined north. By re-introducing the 'large' north/south-difference into its northern side the concepts of north generate their own south. In this, a claim of autonomy becomes visible, identifying it as a creation of modernity. Transferred to scenic associations, the talk of 'charming' or 'endearing' qualities, which mark the reception notably of the *Second Symphony* and *Elverskud*, but also of compositions like *En Sommerdag på Landet*, is one of the most common Gade-stereotypes.²⁴ Norway, in contrast, is increasingly presented by the arts as the northern north: rough, pristine, severe and gloomy, up to outright existential menace.

Fourth, Wagner's north, rooted in Germanic mythology. This is primarily an artificial product which today would perhaps be subsumed under the 'fantasy' genre. This north, however, is most strongly politically and ideologically charged in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. National contents mutate into 'Kunstreligion', religion of art. And resonances with societal reality do not proceed as historical projections, but via political symbols and racist undertones. Whereas Gade widely left behind the Ossianic north in Germany on his return to Copenhagen, he sporadically did examine the Germanic north, as documented by his early Nibelung-project and his later contact with the matter of Baldur, only not to pursue it any further.

21 Rendered in Anna Harwell Celenza, *The Early Works of Niels W. Gade. In Search of the Poetic* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 199–207.

22 '...des Nordens Sphære'; *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 22 (1845), 2.

23 Programmatic here is N.[iels Laurits] Høyen, *Om Betingelserne for en skandinavisk Nationalkonst's Udvikling. Et Foredrag, holdt d. 23^{de} Marts 1844 i det Skandinaviske Selskab* (Copenhagen, 1844).

24 See Matter, *Niels W. Gade*, 163ff., and Siegfried Oechsle, 'Eine Erscheinung aus den "Buchenwäldern Dänemarks": Niels W. Gades 2. Sinfonie im Diskurs des Nordisch-Erhabenen', in Ole Kongsted et al. (eds.), *A due. Musical Essays in Honour of John D. Bergsagel & Heinrich W. Schwab/Musikalische Aufsätze zu Ehren von John D. Bergsagel & Heinrich W. Schwab* (Danish Humanist Texts and Studies, 37; Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2008), 567–89.

These hardly exhaustive typological discriminations of the north do not intend to find categories as exact as possible for a regional 'sonography' of Gade's music and its Nordic tones or to sharply distinguish historic areas one from the other. At least, they promote the prospect of a better understanding of intermediation and more subtle transformations.

Nordic-national?

As the concept of nationality is essential to all these notions of northernness, relations must be differentiated between very distinctly. For instance, the discrimination of centre and periphery is still vital in a concept of nationality such as Schumann's, forming the basis of his speaking of a 'decidedly Nordic character'²⁵ in Gade's music.²⁶ Qualifying as 'national' were, to Schumann, the musical efforts of emancipation of the 'adjacent nations' ('angrenzenden Nationen'). The centre, located within the imaginary borders, is, on the one hand, liable to the idea of an Italian-French-German 'triumvirate' of music, characteristic of the eighteenth century. On the other hand, since at least the 1830s there comes into play an increasing nationalization of the 'classical' era, led by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, as an epitome of German music. Lending the centre the entitlement of universality, though, would be far too simple – even if Schumann claimed that the nations assembled under 'periphery' were regarding 'the German nation as the first and most loved teacher in music' ('die deutsche Nation als ihre erste und geliebteste Lehrerin in der Musik betrachten'). With regard to Scandinavia, 'national' and 'Nordic' are synonymous here. As substantial foundations of 'national tendencies' ('nationellen Tendenzen'), Schumann names 'old folk tunes' ('alte Volkslieder'), 'old fairy tales and legends' ('alte Märchen und Sagen'), scenic stereotypes of Scandinavia and its poets, notably the 'new appearing, eminent' ('neu auftauchenden bedeutenden'). This reveals a concept of north and its national status primarily focused on bourgeois 'Bildung', remaining integrated in Schumann's aesthetics of the poetic and standing on a universal position of an 'adept of mankind' ('Kenner der Menschheit'). Thinking in national essences, defining the true identity of Danish, Swedish or German music, is far removed from that. An anonymous critique of Gade's *Comala*, dating from 1846, illustrates how subtle, poetic and yet musically mediated such historic characterizations can become. In this piece, accordingly, there wafts

25 '...entschieden ausgeprägten nordischen Charakter': Robert Schumann, 'Niels W. Gade', *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 20 (1844), No. 1, 1 January 1844, 1–2. All other quotes in the paragraph above are taken from this text as well.

26 See Laurenz Lütteken, "... im gesunden musikalischen Deutschland". Schumann und das "Nationale" in der Musik, in Matthias Wendt (ed.), *Robert und Clara Schumann und die nationalen Musikkulturen des 19. Jahrhunderts. Bericht über das 7. Internationale Schumann-Symposium 2000 im Rahmen des 7. Schumann-Festes, Düsseldorf* (Schumann Forschungen, 9; Mainz: Schott, 2005), 134–48.

the national folk-tone, that musical mystic of the north which we meet, so original-mysterious, in all melodies of the Nordic peoples' tribes; and not only in their fondness of gloomy, melancholic minor keys, but also in the peculiarly soft and sensual treatment of major harmonies.²⁷

The category of nationality as such would not have to be kept apart from this concept of the 'Nordic tone' because of this, as stipulated by Anna Celenza.²⁸ Instead, a more exact specification of the term is necessary.²⁹ With regard to Gade's composing after 1850 for instance, that is after his return to the Danish metropolis, it would have to be shown why the *Fourth Symphony* of the same year, particularly because of its 'un-Nordic' and universal tone, tells of the new national standpoint of its maker. For indirectly it seems to announce his national claim to be allowed, as a representative of a European marginal nation, to present a universal symphony that does not mark its own origin.

Gade's concept of nationalism in music, taking into account his oeuvre as a whole, largely corresponded with Schumann's. His musical working on different north-topoi was less aimed at the construction of national identity; rather, the attraction of this poetic substance lay in the creation of innovative sounds and forms. Originality and individuality remain the highest-ranking aesthetic categories of his artistic self-concept. For all of his life, Gade heeded to Schumann's advice to remain open to 'other spheres' ('andere Sphären'³⁰) and to Schumann's warning him of keeping in one single style. This is also revealed by Gade's answering the question as to why he had no longer followed up the sphere of the Nordic-national of his early work in his later compositions: 'There was nothing more to be retrieved from it.'³¹ For Grieg, this assessment would have meant the end of his career as an artist on a national mission. For Gade, obviously, it did not. He did not entirely avoid his Leipzig innovations in later years, though – they indeed remained self-reflexive addresses in subtle allusions.

Categories such as the 'the north' and 'the national' would certainly have to be differentiated further. Nevertheless, this also applies to the musical issues that vouch for them. They are aligned with the types of orchestral setting found in Gade's early oeuvre.

27 '...der nationale Volkston, jene musikalische Mystik des Nordens, die uns in allen Weisen der nordischen Völkerstämme so originell-räthselhaft entgegentritt, und zwar nicht nur in der Vorliebe für die düsteren, melancholischen Molltonarten, sondern auch in der eigenthümlich weichen und sinnigen Behandlung der Durharmonieen'; *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 48 (1846), 227.

28 Celenza, *The Early Works of Niels W. Gade*, 189.

29 In a similar way this also applies to Yvonne Wasserloos, 'Achsen-Grenzgang als nationale Mission? Niels W. Gade und Johannes Verhulst zwischen Innovation und Konservierung', *Die Tonkunst*, 10 (2016), 288–99.

30 Schumann, 'Niels W. Gade'.

31 'Der var ikke mere at gøre ud deraf'; after William Behrend, *Niels W. Gade* (Copenhagen: Schönberg, 1917), 113f. Kjerulf, *Niels W. Gade*, 270f., quotes Gade remarking: 'Der er ikke mere at bringe ud deraf'.

The 'Nordic tone' and its types of orchestral composition

It cannot be stressed enough that the 'Nordic' characteristics of sound in the early orchestral works are not to be found in some kind of essence (in which, then, for instance, the component 'modal tonality' would rank highly). But this does not mean, in turn, that the phenomenon had no structural counterpart in the music. Instead of reducing the matter to music-theoretically definable distillates, however, tangible types of musical writing must be taken into account. Abbreviated in a hypothesis: The 'Nordic tone' in Gade's works comprises an inventory of very different modes of orchestral sound. More precisely, one is dealing with a palette of 'Nordic' tones and characters.

First: The largest public impact³² was caused by the 'Bardenchor' ('chorus of the bards'; Gade used the German designation as the heading of the final movement in *Comala*). It consists of a melody, mostly in unison and dominated by brass, grounded on bulky, arpeggiated chordal accents on strong beats. This characteristic sound with its elaborate evocation of elementary artlessness is met by harmonic means which can offer an appearance of antiquity.³³ The type, moulded sharply in terms of instrumentation, has precedents in Ossian-operas, such as those by Rossini and Le Suer,³⁴ but in all likelihood also in the various examples of incidental music composed for Adam Oehlenschläger's tragedies by A. P. Berggreen and J. P. E. Hartmann in the 1830s.³⁵ Yet it is only in Gade's early works that it attains topical conciseness and variance of sound. It was probably the impression derived from the likes of this that inspired Schumann to the musical picture of 'Ossian's giant harp' ('Ossians Riesenharfe'³⁶) in his article on Gade.

Second: The mobile, genuinely instrumental side piece of the static 'Bardenchor' is formed by fast march-like models in which vigorous scalar motions in dotted rhythms

32 This can surely not be restricted to Leipzig. Reception documents in contemporary German periodicals reach from Riga to Cologne, from Hamburg to Munich.

33 See Matter's characterization of the 'Bardenchor' (*Niels W. Gade*, 209ff.). Next to the major/minor-ambivalences specified there, one could add axial notes such as pedal points which lend the sound aspects of static and ruggedness.

34 See *ibid.* 69ff.

35 In connection with Berggreen's music for Oehlenschläger's *Socrates* (1835), see Niels Martin Jensen, 'Niels W. Gade og den nationale tone. Dansk nationalromantik i musikalsk belysning', in Ole Feldbæk (ed.), *Dansk Identitetshistorie*, vol. 3: *Folkets Danmark* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1992), 213f. Hartmann's incidental music for the tragedy *Olaf den Hellige* (autograph dated 'April 1838' with opus number 23) could also be mentioned here, especially its 'No. 3. Chor af Skalderne i 4^{de} Act' for male choir and large orchestra, with a symphonic scoring reinforced by trombones and harp. No. 4 is 'battle music' combining chordal tremoli (violins and violas), arpeggiated harp chords, brass in unison and drawn out *cantabile* lines in the basses. In addition, there are 'Tamburino militare e gran cassa' (Royal Library Copenhagen, C II, 114, Tværfolio, 34ff., according to the source's pencil foliation; a digitization of the autograph is found at http://img.kb.dk/ma/dankam/ms/hartmann_j_p_e/hartmann_olaf.pdf; accessed 17 May 2019).

36 Schumann, 'Niels W. Gade'.

prevail. Intervallic leaps, motorically repeated, in turn provide retaining contrasts. Orchestral sforzati, sharply subdividing, and signal-like series of notes can be added. Harmony contributes to an archaic effect here, too, for instance by way of a poly-diatonic major/minor-tonality in which parallel triads hardly function as (Riemannian) substitutes.

Mediated via verbal indication such as the title of op. 1, both types can supply the sphere of sublimity with receptive connections for an Ossianic imagery (whereas the aesthetics of the sublime as in Kant's dynamic-sublime is quite associable with climatic-scenic north-stereotypes). The genre combines monotony and monumental simplicity, paired with the notion of legendary incidents. As the evocation of the 'bards' particularly possessed imaginative potentials but offered little potential in terms of musical development, one could speak of a static pithiness.³⁷

The third type in the inventory of 'Nordic tones' and the associated north-*imagines* offers a much bigger variability. It is the *cantabile* in a restrainedly conducted melos and a harmony in which modal colourings occur in a muted sonority, usually carried out by woodwinds and lower strings. Other formations may be added which could perhaps be construed as a 'reverberation' of responsorial chanting practices. The subordinate section of the *Ossian-overture* and the slow movement of the *First Symphony* are prominent examples of these *cantabile* models. Though stimuli via older Scandinavian 'folkeviser' can be demonstrated, no direct quotations occur. Consequently, a designation such as 'Romanze im Volkston' would perhaps apply to this type of 'Liedsatz'.³⁸ In the history of reception corresponding allusions of elegiac, melancholic, remote, old or of mysterious appear. Not only is this primarily lyrical domain more versatile and more capable of development than the slightly showy 'Bardenchor'. Usually coloured modally, the *cantabile* also exhibits a subtle *couleur historique*, rather than offering regional associations.

A fourth domain within the inventory of structures and sounds headed 'Nordic tone' is marked by dance-like types that further develop the type of the 'Elfenscherzo', the 'Scherzo of the Elves'. Gade first and foremost adopted Mendelssohn's *Overture for A Midsummer Night's Dream* and transformed some of its features into the symphonic milieu. Due to working with rapid figuration, ornamental formulas, scoring effects like *sordini* and tonally changing scale variants, the type actually deviates least from patterns of German musical Romanticism. Nevertheless, it was precisely the trio ('Meno Allegro')

37 Schumann's concerns are most certainly related to this 'Ossianic manner'. His review of the *Ossian-Overture* (*Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 16 (1842), 41f.) contains the phrases 'Einförmigkeit des Ausdrucks' ('monotony of expression') and 'Kälte des Tons' ('coldness of tone') – though this association, due to its synesthetic sensitivity, still fascinates today.

38 In retrospect, Gade stated to have composed the song-model from the *First Symphony's* beginning as a 'Ballade im Volkston' (Royal Library Copenhagen, C II, 6 Gades Samling 256, kapsel C–E, single sheet). The source is the draft of an album entry dating from the 1880s. The autograph text is in German. According to its invention in the manner of a two-part horn tune with a 'choral' refrain, this particular *cantabile* is indeed a special case.

of the *First Symphony's* Scherzo – representing it in its archaizing minor tonality as a kind of prototype – that evoked the greatest furore in Germany (including Mendelssohn³⁹).

The panorama of symphonic composition as such does not yet represent a musical-structural substratum for the topos of the 'Nordic tone'. With its musical image of an 'historical curtain' opening at the beginning and closing at the end in front of the 'Ossianic' formal tableau, the *Ossian-Overture* exemplifies that the individual form, possessing something of a narrative design here, is not only the 'carrier' of a special *couleur locale*, but forms a crucial constituent of the 'mise-en-scène' in itself. The epic milieu of the formal 'action' melds boreal topoi to a sphere that is more than a side by side of stylistic-technical types of setting.

This short survey also reveals that Gade's early efforts in the matter that the reception called 'Nordic tone' originally is an affair of instrumental music. There again, it is not restricted to the thematic positions of sonata exposition but focuses on the complete classical four-movement cycle. Gade's working on a musical poetics of the North is primarily a symphonic one.

It also becomes transparent that the question of Gade's further compositional development and its reception must take into account the changing combinations of styles, characters and tones. This simply means that, for instance, a history of Gade's reception based on the musical topos of the 'Bardenchor' will fall short.⁴⁰ Conversely, this also applies to attempts of connecting musical semantics of the North with song-like melodic inventions.⁴¹

Of course Gade returns to his own compositional materials later, develops them, puts them in new contexts, uses them as self-quotations or turns away from them completely. An exhaustive examination of this process in his oeuvre, surpassing verbal documents of reception and their selective analytical assessment, in favour of considering more thoroughly the point of view of composition history, is not yet at hand. At least, some lines of perspective in this regard may be suggested.

39 Mendelssohn's letter to Gade, 3 March 1843 (Sørensen, *En brevvæksling*, No. 30, 92f.). See also Friedrich Kistner's, the Leipzig publisher's, letter to Gade on the same day (ibid., No. 29, 90ff.).

40 Although Matter does not reduce Gade's 'Nordic' sound to the type of the 'Bardenchor', he does put exclusive focus on it when it comes to the question of Gade's 'personal style': 'The "Bardenchor" quasi typifies Gade's general mode of composition in a nutshell.' ('Der Bardenchor verkörpert gleichsam in komprimierter Form Gades generelle Kompositionsweise'; Matter, *Niels W. Gade*, 211).

41 In the *First Symphony* the introduction's song-model not only advances to the first movement's main theme but is also subject to a 'monumentalization' in the Finale – a final conception encompassing the cycle which in this manifest thematic relationship represents a novelty in the genre's history. The author's study quoted above (*Symphonik nach Beethoven*) focuses on this song-matter primarily from the perspective of symphonic history, not for the cause of searching for the 'Nordic tone' in Gade.

On Gade's further dealings with the compositional spectrum of the 'Nordic tone'

With the model of the 'Bardenchor' mentioned above, the young Gade created for himself the possibility of transforming the old symphonic 'gears of shiver, fear and horror' ('Hebel des Schauers, der Furcht, des Entsetzens'⁴²) into the great archaism of Ossianic imagery. The title 'Nachklänge von Ossian', 'Echoes of Ossian', served as a semantic signifier for such poetic associations. However, Gade thus provoked a conflict between mythological authenticity and aesthetic originality. Clearly, the contradiction of uncivilized ferocity of the 'Nordlands-Kämpen'⁴³ ('northern warriors') and continual enhancements of the musical material standing in for it could hardly be solved by way of composition. The threshold of stimulus for impressions of mythical fright was, in any case, not to be lowered – an effect of familiarization that could, above all, not be escaped via a strategy of artful artlessness. Even in his *First Symphony*, Gade distinctly withdraws from the bards' sphere of the Ossianic; for the original title of the main theme's song version is about medieval Danish legends of Valdemar-times and refers scenically to the Danish island of Sjælland (Zealand). The *Second Symphony* goes even further in a sublimation of literary-historic contexts.⁴⁴ Thereafter, the 'Bardenchor' occurs in reduced, clearly individualized variants, until it finally ends, as demonstrated by Michael Matter, in a self-quotation with a humorous musical G-A-D-E-signature in the final movement of the last symphony.⁴⁵ Not least Ferdinand Hiller's reaction emphasizes that the *Eighth* was nevertheless a reference to the early work.⁴⁶

In 1846, when Gade, by then an established conductor in Leipzig, first turned to the choral-symphonic genre of works for soli, choir and orchestra with *Comala*, he once

42 E. T. A. Hoffmann in his review of Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*, in E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Schriften zur Musik. Aufsätze und Rezensionen*, ed. Friedrich Schnapp (Munich: Winkler, 1977), 36.

43 The phrase surfaces in the early nineteenth century, see e.g. Theodor von Wedderkop, *Bilder aus dem Norden gesammelt auf einer Reise nach Dänemark und Schweden*, part 2 (Oldenburg: Schulze, 1845) (including a twelve-page supplement of Swedish folksongs in several parts), 158, passim. Digitization at <https://books.google.de/books?id=SnUJliIPyIIC>, accessed 17 May 2019.

44 In this regard, the Gade of the *Second* is closer to Jean Paul's characterization of Ossian: 'Alles ist in seinem [Ossians] Gedichte Musik, aber entfernte und dadurch verdoppelte und ins Unendliche verschwommene, gleichsam ein Echo, das nicht durch rauh-treues Wiedergeben der Töne, sondern durch abschwächendes Mildern derselben entzückt.' ('Everything in his, Ossian's, poem is music, but a remote one, hence doubled and blurred into the infinite; like an echo that does not delight by a rough-true reproduction of the tones but by a extenuated dampening of them'); Jean Paul, *Vorschule der Ästhetik*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, ser. I, vol. 5, ed. Norbert Miller (Munich: Hanser, 1973), 89.

45 Matter, *Niels W. Gade*, 178f.

46 In a letter to Gade concerning the *Eighth Symphony*, Hiller expresses his joy 'to hear once again the Nordic tone so distinctive of you which in the time of the C minor symphony astonished us so and which, in spite of all the tones you are master of, is the one most suitable for you!' ('...jenen Dir eigentümlichen nordischen Ton wieder angeschlagen zu hören der uns zur Zeit in der cmoll Symph. so sehr frappirt & der, trotz aller Töne, deren Du Dich bemeistert, derjenige bleibt der Dir am Besten steht'); Ferdinand Hiller's letter to Gade, Cologne, 16 April 1872, in Sørensen, *En brevvæksling*, No. 610, 833f.

again took his departure from Ossian, therefore from an imaginative space of cultural history which could be called the 'Great North'. Nonetheless, with his next work in this genre, the 'Ballade nach dänischen Volkssagen für Solo, Chor und Orchester' ('ballad after Danish folk legends for soli, choir and orchestra') which Gade himself titled *Erlkönigs Tochter/Elverskud* (1854–55), he makes an analogous withdrawal here too. In this work, manifest melodic borrowings from older Danish folk tunes are not detectable. Yet, the Danish legend matter and the splendidly orchestrated musical tableaux of mood provided for the work's becoming an epitome of musical Danishness ('Danskhed') in national reception. Accordingly, it also ended up on the official 'Kulturkanon' list,⁴⁷ issued by the Danish Ministry of Culture in 2006. The international career of *Erlkönigs Tochter/Elverskud* remains unmentioned there – although the work was published in 1854–55 (parts and piano reduction), as well as in 1865 and 1879 (first and second print of the score) in the Leipzig edition of Kistner in German.⁴⁸ A French and an English piano score followed in 1869 and 1872 respectively. In fact, via the subtitle all these editions do contain a note concerning the ballad's provenance from the sphere of Danish legends. (The Danish origin of the Oluf-ballad is already mentioned in Herder's translation in *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern*.) Yet Gade's composition, today viewed as 'romantikens danske nationalepos',⁴⁹ was one of the most popular choral-orchestral works in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁵⁰ It may be regarded as overdue that now, for the first time, a recording in German was released.⁵¹ And a closer examination of the work's genesis and reception would have to ask how important the national significance of the text was to the composer after all.

The pool of Allegro-themes with more or less march-like traits, mentioned in second place above, Gade would extend in many forms. A martial character noticeably gives way to a more pliable flow, in which rawer chordal accents stand back in favour of a motivic

47 Special issue of *Kulturkontakten*, Copenhagen, January 2006, under 'Partiturmusik', 51.

48 Tr. provided by Edmund Lobedanz. Next to the printed parts, the Leipzig edition of 1854–55 contains a piano score, and only this is where both German and Danish text appears (the German text is given the primary position). Both prints of the score from 1865 and 1879 merely have German text. As late as 1876 a piano reduction with German and Danish vocal text was issued at Wilhelm Hansen in Copenhagen, Danish now being the primary language (the choral parts exclusively contain the Danish text). See esp. Niels W. Gade, *The Elf-King's Daughter Op. 30. Ballad founded on Danish Legends for Soli, Chorus and Orchestra/Erlkönigs Tochter Op. 30. Ballade nach dänischen Volkssagen für Soli, Chor und Orchester*, ed. Niels Bo Foltmann (Niels W. Gade Works/Werke, IV/2; Copenhagen: Engstrøm & Sødring/Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2018), viii–xvi ('Preface to this Volume').

49 *Kulturkontakten*, 51.

50 In connection with the work's reception, see Jensen, 'Niels W. Gade og den nationale tone', 279–89, as well as the 'Preface' to Foltmann's edition.

51 Published in 2018 by the label DaCapo (Danish National Vocal Ensemble, Concerto Copenhagen, Lars Ulrik Mortensen). The preceding performance on 26 February 2017 in Copenhagen has partly been enthusiastically received (concert review in *Berlingske Tidende*, <https://www.b.dk/kultur/gadesom-hovedvej>; accessed 17 May 2019).

design more richly branched and more agile. The first movement of the *Second Symphony*, for instance, is governed by a hymnal verve with chorale-like elements. In the *Third Symphony* the sublimation of Ossianic *maestoso* reaches its peak and its point of transition at the same time. With its abstract materials and its tendency to broadening expansion, the music earns a high level of motivic density. The themes in themselves – with the exception of the finale – turn out richer in contrast and form larger melodic arches. This is where patterns emerge that linger until the last symphony. By itself, a 'northern' reference would hardly be comprehensible here. That this sphere, though, is perceived with hardly any derogation in the reception of the *Third Symphony* shows the effect of growing possibilities of further links in the oeuvre which in turn allow for more sublime solutions.

The *cantabile*, on the third characteristic position in the imaginative domain of the 'Nordic tone', has, in contrast, different and, after all, bigger potentials, as there is no necessity here to boost the Nordic-monumental by way of self-outdoing. Rather, individuality is viable in a dimension of deviation that is alluded to by the metaphors scent, tone or complexion. Knowing of the public's expectations – a public regarding Gade as a representative of a Nordic complexion in instrumental music – the composer can operate with sound deviations on the brink of perceptibility. Precisely in this, however, the matter becomes increasingly self-reflexive due to the possibility to play with the perception of perception or the hearing of hearing. This may not only motivate the recurring talk of the music's charm and allurements but it rather stimulates the imaginative power of hearing as a whole. In terms of *cantabile* inventions, not necessarily restricted rigidly to a structure of 'Liedsatz', Gade succeeds in creating a self-contained type of writing, still praised by Philipp Spitta at the end of the century in his distinctive liaison of great expertise and poetic imaginary:

A special kind of Danish music – that had already begun to swell like a bud, in the music for 'Holger Danske', in Weyse's songs and in some, at least in the newer, folk songs, – has blossomed in Gade. Something tender, aromatic, yet fresh; dewy roses is what one would like to call these maiden-like slender melodies. I characterize this manner as Danish; for among the contemporary Swedish melodies, including Lindblad's most beautiful songs, I have not found it ... Nobody will forget them once they are absorbed.⁵²

52 'Eine besondere Art dänischer Musik, die schon in der Musik zu "Holger Danske" zu treiben anfängt, in Weyses's Gesängen und manchen jedenfalls neueren Volksliedern als Knospe erscheint, ist bei Gade aufgeblüht. Etwas Zartes, Duftiges und doch Frisches; bethaute Rosen möchte man diese jungfräulich schlanken Melodien nennen. Ich bezeichne die Art als dänisch; denn unter den gleichzeitigen schwedischen Melodien, auch den schönsten Liedern von Lindblad, habe ich sie nicht gefunden ... Niemand vergißt sie wieder, der sie einmal in sich aufgenommen hat.' As examples Philipp Spitta specified the secondary theme of the *Ossian-Overture*, the Andante of *First Symphony*, the central movement of the first violin sonata and the second movement of the E minor quintet: 'Niels W. Gade', in *Zur Musik. Sechzehn Aufsätze* (Berlin: Paetel, 1892), 376.

Finally, with regard to the fourth 'section' of the 'Nordic tone' in the early work, the dance/scherzo-like formations, one could speak of quite a rapid amalgamation with the *cantabile*. The trio of the Scherzo in the *First Symphony*, associable with a 'Nordic' elven dance and euphorically received in Leipzig, was in any case not repeatable. The middle movements, which at latest from the *Third Symphony* onwards develop a spectrum of solutions with Intermezzo-character way before Brahms, are the main positions for mediation of dance-like and song-like characters with folkloristic-archaising peculiarity. From here there are direct paths from Gade's short Leipzig period to his long creative time in Copenhagen.

From a primarily compositional perspective, Gade's dealing with the musical potentials founded in his early work presents itself as a history of differentiation, mediation and self-reflexion. In this, the renunciation of Ossianic imaginary and its musical condensations proceeded in the various characteristic disciplines of the 'Nordic tone' in totally different dynamics. If, however, the focus were only laid on the early 'original' and if Gade's musical development was primarily reconstructed along the lines of reception documents, taking the Leipzig early work as their benchmark, then there necessarily would arise the image of a loss of his own originality and of a decline to epigonality. But the 'case of Gade' is far more complicated than that.

Gade after 1848: 'national Romanticism', 'Scandinavism' and aesthetic universality

The four decades of Gade's working as a composer in Copenhagen cannot be outlined here, not even by way of a summary. Instead, a few basic considerations shall be ventured.

Gade's turning away from the Ossian-myth arguably signals also the orientation on a concept of northerness mentioned above, especially illustrated by the shaping qua 'Scandinavism' after c. 1840. In this development of cultural notions of space, the large, older idea of north, being the 'project' of a collective northern European culture, with regard to music essentially formed by Ossian reception, gives way to the smaller dimensions of a regionalized and historically younger north, centred around Denmark, Norway and Sweden. They are more strictly founded on national legends or historical matters. The examination of Scandinavian folk tunes' tradition, increasingly accompanied academically, becomes more intense and more subtle at the same time. Regional scenic stereotypes play a larger role as well.⁵³ The idea of common, cultural-historically and linguistically founded mentalities act as an inter-Scandinavian counterbalance to the politicization of nationality. Significantly, it is Schumann again who provides a vivid phrase for the contrary north-spheres of myth and landscape when he in his Gade-picture supplements the 'Drachentödter' ('dragon slayer') with the 'poet' who was educated by native nature with its mellow 'Buchenwäldern' ('beech groves') and sea

53 See Jensen, 'Niels W. Gade og den nationale tone', esp. 205ff.; Oechsle, 'Eine Erscheinung'; Matter, *Niels W. Gade*, 203ff.

shores.⁵⁴ The changing cultural self-perceptions in the Scandinavian north doubtlessly provide more plausible reasons for Gade's development after the *First Symphony* or after *Comala* respectively than the topos of 'Mendelssohnization', one-sidedly aligned with German music.

The most important aspect, when it comes to explain Gade's behaviour as a composer and conductor after returning from Leipzig in 1848 and after the foundation of his Copenhagen existence, is certainly the European change of middle-class nationalism around and after 1848. Characterized by multiple identities, as formed in close connection with courtly and middle-class milieus in trade, art and science, the older nationalism was replaced by more exclusive concepts of national affiliation. National tones in the political discourse, including cross-national relationships, became increasingly more aggressive at the same time – with consequences for Gade's attitude in the question of a national double-identity (or at least with regard to the size of national identities' overlapping). His reaction by way of his *Fourth Symphony* of 1849/1850 shows most clearly that Gade was aware of the political tendencies. His behaviour must be interpreted along the lines that for him the more rigid nationalism after 1848 had meant a growing danger of the Leipzig early work being put in this altered context. The development after 1848 could also be viewed as a de-poetization of the Nordic in favour of its national functionalization. Instead of reducing himself to the sphere of the 'Nordic tone' in the sense of a substantial foundation of national identity, Gade by way of his 'universal' *Fourth* set a clear signal for the fact that the changed understanding of the 'national' jars with an idea of nationality which served as the basis of his 'Nordic' early work. For his B flat major symphony he received the allegation of 'Deuschtümelei' ('Teutomania'): 'The composer is anxious for being German and therefore loses nativeness'⁵⁵ – a judgement that namely in the altered political coordinate system after 1848 was a national one. Nevertheless, it also made apparent which paths were to be denied to Gade and on which paths one aimed to fixate him in a changed conception of nationality.⁵⁶

54 'Dear Gade, you are an excellent poet (in addition to the dragon slayer) – not in vain did you promenade in the beech groves and on the shores of the sea' ('Lieber Gade, Sie sind ein ganz trefflicher Poet (ausser d. Drachentödter) – in den Buchenwäldern sind Sie nicht umsonst promenirt, und am Strand des Meeres'); Schumann's letter to Gade, Dresden 28 December 1844, quoted after Sørensen, *En brevvæksling*, No. 85, 186.

55 '...der Componist bestrebt sich darin deutsch zu sein, und verliert dadurch an Ursprünglichkeit'; *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 34 (1851), 37. In 1850–75, the work became the most frequently performed symphony of all in Germany. See Rebecca Grotjahn, *Die Sinfonie im deutschen Kulturgebiet 1850 bis 1875. Ein Beitrag zur Gattungs- und Institutionengeschichte* (Musik und Musikanschauung im 19. Jahrhundert, 7; Sinzig: Studiopunkt, 1998).

56 With regard to the differentiation of the Scandinavian north, which provides Denmark with the role of a cultural south-position, Gade's leaving Leipzig could also be perceived as a mental departure from the regions of the 'Nordic tone'. This seems to reflect quite precisely Gade's sentiments, who in 1848–49 launches into the *Mariotta*-project, from which a 'Singspiel' in three acts evolves (first performance Copenhagen 17 January 1850): 'The piece is set in Italy, so I had to come out of my

Furthermore, it should be considered whether Gade's successive renunciation of the boreal genre – being far more than an 'Ossianic manner'⁵⁷ – is affected by genuinely aesthetic aspects. In any case, the features serving as an illustrative agenda or a narrative 'mise-en-scène' of mythical incidents vanish from his music. Elements of the early work connoted Ossianically are transferred to vocal music with *Comala*, belayed there by tangible verbal references. In *Elverskud/Erlkönigs Tochter* op. 30 there appear at the utmost very sublime folk tone-adaptions – echoes of the 'Echoes of Ossian' as it were. The reason for this recurrence in op. 30 is the Danish legendary matter of the text. In *Frühlings-Fantasie* op. 23 (1852/53), created two years earlier, with its German original text and its more universal lyrical topic, there was, in contrast, no cause for implementing a 'Nordic' element, for example by way of an archaically coloured 'Volkston'-*cantabile*. But to apply a general differentiation via the category 'style' would be problematic here for two reasons. On the one hand, one would have to deal with the particular 'work style' of single compositions. On the other hand, the rather subtle difference (in purely musical issues) such as to the German 'folk tone' of Spohr's, Hiller's or Schumann's hardly justifies a scholarly managing of the features alongside the category of style.⁵⁸

Gade's reaction to the altered concepts of nationality and the Nordic converges with an adherence to the aesthetics of tones and characters. It meets the idea of artistic independence, placing sovereign aesthetic strategies above a thinking in ethnic-national essences. The matter of the 'Nordic tone' remained a selectable compositional topic for Gade – however not as a regulated access to a general library of the 'Nordic' style, so to

Nordic fogs and it did me very well in various ways.' ('Das Stück spielt in Italien, ich musste also aus meine nordische Nebel heraus, und es hat mich sehr wohl gethan in vielen Hinsicht.:', Gade's letter to Conrad Schleinitz, member of the Gewandhaus board of directors, Copenhagen 29 October 1849, in Sørensen, *En brevvæksling*, No. 175, 293).

57 See R. Larry Todd, 'Mendelssohn's Ossianic Manner, with a New Source. On Lena's Gloomy Heath', in Jon W. Finson and R. Larry Todd (eds.), *Mendelssohn and Schumann. Essays on their music and its context* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1984), 137–60; John Daverio, 'Schumann's Ossianic Manner', *19th-Century Music*, 21 (1998), 247–73.

58 In connection with a dwindling interest in the Ossian-sphere, Matter refers to a criticism of Romanticism in the course of the debate on realism since c. 1848 which ultimately dates back to Hegel (Matter, *Niels W. Gade*, 192ff.). Gade's distancing himself from the Ossian-sphere, though, can on the one hand be understood as a composed immanent criticism, on the other hand it corresponds to Danish cultural and intellectual history since the 1840s. Moreover, the discrediting of the Romantic in the name of realism is not specific to Gade-reception. Schucht's criticism (cf. *ibid.*) of Romantic sentimentality as a pathological deformation must be regarded a dilettante radicalization of Hegel's critique of Romanticism. A discussion of the category of sentimentality in Gade would in turn have to take into consideration the idea of idyll, connected with the 'Konzertstück für Chor und Orchester' ('concert piece for choir and orchestra') *Frühlings-Botschaft* op. 35 (1858) or with the *Idyllen* for piano op. 34. See Alexander Lotzow, 'Niels Wilhelm Gade's *Frühlings-Botschaft* op. 35 and the Art of Musical Idyll', *Danish Yearbook of Musicology*, 42/1 (2018), 3–23; http://www.dym.dk/dym_pdf_files/volume_42/dym42_1_01.pdf, accessed 17 May 2019.

speak, but more and more as a reception of his own solutions and therefore ultimately of historical solutions also.

Gade indeed did not deliver any programmatic statement concerning the question of his cultural or political identity. Nevertheless, a letter to his son Felix dating from 1878 indirectly reveals a 'universalistic' credo of his art. Its context is an 1878 special concert in the grand hall of the *Casino*, organized by the Copenhagen *Musikforeningen* in favour of Gade:

For my concert's programme I enjoyed myself in choosing four highly different compositions, [the] '1st symphony', being the first larger music in a Danish [sic!] tone, afterwards the strictly Jewish 'Zion' after to the Old Testament – which in the grand hall presented itself well in a perfectly different way – hereon the endearing 'Frühlingsfantasie' and finally the beginning of the great 'Baldur', the first music of Valhalla.⁵⁹

Gade's admission of having enjoyed himself in compiling the works shows a conscious aesthetic giving of signs. As far as we know, it was solely here, therefore in private, that the composer verbally put one of his works into the context of the 'Nordic tone'. The older and more comprehensive stereotype of the 'Nordic' is replaced here, though, by the national attribute, again without using the idea of nationality directly. The look-out of retrospection, from whence Gade's biography and general music history interfere with each other, is quite obvious.⁶⁰ At the latest, the sharp contrast of the Old Testament matter in the concert piece *Zion* – written in 1874 for Birmingham, printed in 1874 in English and in 1877 in German (Novello, London and Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig respectively) – illustrates Gade's claim not to be restricted to the sphere of the Nordic-national. The *Frühlings-Fantasie* on a German text by Edmund Lobedanz, composed in 1852, thus shortly after the *Fourth Symphony*, Gade primarily wrote for the German market. This work, too, reveals Gade as a cross-border composer, this time in lyrical-mirthful distance to his own early work. With the *Baldur*-music, the sixty-one-year old Gade presents an up-to-date product insofar as it is an adaptation carried out in 1877–78 of *Baldurs Drøm/Balders Traum*, dating from 1856–57.

59 Niels W. Gade's letter to Felix Gade, Copenhagen, 7 May 1878; Sørensen, *En brevvæksling*, No. 910, 1151f.: 'Jeg morede mig ved Programmet til min Concert at vælge 4 saa høist forskjellige Compositioner, "1ste Sinfonie" som den første større Musik i dansk Tone, dernæst den streng jødisk gammeltestamentariske "Zion" – som tog sig ganske anderledes godt ud i den store Sal – derpaa den elskværdige "Frühlingsfant:" og slutteligen Begyndelsen af den storslaaede "Baldur", den første Valhallamusik.'

60 In his letter Gade also mentions the symphony being new to most members of the orchestra. The work had last been performed in the *Musikforeningen* in 1861. See Angul Hammerich, *Musikforeningens Historie 1836–1886* (Festskrift i Anledning af Musikforeningens Halvhundredaarsdag, 2; Copenhagen, 1886), 197.

However, Gade only adapted the first and last number of his earlier composition originally encompassing ten.⁶¹ Both of these numbers exclusively employ choir and orchestra, no soloists. It would be in vain to search for recurrences of the 'Nordic tone' here.⁶² Gade had the date of the original composition, 1857, printed on the programme. By choosing this particular music, he publically stressed having taken up the Valhalla-topic earlier than Wagner. According to Gade, the Copenhagen audience acclaimed *Frühlings-Fantasie* as much as *Baldur*. Apparently, they got along well with the composer's ostentatious message of not letting himself be fixed on a definitive characteristic, cultural or national sphere.

The 'Leipzig School' between canon and epigonality

Ideally, enquiries into the history of reception explore ways of understanding art on the basis of selected historical judgements. Nonetheless, not only their representativeness remains to be questioned, including their mechanisms of selection, of mutual enhancement and of topical solidification. Rather, such enquiries always touch on the matter of functional aspects, for instance concerning the reduction of historical complexity offered by a stereotype like the 'Nordic tone.' And it also involves the question as to what is hidden by this global category. To give an example: As mentioned already, since its genesis in 1850 Gade's *Fourth* has been presumed to be a 'Teutomaniac' work, in which Gade appears as a 'excellent vassal of Schumann's and Beethoven's'⁶³ – a verdict continuing at least up to the *MGG*-article 'Symphonie' and its classification of the piece under 'Leipzig classicism'.⁶⁴ But precisely this 'Nordically tone-less' work was according to prevailing statistical data in fact the most frequently played symphony of all by a living composer of Gade's time.⁶⁵ Scholarly interest in this fact has been so scarce until today that an analytically substantiated filing of the work into the genre's history is still

61 In 1897, a piano reduction by August Winding was published by Wilhelm Hansen, Copenhagen. Gade combined the first number with the chant of the gods 'Nu stiger Odin op til Valhalla' and the final chorus 'Hærfader Odin! højt i Valhalla' to a 'Indledningsscene' for choir and orchestra. See Dan Fog, *N. W. Gade-Katalog. En fortegnelse over Niels W. Gades trykte kompositioner* (Copenhagen: Dan Fog, 1986), No. 117, 57ff.

62 See Jensen, 'Niels W. Gade og den nationale tone', 302ff.

63 Kretzschmar, *Führer durch den Konzertsaal*, 500.

64 'Leipziger Klassizismus'; Ludwig Finscher, 'Symphonie', in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik*, 2nd edn., ed. Ludwig Finscher, Sachteil, vol. 9 (Kassel: Bärenreiter/Stuttgart: Metzler, 1998), 99. The remark refers to Gade's whole symphonic production since the *Third Symphony*.

65 Grotjahn, *Die Sinfonie im deutschen Kulturgebiet*; Stefan Keym, 'Eine "deutsche Gattung"? Zum Verhältnis von Symphonie und Nationalität im Leipziger Konzertrepertoire und Musikdiskurs 1835–1914', in Sabine Mecking and Yvonne Wasserloos (eds.), *Inklusion und Exklusion. 'Deutsche' Musik in Europa und Nordamerika 1848–1945* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2015), 41–63.

not available.⁶⁶ Apart from this, the metaphor 'vassal' clearly identifies the piece's author as an epigone. Only for a while could the 'Nordic tone' of works before the *Fourth* slow down Gade's post-Leipzig removal from the canon. But why of all things should the terrain of epigonality be entered with a 'minor or peripheral master' ('Klein- oder Nebenmeister') like the Dane Gade, be it with or without a musical *aurora borealis*? In matters of inferiority, there is, precisely speaking, no holding back at all in post-classicist nineteenth century, as de-canonization and 'epigonization' soon after 1850 also concerned Mendelssohn with great harshness. And if the question of epigone-status is supposed to be asked on a grand scale then it would, in the end, not only concern the whole 'Leipzig School' but likewise everybody born after the era called 'Kunstperiode'⁶⁷ ('art period') by Heine.

This view can be called blunt. But it can at least clarify that criticism of the category 'canon'⁶⁸ is not yet, quasi in reverse conclusion, identical to a positive ascertainment of epigonality. And at the same time, it should be stressed that an historical localization of a figure like Gade cannot be based upon the antagonism between national stereotypes of reception and a canonically 'secured', aesthetically neutral universality. A differentiated analysis of the historiographical use of the category 'epigonality' must rather engage in temporal qualities of historicity, as connected with the question of individual historical continuities, of aesthetic-compositional concepts including their immanent 'Ablaufzeiten'⁶⁹ ('times of expiry'), again distinct by tempi, by directions and by relations of developments. In this, the original self-conceptions of the historical representatives concerned are already relevant. The resigned self-view of Gade's friend Carl Reinecke is most impressive in this regard. Looking back from the beginning of the twentieth century, Reinecke states:

I do not want to oppose being called an epigone ... I could very well enumerate a considerable number of my works in which the influence of Schumann or Mendelssohn would be hard to find, but that did not help me ...: Even in my obituaries I will be called a composer of Mendelssohn's and Schumann's course.⁷⁰

66 See, however, Niels Bo Foltmann, *Kildematerialet til Niels W. Gades symfonier. Historisk/analytisk gennemgang af symfoni nr. 4*, Magisterkonferensspeciale (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 1990; unpub.).

67 Heinrich Heine, *Die romantische Schule*, in *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe der Werke*, ed. Manfred Windfuhr, vol. 8/1: *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland/Die romantische Schule* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1979), 154f.

68 See above, n. 5.

69 Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1979), 135.

70 'Ich will nicht dagegen opponieren, wenn man mich einen Epigonen nennt ... ich könnte wohl eine ganz stattliche Anzahl meiner Werke anführen, in denen Schumannscher oder Mendelssohnscher Einfluß schwer zu entdecken wäre, aber das hat mir nichts geholfen ...: Noch in meinem Nekrologe werde ich ein Komponist in der Mendelssohn-Schumannschen Richtung genannt werden.' Carl Reinecke, *Erlebnisse und Bekenntnisse. Autobiographie eines Gewandhauskapellmeisters*, ed. Doris Mundus (Leipzig: Lehmanns, 2005), 44.

Gade's classification as belonging to the 'Leipzig School' does in fact occur with similar permanence. For the Dane, though, this subsumption was connected with much more complex circumstances, especially since his return to Copenhagen. Hugo Riemann most explicitly expresses positive aspects in his retrospect of the century, published in 1901 (according to its title *Geschichte der Musik seit Beethoven*, 'History of Music since Beethoven', the whole century is, strictly speaking, overshadowed by epigonality). There, Gade is dealt with under the 'Epoche Schumann-Mendelssohn'⁷¹ ('era Schumann-Mendelssohn') in the section 'Die Leipziger Schule', whereas Riemann treats all other Danes mentioned since the end of the eighteenth century in the chapter on 'Die nationalen Strömungen' ('the national currents'). Doubtless, this implies a conscious reverence to the cross-border musician Gade, who is explicitly not counted as belonging 'to the allegiance of Mendelssohn' ('zur Gefolgschaft Mendelssohns'), but is regarded as a 'kindred nature' ('seelenverwandte Natur') that is more than 'an epigone or a satellite' ('mehr als ein Epigone oder Trabant').⁷²

In the second half of the century the 'Leipzig School' was increasingly identified with epigonality. This was not least due to the German reception of Beethoven after 1850. On the one hand, progress and future were not exclusively tied to the question of legitimate Beethoven-heritage. Rather, access to his inheritance was only granted via direct historical pilgrimage. Brahms's 'path to the symphony' as a decade-long 'struggle' with the 'giant' is perhaps the most prominent narration in this regard. Leipzig began, visually speaking, to stand in the way of this canonization – and this applied, independent from the mutual partisan 'couleur', to Wagnerites as well as to Brahmsians. On the other hand, the international openness of the 'Leipzig School' became problematic in the course of the massive national-political charge of the Beethoven-myth. For the more the universal was declared a national virtue in the German discourse, represented by a classicism ever increasingly reduced to Beethoven, and the more at the same time a 'purely musical thinking' was regarded as a domain of the national genius, the more did the latent indifference of German music aesthetics towards national 'tones' and characters take effect. In German perception, the representatives of the 'Leipzig School' from other European countries, among them the Englishman William St. Bennett, the Lorrainer Théodore Gouvy, the Dutch Johannes Verhulst and indeed the Dane Gade as well, were more and

71 Hugo Riemann, *Geschichte der Musik seit Beethoven (1800–1900)* (Berlin and Stuttgart: Spemann, 1901), 207ff., 264ff., and 270ff.

72 Ibid. 270f. Karl Nef, *Geschichte der Sinfonie und Suite* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1921), draws the line after the section on Mendelssohn and Schumann: In the 'phase after Mendelssohn and Schumann the national symphony of the so-called adjacent nations appears, a completely new phenomenon' ('... Periode nach Mendelssohn und Schumann tritt als völlig neue Erscheinung die nationale Sinfonie der sogenannten Nebennationen auf'; 236f.): The Scandinavian countries are counted among them too. Gade, 'who elevated the Nordic symphony to international relevance' ('...der die nordische Sinfonie zu internationaler Bedeutung erhob'), appears in the Denmark section of the chapter 'Die nordischen Länder', 'The Nordic countries' (276ff.). See also Keym, 'Zum Werk- und Deutungskanon', 502.

more moved to a terrain that was historically imagined as an appendix of the 'central period' of the Mendelsohn-Schumann time, regionally as peripheral.⁷³ Insofar one can argue that Gade, according to this perspective, was in danger of being labelled an epigone of secondary degree. In the opposite point of view, from the perspective of national emancipatory endeavours in later nineteenth century, and therefore viewed from the agents of the 'periphery', a Leipzig affectation in turn led to the claim of lacking national identity. Gade's conflict with the Leipzig-critic Grieg proves this unmistakably. Applied to the long nineteenth century, Gade's classification among the 'Leipzig School' does not, in any case, live up to the intricacy of the historic matter. Gade's restraint in the question of his own music-historical positioning may have something to do with this complexity.

Gade's origins, leading the Dane to Leipzig at times in which there were hardly hints of any 'school', offer a highly differentiated view as well. And here, too, another German 'giant' can serve as a 'marker of distance': Johann Sebastian Bach. Whereas for Mendelssohn and Schumann, the era's two 'warrantors', the adoption of Bach (surely in quite different ways) was of vital importance not only for their artistic self-finding but also for their life-long work on contrapuntal formations,⁷⁴ a comparable reference to Bach is almost entirely absent in Gade. This is true for the Dane's years of apprenticeship and travel as well as for his remaining lifetime, considerably longer in comparison to Mendelssohn and Schumann. Surely there are no monocausal explanations for this fact. Simply to call it a deficiency would assume a universal relevance of Bach, too rashly disregarding the national context. The German reception of Bach since Forkel, then especially in the 1830s and 40s, is undisputedly determined by the interest of creating a national figure of identification in sublime, monumental dimensions.⁷⁵ The leading force in this regard was the protestant north with Berlin and Leipzig as its centres. The young Gade was at the utmost collaterally influenced by this German canonization of Bach (although he later staged major performances of *St Matthew Passion* in Copenhagen in the 1870s and 80s). Neither did contrapuntal studies emerge, dealing with Bachian patterns, nor were there any exercises in vocal-polyphonic writing of Dutch-Italian provenance preserved to a more exhaustive extent. In Gade's work, counterpoint at all times remained a 'poetic', integral constituent of his composing, without ascertained historical points of reference.

For music historiography, this background provides rather few arguments for incorporating Gade without much ado into the 'Leipzig School'. To put him in greater distance to it, should, in turn, not intensify national discerning and separating (by making the

73 For Gade, see also Kjerulf, *Niels W. Gade*, 192f.

74 See in particular Anselm Hartinger, Christoph Wolff and Peter Wollny (eds.), *'Zu groß, zu unerreichbar'. Bach-Rezeption im Zeitalter Mendelssohns und Schumanns* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2007).

75 Martin Geck, 'Als Praeceptor Germaniae schlägt Bach Beethoven. Zur politischen Instrumentalisierung der Musikgeschichte im Vormärz', in *ibid.*, 31–37.

composer solely an object of national historiography). It would probably be more appropriate instead to widen the concept of the 'Leipzig School' and thus restore its original European dimension.

Asking for a distinctively individual historical shaping of the young Gade, one would necessarily have to refer to the pool of older Scandinavian folksongs and, in connection with them, to the Nordic world of legends and fairy tales. Gade, however, exported works of art inspired by them, with their specific mythological-literary poetry, to Leipzig where they served as a basis for the creation of the 'Nordic tone'. The 'Nordic tone', in turn, must be counted as part of the basic lay-out of the 'Leipzig School', rather than consigning it to a national periphery in this historiographic formation.

When the young Gade chose the original Uhland-quote 'Formel hält uns nicht gebunden, unsre Kunst heißt Poesie' ('we are not bound to formulas, our art is called poetry') for his *opus primum*, he proclaimed a programmatic expression of departure and of a relationship with tradition that does not show any great deal of an epigone self-concept. Doubtless, Gade shared the basic sentiment of his fellow generation that made Schumann call himself and those born after the era of Mozart, Goethe or Beethoven 'recht tapfre Epigonen'⁷⁶ ('fairly brave epigones'). It remains to be pondered, though, if the talk of grave and menacing 'legacies' – a *basso ostinato* of German music historiography since the late nineteenth century – is at all appropriate with regard to Gade and his Scandinavian context to a comparable amount, or if it rather is a self-image of the German 'Kulturturnation'. In any case, the Dane's compositional-historical connections are aligned with his own present – understood as a domain of musicians still active or recently deceased, which allows for names such as Spohr, Kuhlau, Weber, Marschner, Schubert, Fröhlich, Mendelssohn and Schumann to come into play.

'Gegenwartsmusiker'

The concept of canon is primarily based on a valuation that carries a claim of surpassing its own time. Non-canon qua epigonality in fact requires a value judgement as well. Nonetheless, a temporal difference becomes vitally important here, for epigones are successors, followers or imitators. (Differing from the English term 'subordinate', the prefix 'nach' in the German word 'nachrangig' has a temporal as well as a qualitative dimension.) In a combination of historical and aesthetic aspects, the dimension of time is the more severe one, at least in the era of modernity and its historical thinking: Even

⁷⁶ Schumann. *Tagebücher II*, 74. About a visit to Vienna in 1838, Schumann wrote: 'On Thursday morning the Requiem by Mozart in the Augustinerkirche for Mikschik. I stood next to Mozart's son; I thought of how I too sat [during a] Faust [performance] next to Goethe's grandson, and how we [are] fairly brave epigones' ('Donnerstag in der Früh in der Augustinerkirche Requiem v. Mozart für Mikschik. Ich stand neben Mozart's Sohn; ich dachte daran, wie ich auch den Faust neben Göthes Enkel gesessen, und wie wir recht tapfre Epigonen').

in the ('theoretical') case of identical quality, an imitator would still remain an epigone. This is why the matter must primarily be regarded from a temporal point of view.

To avoid terms like 'canon' and 'epigonality', a phrase like 'one's own present' seems tempting. It is, however, quite precarious. In this regard, one might put forward the idea of the 'non-simultaneity of the simultaneous'. But it would at best offer a starting point for analysing the overlay of historical 'places of time' ('Zeitplätze'), not yet the explanation of the problem as such. Yet instead of only advancing up to the diversity already mentioned in connection with different temporal styles, one should rather unclothe the notion of 'present' itself. However, as this notion does not make sense without reference to a subject, the spotlight must be directed on the conception of subjective historicity. With regard to the age of epigones during Heine's 'Kunstperiode' this allows for an individual balance between offensive-prospective production and historically broad-minded reflexion. Determinations like past, future and progress become elements of intense debate. The musical discourse after 1830, and most notably after 1848/50, mirrors this in an apparently accelerating way. As is well known, aesthetic parties and groups were tied to the temporal notions of 'future' and 'past'. That 'present' is more than the empty 'middle' in between, separating 'progones' from epigones in the sense of a dividing line, was confirmed by Robert Schumann in a late statement.

In a letter of February 1854 to Richard Pohl – who amongst other things had published in Brendel's *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* under the pseudonym 'Hoplit' – Schumann, who was the journal's founder, decidedly speaks against the term 'Zukunftsmusiker' ('musician of the future'):

... I am not very happy with Hoplit's and his party's Liszt-Wagnerian enthusiasm. Who they think to be musicians of the future ('Zukunftsmusiker'), I think of as musicians of the present ('Gegenwartsmusiker'), and who they consider musicians of the past ('Vergangenheitsmusiker') (Bach, Händel, Beethoven), to me seem the best musicians of the future ('Zukunftsmusiker'). I can never deem intellectual beauty in its most beautiful form an obsolete point of view.⁷⁷

Schumann's neologism 'Gegenwartsmusiker',⁷⁸ 'musician of the present', opposes an understanding of history and progress founded primarily on the antithesis of future and

77 '... ich harmonire nicht sonderlich mit seinem [Hoplits] und seiner Parthey Liszt-Wagner'schen Enthusiasmus. Was Sie für Zukunftsmusiker halten, das halt' ich für Gegenwartsmusiker, und was Sie für Vergangenheitsmusiker (Bach, Händel, Beethoven), das scheinen mir die besten Zukunftsmusiker. Geistige Schönheit in schönster Form kann ich nie für "einen überwundenen Standpunkt" halten.' *Schumann Briefedition*; series II: *Freundes- und Künstlerbriefwechsel*, vol. 5: *Briefwechsel Robert und Clara Schumanns mit Franz Brendel, Hermann Levi, Franz Liszt, Richard Pohl und Richard Wagner*, ed. Thomas Synofzik, Axel Schröter, and Klaus Döge (†) (Cologne: Dohr 2014), No. 26, 409.

78 The German word is used here with a genitive-s, analogous to the complementary phrases 'Vergangenheitsmusiker' and 'Zukunftsmusiker'.

past, while the middle in between, tagged by the 'temporal location' present, shrivels to a mere point of change. From the look-out of 'Zukunftsmusik' (at least in its programmatic radicalness), present is only open in the direction of future. The past as historical may indeed have been preliminary for the particular present, but from there on it is disposed of as nothing more than a 'precursor' of one's own mission. A future so consequently imagined as 'rücksichtslos' ('inconsiderate', but literally also meaning 'without looking back' in German) cannot, strictly speaking, generate distinctions that could be identified historically. Present effectively splits up into an opposition of paradoxes: It consists of timely elements which, nevertheless, are always ahead of their time, and of outmoded ones, which already do not belong to their time any more, albeit still existent and pursued 'in' it.

In Schumann's understanding, 'Gegenwartsmusik' in exchange reflects past as a reason or source of having-become. In this act of reflexion, past can preserve timeliness – in the context at hand an aesthetic one. This is why the sentence: 'I can never deem intellectual beauty in its most beautiful form an obsolete point of view', is hardly a classicist credo. The temporality of 'progress' is not caught up in the linear distinction of earlier and later, as if it was an arrow of time pointed constantly towards enhancement in a qualitative sense. On the contrary, progress, arising from a concept of present such as Schumann's, remains an historical time, 'revising itself over and over again'.⁷⁹ It reflects a past from which progress originates or develops and it refers to a future in which it fulfils itself. Elaborating further on the issue of the qualitative: It collides with the idea of linear enhancement, especially when the reflection of a past intensifies itself to an artistic evaluation of its up-to-dateness. This practice's present allows for deviations which in the future display themselves as different historical dynamics. Or to start from Schumann's 'musicians of the future' Bach, Handel and Beethoven: According to this point of view, the past was where 'projects' were begun that are ongoing still and that manifest themselves as a differentiation of the present. The 'space' thus unfolded, a 'space' for individual concepts of present, is also valid for subjective creative layouts and the temporalities of their immanent progresses. Present as a place of progressive epigonality which inscribes its 'layers of time' into the 'one' history – that is perhaps how this view of temporality could be captioned.

In musical aesthetics, the functionalization of terms like future and past may easily obscure the fact that they are modes of time, only meaningful in relation to a subject. Naturally, the partisan musical dispute after 1850 is an element of the discourse of modernity that does not only care for 'the' history or for directions and programmes of epochs but always depends on concepts of subjectivity as well.⁸⁰ One's own historical

79 '... die sich stets aufs neue überholt'; Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*, 266.

80 The differentiation between self-reflexion of art qua art system and the self-reflexion of a biographical subject cannot be elaborated on any further here. See Tobias Janz, *Zur Genealogie der musikalischen Moderne* (Paderborn: Fink, 2014), esp. 215ff.

placing in this inevitably becomes an affair of subjective reflexion, extending to the self-determination of artistic 'standpoints' and 'directions' including their respective tempos of progress.

Even if Gade did not directly comment on Schumann's term 'Gegenwartsmusiker' and the accompanying 'standpoints' of the nineteenth century's partisan musical dispute, he did take a stand to the questions of historical self-positioning contained in it and to the determination of his own temporality with regard to artistic connections and their concept of progress. In this context, there is a significant letter by the composer written just a few months before his death.

Gade advises his son Axel, who had just written a trio, with regard to the relationship of individual strategies and artistic authenticity:

... I like the trio and I would wish for you to hold on to your cordial inner sound of sentiment, without letting you be influenced by external things such as, for instance, originality, personality, depth of effect, the own self, ... it must indeed come out of itself!⁸¹

Subjective inwardness as a basic requirement for creativity, marked-off from possible external influences, is a downright trivial category in early and mid-nineteenth-century aesthetics. Sixty years earlier, Mendelssohn writes to Zelter from Rome, in art there counted only that 'which in profound seriousness flowed from the innermost soul'.⁸² Gade's enumeration of originality, personality and the own self (next to the depth of effect) as issues of 'external things' can be understood as a specific scepticism towards a subjectivity which in the communicational system of art had considerably radicalized itself since the mid-century. And additionally, there were also, in all probability, experiences of dealing with the public placing in terms of nationality, time and again accompanied by major debates in the Danish and German press, that were linked to the matter of a possible influence from Wagner and the 'New German School'.

The final phrase of the citation from the letter ('... it must indeed come out of itself!') is a turning towards a legitimatization of the artistic self, relying on the immanence of the matter as such. Art has to emerge from the implicitness of art. This conceptual step is already found in Mendelssohn's letter cited above: 'If not the matter alone has evoked

81 Niels W. Gade to Axel Gade on 28 August 1890; Sørensen, *En brevvæksling*, No. 1439, 1575f.: '... jeg synes godt om Trioen, og jeg ønsker at Du maa vedblive at holde paa Din hjertelige inderlige Stemningsklang fremdeles, uden at lade Dig paavirke af ydre Ting, som f. Ex. Originalitet, Personlighed, Virkningsfuldhed, Sig selv etc. ... det maa jo komme af sig selv!'

82 '...nur das, was im tiefsten Ernst aus der innersten Seele geflossen ist'; Mendelssohn to Carl Friedrich Zelter, Rome, 18 December 1830; in *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. Sämtliche Briefe*, vol. 2, eds. and comm. Anja Morgenstern and Uta Wald (Kassel: Bärenreiter 2009), 172. See also Thomas Christian Schmidt, *Die ästhetischen Grundlagen der Instrumentalmusik Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdys* (Stuttgart: M & P, 1996), esp. 148ff.

the work it will never “Herz zu Herzen schaffen” (“reach from heart to heart”).⁸³ Gade’s succinct statement documents a continuity of the idea of aesthetic autonomy which is clearly to be separated from that of ‘absolute music’ and its metaphysical issues for the later nineteenth century, too.

However, the ‘it’ forming the subject of Gade’s sentence hardly represents solely the work and the act of creation. Rather, the music-historical self-positioning is indirectly shaped from out of this sphere as well. Whereas Mendelssohn, to return once more to the aesthetic credo of the Zelter-letter, is most decidedly after an historical backstop here – ‘nobody can forbid me to continue to work on what the great masters left behind’⁸⁴ – Gade seems much more reticent with regard to historical recourses. This may also demonstrate a sensitivity of the Dane in the face of the German-national canonization of Bach and Beethoven already mentioned, which particularly in the post-mid-century era could show quite a chauvinist quality. The partisan musical dispute, too, was a deeply national discourse, in which historical claims to inheritance were constructed for legitimatizing aesthetic and art-political interests. And the testaments written out for this in retrospect were drafted in German.

The claim of ‘Zukunftsmusik’ is to write ‘the’ future of ‘the’ music in the shape of its own progress’s history. This does not only reveal a usurpatory grasp for the notional ‘objects’ of past and future. What is also added is the pressure of acceleration inherent to this reflexivity: It is not absolutely necessary to consult Hegel’s ‘Furie des Verschwindens’ (‘fury of disappearance’) for the charging of present with ‘future-ness’ to realize that in this the ageing of the present is subject to acceleration. However, the composure of the epigone Gade signals a distance to this as well: What seems to be ‘laissez-faire’ in matters of creativity contains in the strict sense the postulation to be allowed to allot the tempo of one’s own development oneself. Gade’s ‘it must come out of itself!’ in fact conceals the aspects of his own strategies, decisions, and actions. This, if you will, is the classicist nucleus of his composure. Yet his implicit idea of an historically mediated becoming also reveals the claim for a subjective continuity of composing, accruing from historic connections and their spans set in his own oeuvre, without sealing it off from contemporary developments.

The persistence of Gade’s border-crossing endeavours up to his later years can be witnessed in the case of *Kalanus* of 1869. In the musical press, the Dane found himself confronted here with the reproach of having sacrificed his melodic-harmonic originality for Wagnerian chromaticism and therefore of having left his own ‘sphere’.⁸⁵ But in this

83 ‘Wenn nicht der Gegenstand allein das Werk hervorgerufen hat, so wird es nie “Herz zu Herzen schaffen”’, Mendelssohn to Zelter, *ibid.* (‘Herz zu Herzen schaffen’ quot. from Goethe’s *Faust I*, v. 544).

84 ‘...kann mir niemand verbieten, ...an dem weiter zu arbeiten, was mir die großen Meister hinterlassen haben’; *ibid.*

85 *Kalanus* (1869) provoked a fierce debate in the Danish and German press concerning the question whether Gade had ‘stepped out of his sphere’. See the preface to the work’s edition in Niels W. Gade, *Kalanus Op. 48. Dramatic Poem by Carl Andersen for Soli, Chorus and Orchester/Kalanus Op. 48. Dramatisches Gedicht von Carl Andersen für Soli, Chor und Orchester*, ed. Karsten Eskildsen (Niels W. Gade Works/Werke, IV/4, Copenhagen: Engstrøm & Sødring/Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2018), viii–xii.

instance, too, it could be demonstrated that Gade is not after the import of 'objective' innovations. He rather takes measure at his own oeuvre's premises and defaults. They are followed up and evolved in the sense of 'developing variation'. The basic relation of structural parameters, compiled since the early work, is not completely re-negotiated though. No striking turning points are found in Gade's career in which supposedly 'the' counterpoint or 'the' chromatics had become a focal point of his composing. Harmonics, metrics, voice leading, formal experiments, the structural reassessment of sound colours etc. – all of it is, as it were, processed in a parametrical overlapping with changing accents (for instance in the subtle working with rather free, asymmetrical structures of a metric-harmonic kind). This can be called Romantic classicism or classicist Romanticism – such labellings hardly matter much.

Conclusion

Gade has been treated both as a founder and an epigone of an era. In a way, figures like him form the material for canonization and de-canonization. Instead of dismissing such fluctuations as the fate of individuals it should be considered that to different degrees this is also true of Mendelssohn and Schumann, for instance. Precisely speaking, it concerns the whole era or period dealt with under the term of 'Leipzig School'. Gade would be one of several causes to have this historiographic formation undergo a thorough analysis with regard to its construction and functions. For both sides of the partisan musical dispute the 'Leipzig School' widely served as a negative repository in their fight about the true Beethoven-heritage. Not only would the causes as to why and to what extent this was the case have to be profiled more sharply. Also, the era's distinct international signature would have to be taken into account more emphatically. It forms a complementary opposition to tendencies of national emancipation after c. 1830 and can, as a whole, only be described as a European phenomenon. This has largely been missed out in the foremost German historiographical management of the 'Leipzig School' as a gathering place of Beethoven-epigones. More recent approaches referring to the theory of cultural transfer and its processes have not changed this significantly. The term 'transfer' may be revelatory when it comes to the international emanation of institutional models like the Leipzig conservatory – even if differences are at least as revealing as parallels.⁸⁶ But not without good reason is the thinking in transfers, especially regarding countries and metropolises, in danger of increasing national disparities and

86 See Wasserloos, *Kulturzeiten*; Yvonne Wasserloos, 'Die Dänen in Leipzig. Formen des Kulturtransfers im 19. Jahrhundert', in Stefan Keym and Katrin Stöck (eds.), *Musik – Stadt. Traditionen und Perspektiven urbaner Musikkulturen*, vol. 3: *Musik in Leipzig, Wien und anderen Städten im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert: Verlage – Konservatorien – Salons – Vereine – Konzerte* (Leipzig: Schröder, 2011), 165–81. Of cardinal relevance is Jin-Ah Kim, 'Musik und Kulturtransfer. Ideen zu einem musikwissenschaftlichen Forschungsbereich', in Jin-Ah Kim and Nepomuk Riva (eds.), *Entgrenzte Welt? Musik und Kulturtransfer* (Berlin: Ries & Erler, 2014), 9–56.

of strengthening nationalist agendas in order to heighten the method's productivity and to protect the term of transfer from trivialization and generalization.⁸⁷ In any case, the 'Nordic tone' of Gade's early work is hardly understandable as a result of transfer processes. It is rather a German-Danish co-production amidst a, for long periods of time, common musical culture, decidedly different from the levels of literature or politics, for instance, that are dependent on unequally deeper national divisions.

The deconstruction of musicology's older claim, prevalent in the twentieth century, to define an obligatory tempo of 'the' historical progress and to use it as a basis of value judgements including a stable canon, does seem to widen the view on domains of epigonality in music history. Yet the need for orientation and, as a consequence, for criteria that constructively determine historical times remains. To quote the idea of 'the non-simultaneity of the simultaneous' does not solve much in this instance. Its non-simultaneity according to the devise 'one progress, but many tempos and degrees of realization' would not surpass a pretended plurality and would only perpetuate the antagonism between canonical 'leaders' and epigone successors. But to conversely dissolve the term into a multitude of subjective 'presents' and their respective inner 'logic' would be in jeopardy of reflating varieties of an older post-structural arbitrariness. By referring to Schumann's idea of 'Gegenwartsmusiker' and its temporal reflexivity there is the chance to explore subjective artistic concepts in their music-cultural historicity – and not only within established epochs including their patterns of valuation, but as a working on and with them.

Translated from German by Alexander Lotzow

87 On the allegation of reinforcing national concepts, see Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, 'Vergleich, Transfer, Verflechtung. Der Ansatz der "Histoire croisée" und die Herausforderung des Transnationalen', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 28 (2002), 607–36.

Abstract

Taking stock on Niels W. Gade's 200th birthday in 2017, various achievements can be pointed out: the catalogue and the critical edition of his works, likewise of his correspondence, a recent biography, numerous recordings etc. However, the Dane is usually reduced to one topos of reception, the 'Nordic tone', and categorized into the repository of the 'Leipzig School', which, according to respective aesthetic parties, encompasses the time of epigones between Beethoven and Wagner or Beethoven and Brahms. The article takes its starting point from these concepts. The 'Nordic tone's north' is historically-culturally differentiated and distinguished from the context of nationality. Instead of tying it to musical essences of nationality, it is demonstrated that the 'Nordic tone' consists of a multitude of characteristic types of orchestral composition. Subsequently, the term 'Leipzig School' is examined with regard to categories like canon and epigonality. Primarily, rather than implicit value judgements, their temporal logic is focused on. Led by Schumann's neologism 'Gegenwartsmusiker' ('musician of the present'), a concept of progress is reconstructed, the subjective autonomy of which might be characterized by the paradox label of 'progressive epigonality'. Especially for the 'post-classicist' years from c. 1830 onwards, it might stimulate an intensified search for structures and perspectives of a European history of music.

The author:

Siegfried Oechsle, Prof. Dr. Phil., Musikwissenschaftliches Institut, Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, Germany · oechsle@musik.uni-kiel.de · <http://www.uni-kiel.de/muwi/institut/personen/oechsle.html>