

# Abstract

The starting point of this thesis is an interest in how music may support a text, more specifically how music is able to express the meaning of a specific word and also the local and overall moods of a given text. The overall subject of the thesis is the combination of music and text, and it has been my goal through the thesis to study how music can influence the interpretation of the text accompanied by the music, this I have examined through analyses, focusing on the interpretation of respectively text, music, and their mutual interaction. To examine this field, I have chosen to work with lieder to which more than one composer has set music, since I wanted to examine whether there are common features in their way of expressing the words and moods of the texts. I have chosen to analyse lieder composed by Carl Nielsen, Frederick Delius, Alexander von Zemlinsky, Wilhelm Peterson-Berger, Emil Sjögren og Hakon Børresen, who have set music to *Irmelin Rose* and/or *I seraillets have* by J. P. Jacobsen.

To get an overall understanding of the genre, I have described the tradition, which the lieder featured in my analysis comes from and is a part of. Moreover, I have briefly presented the discussion about the combination of the two kinds of art, music and poetry, in a historical perspective, in order to examine attitudes to, among others, the lied genre and the views on whether or not music is a vehicle for the text and thus subject to the text. To illustrate this debate, I have involved the views of both composers, poets, and theoreticians, among these Franz Schubert, Johan W. Goethe and Arthur Schopenhauer.

My theory contains both the methods of analysis and how music may support a given text. By examining the analysis methods of Kofi Agawu, Per Drud Nielsen and Helge Birkeland, I have found out what musical effects the composers have at their disposal for expressing a text and its moods musically; e.g. harmony, dynamic, rhythm, and attack. The three theoreticians have different approaches to analysing and different focuses, and from these I have worked out my own method to use in my analyses. Above all I have chosen a hermeneutic approach to analysis, and I shall first of all analyse the specific elements of the text and the music and afterwards interpret the combination of those.

The thesis thus gives a view of how six different composers have chosen to set music to the two poems and what common features can be registered in an analysis. It is impossible to say anything in general of whether or not it is Jacobsens style of writing in particular that has affected the composition of the lieder, this would take a larger amount of analysis material, but from the common features I will be able to conclude that specific words and moods described in the text have affected the way in which the composers have the set it to music.

