
Lied der Waldtaube [Song of the Wood-Dove]



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| Title | Lied der Waldtaube [Song of the Wood-Dove] (from: »Gurre-Lieder«) Version for Voice and Chamber Orchestra |
| Time of Origin | 1922 |
| Premiere | 30 January 1923, Copenhagen, Dansk Filharmonisk Selskab |
| Duration | ca. 15 min. |

In a letter dated July 31, 1922, the Danish conductor and composer Paul von Klenau (1883-1946) announced to Arnold Schönberg his intention to have the Chamber Symphony, op. 9, performed in January of the following year. The concert, which would take place on January 30, 1923, was to be conducted by the composer himself. The other works that would be on the program were not chosen before mid-November 1922; indeed, in a letter dated November 13, 1922, Schönberg wrote that "it still needs to be determined what should be performed in addition [to the Chamber Symphony] if necessary." Shortly after writing this letter, Schönberg decided to prepare a chamber orchestra version of the "Lied der Waldtaube" (Song of the Wood-Dove) from the "Gurre-Lieder" for the Copenhagen concert. As he noted on the autograph, completed in Mödling on 14 December 1922, the arrangement was intended "exclusively for small halls and meant to be performed following the Chamber Symphony."

The autograph also contains other interesting annotations: first, Schönberg suggested that his Second String Quartet, op. 10 should be performed at the concert; and second, he envisaged the French-Polish soprano Marya Freund (1876–1966), who had already sung the role of the "Waldtaube" in Paris in 1914, as the soloist. Finally, on January 30, 1923, at the suggestion of the singer (in a letter dated December 30, 1922), the Eight Songs, op. 6 were performed instead of the Second String Quartet, op. 10. The program indicates that the Chamber Symphony was played twice – at the beginning and at the end of the concert, while Schönberg added an improvised lecture that introduced his musical language. This lecture is mentioned both in a newspaper article about the concert and in a postcard Schönberg sent to Alban Berg on January 29, 1923.

The "Lied der Waldtaube" concludes the first part of the "Gurre-Lieder," a work written between 1900 and 1911 and based on the cycle "Gurresange" (Songs of Gurre) by the Danish poet Jens Peter Jacobsen. The theme of the work's first part is the love story of King Waldemar and Tove. The forest dove recounts in the style of a ballad Tove's tragic death at the hands of the jealous queen Helwig: "Helwig's falcon it was that cruelly tore Gurre's dove to pieces!"

Musical motifs heard during the nine previous songs of the first part of the "Gurre-Lieder" provide a structural foundation for the piece and also help introduce an additional semantic layer: through the arrangement for chamber orchestra, they appear detached

from their original symbolic context, and thus direct our attention to the motivic processes of variation and combination. The short, concise motives interweave with the song-like structure arising out of symmetrical measure groupings. Formally, Schönberg thus achieves an allusion to sonata form, within which he integrates strophic-like complexes that are introduced by the recurring refrain melody "Weit flog ich, Klage sucht' ich."

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