
Eight Songs, op. 6



Title	Eight Songs for Voice and Piano, op. 6
Time of Origin	1903 – 05
Premiere	26 January 1907, Vienna, Ehrbar-Saal 21 February 1908, Vienna, Ehrbar-Saal
Duration	ca. 20 min.

1. Traumleben
2. Alles
3. Mädchenlied
4. Verlassen
5. Ghasel
6. Am Wegrund
7. Lockung
8. Der Wanderer

The composition of the Acht Lieder, op. 6 extended from December 1903/January 1904 ("Verlassen," "Traumleben," "Ghasel") – around the same time that op. 3 Nos. 2 and 5 were also being written - to September/October 1905. Schönberg took the texts for five of the songs in op. 6 from the anthology "Neue Lieder der besten neueren Dichter für's Volk." Schönberg correlates Julius Hart's contemplative poem "Traumleben" and its colorful atmosphere to a harmonic oscillation between E major and F major, which is only selectively used in a "text-painting" manner, as for example in the ornamentation of the word "Nachtigallen" (nightingales). The structure of Dehmel's song "Alles" is determined by the interval of a minor second that functions as the basic cell: here we witness a foreshadowing of the principle of using a particular sequence of intervals as a determinant of form. Tonal vagueness and harmonic deviations reveal a tendency to move beyond the home key of A-flat major. While the tonic triad appears here only in the last measure, in "Lockung," the seventh song of op. 6, we have entered the realm of 'fluctuating tonality': "Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this song [...] is that the tonic of E-flat major does not occur anywhere in the entire piece." (Arnold Schönberg, "Structural Functions of Harmony"). In the "Harmonielehre," the concept of 'fluctuating tonality' is described as moving away from a tonic that "from the outset does not appear unequivocally," but rather "admits the rivalry of other tonics [in this case the submediant] alongside it."

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