
Two Songs, op. 14



Title	Two Songs for Voice and Piano, op. 14
Time of Origin	1907/08
Premiere	21 February 1908, Vienna, Ehrbar-Saal 20 January 1921, Vienna, Kleiner Konzerthausaal
Duration	ca. 5 min.

1. Ich darf nicht dankend
2. In diesen Wintertagen

“That I was the first who dared to take the decisive step is not really considered a merit – something I regret, but must ignore. The Two Songs, op. 14 were the first step [...]”

The op. 14 Lieder constitute one of the first works that belong to Schönberg’s “atonal phase.” The two verses of “Ich darf nicht dankend” by Stefan George are from the chapter “Das Jahr der Seele” (The Year of the Soul) from the book “Waller im Schnee” (Journey Through Snow) and date from 1897; the person referred to as “du” (you) in the poems is Ida Coblenz, whom George met and fell in love with in 1893; he presented her with the fair copy of “Das Jahr der Seele.” However, to George’s disappointment, Coblenz married his rival Richard Dehmel shortly thereafter; George then demanded that she return the manuscript, whereupon he burned it. Even if Schönberg could not have known of this autobiographical background, his choice of texts may well reflect his feelings for his wife Mathilde. The settings of these two winter poems were written in December 1907 and February 1908, immediately before the outbreak of the conflict between the painter Richard Gerstl, Mathilde Schönberg, and Schönberg himself, which ended with Mathilde’s return to Schönberg and Gerstl’s suicide. The song “Winterweihe,” based on the text by Georg Henckel, was possibly inspired by the setting of the same text by Richard Strauss, published in 1904, since the original text – in contrast to numerous volumes of poetry by Richard Dehmel and Stefan George – is not in Schönberg’s library.

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