

## **SONG CYCLE AND LIEDER**

### **WHAT IS A SONG CYCLE?**

A song cycle is a group of songs designed to be performed in a sequence as a single entity, tied by a single narrative or theme. As a rule, all of the songs are by the same composer and often use words from the same poet or lyricist. Unification can be achieved by a narrative or a persona common to the songs, or even, as in Schumann's second Liederkreis, by the atmospheric setting of the forest. The unity of the cycle is often underlined by musical means, famously in the return in the last song of the opening music in Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte*. The term originated to describe cycles of art songs (often known by the German term "Lieder") in classical music, and has been extended to apply to popular music.

A song cycle is a group of songs designed to be performed in a sequence as a single entity. Generally speaking, both the song is composed and words are written by the same person. The song cycle can be unified in several ways: by a narrative or persona common to the songs, or by an atmospheric setting; the unity of the cycle is often underlined by musical means.

### **ORIGINS OF THE TERM "SONG CYCLE"**

The term "song cycle" originates from the term "Lieder". The term "Lieder" (plural, root word "Lied") is a German word, and describes a cycle of romantic song settings of German poems in classical music, and has been extended to popular music as well. Lieder generally focus on pastoral themes, or themes of romantic love. The term "Lied" is often used interchangeably with "art song" to encompass like works of various languages.

### **DIFFERENT ARRANGEMENTS OF LIEDER**

Lieder are usually arranged for a single singer and piano (one singer with piano accompaniment); Lied with orchestral accompaniment was a later development. Lied of the Classical era was different than that of the Romantic. Two important composers of Lied in the Romantic era were Franz Schubert and Robert Schumann.

### **POPULAR MUSIC AND MUSICAL THEATER**

Song cycles written by popular musicians are a short series of songs that tell a story or focus on a particular theme. Some musicians also blend tracks together, so that the start of the next song continues from the preceding one. Song-cycle musical theater works are becoming extremely popular among both composers and fans of the genre. Many of these song-cycles have been translated into various languages around the world.