

Mendelssohn's choral songs were immensely popular during the composer's lifetime. They were not written for the concert hall but as occasional pieces for social gatherings of choral singers. Of the four sets of partsongs Mendelssohn published, one (for male voices, Op. 50) was dedicated to the Leipzig singing societies; the others (for mixed voices, Opp. 41, 48 and 59) were, according to their title pages, "for singing in the open air". A favorite pastime of Mendelssohn's choral singers was to take long walks together, and he composed these songs for them to sing while they were resting.

Because of the occasional nature of the songs, Mendelssohn did not publish further collections, leaving three more sets for male voices and two more for mixed voices in manuscript. These were issued after his death, testimony to their continuing popularity in the later nineteenth century. Two of the three songs in this edition, *Neujahrslied* and *Die Waldvögelein*, are from the 1851 *Sechs Lieder*, Op. 88, where they are respectively Nos. 1 and 4. *Die Nachtigall* is No. 4 in Mendelssohn's 1843 publication, *Sechs Lieder*, Op. 59.

The source for this performing edition is the critical edition of Mendelssohn's complete works prepared under the supervision of the composer's friend and former colleague Julius Rietz and published in Leipzig between 1874 and 1877. The original key of *Die Waldvögelein* is F major. Most singers will feel more comfortable at the transposed pitch, but care should be taken that the song does not lose any of its delicate vivaciousness in the tonally richer key of E flat. Editorial interference has otherwise been confined mainly to ensuring consistency in rhythmic phrasing and the positioning of dynamics. Details are given in the Editorial Notes on page 8, where information about the texts may also be found.

Though not primarily intended for concert performance, these songs could well be included in a concert program either individually or as a set. They have lost none of the charm which so beguiled Mendelssohn's contemporaries.

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Peter Aston has combined a career in music education with work as a composer, conductor and musicologist. He has held senior academic posts at the University of York and the University of East Anglia (where he was Head of Music for 24 years and is now Professor Emeritus). He appears as guest conductor with choirs and orchestras at leading European festivals, and is frequently invited to conduct his own music at venues on both sides of the Atlantic.

Dr. Aston has published editions of music by various composers of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. He has made a special study of Italianate church music in 17th-century England, and has written extensively on that period.

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Three Partsongs

2. Die Nachtigall

The Nightingale

(S.A.T.B., Unaccompanied)

Words by J. W. von Goethe (1749-1832)

Music by FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)

English words by Peter Aston and Christopher Smith

Edited by Peter Aston

Andante

Soprano

p

1 2 3

Die Nach - ti - gall, sie war ent - fermt, Der
The night - ing - ale, who flew a - way, In

Alto

p

Die Nach - ti - gall, sie war ent - fermt, Der
The night - ing - ale, who flew a - way, In

Andante

Piano for rehearsal only

p

4 5 *p* 6 *cresc.* 7

Früh - ling lockt sie wie - der; Was neu - es hat sie nicht ge -
spring - time back is wing - ing; No un - tried note is in her

cresc.

Früh - ling lockt sie wie - der; Was neu - es hat sie nicht ge -
spring - time back is wing - ing; No un - tried note is in her

p *cresc.*

P1273

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8 *f* 9 10 11 *p* 12

lernt, Singt al - te lie - be Lie - der, lie - be Lie - der.
 lay, We love her old sweet sing - ing, her — sweet sing - ing.

lernt, Singt al - te lie - be Lie - der, singt al - te lie - be Lie - der.
 lay, We love her old sweet sing - ing, We love her old sweet sing - ing.

Tenor *p*
 Die
 The

Bass *p*
 Die
 The

13 14 15 16

Die Nach - ti - gall, sie war ent - fernt;
 The night - ing - ale, who flew a - way;

Die Nach - ti - gall, sie war ent - fernt;
 The night - ing - ale, who flew a - way;

Nach - ti - gall, sie war ent - fernt, Der Früh - ling lockt sie
 night - ing - ale, who flew a - way, In spring - time back is

Nach - ti - gall, sie war ent - fernt, Der Früh - ling lockt sie
 night - ing - ale, who flew a - way, In spring - time back is

17 18 *cresc.* 19 20 *f*

Was neu - es — hat sie nicht — ge - lernt, — nicht — ge - lernt, — Singt —
 No un - tried — note is in — her — lay, — in — her — lay, — We —

Was neu - es — hat sie nicht — ge - lernt, — Singt —
 No un - tried — note is in — her — lay, — in — her — lay, — We —

wie - der; Was neu - es hat sie nicht — ge - lernt, Singt
 wing - ing; No un - tried — note is in — her — lay, — We —

wie - der; Was neu - es hat sie nicht — ge - lernt, Singt
 wing - ing; No un - tried — note is in — her — lay, — We —

21 22 23 24 *pp*

al - te lie - be Lie - der. Die
 love her old sweet sing - ing. The

al - te lie - be Lie - der, singt lie - be Lie - der.
 love her old sweet sing - ing, her old sweet sing - ing.

al - te lie - be Lie - der, lie - be Lie - der.
 love her old sweet sing - ing, her — sweet sing - ing.

al - te lie - be Lie - der, singt al - te lie - be Lie - der.
 love her old sweet sing - ing, we love her old sweet sing - ing.

25 26 27 28 29

Nach - ti - gall, sie war ent - fernt, Der Früh - ling lockt sie wie - der;
 night - ing - ale, who flew a - way, In spring-time back is wing-ing;

pp

Die Nach - ti - gall, sie war ent - fernt, Der Früh - ling lockt sie wie - der;
 The night - ing - ale, who flew a - way, In spring-time back is wing-ing;

pp

Die Nach - ti - gall, sie war ent - fernt, Der Früh - ling lockt sie wie - der;
 The night - ing - ale, who flew a - way, In spring-time back is wing-ing;

pp

Die Nach - ti - gall, sie war ent - fernt, Der Früh - ling lockt sie wie - der;
 The night - ing - ale, who flew a - way, In spring-time back is wing-ing;

30 *cresc.* 31 32 *p* 33 34

Was neu - es hat sie nicht ge - lernt, Singt al - te lie - be Lie - der, singt
 No un - tried note is in her lay, We love her old sweet sing-ing, we

cresc. *p*

Was neu - es hat sie nicht ge - lernt, Singt al - te lie - be Lie - der, singt
 No un - tried note is in her lay, We love her old sweet sing-ing, we

cresc. *p*

Was neu - es hat sie nicht ge - lernt, Singt al - te lie - be Lie - der, singt
 No un - tried note is in her lay, We love her old sweet sing-ing, we

cresc. *p*

Was neu - es hat sie nicht ge - lernt, Singt al - te lie - be Lie - der, singt
 No un - tried note is in her lay, We love her old sweet sing-ing, we

cresc. *p*

35 *cresc.* 36 *f* 37 38 39 *p*

al - te lie - be Lie - der, singt al - te lie - be Lie - der, lie - be
 love her old sweet sing-ing, we love her old sweet sing-ing, her sweet

cresc. *f* *p*

al - te lie - be Lie - der, al - te lie - be Lie - der, lie - be
 love her old sweet sing - ing, love her old sweet sing-ing, her sweet

cresc. *f* *p*

al - te lie - be Lie - der, singt lie - be, singt al - te lie - be
 love her old sweet sing - ing, sweet sing-ing, we love her old sweet

cresc. *f* *p*

al - te lie - be Lie - der, lie - be Lie - der, lie - be
 love her old sweet sing - ing, her sweet sing-ing, her sweet

cresc. *f* *p*

40 41 42 43 44 *p*

Lie - der, lie - be Lie - der.
 sing - ing, old sweet sing - ing.

pp *p*

Lie - der, singt al - te lie - be, lie - be Lie - der.
 sing - ing, her old sweet sing - ing, old sweet sing - ing.

pp *p*

Lie - der, singt al - te lie - be, lie - be Lie - der.
 sing - ing, her old sweet sing - ing, old sweet sing - ing.

pp *sf* *p*

Lie - der, lie - be Lie - der.
 sing - ing, old sweet sing - ing.

pp *sf* *p*

[poco ritard.]