

A concert of Music by Anton Webern

Program

All music by Anton Webern unless otherwise noted.

Satz für Klavier (1906)

Janis Mercer, piano

Four Pieces for Violin and Piano Op. 7 (1910)

Daniel Lewin, violin, Janis Mercer

Five Songs after Poems by Richard Dehmel (1906-08)

Caroline Jou Armitage, soprano, Janis Mercer, piano

Ideale Landschaft

Am Ufer

Himmelfahrt

Nächtliche Scheu

Helle Nacht

Three Little Pieces for Cello and Piano, Op. 11 (1914)

Robert Howard, cello, Janis Mercer, piano

(This piece will be played twice)

String Quartet (1905)

Daniel Lewin, Dan Flanagan, violins, Jacob Hansen Joseph, viola, Thalia Moore, cello

Intermission

Variations for Piano, Op. 27 (1936)

Janis Mercer, piano

Five Songs on Poems by Stefan George, Op. 4 (1908-09)

Heidi Moss, soprano, Janis Mercer, piano

Eingang

Noch zwingt mich Treue

Ja Heil und Dank

So ich traurig bin

Ihr tratet zu dem Herde

selections from The Kinderstück Project (2005)

Janis Mercer, piano

Kinderstück (Webern) (1924)

Laughing Man (Donivan Johnson)

A Frolic in the Woods (Ramylle Gache*)

Thinking Cap (In honor of Emily) (Daniela Amodei*)

Row Motion (Martha Stoddard)
Can you count to Twelve? (Pablo Furman)
Winter Stream Crossing (Brian Belet)
Fall (Jim McManus)
Kinderstück (reprise) (Webern)

Quartet Op. 22 (1930)

Daniel Lewin, violin, Matt Ingalls, clarinet, Ricardo Martinez, saxophone, Janis Mercer, piano

* Former students of San Francisco Community Music Center's Young Musicians' Program

Notes

(Unless indicated, all notes written by Janis Mercer)

Satz für Klavier: “In 1906 Schoenberg came back from a stay in the country, bringing the Chamber Symphony, It made a colossal impression. I’d been his pupil for three years, and immediately felt, ‘You must write something like that too!’ Under the influence of the work I wrote a sonata movement the very next day. In that movement I reached the farthest limits of tonality...Both of us sensed that in this sonata movement I’d broken through to a material for which the situation wasn’t yet ripe. I finished the movement — it was still related to a key, but in a very remarkable way... — *Anton Webern, The Path to the New Music*

Four Pieces for Violin and Piano Op. 7 was written just after Webern completed his studies with Schoenberg. Influenced by Schoenberg’s **Six Little Piano Pieces** Op. 19, they feature pianissimo and extremely slow tempi. The ordering of the movements, slow-fast-slow-fast is reminiscent of the early Baroque church sonata. Virtuoso pieces for the violin, they feature extreme and sudden tempo changes and dynamics, and wide intervallic leaps. Webern shows a mastery of color in the piano chord voicings and violin effects.

Richard Dehmel (1863-1920) was one of the two most famous German poets by the end of the nineteenth century, along with Stefan George. Schoenberg introduced Dehmel’s work to Webern, and he was equally taken by the poetry. From 1906 to 1908, Webern worked on his own set of lieder, mostly based on poems from Dehmel’s *Weib und Welt*. Musically, Webern’s Dehmel lieder can be considered a bridge between late Romanticism and Modernism – they include the lyricism of the Romantics but have the more ambiguous tonalities of modern music. Webern never attempted to publish this early lieder, perhaps because he felt his compositional style had not been fully formed. Yet this does not take away from how exquisitely he paints the nocturnal scenes and expresses the underlying emotions through his anguished, but mostly hushed pianississimo vocal lines, wandering tonalities, and use of unstable polyrhythms. — *Caroline Jou Armitage*

The **Five Songs**, Op. 4, while written at the same time as the **Five Songs After Poems by Dehmel** are darker and more concerned with harmonic exploration. Recognizable triads are used

together but their relationship to each other is obscured. None of the songs are in a key signature, unlike the **Dehmel Songs** and signal the beginning of his aphoristic style.

The Three Little Pieces for Cello and Piano Op. 11 articulate Webern's continued search for what would become the twelve-tone method of composition. In each movement roughly all 12 tones are presented before any are repeated, but there is no set pattern, and some notes are absent from each movement. The first movement is rather gentle with 3- and 4-note moving lines. The second movement is quite fast with rising and dipping lines between the instruments. The 3rd movement is murky, slow, dynamics not above a pianissimo. The whole piece is finished in two minutes.

Written in one long movement with countless changes of brooding and expressive moods, and at approximately 15 minutes, the **String Quartet 1905** is one of Webern's longest pieces. Throughout his life, Webern associated spirituality with representations of nature and the natural world. In the **String Quartet 1905**, Webern was specifically inspired by the triptych "Life, Nature, and Death", painted by the Italian artist Giovanni Segantini (1858-1899). The 3-note figure that opens the work is reminiscent of the "Muss es sein?" quote ("Must it be?") from Beethoven's final composition, **String Quartet** Op. 135. As an epigraph to his quartet, Webern added a quote by the mystic Jacob Boehme: "Yet what rejoicing was there in the spirit, that I cannot write or tell; nor can it be with aught compared, save only where in midst of death, life is born, and is like the resurrection of the dead."—*Daniel Lewin*

Each movement of **Variations**. Op. 27 is not a set of variations in the traditional form but are "elaborations of its various structural elements." (Leibowitz). In the romantic first movement, the first section is comprised of two-beat overlapping phrases that create four- and three-note phrases. The middle section extends the lengths of the phrases. Between each extended phrase is a loud commentary in wide leaps in the first half of the section, and a muted commentary in the second half. The third section returns to the relative simplicity of the first section. The second scherzo movement, in binary form, is playful, reminiscent of listening to birds and other animals calling in a forest. The published tempo is quarter note=160, but Webern changed it to a slower tempo during rehearsals with Peter Stadlen; the slower tempo creates more opportunities for soaring and breath. The third movement has more clearly defined variations, five in total, and is dance-like.

Quartet Op. 22 was originally written as a concerto for violin, clarinet, horn, piano, and string orchestra but was changed to its current orchestration. The saxophone was a new instrument at the time and Webern wanted to show it had classical as well as jazz capabilities. The first movement, written after the orchestral change, reflects a clear sonata form. There is an introduction and coda surrounding the exposition, development, and recapitulation. Each section is initiated by a ritardando. The saxophone plays the first theme of the exposition while the other instruments play the second theme, simultaneously; in the recapitulation the reverse occurs. The second movement, written first, was finished before Webern changed the orchestration and can be heard as a concerto grosso of sorts. The beginning is a grand tutti section that gives way to a sparser counterpoint among the instruments. Calandi (ritardando and diminuendo) characterize the third section, followed by a piano solo with saxophone and clarinet accompaniment; the violin plays harmonic C pedal points. Quarter note triplets begin the next section, and the

orchestral tutti of the first section rounds off the movement, but not before a hint of another piano solo with accompaniment is heard. There is a mad rush to the end in the form of an *accelerando* and the saxophone has the last word.

The Kinderstück Project

To commemorate the 60th anniversary of Anton Webern's death in 2005, Donovan Johnson and I created **The Kinderstück Project**. Universal Edition had asked Webern to write some children's pieces, but **Kinderstück** was the only he completed. **The Kinderstück Project** "finishes" Webern's cycle using his row as pitch source; many pieces emphasize the little piece's dynamic variety and/or registral leaps. Still others depict nature, which Webern dearly loved, in their titles. Students at San Francisco Community Music Center and professional composers in the SF Bay Area and Washington state participated in the project. The music ranges in difficulty from advanced beginner to high advanced player and can be played in any order or omitted in performance.

Kinderstück nach Webern: Laughing Man has a very simple and easily heard form: ABA' B' A''. Each "A" phrase rhythm is based on the "laughing man" in the title. The two contrasting (*legato*) "B" phrases utilize the the identical twelve-tone registers from the first and final statements of the row in Webern's **Kinderstück**. As with the original, only the prime form is used. The piece is dedicated to Janis Mercer, who lovingly kindled the flame to honor composer Anton Webern (who enjoyed children very much) and keep his torch burning for new generations of young people. —DJ

A Frolic in the Woods is mostly made up of a repeated twelve-tone set. Both the bass and treble clefs use the same set, with a few exceptions. —RG

The idea of **Row Motion** is to create a short perpetual motion piece that pivots back and forth between pitch sequences. The concept is approached from a rhythmic point of view, grouping portions of the row into coherent cells that would flow well from hand to hand. —MS

Thinking Cap (In honor of Emily) is dedicated to the performer of our children's pieces, Emily Nguyen. —DA

Winter Stream Crossing is the second movement of **Drei Kinderstücke** and utilizes fairly strict serial procedures. The pieces maintain a single unified texture, and they are to be performed by advanced amateurs as well as professional pianists. —BB

Can you Count to Twelve? from **Trip to Twelve-Tone Town** asks the player to figure out how to sound all twelve pitches simultaneously without using the damper pedal... —PF

In writing *Fall* from **Four Pieces for Children after Le Stagioni (The Four Seasons)**, the composer sampled a bit of Webern's **Kinderstück**, and then composed a piece around that sample. Each movement could serve as a preliminary approach to Webern's work. —JM

Biographies

Anton Webern (1883-1945) began composing around 1899 and graduated in 1906 from the University of Vienna with a Doctorate in Musicology. He studied with Arnold Schoenberg from 1904-08, under whom he wrote the **Satz für Klavier**, the **String Quartet** 1905, and the **Five Songs on Poems by Richard Dehmel**. After 1909, his music became less tonal and more concise; works such as the **Five Songs** Op. 4, **Four Pieces for Violin and Piano**, Op. 7 and the **Three Little Pieces for Cello and Piano**, Op. 11 are representative of this period. By 1924, Schoenberg and Webern had arrived at the 12-tone method of composition and Webern's **Kinderstück** was written around this time. By the late 1920's and 1930's he had attained mastery of the 12-tone method and the **Variations for Piano** Op. 27 and **Quartet** Op. 22 are fine examples. His music strongly influenced the next generation of composers such as Karlheinz Stockhausen and Pierre Boulez.

As a solo pianist and accompanist, **Janis Mercer's** interest in the music of the Second Viennese School has continued unabated for decades. With her ensemble, *schwungvoll!*, she received funding from the Zellerbach Family Fund for a concert commemorating the 50th anniversary of Webern's death in 1995. In 2005 she commemorated the 60th anniversary of his death with the commissioning of student and professional composers to write music "completing" Webern's unfinished children's piano cycle. She was also invited to compose a chamber work and to attend the 2005 kofomi (KompositionForumMittersill) conference that staged commemorative concerts throughout the town of Mittersill, Austria, where Webern was killed. Her CD of Webern's piano music is available on Centaur Records and was praised as "incredibly expressive...lyrical" (*American Record Guide*). Her website is: <http://janismercerc.com>.

Daniel Lewin has had an unusually varied career as a chamber musician, concertmaster, and teacher. He received Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from the Juilliard School as a student of Joseph Fuchs. Mr. Lewin was Concertmaster of the Charleston Symphony (S.C), the Nevada Symphony, the West Virginia Symphony, and the Cedar Rapids Symphony, among others. He has also been a member of the National, Houston, and San Antonio Symphonies, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic. Mr. Lewin has been a Professor of Violin at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and at the University of Memphis. He has performed at many summer music festivals, including Cabrillo, Casals, Grand Tetons, Skaneateles, Spoleto, and Deer Valley.

Soprano **Caroline Jou Armitage** is known to Bay Area audiences for her "absolutely beautiful" performances sung with "pitch-perfect clarity and affecting intensity" (*San Francisco Classical Voice*). A frequent soloist with the California Bach Society, she has performed Handel's **Dixit Dominus**, Bach's **Cantatas** BWV 21 and 198, and Respighi's **Lauda per la Nativita** (role of Angel). Caroline has also taken the stage at the Berkeley Festival and Exhibition and the Amherst Early Music Festival. Her operatic roles include Laetitia in Menotti's **The Old Maid and the Thief**, Lucy in Britten's **The Beggar's Opera**, and the First Lady and Papagena from Mozart's **The Magic Flute**. She was the featured soloist in a concert of opera arias and choruses with Chora Nova where she sang arias from Purcell's **The Fairy Queen**, Weber's **Der**

Freichütz, and Mascagni's **Cavalleria Rusticana**. Caroline currently studies voice with Karen Clark and harpsichord with Tamara Loring Greene.

Dan Flanagan currently serves as Concertmaster of the Sacramento Philharmonic and Opera, Concertmaster of the Modesto Symphony, Concertmaster of West Edge Opera, Concertmaster of Opera Parallèle, and Instructor of Violin at University of California, Berkeley. A dedicated orchestral player, Flanagan has performed as concertmaster with the Oakland Symphony, Santa Rosa Symphony, California Symphony, California Musical Theater, Festival Opera of Walnut Creek, Symphony Silicon Valley, Merced Symphony, and Symphony Napa Valley. He performs regularly with the San Francisco Opera and Ballet and records film, video game, and television soundtracks with the Skywalker Symphony Orchestra. He is a member of the Solano Trio, the Eco Ensemble and was a founding member of the Farallon Quintet. He will make his Carnegie Hall debut in October of 2022, premiering 20 new works for solo violin inspired by paintings. This will be followed by a tour and an album released by AVIE Records. His original compositions have been heard throughout the SF Bay Area; he's been commissioned by Hunters Point Shipyard Artists, Swedenborgian Church of San Francisco, Gold Coast Chamber Players, and many colleagues.

Robert Howard is a graduate of Rice University and San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He has studied and performed at festivals such as Tanglewood, Spoleto, and the Sandor Vegh Academy in Prague. Robert won first prize in the Rome Festival Competition and has received grants from the Maggini and Virtu Foundations. He performed in the Festival Internacional de Musica in Costa Rica, the Festival de Guadarama in Spain, and on the Mostly Mozart series in Lincoln Center. He has performed with American Bach Soloists, Philharmonia Baroque, and the San Francisco Symphony, and as a regular guest on many Bay Area chamber music series. He has worked directly with composers such as Osvaldo Golijov, Gabriela Frank, George Perle, and Jonathan Berger. Robert runs his own house concert series, concertsbythesquare.org, which combines thematically linked chamber music programs with food and short lecture presentations. A passionate teacher, he has made two trips to Kenya, where he taught and performed. He has coached at San Francisco Conservatory, Stanford University, San Jose State University, and the Conservatorio Superior Coruña in Spain.

Reviled for his "shapeless sonic tinkering" by the *Los Angeles Times*, Oakland musician **matt ingalls** is a composer, clarinetist, concert producer, and computer music programmer. Often incorporating elements of improvisation, his music is heavily influenced by his long involvement in computer music. His "composerly" solo improvisations explore extended clarinet techniques that interact with the acoustic space, often as combination tones. Matt is the founder and co-director of sfSound, a new music series, ensemble, and internet radio station devoted to new ideas and traditions of experimental music, performance art, live electronic music, Bay Area composition, and the various facets of contemporary improvisation.

Bay Area native **Jacob Hansen-Joseph** has performed with some of the world's leading ensembles including the New York City Ballet Orchestra and has played chamber music with the likes of Alon Goldstein, Toby Appel, and members of the Juilliard String Quartet. He lives in Oakland, enjoys smoking ribs and briskets, and has an Australian Cattle dog named Sergeant Slaughter.

Saxophonist **Ricardo Martinez** has performed concerts in France, Scotland, and most recently in Japan, giving concerts in Tokyo, Nagoya, and Shizuoka. He has performed frequently at major conferences including the International Saxophone Symposium, and North American Saxophone Alliance and has appeared several times on WFIU Public Radio.

An avid chamber musician, Martinez was Grand Prize Winner in the 2019 9th Plowman Chamber Music Competition. In France, Martinez performed frequent chamber concerts in Paris at the Korean Cultural Center, Maison de la Culture du Japon, and Maison Heinrich Heine. As an orchestral musician, Martinez has performed with several symphonies, including the California Symphony, Evansville Philharmonic, and Bloomington Symphony Orchestra, Martinez has taught and performed at San José State University, Stanford University, and the Indiana University Summer Saxophone Academy. He served as a clinician in the California Bay Area and to members of the California Youth Symphony Wind Ensemble.

Mr. Martinez is completing a Doctor of Music with minors in Music Education and Wind Conducting at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.

Thalia Moore attended the Juilliard School of Music as a scholarship student of Lynn Harrell. She appeared as a soloist at Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Recital Hall, the Herbst Theater in San Francisco, and the San Francisco Legion of Honor. She has also performed as a guest artist at the Olympic Music Festival in Seattle, and the Grand Teton Music Festival. As a member of new music groups Earplay and the Empyrean Ensemble, Ms. Moore recorded works by Mario Davidovsky, Maria Niederberger, Ross Bauer, Cindy Cox, and Kurt Rohde. She has presented numerous premieres of works, including the 2005 world premiere of **Laws of Motion**, a concerto by Richard Festinger, written especially for her. Ms. Moore is Associate Principal Cellist of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and is a member of the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra.

Noted for her “rich and radiant soprano” (Edward Ortiz, *Sacramento Bee*), **Heidi Moss** has performed on national and international stages such as Opera Memphis and IVAI in Italy as well as Opera Parallèle, West Edge Opera, Oakland Symphony, and the Sacramento Choral Society. A champion of new music, she helped spearhead the performance of song premieres by renowned composers for an alte/neue lieder fest with LIEDER ALIVE! including David Conte, Erling Wold, and Kurt Erickson. She will soon premiere a new song set by Tarik O’Regan as part of the same series. Her collaborations with living composers included a recital of works by Jake Heggie, with the composer himself at the piano. She has also premiered works by philanthropist Gordon Getty with the Russian National Orchestra and San Francisco Opera, most recently in a reading of his opera, **Plumpjack** with Lester Lynch. She frequently collaborates with her husband, composer Kurt Erickson, and has premiered many of his works such as **Song of Solace**, **Young Sea**, and the Neue lieder set **Ich und Du**. Heidi has also garnered recognition in major vocal competitions, including the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (NYC First Place Winner), the Liederkrantz Awards, and the KDFC competition which resulted in a performance with pianist Lang Lang. In 2019, she was awarded the prestigious “Best in the Bay” award for her Richard Strauss recital featuring John Parr of Deutsch Oper Berlin at the piano.

Kinderstück Biographies

Before his retirement, **Donivan Johnson** was the only K-12 music instructor for the Selkirk School District in Northeast Washington and is listed in “Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers”. He has presented his original research on the music of Anton Webern, particularly how it may be heard and understood without resorting to “incomprehensible theoretical languages” at various national and regional conferences for the Society of Composers and the Southwest Contemporary Music Festival and Conference. Mr. Johnson founded the annual Hans Moldenhauer Memorial Lecture series at Whitworth College, and lectures there frequently.

Ramylle Gache studied music at San Francisco Community Music Center. He continues to play as a violist in various community orchestras and in local churches around the SF Bay Area.

Martha Stoddard is the Artistic Director of Oakland Civic Orchestra in Oakland, California. A four-time recipient of ASCAP Plus Awards, her music has been presented by American Composer’s Forum, the Sierra Ensemble, and Avenue Winds. She has had performances by the San Francisco Choral Artists, and the Community Women’s Orchestra. Commissions include chamber works for the Left Coast Ensemble’s Intersection Project. She was a semi-finalist for the American Prize Ernst Bacon Award for her conducted performance of her composition, **Gait Changes** with the Oakland Civic Orchestra. Ms. Stoddard’s flute music is published by Tetractys Publishing.

Daniela Amodei studied flute at San Francisco Community Music Center. She works at Open AI, a research center aiming to discover and enact a safe path to artificial general intelligence.

Brian Belét’s music appears on CD labels Centaur and ravello records and is published by Frog Peak Music; his research is published in *Contemporary Music Review*, *Organized Sounds*, and *Perspectives of New Music*. His website is <http://www.beletmusic.com>.

Pablo Furman coordinates the composition and electro-acoustic music programs at San José State University and is the recipient of awards from the Guggenheim and Koussevitsky Foundations, Djerassi Foundation, International Computer Music Association, and research and artistic awards from California State University. His music appears on Centaur’s *ICMC Commissions*.

James McManus is a retired Professor of Music at Ohlone College in Fremont, California. He enjoys playing music and composing and performs informally.

Five Songs After Poems by Richard Dehmel

I. Ideale Landschaft

Du hattest einen Glanz auf deiner Stirn,
und eine hohe Abendklarheit war,

und sahst nur immer weg von mir,
ins Licht, ins Licht—
und fern verscholl das Echo meines Aufschreis

II. Am Ufer

Die Welt verstummt, dein Blut erklingt;
in seinen hellen Abgrund sinkt
der ferne Tag,

er schaudert nicht; die Glut umschlingt
das höchste Land, im Meere ringt
die ferne Nacht,

sie zaudert nicht; der Flut entspringt
ein Sternchen, deine Seele trinkt
das Ewige Licht.

I. Imaginary Landscape

You had a gleam upon your forehead,
And a noble evening brightness came into
being,
And you always looked only away from me,
Into the light, into the light—
And in the distance there died away the echo
of my cry.

II. On the Shore

The world grows silent, your blood resounds;
Into its luminous abyss sinks
The distant day,

Which does not tremble; the glow embraces
The highest land, in the sea struggles
The distant night,

Which does not linger; from the water there
rises
A little star, your soul is drinking
The everlasting light.

III. Himmelfahrt

Schwebst du nieder aus den Weiten,
Nacht mit deinem Silberkranz?
Hebt in deine Ewigkeiten
mich des Dunkels milder Glanz?

Als ob Augen liebend winken:
alle Liebe sei enthüllt!
Als ob Arme sehrend sinken:
alle Sehnsucht sei erfüllt—

Strahlt ein Stern mir aus den Weiten,
alle Ängste fallen ab,
seligste Versunkenheiten,
strahlt und strahlt und will herab.

Und es treiben mich Gewalten
ihm entgegen und er sinkt—
und ein Quellen ein Entfalten
seines Scheines nimmt und bringt

und erlöst mich in die Zeiten,
da noch keine Menschen sahn,
wie durch Nächte Sterne gleiten,
wie den Seelen Rätsel nah

IV. Nächtliche Scheu

Zaghaft vom Gewölk ins Land

fließt des Lichtes Flut
aus des Mondes bleicher Hand,
dämpft mir alle Glut.

Ein verirrter Schimmer schwebt
durch den Wald zum Fluss,
und das dunkle Wasser bebt
unter seinem Kuss.

Hörst du, Herz? Die Welle lallt:
küsse, küsse mich!
Und mit zaghafter Gewalt,
Mädchen, küss ich dich.

III. Heavenly Journey

Do you float down out of space,
Night, with your silver wreath?
Does the soft lustre of the dark
Lift me up toward your eternities?

It is as though eyes beckon in loving:
Let all love be revealed!
It is as though arms sink in longing:
Let all longing be fulfilled—

A star shines upon me from the distance,
All fears fall away—
Most blissful reveries! —
It shines and shines and aspires downward.

And there are forces
That urge me toward it, and it sinks—
And a flow, an unfolding
Of its brightness takes and transports

And releases me into those times
When there were no men to perceive,
As stars glide through nights,
As mysteries draw near to souls.

IV. Timidity at Night

Timorously from the cloud-bank into the
countryside
Flows the stream of light
Out of the moon's pale hand,
Subduing all my fire.

A stray glimmer floats
Through the woods toward the river,
And the dark water quivers
Beneath its kiss.

Do you hear, O heart? The billow lisps:
"Kiss, kiss me!"
And with timorous might,
O maiden, do I kiss you.

V. Helle Nacht

Weich küsst die Zweige
der weisse Mond.
Ein Flüstern wohnt
im Laub, al neige,

als schweige sich der Hain zur Ruh:
Geliebte du—

Der Weiher ruht, und
die Weide schimmert.
Ihr Schatten flimmert
in seiner Flut, und
der Wind weint in den Bäumen:
wir träumen—träumen—

Die Weiten leuchten
Beruhigung.
Die Niederung
hebt bleich den feuchten
Schleier hin zum Himmelssaum:
o hin—o Traum— —

(Translations in score uncredited.)

V. Luminous Night

Softly the white moon
Kisses the branches.
A whisper lodges
In the leaves, as though the grove were
nodding,

Were hushing itself, for rest:
You, beloved—

The pond rests, and
The willow glimmers.
It shadow flickers
In its water, and
The wind weeps in the trees:
We dream—dream—

The distances illumine
Peace.
The plain
Raises pallidly its moistened
Veil up toward the horizon:
Begone—O dream—

Five Songs, Op. 4 (Stefan George)

I. Eingang

Welt der Gestalten
lang Lebewohl!...
Öffne dich Wald
voll schlohweißer Stämme!
Oben im Blau nur
tragen die Kämme
Laubwerk und Früchte;
Gold Karneol.
Mitten beginnt
Beim marmornen Male
langsame Quelle
blumige Spiele,
rinnt aus der Wölbung
sachte als fiele
Korn um Korn
auf silberne Schale.
Schauernde Kühle
schließt einen Ring,
Dämmer der Frühe
wölkt in den Kronen,
ahnendes Schweigen
bannt die hier wohnen...
Traumfittich rausche!
Traumharfe kling!

II. Noch zwingt mich Treu

Noch zwingt mich Treu über dir zu wachen
und deines Dulden Schönheit daß ich weile,
mein heilig Streben ist mich traurig machen
damit ich wahrer deine Trauer teile.
Nie wird ein warmer Anruf mich empfangen,
bis in die späten Stunden unsres Bundes
muß ich erkennen mit ergebnem Bangen
das herbe Schicksal winterlichen Fundes.

I. Entrance

World of beings,
long fare thee well!...
Open up, forest
of pale-white trunks.
Only high in the blue
do the treetops bear
foliage and fruit;
Gold carnelian.
In the middle,
near the marble monument,
the slow spring
begins its flowery play,
flows from the hollow,
softly as if
grain after grain
were falling into a silver bowl.
Shivering coolness
closes a ring;
dawn of the morning
clouds the treetops;
expectant silence
transfixes those who dwell here...
Dream-wing, whirr!
Dream-harp, resound!

II. Faithfulness still compels me

Faithfulness still compels me to watch over
you,
and the beauty of your suffering, to remain.
My sacred striving is to sadden myself
so that I may more truly share your grief.
Never will a warm voice greet me;
until the late hours of our togetherness
must I recognize with devoted anxiety
the bitter fate of wintry discovery.

III. Ja Heil und Dank

Ja Heil und Dank dir die den Segen brachte!

Du schläferdest das immer laute Pochen

mit der Erwartung deiner—Teure—sachte
in diesen glanzerfüllten Sterbewochen.
Du kamest und wir halten uns umschlungen,

ich werde sanfte Worte für dich lernen
und ganz als glichest du der Einen Fernen
dich loben auf den Sonnenwanderungen.

III. Yes, hail and thanks

Yes, hail and thanks to you who brought this
blessing!

You gently calmed the constant, loud
heartbeat

with that anticipation of you—dear one—
during these radiance-filled weeks of dying.

You came and we are holding each other in
embrace;

I will learn soft words for you
and I will praise you on sunlit wanderings
As if you were like the One who's distant

IV. So ich traurig bin

So ich traurig bin
weiß ich nur ein Ding:
ich denke mich bei dir
und singe dir ein Lied.
Fast vornehm ich dann
Deiner Stimme Klang,
ferne singt sie nach
und minder wird mein Gram.

IV. When I am sad

When I am sad,
I have but one thought:
I think myself with you
and sing you a song.
Then I seem to hear
the sound of your voice;
far away it echoes
and my sorrows diminish.

V. Ihr tratet zu dem Herde

Ihr tratet zu dem Herde
wo alle Glut verstarb,
Licht war nur an der Erde
vom Monde leichenfarb.
Ihr tauchtet in die Aschen
die bleichen Finger ein
mit Suchen, Tasten, Haschen—
wird es noch einmal Schein!
Seht was mit Trost gebärde
der Mond euch rät:
tretet weg vom Herde,
es ist worden spät.

V. You stepped toward the hearth

You stepped toward the hearth
where the glow had died.
The light on the ground
came only from the death-pale moon.
You dipped into the ashes
your pale fingers,
searching, touching, grasping—
Once more it comes aglow!
Look what the moon imparts
with consoling gesture:
step back from the hearth
It has grown late

Translations from the liner notes of the CD Webern Complete Works, featuring conductor Pierre Boulez. Translator uncredited.