

THE ROMANTIC ERA GENRES:

1. THE LIED AND LIED CYCLES

IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGY FOR THIS LESSON:

Through composed music is refers to music that is written all the way through without repetition or return of musical material.

Minne means love. Therefore, **Minnelieder** directly translated would mean love song.

A **clergy** is a male priest or religious leader.

Sacred means connected with God

A **lied** is poetry set to classical music

Secular means not related to the church

ORIGIN OF THE LIED

Lied, plural **Lieder**, any of a number of particular types of German song, as they are referred to in English and French writings. The earliest so-called lieder dates to the 12th and 13th centuries and are the works of the *minnesingers* (singers of courtly love) and poets. Remember a court was the household of a sovereign (ruler).

Many surviving *Minnelieder* reflect southern German origins. These songs occur in a number of forms based on poetic models. The proper lied form, like many other forms, commonly has two sections, the first phrase of music (*a*) repeated with different words, and the second phrase (*B*), again with different words *aaB*. This is the **Bar form** much favoured by German composers and often expanded in various ways.

The monophonic (single melodic line) *Minnelieder* are virile and use small **leaps**; they are attractively contoured and make use of **modal** scales (melodic patterns characteristic of medieval and Renaissance music until the advent of the major–minor scale system). Because musical notation of this period is not precise regarding rhythmic values, the rhythmic interpretation of *Minnelieder* is difficult and controversial. Among important minnesingers (some of the lesser nobility) are Walther von der Vogelweide, Tannhäuser, Wolfram von Eschenbach, and Neidhart von Reuenthal, the first three known today through the operas of Richard Wagner.

The 14th century brought a decline of the monophonic lied and the introduction of **polyphonic** lieder for two or more voices or voice and instruments. One of the most popular polyphonic lieder is the two-voice “Wach auff myn Hort” (“Awake, my darling”) by Oswald of Wolkenstein (1377–1455).

The 15th century saw a flowering of polyphonic lieder for as many as four voices singing together. These polyphonic settings, unlike the courtly *Minnelieder*, are addressed to educated scholars and clergy as well as nobles. *Bar* form and romantic texts predominate and the songs are **through-composed pieces**. The tunes are usually sung by the middle part (tenor); often the parts accompanying the tenor are played on instruments. The tenor melody is often a pre-existent, familiar one, not a tune newly composed for the polyphonic lied. Sometimes the texture is chordal, otherwise one part may imitate the melody of another voice for part of a phrase. When three parts are present, whether sung or played and sung, the tenor and top part (descant) form a harmonic unity, while the third part (countertenor) skips between and below the other two.

Polyphonic lieder reached a climax in the mid-16th century and the invention of printing helped disseminate the secular polyphonic lieder, and many of the most popular ones were turned into sacred pieces by simply substituting a new text and keeping the music. Thus, lieder became important vehicles for spreading Protestantism.

By the late Renaissance (*c.* 1580), lieder were composed deliberately in an Italian style: textures often chordal, phrases of regular length and well-articulated, melodies in the top part with the words carefully declaimed. Under the influence of the new madrigal (a polyphonic Italian secular form), the old lied tradition decayed.

Lieder in the Romantic period

As we said yesterday the romantic period paid homage to the medieval era and one of the major returns, we saw in the romantic period was the Lied. The Lied is now also called the art

The 19th century saw German composers again turning to lied production. Late 18th- and early 19th-century Romanticism gave great impetus to serious popular poetry, and many poems of such masters as Goethe were set by lied composers. Franz Schubert, who composed more than 600 lieder, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, and Hugo Wolf are among the finest 19th-century lied composers.

Although the verse in lieder often was mediocre, for the Romantics, poetry and music were of equal importance. Romantic lieder are generally for a solo voice with piano accompaniment, which often required a virtuoso technique. The songs were primarily salon music: individual lieder lack the scope of contemporary opera arias, but are more intimate and emotionally refined. Composers often wrote **cycles** of lieder, all related by a single topic but giving scope for considerable musical development. A lied may be either through-composed or strophic, *i.e.*, repeating the music for each new stanza of the poem. Occasionally lieder are arranged for accompaniment by full orchestra or, in the case of several lied cycles, for chamber ensemble of reduced strings and winds.

The **form** of a lieder is through-composed or strophic but remember that lied's in the medieval/renaissance periods had bar form (AAB).

1. Romantic lieder have two kinds of forms. Name them.
2. Where would you perform **most** Romantic lieder?
3. Where would you perform **most** Medieval/Renaissance lieder?
4. What is the difference between polyphonic and monophonic?

Tomorrow we will work through a lied, in fact the lied we need to study is the Erlkoning by Schubert! If you can have a listen to the song. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JS91p-vmSf0>