

# Die Nachtigall

Opus 59, No. 4

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

## Text and Translation

[di nax-ti-gal zi va:r ent-fernt]

Die Nachtigall, sie war entfernt

The nightingale, she was gone

[de:r frY:-liŋ lɔkt zi vi:də]

der Frühling lockt sie wieder;

the Spring lures her again;

[vas nɔYəs hat zi nɪçt gə-lɛrnt]

was neues hat sie nicht gelernt,

what new had she not learned

[zɔŋt altə li:bə li:dɔ]

singt alte liebe Lieder.

sings old love songs.

Die Nachtigall, sie war entfernt der Frühling lockt sie wieder; was neues hat sie nicht gelernt, singt alte liebe Lieder.	The nightingale had gone afar; Spring summons her back. She has learned nothing new; She sings the old beloved songs. <sup>1</sup>
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## Background

Mendelssohn's Opus 59 is a collection of six songs for mixed chorus composed between 1837 and 1843, among them *Im Grünen*, *Frühzeitiger Frühling*, *Abschied vom Walde*, *Die Nachtigall*, *Ruhetal* and *Jagdlied*.

## Recordings

UniversitätsChor München, conductor: Johannes Kleinjung - [Die Nachtigall](#)

The lovely Gaechinger Cantorey, conducted by Hans-Christoph Rademann - [Die Nachtigall](#)

## Rehearsal Tracks

These tracks do not have singers, but I think they are still useful:

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<sup>1</sup> Translation from the Choral Public Domain Library, cpdl.org – Choral Public Domain Library Editors. “Die Nachtigall”. Accessed 22 May, 2018. [Die Nachtigall](#)

Soprano: [Soprano Part](#)  
 Alto: [Alto Part](#)  
 Tenor: [Tenor Part](#)  
 Bass: [Bass Part](#)

## Analysis

Key: Ab Major

Meter: 3/8

Form: Modified strophic. Mendelssohn sets the poem three times. Each setting is slightly different, although the melody remains recognizable throughout.

SECTION	MEASURE	EVENT AND SCORING
Strophe 1	1-12	The sopranos and altos sing in homorhythmic duet with sopranos singing the melody and altos providing harmonic support. The phrase structure is irregular – clear cadences can be heard at the end of the 5 <sup>th</sup> , 10 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup> measures, leaving us with a pattern of 5 + 5 + 2 in terms of measures. However, we could consider the last two bars a simple phrase extension
Strophe 2	13-24	The tenors and basses sing in homorhythmic duet with tenors singing the melody. This is the exact same music as the previous duet between the sopranos and altos, with the same 5 + 5 + 2 pattern of phrases. Mendelssohn adds countermelodies in the soprano and alto lines, although for the most part they move with the same rhythm as each other (but not with the tenor and bass)
Strophe 3	25-end	The sopranos sing a slight variation on the original melody with the other voices providing harmonic support; Mendelssohn adds a internal phrase extension to the second phrase and an extension at the end of the third phrase, giving a phrase pattern of 5 + 9 + 6
Coda	44-45	This is just a brief 2 measure ending on the text “liebe lieder”