

## Composer's Foreword

The melody given in notation in the vocal part (with a few specially indicated exceptions) is *not* intended to be sung. The performer has the task of transforming it into a *speech melody* [*Sprechmelodie*], taking the prescribed pitches well into account. He accomplishes this by:

I. adhering to the rhythm as precisely as if he were singing; that is, with no more freedom than he would allow himself if it were a sung melody;

II. being precisely aware of the difference between a *sung tone* and a *spoken tone*: the sung tone maintains the pitch unaltered; the spoken tone does indicate it, but immediately abandons it again by falling or rising. But the performer must take great care not to lapse into a singsong speech pattern. That is absolutely not intended. The goal is certainly not at all a realistic, natural speech. On the contrary, the difference between ordinary speech and speech that collaborates in a musical form must be made plain. But it should not call singing to mind, either. Furthermore, the following should be said about the performance: The performers' task here is at no time to derive the mood and character of the individual pieces from the meaning of the words, but always solely from the music. To the extent that the tonepainterly representation [*tonmalerische Darstellung*] of the events and feelings in the text were of importance to the composer, it will be found in the music anyway. Wherever the performer fails to find it, he must resist adding something that the composer did not intend. If he did so, he would not be adding, but subtracting.

Arnold Schoenberg

[English translation by Stanley Appelbaum]