Gustav Mahler's Symphonies and the Search for Identity

Brian Hailes
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GUSTAV MAHLER’S SYMPHONIES AND THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY

A Thesis Presented

by

BRIAN HAILES

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

May 2022

Department of Music & Dance
GUSTAV MAHLER’S SYMPHONIES AND THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY

A Thesis Presented
by
BRIAN HAILES

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My deepest thanks and appreciation go to my wife, Monica Sinclair, for her unconditional love and support, and to our daughters, Amy and Helen, for the endless intellectual challenges that help bridge the generational gap.
ABSTRACT

GUSTAV MAHLER’S SYMPHONIES AND THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY

MAY 2022

BRIAN HAILES, B.A., WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY
M.M., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Evan MacCarthy

Throughout his life Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) was aware of his role as an outsider and had a deeply conflicted view of his identity. The challenges he faced as a Jew in an overwhelmingly Christian and increasingly anti-Semitic Central Europe, as a German speaker in predominantly Czech speaking Bohemia and Moravia, as a Czech in the Austrian empire, and as an Austrian in a highly militarized but rapidly declining empire in the face of increasing pan-German nationalism, all contributed to this status. At the same time, his diverse early background provided a rich variety of musical experience, leading to an openness to musical influences that would accompany him throughout his career.

Mahler was one of the first German modernists. His approach to the symphony was unique, revolutionary and widely misunderstood. By stretching the boundaries of structure and content with references to childhood, nature and the sounds and images of everyday life, through the deliberate, unsettling juxtaposition of the banal and the sublime, and through the use of voice and text, he used the symphony as a vehicle for personal reflection and exploration. Mahler’s primary forms of composition were Lieder and symphonies, and as his career progressed the two became inextricably intertwined. His
music has been described as *Weltanschauungsmusik* - music that expresses a world outlook. Driven by a desire to engage with the symphonic tradition, his works included the first non-programmatic choral symphonies since Beethoven.

This study focuses on particular aspects of Mahler’s compositional style to demonstrate his continuous search for identity: the references to and quotations from his own songs, from the works of other composers, and from sources such as Jewish/Central European folk music; the rhythmic influence of dances and marches as social references and indicators; the use of non-traditional instrumentation, timbre and sound effects to provide emphasis, coloration and contrast; and the symphonic use of vocal music to explore religious and philosophical beliefs.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Ich bin dreifach heimatlos: als Böhme unter den Österreichern, als Österreicher unter den Deutschen und als Jude in der ganzen Welt. 1

(I am three times homeless: as a Bohemian among Austrians, as an Austrian among Germans, and as a Jew throughout the world.)

When viewed from a historical perspective, the career of Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) was an unlikely success story. Born and raised in a lower middle class, German speaking, Jewish family in the Czech provinces of the Austrian empire, Mahler rose to become the leading conductor of his generation and a composer whose standing has continued to grow in the one hundred years since his death. But in common with others of his background, Mahler had what Richard Taruskin describes as an “ineradicable sense of outsiderhood.” 2

This study will examine Mahler’s symphonies for the ways in which he applied his diverse, eclectic compositional style to his continuous search for identity. I will focus on a number of specific musical techniques that recur throughout the symphonies - melodic borrowing; rhythmic influence; the use of unconventional instruments, timbre and sound effects; the reintroduction of text and voice - as well as their interrelationship and evolution. Common factors from Mahler’s background will be traced as his style matures and his worldview evolves. I will argue that in searching for identity Mahler

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1 Donald Mitchell, ed. Erinnerungen an Gustav Mahler / Briefe an Alma Mahler (Frankfurt/M.: Ullstein, 1978), 137. While Alma’s recollections are notoriously unreliable and at times self-serving, this quote is plausible, if not verbatim.
applied his wide range of techniques and sources, stretching the boundaries of structure and content, to turn the symphony into a vehicle for personal expression and exploration.

Overview of Chapters

Rather than taking a chronological approach, I will focus on particular aspects and techniques of Mahler’s compositional style to demonstrate his continual search for identity. Chapter 3 will explore his use of melodic borrowing from his own songs, from the works of other composers, and from sources such as Jewish/Central European folk music. Chapter 4 will look at the way in which Mahler’s symphonies incorporate dance meter and rhythm derived from Ländler (German folk dance), Viennese waltzes, and military marches, as social references and indicators. Chapter 5 will consider the use of instrumentation, timbre and sound effects that were not traditionally part of the symphonic vocabulary, while Chapter 6 will analyze the way that Mahler uses text and voice in his symphonies to explore his religious and philosophical beliefs. Table 1.1 shows the symphonies that will be discussed in the chapters, based on the techniques that Mahler applies.  

Table 1.1 Discussion of symphonies by chapter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Symphony: 1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Melodic Borrowing</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4. Rhythmic Influence</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Instruments, Timbre &amp; Effect</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Text and Voice</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3 Throughout this report, tables are used to summarize various styles, techniques etc., that appear in the symphonies. No claim is made as to the completeness of these summaries and it is quite conceivable, even likely, that others can point to further relevant examples.
CHAPTER 2
A LIFE OF SUCCESS AND ANGUISH

Throughout his life Mahler was aware of his role as an outsider and had a deeply conflicted view of his identity.\(^4\) The challenges he faced as a Jew in a predominantly Christian and increasingly anti-Semitic Central Europe in the late nineteenth century have been well chronicled. Other less studied factors in his background also influenced his identity: as a German speaker in predominantly Czech-speaking Bohemia and Moravia; as a Czech in the Austrian empire; and as an Austrian living in a highly militarized but rapidly declining empire in the face of increasing pan-German nationalism. At the same time, Mahler’s diverse early background provided a rich variety of musical experience: German, Czech and Jewish folk music, public concerts by military bands from the nearby barracks, the everyday sounds of small town life, and exposure to both Jewish and Christian religious music. These early experiences led to an openness to musical influences that would accompany Mahler throughout his career.

MAHLER’S COMPOSITIONS

Mahler’s primary forms of musical composition were Lieder and symphonies (See Table 2.1).\(^5\) As his career progressed the two became inexorably intertwined: the orchestration of his song cycles became increasingly symphonic while in his symphonies he quoted from both the melodies and the texts of his Lieder, as well as other sources. His complete body of work ultimately became a unique combination of the two genres.

---


It is not just that his output is made up exclusively of songs and symphonies, but also that the two forms permeate each other in manifold ways, as if the relationship between the human voice and an instrumental one were being continually reexamined.\(^6\)

Table 2.1 Mahler's mature works

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Composed</th>
<th>First performances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three Lieder</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1880's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lieder und Gesänge aus der Jugendzeit</em></td>
<td>1880-87</td>
<td>1886-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Des Knaben Wunderhorn</em></td>
<td>1887–1901</td>
<td>1889-1901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen</em></td>
<td>1883–85</td>
<td>1896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symphony No.1</td>
<td>1884-88</td>
<td>1889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symphony No.2</td>
<td>1888–94</td>
<td>1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symphony No.3</td>
<td>1893–6</td>
<td>1896 (movt 2), 1897 (movts 2, 3, 6), 1902 (complete)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symphony No.4</td>
<td>1892 –1900</td>
<td>1901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symphony No.5</td>
<td>1901–02</td>
<td>1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kindertotenlieder</em></td>
<td>1901–04</td>
<td>1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Rückert-Lieder</em></td>
<td>1901 (piano)</td>
<td>various/1907 (complete)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1905 (orch.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symphony No.6</td>
<td>1903–04</td>
<td>1906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symphony No.7</td>
<td>1904–05</td>
<td>1908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symphony No.8</td>
<td>1906–07</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Das Lied von der Erde</em></td>
<td>1908–09</td>
<td>1911*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symphony No.9</td>
<td>1908–09</td>
<td>1913*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symphony No.10</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>1924* (movts. 1&amp;3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1976* (complete performing version)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>*posthumous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Lieder and Symphonies

Throughout the nineteenth century German music, especially Lieder and symphonies, had increasingly become associated with German nationalism. Mahler wrote both Lieder and symphonies, but his proto-modernist approach to symphonic writing was quite different from the lyrical, purely romantic works of his contemporaries and predecessors. Early in his career Mahler wrote song settings of Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Alte deutsche Lieder (The Boy’s Magic Horn: Old German Songs), a collection of folk poems collected, edited and published by Achim von Arnims and Clemens Brentano in 1805 and 1808. He also composed Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen (Songs of a Wayfarer) based on his own Wunderhorn inspired texts. His first four symphonies rely heavily on, and in many instances quote directly from these song cycles and are often referred to as the Wunderhorn symphonies.

The next three “middle period” symphonies show a change in style, away from the Wunderhorn references and into a purely instrumental format, but Mahler didn’t abandon the song cycle, composing and orchestrating the increasingly symphonic Rückert-Lieder and Kindertotenlieder. Symphony No. 8 is a large-scale choral work using texts from the Roman Catholic Veni Creator Spiritus and Goethe’s Faust while the symphonic Das Lied von der Erde (The Song of the Earth) uses a German translation and

7 This emphasis became even greater after 1871 when a newly unified Germany faced the challenge of establishing national unity despite remaining differences among the German states. In domestic and recital environments the growing popularity of Lieder fulfilled the purpose of promoting and enhancing a mythical German past, while in the growing number of large concert halls, heroic large scale orchestral works reinforced the greatness of the national culture. The symphonies of Beethoven stood as the pinnacle of this music, while the works of others, such as Schumann and Brahms, also fit the bill, as well as the operas of Wagner, who portrayed himself as being in the vanguard of nationalism. See Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter, eds., Music and German National Identity (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
adaptation of ancient Chinese verse. Symphony No. 9 and the unfinished No. 10 use large symphonic forces in small groups to convey a late, introspective view of life. Common to all of these works is Mahler’s willingness to adapt an evolving concept of the symphony and orchestral writing.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY SYMPHONY

The typical nineteenth-century symphony was based on the classical forms established by Haydn and Mozart towards the end of the eighteenth century, while accommodating the lyricism and heroism of nineteenth-century romanticism. Throughout the century the symphony was dominated by the presence of, and the example set by Beethoven.9 Such was his dominance that many composers were intimidated by the monumental edifice that the symphony had become. The leading symphonists of the century: Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms, Bruckner, Dvořák, Tchaikovsky; all followed Beethoven’s model, as did virtually all of the hundreds of lesser-known symphonists of the era. Those who favored a different approach: Berlioz, Liszt, Wagner, Strauss; developed other formats that were nevertheless heavily influenced by Beethoven’s symphonic style.

MAHLER’S MUSICAL STYLE

Richard Taruskin describes Mahler as being one of the early German modernists (the others being Strauss and Schoenberg.)\(^{10}\) Among the modernist traits that Taruskin identifies are rapid stylistic innovation, technical advances, and irony – all traits that can be seen in Mahler’s symphonies. The “sense of outsiderhood” that Taruskin describes is always present and, far from writing German nationalist symphonies, Mahler’s music is described as *Weltanschauungsmusik* - music that expresses a world outlook. Indeed, Mahler himself said that his aim was to write “a symphony so great that the whole world is actually reflected therein.”\(^1{1}\) John Toews discusses the importance of the *Wunderhorn* poems as building blocks, or raw material, in Mahler’s expression of his *Weltanschauungsmusik.*\(^1{2}\) In Mahler’s hands these naive representations of life and nature were free of any national, ethnic, or racial association. Toews goes on to state that:

> For Mahler the founding moment of the emergence of culture from nature was universal and defined by the general humanity of the individual lives that form themselves into differentiated cultural communities.

---

\(^{10}\) Taruskin, “Reaching (for) Limits.” Since Schoenberg was 14 years younger than Mahler and was writing unpublished late romantic Lieder at the time of the first performances of Mahler’s first symphony, and Strauss’s early orchestral works follow more closely the late romantic style of Wagner and Bruckner, it can plausibly be argued that Mahler was the first German modernist. Carl Dahlhaus includes Strauss but excludes Schoenberg from his definition: “…the year 1889, by witnessing such works as Mahler’s first symphony and Strauss’s *Don Juan*, stands out from the continuum of history as the dawning of ‘musical modernism.’” Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 330.


Mahler’s approach to the symphony was unique, revolutionary and, at the time, widely misunderstood. Although he was the leading opera conductor of his generation, Mahler did not compose operas, but a number of writers, including Theodor Adorno, Pierre Boulez and Thomas Peattie, have commented on the theatrical and operatic nature of his symphonies:

His symphony is opera assoluta. Like the opera, Mahler’s novelistic symphonies rise up from passion and flow back into it; passages of fulfillment such as are found in his works are better known to opera and the novel than to otherwise absolute music.13

There are elements both of the epic and of the novel in Mahler’s musical forms, from his earliest works onwards. He “tells a story in music,” quite openly when the music is supported by a literary text but no less when this verbal support is absent. Apart from the epic and the novel, there is often the suggestion of an imaginary theatre in Mahler’s works, with real stage effects transferred to the concert hall.14

Mahler’s music ultimately thrives on the attention generated by its conflicting allegiances to a range of symphonic and operatic models15

So why did Mahler not write opera? While there is much about Mahler’s music that can be considered operatic, he did not want to be constrained by the literal nature of opera plot. When discussing his compositional technique, Mahler said:

It's a strange process! Without knowing at first where it's leading, you find yourself pushed further and further beyond the bounds of the original form, whose potentiality is hidden within it like the plant within the seed. In connection with this, it seems to me that only with difficulty could I conform to the limitations imposed by an opera libretto.16

While one can understand the spirit of Boulez’ comment that Mahler “tells us a story in music,” it is not literally true. The music does not have a clear or continuous plot and is open to different interpretations at different times or even simultaneously.\(^{17}\) I believe that this was an important requirement for Mahler in expressing his worldview.

The evidence of diverse sources and influences is readily apparent in the symphonies: the references to and quotations from his song settings of folk poetry; the use of choral music in non-programmatic symphonies, pioneered by but largely dormant since Beethoven; the references to childhood and nature; the sounds and images of everyday life such as church bells and military bands; the use of texts from German Romantic writers and the Roman Catholic Church; the deliberate and at times unsettling juxtaposition of the banal and the sublime:

At the fete on the Kreuzberg, an even worse witches’ sabbath was in progress. Not only were innumerable barrel organs blaring out from merry-go-rounds, swings, shooting galleries and puppet shows, but a military band and a men's choral society had established themselves there as well. All these groups, in the same forest clearing, were creating an incredible musical pandemonium without paying the slightest attention to each other. Mahler exclaimed: “You hear? That's polyphony, and that's where I get it from!”\(^{18}\)

Mahler was driven by a desire to engage in and to continue the evolution of the symphonic tradition of Beethoven, as had been Wagner and Brahms, each in their own way. But for Mahler to achieve his personal vision it was, I suggest, necessary that he name his works “Symphonies,” that they be non-programmatic in a literal sense, and that some of them, at least, be choral.

\(^{17}\) Richard Taruskin, “Is There or Isn’t There? (Not Even the Composer Knows for Sure),” in *Music in the Early Twentieth Century*.
SYMPHONY VERSUS SYMPHONIC PoEM

Mahler was initially reluctant to use the term “Symphony.” Brahms had trodden warily into Beethoven’s symphonic territory and many others had avoided the term completely. In describing his first major orchestral work (1889), which was accompanied by program notes, as a “Symphonic Poem,” Mahler was following the fashionable (and safe) path of many leading composers of the time, including Liszt, Debussy, Franck, Mussorgsky, Saint-Saëns, Smetana and, of course, Strauss. Some of the works of these composers contain strong symphonic elements, but by avoiding or modifying the term “Symphony” they were avoiding a head on collision with Beethoven. Some of the works, especially those by Liszt and Strauss, whether described as “Symphonic poems” or “Tone poems,” were highly programmatic. But Mahler appears to have been increasingly uncomfortable with the constraints of specificity imposed by program music. This does not imply that he was engaging in the highly polarized nineteenth century war between program and absolute music. There is a wide spectrum of underlying programmatic thought, origination and influence that is available between the two extremes, and it is in this space that Mahler situated his work. He did, as Constantin Floros points out, continue to work with inner programs even after he rejected the overt programs of his early symphonies. But these programs were based on personal

19 “I shall never compose a symphony … you have no idea how it feels to our kind when one always hears such a giant (as Beethoven) marching along behind.” Cited in Max Kalbeck, Johannes Brahms - Primary Source Edition (BiblioLife, 2014), 165.
experience, intellectual exploration, the importance of destiny, and the meaning of human
existence, both here and in the afterlife; a far cry from Strauss’s symphonic poems, which
Floros describes as attempts to steer his listeners’ imagination down a particular path.
Mahler’s first reference to his debut orchestral work as a symphony was in 1896, by
which time he had removed all programmatic descriptions and reverted simply to
performance instructions for the movements. By the time it was published in 1899, he
was well advanced on his next two symphonies and this one carried the title of First
Symphony:

But let it be called just a “Symphony” and nothing more, for titles like symphonic
poem are already hackneyed and say nothing in particular: they make one think of
Liszt’s compositions, in which, without any deeper underlying connection, each
movement paints its own picture. My two symphonies contain the inner aspect of
my whole life; I have written into them everything that I have experienced and
endured - Truth and Poetry in music.  

IDENTITY

The concept of identity has been the subject of study among psychologists since
the nineteenth century and increasingly among social scientists since the middle of the
twentieth century. These two schools focus on the two differing, principal aspects of
identity: the individual's perception (i) as a self-aware entity distinct from others and (ii)
as a member (or non-member) of certain social groups. The founder of psychoanalysis,
Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), was a Moravian Jewish contemporary of Mahler.  
The two Central Europeans knew each other and in 1910 Mahler consulted with Freud for

23 Bauer-Lechner, Recollections, 30.
3. Freud’s theories and methods have been subjected to scrutiny over the intervening century and many of
them have been discredited as unscientific or unsupportable. However his vast output provided hypotheses
on which aspects of modern psychology are based, and his work on mental processes and the unconscious
play a role in our current understanding of identity.
advice on his marital problems. Erik Erikson (1902-94), a student of Freud’s daughter, introduced the term “identity crisis” while Henri Tajfel (1919-82) and John Turner (1947-2011) developed the theory of social identity in which collections of individuals categorize themselves as members of a group to the exclusion of outsiders.\(^{25}\) When viewed from the perspective of social acceptance and rejection it is perhaps not surprising that many of the researchers who have worked in the fields of sociology and psychology most closely associated with identity, including Freud, Erikson and Tajfel, came from Central European Jewish backgrounds. As Toews observes, both Mahler and Freud, as second generation emancipated Jews in Central Europe were:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{… deeply committed to the universal ideal of individual liberation from the imposed historical prisons of particularized cultural identities and determined to define their assimilation into their historical cultures as full participation in the inclusive collective identity of a universal humanity represented by the ideals of secular humanism in the Classical and Enlightenment traditions.}\end{align*}
\]

Toews goes on to point out that after 1900 and a number of personal crises that marked the end of the \textit{Wunderhorn} years (see this chapter, “Vienna: Uneasy Lies the Head…”), the Rückert texts, to which Mahler turned for source material, all examine the anxieties, longings, fears and self-reflection of an individual cast as “other” in relation to the world around him.

In his study of identity in \textit{fin de siècle} Vienna, Federico Celestini characterizes the social environment in the city at the heart of a declining Habsburg Empire and goes on to describe a number of stylistic traits that manifest themselves in artistic expression at the


\(^{26}\) Toews, “The Road into the Open,” 95-96.
dawn of modernism, and in Mahler’s music in particular.27 Between 1870 and 1910 Vienna's population more than doubled from 800,000 to over 1.9 million. This explosive growth coupled with the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heterogeneity at the center of a diverse empire led to poverty, unemployment, and social dissent, as well as widespread uncertainty and disorientation. Mahler, a German speaking, Jewish, Moravian, was typical of many inhabitants of the city, whose diverse background provided a positive basis for creativity while at the same time leading to a conflicted view of both individual and collective identity. Among the various musical traits that represent Mahler’s conflicted identity that are not generally characteristic of the conventional symphony are the sudden breakdown of musical subjects, the grotesque destabilization of structure, the plurality of voices representing conflicting views, the continuous metamorphosis and instability of thematic material, and the hybridity of genre and form.

When analyzing Mahler’s music it is important to distinguish between the search for identity and the simpler concept of music portraying of life’s experiences. As will be shown through analysis and reference to the analytical work of others, when Mahler applies techniques such as the quotation of sounds from his childhood, or the juxtaposition of Ländler and Viennese waltzes, he is doing so not just as a portrayal of his life experiences, but as a complex social commentary and as an exploration of his own identity. In order to explore this process, it is first necessary to look at some of the significant factors and influences in Mahler’s life. The purpose of the following sections is not to provide a detailed account of Mahler’s life, of which many are available, but to

focus on specific events and experiences that had an important, and in many cases, adverse, impact on Mahler’s lifestyle, well-being and sense of identity.\(^{28}\)

**THE EARLY YEARS**

Mahler’s childhood came at a fairly fortuitous time for a Jewish boy growing up in a small town in the Austrian empire.\(^{29}\) The Jews had acquired increased social and legal rights through a series of reforms around the time of his birth in 1860, and this allowed his ambitious father Bernard to build a comfortable middle-class life as an inn keeper/distiller. The family attained a respectable social standing in the Moravian town of Iglau, where Jews were increasingly integrated into the German speaking community. There was, however, tension within the family between his ambitious father's drive for assimilation and his more conservative mother's desire to maintain their Jewish orthodoxy.

... it is important not to underestimate the tensions experienced by the young composer seeking assimilation into a German society and culture which did not always encourage his efforts. The loss of identity which Mahler must have experienced can only have reinforced similar reactions to his family life and it is not surprising that although he never became antisemitic – a reaction common among assimilated Jews - Mahler remained in certain subtle ways conscious, even self-conscious, about his race.\(^{30}\)


The ill treatment of his mother by his brutal father created in Mahler a “father-hatred and a mother-fixation.” In addition, seven of Mahler’s thirteen siblings died in infancy, exposing him to the “bleak underside to childhood innocence.” These childhood experiences of death, brutality, and uncertainty of identity, would form a recurring theme in Mahler’s music.

**STUDENT YEARS IN VIENNA**

When he moved to Vienna in 1875 to attend the Conservatory, Mahler encountered a quite different society - class conscious and highly conservative, at the center of a declining empire where liberal values were being eroded, and where anti-Semitism was on the rise. It was during these student years that he first encountered overt anti-Semitism, most notably a thinly disguised rejection of a symphonic movement at the hands of Conservatory director Joseph Hellmesberger. The incident was recalled by Natalie Bauer-Lechner, a close friend for much of Mahler’s life:

It was just before the composition contest; a symphony of Mahler’s was to be played. Since he could not pay a copyist, he had worked for days and nights copying the parts for all the instruments and, here and there, some mistakes had crept in. Hellmesberger became furious, flung down the score at Mahler’s feet, and cried out in his peevish way: “Your parts are full of mistakes; do you think that I’ll conduct something like that?” Even after the parts were corrected, he could not be persuaded to perform Mahler’s work … The scene made an indelible impression on me. Even today, I can see the young man - so far above his so called “superior” - forced to tolerate such shameful treatment. In a flash I realized into what hands the genius of this young man had been placed, and what he would have to suffer in the course of his life.

---

33 On this period, see Caroline Kita, “Student Culture in 1870s Vienna,” in *Mahler in Context*, 40-47.
THE ITINERANT YOUNG CONDUCTOR

In the early 1880s, after a short period teaching in Vienna, Mahler built his reputation as a conductor through a series of appointments in smaller towns in central Europe: the Austrian spa town of Bad Hall; Laibach (now Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia); Olmutz, (near Prague), and Kassel (Germany). In 1884 when the Meiningen Orchestra, under the directorship of the renowned conductor Hans von Bülow, visited Kassel, Mahler sent a letter to von Bülow applying for an assistantship position. The letter was returned without reply and the following year Bülow appointed the younger Richard Strauss as his assistant. Moving on from this rejection, Mahler’s career progressed through the larger cities of Prague, Leipzig, Budapest, and Hamburg, as he continued to build his reputation as a conductor.

VIENNA: UNEASY LIES THE HEAD ...

The decades at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries saw a steady rise in anti-Semitism and the growth of nationalism throughout Austro-Germany. Mahler’s conducting was subject to increasing anti-Semitic criticism of his style and performance. His highly animated conducting style was described as being Jewish in its origins, with reference not only to his actions, but to the perceived racial differences (an attitude that would only increase, with disastrous consequences, in the first half of the twentieth century.) Yet such was his success as a conductor that in 1897...

he was nominated as Director of the Vienna Hofoper (and, the following year, the Vienna Philharmonic.) However, negotiations over his appointment with the Hofoper dragged on for months until it became clear, explicitly or otherwise, that his conversion to Catholicism was a necessary condition for his appointment. Mahler was highly successful in his ten years with the Hofoper, but in the harsh spotlight of Vienna he continued to attract anti-Semitic comment. There was always a section of the press that was critical of both his conducting and his artistic temperament. The right-wing newspaper Reichspost questioned whether Mahler could retain support once he began his “Jew-boy antics at the podium” and the Deutsches Volksblatt wrote, “He contributed much to the deplorable Judaization of that institution”.

In 1901 Mahler met Alma Schindler, a young musician some 20 years his junior, and after a whirlwind courtship they were married the following year. In what should have been the happiest years of his life Mahler met and married reputedly the most beautiful woman in Vienna, fathered two daughters, and had reached the highest pinnacle of the conducting profession as musical director of the Hofoper and the Philharmonic. But Mahler’s life was plagued by problems, self-doubt, and crises, including life-threatening internal hemorrhaging, the loss of a number of close friendships because of his marriage, the death of a daughter, Alma’s infidelity and thinly disguised anti-Semitism, the diagnosis of heart disease, hostile criticism from the self-governing members of the Philharmonic that led him to relinquish the directorship of that ensemble, and continued criticism in the Viennese press. In 1907 he also resigned from the Vienna Hofoper, consulted with Freud over his marital problems, and moved to the United States to become director of the Metropolitan Opera and the New York Philharmonic. He spent
the last four years of his life commuting annually between Europe and New York, and in May 1911 he died in Vienna at the age of fifty, shortly after his final transatlantic sea voyage.
CHAPTER 3
MELODIC BORROWING

In this chapter I will examine Mahler’s use of thematic borrowing or quotation from his own songs, from the works of other composers, and from other sources, in his quest to explore and express his identity through his symphonies. Mahler used these techniques to a much greater extent than many of his predecessors or contemporaries. Quotation has been described as a way of delivering a concealed comment or an aside, and relies on the listener’s knowledge of the quoted source, without which the full effect of the comment would be lost.38 Peter Burkholder has established a typology of musical borrowing based on his study of the works of Charles Ives, and maintains a website that catalogs over two thousand examples of musical borrowing, while Sharon Zurflieh has identified over one hundred examples of borrowing in Mahler’s works.39 The use of this technique in his symphonies was an important tool that provided Mahler with an effective and efficient way of referring the listener to a specific meaning or image, as he sought to juxtapose different, often contradictory messages within his eclectic style. The primary source of Mahler’s self-reference was his own Lieder. Robert Samuel, building on the observations and examples identified by Henry-Louis de La Grange, describes an evolution of Mahler’s self-reference, from the straightforward quotation of one of his own songs in Symphony No.1, through the more tangential and allusive self-referential

technique applied in Symphony No.5, and finally to what he describes as metareference through the use in Symphony No.9 of fragmented units that not only quote, but refer back to earlier works.\textsuperscript{40}

**MAHLER’S LIEDER**

The songs that Mahler wrote early in his career using texts from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* include topics such as children’s songs, soldiers’ lives, nature, and the afterlife. Arnim and Brentano’s selection, collection and editing of the texts represented a major contribution to the Romantic era evolution of the German *Volk*.\textsuperscript{41} During his early years in Vienna (1875-80) Mahler was involved in student societies that exposed him to the works of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and others, that led him to develop his populist and multicultural outlook and his *Weltanschauungmusik*. In this context he became supportive of a cultural pan German nationalism as distinct from specifically Austrian or German nationalism.\textsuperscript{42} Against this background the *Wunderhorn* poems would have appealed to him as song texts and also led to the composition of *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, using his own texts based on the style of the *Wunderhorn* poems. Donald Mitchell has examined in detail the chronology of the composition of the *Gesellen* and *Wunderhorn* songs, including the question of when Mahler first encountered the


\textsuperscript{42}For a detailed study on Mahler’s texts, see Cassandra Henry, “Symphonic Texts and the Cultural Ideology of Mahler’s Lieder” (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 2009).
Wunderhorn poems, and the way in which they influenced the composition of the Gesellen poems.\(^\text{43}\) As Mahler’s reputation grew, the Wunderhorn songs, particularly the orchestrated versions, began to receive critical attention. They were generally well received but there was debate over the appropriateness of Mahler’s settings of this treasured German folk literature.\(^\text{44}\)

In his first four symphonies, Mahler quotes musical themes from the Gesellen and Wunderhorn songs alongside references to musical sounds and experiences from his childhood, to paint a complex, sometimes nostalgic, sometimes ironic and unsettling, picture of his emerging world view.

Table 3.1 Mahler's songs quoted in his symphonies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symphony:</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Movement:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen (Mahler)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ging heut’ morgens übers Feld</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Die zwei blauen Augen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Des Knaben Wunderhorn (Brentano &amp; Armim)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ablösung im Sommer</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lob des hohen Verstandes</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Es sungen drei Engel*</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Urlicht*</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Das himmlische Leben*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindertotenlieder (F. Rückert)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nun seh’ ich wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oft denk’ ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruckert Lieder (F. Rückert)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3.1 shows which of Mahler’s Lieder appear as musical quotations in his symphonies. The songs marked with an asterisk are quoted with both music and text, sung by solo voices or chorus. This chapter will consider only melodic/thematic quotations, while Mahler’s use of text and voice will be addressed in Chapter 6. It is interesting to note that apart from the first movement of Symphony No. 1, Mahler’s quotation of his own songs tends to appear in later movements.

**Jewish and Central European Folk Music**

The clearest and most extensive example of Mahler’s use of folk music occurs in Symphony No. 1. The third movement after its well-known “Frère Jacques” opening and a musical quote from a *Wunderhorn* song, introduces a theme, played initially on the oboe, that has variously been described as Jewish or Bohemian folk music. The contemporary commentator August Beer described it as having a “Hungarian flavor” while David Hurwitz describes it as “a klezmerlike melody straight out of Mahler’s Czech/Jewish heritage.” The rest of the orchestra quickly joins in with dance-like music of varying tempi, reminiscent of the music that Mahler would have heard in his youth and that today we would describe as klezmer music.

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46 I am not aware of any scholarship on this particular issue, but it clearly merits further attention.


48 The term “klezmer” as a description of traditional Central and Eastern European Jewish folk music did not come into common use in English until the late twentieth century. Listening to early recordings of this symphony, it is interesting to note that even Jewish conductors did not feel free to interpret it in a klezmer style until Bernstein did so in the 1960s. By the end of the twentieth century conductors felt free to interpret Mahler’s symphonies in a literal classical tradition or with greater freedom of interpretation as they saw fit, depending on their artistic taste and choices, an approach that Mahler himself advocated. On this topic, see Norman Lebrecht, “The Variability of Mahler’s Performances,” *The Musical Times* 131, no. 1768 (1990):
There has been much discussion about whether the style and melodies in Mahler’s music, as exemplified by the third movement of Symphony No. 1, are Jewish or Slavic folk music. The two are closely related and there is no standard definition of either. One common factor is the use of augmented seconds, which are uncommon in western music other than in the harmonic minor scale. As Jens Malte Fischer points out, unlike in Eastern Europe, there was no purely Jewish music in mid-nineteenth century Bohemia and Moravia.\(^{49}\) The music that Mahler heard would have been Central European folk tunes and dance music, played by and influenced by both Jewish and non-Jewish musicians.

We have become preoccupied with hearing Jewishness in Mahler … there was a great deal of Jewishness in the vernacular music of the day … Jewish folk music was not isolated from non-Jewish traditions especially in border regions such as Moravia or in the Jewish metropole. There were repertories in which the same song type for example included Jewish and non-Jewish variants.\(^{50}\)

**THE EVOLUTION OF SYMPHONY NO. 1**

As discussed in Chapter 2, Mahler was initially reluctant to call his first major orchestral work a symphony. At its premiere in Budapest (1889) he described it as a “symphonic poem in two parts”.\(^{51}\) For one of the early performances, in Hamburg (1893), he included titles and headings, later retracted, that provide some insight into his thinking. The first part (three movements) was described as “From the Days of Youth”; the second part (two movements) as “Commedia humana,” a reference to Dante’s

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Commedia (1472). In this first part, the first movement, marked “Spring without End,” uses for its main theme the melody from the Gesellen song “Ging heut’ Morgen über’s Feld” [I walked out this morning over the field] (Figure 3.1), which is quoted note for note throughout the movement.

![Figure 3.1 "Ging heut' Morgen über’s Feld" opening theme](image)

The second movement, “Blumine,” was removed by Mahler from future performances while the third (now second) movement was entitled “In Full Sail”. There are various reasons why Mahler may have removed the Blumine movement. At one point he described it as being too sentimental and he may also have been responding to criticism of the first performance. In the “Commedia humana” section the fourth (now third) movement (“Funeral March in the manner of Callot” – a French illustrator and humorist) opens with the well-known canon “Bruder Martin” (better known to English speakers as the French song Frère Jacques) but is played in the minor key. The evolution of the symphony’s title and descriptions is shown in Table 3.2.

Dante’s Commedia, with its journey through Hell, has been a source of reference and/or inspiration for a number of musical works, most notably Liszt’s Dante Symphony (1857). See Maria Ann Roglieri, Dante and Music: Musical Adaptations of the Commedia from the Sixteenth Century to the Present (Farnham: Ashgate, 2001).

Floros, Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies, 36-37.
Table 3.2 Evolution of Symphony No. 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Symphonic Poem in Two Parts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td><strong>Part 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Introduction and Allegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Andante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Scherzo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>'Titan'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 1: 'From the Days of Youth: Flower, Fruit and Thorn-Pieces'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. 'Spring without End'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. 'Blumine'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. ‘In Full Sail’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Symphony in D major for large orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Langsam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>schleppend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third movement also includes a musical reference to another Gesellen song, “Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz” [The two blue eyes of my beloved] (1885). However, the reference to this song begins midway through the melody, where the somber words are:

Ich bin ausgegangen in stiller Nacht,
Wohl über die dunkle Heide.
Hat mir niemand Ade gesagt, Ade!
Mein Gesell’ war Lieb’ und Leide!

I set out in the still night,
Across the dark heath.
No one bade me farewell, farewell!
My companions were love and sorrow!

Susan Youens has demonstrated the influence on the Gesellen cycle, both textually and musically, of Schubert’s Winterreise (1827-28) and Die Schöne Müllerin.
(1823) song cycles. Here, for comparison, is an excerpt from the opening verse of Gute Nacht, the first song in the Winterreise cycle:

\[
\begin{align*}
&Fremd bin ich eingezogen, & A stranger I came hither, \\
&Fremd zieh' ich wieder aus. & A stranger I depart. \\
&Nun ist die Welt so trübe, & Now is the world so gloomy, \\
&Der Weg gehüllt in Schnee. & The road covered in snow.
\end{align*}
\]

The final movement was entitled Dall’ inferno, another reference to Dante, and marked Allegro furioso, but amidst all the fire and fury Mahler makes one final nostalgic musical reference to Ging heut’ Morgen über’s Feld.

In calling this work a symphony Mahler was questioning the very fabric of the medium. Not only was he conflating the separate Germanic worlds of Lieder and symphony, but he was compounding this through his eclectic use of a children’s songs as well as references to Jewish or Slavic folk music. The work can be seen as representing a summary or snapshot of his life and his outlook to that point: idyllic views of childhood and nature colored with musical representation of the sounds he grew up with, but contrasted in the second half by his already skeptical, ironic view of life, both in terms of personal relationships and its broader meaning and purpose.

**BEETHOVEN AND BRAHMS**

Mahler was, like every other nineteenth century symphonist, heavily influenced by the shadow and legacy of Beethoven. He conducted many of Beethoven’s works

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and, maybe ill-considered by today’s standards, even tampered with Beethoven’s orchestration, notably of the ninth symphony.  

Mahler also admired Brahms’ work and in 1890 he met the older conductor. It is well recognized that the main theme of the fourth movement of Brahms first symphony (1876) bears a strong resemblance to the Ode to Joy theme in Beethoven’s ninth symphony. Less recognized is the fact that Mahler’s third symphony (1896) opens with a theme that is a minor key equivalent of the Brahms theme and thus can be regarded as a “second derivative” of the Beethoven theme. Figure 3.2 compares these three themes (Brahms is transposed to D major for comparison). Charles Youmans found this allusion disturbing, describing it as “inexcusably obvious,” although it is not clear why it should be inexcusable.  

Youmans continues:

For reasons that he did not articulate, he chose to engage with Brahms openly, in the main theme of a major work, having been taken to task for such things before (and perhaps also remembering that Brahms had been accused, with precisely this theme but in a later section than the one used by Mahler, of borrowing from Beethoven). The cheekiness of this move seems uncharacteristic of Mahler, but by this time his naïveté had long since been vanquished by experience; he would have known that listeners would take note, and that they would argue over its meaning. The solutions that they proposed could cause no greater difficulties for his music than it had already experienced. The fact of the conversation, however, led people toward the kind of contemplation, sophisticated and open-ended, that Mahler believed was required for an appreciation of his conflict-laden and solution-resisting music.

Youmans appears to be accusing Mahler of being disingenuous. Yet Mahler’s music is genuinely conflict-laden and solution resistant, factors that contribute to its

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continued interest one hundred years later. That Mahler should open his third symphony with this reference to Beethoven’s Ode to Joy in a minor key may be an indication that although he subscribed to Beethoven’s desire for universal joy, it was far from clearly attainable in a Mahlerian universe. His choice of the Brahms theme is perhaps a gesture that underlines his commitment to the world of the symphony as opposed to the symphonic poem.

Figure 3.2 Comparison of themes from a) Beethoven Symphony No. 9, b) Brahms Symphony No. 1 and c) Maher Symphony No. 3.

HANS ROTT

Hans Rott (1858-84), a talented colleague of Mahler from their student days, developed severe mental problems, was committed to an asylum, and died from tuberculosis at the age of twenty-five, but his influence can be seen throughout Mahler’s
career. Although Rott and Mahler had a similar musical education and were both influenced by Bruckner and Wagner, their backgrounds were quite different. Rott was Christian and grew up in Vienna, and although his parents were poor and died when he was in his teens, he was fortunate to be taken under Bruckner’s wing at the Conservatory. For much of the twentieth century Rott received little scholarly attention, meriting a scant one paragraph in the 1980 Grove Dictionary of Music. He was simply regarded as Mahler’s friend and colleague, an image compounded by Alma’s typically unreliable statements, but more recent scholarship has painted a more complex relationship. Mahler and Rott were not, it turns out, particularly close friends. There is no mention of Mahler in Rott’s correspondence and Mahler made few references to Rott: “My friend, Hans Rott, has gone mad!” and the noticeably conditioned “We might have had much in common.” The memoirs of their mutual acquaintance, the writer Heinrich Krzyzanowski (1855-1933), implies a streak of anti-Semitism and a dislike of Mahler on the part of Rott. After graduation from the conservatory Rott began to distance himself from his student colleagues as he sought to advance his social standing in Vienna. Rejection of his first symphony by Brahms, lack of progress in his conducting aspirations with Richter, and failure to win the Beethoven Prize, all compounded Rott’s mental disintegration.

We have no direct knowledge of the extent to which Mahler was aware of Rott’s view of him. He must have sensed the anti-Semitism at some level but presumably outwardly he ignored it, as he did all such slights throughout his life. Nevertheless, the impact of his relationship with Rott must have made a deep impression. Mahler

maintained an admiration for the music of his former colleague, retaining copies of Rott’s scores and returning to study them from time to time. For most listeners an initial encounter with Rott’s Symphony No. 1 has an astonishing impact, not only because it is of high quality and relatively unknown, but because of the stylistic similarities to Mahler’s early music. A closer listening places it somewhere between Mahler and their mutual influence, Bruckner. Table 3.3 shows what Stephen McClatchie describes as apparent quotations from Rott’s symphony that appear in Mahler’s symphonies, based on his detailed analysis of Rott’s autograph facsimiles of this unpublished work.\(^{61}\)

It is possible that Mahler saw in Rott many things that he was not: Christian, well received at the Conservatory, at ease in Vienna, two years older and more experienced and, at least superficially, confident of his own abilities. Whatever the reason, it is clear from McClatchie’s analysis that Rott’s influence on Mahler continued throughout much of the latter’s career.

Table 3.3 Apparent Quotations from Rott's Symphony in Mahler's Symphonies\(^{62}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mahler Symphony</th>
<th>Mahler Movement</th>
<th>Rott Symphony</th>
<th>Rott Movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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\(^{62}\) Adapted from McClatchie, “Hans Rott, Gustav Mahler.”
SYMPHONY NO. 5

In 1900-01, after the completion of Symphony No. 4, Mahler was faced with a number of crises that marked the end of the youthful outlook of the *Wunderhorn* years, and he turned to darker material in the poems of Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866). His two song cycles, *Rückert Lieder* (1901-02) and *Kindertotenlieder* [Songs on the Death of Children] (1901-04), are both closely related to Symphony No.5 (1901-02).\(^6\) The clearest example of the relationship is the *Adagietto* of the symphony, which quotes from both the Rückert song “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen” [I am lost to the world] and the second of the *Kindertotenlieder* “Nun seh' ich wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen” [Now I see why with such dark flames]. There are also strong similarities in harmony and orchestration, notably the use of strings and harp to establish and maintain the slow, expressive rhythm and the extended appoggiaturas that heighten the emotional impact.

*Ich bin der Welt* opens:

*Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen,*  
*Mit der ich sonst viele Zeit verdorben,*  
*Sie hat so lange nichts von mir vernommen,*  
*Sie mag wohl glauben, ich sei gestorben!*  

I am lost to the world  
With which I used to waste much time.  
It has for so long known nothing of me,  
It may well believe that I am dead!

…and ends:

*Ich leb' allein in meinem Himmel,*  
*In meinem Lieben, in meinem Lied!*  

I live alone in my heaven,  
In my love, in my song!

---

Nun seh' ich wohl opens with:

Nun seh' ich wohl, warum
so dunkle Flammen
ihr sprühtet mir in manchem Augenblicke.
O Augen, gleichsam, um in einem Blicke
zu drängen eure ganze Macht zusammen.

Now I see why
with such dark flames
Your eyes flash at me in certain moments.
O eyes, it was as if in a single glance
You could concentrate your full power.

The quotes used in the Adagietto are not as direct or evident as those used in the earlier symphonies but consist of motifs interwoven within the songs and the symphony which, along with the harmonies and orchestration, provide a strong link between all three. As an example, Figure 3.3 shows how Mahler approaches a half cadence in each of the three works (both songs transposed to F major for comparison).

a) Symphony No. 5, Movement 4 (Adagietto), measure 24

b) “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen,” measure 16

c) “Nun seh' ich wohl,” measure 9

Figure 3.3 Half cadences in a) Adagietto, Symphony No. 5, b) “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen,” and c) “Nun seh' ich wohl”
“Nun seh' ich wohl” was completed as late as 1904, so technically the song may quote from the symphony, rather than vice versa, but collectively the three examples show the close relationships in Mahler’s mind and the interchangeability between the symphony and the texts of the Lieder. In the fall of 1901 Mahler met his future wife, Alma Schindler and the conductor Willem Mengelberg described the Adagietto as a love offering to Alma. Yet the movement is clearly related to the somber music of “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen” and “Nun seh' ich wohl.” Kinderman proposes that, as with most things Mahler, a dual interpretation is plausible: on one hand Mahler is lost to the world, living alone in his heaven; his love; his song; while on the other hand he is inviting Alma to join him in this private world, an invitation to which she clearly responded.

This chapter has shown some of the many ways in which Mahler used melodic quotation in his symphonies. He was highly conscious of and influenced by important predecessors such as Beethoven and Brahms while at the same time he was always aware of the contribution of his deceased former colleague Hans Rott. In terms of the use of his own songs we have seen that, as his compositional technique developed, Mahler moved from full melodic quotation in Symphony No. 1 to a more subtle, fragmented quotation or allusion in Symphony No. 5, thereby making a connection or reference in a more nuanced manner.
CHAPTER 4

RHYTHMIC INFLUENCE: DANCES AND MARCHES

From early childhood Mahler was exposed to many varied rhythms of music: the Ländler (a German country dance in triple time) of his native Moravia and Bohemia, the military marches and fanfares from the army barracks in his hometown of Iglau, and the waltzes that were popular in Vienna during the nineteenth century. Throughout his symphonies, we hear the sound of these dances and marches, often in deliberately contrasting juxtaposition to each other or to other musical references.

Mahler was not the first to use dances and marches in his symphonies. His innovations lay in both the way that he used them as a reference to his own life experiences, and the way that he moved between them, creating contrasts and generating discontinuities in the music as a means of conveying discomfort, irony and contradiction. This chapter will examine Mahler’s use of these techniques as a means of exploring and expressing his personal identity. Table 4.1 shows Mahler’s incorporation of dances and marches into his symphonies. Several examples of each will be discussed below.

Table 4.1 Dances and Marches

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LÄNDLER AND WALTZES

In nineteenth century, Vienna the Ländler was regarded as a somewhat unsophisticated country dance while the waltz, thanks to the compositions of Johan Strauss Sr. and Joseph Lanner, with their orchestras performing in public dance halls, had become the rage of fashionable society.\(^6^4\) When used in orchestral music the distinction between the two can blur. Both are in triple time but the Ländler is generally slower, with a heavy rhythm and strong emphasis on the first beat, while the waltz is usually slightly faster, more flowing and with less emphasis on the beats. These differences reflect the origins and use of the two dances. The Ländler was danced in farm workers’ boots, often outdoors or in barns, while the waltz was danced in lighter shoes in wooden floored ballrooms. Many nineteenth century composers wrote waltzes, either for dancing as performance pieces or inclusion in symphonies, while Schubert and Brahms also composed Ländler as performance pieces and Bruckner included Ländler in a number of his symphonies. Mahler also included Ländler in a number of his symphonies, beginning with a fairly simple example in the second movement of Symphony No. 1. As his symphonic style developed his treatment of the Ländler became increasingly complex, often juxtaposed with Viennese waltzes as social commentary.

\[65\] Francesca Draughon, “Mahler and the Music of Fin-de-Siecle Identity” (Ph.D. diss., University of California Los Angeles, 2002), 120-121.

SYMPHONY NO. 5

The third movement of Symphony No. 5 opens with a Ländler (Figure 4.1a), which evolves into a Viennese waltz (Figure 4.1b), by way of interludes played on a solo horn reminiscent of an alpenhorn, and then repeated on solo trumpet, before all come together in a closing climax.

a) Ländler theme

b) Waltz theme

Figure 4.1 Ländler and Waltz themes, Symphony No. 5, Movement 3

All of these references can be seen as reminiscences of Mahler’s childhood. Jeremy Barham analyses Symphony No. 5 in the context of Karl Popper’s views on Heimat, which rejects the late nineteenth century Austro-German view of Heimat with its close association to nationalism, and instead defines it as stemming fundamentally from the comforting reminiscences of childhood. With this definition, Mahler’s references can be viewed as a search for and expression of his own personal Heimat.

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SYMPHONY NO. 9

The second movement of Symphony No. 9 consists of a complex juxtaposition of Ländler and waltz. The movement begins with a simple Ländler (Figure 4.2a), marked *Etwas täppisch und sehr derb* (“Somewhat clumsy and very coarse”), which then abruptly transitions to a rather grotesque Viennese waltz featuring prominent tritones (Figure 4.2b). This transition is marked *poco più mosso subito* (a little more movement immediately), the *subito* indicating the discontinuity between the two sections.

The waltz gives way to a third section marked *Ländler, ganz langsam* (very slow). Mahler maintains the sense of Ländler in this slow section by the use of trills from the wind instruments on the down beats, conveying the feeling of the heavy country dance, even though it has slowed down almost to a standstill. The waltz section appears a total of three times, each time being terminated by a return to the Ländler. As the movement proceeds Mahler’s counterpoint becomes increasingly complex, in a frenetic, sinister combination of the themes, before a subdued departure of the Ländler, as instruments...
drop out leaving only solo flute and bassoon, three octaves apart, to provide a lighthearted *pp* exit.

Francesca Draughon has analyzed this movement in detail.\(^{67}\) The way that Mahler juxtaposes and transitions between Ländler and Viennese waltz can be seen as a reflection, at times ironic, mocking, or cynical, of the contrast between his upbringing in a small provincial town and the conservative, class ridden society of *fin de siècle* Vienna. Vera Micznik considers the second movement of the Symphony No. 9 in terms of the meaning of genre, arguing that Mahler’s distortion of the genre of Ländler etc. is dependent on our recognition of the genre in the first place.\(^{68}\) Mahler is simultaneously affirming and negating genre. This tension between our expectation and its gradual refutation adds depth to the contradictions that Mahler is expressing.

**Marches and Fanfares**

The military presence played a major role in the musical life of Iglau in the mid-nineteenth century.\(^{69}\) The major battles of the Austro-Prussian war (1866) took place just over one hundred kilometers to the north, and Iglau was an important garrison town for the Austrian army. Military fanfares and marches were familiar sounds in the streets of Iglau, where the regimental orchestra and bands also played an active role in the town’s civilian cultural life. The sounds of these marches and fanfares, with their emphasis on brass and percussion, provided some of Mahler’s early musical memories and their


\(^{69}\) Freeze, “Music in Iglau, 1860–1875.”
influence can be heard throughout his symphonies, sometimes as a direct reference to his childhood.\textsuperscript{70}

\textit{The Wunderhorn Symphonies}

The introduction to the first movement of Symphony No.1 includes a military fanfare on trumpets before proceeding to the quotation of the \textit{Gesellen} song, “Ging heut’ Morgen über’s Feld” (see Chapter 3), both childhood references. Symphonies 2 and 3 both open with funeral marches before giving way to other ideas. The first movement of Symphony No. 2 originally had the title \textit{Todtenfeier} (Funeral Rites) before Mahler dropped all program references.\textsuperscript{71} In the case of Symphony No. 3, the first movement returns to the march tempo, initially distant but now more positive and upbeat, and gradually becomes the center of attention when taken up by the whole orchestra in a more celebratory mood.\textsuperscript{72} The funeral March returns before giving way to a repeat of the triumphant march to close the movement.

\textit{Symphony No. 6}

Symphony No. 6 was composed between 1903 and 1904 at a time of personal crisis, and there were doubts in Mahler’s mind about his role in life, and indeed its very meaning and purpose. Despite his musical successes he continued to be the target of


\textsuperscript{72} For a detailed analysis see Peter Franklin, \textit{Mahler: Symphony No. 3}, Cambridge Music Handbooks (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
criticism in the anti-Semitic Viennese press. Symphony No. 6 with its pounding rhythms, unconventional sound effects, and insistence on returning to the minor key, certainly does not present a happy picture and, as arguably the least optimistic of all of Mahler’s works, can be interpreted as an expression of these doubts. Mahler himself used the word, “tragic,” and Deryck Cooke goes as far as to describe it as the first genuine “tragic symphony” in the sense of universality, as opposed to the personal darkness of Tchaikovsky’s Pathétique. Mahler uses the pounding rhythm of military marches in three of the four movements (see Figure 4.3).

![March theme, Movement 1](image)

**a) March theme, Movement 1**

![March theme, Movement 2 or 3 (Scherzo)](image)

**b) March theme, Movement 2 or 3 (Scherzo)**

![March theme, Movement 4](image)

**c) March theme, Movement 4**

Figure 4.3 March themes, Symphony No. 6

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73 Knittel, “Ein Hypermoderner Dirigent.”
75 Cooke, *Gustav Mahler: An Introduction to His Music,* 85.
The first movement opens with a heavy, insistent march before giving way to a rich, contrasting string section, while the Scherzo (second or third movement depending on performance practice) matches the first movement’s pounding rhythm and tempo with a different theme in triple time. The fourth movement, after a slow start also returns to the pounding military march tempo in measure 114. This use of relentless military marches, all in A minor, all with repetitive motifs and jarring broken rhythm, convey a bleakness in Symphony No.6 that is very different from the more innocent childhood references to military marches and fanfares discussed above in the earlier Wunderhorn symphonies.

Structurally Symphony No. 6 is one of Mahler’s more conventional, consisting of four movements, with the opening movement Allegro in sonata form followed by a Scherzo, Andante and Finale. Seth Monahan refers to the “neo-classical Fourth and Sixth Symphonies.” The opening movement of Symphony No. 6 includes a full repeat of the exposition, the only time in all of his symphonic output that Mahler follows this convention. But with three of the movements continually returning to driving, marching rhythms, the symphony has a restless quality, while the ending in a minor key represents failure to provide solace or the possibility of salvation, making it the bleakest of Mahler’s endings.

Much has been made of Alma’s claim that the second theme of the first movement was Mahler’s representation of her, but the unreliability of her recollections

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76 Seth Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1-9. Monahan points out that throughout the twentieth 20th century there was little theoretical analysis of Mahler’s symphonies in a traditional sense. By taking a more pragmatic approach to the analysis he demonstrates that the central teleology of the Enlightenment sonata - the resolution of long range tonal tension - is central to Mahler’s early and middle period symphonies.

and her tendency later in life to appropriate Mahler’s intentions for her own purposes have led to much skeptical analysis. Moreover, given the complexity of Mahler’s compositional style and intentions, it is unlikely that he would have resorted to so simplistic a concept. Maybe it is about Alma, maybe it isn't, or maybe it is and it isn't. Maybe it represents the Alma he wishes she was. As with all of Mahler’s works, we should tread warily before ascribing a single meaning or interpretation.

Mahler experienced uncertainty and self-doubt in finalizing this symphony. He changed the order of the inner movements, the Scherzo and Andante, more than once. Initially he had the Scherzo as the second movement, but he worried that critics and audiences might find it too similar to and even repetitive of the first movement, so he changed to the more conventional approach of placing the Andante second. The work was published in both formats and today the Scherzo is generally performed second. It is tempting to argue for the conventional approach of placing the Andante second, but when viewed in the context of the symphony’s relentless pressure and impending doom, there is also a strong argument for placing the unyielding Scherzo second, before delayed, temporary relief is provided by the Andante.

**SYMPHONY NO. 7**

There are two movements in Symphony No. 7 marked Nachtmusik (Night Music): Movement 2 - Nachtmusik I and Movement 4 - Nachtmusik II. Anna Stoll-Knecht has examined Mahler’s notebooks, fair copy and printer’s proofs of the symphony and

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78 Seth Monahan, ““I Have Tried to Capture You …”: Rethinking the “Alma” Theme from Mahler’s Sixth Symphony," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 64, no. 1 (2011): 119-78.
79 Taruskin, “Is There or Isn’t There?”
observes that in some versions Movement 2 was entitled *Nachtstück* (Night Piece) before a late change to *Nachtmusik I*.\(^8^0\) She interprets this as meaning that Movement 2 is music about the night while Movement 4 is music of the night, i.e., a serenade (for discussion of the sounds in *Nachtmusik II* see Chapter 5.) In *Nachtmusik I* Mahler returns to a more relaxed, ambivalent use of the march, a contrast to the pounding rhythms of Symphony No. 6. The major-minor ambiguity of the march theme (Figure 4.4) coupled with the relaxed tempo and reference to music of the night suggests a warm, almost dreamlike atmosphere that paints a nostalgic view of Mahler’s country upbringing and perhaps a longing for simpler times.

![March Theme, Symphony No. 7, Movement 2](image)

Figure 4.4 March Theme, Symphony No. 7, Movement 2

In this chapter we have seen the significance to Mahler of the rhythmic elements of Ländler, waltz and military marches, and the way in which his application of these elements evolved throughout his career. In the early symphonies he uses fairly straightforward rhythmic elements to signify nostalgia for his youth. In Symphony No. 5 we begin to see the juxtaposition of Ländler and waltz as a social commentary on the decadent state of fin de siècle Vienna, while in Symphony No. 6 the relentless pounding

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marching rhythms denote a despairing time in Mahler’s life. Symphony No. 7 uses a more relaxed, almost dreamlike march to denote a wistful nostalgia for the simpler days of youth while Symphony No.9 carries the interweaving of Ländler and waltz to a new level of complexity and commentary.
Mahler was one of the first of what has been described as the second wave of late nineteenth century symphonists.\textsuperscript{81} As such he was engaged with the symphonic tradition but explored ways of breaking away from its constraints. One of the ways that Mahler revolutionized symphonic music was through his expansion of the range of sounds that he used in his symphonies. He makes imaginative and creative use of effects such as sleigh bells, cowbells, whips, and a large hammer, as well as instruments not normally included in the symphony orchestra such as the mandolin, guitar, organ, and celesta, and infrequently used techniques such as harmonics and \textit{scordatura} (non-standard tuning). Table 5.1 shows Mahler’s use of non-traditional symphonic instruments and sound effects. This chapter will examine Mahler’s use of these techniques as a means of exploring and expressing his personal identity.

\textsuperscript{81} James Larkin has summarized the way that analysts have grouped the evolution of the symphony and symphonists in the second half of the nineteenth century. After a supposed “dead period” from 1850 to 1870 (in terms of the canonic repertoire if not output), Dahlhaus talks of the “Second Age of the Symphony. James Hepokowski divides the second age into two generational waves. The first, who began their careers between 1870 and 1889 including Brahms, Bruckner, Tchaikovsky and Dvořák, wrote symphonies that stylistically alluded to the history of the genre and engaged in a conscious dialogue with the tradition. The second wave, beginning with Mahler in 1889 and including Elgar, Sibelius, Nielsen and Glazunov, continued to engage with tradition but were aware of being in an age of transition and explored ways of breaking away from traditional constraints: Larkin, “The Symphony”; Dahlhaus, \textit{Nineteenth-Century Music}; James Hepokoski, “Beethoven Reception: The Symphonic Tradition,” in \textit{The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music}, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 424-459.
Mahler gives an early indication of the breadth of his symphonic landscape with the opening of Symphony No. 1, where the introduction, marked *Langsam, Schleppend*, (slow, lingering) and *Wie ein Naturlaut* (like a sound of nature), takes over three minutes of playing time before the main theme emerges. Throughout this introduction various combinations of strings play long, sustained harmonics, including a high harmonic A7 on the first violins. Mahler described his decision to use these harmonics:

> When I heard the A in all registers in Budapest, it sounded far too substantial for the shimmering and glimmering of the air that I had in mind. It then occurred to me that I could have all the strings play harmonics (from the violins at the top, down to the basses, which also possess harmonics). Now I had the effect I wanted.\(^\text{82}\)

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\(^{82}\) Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 160.
…while Theodor Adorno uses colorful language in his description of this unique and instrumentally unusual opening:

A thin curtain, threadbare but densely woven, it hangs from the sky like a pale gray cloud layer, similarly painful to sensitive eyes … for a few moments the symphony imagines that something has become reality that for a lifetime the gaze from the earth has fearfully yearned for the sky.\(^83\)

This introduction may be modelled on Beethoven’s Symphony No. 7. In both symphonies slow introductions occupy sixty-two measures before giving way to a simple, up-tempo theme, but Mahler’s crucial innovation is the use of the sustained harmonics. This break with conventional instrumentation is an early sign that Mahler’s symphonic journey is going to be on his own terms and in his own time, as he searches for and explores his identity. This journey includes many effects and techniques that were beyond the conventional orchestral tools. Up to that point the sound of the symphony was essentially that which came from the instruments of the standard orchestra: strings, winds and a limited range of percussion instruments, performing forms and structures that were based on and gradually evolved from the symphonies of Haydn and Mozart, and expanded upon by Beethoven. Mahler’s use of sound effects, unconventional instruments, and music from other genres was a radical departure in symphonic writing.

**SYMPHONY NO. 4: SLEIGH BELLS AND THE FIDDLER OF DEATH**

During the one hundred and twenty years of its existence Symphony No. 4 has been the subject of a wide range of differing, sometimes diametrically opposed
interpretations. Some have seen it as happy, joyous music while others detect a deep sorrow. Some commentators have perceived it as absolute music, an homage to the classicism of Haydn, while others look beyond its classical surface for a deeper meaning. More recent scholarship has tended towards the latter view. Mahler often returns to the theme of death in his music. Raymond Knapp contrasts the childlike perspective of Symphony No. 4 with the darker elements that are present in the work. To naively regard the symphony as simply a nostalgic view of childhood would, he argues, miss its reflection of the bleak underside of innocence in an era when childhood death was a common occurrence, an experience with which Mahler was all too familiar. As Knapp points out, the strange sound of a symphony opening with sleighbells immediately conveys the conflicting ideas of childhood nostalgia and the inherent threat of winter. This conflict is maintained throughout the first movement by the contrast between the conventional classical sonata form and the intrusion of unexpected sounds, fragmentary use of naive sources, and sharp juxtaposition of differing motifs. The use of sleigh bells in a symphony is probably unprecedented but there is an interesting prior use in Mozart's German Dances, K. 605, No. 3. It is likely that Mahler was aware of the Mozart work, and this may have influenced his use of sleigh bells in what was his most classical symphonic movement.

The focus on death carries over into the second movement which begins with a solo scordatura violin to create an eerie unworldly effect. This movement was originally entitled *Freund Hein spielt auf* (Friend Hein Strikes Up). *Freund Hein* is a colloquial

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German expression for death, thus the shrill, nervous scordatura violin solo represents death as a fiddler, an association that can be traced back to medieval times. As far back as the bubonic plague of the fourteenth century various instruments were associated with the devil and the macabre dance of death, which could visit any family regardless of social status. By the nineteenth century the fiddle had become the primary instrument associated with death, as demonstrated by works such as Saint-Saëns’ Dance Macabre (1875) as well as Paganini’s carefully cultivated demonic reputation. While Saint-Saëns’ scordatura employs only the top string tuned down by a semitone, creating an A-Eb tritone between the top two strings, Mahler’s scordatura raises the tuning of all four strings by two semitones and relies on timbre rather than melodic interval to achieve its effect.

**Symphony No. 6: Cowbells and the Hammer of Fate**

Symphony No. 6 uses two unconventional sound effects: cowbells, which appear in the first movement then return in the third and fourth movements, and a large, heavy, dull sounding hammer in the final movement. To interpret the purpose of these effects it is necessary to interpret the message that Mahler is conveying. The relentless marching rhythms (see Chapter 4) can be seen as a foreboding on Mahler’s part, a questioning of the purpose and meaning of life, a reaction to the pressures he was experiencing, and a

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88 Mahler was probably the first person to use cowbells in a large symphonic work but his friend and colleague Richard Strauss, who was familiar with Mahler’s symphonies, used them in his Alpine Symphony 1911-14, a work he returned to and completed after Mahler’s death. See Youmans, *Mahler and Strauss*, 162.
pessimism that that while things may be going well, there is trouble down the road. The inclusion of cowbells and hammer provide additional contrast, coloration, and emphasis.

**Cowbells**

After a pause in the pounding backdrop, the cowbells make their first surprising appearance in the development in the first movement sonata. Thomas Peattie has described this as “a startlingly inappropriate sonority in the context of an early twentieth century symphony.” At a superficial level it can be seen as a nostalgic reminder of Mahler’s younger days, a simple youthful contrast to both the public and private pressures of his mature life. Each time the cowbells resurface in the third and fourth movements they provide this nostalgic reminiscence, in contrast to the doom-laden pressures of the pounding, rhythmic marches. But Peattie delves beyond this superficial view, exploring the complex meaning of the cowbells in the context of fin de siècle Vienna. Their distant sound can be interpreted as an ironic representation of a rural environment that is rapidly disappearing in the face of an encroaching decadent urban society. As Adorno put it, the music is "pausing to draw breath, knowing the way back to be blocked".

**Hammer Blows**

Attempts have been made to relate the hammer blows to the fate or death of a fallen hero. Andrew Thomson, pointing to the pounding rhythms interrupted by the bucolic sounds of cowbells, and the hammer blows which afflict the protagonist in the

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finale, draws parallels to Berlioz’ *Symphonie Fantastique*. While it is appropriate to interpret the hammer as the blows of fate, we should recognize that Mahler never intended the strictly programmatic approach that Berlioz takes. They should be interpreted as the blows of fate in general rather than individual blows relating to specific events in the life of either Mahler or an unspecified hero.

Mahler had doubts about how and when to include the hammer blows. He was specific that the hammer should make a loud, dull, non-metallic sound to represent the blows of fate, (a requirement that has challenged orchestral percussionists for over one hundred years!) but he changed the number of blows from an initial five down to three and then finally to the two blows that are used in performances today. These changes in the number of blows are an indicator not only of Mahler’s doubts, but also of the non-programmatic nature of their use.

**SYMPHONY NO. 7: NACHTMUSIK - MANDOLIN AND GUITAR**

In Movement 4 (*Nachtmusik*) of Symphony No.7, Mahler uses solo mandolin and guitar to evoke the atmosphere of a serenade. Neither instrument is a standard member of the symphony orchestra, but Mahler would have been familiar with the use, particularly of the mandolin, in works by Beethoven, Mozart, and many others. The mandolin was

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91 Andrew Thomson, “Kill or Cure? Eros and Death Instincts in Mahler 6 and Elgar 2,” *The Musical Times* 154, no. 1923 (2013): 21-32. Thompson also draws a comparison between Mahler’s relationship with Alma and Berlioz’ relationship with Harriet Smithson and considers the possibility of the “Alma theme” as an *idée fixe*. This is in contrast to Monahan’s views on the “Alma theme”: Monahan, “I Have Tried to Capture You …” (see Chapter 4: Symphony No. 6.)

easily accommodated in the symphony orchestra since its tuning and fingering are the
same as the violin and it is not uncommon to find violinists who play it as a second
instrument. The guitar was less common in orchestral music because of its different
tuning and fingering, but Hummel played and wrote works for the guitar. Beethoven
owned and played a mandolin and wrote a number of works for the instrument, including
two sonatinas, WoO 43 and 44. Even if Mahler wasn't familiar with these works, we can
once again turn to Mozart as a potential source of inspiration. In *Don Giovanni*

Mozart uses the mandolin to evoke the atmosphere of a serenade in Act 2, Scene 1, when
Don Giovanni sings “Deh, vieni alla finestra,” (Come over to the window) in an attempt
to entice Donna Elvira’s maid. This is at least one likely source of Mahler’s association
of the mandolin with serenades and night music.

As one of the first modernist composers, and the first to break with the constraints
of the romantic symphonic tradition that dates back to Beethoven, Mahler explored the
freedom of this new territory through the use of sound effects and non-traditional
instruments. In this chapter we have seen how diverse sound sources such as harmonics,
scordatura violin, mandolin, guitar, sleigh bells, cowbells, and a large hammer, all
enabled Mahler to provide references and images that were beyond the scope of the
traditional symphony orchestra.
CHAPTER 6

TEXT AND VOICE: CHRISTIANITY, JUDAISM, AND SALVATION

One of the issues that Mahler faced throughout his life was the conflict between the Judaism in which he was brought up, Christianity, which was the dominant religion of the Austrian Empire and Germany, and the reconciliation of both faiths with his own personal beliefs and philosophy. In particular, he paid much attention to the issues of heaven, mortality, salvation, and forgiveness.

Steven McClatchie points out that the significance of Mahler’s conversion to Catholicism in the light of his Jewish background is open to conflicting interpretations. Mahler was drawn to mysticism and transcendence, but was not a particularly strong adherent to organized religion. The Jews of Central Europe, following the Enlightenment thinking of Moses Mendelssohn (grandfather of Felix and Fanny), adopted a rationalist view of their religion, which led to their emancipation in the mid nineteenth century and further assimilation. Some, for various personal or social reasons, converted to Protestantism or Catholicism. Mahler’s choice of Catholicism can be interpreted as a pragmatic career move and in the light of his attraction to idealism and mysticism. At a more general and personal level, Mahler leant towards the Romantic concept of Kunstreligion (art as religion, religion as art), a concept embraced by both Wagner and Schopenhauer. The problem for Mahler in his conversion to Catholicism lay in its increased conservatism in the face of rational Protestant criticism, which had led to the First Vatican Council (1869-70), reaffirming the doctrine of infallibility, and implicitly

fueling the growing anti-Semitism, coupled with the increasing rejection of assimilated central European Jews by their more conservative, orthodox colleagues to the east. It is against this background that we can explore Symphonies 2, 3, 4 and 8, where Mahler sets religious and philosophical texts to voice and music.

The use of voice and text in symphonic writing was established by Beethoven with his Ninth Symphony (1824), but there were limited attempts during the nineteenth century to follow this model. Alan Luhring has analyzed choral orchestral music in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, grouping the works based on style and content into categories such as lyric, dramatic, symphonic, and traditional religious.\(^94\) While these decisions are subjective, Table 6.1 shows a list of works between 1800 and 1910 that can be considered choral or vocal symphonies.

Table 6.1 Choral/Vocal Symphonies 1800-1910

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Symphony</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>Beethoven</td>
<td>Symphony No.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Berlioz</td>
<td><em>Roméo et Juliette</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>Mendelssohn</td>
<td>Symphony No.2 (<em>Lobgesang</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Liszt</td>
<td><em>Dante Symphony</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Liszt</td>
<td><em>Faust Symphony</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>Mahler</td>
<td>Symphony No.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Mahler</td>
<td>Symphony No.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Scriabin</td>
<td>Symphony No.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Mahler</td>
<td>Symphony No.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Mahler</td>
<td>Symphony No.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Vaughan Williams</td>
<td>Symphony No.1 (<em>A Sea Symphony</em>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Berlioz’ *Roméo et Juliette* (1839), a *symphonie dramatique*, is a fully programmatic work while Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* (*Hymn of Praise*, 1840), although

often conveniently cataloged and published as his second symphony, was more accurately described by Mendelssohn himself as a symphony-cantata. Liszt’s Faust and Dante Symphonies (1857) are both programmatic works that are more accurately described as symphonic poems. Scriabin's Symphony No.1 (1900) is a work in six movements, with the final movement featuring mezzo-soprano and tenor soloists and ending with a choral fugue based on Scriabin’s own text. Ironically the artistic committee of the Moscow Conservatory, which included Rimski-Korsakov and Glazunov, despite awarding Scriabin the Glinka Prize, declared the sixth movement unperformable, and the premiere went ahead without it. The complete symphony was, however, performed the following year (1901). Mahler, beginning with Symphony No. 2 in 1894, was the first composer since Beethoven to attempt to fully incorporate voice and text into a non-programmatic symphony.

Despite his humble background Mahler was well read. His ambitious, upwardly mobile father was an avid reader, his early education in Iglau had a literary content, and in Vienna, where he took courses in German literature, he was exposed to a wide range of literary thought. The choice of texts that he used in his symphonies provides an insight into his literary and spiritual exploration. The Wunderhorn songs that he wrote early in his career include topics such as children’s songs, soldiers’ lives, nature, and the afterlife. Mahler used Wunderhorn texts in Symphonies 2, 3 and 4, but in the symphonies he chose only texts relating to the afterlife, an indication of the significance and focus he placed on the subject matter of the symphonies compared with the Lieder. Other texts used in these

Symphonies include a poem by Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (1724-1803), a verse from Nietzsche’s *Also sprach Zarathustra*; the medieval Latin hymn, *Veni creator spiritus*, a scene from Goethe’s play, *Faust*, as well as text by Mahler himself, all focusing on earthly suffering and heavenly redemption.

**Siegfried Lipiner**

Mahler’s friend Siegfried Lipiner (1856-1911), whom he met through literary and artistic circles during his early years in Vienna (1875-80) played important role in the development of his world view. Lipiner’s views were influenced by the writings of Schopenhauer, Wagner and Nietzsche and he saw as his mission “to create art that would provide hope in the face of human suffering and to enable compassionate understanding.” Schopenhauer proposed that compassion is the true basis of ethical activity while Wagner and, early in his career, Nietzsche both argued that compassion is the aesthetic principle at the core of tragic art and drama. From these studies, Lipiner evolved his view on three stages of compassion: 1) articulation of suffering; 2) transformation of suffering to compassion; 3) acceptance of world suffering and embodiment of the will to love. Lipiner’s views had a strong and lifelong influence on Mahler, even though their friendship declined significantly after the appearance of Alma Schindler.

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Caroline Kita, in analyzing Lipiner’s influence on Mahler, particularly his three stages of compassion, draws parallels between the second and third symphonies. See Table 6.2 for a brief comparison of the two symphonies.

Table 6.2 Comparison of Symphonies 2 and 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Symphony No. 2</th>
<th>Symphony No. 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Allegro maestoso</td>
<td>Strong and decisive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Andante moderato</td>
<td>Tempo of a minuet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Quietly flowing movement</td>
<td>Comfortable, Scherzo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Very simple but solemn Alto solo: &quot;Urlicht&quot; (Wunderhorn)</td>
<td>Very slow and mysterious Alto solo: &quot;O Mensch! Gib Acht!&quot; (Nietzsche)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Scherzo Mixed chorus Soprano &amp; alto solos (Klopstock &amp; Mahler text)</td>
<td>Cheerful and bold Female &amp; children’s chorus Alto solo (Wunderhorn text)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Slow, tranquil, deeply felt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In both symphonies text is introduced in the fourth movement by a solo alto voice singing quietly above subdued orchestral accompaniment, followed by a larger scale choral movement (Appendices 1 & 2). The fourth movement of Symphony No. 2 uses the Wunderhorn song, Urlicht (Primal Light), while in the fourth movement of Symphony No. 3 the voice sings O Mensch! Gib Acht! (O Man! Take heed!) from Nietzsche’s Also sprach Zarathustra. In Symphony No. 2 the subsequent choral movement begins with a quote from a poem, Die Auferstehung (The Resurrection), by Klopstock. Mahler omits the final three verses of Klopstock’s poem and writes his own ending. Symphony No. 3 uses the text from another Wunderhorn poem, Es sungen drei Engel einen süßen Gesang,
(Three angels sang a sweet song) for its choral movement. In both symphonies we can see the progression through Lipiner’s three stages of compassion. In Symphony No. 2 the solo female voice sings Der Mensch liegt in größter Not! Der Mensch liegt in größter Pein! [Man lies in greatest need! Man lies in greatest pain!], followed in the choral movement by O glaube, du warst nicht umsonst geboren! Hast nicht umsonst gelebt, gelitten! [O believe, you were not born for nothing, have not for nothing, lived, suffered!] and later, Mit Flügeln, die ich mir errungen, in heißem Liebesstreben, werd' ich entschweben zum Licht, zu dem kein Aug' gedrungen! [With wings which I have won for myself, in love's fierce striving, I shall soar upwards to the light which no eye has penetrated!] In Symphony No. 3 the solo voice sings O Mensch! Gib Acht! ... Die Welt ist tief ... Tief ist ihr Weh [O Man! Take heed! … the world is deep … deep is its pain] followed in the choral movement by Ich gehe und weine ja bitterlich! Ach komm und erbarme dich über mich! [I wander and weep bitterly! O come and take pity on me!] and finally die himmlische Freud', die kein Ende mehr hat! [the heavenly joy that has no end!]

The omitted Klopstock verses (Appendix 3) and Mahler’s use of his own text in Symphony No. 2 make an interesting and significant comparison. Klopstock takes a triumphant, Christian approach: Mit Jesu gehn wir ein zu seinen Freuden! [We enter with Jesus, to his delight!] and lebt' ich Im Heiligthume, zu seines Namens Ruhme! [I live in the sanctuary, to the glory of His name!] whereas Mahler’s werd' ich entschweben zum Licht, zu dem kein Aug' gedrungen! [I shall soar upwards to the light which no eye has penetrated!] takes a more subdued Lipinerian approach in its search for a universal message of salvation and eternal rest.
PROGRAMMATIC ORIGINS

Much attention has been paid, not only to the programmatic nature of Symphonies 2 and 3, but to the fact that these programs changed over time in Mahler’s letters to different correspondents, and were often revised or withdrawn prior to performance. Moreover, analysts have pointed to inconsistencies or ambiguities over whether the protagonist is in the first or third person, and is alive or dead. Ryan Kangas, in studying these symphonies, quotes Paul Ricoeur: “The primary concern of hermeneutics is not to discover an intention hidden behind the text but to unfold a world in front of it.” With this in mind, Kangas regards Mahler’s descriptive programs as texts that are themselves subject to interpretation. They also point to the fact that the mid-1890s, when these symphonies were written, was a critical time in both Mahler’s career and in Vienna’s political life. Mahler was coming to realize that for his career to progress he would have to convert to Christianity, while in Vienna the right wing anti-Semitic politician Karl Lueger was repeatedly elected mayor and rejected by the emperor before finally being granted the office. In this context the second and third symphonies can be seen as an exploration and reconciliation by Mahler of his Jewish background, his personal beliefs, and his need to convert to Christianity.

SYMPHONY NO. 4

Mahler had originally intended using his setting of the Wunderhorn poem Das himmlische Leben (The Heavenly Life), as a seventh movement for Symphony No. 3. Whether for artistic, time pressure, or performance reasons, he ultimately used the

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movement as the finale of the Symphony No. 4, but because of its history it needs to be viewed in the context of Symphony No. 3 as well as its own prior movements. *Das himmlische Leben* projects a childlike view of heaven which Carl Niekerk interprets as ironic.\(^9\) Mahler illustrates Nietzsche’s view that a return to religion can only be illusory; that only children can hold such a belief. We are thus left with a somewhat confused view of religion and redemption, which may be precisely where Mahler’s views were in the 1890s, torn between Judaism, Christianity and non-denominational compassionate salvation, knowing what he wanted to believe, but ultimately unsure and skeptical of all.

**SYMPHONIC SONGS**

Ten years elapsed between the completion of the third symphony and the composition of the eighth.\(^{10}\) Mahler’s life had undergone many changes and crises, and his marriage to Alma caused a break in his friendships with Lipiner and Bauer-Lechner. The *Wunderhorn* years were over, but Mahler turned to the poems of Friedrich Rückert for texts that he set to increasingly symphonic orchestration, an important step in the development of his symphonic style and technique. His search for meaning in life and its implications for the hereafter can be seen in his choice of texts for two song cycles for voice and orchestra, *Rückert-Lieder* (1901):


\(^{10}\) *Das himmlische Leben*, intended as the final movement of the third symphony but used in 1900 as the final movement of the fourth was composed as early as 1892. See Zychowicz, *Mahler’s Fourth Symphony*, 9.
As Toews points out, the Rückert texts to which Mahler turned for source material were in sharp contrast to the Wunderhorn texts of earlier years. The Rückert texts all focus on the anxieties, longings, fears and self-reflection of the individual as an outsider.

**SYMPHONY NO. 8**

In the summer of 1906 Mahler finally returned to the choral symphonic format with his monumental eighth symphony, which employs large vocal and instrumental forces, leading to its popular name the “Symphony of a Thousand”. The symphony is in two parts: the first part is based on the Roman Catholic text *Veni creator spiritus* (“Come, Holy Ghost, Creator, from thy bright heavenly throne; take possession of our souls and make them all thine own.”) while the second part uses the text from the closing scene of Goethe’s *Faust* (Appendix 5). Symphony No. 8 marks a break in the evolution of Mahler’s symphonic style. Symphonies 5, 6, 7 and 9 are all purely instrumental works.

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101 Toews, “The Road into the Open,” 95-96.
which demonstrate an increasingly complex development of polyphonic style, yet in the middle of this progression Symphony No. 8 reverts to a simpler, more homophonic style which uses of voice and text throughout. This has drawn much attention and comment, not all of it favorable. Hans Meyer wrote of the “monstrous discrepancy between the two texts” and described their pairing as a “theologically and poetically absurd idea”. 103 Adorno questioned the seriousness of Mahler’s intent, describing the symphony as a “giant symbolic shell” and a “failed, objectively impossible resuscitation of the cultic.” 104

For a number of years Mahler had been thinking of setting Goethe’s Faust to music before embarking on Symphony No. 8. 105 His interest in Goethe dated back to his student days when, as a member of a literary circle that included Lipiner, he had studied the works of Schopenhauer, Wagner, Nietzsche, Goethe and Schiller. For much of the nineteenth century it was Schiller and not Goethe who was regarded as the quintessential German writer. Schiller was the poet of the German people while Goethe appealed more to the elite. It was Goethe’s views on individual freedom, his ambivalence to nationalism, and his embrace of all humanity that appealed to Mahler.

Mahler felt that previous settings of Faust, such as those by Liszt and Schumann, were inadequate, but, as Fischer points out, it was his discovery of Veni, creator spiritus in 1906 that spurred him into action. Mahler quickly saw a connection between the exhortation of Veni, creator spiritus and the answer that Faust provided. The key lies in the former’s Accende lumen sensibus, Infunde amorem cordibus (Light the light of our senses, pour love into our hearts) and Goethe’s Beschwichtige die Gedanken, Erleuchte

104 Adorno, Mahler, 138.
Niekerk identifies a number of other similarities between the texts, including the body as the site of love and location of aesthetic sensibility, the centrality of the aesthetic act, and the redemption of all mankind. Kita again turns to Lipiner for her analysis, this time through comparison with Lipiner’s play, Hippolytos: “Mahler recognized that, like Faust, Hippolytos was about love giving birth to new creation and a consciousness of the immortality of the human spirit.” Once he had received the inspirational impetus for this symphony Mahler worked with surprising speed, completing it over the summer of 1906. He recognized that it was outside of the mainstream of his symphonic body of works but essentially it took on a life of its own. Once completed he may have had doubts, because after its rapid completion he showed no urgency in having it performed, delaying its premiere until 1910.

In this chapter we have seen how Mahler, throughout his career, returned to the use of text and voice in his symphonies, specifically as a vehicle to explore his spiritual and religious beliefs. The eclectic choice of texts: Wunderhorn poems, Nietzsche, Klopstock, Goethe, a medieval Latin hymn, at times edited or supplemented by Mahler’s own words, demonstrate a careful selection aimed at expressing his world view of universal love, compassion, and redemption.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

In exploring Mahler’s search for his identity through his use of specific musical
 techniques in his symphonies, this study has highlighted snapshots of his complex
 personality and outlook as it evolved throughout his life. In Symphony No. 1 his use of
 melodic borrowing from his own songs, the rhythmic influence of the Ländler with which
 he grew up, and the sounds from his childhood, all represent a nostalgic picture of his life
 up to that point as seen by a young man in his twenties. Symphonies 2, 3 and 4, with their
 use of text and voice in addition to the other techniques, capture the outlook of a man
 entering his mature years and grappling with the concepts of belief, compassion, and the
 relationship between the individual and the broader society.

The year 1900 marked a turning point in Mahler’s life in a number of ways. He
 had reached the age of forty, was no longer a young man, and had weathered the storms
 in reaching the pinnacle of his profession, but the Wunderhorn years were over and his
 problems, far from going away, were multiplying. He was faced with the challenges of
 failing health, a complex and difficult marriage, as well as the ever-present anti-
 Semitism. The middle symphonies, numbers 5, 6 and 7, reflect Mahler grappling with
 these issues. In Symphony No. 5 his use of rhythmic influence and melodic borrowing is
 much more complex and nuanced than in the earlier symphonies. The juxtaposition of
 Ländler and Viennese waltz in the third movement demonstrate a conflicted, ironic,
 cynical view of Viennese society alongside the nostalgia for his youth, while the
 references to “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen” and “Nun seh’ ich wohl, warum so
dunkle Flammen” in the Adagietto reflect a complex and bittersweet outlook of isolation

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and futility, tempered by the optimism of the early years of his relationship with Alma. Symphony No. 6 represents the low point in Mahler’s outlook on life, with its relentless rhythmic pounding in three of the four movements and its insistence on returning to and remaining in the minor key, while some relief is provided by the slightly less somber Symphony No. 7.

The late works demonstrate an evolution both in Mahler’s techniques and his outlook on life. Symphony No. 8, somewhat an outlier stylistically, with its use of large scale instrumental and vocal forces and texts from the Roman Catholic Church and Goethe, shows Mahler’s continued search for spiritual meaning and belief, while Symphony No. 9, along with Das Lied von der Erde and the unfinished Symphony No. 10, demonstrates the continuation of the development of Mahler’s complex contrapuntal style. The juxtaposition of Ländler and waltzes in Symphony No. 9 again reiterate Mahler’s conflicted view of Viennese society alongside the nostalgia for his youth and the apparent disappearance of a bygone era of idyllic rural life, a position that can be seen as both ironically quaint and prescient in the light of both the accelerating pace of social and urban development, and the horrors, of the twentieth century.

When considering Mahler’s works, the contentious issue of program versus absolute music never seems to go away. To this day there seems to be difficulty in accepting the idea that music does not have to be exclusively one or the other and that there is a spectrum of underlying programmatic thought and influence that is available in the space between the two extremes. This problem seems to be particularly persistent in the interpretation of Mahler’s early symphonies. Charles Youmans, a self-professed Straussian, writing in 2016 about Symphony No. 1, describes Mahler as “a composer
interested in every conceivable kind of programmaticism, who applies so many layers of extra musical content that the programmatic nature of the piece becomes massively overdetermined” and that the reception of Symphonies 2 and 3 “taught him that in this arena he could not ride Strauss's coattails.”107 Such comments appear to be based on the view that Mahler was attempting (and failing) to compose purely programmatic music in the same vein as Strauss, rather than struggling within the constraints of existing form to find his own expression. A different recent view is provided by Constantine Floros.108 While recognizing Mahler’s desire to distance himself from Strauss, and of potential criticism of program music from the influential critic Edward Hanslick, Floros refers to Mahler’s use of inner programs based on personal experience, intellectual exploration, the importance of destiny, and the meaning of human existence, both here and in the afterlife, as distinct from Strauss’s symphonic poems, which are “invariably programmatic” and “attempt to steer their (listeners’) imagination down a particular path.” This to me is the crucial difference between the two composers and is the platform on which Mahler’s lifelong search for identity is built: Strauss generally writes in the third person; Mahler invariably writes in the first.

In applying and developing his innovative techniques, Mahler became a pioneer of modernism and revolutionized the symphony, a move which was underappreciated at the time, and which laid the groundwork for twentieth century symphonists such as Shostakovich. While living a considerably longer life than predecessors such as Mozart, Schubert and Mendelssohn, Mahler nevertheless died before his work was complete. He,

107 Youmans, Mahler and Strauss, x; Youmans, “Programmmusiker,” 125–127.
like them, never got to write his “Mass in B minor.” It is tempting to contemplate what he might have achieved had he lived as long as his friend and colleague Strauss. Even assuming he could have escaped the horrors of Germany, it is difficult to imagine Mahler bumping shopping carts with Schoenberg and Stravinsky in the aisles of a Los Angeles supermarket, but it is intriguing to speculate on what might have been accomplished alongside, say, Copland and Koussevitzky in New York and Boston, not to mention the look on the face of a starstruck young Bernstein on first meeting his idol.

In terms of where his music was going, Mahler’s last four works lay the groundwork - the oratorio-like scale and structure of Symphony No. 8, the intimate and highly contrapuntal “sparseness on a grand scale” of Symphonies 9 and 10 and, critically, Das Lied von der Erde, a work which, particularly in its final movement, is the farthest Mahler advanced in his integration of voice and symphonic style. Many commentators include this work among the symphonies and Mahler himself at one point described it as such, but there is a difference between describing and naming something a symphony, which Mahler chose not to do. To say that he avoided using the symphony title because of the “curse of the ninth” seems simplistic and unconvincing. Das Lied von der Erde forms a bridge between the symphonically orchestrated song cycles Kindertotenlieder and Rückert-Lieder on one hand, and Symphonies 9 and 10 on the other. In the case of a deceased composer it is, of course, easy to speculate, since it is impossible to be proven wrong, but I believe that if Mahler had lived on, he would have continued the integration of the forms represented by these four last works and ultimately reached a synthesis of text, solo and choral voice, and contrapuntal style, that defined an advanced form of the symphony somewhat akin to the achievements of Wagner in opera.
APPENDIX A. TEXT OF MAHLER SYMPHONY NO. 2

- Unless otherwise noted, all English translations by B. Hailes adapted from various sources.

Movement 4

O Rösch'en rot!
Der Mensch liegt in größ'ter Not!
Der Mensch liegt in größ'ter Pein!
Je lieber möcht' ich im Himmel sein.

Da kam ich auf einen breiten Weg:
Da kam ein Engelein und wollt' mich abweisen.
Ach nein! Ich ließ mich nicht abweisen!

Ich bin von Gott und will wieder zu Gott!
Der liebe Gott wird mir ein Lichtchen geben,
wird leuchten mir bis in das ewig selig Leben!

O red rosebud!
Man lies in greatest need!
Man lies in greatest pain!
How I would rather be in heaven.

There came I upon a broad path:
There came a little angel who wanted to turn me away.
Ah no! I would not let myself be turned away!
I am from God and shall return to God!
The loving God will grant me a little light,
Which will light me into that eternal blissful life!

- Des Knaben Wunderhorn

Movement 5

Aufersteh'n, ja aufersteh'n wirst du,
mein Staub, nach kurzer Ruh'!
Unsterblich Leben! Unsterblich Leben will der dich rief dir geben!

Wieder aufzublüh'n wirst du gesät!
Der Herr der Ernte geht
und sammelt Garben
uns ein, die starben!

Rise again, yes, you will rise again,
My dust, after a short rest!
Immortal life! Immortal life
Will He who called you, give you!

To bloom again were you sown!
The Lord of the harvest goes
And gathers in, like sheaves,
We who died

- Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock
Movement 5 (continued)

O glaube, mein Herz, o glaube:  O believe, my heart, O believe:
es geht dir nichts verloren!  Nothing to you is lost!
Dein ist, ja dein, was du gesehnt,  Yours is, yes yours, is what you desired
dein, was du geliebt,  Yours, what you have loved
was du gestritten!  What you have fought for!

O glaube,
du warst nicht umsonst geboren!  O believe,
Hast nicht umsonst gelebt,  You were not born for nothing!
gelitten!  Suffered!

Was entstanden ist,
das muss vergehen!  What was created
Was vergangen, aufersteh 'n!  Must perish,
Hör' auf zu beben!  What perished, rise again!
Bereite dich zu leben!  Cease from trembling!

O Schmerz! Du Alldurchdringer!  O Pain, You piercer of all things,
Dir bin ich entrungen!  From you, I have been wrested!
O Tod! Du Allbezwinger!  O Death, You conqueror of all things,
Nun bist du bezwungen!  Now, are you conquered!

Mit Flügeln, die ich mir errungen,  With wings which I have won for myself,
in heißem Liebesstreben,  In love's fierce striving,
werd' ich entschweben  I shall soar upwards
zum Licht, zu dem kein Aug' gedrungen  To the light which no eye has penetrated!

Sterben werd' ich, um zu leben!  Die shall I in order to live.

Aufersteh'n, ja aufersteh'n wirst du  Rise again, yes, you will rise again,
mein Herz, in einem Nu!  My heart, in an instant!
Was du geschlagen  That for which you suffered,
zu Gott wird es dich tragen!  To God shall it carry you!

- Gustav Mahler
Symphony No.2, Movement 5

Tag des Danks, der
Freudentränen Tag!
Du, meines Gottes Tag!
Wenn ich im Grabe
Genug geschlummert habe,
Erweckst du mich.

Wie den Träumenden,
Wirds dann uns sein;
Mit Jesu gehn wir ein
Zu seinen Freuden!
Der müden Pilger Leiden
Sind dann nicht mehr!

Ach, ins Allerheiligste führt mich
mein Mittler dann; lebt' ich
Im Heiligthume,
Zu seines Namens Ruhme!

Day of thanks,
Day of tears of joy!
You, my god's day!
When I'm in the grave
Have slumbered enough
Will you wake me up

Like the dreaming,
It will then be us;
We enter with Jesus
To his delight!
The weary pilgrims suffer
Are then no more!

Oh, take me to the holy of holies
My mediator then; I live
In the sanctuary,
To the glory of his name!

- Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock
Movement 4

O Mensch! Gib Acht!
Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?
"Ich schlief, ich schlief —,
aus tiefem Traum bin ich erwacht:
Die Welt ist tief,
und tiefer als der Tag gedacht.
Tief ist ihr Weh —,
Lust — tiefer noch als Herzeleid.
Weh spricht: Vergeh!
Doch all’ Lust will Ewigkeit —,
— will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit!

O Man! Take heed!
What says the deep midnight?
"I slept, I slept —,
from a deep dream have I awoken:
the world is deep,
and deeper than the day has thought.
Deep is its pain —,
joy — deeper still than heartache.
Pain says: Pass away!
But all joy seeks eternity —,
— seeks deep, deep eternity!

- Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

Movement 5

Es sungen drei Engel einen süßen Gesang,
mit Freuden es selig in dem Himmel klang.
Sie jauchzten fröhlich auch dabei:
daß Petrus sei von Sünden freit!

Three angels sang a sweet song,
with blessed joy it rang in heaven.
They shouted too for joy
that Peter was free from sin!

Und als der Herr Jesus zu Tische saß,
mit seinen zwölf Jüngern das Abendmahl aß,
da sprach der Herr Jesus: "Was stehst du denn hier?
Wenn ich dich anseh', so weinst du mir!"

And as Lord Jesus sat at the table
with his twelve disciples and ate the evening meal,
Lord Jesus said: "Why do you stand here?
When I look at you, you are weeping!"

"Und sollt' ich nicht weinen, du gütiger Gott?
Ich hab' übertreten die zehn Gebot!
Ich gehe und weine ja bitterlich!
Ach komm und erbarme dich über mich!"

"And should I not weep, kind God?
I have violated the ten commandments!
I wander and weep bitterly!
O come and take pity on me!"

"Hast du denn übertreten die zehen Gebot,
So fall auf die Knie und bete zu Gott!
Liebe nur Gott in alle Zeit!
So wirst du erlangen die himmlische Freud'."

"If you have violated the ten commandments,
than fall on your knees and pray to God!
Love only God for all time!
So will you gain heavenly joy."

Die himmlische Freud' ist eine selige Stadt,
die himmlische Freud', die kein Ende mehr hat!
Die himmlische Freude war Petro bereit',
durch Jesum und allen zur Seligkeit.

The heavenly joy is a blessed city,
the heavenly joy that has no end!
The heavenly joy was granted to Peter
through Jesus, and to all mankind for eternal bliss.

- Des Knaben Wunderhorn
APPENDIX D. TEXT OF MAHLER SYMPHONY NO.4

Movement 4

Das himmlische Leben

Wir genießen die himmlischen Freuden,
D'rum tun wir das Irdische meiden.
Kein weltlich' Getümmel
Hört man nicht im Himmel!
Lebt alles in sanfiester Ruh'!
Wir führen ein englisches Leben!
Sind dennoch ganz lustig daneben!
Wir tanzen und springen,
Wir hüpfen und singen!
Sankt Peter im Himmel sieht zu!

Johannes das Lämmlein auslassen,
Der Metzger Herodes d'rauf passet!
Wir führen ein geduldig's,
Unschuldig's, geduldig's,
Ein liebliches Lämmlein zu Tod!
Sankt Lucas den Ochsen tät schlachten
Ohn' einig's Bedenken und Achten;
Der Wein kost' kein Heller
Im himmlischen Keller;
Die Englein, die backen das Brot.

Gut' Kräuter von allerhand Arten,
Die wachsen im himmlischen Garten!
Gut' Spargel, Fisolen
Und was wir nur wollen,
Ganze Schüsseln voll sind uns bereit!
Gut' Äpfel, gut' Birl' und gut' Trauben;
Die Gärtner, die alles erlauben!
Willst Rehbock, willst Hasen?
Auf offener Straßen
Sie laufen herbei!

The Heavenly Life

We revel in heavenly pleasures,
Leaving all that is earthly behind us.
No worldly turmoil
Is heard in heaven;
We lead an angelic existence,
And so we are perfectly happy.
We dance and leap,
And skip and sing;
Saint Peter in Heaven looks on.

Saint John has lost his lambkin,
And butcher Herod is lurking:
We lead a patient,
Guiltless, patient,
Darling lambkin to death.
Saint Luke is slaying the oxen,
Without the least hesitation;
Wine costs not a farthing
In the Heavenly tavern;
The angels bake the bread

Fine sprouts of every description,
Are growing in Heaven's garden.
Fine asparagus, fine herbs,
And all we desire,
Huge platefuls for us are prepared.
Fine apples, fine pears and fine grapes,
The gardeners let us pick freely.
You want venison, hare?
In the open streets
Sollt' ein Fasttag etwa kommen,  
Alle Fische gleich mit Freuden  
angeschwommen!  
Dort läuft schon Sankt Peter  
Mit Netz und mit Köder,  
Zum himmlischen Weiher hinein.[K]  
Sankt Martha die Köchin muß sein!

Kein' Musik ist ja nicht auf Erden,  
Die unsrer verglichen kann werden.  
Elftausend Jungfrauen  
Zu tanzen sich trauen!  
Sankt Ursula selbst dazu lacht!  
Cäcilia mit ihren Verwandten  
Sind treffliche Hofmusikanten!  
Die englischen Stimmen  
Ermuntern die Sinnen!  
Daß alles für Freuden erwacht.

And when there's a holiday near,  
All the fishes come joyfully  
swimming;  
And off runs Saint Peter  
With net and with bait,  
Towards the celestial pond.  
Saint Martha will have to be cook!

There's no music at all on the earth  
Which can ever compare with ours.  
Eleven thousand virgins  
Are set dancing.  
Saint Ursula herself laughs to see it!  
Cecilia with her companions  
Are splendid court musicians.  
The angelic voices  
Delight the senses,  
For all things awake to joy.

- Des Knaben Wunderhorn
APPENDIX E. TEXT OF MAHLER SYMPHONY NO.8

English translation by Keith Anderson

Part 1

Veni, creator spiritus, 
mentes tuorum visita; 
imple superna gratia, 
quae tu creasti pectora.

Come, Creator Spirit, 
visit the mind of your people. 
Fill with divine grace 
the hearts that you have created.

Qui Paraclitus diceris, 
donum Dei altissimi, 
fons vivus, ignis, caritas, 
et spiritualis unctio.

You who are the Paraclete, 
gift of God most high, 
living fount, fire, love 
and spiritual union.

Infirma nostri corporis 
virtute firmans perpeti; 
accende lumen sensibus, 
infunde amorem cordibus.

Strengthen our weak body 
with eternal power. 
Illuminate our senses, 
Pour love into our hearts.

Hostem repellas longius, 
pacemque dones protinus; 
ductore sic te praevio 
vitemus omne pessimum.

Drive further away the enemy 
and forthwith grant peace; 
under your guidance 
let us avoid all harm.

Tu septiformis munere, 
dexterae paternae digitus; 
Per te sciamus da Patrem, 
noscamus Filium, spiritum 
credamus omni tempore.

You are the sevenfold gift, 
the first finger of God’s right hand. 
Through you grant that we may know the Father 
and recognise the Son, the Spirit 
let us believe forever.

Da gaudiorum praemia, 
da gratiarum munera; 
dissolve litis vincula, 
adstringe pacis foedera.

Grant the rewards of joys, 
grant the gifts of graces; 
loosen the chains of law, 
draw tighter the bonds of peace.

Gloria Patri Domino, 
Deo sit gloria et Filio 
natoque, qui a mortuis 
surrexit, ac Paraclito 
in saeculorum saecula.

Glory be to the Father Lord, 
glory be to God and to the Son, 
the one born who from the dead rose, and to the Paraclete 
world without end.
Part 2
Final Scene from Goethe's *Faust* Part II

Chorus and Echo

*Waldung, sie schwankt heran,*
*Felsen, sie lasten dran,*
*Wurzeln, sie klammern an,*
*Stamm dicht an Stamm hinan.*
*Woge nach Woge spritzt,*
*Höhle, die tiefste, schützt.*
*Löwen, sie schleichen stumm-*
*Freundlich um uns herum,*
*Ehren geweihten Ort,*
*Heiligen Liebeshort.*

Forest, that sways here,
Rocks that weigh down on it,
Roots that cling,
Trunks dense upon trunks.
Wave after wave splashes,
The deepest cave protects us.
Lions that creep silently
Tame about us,
Honour the sacred place,
The holy shrine of Love.

Pater Ecstaticus

*Ewiger Wonnebrand,*
*Gühnendes Liebeband,*
*Siedender Schmerz der Brust,*
*Schäumende Gotteslust.*
*Pfeile, durchdringet mich,*
*Lanzen, bezwinget mich,*
*Keulen, zerschmettert mich,*
*Blitze, durchwettert mich!*
*Dass ja das Nichtige*
*Alles verflüchtige,*
*Glänze der Dauerstern,*
*Ewiger Liebe Kern.*

Eternal bliss,
Glowing bond of Love,
Seething pain of the breast,
Foaming joy of God.
Arrows, pierce me,
Lances, subdue me,
Clubs crush me,
Lightning strikes me!
That now the worthless
Be cursed for ever
Shine forth the enduring star,
Eternal Love’s core.

Pater Profundus

*Wie Felsenabgrund mir zu Füßen*
*Auf tiefem Abgrund lastend ruht,*
*Wie tausend Bäche strahlend fließen*
*Zum grausen Sturz des Schaums der Flut,*
*Wie strack mit eignem kräftigen Triebe*
*Der Stamm sich in die Lüfte trägt –*
*So ist es die allmächtige Liebe,*
*Die alles bildet, alles hegt.*
*Ist um mich her ein wildes Brausen,*
*Als wogte Wald und Felsengrund,*

*Und doch stürzt, liebevoll im Sausen,*
*As the rocky chasm at my feet*
*On the deep abyss weighs at rest,*
*As a thousand gleaming streams flow*
*To the terrible plunge of the flood’s foam,*
*As with its own great strength*
*The trunk is born up into the air -*
*So is almighty Love*
*That forms all, preserves all.*
*There is about me a wild rushing,*
As if forest and rocky ground shook,
And yet there rose, in lovely sound,
Die Wasserfälle sich zum Schlund,
Berufen, gleich das Tal zu wässern;
Der Blitz, der flammend niederschlug,
Die Atmosphäre zu verbessern,
Die Gift und Dunst im Busen trug –
Sind Liebesboten, sie verkünden,
Was ewig schaffend uns umwallt.
Mein Innres mög’ es auch entzünden,
Wo sich der Geist, verworren, kalt,
Verquält in stumpfer Sinne Schranken,
Scharf angeschlossenem Kettenschmerz.
O Gott! Beschwichtige die Gedanken,
The waters to the abyss,
Called as it were to water the valley;
The lightning that flaming struck
To clear the atmosphere,
Took the poison and vapour in its bosom -
They are Love’s messengers, they tell
What ever-creating surrounds us.
My inner being it too must charm
Where the spirit, confused, cold,
Tormented in the limits of dull senses,
Feels the sharp pain of chains.
O God! Soothe my mind,
Enlighten my needy heart!

Angels

Gerettet ist das edle Glied
Der Geisterwelt vom Bösen:
Wer immer strebend sich bemüht,
Den können wir erlösen.
Und hat an ihm die Liebe gar
Von oben teilgenommen,
Begegnet ihm die selige Schar
Mit herzlichem Willkommen.

Saved is the noble member
Of the spirit world from evil:
Who, ever striving takes pains,
Him can we redeem.
And if in him was love
Shared from above,
The blessed host will meet him
With heartfelt welcome

Choir of Blessed Boys

Hände verschlinget
Freudig zum Ringverein,
Regt euch und singet
Heil'ge Gefühle drein!
Göttlich belehret,
Dürft ihr vertrauen;
Den ihr verehret,
Werdet ihr schauen.

Join your hands
Joyful in a ring,
Rise and sing
Holy feelings!
Taught by God
You may trust;
The one whom you revere,
You shall see.

Younger Angels

Jene Rosen aus den Händen
Liebend-heiliger Büßerinnen
Halfen uns den Sieg gewinnen,
Uns das hohe Werk vollenden,

Die Rosen from the hands
Of loving holy penitents
Helped us to win victory,
To complete the holy work,  
To take this soul's treasure as prize.  
*Jauchzet auf! Es ist gelungen.*  
Evil gave way as we scattered,  
Devils flew when we struck.  
Instead of the punishment of Hell  
The spirits felt the rush of love;  
Even old Satan himself  
Was afflicted with sharp pain.  
Rejoice! We have succeeded.

More Perfect Angels

We are left with earthly remains  
To bear with difficulty;  
And were it of matter indestructible  
It is not pure.  
When the strong force of the Spirit  
The elements  
Has snatched up to itself,  
No angel could part  
The united double nature  
Of both soul and body,  
Eternal Love only  
May divide them.

Younger Angels

I feel now  
In the mist and rocky heights  
A Spirit life  
Dwelling near.  
Of blessed boys  
I see a throng.  
Free from earth’s pressure.  
Gathered in a circle  
They rejoice  
In the new spring and beauty  
Of the upper world.  
Let him begin here  
To win the fulness of life  
As their companion!
Blessed Boys

Joyfully we receive
This one who is a chrysalis;
So we receive
The angels’ pledge.
Loosen the flakes
That surround him!
Already is he handsome and great
From the holy life.

Doctor Marianus

Here the view is free,
The Spirit exalted.
There women pass by
Ascending above.
The glorious one in the midst of them
In wreathe of stars,
The Queen of Heaven
I see in splendor.
O supreme ruler of the world!
Let me in the blue
Expanse of Heaven
See your mystery.
Approve what in man’s breast
Grave and tender moves
And with holy joy of love
Brings him to meet you.
Indomitable our courage
If you nobly command;
Suddenly the embers soften
As you grant us peace.

Doctor Marianus and Chorus

Virgin, pure in fairest mind,
Mother, worthy of reverence,
Our chosen Queen,
Equal to God.
Chorus

Dir, der Unberührbaren,  
Ist es nicht benommen,  
Dass die leicht Verführbaren  
Traulich zu dir kommen.  
In die Schwachheit hingerafft,  
Sind sie schwer zu retten;  
Wer zerreißt aus eigner Kraft  
Der Gelüste Ketten?

To you, the immaculate,  
It cannot be denied  
That the easily corrupted  
Come to you for comfort.  
Dragged down by weakness  
They are difficult to save;  
Who tears by his own strength  
The chains of lust?  
How quickly does the foot slip  
On sloping, smooth ground?

Chorus of Penitents

Du schwebst zu Höhen  
Der ewigen Reiche;  
Vernimm das Flehen,  
Du Gnadenreiche!

You soar to the heights  
Of the eternal kingdom;  
Hear our pleading,  
Thou gracious one!

Magna Peccatrix (Luke, VIII, 36)

Bei der Liebe, die den Füßen  
Deines gottverklärten Sohnes  
Tränen ließ zum Balsam fließen  
Trotz des Pharisaerhohnes;  
Beim Gefäße, das so reichlich  
Tropfte Wohlgeruch hernieder;  
Bei den Locken, die so weichlich  
Trockneten die heil'gen Glieder –

By the love that at the feet  
Of your Son, enheartened by God,  
Let tears flow as balsam  
In spite of the scorn of the Pharisees;  
By the box that so richly  
Dropped down fragrance;  
By the locks that so gently  
Dried the sacred limbs -

Mulier Samaritana (John, IV)

Bei dem Bronn, zu dem schon weiland  
Abram ließ die Herde führen;  
Bei dem Eimer, der dem Heiland  
Kühl die Lippe durft’ berühren;  
Bei der reinen, reichen Quelle,  
Die nun dorther sich ergießet,  
Überflüssig, ewig helle  
Rings durch alle Welten fließet –

By the well to which once  
Abraham led the herds;  
By the pitcher which coolly  
Touched the Saviour’s lips;  
By the pure, rich source  
That now there gushes,  
Overflowing, ever clear  
Flows throughout the world -
Maria Aegyptiaca (Acta Sanctorum)

Bei dem hoch geweihten Orte,  
Wo den Herrn man niederließ;  
Bei dem Arm, der von der Pforte  
Warnend mich zurücke stieß;  
Bei der vierzigjährigen Buße,  
Der ich treu in Wüsten blieb;  
Bei dem seligen Scheidegrüße,  
Den im Sand ich niederschrieb –

By the sacred place  
Where the Lord was laid;  
By the arm that from the entrance  
Warning pushed me back;  
By the forty-year penitence  
That I truly spent in the desert;  
By the holy words of parting  
That in the sand I wrote -

The Three

Die du großen Sünderinnen  
Deine Nähe nicht verweigerst  
Und ein büßendes Gewinnen  
In die Ewigkeiten steigerst,  
Gönn’ auch dieser guten Seele,  
Die sich einmal nur vergessen,  
Die nicht ahnte, dass sie fehlte,  
Dein Verzeihen angemessen!

You who do not avert your gaze  
From women who have sinned  
Raise into eternity  
The victory gained by repentance,  
Grant also this poor soul,  
Who only once forgot,  
Who did not know that she erred,  
Your forgiveness!

Una Poenitentium (once called Gretchen. Approaching)

Neige, neige,  
Du Ohnegleiche,  
Du Strahlenreiche,  
Dein Antlitz gnädig meinem Glück!  
Der früh Geliebte,  
Nicht mehr Getrübte,  
Er kommt zurück.

Turn, turn,  
You matchless one,  
Rich in glory,  
Your face in grace on my happiness!  
The one I early loved,  
No more troubled,  
Comes back.

Blessed Boys

Er überwächst uns schon  
An mächtigen Gliedern,  
Wird treuer Pflege Lohn  
Reichlich erwidern.  
Wir wurden früh entfernt  
Von Lebechören;  
Doch dieser hat gelernt,  
Er wird uns lehren.

He grows the greater  
With his mighty limbs,  
Will true redemption  
Richly return.  
We were early distanced  
From the chorus of life;  
Yet this man has learned,  
He will teach us.
Una Poenitentium (Gretchen)

Vom edlen Geisterchor umgeben,  
Wird sich der Neue kaum gewahr,  
Er ahnet kaum das frische Leben,  
So gleicht er schon der heiligen Schar.

Sieh! Wie er jedem Erdenbande  
Der alten Hülle sich entrafft  
Und aus ätherischem Gewande  
Hervortritt erste Jugendkraft!

Vergönne mir, ihn zu belehren,  
Noch blendet ihn der neue Tag.

By the noble choir of spirits surrounded,  
The newly born scarcely knows,  
He scarcely divines fresh life,  
So he becomes like the holy host.

See! How he from every bond of earth  
Tears aside the old veil  
And from the clothing of the ether  
Comes forth his first youthful strength!

Grant me to teach him,  
Still blinded by the new day.

Mater Gloriosa

Komm! Hebe dich zu höhern Sphären!  
Wenn er dich ahnet, folgt er nach.

Doctor Marianus

Blicket auf zum Retterblick,  
Alle reuig Zarten,  
Euch zu seligem Geschick  
Dankend umzuarten.

Werde jeder bessre Sinn  
Dir zum Dienst erbötig;  
Jungfrau, Mutter, Königin,  
Göttin, bleibe gnädig!

Look up to the redeeming sight,  
All you who repent,  
That tries to bring you  
To a blessed fate.

That every better sense  
May serve you;  
Virgin, Mother, Queen,  
Goddess, be gracious to us!

Chorus mysticus

Alles Vergängliche  
Ist nur ein Gleichnis;  
Das Unzulängliche,  
Hier wird's Ereignis;  
Das Unbeschreibliche,  
Hier ist's getan;  
Das Ewig-Weibliche  
Zieht uns hinan.

All that passes away  
Is only a likeness;  
The inadequacy of earth  
Here finds fulfilment;  
The ineffable  
Here is accomplished;  
The eternal feminine  
leads us upwards.
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