

Abstracts

Georg Mohr: »Rücksichtslose Polyphonie« or: What happened under the linden tree? Gustav Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*

One reads frequently that the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* had their origin in Mahler's frustrated love of the singer Johanna Richter. It is said, too, that the songs had been written and composed in the spirit of Müller/Schubert's *Winterreise* and *Schöne Müllerin*, thereby putting them in the romantic lieder tradition. Both »pieces of information« are apt to obscure the dramatic turn Mahler lends the lieder genre as well as the orchestration by composing his *Gesellen* cycle. On the contrary, it is a work which shows programmatic character for the whole of Mahler's œuvre, especially as seen from the perspective of his later works. The way he effectively puts musical genres and styles as well as text and music into contrast is unprecedented; »rücksichtslose Polyphonie« becomes a fundamental principle of his music. The essay closes with an interpretation of the Lindenbaum stanza of the fourth lied.

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Günter Schnitzler: Gustav Mahler and Romanticism in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*

Mahler's preference for setting texts from the collection of folk songs *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* to music tells us a great deal about his lied aesthetics and about his affinity to Romanticism. Knowing that music represents a medium aesthetically superior to poetry, Mahler shows a leaning to *Wunderhorn* texts since, in their role as a »source of all poetry« rather than as »literary poetry«, they are able to bear not only interventions to the texts but also having to submit to the music. The fact that Mahler chose this collection in favour of all others is due to the formative influence of Romanticism which the *Wunderhorn* reveals. This influence is distinguished by a field character of reality which connects everything with anything, and by a consciously contrasting structure. The way of the poem *Der Schildwache Nachtlied* from the (putative) folk version through the versions used by Mahler in his piano and orchestra song shows these metamorphoses as far as the transformation of the Romantic to the Modernity of Mahler and his time.

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Ingo Müller: Poetry and Music in the Conflict between Mediation and Immediacy. Gustav Mahler's *Fünf Lieder nach Texten von Friedrich Rückert*

Rückert's linguistic and formal brilliance can be read as a symptom of having lost an original and intuitive unity between subject and world. This loss also

seems symptomatic of an entire generation of poets who feel helpless against a sense of diremption and epigonism. Gustav Mahler knew these feelings as well. All of the five poems by Rückert, which Mahler chose for his settings, reveal the question of the unity of self and world and, at the same time, the awareness of the irretrievable loss of this unity. Rückert's intellectual poetry implicitly deals with the conflict between lost immediacy and striving to compensate for this deficiency. This conflict informs the mediating character of his poetry. Mahler, however, tries to achieve a new aesthetic balance between mediation and immediacy by giving his settings an air of immediacy and sensuality, an effect which is, itself, a product of calculation.

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Alexander Odey: »... von Gottes Hand bedeckt«. Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* as an Expression of his Religiousness

As a song cycle and as his final composition in the field of lieder, Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* occupy an important position in his oeuvre. But they also belong among his most personal works, since they are based on deeply religious considerations. In Rückert, Mahler found a poet whose inner world was closely related to his own. In his setting of the poems, however, the composer went even further and declared his belief in the continuation of human existence after death, in the transcendence of death through the power of love, and in a god whom he understood as love personified.

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Peter Revers: »Duft lyrischer Versgebilde«. Music and Poetry in Gustav Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*

In the commentary to his anthology *The Chinese Flute (Die Chinesische Flöte)*, Hans Bethge mentions the impact of music on Far Eastern poems which are hardly compatible with the Western metrical system, emphasizing the quality of textual sonority. Bethge's and Mahler's approach to these poems corresponds in many ways to these aspects as well as to the characteristic amalgamation of narrative structure and lyrical reflection of the inner self (partly resulting in abandoning constant meter altogether). On the other hand, the polarity of life and death provides a close web of melodic, tonal and sonoric relations, thus creating a highly innovative formal design overcoming the traditions of the genres of lieder and symphony.