

Gustav Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*

by

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THYG 694 – Analytical Thesis

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Music in Theoretical Studies
at the
New England Conservatory of Music

May, 2006

Boston, Massachusetts

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to acknowledge the invaluable support of Prof. Deborah Stein: for accepting me as a student in her classes, for her early encouragement and assistance in entering the graduate program at the New England Conservatory, for her suggestion of *Das Lied* as a work to examine for this project, for her comprehensive knowledge of the German *Lied* as an art form, for her understanding of, and insight into, Mahler's harmonic language, and for her tireless assistance in the development and execution of this study.

The author also would like to acknowledge Dr. Larry Thomas Bell for his superlative teaching abilities, his talent for making complex issues understandable, his thoughtful approaches for gaining mastery of difficult skills, his wide-ranging musical knowledge, his musicianship, his patience, and his constant encouragement.

The author acknowledges Ronald Knudsen and Adrienne Hartzell for their extraordinary commitment to making "Music for All" of the highest artistic standards, and for creating a path that could bring the author fully back to music after far too long an absence.

Finally, the author acknowledges his wife, Barbara, and family for their constant encouragement, support, and understanding of the energy and commitment required to be a successful graduate student – at any stage of life.

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I. Introduction

In this paper, I consider Gustav Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* (*The Song of the Earth*) with emphasis on a detailed examination of its first movement. The study is organized into nine parts. Following a brief introduction in this Section I, Section II provides a historical context for *Das Lied* that includes: aspects of Mahler's biography as it relates to the work; a summary of the text, style, form and harmonic language of *Das Lied*; and how *Das Lied* was received. In Section III, I discuss the general meaning of the text of *Das Lied*, with a focus on the themes and images of German Romanticism. I present an overview of Mahler's *Das Lied* harmonic language in Section IV, and a comparison of first movement studies published by three particular scholars in Section V. A detailed harmonic analysis of the first movement is given in Section VI, and the possible meanings of the various first movement tonalities are presented in Section VII. I consider Mahler's orchestration of *Das Lied* in Section VIII, and close with comments on Mahler's musical legacy in Section IX. The text with a translation is provided in Appendix A, and a selected bibliography is given, including Mahler's biographies as they relate to *Das Lied*.

II. Historical Perspective

While Gustav Mahler was a composer all of his adult life (1860 – 1911), he made his reputation and his living as a conductor. He was well known for conducting Mozart and Wagner operas, and Beethoven symphonies (particularly his Ninth). Not until the last decade of his life did his reputation as a composer grow to the same magnitude as that as a conductor. His year was typically structured around a heavy conducting schedule except for the summer, when he composed.

Mahler's first major work, *Das klagende Lied*, was composed in 1880. His early compositions were influenced by the music of Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Wagner, and Weber (Franklin 2001, 615). There are obvious parallels between Beethoven's use of voices in his Ninth Symphony and a number of Mahler's large-scale symphonic works as early as his Second Symphony but also going back to *Das klagende Lied*. Berlioz and Liszt were influences (Reilly 1982, 72), as was Richard Strauss (Franklin 2001, 602). As he matured, Bach became a significant inspiration (Franklin 2001, 622).

Das Lied von der Erde was one of Mahler's last major works. First performed in November 1911, six months after Mahler's death, it was composed during 1908 and completed when Mahler was 48 years old. The prior year, 1907, had been an extraordinarily difficult one for Mahler (Hefling 2000, 28 – 35). He had resigned his ten-year directorship of the prestigious Vienna Court Opera under very difficult circumstances, and had agreed to conduct the Metropolitan Opera in New York beginning in January 1908, his first visit to the United States. During the summer of 1907, the eldest of his two beloved daughters died suddenly of scarlet fever when she was only four years old. Very soon afterwards, Mahler was diagnosed with a

heart valve defect. It was known at the time that such a defect could lead to malignant endocarditis, which was fatal prior to the discovery of antibiotics, and which was the eventual cause of his death four years later. His doctors therefore recommended that he strictly curtail the physically active lifestyle that he loved.

Any one of these three events would have been difficult to overcome. Altogether, they were devastating. Mahler found it difficult to compose until finally, late in the summer of 1908, inspiration returned. In a burst of creative energy, Mahler worked feverishly to complete what would become *Das Lied von der Erde* before his busy conducting schedule resumed that September.

Das Lied von der Erde is a large-scale work for full orchestra and two vocal soloists. Considered by Mahler to be his most personal work, he characterized it as a “symphony for tenor and alto voice and orchestra” rather than as a song cycle (Floros 1993, 243 – 244). Each of the six movements is a setting of eighth-century Chinese poetry. The text is full of themes and images from German Romantic poetry, including its Oriental character (Stein and Spillman 1996, 5 – 15). The overall meaning of the poetry is most strongly illustrated by the first and last movements. In the first, the poet’s drinking song of the misery of the earth underscores the brevity of human life in comparison to the eternal nature of the earth, with its annual renewal every spring. In the last movement, the poet basks in the beauty of the renewing world and, in loneliness and stillness, awaits peaceful death and says farewell.

At the time that *Das Lied von der Erde* was composed in 1908, tonality was on the verge of breaking down. Arnold Schoenberg was the first composer to abandon tonality, which he did in 1908 (Neighbor). His *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten* (*The Book of Hanging Gardens*) op. 15 was composed in 1908 – 1909. According to Neighbor, “Here dissonance is finally

emancipated, that is, it no longer seeks the justification of resolution. Consequently structural harmony disappears, along with its need for measured periods and consistent textures, and so does tonality itself as a central point of reference.” Schoenberg’s atonal *Drei Klavierstücke* (*Three Piano Pieces*) op. 11 was composed in 1909, along with *Fünf Orchesterstücke* (*Five Pieces for Orchestra*) op. 15 and *Erwartung* (*Expectation*) op. 17. Schoenberg’s pupils Alban Berg and Anton Webern were finding their own atonal compositional voices at this same time (Jarman; K. Bailey).

The harmonic language in *Das Lied* is fluid and full of ambiguity. It is similar to that used in Wagner’s *Tristan*, because this opera was a major influence on Mahler (Hefling 2000, 81). Robert Bailey describes Wagner’s techniques in his analysis of the opera (1985, 115 – 125). These techniques, as well as others used by Mahler, are summarized in Section IV.

The overall harmonic structure of *Das Lied von der Erde* is shown in Figure 1 (Hefling 2000, 81). This appears to be fairly straightforward, centered around the keys of A and C (both major and minor).¹ However, the details of any individual movement can be extraordinarily complex, as will be shown in Sections V and VI with respect to the first movement. While Figure 1 was published by Hefling, he acknowledges Robert Bailey for this figure, and for Hefling’s understanding of the form of *Das Lied* (Hefling 1992, 303; 2000, 81 – 83, 144).

¹ In this paper, upper-case letters are used to indicate major keys and pitches, while lower-case letters are used to indicate minor keys. This format is followed except when directly quoting other sources, in which case the format used by the source will be followed. Any ambiguity of key in quoted sources will be clarified within the quotation.

Figure 1 Overall structure of *Das Lied von der Erde* (Hefling 2000, 81).

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | 6 |
|------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|---|----------|
| Das | Der | Von | Von | Der | | Der |
| Trinklied | Einsame | der | der | Trunkene | | Abschied |
| vom Jammer | im | Jugend | Schönheit | im | | |
| der Erde | Herbst | | | Frühling | | |
| a | d | B | G | A | c | c |
| | | | | | | C-a/C |

Das Lied has received considerable attention from a number of well-regarded scholars.

In addition to Robert Bailey and Stephen Hefling are Constantin Floros (1993, 250) and Donald Mitchell (2002, 176 – 177). There is no universal agreement among these scholars regarding the precise form of the first movement or even on specific keys in all areas of the movement, which is not surprising given the extent of the harmonic ambiguity in the work. I examine the different views of these scholars in detail in Section V.

The reception of *Das Lied von der Erde* was similar to the reception of much of the rest of Mahler’s music (Hefling 2000, 54 – 79). There were those who loved his music passionately, among them composers such as Schoenberg, Berg and Webern, conductors such as Bruno Walter, Otto Klemperer and others, certain journalists and musicologists, and young musicians “plus those of earlier generations sufficiently open-minded to take his often shocking innovations seriously” (Hefling 2000, 54). According to Hefling, the “detractors were antisemites – especially in Vienna, including a number of journalists – as well as conservative critics and listeners generally” (2000, 54). Today, the work is viewed as “a culminating synthesis of song and symphony” that is “widely regarded as Mahler’s finest masterpiece” (Hefling 2000, ix).

III. Analysis of Text

As mentioned in Section II, each of the six movements of *Das Lied von der Erde* is a setting of poetry from the eighth-century Chinese T'ang dynasty, from Hans Bethge's translation *Die chinesische Flöte (The Chinese Flute)*. These are very loose translations (Bethge called them "paraphrase poems"), which were subsequently reworked by Mahler to suit his artistic goals for the piece (Hefling 2000, 36). The six movements include: "Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde (The Drinking Song of the Misery of the Earth)"; "Der Einsame im Herbst (The Lonely One in Autumn)"; "Von der Jugend (Of Youth)"; "Von der Schönheit (Of Beauty)"; "Der Trunkene im Frühling (The Drunk in Springtime)"; and "Der Abschied (The Farewell)". I will discuss the meanings of each of these, with reference to the themes and images of German Romantic poetry, with its emphasis on "heightened individuality" and the image of the wanderer, "the evocative world of nature" with images of landscapes and birds, "the seductiveness of mystery" with images of night versus day, and "spiritual salvation" with the image of yearning for peaceful death (Stein and Spillman 1996, 3 – 16).

One of the fundamental features of the Romantic soul was "the embrace of the contradictory or dichotomous, the mingling of two seemingly incompatible, opposing elements into a singular entity" (Stein and Spillman 1996, 5). According to Hefling, "*Das Lied* is founded on syzygial polarities" (Hefling 2000, 80). A syzygy is a pair of opposites. Hefling continues as follows:

The poems Mahler selected and retouched for *Das Lied von der Erde* abound in natural imagery that, in the context of the whole, projects a dualistic conception of the human spirit: night and day, autumn and spring, youth and

death, intoxication and meditation, male and female. In basing the work on syzygial pairs, Mahler was not only following his own inner dictates, but also responding to a modernist tendency highly characteristic of *fin-de-siècle* Austrian creative life (Hefling 2000, 80).

Hefling makes it sound as if the German Romantic movement was at its peak at the time *Das Lied* was composed, but this is not the case. According to Stein and Spillman, “The Romantic period proper spans approximately thirty years, from 1796 to c. 1830, but the impact of the movement continued throughout the nineteenth century,” including composers Beethoven and Schubert during its middle period, and Weber and Schumann during its late period (1996, 4).

There are a number of translations of the text available, provided by George Bird and Richard Stokes (1998, 85 – 89), Stephen Hefling (2000, 120 – 131), and Donald Mitchell (2002, 171, 213, 249, 273, 311, and 337) in addition to those included with the piano and orchestral scores (Mahler 1988, viii – ix; 1991, x – xii). These differ not only in translations of specific words, but also in their general approach. Some (such as Hefling) give a word-for-word translation, while others (such as Bird and Stokes) give a more poetic translation to convey the meaning of the poetry. The text used for *Das Lied* here, along with a translation, is provided in Appendix A; it is based on Hefling’s, as the word-for-word translations provide a better foundation for understanding how the text is set by the composer.

A. Overview of German Romantic Themes and Images in *Das Lied*

As mentioned, *Das Lied* is full of the themes and images of German Romanticism. These are summarized in Table 1. The protagonist of *Das Lied* epitomizes the image of the Wanderer.

According to Stein and Spillman, “The most powerful Romantic image that conveyed the poet’s preoccupation with the themes of the individual and the world of emotion was the figure of the Wanderer, the solitary figure whose travels through the world reflected a similar spiritual journey within” (1996, 7). In *Das Lied*, we follow the Wanderer as he sings a song of the misery of the earth in the first movement (which, we discover, is really a song of the misery of the Wanderer), contemplates his loneliness in the second, observes life in the third and fourth, numbs his consciousness through wine in the fifth, and says farewell forever in the sixth.

Table 1. Themes and Images of German Romanticism in *Das Lied* (Stein and Spillman).

| Themes | Images |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| heightened individuality | the Wanderer, wine |
| the evocative world of nature | landscapes and animals |
| the seductiveness of mystery | night versus day |
| spiritual salvation | yearning for peaceful death |
| cultural influences | Oriental |

Wine is an important symbol in *Das Lied*, representing the joys of life, especially when enjoyed with song. We have the image of the “beckoning” wine in its golden goblet in the opening of the first stanza. This is called personification, giving human characteristics to something that is nonhuman. The poet tells us that playing the lute and drinking are things that go together well, and that a full goblet of wine at the right time is worth more than all the kingdoms of the earth. However, we also have the dichotomous symbol of wine as the chief

means of numbing one's consciousness (in the fifth movement, "The Drunk in Springtime") in order to obliterate all sensory perception, to deal with the anguish over having such a short life.

Nature images abound in *Das Lied*. According to Stein and Spillman, "The natural world contained a wide array of natural objects, creatures, and sounds that provided the poet with both an atmosphere in which to feel and sense vividly and a landscape in which to wander and struggle" (1996, 8). There are frequent references to landscape scenes, especially with water and flowers, as well as references to the sky, sun and moon, and trees. Animals are also plentiful in *Das Lied*, with birds, horses, a tiger, and even a howling ape as a shocking image of death mocking humankind.

Another major theme of German Romanticism is called by Stein and Spillman "The Seductiveness of Mystery," which they describe as follows: "The enticement of the mysterious came from every corner of the Romantic's experience, from the mysteries of the inner psychological domain (the unconscious and dreams) to those within nature's vastness, to the mystical side of religious devotion. The heightened reactions to the mysteries of the psyche, the world of nature, and the spiritual were most vivid at night, when darkness provided an escape from daily life and intensified the unknown, when the poet was solitary and felt more in tune with the mysterious" (1996, 10 – 11). *Das Lied* contains a number of night-time images and references.

A fourth major theme of German Romanticism is spiritual salvation, with its image of yearning for peaceful death. According to Stein and Spillman, "Religious faith was intimately linked to the German Romantic longing for death (as spiritual salvation) and was expressed most vividly within the context of nature. When combined with nature's benevolence, the notion of spiritual salvation through death offered a release from both external earthly concerns and the

poet's innermost torments" (1996, 11). In *Das Lied*, this yearning for peaceful death is most clearly expressed in the second and sixth movements.

A final major theme of German Romanticism that is expressed in *Das Lied* is an interest in foreign cultures. This "enriched the poet's expressivity" by evoking "a foreignness and distance that intensified poetic mystery" (Stein and Spillmann 1996, 13 – 14). In addition to the fact that the poetry has Chinese origins, there are a number of scenes in *Das Lied* that evoke oriental images.

B. "Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde (The Drinking Song of the Misery of the Earth)"

The first movement introduces us to the poet/Wanderer, and sets the stage for the overall work by presenting the main theme of the work: the brevity of human life in comparison to the eternal nature of the earth, with its annual renewal every spring. The first stanza opens with the image of the "beckoning" wine in its golden goblet, and the poet asking his companions not to drink until he sings them a song. The song is described as a song of sorrow that will lie waste to the gardens of the soul (a nature reference), and cause joy and song to wither and die. We have the paradox of this song resounding in gusts of laughter in our soul. An ironic refrain ends the stanza: "Dark is life, is death." This is ironic in the sense that, if life were so dark, why would one want so desperately to extend it.

In the second stanza, the poet addresses the master of the house whose cellar holds its fill of golden wine, prepares to sing his song, and comments on the joys of drinking and singing. This happy scene is quickly dashed with a repeat of the dark refrain, ending the stanza.

At the beginning of the third stanza, the poet sings his song, which contains a number of nature references. He sings that the firmament is eternally blue and the earth will long stand firm and blossom every spring. He then asks how long one can live, and answers that not for a hundred years can one enjoy the “rotten trifles” (Bird and Stokes translate this as “brittle vanity”) of this earth (1998, 85). The poet’s song thus delineates the main theme of *Das Lied*.

The poet looks down and sees a mad spectral figure, an ape, in the moonlight on the gravestones, howling and shattering the sweet fragrance of life. This shocking image serves as a climax to the movement, both in the text and in the music. The poet then tells his companions that it is now time to take their wine and drain their golden goblets to the dregs. While ostensibly this is a convivial scene of song and drinking, it is nevertheless tinged with a sense that the wine will also dull their senses to the pain of misery that they have just heard. The stanza ends with a final repeat of the dark refrain.

We are now in a position to recognize that the title to the first poem is itself full of irony. The earth, with its everlasting life and annual renewal, has reason to be joyful. In fact, this is not the song of earth’s misery, but of humankind’s.

C. “Der Einsame im Herbst (The Lonely One in Autumn)”

The second movement is a significant contrast to the first. It has a much calmer, softer tone than the first movement, with only one exclamation point in the text in comparison to thirteen in the first! There is more of a focus on nature and the inner state of the poet, and more of a poetic progression throughout the poem. Poetic progression is “the flow of a poet’s thoughts or feelings as they evolve over the time of a poem. This includes the poet’s experience of the

outer world of nature and other people as well as the poet's inner personal experience" (Stein and Spillman 1996, 331).

The first of this poem's four stanzas describes a beautiful nature scene: blue mists above a lake in autumn, with frost on the grass and what looks like jade dust sprinkled on delicate blossoms by an artist. Given the frost, this sounds like very early morning. The jade dust is an Oriental reference. One would likely think it is spring except for the obvious reference to autumn. The second stanza represents a significant poetic progression. The nature scene is again described, but now as a scene much closer to death rather than in the early stages of life: the sweet fragrance of the flowers has faded, their stems are bent down by a cold wind, and soon the withered golden leaves of the lotus flowers will drift on the water.

In the third stanza, the Wanderer longs for peaceful death. The image of a lamp being extinguished as an image of death is used in Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* several times, at the end of the first and third songs (Mahler 1991, viii – ix). In the final stanza, we learn that the Wanderer's longing for death is due to his loneliness and loss of love.

D. "Von der Jugend (Of Youth)"

The third poem is an Oriental scene of friends together, enjoying life and each other's company. The friends, beautifully dressed in silk, are drinking and chatting while some write poetry. They are isolated from the world, in a pavilion of green and white porcelain, surrounded by a calm pool with only a jade bridge connecting to land. Nature images include comparing the bridge to the arch of a tiger's back, and to the shape of a half moon. The poetic implication of the scene is that youth are completely oblivious to the pain and misery they will feel once they

fully recognize their own mortality (as the poet's song described in the first poem) and experience loss of love and loneliness in the autumn of their lives as the Wanderer does in the second poem.

E. "Von der Schönheit (Of Beauty)"

As in the previous movement, the poet is an observer of the scene being described: young maidens sitting in the sun picking flowers on a river bank, bantering with each other while being caressed by a gentle breeze. They are interrupted by a vigorous group of handsome young men on horseback. The most beautiful of the maidens is very strongly attracted to one of the riders. The scene is intensely sensual and physical, with the kind of passion depicted that the Wanderer mourns losing in the second poem. This is the only point in *Das Lied* that we see any relationship between lovers. Even in this case, it occurs at a distance from the Wanderer, as the poet is simply an observer to the scene. Further, while there is great passion and desire on the part of the maiden, it is unfulfilled as the young man gallops off.

F. "Der Trunkene im Frühling (The Drunk in Springtime)"

In this movement, we have wine as the chief means of numbing one's consciousness in order to obliterate all sensory perception, to deal with the anguish over having such a short life. The Wanderer drinks until he passes out and, when he awakens, repeats the cycle. He does not care that spring has come; he just wants to be drunk. He wonders why he should work and

worry, if life is only a dream. Of course, in his habitually drunken state, life can only be a dream.

Several nature images are used in this poem. A bird sings, laughs, and answers the Wanderer's question whether spring is here. This is another example of personification. We also have the nature image of the moon gleaming in the black heavens. We might generally consider the image of the moon to be comforting or consoling, but this image is considerably bleaker, darker, and more threatening.

This movement forms a pair with the first movement, which is also a drinking song. According to Mitchell, Mahler's goal was

to round off the sequence of five movements that effectively comprises the first part of the bi-partite symphony, and while still sustaining the less than monumental character of the middle movements at the same time to switch the symphony as it were back on course, to return us to (and thereby simultaneously to remind us of) the major poetic topics of *Das Lied*, the issues that still require final resolution, and that meant, in my view at least, setting up again the basic conflict, first projected so forcefully in the first 'Trinklied' and since suspended (or placed in different perspectives) (2002, 313).

G. "Der Abschied (The Farewell)"

The final movement is the largest of the six, nearly equal to the combined lengths of the first five. The text is comprised of two poems joined together ("In Expectation of the Friend"

and “The Farewell of the Friend”), which were significantly reworked by Mahler to fit the artistic and poetic needs of *Das Lied*.

The poem begins with a nature scene of the sun going down, bringing shadows and coolness, and the moon rising up through the blue lake of heaven. There’s a gentle breeze, the brook is personified as it sings a pleasant melody in the darkness, and the flowers grow pale in the twilight. We are immersed in the evocative world of nature, combined with the mystery of the approaching night. The earth is personified as taking deep breaths of rest and sleep. All longing turns to dreaming, and weary people go home to relearn, in sleep, forgotten joy and youth, as the world falls asleep. There is then a change in perspective, as the Wanderer turns inward rather than just describing the scene. He is waiting for his friend, to bid him a last farewell, and longs to be by his side to enjoy the beauty of the evening. “In Expectation of the Friend” ends with the Wanderer experiencing and appreciating the beauty of the “eternal love-and-life drunken world” (Hefling 2000, 130).

In “The Farewell of the Friend,” which forms the second part of “The Farewell,” the friend arrives and talks with the Wanderer, asking him where he is going and why. The Wanderer responds that “Fortune was not kind to me in this world,” he seeks rest for his weary heart, and he is going to wander in the mountains, to his homeland, to his abode (Mitchell 2002, 337). His heart is still and awaits its hour. The beloved earth everywhere blossoms in spring and grows green again. Everywhere and forever the horizons shine bright and blue, forever.

There is a significant ambiguity in this text relating to persona. The identity of the observer, speaker, waiting friend, and departing friend are uncertain. Arthur Wenk postulates three personae: a narrator, a waiting friend, and a departing friend. According to Hefling, who acknowledges Mitchell’s work on this point, “the musical persona and the archetypal figure of

Death have become one, inseparably fused, no longer adversaries" (2000, 114). After extensive analysis with particular attention to how the musical setting of the poetry clarifies the textual ambiguities, Mitchell ultimately concludes that there is only one persona: Mahler himself (2002, 370 – 373 and 424 – 432).

IV. Harmonic Language Overview

As mentioned, the harmonic language in *Das Lied* is fluid and full of ambiguity. Mahler makes use of a wide variety of techniques including: pentatonicism, modal mixture, double-tonic complex, added sixth chords, semitone voice leading, implicit tonality, “expressive” tonality, cyclic use of motives, and heterophony.

One of the defining qualities of *Das Lied*, essential to providing its oriental flavor, is extensive use of pentatonic scales. Such scales have only five pitches within an octave. A more thorough discussion of pentatonicism is beyond the scope of this study. Stephen Hefling gives an excellent summary of pentatonic scales and an analysis of their use in *Das Lied*, stating that “pentatonic scales, the most frequent modes of pitch organization in Eastern music, are central to both horizontal and vertical dimensions of *Das Lied*, and nowhere more so than in the first movement. They provide Mahler with the germ-motives of the larger structure, which he develops with the same degree of organic coherence that first emerged in the ‘orientalist’ song of 1901, ‘Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen [I have become lost to the world].’” Furthermore, “Harmonic manifestations of the pentatonic motive include the numerous and unusual ‘V–IV–I’ cadential progressions that punctuate this music” (Hefling 2000, 84 – 91). A number of these progressions are identified in Section VI.

Robert Bailey describes Wagner’s harmonic techniques in his analysis of *Tristan* (1985, 115 – 125). All of the techniques described by Bailey are used in *Das Lied*, as *Tristan* was “Mahler’s favorite work of musical theater” and a major influence for him (Hefling 2000, 81). According to Bailey, “An immediately apparent principle of later nineteenth-century German tonal construction is modal mixture, the use of both the major and minor inflections of a given

key" (1985, 116). Mode mixture is defined as "The selective use of elements from the opposite mode, most often pitches of minor, $\flat 6$ and $\flat 3$, within the major mode" (Stein and Spillmann 1996, 329). Hefling notes "mixture and juxtaposition of mode are stock-in-trade for Mahler" (2000, 81). This was a technique widely used by nineteenth-century composers, consistent with the increasingly popular view that there were only 12 chromatic keys, rather than 24 different major and minor keys. Mahler uses both parallel (having the same tonic pitch) and relative (having the same key signature) major/minor pairs to set the text of *Das Lied*, as discussed in Sections VI and VII.

Another technique described by Bailey is semitone voice leading, in which "*linear* considerations (with either diatonic or semitone voice leading, or both in alternation) more and more take precedence over *harmonic* ones," providing for new resolutions of the V^7 sonority, "all of which assume equivalent significance in this period" (1985, 117 – 118). Bailey describes Example 1 as follows:

The first of these progressions is the most familiar and characteristic cadential progression in tonal music. Semitone voice leading governs all the others. 1b is of particular interest because with semitone voice leading, either the major or minor form of the triad can appear. Enharmonic respellings of the V^7

Example 1 Possibilities for resolution of the V^7 sonority (Bailey 1985, 117).



sonority in progressions like 1b and 1c permitted its description as an augmented-6th chord (or German 6th), a functional differentiation that maintained the much greater importance of dominant function in resolution

1a. In music before *Tristan*, these progressions usually had only “decorative” significance at best – mere foreground progressions with no larger harmonic or tonal significance. Later on, however, music often turns on these equally valid “meanings” or resolutions for the one sonority (1985, 117).

Kofi Agawu provides one illustration, given as Example 2, of Mahler's extensive use of semitone voice leading in *Das Lied* (1986, 39). Describing this, Agawu states: "While certain passages retain the tonality-defining dominant or dominant-functioning chords, others abandon consonant articulation, preferring consistency in voice-leading" (1986, 38).

Example 2 Semitone voice leading in the first movement of *Das Lied* (Agawu 1986, 39).

A third technique described by Bailey is use of a “double-tonic complex,” the “pairing together of two tonalities a minor 3rd apart” (1985, 121 – 124). Hefling considers the fact that Mahler and Wagner paired the same keys of a minor and C major to be no accident, as Mahler was “almost certainly influenced” on this point by *Tristan* (2000, 81). Example 3 shows the combination of the tonic triads of a minor and C major for this particular double-tonic complex, and how this can be equivalent to a tonic triad in C major with an added sixth. Hefling discusses these “added sixth” chords which, in this case, share the pitches C and E (2000, 84 – 86). As explained by Bailey, “The function of this major triad with added 6th should not be confused with the function of the added-6th chord in twentieth-century popular music, which acts simply as a decorated triad (a triad with an extra nontriadic note). The actual notes of the two chords are the same, but this double-triadic sonority functions here as the harmonic representative of the double-tonic complex at work throughout the structure” (1985, 122).

Two other harmonic techniques in *Tristan* are described by Bailey as follows: (1) “the treatment of the V⁷ chord as a temporary consonance,” and (2) “what we might call the indirect method of exposition, wherein certain fundamental tonal and motivic elements first appear by implication rather than by explicit statement. The dominant is in fact so intimately bound up with its tonic that it can suggest or present it by implication and thereby substitute for it” when

Example 3 Double-tonic complex with a minor and C major.

Double-tonic complex

a minor C major a minor + C major added-6th chord

used as a local consonance (1985, 125). As shown in Section VI, these techniques are used frequently in *Das Lied*. For example, this occurs at mm. 29 – 30 in the first movement on a cadence in D major. Stein and Spillman call this “implicit tonality,” which they define as “a section of a piece where a tonality is suggested, by its dominant, vii^{o7} and other chords, but is not clearly established through a tonicization or modulation” (1996, 328).

One final Wagnerian harmonic technique addressed by Bailey is the use of “expressive” tonality. In *Das Lied*, there is a refrain that is repeated at the end of each strophe in the first movement. Each refrain is set in a key a half step above the prior one. Hefling notes that this is an “‘expressive’ tonality that Mahler uses frequently; here it literally heightens the poignant conclusion of each strophe” (2000, 84).

As mentioned, Mahler uses pentatonic scales to provide “the germ-motives of the larger structure.” Hefling also shows how the basic pentatonic cell, used in the opening measures of the first movement, recurs in each of the remaining five movements (2000, 84 – 87). Such cyclic use of motivic material is reminiscent of Beethoven, or of Berlioz. However, Mahler extends the use of these further towards Wagner’s use of leitmotifs. According to Hefling, “In the ‘leitmotivic’ manner fully developed by Wagner, Mahler repeatedly uses the motives both to adumbrate and to recall other moments of the movement (and occasionally of the work), thereby enhancing its dramatic power and coherence” (2000, 89).

Another harmonic technique used by Mahler in *Das Lied* is heterophony. Theodor Adorno defines this as “The blurred unison in which identical voices diverge slightly through rhythm,” as contrasted with homophony (all voices subordinated to one melody) and polyphony (melodic equality of voices) (1992, 150). Hefling (2000, 86) and Mitchell (2002, 125) also discuss Mahler’s use of heterophony. In fact, Mitchell includes Guido Adler’s 1908 essay on the

topic as an appendix (2002, 624 – 634). Example 4 shows the use of heterophony in the first movement of *Das Lied* (mm. 14 – 15), where we see the pitches of A, C, E and G used repeatedly, but in three different rhythmic patterns.

This brief overview of Mahler's harmonic language for *Das Lied* is not intended to be exhaustive. Indeed, Adorno points out several additional techniques (lack of a traditional bass function and high tessitura of the solo part) (1992, 150), and Kofi Agawu identifies the use of back-relating dominants, which he calls a “retrospective dominant” (1986, 30). Further, Agawu notes “there are still those passages in which the complexity of the sonorities defies categorization within the system of functional harmony,” and suggests set theory while doubting its relevance to Mahler (1986, 39 and 47). Instead, I have given a flavor of Mahler's principle techniques, in order to set the stage for a detailed harmonic analysis of the first movement.

Example 4 Use of heterophony in the first movement of *Das Lied* (Mahler 1991, 52).

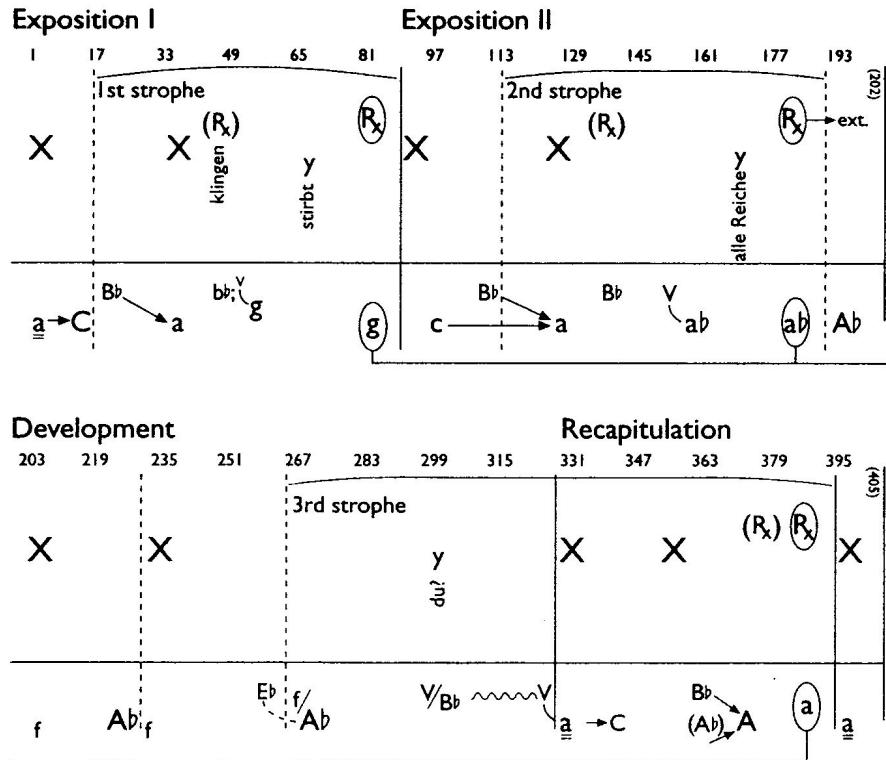
The musical score for Mahler's 'Das Lied' (Movement 1, page 52) illustrates the use of heterophony. The score consists of four staves: Tenorstimme (top), 2. Vi. Vla. (second violin), Hfen. (harp), and piano (bottom). The Tenorstimme staff features rhythmic patterns with 'rit.' and 'Mit voller Kraft.' markings. The 2. Vi. Vla. staff has a sustained note with 'tr.' and 'rit.' markings. The Hfen. staff has a sustained note with 'rit.' markings. The piano staff has dynamic markings 'sff' and 'sf m.s.'.

V. Summary Formal Analysis of “Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde”

Das Lied von der Erde has received considerable attention from a number of well-regarded scholars such as Robert Bailey and Stephen Hefling as well as Constantin Floros and Donald Mitchell. I present here a summary of the form of the first movement of *Das Lied* as described by these scholars, and examine the areas in which they agree or disagree. I begin by presenting the Bailey/Hefling view, then examine Floros’ and compare the two. I then examine Mitchell’s analysis, in which he has a different view of the structure of the text, and compare his to the others.

Hefling’s view of the form and harmonic scheme of the first movement derives from that of Robert Bailey, whose ideas are shown in Figure 2 (Hefling 1992, 303; 2000, 81 – 83, 144).

Figure 2 “Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde,” formal scheme (Hefling 2000, 83).



This figure gives measure numbers at the top, the location of the three stanzas of text (strophes), recurring thematic figures (indicated by X, y, and R_x), and a variety of key areas. Hefling describes the first movement's formal structure as follows:

Robert Bailey has lucidly observed that the first movement of *Das Lied von der Erde* is an extraordinary union of strophic lied and sonata form, as illustrated in the proportional diagram of [Figure 2]. It is a perfect binary structure: the first half (202 mm.) consists of two expositions (the second varied), which present the first two stanzas of the poem, while the second half (203 mm.) comprises a development and curtailed recapitulation spanned by the third strophe, which bisects the development and presses forward into the reprise. Motivic element *X* is the main orchestral motive based on the pentatonic cell that pervades much of the work. The tonal center of the movement as a whole is A (major/minor), and as is well known, each of the three poetic stanzas is punctuated by the recurring refrain (R_x), “Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod” [Dark is life, is death]: its first occurrence is in G minor, the second in A-flat minor, and the third in the tonic, A minor. The successive appearances of the refrain, rising by semitone, intensify the poignance of this crucial line of poetry. This ascending tonal progression is not merely an expressive detail, but underscores the integration of the three strophes into a musical structure that is binary and sonata-like. A♭ is the movement's main secondary tonal center: the double exposition concludes in that tonality, and the development focuses on A♭, coupled with the adjunct third-related key of F minor. And the abbreviated reprise, concurrent with the

return to the tonic of A, arrives mid-way through the third strophe. In short, the blending and balance of symphonic and strophic procedures is utterly remarkable (1992, 303 – 305).

Based on my study of the score, I find this to be an accurate and succinct statement of the form and structure of the first movement.

Floros has a similar view of the form of the first movement (1993, 249 – 251). He defines it as a “synthesis of strophic structure and sonata-allegro form” (1993, 249) and outlines it in the following way:

First Exposition (= first stanza)

| | | |
|-----|---------|--|
| Mm. | 1 – 32 | First section in A minor |
| | 33 – 52 | Transition |
| | 53 – 80 | Secondary section in D minor and G minor |
| | 81 – 88 | Refrain in G minor |

Second Exposition (= second stanza)

| | | |
|--|-----------|---|
| | 89 – 124 | First section |
| | 125 – 136 | Transition |
| | 137 – 152 | Interpolated passage beginning in B-flat major and ending in C-flat major |
| | 153 – 182 | Secondary section in E-flat minor and A-flat minor |
| | 183 – 202 | Refrain in A-flat minor/A-flat major |

Development (Arioso character)

(third stanza, lines 1 – 2)

| | | |
|--|-----------|----------------|
| | 203 – 229 | First section |
| | 230 – 260 | Second section |
| | 261 – 284 | Third section |
| | 285 – 292 | Transition |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| | Recapitulation (third stanza, lines 3 – 12) |
| 293 – 325 | Secondary section beginning in B-flat minor |
| 326 – 372 | First section |
| 373 – 392 | Refrain in A minor/A major |
| 393 – 405 | Postlude (1993, 250) |

Floros' description is similar to that of Bailey/Hefling in many ways. They agree on the "synthesis of strophic structure and sonata-allegro form" consisting of four parts: "exposition, varied repeat of the exposition, development, and varied recapitulation" (Floros 1993, 249). They also agree on the structure of the text as having three stanzas, or strophes, condensed by Mahler from the original version of Bethge that has four. However, Floros focuses more on the details of sonata form in identifying the various subsections and transitions within each of the major sections, while Bailey provides a more global diagram that integrates the strophic form with the major elements of sonata form, while also indicating musical thematic elements as well as illustrating the tonal complexity of the movement. This tonal complexity is shown by including a variety of key areas and showing how they may relate by positioning them at different vertical locations and connecting them with various lines (solid or dashed, straight or curved, and with or without arrows). The overall key of the movement is double underlined (a minor), while the progression of keys used for the refrain are circled and connected.

Figure 2 is informative and provides a succinct outline of the formal scheme of the first movement of *Das Lied*. However, there are problems in interpreting the diagram because there is no published guide to understanding the precise meanings of the various graphical indications relating to the harmonic and tonal structure. According to Hefling, the curved lines show dominant-tonic resolutions while arrows "indicate third pairings or semitone connections"

(personal communication). While this is quite helpful, the details of the diagram remain difficult to interpret.

Floros' description is similar to that of Bailey/Hefling, but there are areas of disagreement. The most significant difference relates to the span of the recapitulation. Bailey/Hefling consider the recapitulation to begin at m. 326, while Floros considers it to begin considerably earlier, at m. 293 (1993, 250). I will return to this issue after providing Mitchell's view.

The authors are also not in full agreement over the various key areas. Perhaps the most conspicuous of these is the indication of C \flat major by Floros approaching m. 152 (1993, 250), which is absent in the Bailey diagram of Figure 2. Based on my study of the score, I concur with Bailey/Hefling, as C \flat major is only touched briefly in the transition to e \flat minor. The tonic triads of these two keys share the two pitch classes of E \flat and G \flat .

They also differ in three areas of considerable harmonic ambiguity. In the first of these (mm. 53 – 80), Floros includes both possibilities (d minor and g minor) while Bailey/Hefling give g minor with a curved line connecting this to v (v of g minor being d minor). The same issue exists at mm. 153 – 182, among the keys of a \flat minor and e \flat minor. A third example exists at the beginning of the development (m. 203), where Bailey/Hefling show f minor along with A \flat major. Hefling describes this as being focused “on A \flat major, coupled with the adjunct third-related key of F minor” (1992, 305). Floros makes no mention of what key is used in this extended portion of the development (more than 50 measures). In my view, it is not clear if f minor is the key or whether this is merely vi of A \flat major. In fact, even A \flat major is only hinted at through its dominant (E \flat major and V of V) in the development section, although the previous section does clearly end in A \flat (both major and minor). Of these, the Bailey/Hefling descriptions

provide more comprehensive characterizations of the tonalities. We return to these ambiguities when considering the relationship between tonality and text in Section VII.

Donald Mitchell has written extensively on *Das Lied von der Erde* (2002). His “outline scheme” or diagram of the first movement’s basic plan is given in Figure 3 (2002, 175 – 177).

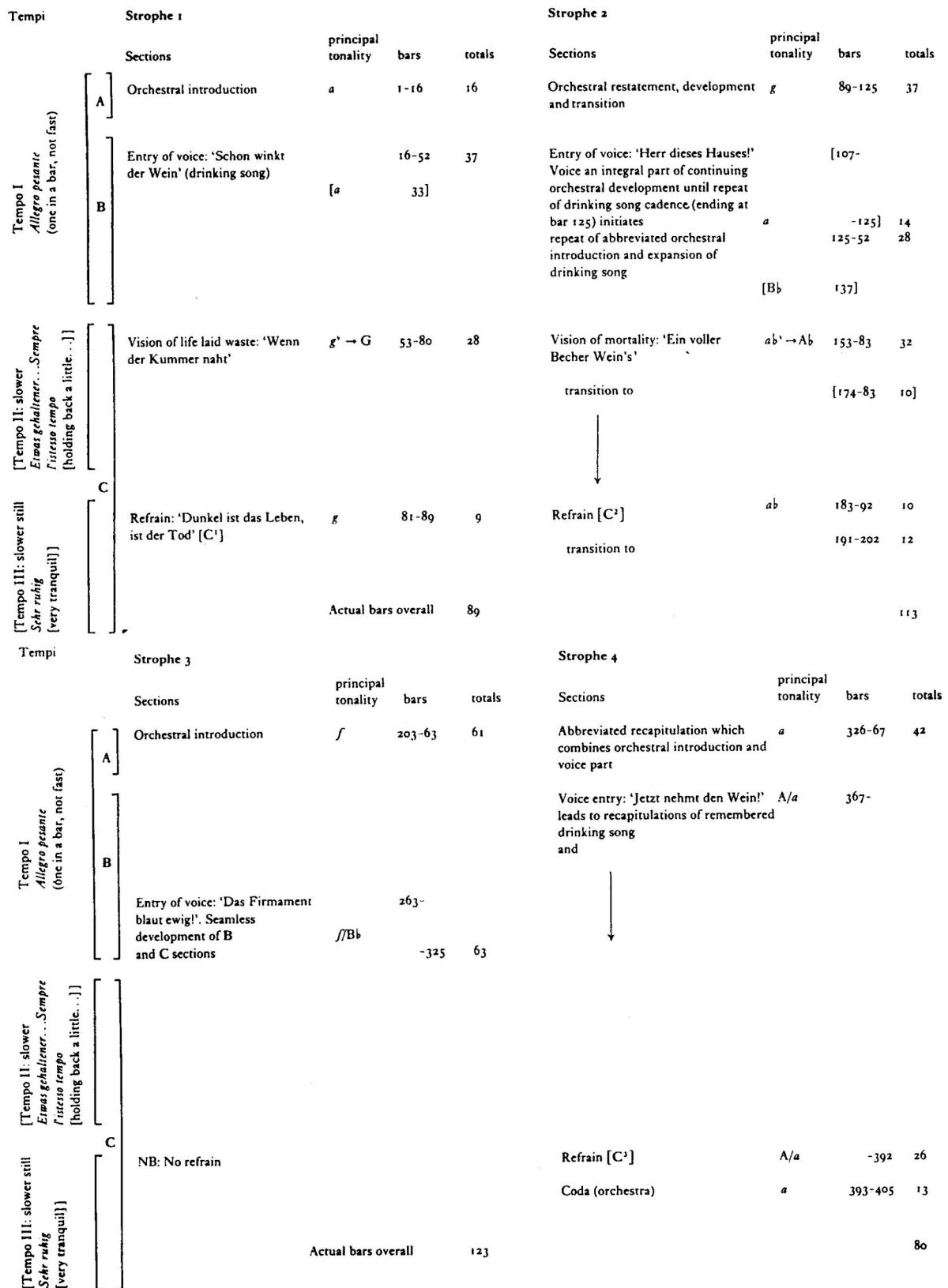
According to Mitchell,

No diagram, however carefully considered and drawn, can indicate more than a few of the essential features of any Mahler work, movement or part-movement; and this first song of *Das Lied* is no exception. Perhaps the most helpful approach is to take each broad feature in turn, and above all to read the diagram not only downward but across and also comparatively. Because it is the relationship between the strophes – the contrasts, the developments and truncations, the interfertilization – that is so fascinating and so characteristic of Mahler’s compositional process (2002, 175).

While Mitchell’s outline is informative, particularly in attempting to add tempo indications and the connections between the strophes (gained by reading across), I find it generally to be less insightful and descriptive than the Bailey diagram of Figure 2.

Perhaps the most significant difference between Mitchell’s views and those of Bailey/Hefling and Floros is that Mitchell considers there to be four strophes (versus three, the last two combined into a single strophe). The original poem for this movement had four strophes but was modified by Mahler (Mitchell 2002, 169). Others share Mitchell’s view, including Arthur Wenk (1977, 33 – 34) and George Bird and Richard Stokes (1977, 85). I agree with Mitchell that there is a natural break in the text. However, Mahler’s setting of the text and, in particular, the lack of a refrain argues for the existence of only three stanzas rather than four.

Figure 3 “Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde,” outline scheme (Mitchell 2002, 176 – 177).



Other differences and similarities between Mitchell's view and the views of Bailey/Hefling and Floros relate to the precise locations of sectional boundaries, and the definition of principal tonalities within sections. Mitchell and Bailey/Hefling tend to organize the sections with respect to the text, whereas Floros tends to focus on sonata-form elements. For example, Mitchell and Bailey/Hefling separate the orchestral introduction as one section (mm. 1 – 16, with the entrance of the voice in m. 16), while Floros considers mm. 1 – 32 as the first section in a minor. This latter view yields an odd boundary, truncating the first two lines of text before the last word, which arrives at the end of a full cadence in a minor.

As an example of differences of opinion regarding principal tonality, recall that the beginning of the development section (mm. 203 – 263) was considered by Hefling as being focused “on A♭ major, coupled with the adjunct third-related key of F minor” (1992, 305), while Floros makes no mention of what key is used. Mitchell maintains that this section “decisively opens in f, a new tonality to match the new style” (2002, 192), and further indicates f minor as the principal tonality of this entire section, with no mention of A♭ major (2002, 177). As previously mentioned, this is a harmonically ambiguous region and I agree with Bailey/Hefling’s summary.

Mitchell agrees with Bailey/Hefling regarding the span of the recapitulation. He considers the opening of the fourth strophe at m. 326 to be “an undoubted moment of recapitulation” (2002, 199), while Floros views the recapitulation to begin considerably earlier at m. 293 (1993, 250). I am in agreement with Bailey/Hefling and Mitchell on this point. As is shown in Section VI, the music at m. 326 closely mirrors the music at the beginning of the movement, thus providing a clear sense of recapitulation.

VI. Detailed Harmonic Analysis of “Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde”

We are now in a position to consider a detailed harmonic analysis of the first movement of *Das Lied*, “Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde (The Drinking Song of the Misery of the Earth).” The analysis is summarized in Figures 4 through 6, one for each stanza of the text. Each figure contains measure numbers, tonalities (or harmonies), the text in German, and a translation taken from Hefling (2000, 120 – 122). Measure numbers are aligned with tonalities (or harmonies) and the German text, with the alignment occurring along the left edges of each of these. In Figure 4, for example, the text begins at measure 16, in the tonality of C major. A B^b⁶ chord occurs at m. 17, on the word “Wein” (bII⁶/a). Note how the left edges of these are all carefully aligned. (The translation is not aligned.) Given the harmonic ambiguity and the frequent use of passing chords and semitone voice leading, no attempt is made to identify the precise harmonic content of each measure; rather, the goal is to give an indication of significant harmonic changes in order to illuminate the setting of the text and, thereby, to provide a better understanding of the detailed musical structure of the work. As previously mentioned, the convention being followed is to use upper case letters for major keys and pitches, and lower case letters for minor keys. This format obtains except when directly quoting other sources, in which case the format used by the source is followed, clarified when necessary.

Many different areas of tonality are expressed, but one seldom feels the existence of a stable key area. When such a stable key is expressed, a box in the figure surrounds it. Thus, the piece opens in the key of a minor, wanders off harmonically, and then returns to a minor towards the end of the second line of text, as indicated in Figure 4. This wandering consists of a move into C major, then to the Neapolitan of a; it touches on c minor, begins its return to a minor with

Figure 4 Detailed harmonic analysis of “Das Trinklied” first stanza

| | | | | | |
|----------|---------------------------------|-------|----|-----------|------------------------|
| mm. | 1 12 13 14 16 | 17 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| tonality | \boxed{a} <u>V - IV - I</u> C | B^b | c | $+6$ a | $\underline{V^6}$ a |

Schon winkt der Wein im gold’nen Pokale,
Now winks the wine in the golden goblet,

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---|------------------------|--|
| 28 | 29 30 | 32 | 33 34 36 |
| $\underline{ii^7}$ D | $\underline{V^6 - \underline{3}}$ (=A) D | $\underline{V^7}$ a | \boxed{a} <u>i - V^7</u> (PAC) a |

doch trinkt hoch nicht, erst sing’ ich euch ein Lied!
but drink not yet, first sing I to you a song!

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|------------------------|------------------------|----|----|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|------------|
| 37 | 39 | 40 41 | 42 | 44 | 45 | 47 | 51 | 53 |
| a | $\underline{V^6}$ A | $\underline{V^7}$ d | a | A | $\underline{V^6}$ d | \underline{VI} d | b^b G^b | B^b d |

Das Lied vom Kummer soll auflachend in die Seele euch klingen.
The song of sorrow should burst laughing in the soul (to) you resound.

| | |
|---------------|----|
| 56 | 57 |
| <u>V</u> g | g |

Wenn der Kummer naht, liegen wüst die Gärten der Seele,
When the sorrow comes, [then] lie waste the gardens of the soul,

| | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|---|
| 67 | 69 | 77 78 |
| g | $\underline{V^7}$ (see text) g | $\underline{V^6 - \underline{3}}$ (=G) C |

Welkt hin und stirbt die Freude, der Gesang.
[Then] dries up and dies the joy, the singing.

| | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------|----|
| 81 | 87 | 89 |
| \boxed{g} | $\underline{V^7}$ g (PAC) | g |

Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod.
Dark is (the) life, is death.

an augmented sixth chord in m. 24, and then hints at D major (an implicit tonality) before returning to a minor. Note that as early as m. 12 we find an “unusual ‘V–IV–I’ cadential progression,” along with the very close juxtaposition of a minor and C major. This double-tonic complex (a minor with C major) occurs as early as mm. 5 – 9, while mm. 14 – 15 (shown as Example 4 in Section IV) includes heterophony as well as the same double-tonic complex.

One characteristic harmonic gesture that occurs frequently in the first movement is the use of unresolved cadential $\frac{4}{4}$ chords. This occurs in mm. 29 – 30, for example, as well as in mm. 77 – 78. We would expect to proceed from V/D in m. 30 to D, but instead wind up in A (both major and minor). A similar progression takes place in the later example, where we expect to proceed from V/C to C in m. 78, but wind up in G (major/minor). Note that both of these are also examples of implicit tonality, as neither D nor C is tonicized. Note also the significant use of modal mixture from mm. 29 – 39.

The region from mm. 53 – 80 was discussed in Section V as a region of harmonic ambiguity between d minor and g minor. I have shown g minor from m. 57 to just before m. 69. At this point, what appears to be a dissonant altered dominant seventh chord (which has a lowered fifth degree) is sustained over eight measures. However, because of the resolution of this chord, it is more appropriate to view it as $ii^{\phi 7}/C$ rather than as a dominant. The key of g minor is then clearly expressed for the first statement of the refrain at m. 81.

A detailed harmonic analysis of the second stanza is given in Figure 5. Note that, harmonically, the second stanza opens identically to the first: mm. 90 – 125 is identical to mm. 1 – 33, except that the second stanza opens in g minor rather than a minor (g minor being continued from the end of the first stanza), and the augmented sixth chord of m. 24 does not occur in the second stanza.

As previously mentioned, the same type of harmonic ambiguity occurs in the second stanza as in the first stanza (at mm. 53 – 80). Now, it occurs at mm. 153 – 182, among the keys of $a\flat$ minor and $e\flat$ minor. I have shown $a\flat$ minor from m. 157 to just before m. 169. At this point, just as in the first stanza, what appears to be a dissonant altered dominant seventh chord (which has a lowered fifth degree) is sustained over eight measures. In this case, however, its resolution supports viewing it as a dominant. The key of $a\flat$ minor is then clearly expressed for the second statement of the refrain at m. 81. As mentioned, this second refrain occurs in a key a semitone above its first statement.

Figure 5 Detailed harmonic analysis of “Das Trinklied” second stanza

| | | | | | | |
|----------|-------------|-------------------|-----|------------|-----|-----|
| mm. 90 | 102 | 105 | 106 | 109 | 112 | 114 |
| tonality | \boxed{g} | <u>V – IV – I</u> | | $B\flat^6$ | | c |
| | | | | C | | |

Herr dieses Hauses!
Lord of this house!

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|------|------------------|-------------|
| 117 | 119 | 121 | 122 | 124 | 125 |
| $\underline{V4^6}$ | $\underline{ii^7}$ | $\underline{V4^6 - \S}$ | (=A) | $\underline{V7}$ | \boxed{a} |
| a | D | D | | a | (PAC) |

Dein Keller birgt die Fülle des goldenen Weins!
Your cellar holds the abundance of golden wine!

| | | | | |
|-----|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| 129 | 131 | 132 | 133 | 134 |
| a | $\underline{V4^6}$ | A | a | G |
| | A | | | |

Hier, diese Laute nenn’ ich mein!
Here, this lute call I mine!

137 139

B V⁷
B_b

141 143

B_b V⁷
B_b

Die Laute schlagen und die Gläser leeren,
The lute (to) stroke and the glasses (to) empty,

145

G_b

149

C_b

153

e_b

das sind die Dinge die zusammen passen.
those are the things that togther go well.

156 157

V
a_b

Ein voller Becher Weins zur rechten Zeit
A brimming cup of wine at the right time

163

V⁷
a_b

ist mehr wert, ist mehr wert,
is more worth, is more worth

169

V⁷ (see text)
a_b

179 180

V⁶ - 5 (=A_b)
D_b

ist mehr wert als alle Reiche dieser Erde!
is more worth than all the kingdoms of this earth!

183

a

189

V⁷
a_b

191

A_b

193

a_b

195

A_b

197

a_b

199

V⁶
A_b

202

V⁷
a_b

Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod.
Dark is life, is death.

Harmonically, the only other significant difference between the first two stanzas is that, in the second stanza, a stable key area is expressed, just before the harmonically ambiguous region. From mm. 137 – 144, the key of B \flat major is stable in setting the text relating to playing the lute and drinking. The poetic meaning of this key is discussed in Section VII.

Before the text of the third stanza begins, the development section of the movement starts in m. 203 with an extended orchestral interlude of sixty measures, as shown in the detailed harmonic analysis of the third stanza given in Figure 6. As discussed in Section V, this is a third region of harmonic ambiguity, which Hefling describes as “being focused on A-flat major, coupled with the adjunct third-related key of F minor” (1992, 305). If we consider E \flat major to be V of A \flat major, then we can see from Figure 6 that the key of A \flat major comprises much of this section, but only through its dominant. Harmonic ambiguity continues well into the setting of the third stanza’s text, until A \flat major is finally confirmed in mm. 280 – 282. This key lasts only briefly, as the development continues to unfold. We immediately have another brief region of stable, but implied, tonality in the key of b \flat from mm. 292 – 300, surrounding the question of how long can one live. Not until the end of the development at m. 326 do we reach another region of stable tonality as we return to the home key of a minor to begin the recapitulation.

A close comparison of the melodic content and the harmonic progressions at the beginning of the recapitulation (mm. 326 – 353) to those at the beginning of the movement (mm. 1 – 33) reveals that this is, in fact, the recapitulation. Not all scholars agree on this point, as discussed previously. This is an altered reprise, consistent with Mahler’s long-standing view that art should be like life, and that each repetition should be further developed (Hefling 2000, 84). A careful examination of the sequence of harmonic progressions shows the two passages to be identical except for the following omissions in the recapitulation: c minor in m. 23, and a brief

excursion to the implied tonality of D major (mm. 28 – 29) with the a minor dominant chords that serve as transitions into and out of this region in mm. 25 – 27 and m. 32. Essentially, the opening exposition has been transposed into the home key of a minor.

There are only very brief excursions from the tonalities of A major/a minor from this point to the end of the movement (mm. 353 – 405). The exceptions include the setting of the word “life” in mm. 361 – 365 with harmonies of B \flat (II) and A \flat , and the setting of “wine” in m. 369 in the implied tonality of D major. The setting of the final refrain is in a minor (a semitone above that of the second refrain), but with a significant coloring of A major. We examine such text-setting issues, including motions outside of the principal tonalities, in considering the possible poetic meanings of the various tonalities in the next section.

Figure 6 Detailed harmonic analysis of “Das Trinklied” third stanza

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|-----|----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|-----|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| mm. | 203 | 222 | 225 | 228 | 229 | 230 | 241 | 243 | 244 | 245 | 247 | 249 | 253 | 256 | 257 | 261 |
| tonality | f | | <u>V⁷/V-V₄⁶ - 3</u> | c | f | E \flat | <u>V₄⁶ - 3</u> | | <u>V₄⁶ - 3</u> | | <u>V⁷ - I - V⁷ - I</u> | | <u>V₄⁶</u> | | | c |
| (Development section instrumental interlude) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 263 | 265 | 267 | | 269 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <u>V₄⁶</u> | <u>V₄⁶</u> | <u>V₃⁵</u> | | <u>V₄⁶</u> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | c | f | f | | f | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Das Firmament blaut ewig, und die Erde The heavens are blue ever, and the earth | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 271 | | 276 | 277 | 280 | 281 | 282 | 285 | 292 | 293 | | | | | | |
| | <u>V₄⁶</u> | | <u>V⁷/V-V₄⁶</u> | | <u>V⁷</u> | <u>A\flat⁶</u> | <u>A\flat</u> | <u>V₄⁶</u> | | <u>V⁷ - V₄⁶</u> | | | | | | |
| | f | | A \flat | | A \flat (IAC) | | | f | | b \flat | | | | | | |
| wird lange fest steh’n und aufblühn im Lenz. shall long firm stand and forth-blossom in spring. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

295 297 298 299 301
 $\frac{V^7}{b^b}$ $\frac{V^6}{b^b}$ $\frac{V - V^6}{b^b}$ $\frac{V^5}{B^b}$

Du aber, Mensch, wie lang lebst denn du?
You, however, man, how long live then you?

307 309 310 313 314
 $\frac{V^5}{B^b}$ $\frac{V^6 - \frac{5}{3}}{E^b} (=B^b)$ $\frac{V^6 - \frac{5}{3}}{D^b}$

Nicht hundert Jahre darfst du dich ergötzen,
Not (a) hundred years may you yourself amuse,

315 316 317 321 323 325 326
 $\frac{V}{D^b}$ $\frac{+6 - V}{C}$ $\frac{+6}{C}$ $\frac{+6 - V}{a}$ \boxed{a}

an all dem morschen Tande dieser Erde!
with all the rotting trifles of this earth!

328 338
a $\frac{V}{C}$

Seht dort hinab! Im Mondschein auf den Gräbern
See there o'er there! In the moonlight on the gravestones

340 341 342 345
 $\frac{V}{C}$ $\frac{IV - I}{C}$ B^b

hockt eine wild-gespentische Gestalt.
crouches a wildly-ghost-like-eerie form.

348 349 353
 B^b $\frac{+6}{a}$ \boxed{a}

Ein Aff ist's! Hört ihr, wie sein Heulen
A monkey it is! Hear you, how his howling

356

a

361 365

B^b A^b

hinausgellt in den süßen Duft des Lebens!
shrieks forth into the sweet scent of life!

367

369 370

V⁶
A

V⁶ – 5 (=A)
D

373

a

Jetzt nehmt den Wein! Jetzt ist es Zeit, Genossen!
Now take the wine! Now is it time, companions!

376

379

381

383

384

a

V⁷
a

A

a

+6
a

Leert eure gold'nen Becher zu Grund'
Empty your golden cups to the bottom!

385 387 389 391 393 403 405

A a V⁶ V⁷ a V⁶ a
A (PAC) a (IAC)

Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod!
Dark is life, is death!

VII. Text Setting of “Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde”

We now consider the setting of the text and the possible meanings of the various tonalities in *Das Lied*. The most significant key of the first movement is a minor. Donald Mitchell calls a minor Mahler’s “tormented key” (Mitchell and Nicholson 1999, 277), while Stephen Hefling calls it “the key of tragedy in the Sixth Symphony, and of nihilistic despair in ‘Das Trinklied von Jammer der Erde’” (1999b, 484). Donald Mitchell has much to say about the setting of the first movement of *Das Lied*, stating that what he calls the *orchestral introduction*

sets the epic, heroic note that is appropriate to the opening of a work of the scale of *Das Lied*, and particularly appropriate to a drinking song that may celebrate earth’s irreversible sorrows but at the same time by no stretch of the imagination could be said to give passive expression to the negative philosophy of the text. My choice of the word ‘celebration’ is not accidental.

This is music of exceptional energy which, in an important sense, constitutes a heroic form of protest *against* the dark sentiments of the poem (2002, 175) . . .

Mahler makes an exceptionally imaginative approach to the text and offers, through the music, an exceptional interpretation of it . . . the kind of modifications he arrives at, while by no means necessarily distorting the spirit of the text, are made *for the sake of the music* and above all for the long-term strategy he has in mind *for the work as a whole*. We saw the same factors operating in ‘Nun will die Sonn’ [the first song of *Kindertotenlieder*]: how subtly Mahler sustained the balance between the total darkness of unalleviated grief and the future promise of light, relief and repose. We saw how those

psychological states of mind were embodied . . . in contrasted images of night and rising sun, with Mahler being preternaturally careful, while spelling out and developing this poetic contrast, *not* to promise too much too soon, lest by revealing the *dénouement*-to-be at too early a stage – as it were, unveiling the sunlight too soon – there was nothing left in suspense, and the poetic drama would be over before it were begun (2002, 181) . . .

Moreover, in the third and final statement of the refrain, he builds into it, by means of an emblematic major/minor (A/a) juxtaposition, the conflict that is at the centre of the first ‘Trinklied’ . . . The minor had to cancel the major if the debate was to continue. On the other hand, the momentary establishing of A suspends a question mark over the otherwise exclusively negative refrain, as it were questioning its comprehensive truth. As it happens, A is not going to be the ultimate mitigation of *a* (C is to be that). But at this stage in the game, A/a properly represents the setting up of the conflict, while not disclosing the eventual outcome (2002, 183).

With this as background, I therefore propose the following interpretations for the various significant tonalities used in the first movement of *Das Lied*: a minor is the overall key of the movement. It opens and closes the movement, is used more than any other key, and is used as a stable key area far more frequently than any other key. It, along with A major and C major, represent the meaning of the movement as a whole, as A and C are very close to a minor. A major is the parallel major of a minor, and Mahler frequently shifts between these two as if they were expressing different affects of the same key. Mitchell also discusses of the use of A major as the key of the second drinking song (2002, 183). C major is the relative major to a minor, but

there is more to it than that in this work. C major is bound together with a minor through pentatonicism, and through their use together as a double tonic complex. In setting the text, C major is used as an implied tonality at the end of the development (mm. 316 – 322) to describe “all the rotting trifles of this earth!” It is also used at the climax of the movement near the beginning of the recapitulation (mm. 338 – 344) when the ape is seen on the gravestones – the most graphic image of death in the entire work. I agree with Donald Mitchell that a minor is Mahler’s “tormented key.” Stephen Hefling’s assessment that it is the key of “nihilistic despair” goes a bit too far in my view. Nihilistic despair may be what the text tells us, but Mahler’s music paints a far brighter picture than this.

The harmonic ambiguity at the beginning of the development section (beginning at m. 203) relating to the keys of f minor and A♭ major is discussed in Sections V and VI. These keys are close companions in this work, with f minor (as an implied tonality) used to represent the blue firmament and the earth (mm. 265 – 275), while A♭ major is used to represent life and the annual renewal of spring (mm. 276 – 284). Note the use of A♭ major to set the final part of the word “life” at a climactic moment (m. 365). The key of a♭ minor is a dark companion to A♭ major, representing death as opposed to life. It is used to set the second refrain (mm. 183 – 190), and is used in the harmonically ambiguous section leading up to this (mm. 156 – 178), as discussed in Sections V and VI. Note that this second refrain proceeds from a♭ minor to a sudden shift to A♭ major on the final word, “death,” as discussed above by Mitchell.

B♭ major is another important tonality in this movement. It is used to set the image of the wine in its golden goblet (mm. 17 – 22), and the description of playing the lute and drinking (mm. 137 – 152). Thus, the tonality of B♭ major represents the enjoyment of life through drinking and song. Note that this is also the key of the third movement, “Of Youth.”

D major is a key that we never get to, although it is hinted at a number of times. It is first used (in mm. 28 – 30) when the Wanderer tells his companions not to drink their wine (until he sings them a song). It is used a second time (mm. 119 – 122) to describe the full cellar of wine. It is used a final time after the Wanderer has sung his song and tells his companions that now is the time to drink their wine (mm. 369 – 370). In each of these cases, we have images of unconsumed wine which, poetically, translates to an unlived life.

The final significant key in this movement is g minor, “when the sorrow comes” (m. 56). It is also used to set the first refrain, which is the darkest of the three. The key of g minor, the key of sorrow and death, is thus the real key of nihilistic despair.

VIII. Orchestration of *Das Lied von der Erde*

Let us now consider the setting of the text through orchestration of the music. *Das Lied* calls for the typically large Mahlerian orchestra: 3 flutes (one alternates piccolo), 3 oboes (one alternates English horn), 3 B♭ clarinets plus one E♭ and one bass clarinet, 3 bassoons (one alternates contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, full percussion (tympani, celesta, mandolin, glockenspiel, triangle, bass drum, cymbals, tam-tam, and tambourine), 2 harps, full strings (first and second violins, violas, cellos, and basses), and 2 soloists (tenor and alto).

Despite the large forces, they are seldom all used together. Even though the first movement is very powerful, with a number of loud sections, it uses none of the percussion instruments normally associated with these types of passages such as tympani, bass drum or cymbals. In fact, tympani and tuba are only used in the setting of the young men on horseback in the fourth movement's "orchestral fireworks" (Mitchell 2002, 276). Much of *Das Lied* is orchestrated in a manner similar to the *Kindertotenlieder*, where the orchestra is used more as a chamber ensemble. This is particularly true of the second ("Der Einsame im Herbst") and last ("Der Abschied") movements. According to Donald Mitchell,

The conspicuously resigned mood of 'Der Einsame' after the strife and protestation of the first 'Trinklied' offers, one might think, a sufficiently radical contrast. But it is a contrast reinforced by – or embodied in – a radical contrast in sonority. Mahler, for 'Der Einsame', produces an entirely new orchestra. The large orchestral resources that he used to such brilliant and strenuous effect in the first 'Trinklied' are temporarily packed away, along with the major philosophical debate, and what emerges as soundscape to

project the landscape of ‘Der Einsame’ is a typical Mahlerian chamber ensemble (2002, 219) . . .

I have just suggested that Mahler, after exploiting a large orchestra in the opening ‘Trinklied’, introduces a new, contrasting orchestral conception along with ‘Der Einsame’. But that is to underestimate the position. For it is two ‘new’ orchestras – or, if not quite that, then certainly two distinct and independent orchestral textures – that Mahler deploys in ‘Der Einsame’, in the same manner as in the *Kindertotenlieder* and for virtually identical reasons, i.e. to articulate the contrasting poetic/symbolic ideas of the text (2002, 221).

In commenting on Mahler’s late style, Constantin Floros discusses the issue of a chamber music style as follows:

Some writers like to speak of a tendency toward a chamber music style in Mahler’s late works. This formulation is vague and therefore inappropriate. It would be more fitting to say that in his later works Mahler intentionally includes passages that are scored as chamber music. Examples exist in *Das Lied* . . . However, sections orchestrated as chamber music also occur in works from the early and middle periods, the difference between these and the late works being one of degree (1993, 242).

Another major issue that is also a question of orchestration is the choice of solo voices for the work: tenor and alto. Each movement has one soloist, alternating between the two, with the tenor having the first movement. According to Hefling, “the dualism of *Das Lied* is immediately apparent in the disposition of the soloists: the tenor is a wanton singer of Dionysian revelry, whereas the alto denotes ‘appeasing resignation, contemplative philosophy,’ and Apollonian,

autumnal reflection on all that is transitory” (2000, 81). The issue of persona is discussed in the analysis of the text in Section III, which concludes that there is only one persona throughout the work. According to Hefling, “The two voices, then, do not represent two separate characters (much less the utterances of a narrator), but rather manifest the dynamic polarity of the human spirit” (2000, 81 – 82). Furthermore, in discussing the second movement, Hefling notes that

The raucous nocturnal drinking bout has been left far behind. Although the score calls for alto rather than tenor, Mahler’s change in gender of the pronoun in the title – from ‘Die Einsame’ (feminine) to ‘Der’ (masculine) – underscores that the protagonist is the same, but now contemplates life from a different domain of the soul, standing alone on the edge of a lake” (2000, 92).

One of the distinctive sonorities in *Das Lied* is the sound of flutter-tonguing flutes. Mahler uses this new technique to perfection, as early as mm. 3 – 4, to create a memorable sonority whose physical image is revealed much later, at the climax of the movement. Donald Mitchell calls mm. 3 – 4 “seminal bars” (2002, 184). “The impulse of the quasi-heroic opening horn fanfare is immediately answered by the shrieking chatter of a chromatic descent, colored by the recently discovered technique of flutter-tonguing on the flutes: only in the third strophe will we realize that this is the howling of the monkey on the gravestones, the symbol of death” (Hefling 2000, 88).

Trills are a frequently used technique in *Das Lied*. For example, in the brief section from mm. 53 – 75 of the first movement, the following instruments trill: flutes, oboes, clarinets, horns, first violins, solo violin, violas, and cellos. The trills create a haunting sonority to set the text relating to sorrow drawing near, lying waste the gardens of the soul, and the death of joy and song. “Trills infest the texture at every pitch and in every instrumental color. Trills throughout

the ‘Trinklied’ are consistently part of the symbolic imagery identified with this particular area of hallucinatory feeling” (Mitchell 2002, 184).

Virginia Sue Taylor provides an extended dissertation on Mahler’s “innovative writing” for the harp and his contribution to its “expanding role,”

particularly the association of the instrument with texts and its programmatic or symbolic use . . . In nineteenth-century orchestration the harp had been mainly a decorative appliqué which served to strengthen, embellish, or prolong the harmonic elements of a composition. It can be said that Mahler gave legitimacy to the harp as an instrument for twentieth-century musical expression by freeing it from this stereotypic role . . . The harp as treated by Mahler and Strauss also served as the nucleus of a coterie of coloristic percussion instruments – *Klangfarbengruppe* – which became a recognizable timbral identity found in much of the orchestrated music of composers who centered their activities in Vienna after the turn of the century (1988, iv – v).

The harp was not a new instrument, having been in use since at least medieval times. However, it had only relatively recently become fully chromatic, with a pedal mechanism enabling playing in all keys patented in 1810 (Taylor 1988, 1 – 5). The use of two harps by Berlioz in his *Symphonie fantastique* in 1830 “essentially marks the entrance of the harp into the orchestral repertoire” (Taylor 1988, 5 – 6).

In the two drinking songs of *Das Lied* (the first and fifth movements), Mahler “combines the harp with the triangle and glockenspiel to brighten the orchestration and highlight the boisterous nature of both songs. The harp’s arpeggios and glissandi add exuberance while its chords often stress the rhythmic patterns” (Taylor 1988, 196). Taylor compares the use of the

harp in the first movement of *Das Lied* to its use in Wagner's *Tannhäuser* (the Act I hymn to Venus):

In both these works the “protagonists” are minstrels whose vocal materials resemble the declamatory and narrative styles usually associated with this musical bard . . . A plucked instrument is an indispensable accessory to the image of a minstrel, *Minnesinger*, or *Meistersinger*; the texts of both the Wagner and Mahler works make reference to an instrument of this type. The harp is therefore prominent in both orchestrations (1988, 196 – 198).

Another unusual instrument used by Mahler in *Das Lied* is the mandolin, as a part of the *Klangfarbengruppe*. In the fourth movement (“Of Beauty”), at the sudden entrance of the boys on horseback, “the music erupts with color as the glockenspiel, tambourine, cymbal, mandolin, and harp burst forth to alter the mood of the song and inject timbres imitating Chinese instruments . . . The mandolin functions here to stress and color the accented notes, except at the raucous second march episode. There Mahler unites an imitation horses’ whinny in the mandolin with the harp’s chromatically descending chords, to create a menacing, slightly mocking tone” at rehearsal [13]+2 (Taylor 1988, 210 – 211).

Also within the *Klangfarbengruppe*, the tam-tam plays an important role in *Das Lied*. Donald Mitchell makes this clear in his discussion of the final movement:

It is with an undeniable ritualistic gesture – the arresting stroke on the tam-tam . . . – that ‘Der Abschied’ begins. Familiarity with the work has done something perhaps to soften the impact of this audacious importation of an entirely new sonority into *Das Lied*: it is the *first* time that the tam-tam is heard in the work . . . (Furthermore, the *low* tam-tam powerfully contrasts

with the *high*-pitched metal instruments in previous songs, e.g. the triangle in the last bars of the second ‘Trinklied’.) Mahler must have been aware of the traditions and history of the large gong – an oriental history, moreover – that make it the instrument *par excellence* for initiating the solemn rites and ceremonies of death. It is this, after all, that is its precise function in the first and immediately ensuing bars of ‘Der Abshied’ (2002, 355).

One final *Klangfarbengruppe* instrument, also quite new at the time, plays a pivotal role in the orchestration of *Das Lied*. This is the celesta. “There is no doubt that in Mahler’s lieder this instrument signifies ‘eternity,’ as at the conclusion of *Lied von der Erde*. The very fact that the instrument was so new must have enhanced the association: patented in 1886, the celesta had been heard in Chausson’s *La tempête* (1888), Tchaikovsky’s *Nutcracker* (1892), as well as Charpentier’s *Louise* (1900), which premiered in 1900 and was conducted by Mahler in 1903” (Peter Revers, in Painter 2002a, 179). “The celesta’s inherent capacity to give us the impression of arrested time, its crystal translucency and its icy impersonality and isolation create a sonority which leads us into another sound dimension” (Ludmila Kovnatskaya, in Reed 1995, 183). “The celesta was predominantly the instrument that Mahler identified with the idea of a final calm beyond the storms and passions of life” (Mitchell 2002, 415).

Mahler was a master of orchestration. According to Barbara Barry:

For Mahler, as for Berlioz, another superb orchestrator, sonority was an intrinsic part of the musical idea, an essential aspect of its character. Far from being surface effects, for Mahler sonority became an important means of articulating and clarifying structure, as well as enriching late nineteenth and early twentieth century orchestral repertory with some of its most individual

and memorable timbres. These sonorities recur not only in the same work but also between works, which leads Guido Adler to say how the recurrence of such figures and sonorities across Mahler's movements and works creates an inner connection of referential meaning (2000, 215).

IX. Conclusion

Gustav Mahler stands as a giant in music's evolution, whose influence has been enormous. Two authors provide a succinct commentary on Mahler's stature and his lasting impact. According to Peter Franklin, Mahler's

historical role as a mediator between the Austro-German musical tradition and early 20th-century modernism, linked with the broad emotional range and energetically powerful effect of his music in performance, led to his symphonies acquiring canonic status. Historical and theoretical musicologists have found in them a persistently rich and provocative field of study; his continuing popularity and influence on other composers further justifies his description as one of the most important figures of European art music in the 20th century (2001, 602).

Commenting on *Das Lied*, Barbara Barry states:

Das Lied von der Erde stands at the intersection of many perspectives – in the different interpretations of structural retention/transformation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century vocal symphony; in the avoidance of closure which anticipates later trends in the twentieth century; and as a dimension in the history of ideas, that Mahler believed that music, both the music that he wrote and the music he conducted, mattered profoundly, not only as aesthetic pleasure, but affecting and refining the whole range of human experience as a reflection of it (2000, 219) . . .

By modifying and reinventing structures, Mahler selected and transformed the vocabulary of expressive content in *das Lied von der Erde*. Wrought to a high

level of technical mastery, the work communicates by relating to profound aspects of human experience, and through its value, it is retained in memory (2000, 220 – 221).

Gustav Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* occupies an important position in the canon of music literature. As with any great work of art, it contains considerable ambiguity that enhances its power of expressiveness. Mahler's music continues to enrich and sustain us, not only through its performance, but also by providing a fertile ground for further study, thereby expanding our understanding of one of humankind's highest art forms.

Appendix A. Text and Translation

The following text and translation follow Hefling's quite closely (2000, 120 – 131). The translation of selected words in the first poem has been changed to reflect my own understanding of the German, in cases where I felt that the meaning could be improved relative to the poetic intent. All changed words are underlined.

Das Lied von der Erde

1 Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde

Schon winkt der Wein im gold'nen Pokale,
doch trinkt hoch nicht, erst sing' ich euch ein
Lied!

Das Lied vom Kummer soll auflachend in
die Seele euch klingen.

Wenn der Kummer naht, liegen wüst die
Gärten der Seele,

Welkt hin und stirbt die Freude, der Gesang.

Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod.

Herr dieses Hauses!

Dein Keller birgt die Fülle des goldenen
Weins!

Hier, diese Laute nenn' ich mein!

Die Laute schlagen und die Gläser leeren,
das sind die Dinge, die zusammen passen.

Ein voller Becher Weins zur rechten Zeit
ist mehr wert, ist mehr wert,

ist mehr wert als alle Reiche dieser
Erde!

Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod.

The Song of the Earth

1 The Drinking Song of the Misery of the Earth

Now beckons the wine in the golden goblet,
but drink not yet, first sing I to you a
song!

The song of sorrow should burst laughing in
the soul (to) you resound.

When the sorrow comes, [then] lie waste the
gardens of the soul,

[Then] dries up and dies the joy, the singing.

Dark is (the) life, is death.

Lord of this house!

Your cellar holds the abundance of golden
wine!

Here, this lute call I mine!

The lute (to) stroke and the glasses (to) empty,
those are the things that togher go well.

A brimming cup of wine at the right time
is more worth, is more worth,

is more worth than all the kingdoms of this
earth!

Dark is life, is death.

Das Firmament blaut ewig, und die Erde
wird lange fest steh'n und aufblühn im
Lenz.

Du aber, Mensch, wie lang lebst denn du?
Nicht hundert Jahre darfst du dich ergötzen
an all dem morschen Tande dieser Erde!
Seht dort hinab! Im Mondschein auf den
Gräbern
hockt eine wild-gespentische Gestalt.
Ein Aff ist's! Hört ihr, wie sein Heulen
hinausgellt in den süßen Duft des Lebens!
Jetzt nehmt den Wein! Jetzt ist es Zeit,
Genossen!
Leert eure gold'nen Becher zu Grund'
Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod!

2 Der Einsame im Herbst

Herbstnebel wallen bläulich überm See,
vom Reif bezogen stehen alle Gräser;
man meint, ein Künstler habe Staub von Jade
über die feinen Blüten ausgestreut.

Der süsse Duft der Blumen ist verflogen;
ein kalter Wind beugt ihre Stengel nieder.
Bald werden die verwelkten, gold'nen Blätter
der Lotosblüten auf dem Wasser zieh'n.

Mein Herz ist mude. Meine kleine Lampe
erlosch mit Knistern, es gemahnt mich an den
Schlaf.

Ich komm' zu dir, traute Ruhestätte!
Ja, gib mir Ruh', ich hab' Erquickung
not!

The heavens are blue ever, and the earth
will long firm stand and forth-blossom in
spring.

You, however, man, how long live then you?
Not a hundred years may you yourself amuse
with all the rotten trifles of this earth!
See there o'er there! In the moonlight on the
gravestones
crouches a wildly-ghost-like-eerie Form.
An ape it is! Hear you, how his howling
shrieks forth into the sweet scent of life!
Now take the wine! Now is it time,
companions!
Empty your golden cups to the bottom!
Dark is life, is death!

2 The Lonely One in Autumn

Autumn hazes well up bluish o'er the lake,
with frost covered stand all the grasses;
one would think an artist had a powder of jade
over the fine blossoms strewn.

The sweet scent of the flowers has vanished;
a cold wind bends their stems down.
Soon will the withered, golden leaves
of the lotus blossoms on the water float.

My heart is tired. My little lamp
went out with crackling, it calls me to
sleep.
I come to you, beloved resting place!
Yes, give me rest, I have (of) refreshment
need!

Ich weine viel in meinen Einsamkeiten.
Der Herbst in meinem Herzen währt zu lange.
Sonne der Liebe, willst du nie mehr scheinen,
um meine bittern Tränen mild aufzutrocknen?

3 Von der Jugend

Mitten in dem kleinen Teiche
steht ein Pavillon aus grünem
und aus weissem Porzellan.

Wie der Rücken eines Tigers
wölbt die Brücke sich aus Jade
zu dem Pavillon hinüber.

In dem Häuschen sitzen Freunde,
schön gekleidet, trinken, plaudern,
manche schreiben Verse nieder.

Ihre seidnen Ärmel gleiten
rückwärts, ihre seidnen Mützen
hocken lustig tief im Nacken.

Auf des kleinen Teiches stiller
Wasserfläche zeigt sich alles
wunderlich im Spiegelbilde.

Alles auf dem Kopfe stehend
in dem Pavillon aus grünem
und aus weissem Porzellan;

I weep much in my loneliness.
The autumn in my heart lasts too long.
Sun of love, will you never more shine
in order my bitter tears mildly to dry up?

3 Of Youth

Midway in the little pond
stands a pavilion of green
and of white porcelain.

Like the back of a tiger
arches the bridge (itself) of jade
to the pavilion (across).

In the cottage sit friends,
beautifully dressed, drinking, chatting,
several writing verses down.

Their silken sleeves slide
backwards, their silken caps
crouch drolly deep on the nape of the neck.

On the small pond's still
water surface shows (itself) everything
curiously in mirror image.

Everything on its head standing
in the pavilion of green
and of white porcelain;

wie ein Halbmond steht die Brücke
umgekehrt der Bogen. Freunde,
schön gekleidet, trinken, plaudern.

4 Von der Schönheit

Junge Mädchen pflücken Blumen,
pflücken Lotosblumen an dem Uferrande.
Zwischen Büschen und Blättern sitzen sie,
sammeln Blüten in den Schoss und rufen
sich einander Neckereien zu.

Gold'ne Sonne webt um die Gestalten,
spiegelt sie im blanken Wasser wider.
Sonne spiegelt ihre schlanken Glieder,
ihre süßen Augen wider,

und der Zephir hebt mit Schmeichelkosen
das Gewebe ihrer Ärmel auf,
führt den Zauber Ihrer Wohlgerüche durch
die Luft.

O sieh, was tummeln sich für schöne Knaben
dort an dem Uferrand auf mut'gen Rossen,
weithin glänzend wie die Sonnenstrahlen;
schon zwischen dem Geäst der grünen Weiden
trabt das jungrische Volk einher!

like a halfmoon seems the bridge,
upside-down the arch. Friends,
beautifully dressed, drinking, chatting.

4 Of Beauty

Young maidens are picking flowers,
picking lotus blossoms on the shore's edge.
Midst bushes and leaves sit they,
collecting blossoms in their laps and call
to each other teasing banter (to).

Golden sunlight weaves around the figures,
mirrors them in the smooth water (against).
Sunlight mirrors their slender limbs,
their sweet eyes (against [i.e., against the
water]),
and the zephyr lifts with coaxing caresses
the fabric of their sleeves up,
Wafts the magic of their lovely scent through
the air.

O see, how romp about the handsome lads
there on the shore's edge on spirited horses,
into the distance gleaming like the sun's rays;
now amidst the branches of the green willows
trots the young-vigorous band over here!

Das Ross des einen wihert fröhlich auf,
und scheut und saust dahin,
über Blumen, Gräser wanken hin die
Hufe,
sie zerstampfen jäh im Sturm die
hingesunk'nen Blüten,
hei! wie flattern im Taumel seine Mähnen,
dampfen heiß die Nüstern!
Goldne Sonne webt um die Gestalten,
spiegelt sie im blanken Wasser wider.

Und die schönste von den Jungfau'n sendet
lange Blicke ihm der Sehnsucht nach.
Ihre stolze Haltung ist nur Verstellung.
In dem Funkeln ihrer grossen Augen,
in dem Dunkel ihres heissen Blicks
schwingt klagend noch die Erregung
ihres Herzens nach.

5 Der Trunkene im Frühling

Wenn nur ein Traum das Leben ist,
warum denn Müh und Plag?
Ich trinke, bis ich nicht mehr kann,
den ganzen, lieben Tag!

Und wenn ich nicht mehr trinken kann,
weil Kehl' und Seele voll,
so tauml' ich bis zu meiner Tür
und schlafe wundervoll!

The horse of one neighs joyfully forth,
and shies, and rushes off,
o'er flowers [and] grasses stagger back the
hoofs,
they trample fast in tumult the
downfallen blossoms,
ho! how flutters in frenzy his mane,
[and] steam hot the nostrils!
Golden sunlight weaves around the figures,
mirrors them in the smooth water (against).

And the fairest of the maidens sends
long glances to him of longing (after).
Her proud bearing is only pretence.
In the sparkling of her large eyes,
in the darkness of her hot glance
Reverberates plaintively still the agitation
of her heart within.

5 The Drunk in Springtime

Since only a dream (the) life is,
why then toil and torment?
I drink, 'til I no more can,
the whole livelong day!

And when I no more drinking can,
because throat and soul [are] full,
then stagger I up to my door
and sleep wonderfully!

Was hör ich beim Erwachen? Horch!
Ein Vogel singt im Baum.
Ich frag' ihn ob schon Frühling sei.
Mir ist als wie im Traum.

Der Vogel zwitschert: Ja! Ja! Der Lenz,
der Lenz ist da, sei kommen über Nacht!
Aus tiefstem Schauen lauscht' ich auf,
der Vogel singt und lacht! und lacht!

Ich fülle mir den Becher neu
und leer' ihn bis zum Grund
und singe, bis der Mond erglänzt
am schwarzen Firmament!

Und wenn ich nicht mehr singen kann,
so schlaf' ich wieder ein.
Was geht mich denn der Frühling an!?
Laßt mich betrunken sein!

What hear I upon awakening? Listen!
A bird sings in the tree.
I ask him if already spring's come.
For me it's as though in a dream.

The bird twitters: Yes! Yes! Spring,
spring is here, it's come over night!
In deepest gazing listened I up at him,
the bird sings and laughs! and laughs!

I fill myself the cup anew
and empty it to the bottom
and sing 'til the moon glows forth
in the dark heavens!

And when I no more singing can,
then to sleep I again go.
What matters to me then the spring!?
Let me drunk be!

6 Der Abschied

Die Sonne scheidet hinter dem Gebirge.
In alle Täler steigt der Abend nieder
mit seinen Schatten die voll Kühlung sind.
O sieh! wie eine Silberbarke schwebt
der Mond am blauen Himmelsee herauf.
Ich spüre eines feinen Windes Weh'n
hinter den dunklen Fichten!

6 The Farewell

The sun departs behind the mountain.
Into all valleys steps the evening down
with its shadows that full [of] coolness are.
O see! like a silver ship soars
the moon upon the blue heavenly lake upward.
I sense a gentle wind's drift
behind the dark pine trees!

Der Bach singt voller Wohllaut
durch das Dunkel.
Die Blumen blassen im Dämmerschein.
Die Erde atmet voll von Ruh' und Schlaf.
Alle Sehnsucht will nun träumen,
die müden Menschen geh'n heimwärts,
um in Schlaf vergess'nes Glück
und Jugend neu zu lernen.
Die Vögel hocken still in ihren Zweigen.
Die Welt schläft ein!

Es wehet kühl im Schatten meiner Fichten.
Ich stehe hier und harre meines Freundes.
Ich harre sein zum letzten Lebewohl.
Ich sehne mich, O Freund, an deiner Seite
die Schönheit dieses Abends zu geniessen.
Wo bleibst du? du lässt mich lang allein!
Ich wandle auf und nieder mit meiner Laute
auf Wegen, die von weichem Grase
schwellen.
O Schönheit! O ewigen Liebens-, Lebens-
trunk'ne Welt!

Er stieg vom Pferd und reichte ihm den
Trunk
des Abschieds dar.
Er fragte ihn, wohin er führe
und auch warum es müsste sein.
Er sprach, seine Stimme war umflort: Du,
mein Freund,
mir war auf dieser Welt das Glück nicht
hold!

The brook sings full of pleasant melody
through the darkness.
The flowers pale in the twilight.
The earth breathes full of rest and sleep.
All longing will now dream,
the tired men go homewards,
so in sleep forgotten happiness
and youthfulness anew to learn.
The birds crouch quietly on their branches.
The world [goes to] sleep!

It breezes cool in the shadow of my pine trees.
I stand here and wait for my friend.
I await his last farewell.
I long (myself), O friend, at your side
the beauty of this evening to enjoy.
Where are you? you leave me long alone!
I wander up and down with my lute
on paths that with soft grass
swell.
O Beauty! O of eternal love-and-life
drunken world!

He stepped from the horse and offered him the
draught
of farewell (forth).
He asked him whither he was going
and also why, why it had to be.
He spoke, his voice was veiled: You,
my Friend,
for me was in this world (the) Fortune not
favorable!

Wohin ich geh'? Ich geh', ich wand're in die Berge.

Ich suche Ruhe für mein einsam Herz!

Ich wandle nach der Heimat, meiner Stätte.

Ich werde niemals in die Ferne schweifen.

Still ist mein Herz und harret seiner Stunde!

Die liebe Erde allüberall

blüht auf im Lenz und grünt aufs neu!

allüberall und ewig blauen licht die Fernen,

Ewig . . . ewig . . .

Whither I go? I go, I wander to the mountains.

I seek rest, rest for my lonely heart!

I wander to the homeland, to my abode!

I will nevermore afar roam.

Still is my heart, and awaits its hour!

The beloved earth all over everywhere blossoms forth in spring and greens up anew! everywhere and ever blue brightly the horizons,

Eternally . . . ever . . .

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