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Message from the Editor

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This is the first issue of our journal in which we are publishing a very lengthy article. We hope to receive more of those in the future.

As always, I would like to sincerely thank all members of our peer-review board for their hard work and excellent suggestions for improving each article. A very special thanks goes to our Music Graphics Editor, Richard D. Hall, who had much work with the musical examples of this issue.

While this issue is still delayed, the Fall 2007 issue will be released before the end of December. After that, we should be back on our envisioned publication schedule.

All issues may contain articles and announcements in the following categories:

- **articles with a special focus on local music traditions;**
- **articles** that deal with issues related to the mission of CMS and / or with our region (generally, all music-related topics are being considered);

- **opinion articles** that are part of, or provide the basis for, discussions on important music topics;
- **composer portraits** that may or may not include an interview;
- **short responses** to articles published in this or previous issues;
- **bibliographies** on any music-related topic, especially (annotated) bibliographies related to the mission of CMS and / or to our region;
- **reviews** of books, printed music, CDs, and software; and
- **reports** on recent symposia, conferences, and concerts.

I would like to call for submissions that fit any of these categories. Submissions by students and / or by non-CMS South Central members are, as always, very welcome. All submissions are expected via e-mail with attachments in Word format or in Rich Text Format. For detailed submission guidelines visit

<http://www.txstate.edu/scmb/>

Visit the CMS South Central Website:

Go to <http://www.music.org/southcentral.html>

Visit the *South Central Music Bulletin (SCMB)* Website:

Go to <http://www.txstate.edu/scmb/>

Articles – Special Focus: Transdisciplinarity

The Future of CMS: Beyond Our Disciplines

For nearly 50 years The College Music Society has welcomed college, conservatory, and university faculty members and students from across the field of music. In fact, CMS is the only professional music organization structured in this fashion. This has provided an opportunity for a mutual exchange of ideas and dreams among a wide variety of music faculty and across all subspecialties.

Reflecting the reality of the profession, the organizational structure of CMS includes representatives from major specialties within music, and the Society's conference programs and publications often manifest sub-disciplinary concerns.

Recently, though, the call for proposals for the annual conference resulted in an increase of submissions that are transdisciplinary – that is, ideas that go beyond the subdisciplines into which we conven-

tionally organize music in higher education. Does this phenomenon signify a trend within the organization's membership? Is there a spirit of transdisciplinarity "bubbling up" within the membership?

Looking ahead, how might this blossoming notion of transdisciplinarity influence and inform the next 50 years of The College Music Society? How might transdisciplinarity affect the makeup and activities of the Society? More importantly, what ramifications might this have for the education of students in music? What might CMS become over the next decades, and how might the Society look in 2058?

Does this spirit of transdisciplinarity have the potential to transform the very fabric of The College Music Society, as well as the profession the Society seeks to serve?

(Reprinted from *The College Music Society Newsletter*, January 2007, p. 3.)

Musicians in White Lab Coats

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Imagine a music theorist with interests in cognition and perception, an instrumental music educator who studies motor skills, a voice teacher that researches vocal science and choral pedagogy, and an otolaryngologist with expertise in cognitive neuroscience. It is a sunny afternoon, and all are seated in a plush conference room situated in one of the finest brain imaging centers in the United States. The topic of discussion is music learning, particularly the potential for studying the neurological activity that occurs while employing various pedagogical methods. All bring their individual areas of experi-

ence and expertise to the table and an exhilarating brainstorming session ensues. There are certainly more questions than answers at this point, but the conversation is one that could never occur in the isolated office of just one of those individuals.

The CMS National Topic for 2007 centers on the idea of transdisciplinarity in music. In the description of this topic that is found in the January 2007 CMS Newsletter, a distinction was made between interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, with "inter" referring to interactions "between disciplines with their own fixed boundaries" and "trans" suggesting "thinking beyond disciplines – and potentially beyond the rigidification that established disciplines can impose on our thinking." Because I generally see more similarities than differences between these two terms, and because I would rather focus on concepts than definitions, I will use both interchangeably as I comment on two types of interactions between disciplines. The first

one involves the musicians from the above scenario, and the second involves their presence in a research center filled with MRI machines, PET scans, and scientists in white lab coats.

So I begin with some thoughts about the idea of transdisciplinarity within our own discipline of music, which therefore requires me to establish what that discipline really is. In 1955, a committee from the American Musicological Society defined musicology as “a field of knowledge having as its object the investigation of the art of music as a physical, psychological, aesthetic, and cultural phenomenon” (Davison et al. 1955, 153). Richard Parncutt, original organizer of the Conference on Interdisciplinary Musicology, then more recently defined musicology as simply “musical scholarship”. He then continued:

“It is the academic study of any and all musical phenomena. It addresses the physical, psychological, aesthetic, social, cultural, political, and historical concomitants of music, musical creation, musical perception, and musical discourse. It incorporates a blend of sciences and humanities, and is grounded in musical practice (performance, composition, improvisation, analysis, criticism, consumption, etc.). It involves a wide range of non-musical disciplines and corresponding research methods.” (Parncutt 2004.)

Based on these definitions, the overall field of musicology appears to be quite interdisciplinary. But if we examine the makeup of most American university music departments, we find the field of musicology defined in a very different way. Instead of being a general word that simply refers to the scholarly study of music, it refers more specifically to music historians. Although this distinction might simply be one of convenience, therefore not justifying much discussion or debate, I think the way we define ourselves actually plays a role in this idea of transdisciplinarity. So let me back up and provide a brief history.

By the mid-1940s, musicology was divided into three basic subdisciplines: historical, ethnological, and systematic (Haydon 1941). In both historical and ethnological musicology, similar research approaches (which are often borrowed from the disciplines of history, anthropology, and cultural studies) are used to examine the styles, traditions, and

social contexts of various repertoires of music. The main difference between the two is simply that historical musicology focuses on notated music of the Western world, while ethnological musicology addresses music of any kind from any part of the world. Systematic musicology, on the other hand, focuses on music as a phenomenon, with emphasis placed on “systematically” unearthing general principles or theories that explain the characteristics of certain musical styles, genres, or behaviors. This type of approach currently applies to many areas of music scholarship, including music theory, music cognition and perception, acoustics and psychoacoustics, aesthetics, technology, education, and many more.

Due to the fact that these “systematic” fields emerged fairly quickly, each eventually having their own names, journals, conferences, and experts, the umbrella term of systematic musicology seems to have been dropped in favor of the more specific titles themselves. In this way, the term musicology was entirely lost from their description. Ethnological musicology then became contracted into the single word title of ethnomusicology and, perhaps by convenience or abbreviation, the term “historical” was dropped and we were left with just one field of musicology. So even though it always did refer to historical musicology (and actually still does refer to those with expertise in music history), that field alone retained the title of musicology, thus making it appear that this term refers to a single approach to the study of music, rather than the originally broad and interdisciplinary definition.

Given this context, I think that the terms interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary can be applied to all who are trained as musicians in any way – to all who are actually musicologists, with some specific area of musical expertise. If we move past the conventional definitions of our titles and areas of emphasis, as well as from the notion that there is only one type of musicologist, all of what we do in music can be interdisciplinary. In describing this idea, Nicholas Cook made the following comment:

“I’ve never seen musicology / music theory as a discipline. Departments of history consist of different sorts of historians, but departments of music consist of historians, anthropologists, popular culture theorists, aestheticians,

and psychologists (as well as composers and performers, of course) – it's just that they all happen to work on music. In other words, a department of music doesn't represent a discipline, rather it is an interdisciplinary (or at least multidisciplinary) research centre – or to put it another way, musicology is inherently multidisciplinary.” (E-mail correspondence cited in Parncutt 2004.)

So the idea of thinking “beyond” our disciplines therefore refers to all of us (performers, historians, theorists, educators, composers, etc.) being more willing to communicate and collaborate with each other as musicologists. For instance, we need more historians and theorists interested in doing research that informs both performance and pedagogy. We need more performers interested in how that information about context and structure might affect their expressive and technical approaches. We need more conversations about pedagogy between those that are called “music educators” and those that teach in every other musical context. In one sense, we just need more interaction (and less theoretical walls built) between those involved in the more research-oriented musical fields and those involved in the more practical disciplines like performance and composition.

My second approach to interdisciplinarity then involves our interactions with researchers from fields that are completely outside of music. I think we would all agree that music touches on many different aspects of being human, with music having cognitive, psychological, developmental, sociological, emotional, and creative components. Given that it takes approximately 10,000 hours of “deliberate” work to become an expert in any given discipline (Ericsson et al. 1993), it certainly seems impossible for any one of us to become a true expert in multiple fields of musicology, let alone other relevant fields outside of music. This again behooves us to take advantage of opportunities to not only communicate with each other as musicologists, but to also engage ourselves in projects that involve researchers outside of music that can bring additional knowledge and methods to the table. I think this goal is well summarized in the description of the conference that I made reference to earlier. The organizers stated:

“The aim of this conference is to generate solutions to problems arising from the study of music through interdisciplinary synergy – as opposed to a mere multidisciplinary accumulation of knowledge. In other words, the aim was not primarily to make researchers more aware of research in related disciplines (although that is still good), but to generate new knowledge through deep, detailed, thorough, creative interaction between and among the various disciplines that are relevant to a given question.” (Parncutt 2004)

And so I return to that conference room, to the conversation between three musicologists and one neuroscientist. In addition to my own research efforts, I am also the director of the Institute for Music Research (IMR) at the University of Texas-San Antonio (UTSA). This organization was established in 1991-92 and exists to promote and support research in the areas of music psychology, music learning, and music technology, from both a financial and a creative point of view. In this regard, one of the most significant accomplishments of the IMR thus far is the collaboration between music faculty at UTSA and cognitive neuroscientists at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, for that provides a perfect example of research that could never be done (and questions that could never be investigated) without the combined efforts of scholars with completely different types of training and expertise. In the most basic sense, it would simply be impossible for a single scholar to have the intuitions and training that come from decades of performing, teaching, and research in music and the scientific, anatomical, and technical knowledge that comes from intense training in medicine and neuroscience. So both the beauty and the challenge of an organization like the IMR is that it is entirely dependant on the spirit and efforts of its participants, with the most important work being done when a significant number of faculty are present and interested in combining their ideas and knowledge to address a variety of questions about music.

So how does all this relate to the mission and purpose of the College Music Society? First, I think we need to recognize the inherent interdisciplinary nature of music and better take advantage of the opportunities that CMS provides to interact with all types of musicologists. Our conferences cur-

rently have sessions focusing on multiple approaches to music, which therefore give us a chance to attend many different presentations and be exposed to a variety of ideas. But we could also start encouraging presentations that are more literally interdisciplinary. A proposal for such a presentation would therefore require the participation of multiple scholars with contrasting musical expertise, all combining their knowledge and experience in a collaborative effort to better understand some aspect of music. Although this need not be the focus of the entire conference, perhaps a “transdisciplinary” session would begin to engender excitement about the potential of such interactions.

In addition, we need to consider how these transdisciplinary research approaches might also affect our pedagogy. At UTSA, one of my favorite classes to teach is called “Foundations of Music.” The main objective of this class is to introduce students to an assortment of interdisciplinary approaches to music. After first being exposed to various methods of music research, students are given an overview of how these methods can be used to study the relationship between music and other disciplines (including philosophy, physics, biology, anthropology, sociology, cognitive psychology, and education). In my experience, this type of class helps students discover two basic things: (1) that research (which they were either oblivious to or thought was irrelevant) can actually confirm or explain many of their own musical experiences and intuitions, and (2) that music affects and is affected by all aspects of life, therefore helping them realize that success in their chosen musical field can be in-

creased by also having a broad and mature musical understanding.

Interdisciplinary pedagogy certainly does not need to come in a course just like this one, nor does it necessarily need to come in a structured course at all. In the same vein, interdisciplinary research does not always need to involve neuroscientists or white lab coats. Instead, we must simply remember that the study of music inherently touches on many different abilities, approaches, perspectives, and ideas. And in order for our students to be aware of these possibilities, we must be open to them as well. In order for us to better understand all the fascinating aspects of music, we need to communicate with each other as musicologists, and then collaborate with our colleagues outside of music. We need to increase our own musical experiences, training, and expertise while still realizing that we can gain much from being willing to “think beyond disciplines – and potentially beyond the rigidification that established disciplines can impose on our thinking.”

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Music is Too Important

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It was a great relief when sometime between my sophomore and junior years I decided not to major

in music. There were simply too many required classes and ensembles. I loved music, but also wanted to take philosophy, science fiction literature, Sanskrit, tennis, join a radical student organization, and pursue a girlfriend in the Theater Department. But I couldn't do all that when what seemed like 119 of the 120 credit hours needed to graduate had to be in music. So I bailed, much to the bafflement of my friends in music theory and orchestra.

Actually, it was in orchestra that I got the big fat idea. A French horn player, I (like other wind instrumentalists) had to endure seemingly endless hours of listening to the strings rehearse and rehearse difficult passages. I began to bring books along to relieve the tedium – novels, poetry, history – and pretty soon I became so absorbed in reading that I began missing my entrances. In retrospect, I can see that had I not changed majors I might have been asked to do so.

In any case, my curiosity and freedom led me all over campus. I had an absolute blast reading fat Russian novels, carrying out psychology experiments, editing an underground newspaper, occupying the university president's office, and courting my Greek tutor. Eventually I discovered that you could major in something called music history. There you could combine a focus on music with insights from sociology, psychology, history, economics, languages, and other disciplines in a way that satisfied both a love of music and curiosity about the larger world. In other words, I became a transdisciplinary.

Somewhere around this time I stumbled on an observation by politician, journalist, and French premier Georges Clemenceau (1841-1929): "War is too important to be left to the generals." I think, we

music students and professionals could adapt this idea: "Music is too important to be left to musicians." Yes, we need to know music inside out but, without becoming jacks of all trades and masters of none, let's welcome and even reach out for the insights of other disciplines.

One of the basic facts of life is that we're all different, so my path to transdisciplinarity is not a recipe. We must all find our own way and voice. In my case, there is something in addition to the foregoing. I luckily married that Greek tutor and discovered that she was an avid dancer. It was not long before she got me out on the floor, and that experience – moving to the beat – has, I think, made me a better musician. I don't know if Clemenceau danced. I like to think so. But I think he would have approved of turning his war dictum into a general rule.

So over the coming decades, I'd like to see the College Music Society expand its admirable and long-standing policy of exchanging ideas among a wide variety of music faculty to include non-music faculty as well. We could also do well to free up some curriculum credit hours so that our students might follow their bliss. Finally, by 2058, preferably well before, I'd like to see more CMS members out there on the dance floor.

Thoughts on Trans-, Inter-, Inner-, Intra-, Cross-, Multi-, and Non-Disciplinary Approaches to Music

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The term 'transdisciplinarity' is used for approaches that "transcend" or dissolve the boundaries of a traditional discipline. More commonly known is the term 'interdisciplinarity', which refers to the integration of the knowledge and methods from two or more disciplines to achieve a specific goal or complete a specific task. Interdisciplinarity is used to

understand the "bigger picture" of complex problems. Intradisciplinarity is similar to interdisciplinarity, but refers to the integration of the knowledge and methods from two or more SUB-disciplines of one specific discipline. Other common terms are multi-disciplinarity, cross-disciplinarity, and non-disciplinarity. Some scholars define multi-disciplinarity as an approach to study several subjects from different disciplines by using the methods of only one discipline. Cross-disciplinarity, on the other hand, can be defined as a research approach for studying a subject with a method that is foreign to the discipline of the subject. Finally, non-disciplinarity is the intentional disregard of the boundaries of a discipline in terms of their subjects and methodology; such approach is necessary to answer lar-

ger questions (such as global warming, for example). Some scholars, however, use the terms ‘multi-disciplinarity’ and ‘cross-disciplinarity’ as synonymous with both inter- and trans-disciplinarity.

Trans-, inter-, intra-, cross-, multi-, and non-disciplinary approaches point out the limitation of one specific discipline, or better: its over-specialization. One may find the million-and-twenty-third book about Mozart redundant, because there is not any significant gain in the knowledge about Mozart. Or one may not find hearing or reading lengthy analyses of a few measures of music useful, because they often omit any relevant conclusions about the applicability of such analyses to a more general / broader context. Especially the split between musicology (meaning mainly: historical musicology) and music theory in the United States is a clear sign of overspecialization. Approaches beyond disciplinary boundaries help overcome such excessive overspecialization.

Despite the problem of defining the various terms, the concept of inter-, trans-, cross-, multi-, or non-disciplinarity is not new. In fact, many disciplines grew out of philosophy during the 19th century. Before their separation, all of them were part of a broader philosophical discourse.

But back to “transdisciplinarity” – the term used for the 2008 CMS Common Topic. The term was originally introduced by the Swiss philosopher and developmental psychologist Jean Piaget (1896-1980). The German philosopher Jürgen Mittelstraß, specializing in the philosophy of science, understands interdisciplinarity as transdisciplinarity: “[W]hether one understands interdisciplinarity in the sense of re-establishing a larger disciplinary orientation, or as a factual increase of cognitive interest within or beyond given fields or disciplines, one thing stands out: interdisciplinarity properly understood does not commute between fields and disciplines, and it does not hover above them like an absolute spirit. Instead, it removes disciplinary impasses where these block the development of problems and the corresponding responses of research. Interdisciplinarity is in fact transdisciplinarity.” (Mittelstraß 2001, 497.)

So, what does transdisciplinarity mean for us in music? A search in RILM with ‘transdisciplinarity’ as a keyword did not yield any results. Zero! A search with the adjective ‘transdisciplinary’, however, provided 14 search results – such as articles by Gunnar Johannsen on “Human supervision and control in engineering and music: Foundations and transdisciplinary views”, but mainly articles published in the journal *Critical Musicology: A Transdisciplinary Online Journal*. On the other hand, a search in RILM with ‘interdisciplinarity’ resulted in a list of 66 entries (compared to the zero with ‘transdisciplinarity’), and another search with ‘interdisciplinary’ yielded 1,725 entries in RILM (compared to the 14 with ‘transdisciplinary’). A similar search with the same terms in the International Index to Music Periodicals led to the following results:

- ‘transdisciplinarity’ as a keyword: zero records,
- ‘transdisciplinary’ as a keyword: 11 records,
- ‘interdisciplinarity’ as a keyword: 30 records, and
- ‘interdisciplinary’ as a keyword: 1,164 records.

Among books and journals (excluding specific articles), there is only one that contains the word ‘transdisciplinary’ – the journal mentioned earlier: *Critical Musicology: A Transdisciplinary Online Journal*. And that journal, unfortunately, has only published articles between 1997 and 1998. Similarly, there is only one book (and no journal) that has ‘interdisciplinarity’ in its title – a dissertation by Roseane Yampolschi on “Standing and Conflating: A Dialogic Model for Interdisciplinarity in Composition”. But there are numerous books and journals that have the term ‘interdisciplinary’ in its title, such as *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, *Cultural Analysis: An Interdisciplinary Forum on Folklore and Popular Culture*, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, *Hera’s Peacock: An International Thematic Interdisciplinary Journal*. There are many books with ‘interdisciplinary’ in its title, such as *Interdisciplinary Studies in Musicology*, but most of them are not in English, and many of those that are in English, are not published in the US.

What does this tell us? First of all, in music the term ‘interdisciplinary’ is much more used than

‘transdisciplinary’ and, second, only relatively few US-American scholars have shown interested in it so that they would publish books or articles on interdisciplinary music research. This problem might root in the fact that there are few scholars interested in methodological reflections on music research, since all trans-, inter-, intra-, cross-, multi-, and non-disciplinary approaches ultimately need to reflect on the use of research methods. But this might also point to another problem: that of the distinction between inter-disciplinarity and intra-disciplinarity.

Intra-disciplinarity refers to connections between the various sub-disciplines. In music, we can at least distinguish:

- Music Theory
- Musicology
- Ethnomusicology
- New Musicology
- Music Sociology
- Music Psychology / Perception
- Music Semiotics
- Music Pedagogy / Education
- Popular Music / Jazz
- Music Aesthetics / Philosophy
- Music Therapy
- Music Performance / Performance Practice
- Music Gender Studies / Gay & Lesbian Studies
- Acoustics
- Music Business
- Music Entrepreneurship

Approaches that draw from at least two of these areas are intra-disciplinary in nature. But STOP: Isn’t Music Education ‘inter-’disciplinary by itself, integrating subjects and methods of music as well as of education? And Music Semiotics – integrating subjects and methods of music as well as of semiotics? Etc. Thus, I am back to where I started out: pointing out the problem of differentiating between trans-, inter-, intra-, cross-, multi-, and non-disciplinary approaches.

I might hint at one solution, one that I have been developing over the past ten years or so. In my methodological research, I developed what I call ‘perspectivism’ in music research. In one of my publications, I pointed out:

“Traditional music research is usually conducted from a single perspective: either from a historical perspective

or from a theoretical perspective or from an aesthetic perspective, etc. Furthermore, traditional music research is seldom intra- or inter-disciplinary, nor is it usually cross-cultural. However, observing and researching a topic from different perspectives, thus creating a *network* of intra- and interdisciplinary perspectives – an approach which may be called ‘perspectivism’ – is more fruitful, since one perspective, one way, one methodology results only in one answer – an answer predetermined by the methodology applied. Shifting perspectives can mean a different answer, at least a slightly different answer. Most often, it means an epistemological enrichment (epistemology being the study of the methods and grounds of knowledge, especially with regard to its limits and validity).” (Schüler 2002, 197.)

In the cited article, I briefly exemplified perspectivism with the topic “development of 12-tone music”. The goal of perspectivism is to create a multi-dimensional dynamic network of perspectives, thus never allowing the research to be ‘complete’. The possibilities are infinite and the results hardly imaginable.

I also mentioned ‘cross-cultural’. If we consider ‘interdisciplinarity’ to its fullest extent, we will eventually come across ethnology, or, in our case, ethnomusicology. As a result, we will have to consider cross-cultural approaches to music. While the emergence of musicology during the late 19th century was the emergence of a “global musicology,” historical musicology with the focus on Western music soon divorced itself from some of the early ‘global’ ideas of music research. Throughout the 20th century, the separation between musicology and ethnomusicology worsened, and the separation of music theory and musicology – and the specialization of music theory over the second half of the 20th century – certainly did not contribute to a global worldview in music. Ethnomusicologists had to remind ‘musicologists’ and ‘music theorists’ that even Western music developed in specific cultural contexts, and that these cultural contexts change constantly and are influenced by what we generally refer to as ‘non-Western music’. Only recently, some ‘Western musicologists’ spoke up and called for a globalization of musicology. I specifically refer to the international congress of the Musicological Society of Japan in 2002, at which music scholars such as Nicholas Cook – especially with his lec-

ture on *We Are All Ethnomusicologists Now* openly questioned the separation of musicology and ethnomusicology: "For if musicology is as much about performance as about works, as much about events as about texts, then its methods become as much ethnomusicological as musicological (and notice, by the way, how odd the word 'musicological' sounds when you say it straight after 'ethnomusicological')." (Cook 2004, 54-55.)

Cook's call for a globalization in music research goes far beyond musicology and ethnomusicology – globalization of music research means, in fact, interdisciplinary (or transdisciplinary, for the lack of a better defined term) and cross-cultural music research.

* * *

By now, I must have endlessly bored the performing musicians, who might have said, ten minutes ago: Yes, transdisciplinarity is common in contemporary arts in the combinations of dance & music, visual arts & music, acting & music, etc., etc. – Yes, I do think we need to consider those transdisciplinary approaches to the arts. As a scholar, I mainly focused on research in my discussions.

But what does it all mean in relationship to the College Music Society? I love CMS as a professional organization, because people from all music disciplines come together. But is that 'transdisciplinarity'? It certainly is not! We can possibly make it that in our heads, by attending different kinds of conference sessions and making connections to our own sub-discipline. But most presentations are not transdisciplinary at all (but we are not hosting the Conferences on Interdisciplinary Musicology; see <http://www-gewi.uni-graz.at/staff/parncutt/cim.htm>). That is certainly not a criticism, as there is still, and always will be, a great need for inner-disciplinarity (for lack of a better word). But there is also a need for trans-, inter-, intra-, cross-, multi-, or non-disciplinarity, hopefully in connection with cross-cultural reflections. I am looking forward to an increase in such approaches at our conferences in the future.

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Article

The Philosophical Implications of Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*

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Introduction

Gustav Mahler's orchestral song cycle *Kindertotenlieder* is known for its brilliant expressivity and unique musical language. Written in 1901-1904, the cycle takes on the challenging subject of the death of children. It was Mahler's second song cycle and is considered one of his late works. It is a work that definitely characterizes the late Romantic period.

This article will focus on aspects of the cycle that make it such a significant composition – the philosophical aspects of the *Kindertotenlieder*. I will examine existing research on the cycle and the background and context of the composition. I will explore Mahler's state of mind at the time and examine his beliefs that allowed him to write such intimate and emotional music, music for which he supposedly had no outlet for motivation at the time. I will uncover the cycle's links to different philosophies and their relationship to the concept of grief. The song cycle as a whole represents the ultimate search for meaning. This study will explore the levels of meaning of the songs of the *Kindertotenlieder* that were able to provide some consolation for the ultimate loss. A study of the philosophical connotations of the *Kindertotenlieder* will help to clarify aspects of the song cycle that have been heavily debated, such as the chronology of the songs, the question of the cycle's unity, the source of Mahler's motivation, and the relationship between the *Kindertotenlieder* and other works by Mahler.

1. Mahler, Rückert, and the *Kindertotenlieder*: Preliminary Remarks

1.1. Mahler's Life and Work

Gustav Mahler was born in Bohemia on July 7, 1860. His oeuvre consists of symphonies and songs

that encompassed the Romantic ideal, but also foreshadowed the originality of the twentieth century. His music, along with the music by Richard Strauss, was thought of as “New German’ modernism” (Franklin 2006). As the director of the Vienna Hofoper from 1897 to 1907, he displayed “post-Wagnerian idealism” (ibid.). Mahler wrote nine large-scale symphonies – he left a tenth unfinished – and most of his songs are accompanied by orchestra. Mahler had studied at the Vienna Conservatory. His early conducting career consisted of various positions in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, including an important post in Kassel from 1883 to 1885. His later positions in theaters established his reputation as difficult, disrespectful, and even cruel to performers. Mahler was very critical of performers, and he demanded a lot from them. As a result, many musicians disliked working with him or resented him. Also, he had many disagreements with his superiors. His numerous absences due to conducting trips and many complaints of displeased singers often caused scandals. However, the scandals surrounding Mahler's behavior and tensions between him and his superiors often proved to be productive for Mahler.

Mahler wrote the first drafts of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, the First Symphony, and the first movement of the Second Symphony, entitled *Totenfeier*, while holding a position at the Neue Stadttheater in Leipzig. He then became director of the Royal Hungarian Opera in Budapest, where he had complete artistic control. Mahler was known as an innovative conductor, but unfortunately his career was plagued by discrimination and criticism. In this post especially, he concentrated on administration, yet some members of the audience resented him because he was Jewish. In 1889, Mahler's father, mother, and younger sister died, and Mahler became head of the household. In 1891, Mahler obtained a position at the Hamburg Stadttheater. Two years later, he began what would be a pattern of working summers, initially at the beach near Steinbach in Austria. Tragedy struck in 1895, when Mahler's brother Otto committed suicide. Mahler

then converted to Roman Catholicism in 1897 in order to secure a post at the Vienna Hofoper.

Mahler saw his position in Vienna as a revolutionary one, yet he struggled with the status of his opera company as a court institution. Adding to his difficulties was the fact that many influential people in Vienna were anti-Semites. His methods were controversial, and many criticized his dramatic conducting gestures. Mahler took advantage of this creative role and amended what he felt were weaknesses in the orchestration of Schumann and Beethoven. In fact, his radical portrayal of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony had caused his dismissal from his position in Hamburg. Mahler involved himself in every aspect of the productions at the Vienna Hofoper, and the result was a decade of memorable opera performances in Vienna. However, it took his toll on him, and he began to suffer from physical and mental health conditions.

In 1902, Mahler married Alma, who was twenty years younger than him. She introduced Mahler to a circle of Modernist Viennese artists. He profited both mentally and creatively from the marriage, for their honeymoon in Russia was actually a conducting tour. This tour led to many engagements outside Vienna, where he performed his own music. The public eagerly awaited premieres of Mahler symphonies, and the Eighth turned out to be the last one he conducted. Hardship struck Mahler again in the summer of 1907. His two daughters became ill, and one of them, Maria, did not recover and died. This was after the completion of the *Kindertotenlieder*, and Mahler could not bring himself to conduct the song cycle after Maria's death. Many scholars have noted Mahler's extreme misfortune in composing a cycle surrounding the subject of the death of children, only to experience such a loss three years later. Some writers also speculate that this unfortunate event and other works by Mahler, particularly the Sixth Symphony, indicate that he possessed a kind of ill-fated clairvoyance.¹ Mahler then left Vienna for New York, which he found to be elitist and conservative, but he admired the musicians at the Metropolitan opera. He took

over the New York Philharmonic and drafted the Ninth Symphony in the summer of 1909. Fatigue caused an illness in February of 1911, which led to a serious bacterial infection. Mahler traveled to Vienna, and died there on May 18, 1911.

Mahler's Second and Third Symphonies became very popular, which paved the way for the Mahler festival in 1920 in Amsterdam, a testament to his posthumous reputation. Mahler's Fifth and Sixth Symphonies are considered his most successful and rewarding experiments in a new style. The Sixth Symphony in particular displays the philosophical and psychological implication of the new style. The multi-media character and theoretical incompleteness of the Tenth Symphony confirm Adorno's opinion of Mahler's music as "paradoxically inimical to the cultural category of art it nevertheless contributed to, relied upon, and heightened in so significant a manner" (Franklin 2006). In the 1960s, due to the centenary of his birth, a renewed interest in Mahler's symphonies developed. A young and unrestricted generation was attracted to the "passionate engagement and often cathartic power of his music" (ibid.). The following decade, his symphonies became part of the canon, and they are considered a link between Austro-German tradition and twentieth century modernism.

All of Mahler's early works, except one, link poetry with music. He wrote the poems for *Das klagende Lied* and *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*. Such poems show the relationship to early German Romanticism, a dual symbolism of nature as both nurturing and threatening (Plantinga 1984, 450). His first four symphonies are considered a tetralogy – they displayed the *Wunderhorn*-style of the 1890s and created a genre of allegorical songs that utilize contrasting voices in the manner of a discourse. Many of his symphonies utilize, or are related to, his songs. He felt that the symphony and the song with orchestral or piano accompaniment were "intimately connected" (Plantinga 1984, 450). His songs were a pool of musical ideas in his process of constantly revising and constructing his massive symphonies. Mahler's three song cycles are *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (1883-1885), *Kindertotenlieder* (1901-1904), and *Das Lied von der Erde* (1907-1908). For Mahler, the song cycle was a me-

¹ The links between the *Kindertotenlieder* and the Sixth Symphony will be discussed in the next section of this article.

dium in which he could experiment, establish coherence on a larger level, and establish a source for his later symphonies (Agawu 1983, 81).

1.2. Preliminary Remarks on Mahler and His Kindertotenlieder

The *Kindertotenlieder* are made up of five songs; Mahler began the cycle in 1901 and completed it in 1904. The poems are taken from Friedrich Rückert's collection with same title. Mahler also composed five other songs utilizing Rückert's poems that are not a cycle and are referred to as the *Fünf Rückert Lieder*. One of the most valuable sources on the philosophical characteristics of the cycle is Peter Russell's published dissertation *Light in Battle with Darkness: Mahler's Kindertotenlieder* (Russell 1991). Russell found that Mahler was incredibly sensitive to the poetry, enhanced the musical interpretation, and was aware of the imagery in the poetry. Donald Mitchell also conducted extensive research on Mahler. Mitchell (1985) has displayed the many examples in *Kindertotenlieder* of Mahler's musical genius: the artistry of the songs, the musical connections, and the musical coherence of the cycle. It is generally agreed that Mahler's musical language is represented in his orchestration, which is purposefully symbolic. Russell believes that "Mahler combines his musical patterns with detailed attentiveness to his texts" (Russell 1991, 65).

Russell concludes that the research on the *Kindertotenlieder* had focused on four areas: Mahler's motivation – he had not suffered the loss of a child at the time of composition; the question of the sequence of composition of the songs – the evidence is conflicting; the question of the cycle's unity; and the relationships between the songs of the *Kindertotenlieder* and other works by Mahler (ibid., 2). While the problem of Mahler's motivation will be discussed in chapter two of this paper and while the question of the cycle's unity will be addressed in chapters two and three, the chronology of the songs and the *Kindertotenlieder's* relationship to other works by Mahler will be discussed here.

The question of the chronology of the songs of the *Kindertotenlieder* has many conflicting answers. We know that Mahler composed some of the songs in 1901, and the others probably in 1904 – we

just are not sure which ones were composed when. Many scholars look at the similarities in character of the songs to answer the question, for the treatment of the material in Songs 1, 2, and 5 is very different from the treatment of Songs 3 and 4. Edward Kravitt's (1978) argument is that Songs 1, 2, and 5 were composed in 1901, and Songs 3 and 4 in 1904, which is the general consensus. Kravitt's argument corresponds with Donald Mitchell's examination of Mahler's manuscripts. All of the manuscripts of the *Kindertotenlieder* are undated, and the manuscript of Song 1 is missing. The manuscript paper of Songs 2 and 5 is the type that Mahler used frequently. The manuscript paper used for Songs 3 and 4 is a completely different brand. This indicates that these two pairs of songs were composed at different times. Christopher Lewis also examined the composition drafts and the manuscripts of the *Kindertotenlieder*. Although Kravitt and Lewis agree that Songs 2 and 5 were written at the same time, and Songs 3 and 4 were written together, Lewis concluded that Songs 1, 3, and 4 were written in 1901 and Songs 2 and 5 in 1904 (Lewis 1996, 218). Mahler scholars also mention the fact that the manuscript for *Kindertotenlieder* No. 3 was in the possession of Mahler's long-time friend Natalie Bauer-Lechner. An auction of Bauer-Lechner's possessions included a manuscript of Song 3, and Mahler's relationship with her ended when he got married in 1901, which indicates that Song 3 would date from 1901. Alma Mahler's statements add to the confusion, because her three books present conflicting information. Although we do not know which songs were written in 1901, we can conclude that the number is three. Since this issue is unresolved, composition of *Kindertotenlieder* is generally assigned to 1901-1904.

The relationship between Mahler's symphonies and songs has been well-documented. *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* and the *Wunderhorn* songs find reflection in the first four symphonies, and the *Kindertotenlieder* and the Rückert songs relate to symphonies 5-7. The Fifth Symphony is the first without a dramatic program, voices, songs, or movements based on songs. *Kindertotenlieder* No. 1 and the Fifth, which Mahler worked on in 1901, have an identical cadence. Jens Brincker

shows that a figure in Song 1 provides motivic material throughout the Fifth (Brincker 1974, 165). The opening phrase of Song 2 resembles the beginning of the fourth movement of the Fifth Symphony. The Adagio movement of the Fourth, written in 1900, pre-quotes the opening vocal figure of Song 2. Song 3 has obvious links with the Fifth Symphony. Song 4 ends with a vocal figure that is quoted in the concluding, slow fade-out of the Ninth Symphony (1908-1911). Song 5 has links to the finale of the Sixth (1904). There is also a broader relationship. The “somber world” of tragedy portrayed in *Kindertotenlieder* is also present in the Sixth and the Seventh Symphonies. Alma made statements that attest to the relationship between *Kindertotenlieder* and the Sixth. She described the third movement as two children playing a game, their voices becoming more and more tragic, eventually dying out. The Sixth was a very emotional work for both Gustav and Alma, because it was so personal and prophetic. “In the *Kindertotenlieder*, as also in the Sixth, he anticipated his own life in music” (Alma Mahler 1973, 70). In this aspect, the *Kindertotenlieder* are very forward-looking and innovative.

In order to comprehend the philosophical implications of the *Kindertotenlieder*, an overview of the general characteristics of the cycle and the individual songs is necessary. The most obvious unifying factor of the cycle is the theme of the death of children. Hans Redlich believes that this theme symbolizes a quintessential Romantic feature: the songs “revolve around the solitary, suffering ego at its centre” (Redlich 1963, 144). Many Mahler scholars have noted that the *Kindertotenlieder* represent a transition in Mahler’s song-writing. Mahler was trying something new at the time – “an exclusively instrumental symphonic style” (Russell 1991, 12). The style of *Kindertotenlieder* differed in that it was symphonic, extremely sparse, linear and contrapuntal, and transparent. The voice is treated as another instrument in the contrapuntal texture. This technique allowed Mahler to explore different sonorities in different songs, or within the same song. Philip Barford believes that the *Kindertotenlieder* display “a deepened psychological insight, intensified chromatic inflection, and a fascinating orchestration, which develops the style of the *Wayfarer* songs” (Barford 1971, 15).

Song 1: “Nun will die Sonn’ so hell aufgeh’n” (“Now the sun is about to rise as brightly”)²

Mahler’s Text:

*Nun will die Sonn’ so hell aufgeh’n,
Als sei kein Unglück, kein Unglück die Nacht gescheh’n!

Das Unglück geschah nur mir allein!
Die Sonne, die Sonne, sie scheint allgemein!

Du mußt nicht die Nacht in dir verschränken,
Mußt sie ins ew’ge Licht, ins ew’ge Licht versenken!

Ein Lämplein verlosch in meinem Zelt!
Heil! Heil sei dem Freudenlicht der Welt,
dem Freudenlicht der Welt!*

Translation:

Now the sun will rise as brightly
As if no misfortune had happened in the night!

The misfortune moreover happened to me alone!
The sun, it shines for all alike!

You must not enfold the night within you,
You must drown it in the eternal Light!

A little lamp went out in my tent!
Hail! Hail to the gladdening light of the world!

² For Mahler’s text, translation, and changes made to Rückert’s text see Russell 1991, 68. Mahler made a few changes to Rückert’s text: In stanza one, Mahler changed *Sonne* to *Sonn’*, *aufgehn* to *aufgeh’n* and *geschehn* to *gescheh’n*. He repeats *kein Unglück*. In stanza two, Mahler changed *auch* to *nur* and repeats *Die Sonne*. In stanza three, Mahler altered the position of *nicht*, changed the spelling of *verschrenken* to *verschränken* and changed *ewige* to *ew’ge*. He repeats *ins ew’ge Licht*. In stanza four, he changed *Lämpchen* to *Lämplein*. *Freudenlichte* loses the final *e*, and both *Heil* and *dem Freudenlicht der Welt* are repeated.

Song 1 displays the desolation of the poet. Many scholars have noted that it was the perfect choice for the initial song of this complex and sorrowful cycle, both poetically and musically. The poem is full of light and dark imagery, and the symbolism provides “a setting off point for the cycle.” (Russell 1991, 69.) It seems to have been written on the morning after the child’s death, but interestingly, it moves efficiently from the “immediacy of loss and lament to emotional resolve and finally optimism” (ibid., 45). However, this is just a hint of optimism. Song 1 displays many of the emotions expressed throughout the cycle within it, and it establishes a conflict that is definitely left unresolved. The key is D minor (D major).

Song 2: “Nun seh’ ich wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen” (“Now I can see why such dark flames”)³

Mahler’s Text:

Translation:

*Nun seh’ ich wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen
Ihr sprühtet mir in manchem Augenblicke.
O Augen! O Augen! Gleichsam, um voll in einem Blicke
Zu drängen eure ganze Macht zusammen.*

Now I can see why such dark flames
You flashed at me at many a moment
O eyes! O eyes! As if into a single look
To concentrate your whole power.

*Dort ahnt’ ich nicht, weil Nebel mich umschwammen,
Gewoben vom verblendenden Geschehe,
Daß sich der Strahl bereits zur Heimkehr schicke,
Dorthin, dorthin, von wannen alle Strahlen stammen.*

But I could not guess, because mists shrouded me
Woven by blinding destiny,
That the ray was already preparing to return home
To the place from which all rays originate.

*Ihr wolltet mir mit eurem Leuchten sagen:
Wir möchten nah dir bleiben gerne,
Doch ist uns das vom Schicksal abgeschlagen.*

You wanted with your shining eyes to say to me:
We would dearly like to stay near you,
But that is denied us by fate.

*Sieh uns nur an, denn bald sind wir dir ferne!
Was dir nur Augen sind in diesen Tagen:
In künft’gen Nächten sind es dir nur Sterne.*

Look at us well, for soon we shall be far from you!
What are only eyes to you in these days
In future nights will be but stars to you.

Song 2 portrays an individual remembering tragic events, but references an “inauspicious future” (Revers 2002, 180). The song emphasizes the images of eyes, seeing, and stars. This is also an indication of the children’s homecoming. Although there is a C minor key signature, the song is mainly tonally ambiguous. The key of C minor is not apparent until the last two measures. The tonal structure is defined by both functional harmony and assertion. The origin of vertical local harmonies suggests an emphasis on contrapuntal procedure, rather than actual surface sonorities. (Agawu 1983, 93.) The harmonic tension and delayed tonic, and any sort of foundation for tonal development “become a compositional program that translates the openness and uncertainty conveyed by the text in exemplary ways” (Revers 2002, 180). The key is considered to be C minor (C major).

³ For Mahler’s text, translation, and changes made to Rückert’s text see Russell 1991, 76. In stanza one, Mahler repeats *O Augen* and inserts *voll* before *in einem Blicke*. In stanza two, Mahler repeats *dorthin*. In stanza three, Mahler omits *immer*. In stanza four, Mahler changed *Sieh’ recht uns an!* to *Sieh’ uns nur an* and *dir noch Augen* to *dir nur Augen*.

Song 3 “Wenn dein Mütterlein” (“When your mother”)⁴

Mahler’s Text:

*Wenn dein Mütterlein
Tritt zur Tür herein,
Und den Kopf ich drehe,
Ihr entgegen sehe,
Fällt auf ihr Gesicht
Erst der Blick mir nicht,
Sondern auf die Stelle,
Näher, näher nach der Schwelle,
Dort, dort, wo würde dein
Lieb’ Gesichtchen sein,
Wenn du freudenhelle
Trätest mit herein,
Wie sonst, mein Töchterlein!*

*Wenn dein Mütterlein
Tritt zur Tür herein
Mit der Kerze Schimmer,
Ist es mir, als immer
Kämst du mit herein
Huschtest hinterdrein,
Als wie sonst ins Zimmer!
O du, o du des Vaters Zelle,
Ach, zu schnelle, zu schnell
Erlosch’ner Freudenschein,
Erlosch’ner Freudenschein!*

Translation:

I

When your mother
Comes in through the door
And I turn my head
And look towards her,
My glance falls first
Not on her face
But on that place
Nearer the threshold,
There, where your
Dear little face would be
If you, bright with joy,
Were coming in with her
As you used to, my daughter!

II

When your mother
Comes in through the door
With the shimmering of the candle,
It seems to me always as if
You were coming in with her,
Slipping in behind her
Into the room as you used to!
Oh you, the gladdening light
Of your father’s cell,
Alas, too quickly extinguished!

Song 3 symbolizes the painful void left by the children. Mahler made the most textual changes to this poem. This is the only song in which the key does not change, so Mahler brings out the emotion in other ways – mainly through a dialogue among the instruments. This song is thought of by some scholars to be in a completely different character than Songs 1, 2 and 5. It portrays the domestic aspects of the poet and is thought to represent “house and hearth.” The key is C minor.

⁴ Mahler’s text, translation, and changes Mahler made to Rückert’s text from Russell 1991, 84. He began the song with the second stanza of the poem and omits the last three lines. He continued with the first half of the first stanza and disposes of the second half. Mahler repeats *näher, dort*, and *trätest mit herein*. – In stanza two, Mahler changed the opening line to *Wenn dein Mütterlein! Tritt zur Tür herein*. He changed *der Vaterzelle* to *des Vaters Zelle*. He repeated *O du, zu schnelle* and *erlosch’ner Freudenschein*. Mahler inserts the three lines omitted from Rückert’s second stanza at the end of the song.

Song 4 “Oft denk’ ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen” (“Often I think they have only gone out”)⁵

Mahler’s Text:

*Oft denk’ ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen!
Bald werden sie wieder nach Hause gelangen!
Der Tag ist schön! O, sei nicht bang!
Sie machen nur einen weiten Gang.*

*Ja wohl, sie sind nur ausgegangen
Und werden jetzt nach Haus gelangen!
O, sei nicht bang, der Tag ist schön!
Sie machen nur den Gang zu jenen Höh’n!*

*Sie sind uns nur vorausgegangen
Und werden nicht wieder nach Haus verlangen!
Wir holen sie ein auf jenen Höh’n
Im Sonnenschein! Der Tag ist schön auf jenen Höh’n!*

Translation:

I often think they have only gone out!
Soon they will get back home!
The day is fine! Oh do not be afraid!
They are just going out for a long walk.

Yes indeed, they have only gone out
And now they will be reaching home!
Oh do not be afraid, the day is fine!
They are only taking a walk to those heights!

They have only gone on ahead of us
And will not want to come home again!
We will catch up with them on those heights
In the sunshine! The day is fine on those heights!

An apparent change in mood occurs in Song 4. It represents a homecoming – the children will find their way home to where their parents will one day join them. It is the only song in a major key, it seems to have a positive spirit, and there is no imagery of darkness or night. However, this song is extremely restless, and in this matter it contributes to the unresolved quality of the cycle. Its anticipation of the “gladdening light” is more convincing than in Song 1, but still does not resolve the emotional conflict of the cycle. Mahler followed the structure and patterns of the poem. The song has greater momentum than the poem, because the music does not rest at the end of a stanza, but is “urged on by a need to find a resolution” (Russell 1991, 100). It climatically reaches a major key at the end. Though the song differs in some aspects from the previous ones, it is linked to them by imagery and should be thought of as a development of them, rather than a departure. The key of this song is E-flat major, while partially surrounding the parallel minor.

Song 5 “In diesem Wetter!” (“In this weather!”)⁶

Mahler’s Text:

*In diesem Wetter, in diesem Braus,
Nie hätt’ ich gesendet die Kinder hinaus,
Man hat sie getragen, getragen hinaus.
Ich durfte nichts dazu sagen.*

Translation:

In this weather, in this raging,
I would never have sent the children out.
They have been carried out;
I was not allowed to say anything about it.

⁵ For Mahler’s text, translation, and changes Mahler made to Rückert’s text see Russell 1991, 91. In stanza one, Mahler changed *Haus* to *Hause* and *weitern* (further) to *weiten* (far). In stanza two, Mahler changed *Haus* to *Hause* and *Höhn* to *Höh’n*. He inserts *nur* in the last line. In stanza three, Mahler replaced *hier* with *wieder* and changes *Höhn* to *Höh’n*. He repeats *auf jenen Höh’n*.

⁶ For Mahler’s text, translation, and changes Mahler made to Rückert’s text see Russell 1991, 101-102. In stanza one, Mahler changed *Man hat sie hinaus getragen* to *man hat sie getragen, getragen hinaus* and reversed the positions of *dazu* and *nichts*. No changes were made to the second stanza. In stanza three, Mahler added *Nie* to the second line. Stanza four is a repetition of stanza one, but Mahler replaced *Braus* with *Graus*. Mahler used Rückert’s fourth stanza for his fifth stanza. Mahler adds *in diesem Saus* and changed *ruh* to *ruh’n*. He repeated *der Mutter* and discards the *e* on *Sturme*. Mahler extended the stanza by adding *Sie ruh’n, sie ruh’n wie in der Mutter Haus, wie in der Mutter Haus!*

*In diesem Wetter, in diesem Saus,
Nie hätt' ich gelassen die Kinder hinaus,
Ich fürchtete, sie erkranken;
Das sind nun eitle Gedanken.*

*In diesem Wetter, in diesem Graus,
Nie hätt' ich gelassen die Kinder hinaus,
Ich sorgte, sie stürben morgen,
Das ist nun nicht zu besorgen.*

*In diesem Wetter, in diesem Graus!
Nie hätt' ich gesendet die Kinder hinaus,
Man hat sie hinaus getragen,
Ich durfte nichts dazu sagen!*

*In diesem Wetter, in diesem Saus, in diesem Braus,
Sie ruh'n, sie ruh'n als wie in der Mutter,
Der Mutter Haus.
Von keinem Sturm erschreckt,
Von Gottes Hand bedeckt,
Sie ruh'n, sie ruh'n
Wie in der Mutter Haus,
Wie in der Mutter Haus!*

In this weather, in this rushing,
I would never have let the children go out;
I was afraid they might fall ill;
Those are now idle thoughts.

In this weather, in this horror,
I would never have let the children go out.
I worried they might die tomorrow;
Now that is no cause for worry.

In this weather, in this horror!
I would never have sent the children out.
They have been carried out;
I was not allowed to say anything about it!

In this weather, in this rushing, in this raging,
They rest as in their mother's,
Their mother's house.
Frightened by no storm,
Covered by God's hand
They rest, they rest,
As in their mother's house,
As in their mother's house!

A combination of a storm and lullaby, Mahler's fifth song is an exquisite work of art. Not only does it play a significant role in the cycle, it masters a musical evocation of a storm. It climaxes the cycle as a whole by bringing its conflict to the forefront and leading it to resolution. The fifth poem is the denouement of the cycle. There is a definite transition when the storm suddenly subsides and the lullaby emerges. The sense of finality is highlighted by Mahler's musical language. The effect is a feeling of acceptance and coherence of the last song of the cycle. In Song 5, the children find their home, and the poet's anguish rests. The key is D minor, then D major.

1.3. Rückert's Life and Work and Mahler's Attraction to Rückert

Compared to Mahler, Rückert had a very uneventful and private life. Rückert was born in Schweinfurt in Franconia in 1788. He wrote some notable poetry and was an editor and contributor to periodicals. He was devoted to scholarship, translation, poetry, and the interpretation of oriental literature. He taught oriental languages at Erlangen. Rückert loved country and rural life. He was "content to live in the confines of the family circle" (Russell 1991, 29). Scarlet fever caused the deaths of Rückert's daughter Luise, at the age of three in December of 1833, and of his son Ernst, at the age of five in January of 1834. Three of Rückert's other sons were also ill and did not recover until the Easter of 1834. Rück-

ert worked on the *Kindertotenlieder* from the end of 1833 to June of 1834. He wrote at a rate of two to three poems a day, which was not unusual for him. He sought relief from anguish in his writing. (Ibid., 33.)

Two collective editions of Rückert's *Kindertotenlieder* were published. The first edition was first published in 1872 with a total of 425 poems. This edition was organized in four sections. In an effort to organize the poems chronologically, the collection uses four headings: *Leid und Lied* (*Suffering and Song*), *Krankheit und Tod* (*Sickness and Death*), *Winter und Frühling* (*Winter and Spring*), and *Trost und Erhebung* (*Solace and Exaltation*). Rückert's sister brought out the second edition of the poems in 1881, entitled *Leid und Lied*. She re-

duced the number of poems to 241 and arranged them under the headings *Leid: Luise. December 1833, Ernst: Januar 1834, Unzertrennlich* (Inseparable), *Trost und Erhebung*, and *Zeit und Ewigkeit* (Time and Eternity). (Ibid., 35.) Russell believed that it was important to decipher which edition Mahler used. It is not likely that Mahler used one source in 1901 and a different source in 1904. Russell concluded that Mahler used the 1872 edition, because of the arrangement of poems in that edition. The 1872 edition would have been available to Mahler, as it was the better-known edition. It has an unmistakable title, and copies of it are easy to come by today. Mahler chose no poems from the *Leid und Lied* section or the *Winter und Frühling* section. He chose the poems “Wenn dein Mütterlein” (Song 3) and “Nun seh’ ich wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen” (Song 2) from the *Krankheit und Tod* section. He chose the poems “Oft denk’ ich sie sind nur ausgegangen” (Song 4), “In diesem Wetter, in diesem Braus” (Song 5), and “Nun will die Sonne so hell aufgehn” (Song 1) from the *Trost und Erhebung* section.

When Mahler turned to Rückert in 1901, it was a turning point in his career. Mahler’s shift from the *Wunderhorn* texts to Rückert was a shift down a different path – his late songs demonstrated his artistic maturity. Rückert was a conservative choice, given Mahler’s modernist connections at the time. Russell discusses what he calls “the improbable conjunction of minds” that took place during the composition of the *Kindertotenlieder* (Russell 1991, 54). Mahler was a bachelor, 41 years old, a complex genius, full of conflict, and self-searching. His four symphonies had pegged him as a modern composer by 1900, he had a prestigious position, and he was in the public eye. “The genius, the difficulties of whose artistic mission so intensely preoccupied him that they left neither time nor energy for mundane tasks of everyday life, became magnetized – briefly, to be sure, but momentarily – by the poetry of Rückert” (ibid., 54). Rückert was an academic, middle-class, a father of six, of mild temperament, and was satisfied with the study of languages, nature, and his family. He was considered “a paterfamilias of the Biedermeier” (ibid., 54). Rückert was a professor of Eastern Studies. He

translated Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, and Hebrew into German. He identified closely with the East, and “seemed to be an Asiatic speaking German as a foreign tongue” (Kravitt 1978, 349). Kravitt believes that this gives insight to connection between Mahler and Rückert. Mahler was often criticized in the anti-Semitic press as an Asiatic who “speaks musical German with the accent, inflection, and above all, the gestures of the East, the ever-Eastern Asiatic Jews” (Louis 1909, 182).

Kravitt points out other ties. Both Mahler and Rückert had lost a brother named Ernst. Both of them had an attraction toward *Symbolistes*. “Rückert had used unusual syntax, diction, and orthography, solely for evocative purposes, many decades before the French *Symbolistes* made extensive use of such devices” (Kravitt 1978, 350). Examples of such language in the second poem include “von wannen alle Strahlen”; *verblendenden* Geschicke”; “Ihr *sprühet*,” referring to “Augen”; and in its context, “Zelt” as opposed to “Welt” (ibid., 350). One more interesting link: Mahler suffered a near-death experience on February 24, 1901, which will be discussed in chapter 2. In a letter, he referred to his near-death as “Unglück.” Rückert also uses this word to refer to his child’s death. “Inverse expressions in the poems of Rückert – day and night; light and darkness; life and death – were also an essential part of Mahler’s individual artistic expressions” (ibid., 350). In 1901, upon discovering the *Kindertotenlieder* poems, Mahler agreed with the mystic language and philosophy of Rückert.

Some Mahler scholars feel that the theme of the death of children was the link to this attraction of opposites. Perhaps also the expression of withdrawal and world-negation in the poems was attractive to Mahler at a time when he suffered a near fatal illness. Russell believes that though Mahler and Rückert may have held similar philosophical views, their connection is still unusual. Two men so different in character and artistic merit “appear to meet so intimately, in so intimate an area” (Russell 1991, 54). Mahler’s song “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen,” one of the *Fünf Rückert Lieder*, is by many scholars and musicians considered to be his best song, but the poem is considered to be amateur. In fact, Rückert’s poetry was considered quintessen-

tially ordinary. Yet, it was not odd for a Romantic composer to turn a sub-par poem into a remarkable song. But Mahler went above and beyond with “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen” and especially the *Kindertotenlieder*. So, when Mahler read Rückert, he was not only seeing Rückert’s soul, but his own – “he saw more than was actually there” (ibid., 55). It is an error to think that Mahler simply selected the most “beautiful” of the *Kindertotenlieder* poems. Mahler chose carefully, and while he did not choose the most notable poems, he created with them an integrity of his own.

Lewis felt that the Rückert lyrics captured the essence of Mahler: “The powerful voice that cried out to him from Rückert’s poetry, the voice with which he felt such affinity, was his own, and it spoke to him of the one thing that mattered to him above all else – his existence as a creative artist” (Lewis 1996, 244). Kravitt contends: “For Mahler, Rückert’s poetry embodied the composer’s new attitude toward existence, one that was crystallized in the crisis of February 24. After 1901, Mahler directed his long-burdened and obsessive thought on death and hereafter into new channels” (Kravitt 1978, 349). His semi-Catholic outlook was transferred to a more mystical view of eternal renew, a view expressed by Eastern ideals and the writings by Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801-1887). “Fechner’s philosophy and panpsychism – his belief that the entire cosmos is animate – became of central importance to Mahler ... Fechner, and eventually Rückert, became complementary exponents of Mahler’s mystical ‘feeling’ about existence” (ibid., 349).

In addition to personal and philosophical factors, we must note that the formal structure of Rückert’s poems appealed to Mahler, because they resemble folk poems and allow for musical repetition, variation, and development. The same short lines allow for a sharing of material between voice and orchestra and the same frequent use of contrasts. There have been many reasons suggested for Mahler’s interest in Rückert in 1901, some extraordinary. There has been enough speculation to suggest that it was probably a combination of several factors. When the *Kindertotenlieder* were completed in 1904, there is no evidence that Mahler

went back to Rückert’s poetry or philosophy; his intense interest proved to be only temporary. Rückert’s writing did not make a lasting impression on Mahler the way that Goethe did. Mahler’s interest in Rückert’s orientalism may have been a precursor to his inspiration for *Das Lied von der Erde*. (Russell 1991, 26.)

1.4. Additional Remarks

There is no biographical information that discussed Mahler’s process of selection of poems from Rückert’s *Kindertotenlieder*. Russell rejects the theory of Hans Mayer that Mahler was so engulfed in self-projection that the poems were a “pretext” for self-expression. Although a very powerful personal psychological attraction to the poems was present, Mahler was very aware of the poems he chose and what they meant and what their images were: “... they were poems to whose detailed imagery and symbolic content not only spoke to his emotional well-being, but also met his artistic aims and could eventually be combined in a cycle with his own artistic coherence” (Russell 1991, 55). We can assume that Mahler read more than the five poems he chose, because they are dispersed so widely in both editions of the *Kindertotenlieder*.

It is interesting that Mahler did not choose any poems with a single image of nature from the *Kindertotenlieder*, which was full of nature imagery. Nature imagery was not something that Mahler was opposed to in his other works. We can assume that at this point in his life, Mahler had turned away from nature and to himself, probably due to his illness of 1901, resulting in introspection. The outside world proved to be “unresponsive,” and he was “engaged in the troubled probing of a world of darkness” (ibid., 56). He was drawn to the imagery of light and dark in four out of the five poems he chose. Only a small number of Rückert’s poems, thirty-six out of 425, contained such imagery, and their connection in the song cycle is entirely Mahler’s doing: “... having selected the poems he wanted, he placed them in a sequence in which they would interact and reflect meaning one upon the other, and saw to it that they would constitute a satisfying unity” (ibid., 57). It is amazing that Mahler was able to wade through the plethora of “unsuit-

able” poems and recognize the imagery and potential of the poems he chose. He looked at the poems through composers eyes, in the mind set of writing in a new style – one that even went beyond his own. The poems he chose were not really suitable for the established song styles, but they were for his new style. He passed up poems that were “obvious songs” and instead made imagery paramount.

2. Mahler’s State of Mind and Beliefs

2.1. Mahler’s Motivation and His Crisis of 1901

The composition of *Kindertotenlieder* begs a specific question: What drew Mahler to such a subject? Mahler began the composition in 1901 when he was not married and had an important post as the director of the Vienna Hofoper. He completed the composition in 1904, when he was married, had two daughters, and was enjoying his success. One explanation is that Mahler had “general emotional preoccupations” with death and the Romantic inclination toward childhood and children. Some feel that Mahler had a “need to suffer,” which was part of his complex character. (Russell 1991, 3.) Yet another explanation is that Mahler was oblivious to the content in the *Kindertotenlieder* and simply wanted an “artistic challenge.” However, that interpretation implies a detachment uncharacteristic of Mahler – for him, and most Romantic composers, composition was a means of expressing inner experiences (ibid., 4). Mahler admitted to Natalie Bauer-Lechner: “It hurt him that he had to write them [the *Kindertotenlieder*], and he was sorry for the world which would one day have to hear them, so dreadfully sad was their content” (Bauer-Lechner 1984, 193).

Edward Kravitt provides a much more detailed explanation for the problem of Mahler’s motivation, mainly based on a near-death experience Mahler had. Mahler suffered a crisis on February 24, 1901, that was brought on by ill health and exhaustion. He suffered from a hemorrhage late that night. The doctors were able to alleviate the immediate emergency, but Mahler had believed that his time had come. Kravitt contends that this critical period for Mahler was definitely reflected in the

songs he wrote at the time, especially the *Kindertotenlieder*. In “Um Mitternacht,” the words of Rückert describe Mahler’s crisis on February 24: “I took account of the pulses of my heart ... At midnight, I could decide nothing ... At midnight I placed my powers in your hands, Lord! Lord over life and death” (Kravitt 1978, 330). The song “Der Tambour’sell” reveals biographical and psychological information about Mahler. The poem is about a drummer boy who is being led to his execution. One of the boy’s final statements was “Had I remained a drummer boy” (ibid., 331). Mahler had been neglecting his health before the tragedy of 1901, but it was such relentless ambition that allowed him to rise so prominently from a provincial conductor, a drummer boy, so to speak, in small towns to the director of the Vienna Hofoper. With both “Um Mitternacht” and “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen,” as well as the *Kindertotenlieder*, Mahler felt as if he were obligated to write the songs. “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen” is even more autobiographical. His “permanent feelings of alienation were expressed in ‘Ich bin der Welt,’ but with serenity” (ibid., 332).

Kravitt’s thesis is that the *Kindertotenlieder* are actually a dirge for Mahler’s own death, thoughts brought on by his illness of 1901. His crisis shocked him into the idea of having a child in order to maintain his own mortality. Placing himself in the role of a mourning parent, Mahler symbolized this desire in the *Kindertotenlieder*. (Ibid., 333-34.) However, Lewis believes that “it is curious that fear of death and a need to have progeny should find expression in songs about *dead* children” (Lewis 1996, 240). In Lewis’ opinion, Mahler’s hemorrhage of 1901 did frighten him, but did not cause an obsession about death. He had an operation the following year that dispelled any remaining fears, and he no longer had any anxieties about his health. Lewis believes that Kravitt’s thesis relies on an interpretation of the poems that depends on real, though unborn, children, and real, though anticipated, death. It does not support Mahler’s knowledge of the literary context of Romanticism and the symbolism of his earlier songs. However, texts that have the loss of family as their subject do encompass the Romantic ideal.

2.2. *Psychoanalytical Observations*

Two psychoanalytical views have been proposed in order to explain Mahler's motivation for writing the *Kindertotenlieder*; both point to Mahler's personal circumstances at the time in terms of the "emotional legacy" of his childhood. Psychoanalyst Theodor Reik's theory surrounds the fact that many of Mahler's siblings died as children. Mahler was greatly affected by the death of his brother Ernst, who died at the age of twelve. In 1901, at the age of forty-one, Mahler was contemplating marriage and fatherhood. This revived repressed memories of the child deaths of his siblings and unresolved anxieties. Mahler thus identified with his father by putting himself in that frame of mind. (Reik 1953, 319). David Holbrook's theory developed from Reik's theory and describes an intense spirituality in Mahler at the time. Holbrook claims that Mahler was concerned throughout his life with finding a meaningful existence. In the face of death, Mahler "struggled to bring the core of the self to birth" (Holbrook 1975, 63). He suggests that Mahler's preoccupation was with the "repressed libidinal ego – the unborn infant self, the hunger to exist evoked by a child" (ibid.).

The *Kindertotenlieder*, on the subject of a father mourning his children's death, reveals subtler autobiographic information. "A key to this paradox is provided in a proactive thesis by the psychoanalyst Stuart Feder" (Kravitt 1978, 332). Kravitt believes that Feder's theory deserves attention, because it reflects directly on Mahler's crisis of 1901. It is based on four points, the first being that Mahler's crisis shocked him into the thought of having children of his own, in an effort to gain immortality. The concept of immortality was essential to Mahler's thinking. His thinking was initially shaped by Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) and later by more scientifically inclined philosophers, such as Fechner, Rudolf Hermann Lotze (1817-1881), and Eduard von Hartmann (1842-1906). (Ibid., 333.) Fechner adopted a concept of "panpsychism," that is "man, animals, and plants, and all of the cosmos have a consciousness that persists eternally in mind and in the material universe, which, to Fechner, are one" (ibid.). Kravitt feels that it was natural for Mahler to think of having children at this time.

However, the desire to have children had different implications for Mahler the composer and Mahler the man.

The second aspect of Feder's theory is that Mahler's hasty courtship of Alma Schindler was a result of his newfound desire to have children. In 1902, he was a sought-after bachelor. He had a whirlwind courtship with Alma – they planned to marry two weeks after they met (ibid., 334). It must have been extraordinary circumstances that compelled the forty-one year old into a hasty marriage with a nineteen year old. The third significant point of Feder's theory is that Mahler relieved his persistent conflict in his preoccupation about death in thought, life, and art, by embracing the concept of conquering death by birth. "Mahler's lifelong obsession with the omnipotence of death is well-known. Philosophically he had resolved the problem – death is conquered by birth or rebirth – in several ways" (ibid.). When Mahler faced death in 1901, his associations with death became real and recurrent. This implication was still on his mind a year later, when his first child was born. Therefore, Mahler tried to rebut his death, not just philosophically, but in reality, with the conception of a child.

The fourth important aspect of Feder's theory is that Mahler symbolized his wish to have children in the *Kindertotenlieder* in the form of a mourning parent, a symbol that also reflects the opposite concept of death by birth. The nucleus of Dr. Feder's thesis is the symbol of the mourning parent. It concerns the connection between the death of children and the birth of others to replace them. Such a connection was solidified in Mahler at a young age. Mahler's father, Bernhard, had lost eight out of fourteen children. Gustav was the second child, and essentially a "replacement" for the first-born Isidor (1858-1859). (Ibid., 333-335.) According to Kravitt, Mahler could have easily identified with the grieving father because of this. Mahler stated to Guido Adler (1855-1941) that while composing the *Kindertotenlieder*, "I placed myself in the situation that a child of mine had died. When I really lost my daughter, I could not have written these songs anymore" (Gustav Mahler, quoted in Kravitt 1978, 335).

Kravitt believes that the most substantial evidence to support Feder's theory concerns a change that Mahler made in the text of *Kindertotenlieder* No. 5, "In diesem Wetter." In the manuscript copy, Mahler replaced the final word *Haus* (house) with *Schoß* (womb)⁷, giving the poem an entirely different connotation:

In diesem Wetter, in diesem Saus

(In this weather, in this storm)

In diesem Braus, sie ruh'n, sie ruh'n ...

(In this tempest they rest, they rest ...)

Sie ruh'n, sie ruh'n wie in der Mutter Schoß

(They rest, they rest as in their mother's womb)

The inclusion of *Schoß* as a symbol of unborn children awaiting birth in a cycle about the death of children has great importance. It displays that Mahler did connect the death and birth of children, artistically and philosophically, as well autobiographically (Kravitt 1978, 337). Mahler changed the word *Schoß* back to *Haus* when the manuscript went to the copyist in 1905. By that time, Mahler had two daughters. Even though he deleted the word, just the inclusion of *Schoß* at one point, at the inauguration of the cycle, indicates an aspect of Mahler's motivation. From a psychoanalytic standpoint, *Mutter Haus* is a symbol for *Schoß*. The lyric poetry that Mahler selected among Rückert's huge collection indicates his adherence between the link of death and birth portrayed in this mournful music. The two psychoanalytical theories of Reik and Feder actually complement each other. Both claim that Mahler's consideration of fatherhood caused him to identify with his own father, and therefore he was drawn to the subject of the deaths of children (Russell 1991, 5). Still, some scholars feel that there is no explanation for Mahler's motivation to write

the *Kindertotenlieder*. We can never know for sure, but upon hearing the songs, one must wonder how he gave such expression of a loss he had never experienced. In 1907, his daughter Maria died of diphtheria at the age of four. From that point on, Mahler could not bring himself to study or conduct the *Kindertotenlieder*. There is commentary that Mahler believed his artistic creations to be precursors of the future. As interesting as this inquiry may be, it does not explain his *motivation*.

2.3. Mahler's Completion of the Cycle in 1904

Mahler's life had undergone major changes from 1901 to 1904. He got married and had two children. "Since Mahler's art so often reflects his own life, one would expect that certain of his works of 1904 would in some way reflect his family life" (Kravitt 1978, 351). Indeed, the *Kindertotenlieder* Nos. 3 and 4, which some Mahler scholars believe were written in 1904, reflect domestic life, because the children are the main focus. Songs 1, 2, and 5 are more philosophical and deal with the inner experience, while Songs 3 and 4 are literal and deal with everyday reality. Mahler gave this joyous phase of his life "inverse artistic expression" (ibid.). In such a happy summer, he completed the mournful *Kindertotenlieder* as well as the tragic Sixth Symphony. It is possible that he realized how much he had to lose. As stated earlier, we know that three songs were composed in 1901 and two in 1904, but we do not know if Mahler had envisioned a cycle in 1901. However, Mahler was clearly thinking of a cycle when composing the two songs in 1904. Three years has passed – he was no longer a bachelor, he had had time to contemplate that a possible symbolic pattern may be elaborated by the addition of songs. (Russell 1991, 55.)

3. Philosophical Implications of the *Kindertotenlieder*

3.1. Links to Different Philosophies in the *Kindertotenlieder*

3.1.1. Eastern Ideals and Mystical Qualities

It is evident that the theme of eternal renewal was a central concept to Mahler. There is evidence of

⁷ A more common meaning of the word "Schoß" is actually "Lap." In fact, "Womb" is not generally listed as a translation of the word "Schoß" in German-English dictionaries. It is possible that Kravitt was referring to a historical or metaphorical use of the word. Kravitt does not make any mention of the more literal translation of "Lap," nor does Russell in his discussion of Kravitt's arguments. Therefore, the last line of the poem could be interpreted as either "They rest, they rest as in their mother's womb," or "They rest, they rest as on their mother's lap."

Kravitt's theories and the psychoanalytical theories posed by Reik and Feder in the *Kindertotenlieder*. Kravitt believes that the concept of rebirth was the foundation of the cycle and guided Mahler's choice of symbolism. This is evidenced by Mahler's original choice of the final word *Schoß* in Song 5. Also, several musical statements from the first song appear in the last song, which will be discussed later in this article. Not only does this unify the cycle, it displays this mystical symbolism and the essence of the *Kindertotenlieder*. (Kravitt 1978, 345.)

Song 2 in particular displays Mahler's mystical exploration of the mysteries of existence. Kravitt believes that the central concept of the *Kindertotenlieder* is displayed in two separate couplets of the poem that portray the reality of the children's fate. The first couplet describes "That the ray was already preparing to return / To that realm whence all rays stem" (ibid., 344). This song reveals the children's real fate – to be part of the process of continual regeneration. The concept of an everlasting light was central to Mahler's thought at this time, especially after 1901; it symbolized life as eternal renewal. Kravitt concludes that these lines represent Mahler's belief in panpsychism: "What to you in these days are only eyes / Will to you, in future nights, be only stars" (ibid., 345). Russell agrees that the last lines of the poem are integral to its meaning: "In these last two lines are summarized the poem's fundamental symbolic polarities, in the sequence of images *Augen ... Tagen ... Nächten ... Sterne*" (Russell 1991, 81).

The mystical quality and elements of Eastern philosophy present in the first two poems was not accidental. Rückert was an orientalist and was very much interested in Eastern philosophy and the ideas of Fechner. Revers and Zedlacher believe that in the piano version of Song 4 "...the meaning of the words is detached from the worldly sphere of human speech" (Revers and Zedlacher 2002, 176). The third stanza accurately displays how Romantic metaphysics was represented by music – a hope that is emphasized by music to the point of transcendence. Such reiterated affirmations of the link between death and birth succeed in transforming the "hopeless mourning atmosphere of the *Kindertotenlieder*" into optimism (Kravitt 1978, 346). The con-

clusions of *Das Lied von der Erde* and the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* are also affirmations of life, a theme that is present in much of Mahler's work.

Mitchell believes that most of the images in the *Kindertotenlieder* are in fact double images, "functioning simultaneously on two different levels" (Mitchell 1985, 141-142). According to Kravitt, Mahler emphasized "mystical symbolic patterns" of the poems (Kravitt 1978, 345). In Kravitt's view, songs 1, 2, and 5 have the same musical and philosophical character and portray the central concept of eternal rebirth. It has been argued that Mahler's thinking was dominated by Nietzsche. Particular kinds of symbolism – concepts of *Licht*, *Leben*, and *Lust* – make up the foundation of Nietzsche's thinking. At least one of these concepts is found in all of Mahler's songs and symphonies, in association with the idea of death as rebirth. For example, the redemption chorale of the Second Symphony displays Mahler's vision of the Nietzschean *Übermensch* – "transcending good and evil and triumphing over Eternal Recurrence" (Nikkels 1989, 62). Nietzsche-allusions are also present in the *Kindertotenlieder*. Philip Barford believes that Mahler's later songs display a combination of "recurring thematic motivation and a struggle to transcend into mystical realization" (Barford 1971, 15).

It is evident that Mahler was definitely driven by an interest in mysticism and Eastern philosophy. This was not necessarily a fleeting interest, but it was an interest that was heightened during the composition of the *Kindertotenlieder*. Mahler's complex character, his endless search for meaning, and his existential dilemma were steered toward mysticism, and he became engrossed in it at least for a temporary period. His nearly fatal crisis, experiences with the loss of siblings, and the fact that he was ultimately a student of philosophy also contributed to this inclination. All of these factors combined provide some clarification of Mahler's motivation for writing such a complex composition.

3.1.2. Hegelianism

Hegelianism refers to a philosophy developed by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). This philosophy contends "the rational alone is real,"

meaning that all reality can be expressed in rational terms. A facet of Hegelianism is the Doctrine of Development, which deals with the process of development applied to reality in its most abstract form. At the commencement of any study of reality is the concept of being. The following discussion will explore how the *Kindertotenlieder* is related to the ideas of Hegelianism.

Mahler's music has a very organic character, and the *Kindertotenlieder* definitely display this quality. Mahler felt that Rückert's poetry resonated with the philosophy of Schopenhauer, which was a great influence on Mahler in his student days. "According to Schopenhauer it is essential to 'still the wheel of Ixion,' the perpetual cycle of striving and dissatisfaction that brings manifestation of the individual will" (Hefling 2002, 201). Mahler transformed such feelings into his music through his use of the pentatonic scale. The result was a blurred centrality and tonal organization, investing his songs with an organic coherence. The larger structure often develops from a single motive – the pentatonic cell – "in which is contained the germ of everything that is yet to be" (ibid.). This is a technique that is crucial to Mahler's late style. In fact, Kofi Agawu (1983) identified this technique in *Kindertotenlieder* No. 2. In his discussion of the melodic process of the song, Agawu concludes that the melodic structure is managed by continuous manipulation of an initial melodic cell. The result is that every following melodic statement may be linked with the initial cell. The *Kindertotenlieder* display a technique prominent in Mahler's songs – a technique of variation and development that represents a compromise between a simple strophic setting and a through-composed setting.

In his analysis of the text and music, Agawu concluded that Song 2 is based on a musical outer form and is divided into sections he calls Introduction, Statement, Contrast, Restatement, and Coda (Agawu 1983, 82). Agawu displays the complete pitch content of *Kindertotenlieder* No. 2 as a reduction, which further shows the basis for the process of generation within the context of the larger scheme. For example, the introduction provides "a precedent for the manipulation of contours" used throughout the song. (Ibid., 86-87.) Agawu also

displays the process of developing variation in the first formal segment of the song. This process also occurs in the contrast and restatement sections, which suggests a strong continuity in the foreground structure – essentially a monothematic song. There is evidence of continuity between non-contiguous units, which suggests a melodic structure that is not only monothematic, but also "mono-processive" – one idea constantly branching out into variations. (Ibid., 88.) It is my opinion that Mahler utilizes a similar technique to the one described by Hefling and Agawu in the *Kindertotenlieder* cycle as a whole by establishing an idea in the first song from which everything is based, and not resolving it until the last song. In this manner, Song 2 can be considered a microcosm of the entire cycle.

There is a prominent relationship of form between the *Kindertotenlieder* and the surrounding symphonies. Mahler's songs evolved ever more symphonically into his late works – culminating in his song-symphony *Das Lied von der Erde*. The relationship between symphony and song is evident not only in the forms of songs and movements, but also in the overall frame of the work – "the idea of a first movement outlining the start of a narrative or interior drama and a finale supplying the denouement, the resolution of what has intentionally been left incomplete" (Mitchell 1999, 217). Mitchell said of the *Kindertotenlieder*:

"Who would have predicted that an outwardly 'poetic' sequence of songs, narrow in focus – each song in its way a meditation on mortality, on the special poignancy of the loss of children – and seemingly devoid of the possibility of 'drama,' of narrative progression, should in fact represent one of Mahler's subtlest and most sophisticated treatments of both 'frame' and narrative." (Ibid., 218.)

Mitchell defines the 'narrative idea' as "not ending up where one has started," which developed throughout Mahler's symphonies into the idea of the 'frame' – "where the finale winds up somewhere else and also brings to a conclusion what was stated in the beginning" (ibid.). James A. Winn contends that "the centrifugal energies of programmaticism in the *Kindertotenlieder* is balanced by equally powerful unifying forces" (Winn 1981, 196).

Some scholars stress the developmental character of the *Kindertotenlieder*, rather than the

organic character. In the Introduction to the mini score, Hans Redlich describes the songs as having a steady emotional progression: “a pale sunrise on the morning of the death of two children (Song 1), magic of two pairs of eyes that will gaze down (Song 2), a mother entering with a candle which brings up an unbearable image of a lost child (Song 3), a beautiful day carries self-deception that it may be only a long walk the children have taken (Song 4), (combines dirge and lullaby) funeral march revives the children’s burial, storm and grief transformed into a cradle song, folk-like simplicity ends song on a note of consolation (Song 5)” (Redlich 1961, v). Also, the overall instrumental design of the cycle progresses. The cycle begins with a very sparse texture, a wind duet, and proceeds to gain more and more instruments, until it reaches a full orchestra in Song 5. However, the second half of Song 5 is much more scaled down in both orchestration and dynamics.

Indeed, the cycle is an example of a grand development, and individual songs develop within themselves. Song 1 displays the formal structure’s relationship to symphonic form – particularly sonata form, but Mahler trades the tonic-dominant relationship for that of a relationship between D minor and D major (Mitchell 1999, 218). Mahler utilized this idea frequently, but did it with parallel keys for the first time in the *Kindertotenlieder*. In Song 1, Mahler applied sonata form to strophic form – stanza one is the exposition, and stanza two is the repeat of the exposition. Stanza three is the development and stanza four is the recapitulation. Many have noted the fact that Song 1 introduces a conflict that will not be resolved until the finale. Since Song 1 resembles a sonata form, it can be considered a microcosm of the entire cycle. Even though the struggle presented in the song is left unresolved, the development within the song mirrors the development of the entire cycle. The song acts as a significant first movement in a work that can be considered a symphony. This shows Mahler’s incredible artistry – to take a strophic structure and the imagery of the text and give it a “detailed musical expression” (Russell 1991, 75).

I believe that the organic quality of the *Kindertotenlieder* and the reoccurring aspect of devel-

opment allow the music to display the struggle that inevitably comes along with grief. Examples of this will be displayed later on in this chapter, but here I will touch upon a few. In Song 1, Mitchell believes that the climax is at bars 59-63. The voice has just finished, and the full orchestra plays an agitated chromatic passage, which was originally heard on *Nacht*, but now has orchestral development. According to Russell, the instability of the music, compared with the emphasis on eternal light, displays how the struggle of the mourning father is apparent in the development of the song (Russell 1991, 73).

In Song 2, as it develops, each quatrain seems to express a different aspect of the struggle of grief. Lewis points out that the first quatrain of the poem expresses a “state of present knowledge” reflecting on a time when a “source of artistic authority was understood” (Lewis 1996, 241). The second quatrain displays the failure to understand the flames that is attributed to the reflection on superficial accomplishments, which actually do provide a glimpse of truth. The third quatrain reflects on the past and the truth – “we can never remain what we are now, for that inevitably becomes what we have been, and that, as we grow and learn, what we are becomes farther and farther removed from what we are” (ibid.). Kofi Agawu found that the words *Strahlen*, *Leuchen*, and *Sterne* are linked to six-four chords and shifts in mode correspond to the variations in the poetic vision.

Song 4 is the most strophic, because Mahler follows the structure of the poem. He utilizes this form to enhance the music, because in each of the three stanzas “similar material is presented consecutively but with variation” (Russell 1991, 92). In Mahler’s use of strophic form, he is able to bring out the similarities and differences among the stanzas. In the first stanza, the father is deluded into thinking the children are just out for a walk; they have just gone on a longer walk than usual. The second stanza follows the same basic pattern as the first, but the orchestral accompaniment is modified to match the variations in the poem. The second stanza has almost identical words, but slight changes indicate a metaphorical meaning: “the children have indeed gone out on a journey, and will

find their way to a different ‘home’, a heavenly home symbolized in the phrase *zu jenen Höhn*” (ibid.). The third stanza creates a new atmosphere, because Mahler is trying to match the new idea in the poem – the children have merely gone out without their parents, who will one day join them. The solid figure of the sixths in the opening bars is replaced by restless eighth note figures in the cellos and clarinets. The third repetition of *Haus* reverts back to the original meaning of the parental home. The biggest change in the third stanza is in the second half, where the vocal line is extended over eleven bars, compared to seven bars in stanza one and eight bars in stanza two. In the third stanza, *ausgegangen* becomes *gegangen* – the poet seems to be reasoning with himself. The children will literally never come home again, but one day the parents will catch up with them.

The process of variation and development is also present in Song 5. Mahler’s treatment of the opening of each of the stanzas uses the same figure, but with variation. For example, “the implied upward surge of anxiety in the second stanza at *ich fürchtete, sie erkranken* [is] followed by the helpless, almost throw-away mood implied by the *pianissimo* falling figure at *das sind nun eitle Gedanken*” (ibid., 106). The same principle of repetition and variation characterizes the last part of each stanza. The most prominent example of variation in the entire cycle occurs in Song 5, for it is a combination of a dirge and a lullaby.

The concept of development is an integral aspect of Hegelianism. This line of thinking contends that being is not a static concept. Being is dynamic, because it passes over into nothing and then returns to the higher concept of becoming. Hegel contends that being tends to become its opposite – nothing. Both being and nothing are united in the concept of becoming. Therefore, Hegelianism holds the concept of becoming higher than the concept of being. Becoming is the more accurate representation of reality.

In my opinion, the *Kindertotenlieder* relate to Hegelianism in this aspect. The fact that the cycle is constantly developing on both an individual and over-all level, both emotionally and musically, in an organic manner displays how important the process

of development is to the understanding of the cycle. Hegelianism stresses that a fundamental process is constantly present, and indeed the process of development is ever-present in the *Kindertotenlieder*. Hegelianism contends that becoming provides the ultimate expression of thought. Humans can only obtain the complete knowledge of something when they understand how it has developed. In the discussion of grief later on in this chapter, we will see how a constant process of development was necessary in order to have an accurate portrayal of grief. The songs of the *Kindertotenlieder* represent the struggle between grief and consolation. Mahler purposely left the conflict established in Song 1 unresolved, because he knew the conflict had to be developed throughout the cycle in order for the resolution to be accurate and sufficient. He knew that the *development* of the struggle was absolutely necessary to find solace and obtain clarity. The process of development is as important to the philosophy of Hegelianism as it is to the impact of the *Kindertotenlieder*. The development of the music, of ideas expressed in one song and generated in another, and the progression and juxtaposition of emotions are integral characteristics of the *Kindertotenlieder*.

3.1.3. Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is the study of the interpretation and understanding of texts. The definition of ‘text’ is extended to any objects subject to interpretation. Therefore, Hermeneutics is not only associated with text that is set to music, but also the music itself. The following discussion will relate aspects of the *Kindertotenlieder* to Hermeneutics. There are many complex factors that contribute to the unity of the cycle of the *Kindertotenlieder*. Russell concludes that Mahler consistently chose poems with a certain imagery found only in a small number of them. Mahler deliberately brought out that imagery in his musical language, and he was actually more sensitive to the text than his commentators indicated. In addition to the musical connections of the songs, the songs also are connected by their imagery “that indeed one is inseparable from the other” (Russell 1991, 113). The *Kindertotenlieder* actually have a sense of organization that has not been previously perceived by scholars. For example, Song 5 does

not display imagery of light and dark, but summarizes the imagery of all the other songs.

Mahler envisioned the songs as a unified cycle, and he indicated so on the score: "These 5 songs are intended as a unified, inseparable whole, thus their continuity must be maintained (also by suppression of disturbances, such as, for example, applause at the end of only one of the songs)" (Gustav Mahler 1979, 3). Some scholars feel that Mahler avoids the monotony of the sameness of subject by the "emotional and musical contrasts of the songs, the extreme subtlety of their emotional gradations and their variations in texture and tone" (Russell 1991, 10). Yet some Mahler scholars feel that the emotional content of the songs contrast. They are described as "by turns of emotionally stunned, wildly grief-stricken, warmly affectionate, and radiantly consolatory" (Cooke 1980, 77). It has been noted that Song 3 is a very different character than Songs 1, 2 and 5. However, Russell believes that Song 3 has the same key images of the first two songs: eyes and seeing, the radiant child's face, the radiance of the child's eyes, and the extinguishing of light. Also, Mahler links Song 3 with the previous one, as the opening figure resembles the pattern from the closing phrase of Song 2. Song 5 occurs in the same emotional world as the other songs, yet the poem itself evokes no images of light or dark, but the song certainly does: "... using storm and cessation (and transformation) of storm as images of psychological states in precisely the same way that the images of light and dark have been used in the preceding songs" (Mitchell 1985, 142). Whatever position one takes, that the songs compliment or contrast each other, I believe that in order to comprehend the *Kindertotenlieder*, one must have an understanding of the individual songs, the entire cycle, and the relationships between the individual songs and the entire cycle. It is apparent that the parts make up the whole. Mitchell believes that "all ... songs are independent and each creates its own distinct world." Yet all of the songs have a common source of feeling: "pain, suffering, grief, and awareness of mortality." (Mitchell 1999, 221-22.)

A remarkable unifying factor of the *Kindertotenlieder* is the use of "symbolic instrumentation." Mitchell did extensive studies and analyses that

show the symbolic instrumentation as a formal principle of the cycle. He displays how the orchestra was carefully calculated as "an aspect of the total form of the work" (Russell 1991, 12). The patterns of the keys of the songs are symmetrical: Song 1 (D minor → D major), Song 2 (C minor → C major), Song 3 (C minor), Song 4 (E-flat major → E-flat minor), Song 5 (D minor → D major). Song 3, despite its key relationship to Song 2, stands alone as a centerpiece (Russell 1991, 10). What Revers calls the "closed cyclic form of the *Kindertotenlieder*" is apparent in the key relationships – D minor in the framing songs, C minor for Songs 2 and 3, and E-flat major for Song 4 (Revers 2002, 177).

The musical language of the songs contains many links. In Song 4, the return to E-flat major on *Sonnenschein* is emphasized by a melisma. In Song 1, the words that symbolize light were also drawn out by a melisma. Song 5 contains quotes from Song 1. Song 5 is linked with Songs 2 and 4, because they all can be considered to have a theme of homecoming. The former structure of Song 5 is the same as Song 4 – a strophic poem in which each stanza is characterized by repetition with variation. Also, the descending figure of the storm in Song 5 echoes the final descending figure of the voice on *jenen* in Song 4. (Russell 1991, 104.) Russell believes that Song 3 plays a special role in the entire cycle: "The whole import of the third song is indeed to bear out the truth expressed in the opening quatrain of the second song: that in the child's eyes is concentrated a terrible power over the father's life, and that the extinction of their light means his despair" (ibid., 86).

The hermeneutic circle is a process of understanding a text. It refers to the idea that the understanding of a text as a whole is established by reference to the individual parts, and the understanding of each individual part by reference to the whole. Neither the whole text nor any individual part can be understood without reference to one another, and hence, it is a circle. To my knowledge, the hermeneutic circle greatly applies to the understanding of Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*. The definition of a song cycle is purposefully vague so that it may apply to many different groups of songs that have some sort of connection. With the *Kinderto-*

tenlieder, Mahler managed to expand an already broad definition, in that his songs are both connected and disconnected at the same time. The interpretations of the unity of the songs of the *Kindertotenlieder* differ. Some scholars believe that the songs complement each other, some believe they progress, and some believe they contradict each other. In fact, they do all three. I contend that because the songs are such an accurate portrayal of the process of grief, they cannot simply progress and they cannot have one simple connection. They connect on many complex levels, their connection even lies in their differences, and their differences combine to create a whole picture. Songs of the *Kindertotenlieder* that are considered to be of a different character have links through their musical language or imagery. Of course, all of the songs have the prevailing mood of grief and display an effort to reach reconciliation. Mahler was familiar with grief, and he knew it was a complicated process – it is not a simple progression, and it is not united by a single emotion. The differences in the songs are necessary in order to display the range of emotions in the grieving process. The similarities of the songs seem to reorganize the grieving process, to hint at optimism and serve as a reminder of the ultimate goal – consolation. This indicates that the understanding of the *Kindertotenlieder* depends on an examination of the individual songs and how they relate to the cycle as a whole. This is just one of the ways in which the *Kindertotenlieder* are a complex and innovative composition.

3.1.4. Post-Structuralism

Post-Structuralism is a broad term applied to intellectual developments in Continental Philosophy and Critical Theory originating in the 1960s. In direct contrast to Structuralism's claims of culturally independent meaning, Post-Structuralists generally view culture as integral to meaning. Post-Structuralism is difficult to define or summarize, and the question of whether or not Post-Structuralism can actually be considered a philosophical movement is highly debated. However, this study will relate the basic assumptions of the theory associated with Post-structuralism to aspects of the *Kindertotenlieder*.

Mahler's knowledge and love of German literature is well known. His literary interest was necessity for him and spanned time periods and countries. However, Mahler has been criticized for his treatment of text. Some critics believed that he lacked sensitivity of poetry, and that he was merely concerned with the way a text could serve his own need for expression. Russell believes Mahler sought poems he could relate to, as every composer does. This does not mean that he reduced poetry to merely self-expression. "Indeed one of the most fascinating aspects of all lieder, Mahler's included, is precisely the ever-present tension between the poet's personality and intentions, and the composers" (Russell 1991, 21). Also, the history of the Lied has many examples of settings of second-rate poets that are first-rate songs. Lewis believes that the Romantic artist had an inherent understanding of the symbolic meaning of seemingly simple poetry (Lewis 1996, 228). Many Mahler scholars agree that Mahler utilized texts for his own needs, but those that have conducted detailed studies of the songs, such as Theodor Adorno, disagree. According to Russell, the text changes Mahler made to the *Kindertotenlieder* poems do not indicate that he lacked respect for the poems. With the exception of the poem used for Song 3, the changes he made were minimal (Russell 1991, 66).

A basic element of Mahler's song-writing was that the music always expresses more than the words can alone. "The text is really a mere indication of the deeper content which is to be fetched out of it – of the treasure which is to be raised" (Bauer-Lechner 1984, 46). Zoltan Roman thought that Mahler represented a medium between placing the poem above the music and making the melody the most important element, a balance between literature and music. "Through the infinite possibilities of variation, Mahler was able to follow and express the most delicate changes in the narrative and psychological contents of a given text" (Roman 1970, 122). Half of Mahler's songs are in variation form, and the other half use variation form principles – a sort of "musico-literary technique" (Russell 1991, 22). His attempts to uncover the deeper meaning of the poem are evident in the form of his songs – a compromise between strophic and through-com-

posed, what Mahler called “eternal development” (ibid., 24). This addresses the organic character of Mahler’s music discussed earlier.

Mitchell contends that Mahler transcended the text of the *Kindertotenlieder* and thereby established new forms. For example, Song 1 displays an emotional conflict that is not resolved until Song 5. Mahler gives an emphasis to this poem that was not there before – placing emphasis on the “gladdening light of the world” (ibid., 74). The poem itself does not express “the triumph of faith over doubt – it takes the music to do that. The last two couplets seem to only express *belief* in the eternal light.” In the poem, the grieving father’s doubt is subject to interpretation. In the song, it is unmistakable and displayed mostly in Mahler’s treatment of the last couplet. The emotional content of the song erupts in the third couplet, which makes the third couplet much more relevant and haunting than Rückert originally did. About Song 3, Kravitt states: “Though the pitiful real-life subject of these poems tends, in Rückert’s treatment, to be maudlin, in Mahler’s, it is muscular and certainly in the closing phrases of the third song of nearly crushing emotional power” (Kravitt 1978, 353). According to Russell, Mahler invested the poem used for Song 5 with much more character and clout than what was originally there. Mahler possibly chose the poem for Song 5, because he knew the cycle would need a “climax and release.” The poem really has little character – the storm is merely an observation, but Mahler gives the storm a crucial role and a psychological significance. Mahler also gives the song character by his treatment of the last stanza. (Russell 1991, 102.)

Primarily, Post-Structuralists believe that the concept of ‘self’ is not a singular and unified entity. Rather, an individual is made up of many conflicting strains and has access to many different outlets for knowledge. In order to comprehend a text, the reader must understand how the work is related to his or her own personal concept of self. Therefore, self-perception is necessary for interpretation. Secondly, the meaning that the author intends is not as important as the meaning that the reader perceives. Post-Structuralism contends that a text can have more than one meaning or purpose. The meaning of

a text can change in relation to certain variables. Post-Structuralism rejects the idea that there is a consistent structure to texts, specifically the theory of binary opposition. Post-Structuralists advocate deconstruction, which claims that the meanings of texts and concepts constantly shift.⁸ The only way to properly understand these meanings is to deconstruct the assumptions and knowledge systems that produce the illusion of singular meaning.

Mahler has been accused of “usurping” his texts and of utilizing too much self-projection in his texts. I believe that Mahler made specific and original interpretations of the *Kindertotenlieder* poems, and this indicates a Post-structuralist line of thinking. It is evident in Mahler’s treatment of the poems, and his selection of the poems that he saw a very specific purpose, connection, and ultimate conclusion in them. He saw in them things that others, even other composers, would not see. Many scholars have noted Mahler’s extraordinary feat in his selection of the poems for the *Kindertotenlieder* – the fact that he waded through over 400 poems and chose five that he knew, through his music, would accurately portray the loss of a child. Russell contends that he saw in them a common imagery, which Mahler somehow knew he could transform into a musical representation of the struggles of grief leading to a final resolution. Mahler did not choose the poems that were the most suitable to set to music. Instead, he chose poems that he saw his ultimate vision in. It is evident that Mahler made more out of the poems than was originally there. The poem used for Song 5 is simply describing a storm, but Mahler made it the culmination of the entire cycle – he made a relatively simple poem the ultimate resolution for the incredibly complex struggle between grief and consolation established throughout the cycle. Whether or not Mahler is guilty of usurping texts or too much self-projection is debatable. Some sense of self-projection is necessary for any composer to set a poem.

In my interpretation, for the composition of the *Kindertotenlieder*, it was Mahler’s self-projection that made it such a remarkable and expressive representation of grief. Even though Mahler had not

⁸ On deconstruction see Stefaniya 2005.

suffered the loss of a child at the time, he had suffered the loss of many siblings, and he experienced his parents' reaction to it. Mahler projected those experiences onto his selection of the poems. Mahler definitely applied his own interpretation to Rückert's poems, not out of a lack of respect for Rückert, but because he could only represent his own experiences and interpretations of grief, not someone else's. We must not forget that Mahler was a composer enveloped in the Romantic idiom, a composer that had an insatiable desire for self-expression. The combination of devices that Mahler used in the *Kindertotenlieder* that are distinct to him – the mystical references, the focus on light and dark imagery, the accurate portrayal of grief by someone who was very familiar with it – culminated in a remarkably expressive and touching composition. Some degree of self-projection was absolutely necessary in this case in order to provide an authentic representation of the subject.

3.1.5. Aesthetic Realism

Aesthetic Realism is the philosophy founded by the American poet and critic Eli Siegel in 1941. It is important to note that while many of Siegel's ideas have merit, Aesthetic Realism has been criticized on many levels. This line of thinking is concerned with aesthetics, the concept of opposites, poetry, and how individuals view the world. This section of this article will relate the *Kindertotenlieder* to aspects of Aesthetic Realism.

Russell believes that images of light and dark were a constant factor in Mahler's work – its presence in *Kindertotenlieder* is not new, just elaborated. Mahler's tendency toward light and dark could be due to his religious and philosophical readings. A recent study shows how much Mahler's inclination to light imagery may be due to reading of Nietzsche, particularly *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.⁹ There is also reason to believe that this inclination came from Mahler's experiences – the youthful Mahler is the wayfarer, wounded by love; the older Mahler struggles with his own mortality, suffering with darkness in *Das Lied von der Erde*. Mahler associates light with salvation and eternal life in his

Second Symphony. "Urlicht," the contralto solo of the fourth movement, and the chorus in the finale based on Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock's ode *Auferstehung* have the same eternal light imagery. In the Third Symphony, the fourth movement is Nietzsche's *Midnight Song*, followed by a finale with the song "Es sungen drei Engel einen süßen Gesang" from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, which depicts the joys of heaven and has a very bright accompaniment. The fourth symphony has a similar depiction of heaven in the song "Das himmlische Leben" for soprano solo. Therefore, in scanning the *Kindertotenlieder*, Mahler noticed poems with such imagery and poems that identified salvation with eternal light.

The poems of the *Kindertotenlieder* touched on Mahler's transitioning view of life. Lamplight or candle light represent the children's deaths – the lamp or candle being suddenly extinguished. The radiance of the children's eyes is described as dark flames. Sunlight or the sun is portrayed not as strong as the power of night and insufficient to console the grieving father (Russell 1991, 53). The children are characterized as the sun and the moon, which no longer reappear for him on a familiar cycle. In Song 1, Rückert juxtaposes the symbols of darkness, light, and death with sunrise, life, and eternal light and therefore summons ideas of the literal meaning of the poem. Mahler grasps these symbols and transforms them into remarkable music. He portrays the symbol of the sunrise in the first line with a descending vocal line. His vocal line portraying night ascends. Therefore, Mahler portrays the opposites as being musically the reverse of each other. Song 4 differs from the others in that it depicts sunshine or day, as opposed to night.

Many scholars believe that the poem "Nun will die Sonn' so hell aufgeh'n," which Mahler chose for Song 1, was written the morning after the death of a child. Kravitt believes that it "contrasts Rückert's deep grief with the unconcerned world about him, a world he soon must join" (Kravitt 1978, 341). Kravitt emphasizes the fact that Mahler changed one word of the poem. In line 3, *Das Unglück geschah auch mir allein*, (The grief was also mine alone), Mahler replaced *auch* (also) with *nur*

⁹ See Nikkels 1989 as well as Russell 1991, 65.

(only), making the line: “the grief was only mine alone.”

“To the German Rückert, the death of his children from scarlet fever struck him individually (“allein”) – but in the 1830s, death from that disease was of communal (“auch mir”) concern. To Mahler, the perpetually alienated, plagued by the dream of the Wandering Jew, the grief was “only” his; he suffered “alone.” The crisis of February 24 was “only” his; the next morning he observed how the world went on unconcerned.” (Kravitt 1978, 342.)

The image of the sunrise in Song 1 is interesting – human misfortune is displayed against a natural, unchanging event. This is characteristic of the art song, and the relationship between sunshine and pain is a characteristic of Mahler’s songs (Revers 2002, 177). The role of the sun is negative – “it rises indifferent to the human disaster which has occurred in the night” (Russell 1991, 53). Lewis believes, Song 2 has many levels of poetic meaning that display the Romantic ideal. He shows that the literal sense of the poem is a “framework for symbolic reference to the Romantic dilemma of the artist estranged from society” (Lewis 1996, 244). Russell points out that in the section of the *Kindertotenlieder* poems from which Song 2 was taken, *Krankheit und Tod*, there is an extreme absorption in Rückert’s own feelings. He is irritated by others who try to console him, and he neglects his wife’s feelings – she “is only a faint presence” (Russell 1991, 42). Kravitt suggests that Mahler was drawn to the mood of withdrawal and world weariness in Rückert’s poems, especially in 1901, after his brush with death. A less persuasive argument by Reinhard Gerlach concerning Mahler’s attraction to Rückert suggests that Mahler was “aware of his problematic position as an epigone, a derivative late-comer in the wake of Beethoven and Wagner, found himself mirrored in the epigone of Rückert” (ibid., 26).

A fundamental teaching of Aesthetic Realism is that beauty in art is defined by the unity of opposites. The world, art, and self all combine to form a totality of opposites, and each element explains the other. Aesthetic Realism is concerned with the quality of poetry. Siegel contends that good poetry is both logical and passionate. I believe that the *Kindertotenlieder* display the unity of opposites promoted by Aesthetic Realism by its combination,

juxtaposition, and opposition of darkness and light in a countless number of ways. In my opinion, Mahler emphasized the light and dark imagery in his chosen poems, and utilized the dramatic effect of the concept of opposites to shape his complex and innovative interpretation of a difficult subject. Aesthetic Realism also proposes that the world is the unity of freedom and order, and a good poem depicts the world. A good quality poem evolves in an organic manner – it is a single entity with many factors that serve each other. There are many examples of the organic qualities of the *Kindertotenlieder*. I believe that in his transformation of the poems, Mahler applied an organic quality to them that adheres to this principle of Aesthetic Realism. Russell contends that the technique Mahler used was “a combination of variation and development ... this technique allows for a successful ‘organic fusion’ in *Kindertotenlieder* ... music which evolves naturally in itself, while at the same time expresses step-by-step the meaning of the words being sung” (ibid., 24).

A primary teaching of Aesthetic Realism is that every individual essentially desires to like the world in a sincere and precise manner. However, there is another desire opposing this – the desire to have contempt for the world and what is in it, for that makes one feel more important. The third primary principle is that the will for contempt causes unhappiness or even insanity. Aesthetic Realism contends that one’s attitude to the world governs how he or she sees things. It is evident that both Mahler and Rückert had feelings of world-weariness and world-negation. Contempt for the world played a part in the themes underlying Rückert’s poems and Mahler’s attraction to them. Certainly, Mahler was very concerned with his place in the world, and struggled with the Romantic dilemma of creating an art that satisfied his needs for expression and could also be well received by the public. Yet Aesthetic Realism contends that world-negation is merely an attempt to make one feel more important, and it is not a desirable state of mind, but rather something that should be overcome. While I cannot say whether or not Mahler and Rückert overcame such feelings, I believe that the grieving father portrayed in the *Kindertoten-*

lieder did defeat his feelings of world-negation. The unconcerned world, and the sense of bereavement that is his alone, is emphasized in the first song. In order to reach the consolation so effectively expressed in Song 5, those feelings must be overcome. In his representation of the poems, Mahler portrays the conquering of such feelings as a part of the grieving process.

3.2. The Search for Meaning and an Outlet for Grief and Comfort

3.2.1. The Search for Meaning

Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* accurately display the ultimate search for meaning in many different ways. Lewis believes that one symbol often portrayed in Romantic song is that of estrangement – the wanderer represents artistic escape, the process of art which in turn represents the process of life. This is especially true for the *Kindertotenlieder*. The wanderer is wrapped up in a search for meaning, greatly affected by the incoherence of experience. The Romantic identity represents the complexity of an existential duality. The dilemma goes beyond the artist and actually addresses the fundamental questions of human existence (Lewis 1996, 229). Mahler's poetry and music is autobiographical in an extraordinary way. Its goal is to define self and life. His professional life made family life difficult. This is represented in his constant effort to merge the drama of the symphony with the lyricism of the song (*ibid.*, 218). The later symphonies also display the same polarity, without the songs. *Das Lied von der Erde* (1907-1908) transcends darkness and doubt, and ends with a radiant vision of eternity.

“In all of his works, over and over again, Mahler undertook the struggle from the toils of mortality into a vision of immortality and a struggle from the darkness of ignorance into the illumination of knowledge, composing was indeed itself a means of exploring the mystic complexities of the human condition.” (Russell 1991, 62.)

3.2.2. Grief

Grief is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. It is usually associated with the emotions, but it also has physical, cognitive, behavioral, social, and philosophical ramifications. Most individuals at one time or another will experience loss. The terms ‘grief’ and

‘bereavement’ are often used interchangeably, however ‘bereavement’ often refers to the state of loss, and ‘grief’ to the reaction to loss. Scholars have begun to account for the fact that the response to loss varies from person to person. The conventional view of grief was that people move through an orderly and predictable series of stages. Researchers such as Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and others have proposed stages of grief often referred to as the “grief cycle.” (Kübler-Ross and Kessler 2005, 7.) The stages are identified as denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. However, recently researchers have come to realize that a wide variety of responses to loss are possible. These responses are influenced by many factors, such as family and culture as well as spiritual and religious beliefs.

I have already proposed that Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* are an accurate and expressive portrayal of the grieving process associated with the loss of a child. I have shown that this is because the cycle contains so much development and is both unified and disconnected, but always striving for the end goal. It is as if the songs take us through the entire range of emotions – complete with hints of optimism, memories of the children, and fruitless resolutions – until finally consolation is reached in the second half of the last song. A “symphonic structure” with a poetic purpose expresses a parent's battle between grief and hope, darkness and light. The first and last songs are an exposition and resolution of this battle. The other three songs express what must be endured in order to reach that resolution. Song 5 portrays the final victory of light over dark. “The first movement having set up the conflict and possible ‘goal’ which might resolve it, the finale proceeds to do just that, with perfect formal logic.” (Mitchell 1999, 219.) An autobiographical interpretation of the cycle is that it transforms something that is very painful into something “ennobling and transcendent.” “It is because the cycle is so faithful to human experience, indeed, that we so readily accept the transformation of mood at its end as a natural outcome” (Russell 1991, 112). In the middle movements, each song explores an aspect or vision of loss. “Such music is thus the fervent outpouring of one to whom every moment of happiness is tinged with darkness, every moment of

joy a threat of future pain, and every optimistic promise dubious of realization.” (Barford 1971, 15.)

There is a plethora of examples of the struggle between grief and consolation in the musical language, imagery, as well as similarities and differences of the songs of the *Kindertotenlieder*. In the opening of Song 1, the oboe and solo horn play a “bleak counterpoint,” which is unlike any conventional opening (Russell 1991, 69). It establishes a lament and the linear, contrapuntal style of the entire cycle.

Langam und schwermütig, nicht schleppend.

Example 1: Contrapuntal Opening of Song 1 (mm. 1-4)

The second vocal line brings a new timbre, because the woodwinds are replaced by muted lower strings and rhythmic figures on the harp. “The voice now sings of its misfortune to a rising line, but rising by semitones, as if with great effort ...” (Ibid., 70.)

pp mit verhaltener Stimme

Example 2: Ascending Vocal Line of Song 1 (mm. 10-14)

The cadence on *Nacht gescheh'n!* occurs three times in the song – also on *Scheinet allgemein* and *Freudenlicht der Welt!*, as if attempting to bring the parent back on course, on the road to consolation.

Example 3: Reoccurring Cadence of Song 1 (mm. 14-15)

Then there is a brief rest, as if darkness had indeed been replaced by light. Yet, this is only an illusion that is quickly discarded, because then the music becomes unsteady – it only hinted at a symbol of light. Mahler does this on purpose, according to Mitchell. Mahler purposefully saturates his source of imagery, otherwise the symbolism in Song 5 would fall short. After the “lightening” of D minor to D major (Mitchell’s word), the repetition of *dem Freudenlicht der Welt!* in the final bars reverts back to minor. The cadences display a lack of resolution, and the harp entrance on *Welt!* does not add a final tonic. “Thus the conflict of emotions in the poem, expressed throughout the dichotomy of darkness and light, remains unresolved – and indeed it is only via emotional experience of the cycle as a whole that a resolution will be reached.” (Ibid., 75.)

In Song 2, just before the end of the first half, a strong C major tonality is established on *Strahlen*, and the voice drops a minor sixth (see Example 6). The music seems to be moving towards a resolution in C major, but that is avoided. What Agawu identified as the “central motif” provides an introduction to the next section. The voice enters with a repetition of the central motif.

Example 4: Central Motif of Song 2 (mm. 38-39)

The kettledrum increases the tension, and there is a lingering D on *Leuchten*. This is an intensely warm moment: on the cadential six-four D major chord are “sweeping semiquaver [sixteenth-note] harp arpeggios,” light orchestral effects, “a sudden great warm effulgence of light,” and Mahler directs the singer to sing warmly (ibid., 81). Mitchell believes that this radiant D major moment symbolizes the target of heaven that is not reached until the end of the cycle (Mitchell 1985, 97).

Example 5: D major Moment of Song 2 (mm. 39-41)

We find a definite emphasis on the words *Strahlen*, *Leuchten*, and *Sterne* – the words that are the most obvious references to light in a dark environment. The harmony surrounding each of these words is a cadential six-four chord, approached by a German augmented sixth chord and underlined by a harp arpeggio (Agawu 1983, 83). (See Examples 5 and 6.)

Example 6: German Augmented Sixth Chord of Song 2 (mm. 33-34)

There are only four six-four chords in the song; they provide continuity in a song that is otherwise tonally ambiguous (*ibid.*, 84). The cadential six-four chord provides a strong sense of tonal progression, and Mahler uses it to emphasize more optimistic parts of the poem. In this song, the goal of eternal light is not within reach, it is merely implied by the inferences of optimism. Bleak words are contrasted by the orchestra – almost “as if in celestial denial” (Russell 1991, 81).

In Song 3, a climactic passage occurs in the second half of the first stanza. It is a harmonic departure from C minor, but the key is restored on *Töchterlein*.

Example 7: Harmonic Departure of Song 3 (mm. 31-33)

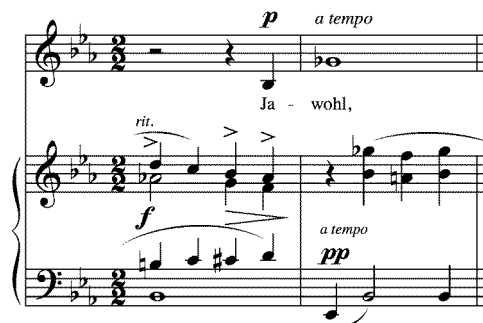
The dominant feature of this passage is the lack of pauses. It contradicts the first half of the first stanza, which has orchestra interludes. The seven lines flow without pause, which represents a grand discharge of emotions. The second stanza follows the same pattern as the first. The harmony develops in the same manner, and the vocal line follows the same melodic and rhythmic course. However, differences in the instrumental parts are presented. The strings supply rich harmonies, and the violas play at a high pitch that add color and intensity. In the second stanza, the climactic passage is more intense than the first. The biggest change is that *erlosch'ner Freudenschein* is repeated, spread out over seven notes, with crescendos on the last syllable.

Example 8: Text Emphasis of Song 3 (mm. 61-62)

This word is given great emphasis – “his daughter *is* indeed his *Freudenschein*” (Russell 1991, 90). This also reflects the earlier images in the cycle. At the end of Songs 1 and 2, we saw that the eternal light was not yet within reach. This song also ends in a sense of unresolved grief. A calm mood is presented when the cor anglais and bassoon resume contrapuntal figures, but Mary Dargie points out that it is “only the calm of suppressed tension” (Dargie 1981, 320). The pizzicato bass picks up, then breaks off – the mother’s footsteps have halted. This reluctance

of acceptance is actually the theme of the next song, which begins to bring us closer to light and relief. In Song 3, the tonality is very secure, compared to Song 2. The key of C minor is never in question. Song 3 is in the realm of memory, and the music has suspensions and chromaticism similar to the main motive of Song 2. However, enveloping into a world of memories cannot ease the pain of the present. This is portrayed in the final lines, which begins on a high F and descends two octaves in eight measures. The song ends on a dominant, which is rare for Mahler. “It is a way of implying that the grief given vent in the song remains unresolved, that the reality of the father’s loss has not yet been accepted.” (Russell 1991, 90.)

Song 4 has a much warmer feel than the others, because it has images of daylight and sunshine. However, this does not mean that the grief portrayed in the previous songs has been resolved – this song displays aspiration, but not fulfillment. Opening material returns at bar 19, signifying what Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht identified as *bewegte Ruhe* [moving stillness]. According to Eggebrecht, it “implies a state of emotion-filled calm, as if everything were all right” (Eggebrecht 1982, 235ff). Nevertheless, the singer’s phrase ends inconclusively, and the phrase is left to the orchestra to resolve. Bar 23 contains a strong indication toward a resolution in E-flat major because the harmony surrounds the dominant of E-flat major, but the voice enters and begins the second stanza with an unexpected G-flat.



Example 9: Unresolved Moment of Song 4 (mm. 30-31)

This results in what Dargie calls “a brief period of suspended animation amid the onward rush of events” (Dargie 1981, 322). Mahler goes beyond

the final expression of *Der Tag ist schön* and repeats *auf jenen Höh'n*, which allows the voice to have “passionate rising phrases” previously heard only in the orchestra. Now the voice can expose what has been implied. An E-flat major cadence finally occurs at bar 69, yet the postlude still has hints of uneasiness. Eggebrecht believes that this indicates that the singer’s triumphant expression does not lead to an actual resolution – “the liberating thought in Mahler’s setting reveals its lack of foundation, it collapses; the song returns to its beginnings” (Eggebrecht 1982, 246).

According to Mitchell, Song 4 shows a belief that the sun still shines in the distance, and each stanza dispels anticipation of the bright day that is on the horizon. On the other hand, there is an underlying feeling of unfulfilled yearning throughout the song, characterized in the poet’s assertion of a future reunion with his children remaining just that – an assertion. The inner tension is unresolved, and Mahler implies this in his musical phrasing, harmony, and shifts in tonality. “In conveying this tension, Mahler is faithfully following Rückert, whose poem is characterized by precisely this doubting-hoping ambivalence” (Russell 1991, 92). In the *Kindertotenlieder* No. 4, the “past, present, and future become an indissoluble unit that is paradigmatic of the process of mourning” (Revers 2002, 176). The individual comes to terms with the loss through a combination of memories, the present situation of the parents who remain behind, and the hope for a future reunion.

In Song 5, the storm represents all of the feelings of grief and despair that have gone unresolved – “it acts as an outlet for the cycle’s unresolved conflicts, and thus as a catharsis of them” (Russell 1991, 111). Throughout the song, the storm rages in the orchestra, and the dynamic level is reduced at the beginning at each stanza to allow the voice to come through. Yet the storm returns with greater force each time. No orchestra interlude is present between the first two stanzas, but a six-bar interlude appears between stanza two and three, and an eight-bar interlude appears between stanzas three and four. Since the storm is stronger each time, so is the singer’s outcry. At the end of stanza three, the storm reaches a thundering climax, and the full or-

chestra participates, including kettledrum and gong. Almost all the orchestra parts have *fortissimo* dynamics.

Stetig steigend.

Example 10: Climax of Song 5 (mm. 73-75)

From bar 73, the marking is *stetig steigend* [continuously increasing]. Beginning at bar 98, the rocking accompaniment figures of the lullaby appear, and the key changes to major at bar 99. Now, after all the implications that light will overcome dark, we see it happening. I believe that this is evidence that the *Kindertotenlieder* are truly cyclic, and that Song 5 is also a microcosm of the entire cycle. The end of the storm brings acceptance and tranquility, more so than is implied in the poem. “The sense of potent, deep and final peace expressed in Mahler’s last stanza reveals that with this resolution not only the song, but the cycle too has reached an end” (Russell 1991, 103). The final section is a lullaby, in which the children are resting in eternal peace – it is a total contrast. The surging dynamics have changed to *pianissimo*, and what were once forceful woodwinds is now a delicate combination of muted strings and celesta. There is no chromaticism or agitated rhythms. The rocking accompaniment of the celesta and the strings have a lyrical and diatonic melody. A mood of light and radiance penetrates this section from the beginning. (Ibid., 109.) The grieving parent has finally obtained tranquility. At bar 133, the sought-after D major cadence appears. The intrusion of the lullaby establishes acceptance – what was left an open question has been answered. In the epilogue, the solo horn reaffirms the goal of the entire piece: a clear D major (Mitchell 1999, 220). The music dissolves and dies, because there is nothing left that needs to be said.

Research has shown that many who worked with the bereaved found stage models of grieving to be too simplistic and that an examination of the processes, dynamics, and common experiences of grief would be more beneficial and applicable. The psychiatrist John Bowlby identified the ebb and flow of processes such as Shock and Numbness, Yearning and Searching, Disorganization and Despair, and Reorganization (Bowlby 1980, 85). In Mahler’s songs in general, the accompaniment is made up of constantly “shifting planes of color, the vocal line is interrupted with orchestral interludes, the form is made up of a pattern of associated images ... When the voice is silent, the orchestra explores its soul” (Barford 1971, 18). Mahler’s orchestration of *Kindertotenlieder* aims specifically

“at the delineation of structure, striving for the greatest possible clarity” (Russell 1991, 65). In Song 1, Mahler accommodates for the dichotomy of imagery, because for every couplet there is an alternation of woodwind accompaniment and string accompaniment, “... these contrasts of sonority reflecting the fundamental contrasts in the poem between grief and consolation” (ibid., 69). It is evident that Mahler does not simply display a progression from sadness to solace in the *Kindertotenlieder*. Throughout the entire cycle, and within individual songs, there is a discourse; an ebb and flow of emotions, very similar to the ebb and flow of emotions associated with the grieving process. It is as if the music is reasoning with itself, trying to find answers, and no matter how much it is discouraged, it is persistent in its search for resolution.

In Song 2, a representation of ambiguity and unity exists. The song contains several different tonal regions, variations in tempo, and time signature changes. The ambiguous tonal shifting is important to Mahler’s interpretation of the poem. Unity is provided by the “central musical motif,” which opens the orchestral introduction. Agawu states that there is yet another level of meaning displayed in the interplay between major and minor triads on C. The sections of minor tonality seem to provide a frame for the major tonalities, but do not control them. This frame and the larger tonal structure are essentially static. Therefore, two levels of significance are established: the background minor mode suggesting the emotions of the father and the major mode that corresponds to the occasional optimism that accompanies the tragic condition. (Agawu 1983, 84.) In Song 3, the only song that stays in one key, alternate orchestras provide a discourse and bring out the emotion. This helps to build an emotional tension that dissolves in a climax. The first half of each stanza is a contrapuntal dialogue between the winds and the pizzicato lower strings. Song 1 also had alternate orchestras that bring out the emotional contrasts (Mitchell 1985, 139).

Many scholars have noted the tension that is prominent in Song 4. The first bar of a song establishes a different environment than each previous song. From the very beginning we “are aware of the ambivalence, the tensions, which will permeate the

song” (Russell 1991, 92). Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht’s detailed analysis of Song 4 breaks down the orchestral prelude into four emotions that are fundamental to the song’s meaning (Eggebrecht 1982, 235ff). Few would discern such specific connotations in the first five bars, but there is no mistaking the feelings of restlessness and ambivalence in the first measures. The agitation presented at the beginning dominates the song. The irregular phrases, shifting time signatures, and especially the unpredictable changes in harmony also contribute to this feeling. In Song 4, there is an alternation between voice and orchestra. At the end of stanza one, the voice drops out and the orchestra takes over, and at the end of stanza two, the voice drops out later and the orchestra takes over less. In the third stanza, the voice does not drop out at all, but asserts itself with an extended concluding phrase of the orchestra – “the singer’s song is at last made complete” (Russell 1991, 97). In Song 5, Russell identifies a surging, then falling pattern in the third stanza. The mystical lines portray accurately the emotional transition of the words “with their swift passage from the anxiety to hopelessness” (Russell 1991, 106). I contend that these aspects of the *Kindertotenlieder* represent a discourse inside of a progression – much like the accurate portrayal of grief that researchers have come to agree on.

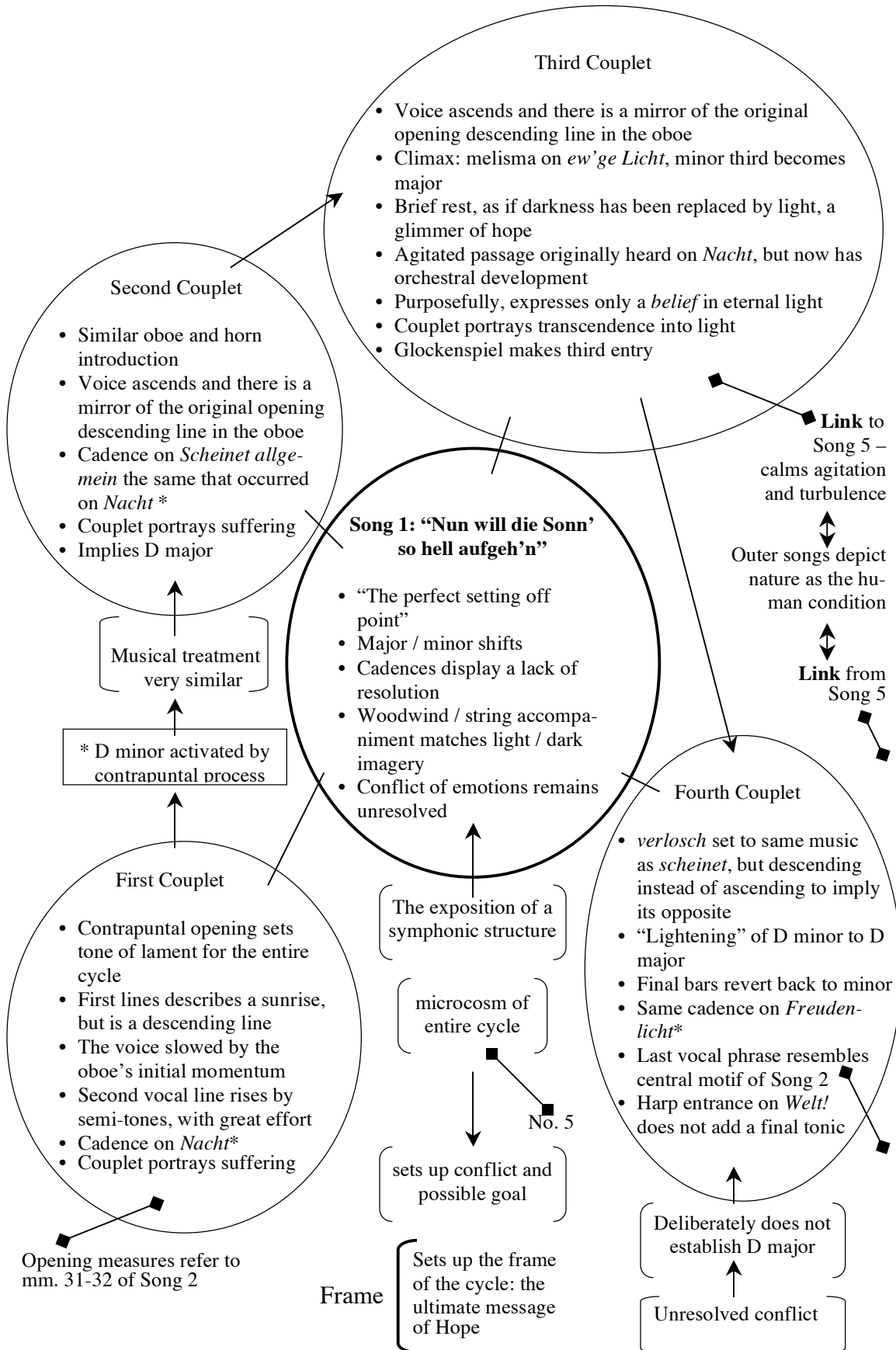
In the yearning and searching stage of grief, the bereaved tries to locate the lost person. Of course, their search is in vain. This process has also been referred to as ‘pining’ (Bowlby 1980, 87). It is common for the grieving person to feel or believe that they actually saw the deceased for a moment, or to otherwise sense their presence. This stage of grief often signifies that the bereaved is beginning to accept the loss. Song 3 can be thought to represent the pining stage, because the poem describes the mourning father seeing a vision of his daughter in the doorway. It is interesting that the pining stage has been identified as a sign that the bereaved is coming to terms with the reality of the loss, and that pining is represented in the middle song, the plateau, of the cycle. There is a distinction between normal grief and complicated grief. Normal grief encompasses at least two of Kübler-Ross’ five stages of grief, though not necessarily in any order.

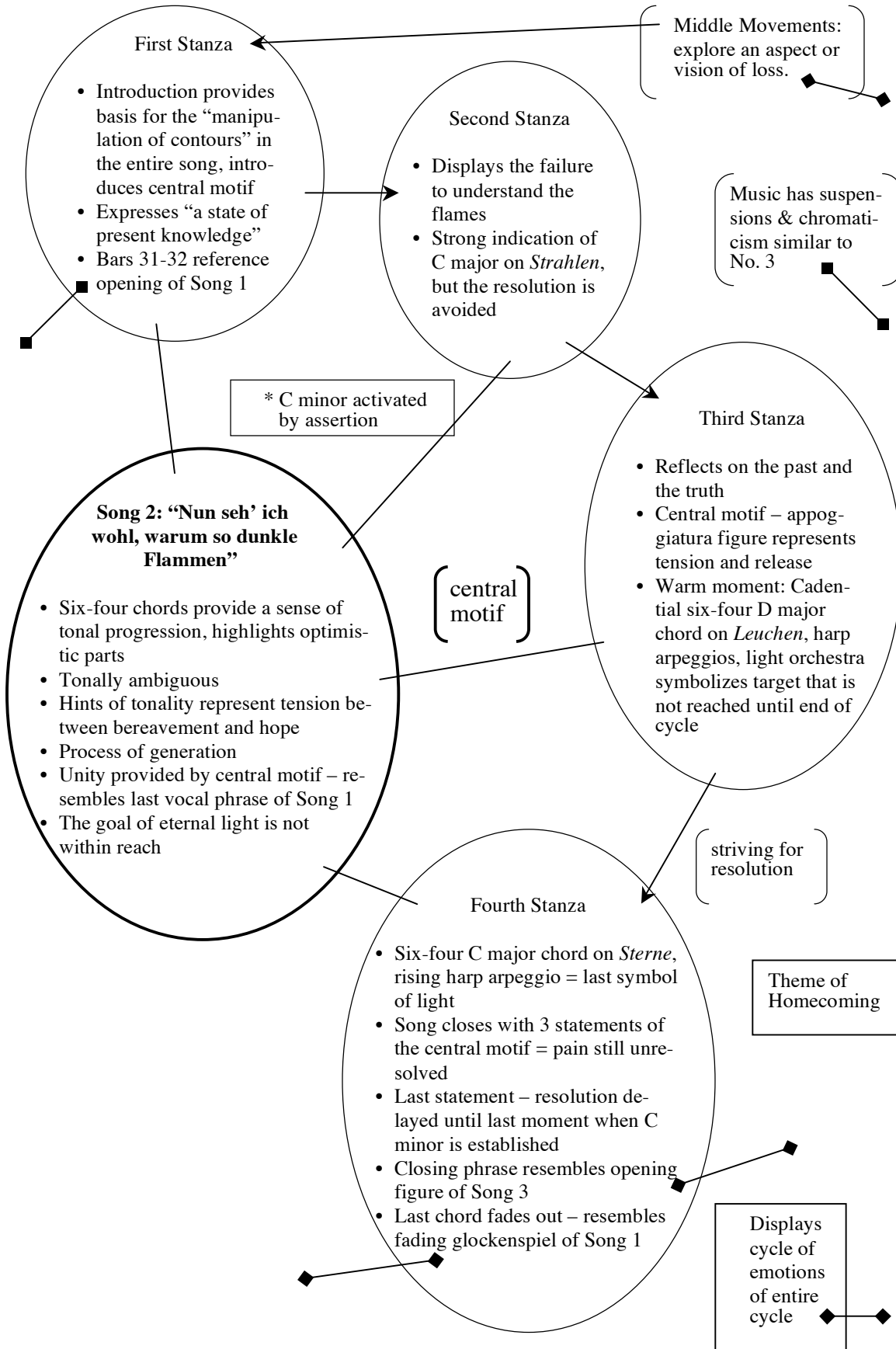
Complicated grief goes through the stages in a random order and includes stages in addition to those identified by Kübler-Ross. To my knowledge, Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* definitely portray the process of complicated grief. The examples portraying the struggle of the grieving process abound, among the individual songs as well as the whole cycle. The charts on the following pages are a graphic representation of these examples.

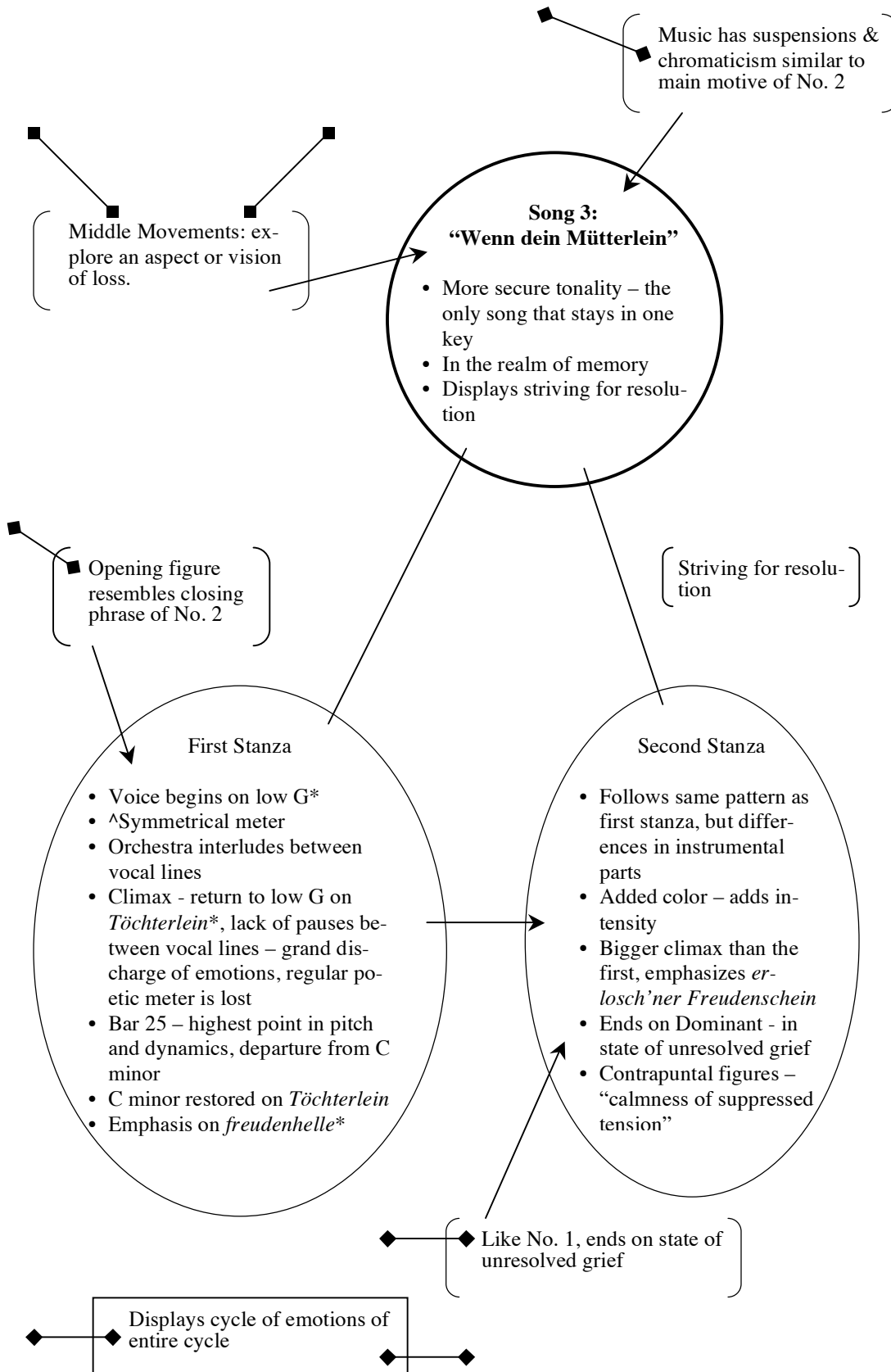
In all cases of the death of a child, parents find the grief overwhelming. Such a loss can lead to a lifelong grieving process, for the parent will never overcome the loss, but can learn to understand and adapt their life accordingly. Parents are often plagued by feelings of guilt, often projected on themselves. They have trouble coping with the abrupt ending of the dependent nature of the relationship. The loss of a parent, grandparent, or sibling can be very troubling in childhood, and children react differently to loss, depending on their age. Mahler was able to portray the grieving process so accurately in the *Kindertotenlieder*, because he was very familiar with the concept of grief after experiencing the loss of eight siblings, including his beloved brother Ernst. Some believe that the inclusion of the lullaby in the second half of Song 5 is over-simplistic – it is a resolution that is too convenient. I believe that the lullaby is a sufficient and suitable resolution, because it represents what has been sought after in the entire cycle – certainty. “Initially, in the final song, the imagined tempestuous nature and the self’s confused state correspond ... Yet finally the self is removed to a bright sound world distanced from all peril.” The first three stanzas are characterized by a jagged descending melody, with the performance direction “with restless anguished expression.” When the lullaby starts, the voice becomes song-like and despair is replaced by the comfort of certainty – “Certainty of a home beyond time and space.” (Revers 2002, 179.) In my opinion, certainty provides the sense of comfort that

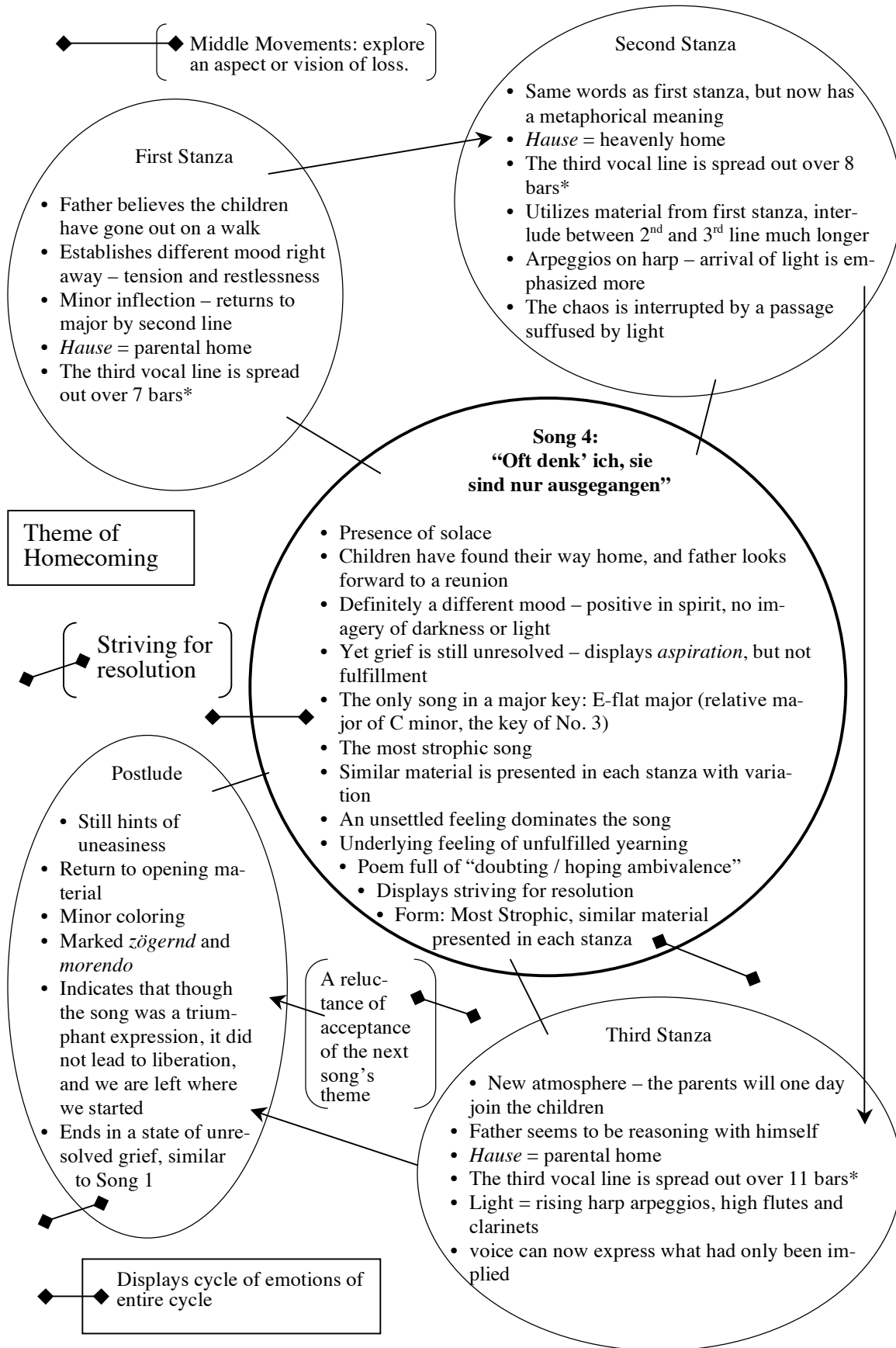
the grieving father has been seeking throughout the entire cycle.

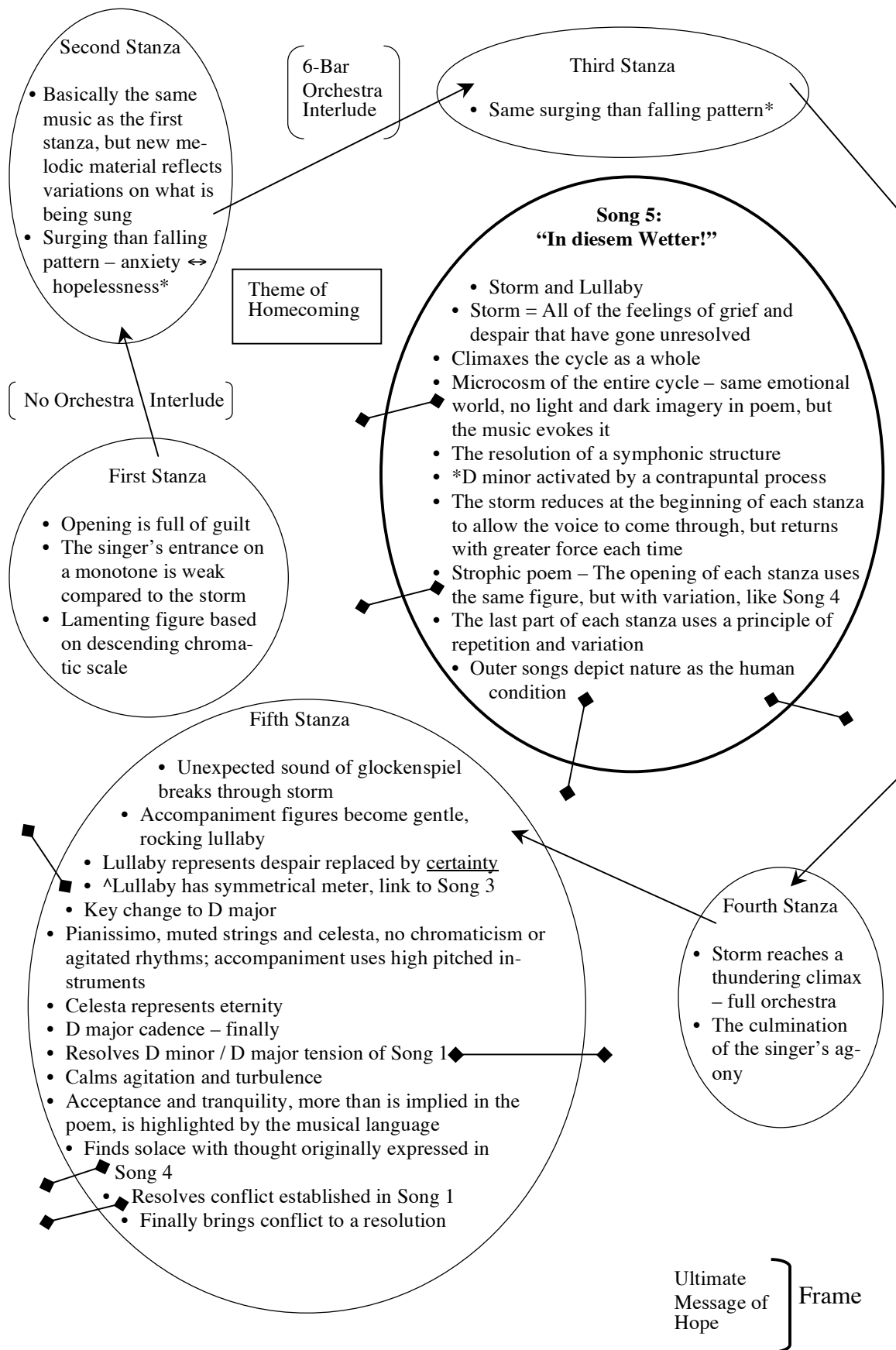
The lullaby is also effective, because it comes at exactly the right time – after the grieving parent has run through the gauntlet of emotions, re-visited memories of the children, recalled their deaths, and endured the storm that summarized and incorporated all of these experiences; finally he is ready for solace. Mahler knew that the resolution did not depend on a progression that culminated in a big finish. He knew that the conclusion depended on the state of acceptance that can only come after experiencing the cycle of emotions portrayed in the *Kindertotenlieder*. This is displayed in the key relationships of the songs. Mitchell points out that the tonal organization of the cycle is concentric, rather than progressive. The songs “explore a fairly narrow sequence of tonalities,” rather than progress. When it returns to the tonic minor in the last section of Song 5, it “conducts an exercise in pacification, in conciliation, by turning to the tonic major” (Mitchell 1985, 76). Song 5 is the ultimate resolution to unresolved conflicts in Song 1. This portrays acceptance, rather than denial, of the suffering and proves that the collection of five *Kindertotenlieder* is cyclic. Mahler knew that the loss of a child was something that can never be fully resolved, and he portrays this in the epilogue. “Although the final song suggests a transcendent and comforting world of tranquility and heavenly peace, the musical structure of the epilogue makes clear the shadow of pain and loss that marks every measure of the *Kindertotenlieder* cycle.” (Revers 2002, 183.) We are not released from pain and suffering, but return to it. This is a sense of dissolving, succumbing to the grief, instead of fighting it. The fact that the grieving parent has obtained a sense of certainty that the children have gone to a better place allows him to accept their fate and the reality of the tragic loss. Therefore, the final resolution is a statement of certainty and acceptance.











Gustav Mahler: *Kindertotenlieder*

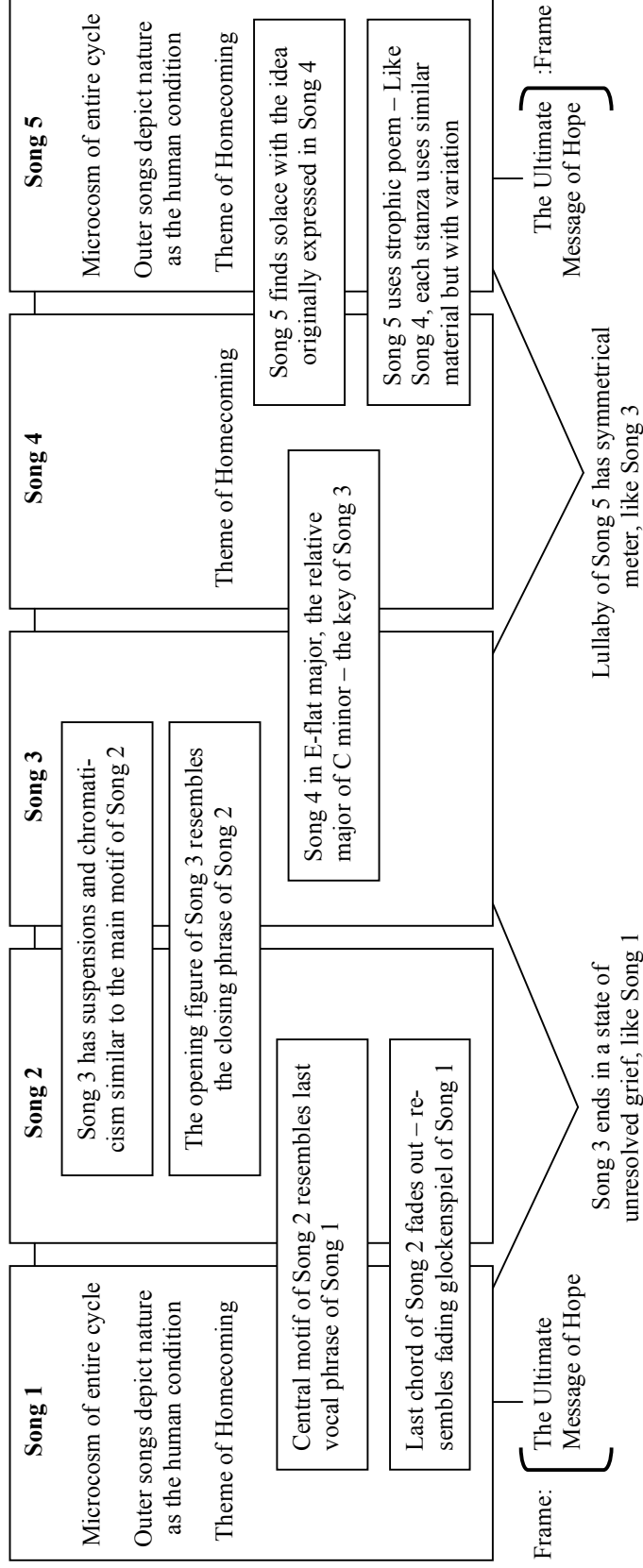
Contrast of songs: “Emotionally stunned → wildly grief-stricken → warmly affectionate → radiantly consolatory”

Prevaling mood of grief

Middle movements explore an aspect or vision of loss
 Middle movements display the cycle of emotions
 Middle movements display a striving for resolution
 Middle movements display a tension between tragedy and comfort / light and dark intensifies

Tonal organization of songs is cocentric – a narrow sequence of tonalities

Song 5 resolves D minor /
D major tension of Song 1



Steady emotional progression of songs: A pale sunrise on the morning after death → magic of two pairs of eyes → unbearable image of lost child → a beautiful day carries self-deception → storm and grief transformed into lullaby

Conclusions

It is important to note that any philosophical implications based on Mahler's work should be collective, rather than based on a single thinker. Whatever influences Mahler had on his thinking, he made them his own. All of the influences he had combined to form a broad display of ideals – not a definite philosophy. I do not mean to imply that Mahler advocated Hegelianism or that the thoughts he expressed in the *Kindertotenlieder* were a precursor of Post-Structuralism. I contend that this composition has characteristics that pertain to such philosophies, indicating that the *Kindertotenlieder* were full of complexities, and their underlying elements transcend many lines of thinking and levels of meaning. We have seen that the *Kindertotenlieder* have many examples of Eastern ideals and Mystical qualities. There is an underlying, yet prominent organic quality of the music that stresses the process of development in the way that the philosophy of Hegelianism does. The process of the hermeneutic circle greatly applies to the cycle, because each song and their relationship to each other need to be understood in order to comprehend the entire cycle, especially its conclusion. The *Kindertotenlieder* is saturated with light and dark imagery, and in this manner it utilizes the concept of the unity of opposites promoted by Aesthetic Realism. The *Kindertotenlieder* go beyond their time and relate to the future, because they represent the true nature of suffering and the endless search for meaning. The fact that it relates to different philosophies, some that were not even solidified during Mahler's lifetime, indicates how deep and forward-looking this composition was. It is only fitting that a composition taking on such a subject matter is so complicated. Mahler's *oeuvre* in general is an indication of his inability to be anything other than complex. He only wrote symphonies and songs, and the relationship between his symphonies and songs is well documented. Mahler's output was constantly evolving; his works transitioned, but also overlapped. The *Kindertotenlieder* are a representation of Mahler's work overall – constantly developing and utilizing quotes and referencing other works.

There were many dichotomies present in Mahler's life: songs versus symphonies; his life as a Romantic artist versus his life as a husband and father; the massive orchestra versus the chamber orchestra; absolute music versus program music; the Romantic artist's dilemma of feeling versus reason. Mahler was used to complexities in his life, and the *Kindertotenlieder* were an extension of his life. The symbolism, juxtaposition of optimism and despair, and constant development of the grieving process were not really a deliberate choice, but a reaction to his existence. Mahler is guilty of self-projection in the poems of the *Kindertotenlieder* that he chose, because it was necessary in order for him to create what he felt compelled to create. Post-Structuralism asserts that self-projection is a necessary part of interpretation. Unlike Rückert, Mahler had not suffered the loss of a child at the time, and he had to draw on his own experiences with the loss of siblings. Mahler's choice of poems was deliberate in that it was a desire for expression that was embedded within him. He utilized his beliefs, the kinship he felt with Rückert, and his needs as a creative artist to create the *Kindertotenlieder*.

Mahler was a composer who was “wrapped up” in the Romantic ideal, a true representation of his setting. We know this about Mahler, so we require some sort of autobiographical explanation for his motivation for writing a piece. The explanation for his motivation for writing the *Kindertotenlieder*, like Mahler, is very complex and encompasses several factors. Ultimately it is autobiographical – it is clear that Mahler had a need, not just a desire, but an obligation to write these songs. This need was a result of his need to express himself – to express his experiences with grief; his intense interest in Rückert; panpsychism; the philosophies of Fechner, Schopenhauer, Hartmann, Lotze, and Nietzsche; his self exploration after a near death experience; and his response to becoming a husband and a father – all of this served as a catalyst for a remarkable form of self-expression that materialized in the *Kindertotenlieder*.

Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* are enhanced by extra-musical elements that represent various aspects of grief, such as despair, anger, hope, reasoning, guilt, and struggling. This gives it a sort of dis-

unct quality, but ultimately, the composition is held together by the unyielding goal of consolation and the prevailing mood of sorrow. Some scholars believe that Mahler's Lieder do not transform in the manner of his symphonies and do not encourage a stability of emotion like traditional Lieder. The songs of the *Kindertotenlieder* are progressive, conflicting, and stable. While they do not progress in the traditional manner, there are many subtle developments and juxtapositions. They all contain transitions to and from despair and hope, and overall they have the overwhelming mood of despair. Therefore, the songs display both transition and stability. Ultimately, they display a juxtaposition of feelings, and the cycle displays a cyclical progression, rather than a linear one. Part of the impact of the *Kindertotenlieder* is that they portray past, present, and future. The memories represented in the songs help to display the grieving process of the father and bring us closer to acceptance. The songs express the feelings of the bereaved parent at that moment. Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* are a constant attempt at reconciliation highlighted with moments of anger and despair. The composition is an accurate representation of the complicated grieving process.

My conclusions shed light on the main research areas of the *Kindertotenlieder*. To my knowledge, Mahler was not so much motivated to write the *Kindertotenlieder* as he was compelled. The subject of the death of children would have been challenging for many composers, but Mahler saw in the subject a novel outlet for expression. The question of the cycle's unity and the chronology of the songs are related. To say that songs 1, 2, and 5 are of a different character than songs 3 and 4 is true, but it relies on a division of the cycle. Again, both answers are correct. The songs are disconnected and connected – disconnected in the juxtaposition of moods, but connected in the overall mood of despair and the goal of reaching consolation. Mahler's late works were complex by default, because they were the culmination of his brilliance, what he toiled to express, and what was within him that drove his artistic genius. Mahler is one of the most complex artists of all time, and with the *Kindertotenlieder* he created a truly remarkable composition – one that accurately expressed a human reaction to

tragedy, explored various levels of philosophy, and with almost every measure displays superb artistry.

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Composer Portraits

From Gypsy Music to Post-Minimalist Deconstruction: A Portrait of, and Interview with, Composer Charles J. Ditto (b. 1954)

by Ju-Sun Kim

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Biographical Annotations

Charles J. Ditto was born in Houston, Texas, on October 3, 1954. He grew up in a musical family. Ditto's father was a singer-guitarist, and his mother was a principle clarinet in her school and a pianist and organist in church. Because of his parents' musical talents, he, as well as his brother and sister, experienced music naturally; he was given music lessons, including piano, clarinet, and guitar, since he was seven years old. His family used to make music together, such as singing four-part hymns and playing various instruments. His parents bought season tickets for the Houston Symphony, and he remembered that it was the chance to improve his musicality while he has been attending high school and college. After that, he became a pianist in church, like his mother. He entered the University of Houston in Houston, Texas, in 1972, and he received the degree of Bachelor of Music in composition from the university in May 1977. Between 1977 and 1991, he worked as a professional accompanist, composer, and musician. He has played classical and popular music in various types of ensembles, worked as a recording session musician, composed commissioned scores, and worked as a dance accompanist at the University of Texas at Austin Department of Theater and Dance for 16 years. While he was an accompanist, he played ballet and modern dance music as well as music for theatrical productions, and he improvised most of the music for dance classes.

Ditto's experiences as described above are the resource of his later composition. He also established Ditto Records and Human Symphony Music in 1986, and he released eight albums of original music to date.

Charles Ditto enrolled in the Graduate School of the University of Texas at Austin, and he earned a Master's degree in May 1994. During this time, he was influenced by minimalist composers, such as Steve Reich (b. 1936), Philip Glass (b. 1937), John Adams (b. 1947), and Arvo Pärt (b. 1935), and he also discovered his own musical language. He created his music by incorporating a kind of tonality in non-traditional ways, which are based on his experiences from graduate school.

Ditto's professional assignments have included commissioned scores for theater and dance for the University of Texas, Amherst College, KO Theater Works in New York, the Sharir Dance Co-operation, Diana Prechter, Peter Lobdell, Impulso, and Kenesis. He was awarded the Copeland Fellowship at Amherst College for the spring of 1998. In December 1998, he received the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in composition from the University of Texas at Austin. Since then, Charles Ditto has been teaching music theory and composition at Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas.

Interview with Charles J. Ditto

This interview was conducted in early November 2006, in San Marcos, Texas.

Ju-Sun Kim:

First, I would like to ask you about your background. What were your most important influences when you grew up? How would you characterize your music environment?

Charles J. Ditto:

My family was a very musical family. My mother was principle clarinet in her school. She was also a church pianist / organist. My father was a singer-guitarist. My brother, sister, and I were all exposed to music from infancy and were all given multiple music lessons, beginning at around age 7. Our main family activity was making music together: singing four-part hymns together, passing around instruments and playing and singing songs. During high

school and college, my parents would buy me season tickets for the Houston Symphony, and I would go every Monday night, with scores in hand, and sit up in the upper balcony with a pen-light and follow along. I followed my mother and became the church pianist.

Ju-Sun Kim:

You said you were passing around instruments in your family, when you were a child, but what are your main instruments, besides the piano, and how did you learn those instruments?

Charles J. Ditto: I was given private lessons on clarinet, piano, and guitar, starting at age 7.

Ju-Sun Kim:

As far as I know, between 1977 and 1991 you were working as a professional accompanist, musician, and composer. Please tell me more about your work during this time. And did the work as an accompanist and musician influence your own music?

Charles J. Ditto:

During these years, I performed in various bands, working in and out of Austin and Houston: rock, blues, punk, country, Gypsy, etc. Concurrently, I was an accompanist at the University of Texas at Austin Department of Theater and Dance, playing for ballet and modern dance classes as well as for theatrical productions. Since I improvised most of the music for dance classes, I was able to develop 'live' theory skills. For example, one day I might focus on playing progressions featuring the French augmented 6th chord in many keys, or secondary diminished 7th chords, or I would work on distant modulations, etc. I was paid to practice four to six hours per day, so my piano skills blossomed. I also developed a keen appreciation for phrasing and proportion in music and how music flows with the rhythms of dance. Also, while performing as a professional musician in various bands, I learned how to play accordion, mandolin, banjo, dulcimer, and dobro. Then, around 1985, MIDI technology came about. I immediately bought some equipment and used my computer as a sequencer and embarked on a solo live MIDI composer / performer, doing one-

man electronic music concerts in clubs and at festivals, etc. I started my own record and publishing companies and began making recordings of multi-layered MIDI tone poems and have released eight albums to date. Another huge influence during these years was the body of commissioned scores for theatrical productions for the Amherst College Department of Theater and for their director / writer / artist-in-residence Peter Lobdell. We have continued to work together for 20 years.

Ju-Sun Kim:

In 1992, you entered Graduate School. Did you notice any change of your musical style after entering Graduate School?

Charles J. Ditto:

I fell under the spell of the minimalist composers – Reich, Glass, Adams, Pärt – and found a musical language therein that excited me as a composer. So I decided to return to school and further develop my theory and composition skills. Their music incorporated a kind of return to tonality, at least in a non-traditional sense.

Ju-Sun Kim:

Who were the role models for you as a composer?

Charles J. Ditto:

Bach, Monteverdi, Bartók, Webern, Feldman, Rochberg, Moondog, Berg, Reich, Glass, Adams, Verdi, Wagner, Liszt, Schubert, Arvo Pärt, and Harry Partch.

Ju-Sun Kim:

Going back to your compositional work again, how would you characterize your music?

Charles J. Ditto:

Post-minimalist deconstruction.

Ju-Sun Kim:

I would like to ask for your opinion about Modern music in general. Many composers try diverse and unique techniques, but audiences are not perceptive of experimental music. What is your opinion on this problem?

Charles J. Ditto:

Good question. My answer is only my opinion; many would not agree: If you look at music throughout the ages (folk music, pop music, dance music, ritual music, etc.), the mass culture expects music to have two fundamental components: pulse and drone. Pulse is a beat – a groove. Drone is a sense of key or tonic – even if it is a shifting one. (Tonality is really an elaborate drone.) Then a melody can be added or not – this is where inspiration enters. Music that is devoid of one or both of these components loses its audience. It's not that it's not good music. It's just that the mass audience is left behind. Much of the music of the early 20th century was intentionally devoid of both pulse and drone. A lot of this music is fantastic, original, even revolutionary, but the mass audience didn't know how to relate. Minimalism, to me anyway, represented a return to the musical womb of pulse and drone.

Ju-Sun Kim:

You have been in Texas for a long time. Do you think your national and regional identity is expressed in your music?

Charles J. Ditto:

Well, I suppose so, but it might be more someone else's determination, but, in the first movement of my *String Quartet* from 1995, the double-stop idea of the main motive is derived from a Floyd Cramer piano lick, which itself is derived from a country fiddle lick. I have also used tinges of blues, gospel, and country music in other pieces, such as in my *Prelude in the Texas Style* for piano – this might reflect some Texas influence, but, I think, our 'national' identity has been somewhat blended with the European since the 19th century.

Ju-Sun Kim:

What are your goals as a composer and a professor? Do you have any specific plans?

Charles J. Ditto:

I would like to write and publish music that many, many people love. I'm not the 'ivory tower' type. The audience matters to me. I also greatly enjoy teaching music and plan to continue doing so until I

retire at a ripe, old age. One learns so much about music through teaching it. My goals are twofold: First, discover and learn as much music as possible (through listening, analysis, and teaching), and second, become a noted composer of well-loved music.

Ju-Sun Kim:

Thank you very much. I wish you all the best in your creative endeavors!

Commissioned Scores and Performances by Charles J. Ditto (Selection)

High Wood (2007). Commissioned by oboist Ian Davidson, title track for his forthcoming CD *High Wood*, Fall 2007.

Original score for *The Pillowman* (2007). Commissioned by Amherst College, Department of Theatre and Dance, directed by Peter Lobdell and performed at Kirby Theater, Amherst College, October 25-27, 2007.

"The Widow's Waltz" from *Histories* (1998), original opera. Performed at the 2007 Conference of the National Association of Composers USA (NACUSA), Texas Chapter. Texas State University, March 3, 2007.

Raving (2003). Score and Live Performance. A theater work by Peter Lobdell. Four performances at the Metropolitan Playhouse, New York City, January 26-29, 2006. Performance at the International Michael Chekhov Festival, Holden Theatre, Amherst, MA, August 12, 2005. Performance at the New World Theater's Festival of the Arts in Amherst, June 2003.

C'est 'La Vie (2004). Written and directed by Peter Lobdell, Kirby Theatre, Amherst College, April and October, 2004.

Immunity (2004). Written and directed by Peter Lobdell, Kirby Theatre, Amherst College, April and October, 2004.

The Millennium Two-Step (2003). Written and directed by Peter Lobdell, and Thom Haxo, the KO Festival of Performance. Amherst, April 2003.

The Hunting of the Snark (2002). Written and directed by Thom Haxo and Peter Lobdell, Kirby Theater, Amherst College, May 2002.

Prelude in the Texas Style (1995). Performed by Faith DeBow at the Texas Society for Music Theory Conference, Texas State University, February 27, 2004.

String Quartet (1996). Performed by the faculty string quartet at the Joint College Music Society South Central Chapter and National Association of Composers USA (NACUSA) Texas Chapter concert, Texas State University, March 9, 2006.

Other Uses of Enchantment (1986). Created and performed by Diana Prechter and Peter Lobdell, Dougherty Arts Center, Austin, 1986.

Conference Presentations (Selection)

“Art Music Finds Mass Audience / Minimalist Structure in Steve Reich’s *Electric Counterpoint / II*.” Paper presented at the International Conference on the Arts in Society Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland, August 15-18, 2006.

Dimitar Ninov (b. 1963) – A Contemporary Bulgarian-American Composer

by Elizabeth Lee

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Introduction

After hearing a performance of selected pieces from Dimitar Ninov’s piano album, I became intrigued by the various musical concepts incorporated into the music. Of particular interest was the piece entitled *Bulgarian Dance*. Its complex rhythmic concepts and musical structure were quite interesting. Ninov’s musical style portrays a composer in whose works different cultures are interwoven and whose music bears a sincere message to the listener.

“Minimalist Structure in Steve Reich’s *Electric Counterpoint / II*.” Paper Presented. College Music Society (CMS) South Central Chapter and National Association of Composers, USA (NACUSA) Texas Chapter Conference. March 11, 2006.

Additional Notable Performances

Third Coast New Music Project. Produced by George Cisneros, San Antonio, Texas, June 11, 1987.

X / XX Experimental Music Festival. Austin Annual Festival. Since its inception in 1990.

Four live MIDI demonstration / shows of original music. University of Texas at Austin. 1991-1995.

Publications

[together with Luch D. Harney] “Musical Function in Selected Spanish and Cuban Zazuela,” *Gestos: Teoría y práctica del teatro hispánico* 44 (Fall 2007).

“Handel’s Music for Musical Clocks,” *Fontis Artis Musicae* 44/3 (July-Sept 1997): 266-280.

Biographical and Educational Background¹

Dimitar Ninov was born in Varna, Bulgaria, on May 27, 1963. His childhood was happy and rich with experiences. At different periods of his life, besides the time he devoted to outdoor plays with the children from his neighborhood, he applied himself to various kinds of creative activities: he would draw (and later paint) pictures, hoping to become a painter one day, or, being inspired by different writers, poets, and playwrights (William Shakespeare, for example), he would begin a novel or write a few poems. These passions held him until he turned 18, and even now he likes to express his thoughts on paper.

Dimitar was attracted to music for the first time when, at the age of 7, he attended a summer camp with his native town boys’ choir, the “Choir

¹ The information for this biography was obtained in personal interviews with the composer in the early Fall 2006.

of Varna Boys.” He became a member of this wonderful ensemble, which still exists today and travels around the world. For example, led by its founder and conductor, Professor Marin Chonev, they gave a recital in the United States just a few years ago. Singing in the choir was an exciting experience to Dimitar, and it was there that he was captivated by the wonderful capabilities of the piano. During the years that followed, he wanted to study either piano or violin, but he never found the determination to clearly express his desire to his parents. His sister, who is six years older, had been studying violin very successfully, but Dimitar seemed to be too distracted by various activities to be able to focus on a single instrument. Although his parents were not musicians, they were very musical and liked singing fragments from opera arias, songs, or duets at social functions and gatherings with friends. Dimitar’s father was the director of the board of culture for the city of Varna and the encompassing region – quite an important position at that time. Hence, through organizing different types of concerts, festivals, competitions, plays, etc., the young Ninov had the opportunity to meet and establish connections with a great number of most prominent Bulgarian artists in the fields of music, literature, theater, movies, fine arts, ballet, etc. He always felt thrilled and privileged to spend time in the company of such notable figures, whom he respected enormously for having created symphonies, films, books, and other pieces of art.

At age 13, Ninov began strumming the guitar for the first time – asking some fellow students to show him how to pick certain chords. At age 15, he began to play violin on his own, achieving a good vibrato in a matter of weeks and being able to learn “Neapolitan Song” by Tchaikovsky. This fact highly impressed his father, who asked him what he wanted to study: violin or guitar. Dimitar instantly thought of the possibility of becoming a classical guitarist (just because he had watched one guitarist on television who performed miracles on his instrument) and said: guitar. So, at age 15 he began classical guitar lessons and advanced quickly. In high school, he co-founded a pop band that played mostly Beatles songs, and he was fortunate to be the front man of this group. His musical activities

gained momentum, and at age 16 Dimitar had no doubt he wanted to pursue the career of a professional musician. It was not until the age of 18, however, that he started taking lessons in piano, harmony, and ear training. He graduated from the French Language High School in his native town. After serving in the army and attending the National Academy for Music and Dance in Plovdiv for two years, he transferred to the National Academy of Music *Pancho Vladigerov* in Sofia. It was here that he earned his Master’s degrees in Theory of Music (1992) and in Composition (1996). During his work on the composition degree, Ninov studied with one of the most prominent Bulgarian composers: Professor Alexander Raitchev. His Master’s in Composition thesis was a Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra, which was premiered by the Academic Orchestra in May 1996.

From 1992 through 1997, Dimitar Ninov worked as a conductor of the children’s choir *Bonka Golemanova* in Botevgrad. He also gave private lessons in harmony, solfege, and other disciplines in Sofia. In addition, he worked as a composer and arranger in the field of popular music. In 1999, Dimitar Ninov traveled to the United States to start working on his doctoral degree. He first attended the University of South Carolina. Here, he was employed as a teaching assistant in theory of music. Later, Ninov transferred to the University of Texas at Austin, where he completed his doctoral degree in composition. His doctoral composition was a three-movement symphony for orchestra, entitled *Spring Symphony*.

Ninov has composed in numerous genres, including orchestral works, chamber ensembles, choir, voice, and piano. His most popular work is the *Piano Album*, which was published by the FJH Music Company in early 2005.

Dimitar Ninov is currently a Lecturer of Music Theory and Composition at Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas, and the Music Director of St. Williams Catholic Church in Round Rock, Texas.

Interview with Dr. Dimitar Ninov

The following interview was conducted in San Marcos, Texas, on November 9, 2006.

Elizabeth Lee:

Thank you again for taking the time to let me interview you. I would like to start by asking about your childhood. I know you grew up in Bulgaria. Can you tell me a little bit about your musical influences there, and when you started studying music?

Dimitar Ninov:

Yes. I began formal music studies relatively late in my life. For example, my first lessons in piano, harmony, and solfège occurred when I was 18 years old. I practiced with interest and regularity, but later I had to discontinue the lessons for two years. I didn't resume regular practices until I turned 21. Therefore, it was a relatively late start with the formal musical disciplines. However, I did begin earlier with classical and popular guitar. At that time, I sang in a high school band and listened to pop music.

Elizabeth Lee:

Were there any other instruments besides piano and guitar?

Dimitar Ninov:

I also sang in choirs during different periods of my life. For instance, as a little child, I sang in my native town boys' choir, which is well known in Bulgaria.

Elizabeth Lee:

Were there any musical influences when you were younger than 18 that made you want to start studying piano?

Dimitar Ninov:

Yes, definitely. When I heard the so-called Unfinished Symphony by Schubert (I was 15), I was so mesmerized by it that I decided that classical music was something I wanted to pursue as a career in my life. Other strong influences, mainly from the pop music field, were The Beatles, Deep Purple, Queen, Pink Floyd, ABBA, and so forth.

Elizabeth Lee:

You earned your doctoral degree in composition at the University of Texas at Austin, but you also

earned a Master's degree in composition and a Master's degree in Music Theory in Bulgaria ...

Dimitar Ninov:

... Yes, I finished my Master's degrees in Bulgaria, at the National Academy of Music in Sofia. The program didn't offer a separate bachelor's degree; it incorporated both bachelor and master's degrees, provided that you spent ten long semesters at the conservatory, and you passed your examinations successfully. I graduated in Theory of Music in 1992 and in Composition in 1996.

Elizabeth Lee:

When did you start composing?

Dimitar Ninov:

I started composing at an age at which some young composers make a career. Consequently, my mature compositions that were saved as opus numbers didn't come until 1989 or 1990. I was 27 years old at that time, and I had composed *The Piano Album* and some other chamber pieces.

Elizabeth Lee:

Getting your doctoral degree in Texas, what spurred you to come to Texas?

Dimitar Ninov:

That is an interesting question. I went to the University of South Carolina first, where I had been admitted into their DMA program in composition. I greatly enjoyed my two years there. At a certain time, I started looking for a public university that offered a more competitive composition program nationwide. I considered applying to the University of Texas at Austin, which was ranked 13th in terms of their composition program at that point. It was a successful transfer, as a result of which I came to Texas, five years ago, in 2001.

Elizabeth Lee:

When you were at the University of South Carolina, did you teach?

Dimitar Ninov:

Yes, I did. It was Theory of Music I and II. In fact, it was a combination of Theory and Aural skills. That is what I remember, and I greatly enjoyed it. Professor Dorothy Payne, the co-author of the Kostka-Payne *Tonal Harmony* textbook, was one of my mentors; I attended her Pedagogy of Theory class. I am grateful for her insightful teaching and great assistance, and I am still in touch with her.

Elizabeth Lee:

In which ways did Dorothy Payne influence you, and who else was influential to you at the University of South Carolina or at UT Austin?

Dimitar Ninov:

Professor Payne was intellectually influential to me. She gave me some new insights, because the system of education in Bulgaria is quite different than here. In addition, I had a few nice professors in composition and advanced orchestration – such as Samuel Douglas and John Fitz Rogers. Here at UT, I took lessons with Dan Welcher and Russell Pinkston. I value the orchestration book by Kent Kennan and Donald Grantham and a variety of other theory books, among them *Harmony* by Piston and DeVoto and *Musical Form* by Douglas Green. These are some of my American influences in terms of music theory and composition.

Elizabeth Lee:

You mentioned just a second ago the differences in the educational systems here in the United States and in Bulgaria. Is there something that you prefer in either or that was better in either?

Dimitar Ninov:

I would say either system has its own advantages and disadvantages. Right now, because I've been living in the United States for seven years, I prefer to blend the approaches. My teaching represents an amalgam of what I consider good elements from both systems. Here in the US, they rely much on written tests; the individual one-on-one contact is not very much explored or implied into the daily teaching. In Bulgaria, on the other hand, individual contact counts a lot. We have a very difficult final

exam at the end of the semester, and this final exam is comprehensive. You have to solve some problems, to discuss a topic, and to analyze, not only in writing, but also verbally. On the other hand, the written tests as widely applied in the US, especially when they are focused on the substance of the material, are very useful. Therefore, I'm trying to combine both activities as long as the policy of the school allows me, and here it does.

Elizabeth Lee:

What were some of your biggest influences as a composer? Were there any life experiences, possibly the move to the United States, anything like that?

Dimitar Ninov:

First of all, moving to the US enriched my life, my art, and my insights, and expanded my horizons. It is an invaluable experience to travel abroad, all the more if you have the opportunity to live there for a while. Now I look at my own country with different eyes. As for my biggest influences in composition, some of them are the great names of 20th century music: Igor Stravinsky, Béla Bartók, Arthur Honegger, Paul Hindemith, Karl Orff, Sergey Prokofiev, Dmitri Shostakovich, and others. Although I pay respect to Schoenberg, Webern, and Berg, I am not greatly moved by their music. I love some of Messiaen's works, especially his *Catalogue of the Birds for Piano* and other pieces. But main influences for me have been the names I already mentioned.

Elizabeth Lee:

I'd like to also ask you about the identity of your music. Would you say that it has influences from regional or global identities, like Bulgaria or maybe even Texas?

Dimitar Ninov:

Oh yes, definitely. My composition teacher in Bulgaria, the late professor Alexander Raitchev, was a very prominent Bulgarian composer. He was a student of Zoltan Kodaly, and enjoyed a European reputation. Being a brilliant orchestrator, he knew how to put down a page of a musical score for a big orchestra very smoothly, very easily. Raitchev

taught me not to fear orchestrating and arranging – something that I admire doing at the present time. Here in Texas, Dan Welcher and Russel Pinkston encouraged me to seek to expand my musical vocabulary by enriching my scores with more interesting and fresh means of expression.

Elizabeth Lee:

Being from Bulgaria, are there strong influences of that identity in your music? I noticed one of the pieces in your *Piano Album* was titled “Bulgarian Dance”.

Dimitar Ninov:

Yes, “Bulgarian Dance” is written in alternating 7/8 and 11/8. Irregular meters are an old tradition in Bulgarian folk music; the entire palette from 5/8 to 15/8 naturally exists in our folk music. And, of course, I’ve been influenced by some traditional songs, with which we have been raised. You cannot escape this phenomenon; as you have grown up here, in the United States, you sometimes listen to country music, and it influences you unconsciously, even if you don’t want it. This is what happens in other countries with their folk music.

Elizabeth Lee:

You composed in numerous genres, including orchestral works, chamber ensembles, choir, voice, and piano. Which do you feel is your best genre to compose in and why?

Dimitar Ninov:

Elizabeth, if you ask me, right now I am attracted to vocal-orchestral works. I just composed a *Gloria* for the dedication of a big catholic church – St. Williams, in Round Rock, Texas – at which I have the privilege to be the music director. It is an impressive and beautiful building that can hold nearly 1,700 people to worship inside. This *Gloria* will be performed by a mixed choir and an orchestra, along with a number of other pieces that I didn’t compose – but I am arranging some of them now. Of course, I love symphonies and chamber music. This is what my passion is about.

Elizabeth Lee:

Going back to the *Piano Album*, it was recently published by a large music publishing company, and I’d like to ask you a few questions about that. How did you go about composing the collection of pieces, and would you classify the book as a pedagogical tool? Something similar to Schumann’s *Album for the Young*?

Dimitar Ninov:

When you flip through the pages of the book, you will see a note from the composer. It says that although the book hasn’t been designed as a pedagogical tool, the benefits will be enormous for those who learn all the pieces and master them. Because they contain a great variety of melodies, harmonies, and rhythms, including etude-like passages that could develop the musician’s technique. Otherwise, I thought of it as a collection of creative pieces, a series of images related to characters, moods, states of nature, and so forth, that would catch the interest of a young performer.

Elizabeth Lee:

Is there anything else you would like to add about the *Piano Album* that I haven’t asked?

Dimitar Ninov:

I’m proud of it, I love it, and I was commissioned to compose another one by the same publisher, the FJH Music Company. It’s about the same difficulty, but the pieces are shorter, about one page each, and maybe a little lighter technically.

Elizabeth Lee:

I noticed you were a member of NACUSA (National Association of Composers, USA). What is your position or office in the organization?

Dimitar Ninov:

In the NACUSA Texas chapter, I serve as a Concert Coordinator. Right now, I am working on a collaboration between Bulgarian composers and American composers from NACUSA. Hopefully, the first joint project will take place almost simultaneously in two countries. Here in the United States, in San Marcos at the NACUSA conference in March

[2007], several Bulgarian pieces will be performed, and in the spring, almost at the same time, several pieces by NACUSA composers will be performed in Sofia [Bulgaria]. So if this happens, I will be happy to have contributed, along with Dr. Nico Schüler, to the first NACUSA Texas Chapter's collaborative event with another country.

Elizabeth Lee:

You also mentioned you are the music director in a church in Round Rock ...

Dimitar Ninov:

... St. Williams Catholic Church.

Elizabeth Lee:

How did you come by that position?

Dimitar Ninov:

I was looking for a job as a university instructor or / and as a music director at a church. A lady called me who was interested in hiring a family, preferably a pianist and a conductor. And we are a family, my wife and I - she is the pianist and I am the conductor - what a happy coincidence! We are very grateful for that opportunity. St. William's helped us a great deal.

Elizabeth Lee:

Are you giving private lessons in theory, harmony?

Dimitar Ninov:

Yes. Theory incorporates harmony, counterpoint, and musical form. Yes, I do.

Elizabeth Lee:

It sounds like you have a really busy life on top of teaching and composing.

Dimitar Ninov:

Right now, I don't give many lessons. But I have a few students who are interested in harmony and composition. I used to give lessons in piano, too, but I transferred my students to my wife, because

my schedule is very busy now, and because she is a better piano pedagogue and performer.

Elizabeth Lee:

Is there anything else you might like to add?

Dimitar Ninov:

Thank you very much for this interview!

Representative Compositions by Dimitar Ninov

- 2006 Music for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Op. 20 – 7'
- 2005 Music for Cello and Piano, Op. 18 – 7'
- 2004 *String Quartet "Mountain Stream"*, Op. 17 – 17'
- 2004 *A Lonely Man's Prayer* for Violin and Piano, Op. 16 – 3'
- 2004 *Revelation*, Trio for Violin, Violoncello, and Piano, Op. 15 – 8'27"
- 2003 *Cinderella* for Flute, Violin, Harp, and Percussion, Op. 14 – 4'30"
- 2003 *Reflections*, Quintet for Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Violoncello, and Piano, Op. 13 – 7'08"
- 2003 *Spring Symphony*, Op. 12 – 21'
- 2001 *Symphonic Allegro*, Op. 11, for full orchestra
- 2000 *Trio* for Violin, Clarinet and Piano, Op. 10 – 7'58
- 1999 *The Fugue Which Returns* for String Quartet, Op. 9 – 3'
- 1996 *Concerto* for Clarinet and Orchestra, Op. 8
- 1994 *Sketches for String Orchestra*, Op. 7
- 1992 *Rondo for Piano*, Op. 6 (revised in 2003) for solo piano, 4'11
- 1992 *Recitative and Toccata* for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 5 – 5' 30
- 1992 *Wind Quintet*, Op. 4
- 1991 *Three Songs for High Voice and Piano*, Op. 3
- 1991 *Sonata for Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon*, Op. 2
- 1989 *Piano Album*, Op. 1 (revised in 1995, 2003, 2004) for solo piano, ASCAP

Report

50th Anniversary of *The Ballad of Baby Doe*

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The anniversaries of opera premieres flow in and out of our collective conscious, depending upon how much publicity value they have. If opera managers are worried that a warhorse may not sell, suddenly we are all made aware of the anniversary of its premiere – the unspoken logic being that if an opera has existed this long, there is definitely a reason to celebrate its anniversary by buying a ticket.

The same sort of logic applies to house premieres. If a work began its life in a local opera house, if it is actually responsible for building the artistic credentials of a local company, if it is based on a local, true story, and if it is becoming a standard repertory item in American houses, then we better not miss the opportunity to celebrate the premiere. For small opera companies, the anniversary should be the centerpiece of the season.

None of the foregoing was lost on Artistic Director Pat Pearce at Central City Opera this last summer. The fiftieth anniversary of Douglas Moore's *The Ballad of Baby Doe* was celebrated on June 24th, 2006, in a fashion uncommon to the wilderness of a mining town in central Colorado. In fact, it was uncommon to any other place. The usual details of an opening season were there: recognition of donors, presentation of board members and important staffers, congenial comments from trustees intended to shake a few more dollars from the audience before the end of the fiscal year, and so on. What was not common was the whole experience to be outdoors in a lovely garden between the opera house and a Victorian annex. It was also uncommon to combine the enterprise with a cotillion for the young daughters of the sustaining donors. Being introduced to beautiful women in yellow gowns in a garden florid with yellow roses is interesting, but it is certainly not usual for the opening of an opera

season. Neither of course were the special dinners at the Teller House (one of the 30 Victorian properties owned by the opera association), the ball following the performance, or the way the season actually begins. Because Central City was a mining town, a constant part of daily routine in those hectic silver mining days was the sound of blasting. In honor of that history, the opera season begins with the firing of a cannon that echoes up and down those old, narrow streets for quite a while. All opera companies want to begin their season with 'a bang', but I know of no others that are quite so literal.

The uncommon opening ceremonies were a fitting prelude to a very uncommon production of *The Ballad of Baby Doe*. It was uncommon on the visible level, and uncommon on the artistic level. The story of silver-mining tycoon Horace Tabor's affair and marriage to a woman half his age (Baby Doe), his financial collapse, his interaction with his ex-wife, Augusta, and Baby Doe's death at the Matchless Mine in 1935 were all worked out on a stage with a 25 foot proscenium. The original production from 1956, which I saw in the house in a revival in 1981, was all soft set – flats and drops. The new production has eleven, three-dimensional unit sets that never repeat throughout the show. A walk through Central City after the performance made it very clear that the sets had found some inspiration in the local surviving architecture. Costume research done through pictures of the Tabor's and their times yielded an authenticity that goes beyond the *mise en scène* of most operas. Michael Ehrman staged the show with an acknowledgement of the performance traditions that have grown up around it in Central City. What seemed new to me about his staging was the physical space that he managed to reserve for the main characters in the blocking. This extra bit of working space, hard to acquire on a small stage, made it abundantly clear who was important to the through-line of the play, and who was not.

The Ballad of Baby Doe was uncommon on the artistic level, too. Horace, played by Tim Noble (substituting for Jake Gardner), quickly found the

substance of Tabor in a commanding physical and vocal presence. He was just as successful at showing Tabor's vulnerability. In Tabor's monologue before he dies, he remembers all that has passed and reconciles himself to the fact that there is no time left to change it. Many singers would err to the side of too much sentimentality in an outright bid for the audiences' sympathy. Noble's approach was restrained, more a personal awakening than a demand for pity. His command of soft – but easy to understand – projected singing made the monologue one of the more interesting moments in the performance.

Augusta, Horace's ex-wife, always receives a large share of audience sympathy as the wronged woman. She is the victim of a callous man's mid-life crisis. The interesting thing about Joyce Castle's portrayal was the depth she added to the character by giving some intimations of how she failed to be the wife Horace needed. Her stubbornness, her desire to control every aspect of her husband's life, and her distrust of how he might treat the soft side of her personality if it were revealed, all made it easy to understand why Horace began to look for a Baby Doe. Her big aria "Augusta, Augusta! How can you turn away?" was sung with the power only a mature mezzo-soprano can garner. It received a long salute from the audience.

The title character of a show usually bears the responsibility of a show's success or failure. That is certainly true of *The Ballad of Baby Doe*. When the show moved to New York City Opera in 1958, Beverly Sills' rendition of the role not only made the show a success, but transformed her into a star as well. Many opera aficionados treasure their original cast recording with Sills, Walter Cassel, and Francis Bible. While *The Ballad of Baby Doe* has resisted becoming a prima donna's opera, it certainly cannot be hurt by having a dramatic coloratura at the helm. Joanna Mongiardo was a Baby Doe for the connoisseur. Her singing was beautiful in every way. Long lines, beautiful phrasing, agility, and a top that never became screechy made her realization of the 'silver aria' and the 'willow song' a real thrill.

Opera audiences are always enthusiastic about conductors, but they rarely know how impor-

tant a good one is to a production. In a play, dramatic pacing, which is so important to audience impact, is largely achieved by the actors themselves – by the speed of their stage action and line reading. With an opera, all of that dramatic sensibility is achieved through the conductor's baton. Conductor John Moriarty knew when to linger for affect, and when to push to reclaim musical inertia. He managed to coax a full symphonic sound out of a pit orchestra that was restricted by the confines of a 129 year-old opera house.

The last uncommon thing about *The Ballad of Baby Doe* is that it has been around long enough to encourage a dedicated following. My first exposure to the show was singing one of Horace's cronies in the Indiana University production with Walter Cassel in 1976. The show so interested me that, when in Aspen a few summers later, I took a discovery trip to Leadville and Central City as a matter of singer's research. I thought my interest in knowing everything I could about the *The Ballad of Baby Doe* was probably singular and quirky. I found out, after mingling with my fellow audience members, that lots of people at the anniversary production knew lots about *Baby Doe*. Some had interesting first hand stories they were happy to tell about the Tabors. Others had musical insights. One knew that *Baby Doe's* last aria "Always through the changing" was an homage to the Wagner "Liebestod" beginning in the same key, shifting to minor, and sounding the 'Tristan chord' every time *Baby* sings the word 'love'. Film buffs saw the allusion to *Citizen Kane* when Horace was prancing with the dance hall girls at the beginning of the show. Longtime Central City Opera goers could compare the production details of all eight presentations seen there. In short, *Baby Doe* has a little opera cult. It is not made up of the kind of rabid fans that grow up around singers, but it is definitely present at productions.

To learn more about *The Ballad of Baby Doe* will not be difficult. Google turned up seven and half million hits. I would start with:

<http://www.centralcityopera.org>

<http://www.babydoe.org>

<http://www.beverlysillsonline.com>

<http://www.ebookmall.com/ebook/224715-ebook.htm>

The citations begin with the opera company and work outward to the “doe heads,” cast members, and an ebook with a complete overview. You

never know who may be the next great fan of the *The Ballad of Baby Doe*. Maybe it’s you!

CD Review

Otto Laske's *Trilogy*

by Stephanie Phillips

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Otto Laske: *Trilogy*. CD LA 200, CDemusic, Web: <http://www.cdemusic.org>.

Known as a pioneer in algorithmic composition, poet and scholar Otto Laske uses computers to create complex and beautiful music. His 2001 CD *Trilogy* is symphonic in design and grand in scope. While the score is algorithmically derived and the sounds computer-generated, the music is far from mechanical or dry. This powerful music is surprisingly organic and lyrical. Laske writes: "I have been composing *TRILOGY* all of my life, carried by the eternal movement" (liner notes). Considering the musical depth and technical complexity of this work, it is easy to believe this is true. Educated in Germany and the United States, Laske studied sociology, music composition (receiving a Masters in Composition from The New England Conservatory), computer science and psychology. Along with his extensive research on music cognition and artificial intelligence, he has composed numerous works of instrumental, vocal, and computer music, and penned a large collection of poetry. His diverse studies and interests must underlie his ability, as evident in *Trilogy*, to create music that is algorithmically composed, yet very emotional and organic. The music was created using Koenig's PROJECT ONE and Scaletti-Hebel's KYMA sound synthesis language (liner notes). Composer Michael Rhoades, whom Laske credits for his assistance in the production of this recording, discussed this compositional process in his article "Disseminating Otto Laske's Algorithmic Compositional Methods" (posted at <http://www.perceptionfactory.com/workshop/Michael.htm>). He points out that Laske's work is more musical than algorithmic compositions tend to be, and that this is partially because the complexity of Laske's scores are enhanced "through the creation of sub-scores, at various stages of the compositional proc-

ess. Instead of generating one score by algorithmic compositional means, several layers of subscores are created." This depth of composition and layered approach are apparent throughout the work.

The three pieces in *Trilogy* are distinct in mood, yet clearly unified structurally through the repetition of thematic material. To this reviewer, a novice at deciphering computer-created compositions, the music is at once foreign and amazingly familiar. The composer chose a strong scene of tall boulders and a sweeping vista for the CD cover for this composition. At times, this music evokes a sense that if we humans could hear molecules shifting, boulders rising up from the earth, or the formation of crystals – that would be this music.

The first piece, *Erwachen* (Awakening), begins with scintillating clarity, as dawn's light on a landscape of ice crystals. It is as if the crystalline sound, at times jarringly dissonant or stunningly beautiful, could cut as well as illuminate. Bold rays of sound unfold slowly, haltingly, as the composer writes "slow as my own artistic development" (liner notes). A second theme "bubbles up" from beneath the epic music, evolving into an undulating liquid sound, contrasted with a repeated return to the original theme.

Echo des Himmels (Heavenly Echo) is spacious and unhurried. While *Erwachen* is piercing, *Echo des Himmels* wraps the listener in a soft mist, at turns comforting or ominous. Like a walk through the rainforest, this soundscape is multifaceted yet gentle, revealing itself step by step, one jeweled tone at a time. The name is derived from the first line of the poem *Ermunterung* by the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843) and is a "celebration that comprises a lament" (liner notes). Both themes from *Erwachen* return and tie this very reflective composition to the previous one.

The final piece, *Ganymede*, also taken from a poem by Hölderlin, refers to the Greek God Ganymede who "is seen as taken from, and returned to, earth" (liner notes). The most dissonant of the three parts of *Trilogy*, *Ganymede* is epic and at times tumultuous. Beginning with a strong and re-

petitive dissonant motive, the piece moves quickly into cascading sounds that crash like whitewater, terrifying and beautiful. Here also, a return of previous thematic material serves to unify the whole.

Trilogy is evocative, poetic, and very deep music. The profound sense of connection this re-

viewer felt with nature images, as if the complex soundscapes were created by the earth itself going about the process of life, leads one to marvel at the power and possibilities of algorithmic composition.

Book Reviews

Signs of Music: A Guide to Musical Semiotics by Eero Tarasti

by Scott Benner

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Tarasti, Eero. *Signs of Music: A Guide to Musical Semiotics*, edited by Jean Umiker-Sebeok. Berlin / New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2002. Paperback. ISBN 978-3-11-017227-0, viii + 224 pages. Web: <http://www.degruyter.com>

Signs of Music: A Guide to Musical Semiotics consists of essays and articles authored by Eero Tarasti (b. 1948) that have been chosen to fit in the book series "Applied Semiotics." Mr. Tarasti wrote his *Theory of Musical Semiotics* in 1994 and has contributed greatly to the "new musicology" movement. He also developed a new philosophical theory called "existential semiotics." Mr. Tarasti is currently Professor of Musicology at the University of Helsinki and has written and edited numerous books with a semiotical approach to music since the 1970s. *Signs of Music* is meant to serve as a practical guide to musical semiotics, i.e., the study of music as sign and communication. The concept of musical communication is easy enough to grasp, but the many abstract meanings associated with semiotics are in and of themselves quite oblique. The opaque nature of the concepts discussed in this book is very subjective. This might cause frustration for the reader.

Part one is a historical perspective of music from this relatively new discipline. Two major schools of thought on the subject have emerged: The "American" school of semiotics is based on the work of the philosopher and mathematician Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914), while the "European" school of semiotics is derived from the work of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913). According to Peirce, there are three phases through which we apprehend reality. The First phase comes when we hear a melody as an impression of emo-

tion, without recognizing what piece of music it is or who composed it. The Second phase is when we identify the piece or its composer. The Third phase is when we draw inferences about its style and structure as well as giving it meaning as in a sign. Peirce separates signs into three entities: the *object* to which a sign refers; the *representamen*, i.e., the sign itself; and the *interpretant*, a secondary sign by which we mentally link the sign to its object. He further distinguishes signs into categories of icons, indexes, and symbols.

Algirdas Julien Greimas (1917-1992), a Lithuanian-born linguist, exemplified the "European" school of semiotics, of which the roots stem from Saussure. Greimas concentrated on "seme-analysis", i.e., the study of the smallest units of meaning in a text, and proposed that all meaning comes from "isotopies": deep-level semantic fields that allow us to read a text as a coherent whole. His theory of *modalities* shaped the generative discourse among musicologists as to whether or not music is a sign.

Part two of the book examines the metaphors of nature and organicism in music. The idea that music is directional and must progress toward some goal exhibits the fact that music has finality. A musical piece is a living organism and will not experience its full potential until it has been performed in front of an audience. The author goes on to list many "utterances" which he considers to be signs.

Part three explores the social aspects and musical practices associated with semiotics. The voice has always been a means of communicating with transcendental reality and often plays the role of an instrument. The orality of music, as opposed to its written text, also aids in the communication of ideas and emotions through signs. In most societies, singing is integrated throughout the community and its various structures. Many signs associated with nationalistic identities are related through music and song. One conclusion that can be drawn from this century is that musical taste no longer coincides

with social class. The author's theory of "existential semiotics" is discussed throughout this book.

In conclusion, this book does not serve well as an introduction to musical semiotics. The reader must be well versed in the concepts in order to fully grasp the ideas in this text. The subject is somewhat

tiresome and overly subjective. This does not mean that everyone who is unaccustomed to the theory of semiotics will not enjoy this book, but one may find it to be an exercise in the laborious categorizing of unnecessary abstract concepts, which do not aid in the enjoyment nor the understanding of music.

Methods and Materials for Conducting by Douglas Stotter

by Timothy R. Hurlburt

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Douglas Stotter: *Methods and Materials for Conducting*. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2006. Soft Cover, Spiral Bound, 2006, ISBN 9781579995515, xiii + 253 pages. Web: <http://www.giamusic.com>

Methods and Materials for Conducting, written by Douglas Stotter, fills a void in the music education field by offering a comprehensive approach to teaching conducting to future music educators. Although many books about conducting techniques and repertoire have been published throughout the years, instructors have long complained about the lack of a complete method for teaching conducting to both undergraduate and graduate students at the university level.

Stotter has been teaching conducting for over twenty years and is currently Director of Bands, Associate Professor of Music, and Coordinator of Winds and Percussion at the University of Texas at Arlington. He has earned degrees from the University of Michigan and the University of Iowa, where he studied conducting with Myron Welch and Elizabeth A. H. Green.

Green's influence on Stotter and the ideas presented in Part 1 of the book, entitled "Manual of Technique," is very apparent. *The Modern Conductor* by Elizabeth Green and Mark Gibson, now in its seventh edition, has long been considered the authoritative text in the education of young conductors. (Green, Elizabeth A. H., and Mark Gibson. *The Modern Conductor*. 7th ed., Upper Saddle River, NJ:

Prentice-Hall, 2004.) Green and Gibson used diagrams and explanations to present basic skills and ideas to beginning conductors. The book was meant to supplement a larger curriculum in a beginning conducting class and has been used for years in universities all over the country.

In "Part 1: Manual of Technique," Stotter used much of the same exercises and diagrams that Green and Gibson used in their book, but cleaned them up and organized them in such a way that is extremely useful to a professor teaching conducting to beginning students. First, the information is separated into nine different units that are introduced in a logical, sequential, and pedagogical approach to the art and functionality of conducting. Secondly, the explanations are written concisely and in a vocabulary that even young undergraduate music majors should be able to understand. Thirdly, every time a new skill is introduced, Stotter uses an example from accessible wind band repertoire that undergraduate instrumental music educators should be aware of by the time they complete their degree. This indirect introduction of wind band repertoire is a very important advantage to using this text in a collegiate classroom. Lastly, the fact that the book is spiral bound allows for easier use in a music classroom. A traditionally bound book is difficult to keep open on a music stand while students practice conducting gestures during class. The spiral binding makes this text user and classroom friendly.

"Part 2: Excerpts," is a collection of excerpts from real music that a young music teacher might encounter. It includes Bach chorales and a few orchestral excerpts, but is dominated by excerpts of pieces generally accepted as standards of the wind band repertoire. There are 46 substantial excerpts included, and each is indexed in Part 3 of the book

as to when it should be used in the teaching process. These excerpts could easily be used in the evaluation of individual student progress as well as for simple practice exercises or sight-reading (sight-conducting) activities.

The text is all brought together in "Part 3: Instructor Guide," in which Stotter carefully lays out how the book can be used most efficiently and effectively. It includes a schedule of how the units could be taught in a ten-week or fifteen-week course (semesters or trimesters), a useful section on student evaluation, and an incredibly useful guide to which excerpts in "Part 2: Excerpts" should be used during the teaching of each particular skill in each unit from "Part 1: Manual of Technique." Stotter also includes suggestions for using this book in an intermediate or advanced course and two more indexes of the excerpts included in the previous section of the book. Without this crucial section of the book, most of the usefulness of this text would be lost.

The three appendices in this book are the most impressive inclusions. In the first appendix, Stotter includes examples of useful evaluation forms that coincide with the method he has laid out in the preceding pages. By including this, he not only allows the student to know what the expectations are for them, but also gives the instructor a fair and consistent vehicle to evaluate the students in the classroom. In the second appendix, Stotter lists 22 books that are suggested reading for further study.

All the texts listed are useful supplements to this approach of teaching conducting and would fit nicely into the philosophy and pedagogy presented throughout Stotter's book. The third appendix lists where each of the excerpts can be found in the series *Teaching Music through Performance in Band*. (Miles, Richard. Ed. *Teaching Music through Performance in Band*, volumes 1-5. Chicago: GIA Publications, 1997-2005.) This would be especially useful if the instructor, or student, wanted to use a recording for conducting practice, as all the pieces included in the series are recorded and included with the companion compact disc. With the suggestions included in this section of the book, Stotter cements this book as a true, comprehensive method for teaching conducting and catapults the importance and viability of it in the classroom.

Douglas Stotter has done the music education field a favor by compiling this method book for teaching conducting, and as time passes, I believe the importance of this textbook will become apparent. More and more universities adopt their conducting classes to the method outlined by Stotter every year, and more books building on the foundation laid by this text are published every year. The void of a comprehensive method for teaching conducting to undergraduate music education majors has been filled by this well-organized, sequential and user-friendly book, and through its proper use, more and more students will become more artistic and functional conductors in their studies.