In Search of Wholeness:
Gustav Mahler and Programme Music

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The question as to whether or not Gustav Mahler should be regarded as a composer of programme music has always been controversial. Mahler's own self-contradictory statements on the subject do not make the matter clearer, rather the opposite. Nor do Mahler's earliest biographers, mostly friends and acquaintances, help; they display a loyal and uncritical attitude to their subject, and present Mahler as he himself in his later years wished to be regarded, namely as a composer who did not write programme music; where the term *programme music* was commonly understood, then as now, to mean illustrative, descriptive music.

This point of view is also held by many of the later Mahler researchers, for example Adorno,[1] Dahlhaus,[2] Danuser,[3] and the editors of the Critical Edition of Mahler's Works.[4] Dahlhaus and Danuser accept that Mahler used programmes or programmatic ideas during the composition of his music, but they deny that these programmes should have any significant connection with the finished product. For them the verbal utterances are scaffolding, which is a help during the process of work, but which is obsolete when it has ended. The programme is aesthetically "irrelevant". Since Mahler withdrew all programmes and programmatic text from the published editions of his symphonies, and also from most concert programmes after 1900, they regard him as a composer of absolute music (Dahlhaus p.138f, Danuser p. 14 and 16f).

Constantin Floros[5] has to be given the credit for breaking the tabu surrounding Mahler's relationship to programme music. He is representative of the comparatively small group who regard Mahler's music as programme

1. Adorno finds Mahler's titles for various symphonies and movements "embarrassing", Theodor W. Adorno: *Mahler. Eine musikalische Physiognomik,* Frankfurt a.M. 1960, p. 9, see also p. 83, p. 112 and p. 165f.
2. Carl Dahlhaus: *Die Idee der absoluten Musik,* München 1978, p. 128ff (= Dahlhaus).
3. Hermann Danuser: "Zu den Programmen von Mahlers frühen Symphonien", *Melos Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 1975, p. 14ff (= Danuser). In general short references will be placed in the text proper.
4. See *Gustav Mahler Sämtliche Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe,* the preface to the *Third Symphony*; see also comment to letter No. 145 in Herta Blaukopf (ed.): *Gustav Mahler Briefe Neuausgabe,* Wien, Hamburg 1982, (= GMBN with numbers referring to letter numbers).
5. Constantin Floros: *Gustav Mahler,* volume I: *Die geistige Welt Gustav Mahlers in systematischer Darstellung,* Wiesbaden 1977 (= Floros I), volume II: *Mahler und die Symphonik des 19 Jahrhunderts in neuer Deutung,* Wiesbaden 1977.

music in the sense in which Liszt used the term. Floros supports his arguments with an impressive quantity of aesthetical and philosophical references in his first volume, systematically arranged in various conceptual categories; in his second volume he uses a semantic approach.

The historian McGrath[6] was the first to place Mahler in the context of the Viennese cultural and political life of his time, in that he goes beyond a narrow biographical, music-history presentation. Since his book is primarily a group biography dealing with a certain intellectual circle rather than a biography of Mahler himself, McGrath does not discuss in depth the concept of programme music in general or in connection with Mahler. In his analysis of the *Third Symphony* on the basis of Schopenhauer-Nietzsche ideology, he takes it more or less for granted that Mahler regarded the programme as a guide to the content of his music.

Finally, Hans-Heinrich Eggebrecht[7] in his very convincing study on the content of Mahler's music places it between the two groupings of absolute and programme music. He admits its debt to absolute music, but at the same time he disagrees with Dahlhaus' opinion that Mahler's music is absolute music in its revelation of the *absolute*.[8] To Eggebrecht, Mahler's music is "empirical music" (Eggebrecht p. 166f).

We may conclude from this short presentation of some of the later Mahler research, that there is far from agreement as to whether Mahler should be regarded as a composer of programme music or not, though in recent years the weight has moved somewhat in the direction of the first category.

In our opinion, those who claim that Mahler did not write programme music but pure music of sorts, exclude the vast area between the extremes of absolute and programme music and thereby fail to understand the most important aspect of Mahler's music: its message. We will here propound the thesis that Mahler deliberately aimed at communicating a message with his music and therefore, for want of a better term, we will adhere to that of *programme music* in describing his work.

In our aim to re-define the term programme music with respect to Mahler's music we will examine the term separately in each of the various contexts in which it occurs: 1) the conception, or composition phase, in which a piece of music is created; 2) the expository phase, in which the composer expounds the contents of his music for his listeners, for example by writing programme notes in a concert programme and by the music itself; 3) the reception phase,

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6. William J. McGrath: *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria,* New Haven, London 1974 (= McGrath).
7. Hans-Heinrich Eggebrecht: *Die Musik Gustav Mahlers,* München 1982 (= Eggebrecht).
8. Dahlhaus p. 23; Dahlhaus uses the term the *absolute* in the meaning of the German romantics and applies this meaning of the term to the aesthetics of Wagner and Schopenhauer. In our opinion the *absolute* is given a different, more material quality by Schopenhauer in that it has a definite connection with the material world through the *Erscheinungswelt,* see p. 10f. of this article.

in which the listener assimilates the ideas of the composer through the music and the programme printed in the concert programme.

Furthermore, it is essential to keep in mind that the concept of programme music must be seen in a historical perspective. It cannot be divorced from the prevailing ideas of the period in question. Therefore, we will also look at the term programme music in relationship to the musical aesthetics of the time in question, in particular regarding the question of content, regarding the relationship between music and words, and regarding music's relationship to extra-musical phenomena in general.

Mahler spent his formative years, the middle eighteen-seventies to the middle eighties, in Vienna, in a period during which the town was the stronghold of the Wagnerians. The *Wiener akademische Wagner-Verein* had the largest membership of all the contemporary Wagner societies. Their task was not only to increase awareness of The Master's works, but also to be missionaries for the ideology which lay behind them. Mahler was a member of this society for a time and even won a scholarship from the society to go to the first Bayreuth-Festival he was to attend.[9]

Mahler was also, while he was a student at the University of Vienna, a member of the student society *Leseverein der deutschen Studenten Wiens,* a society which was of the greatest importance in forming his opinions. The purpose of this society was to undermine the prevailing power of the liberals and to establish what would be, in its members' opinion, a more just form of society. The ideas of the student society were a curious mixture of *deutschnational* and socialistic ideas, which were by no means confined to the purely political. On the contrary, they had realised that there was a connection between cultural and political life. The society, among whose members Mahler found many lifelong friends (Friedrich Löhr, Emil Freund, Siegfried Lipiner) based its philosophical and cultural-political standpoints primarily on the writings of Schopenhauer, Wagner, and the young Nietzsche, and they were even in personal contact with these last two for a while.[10]

Mahler's letters and utterances clearly witness the influence which these three thinkers had on him. Under the influence of Wagner's article *Religion und Kunst* Mahler became a vegetarian for a number of years, from which he soon expected a cultural regeneration (GMBN 11). He regarded Wagner's article on *Beethoven* from 1870 and Schopenhauer's statements about music in *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* as the wisest, deepest words ever written on music (GMBN 114). From his letters, and from Natalie Bauer-Lechner's and Alma Mahler's respective memoirs one can clearly see that he had deep insight into Schopenhauer's ideology, and was familiar with

9. *11. Jahresbericht des Wiener akademischen Wagner-Vereins für das Jahr 1883,* Wien 1884, p. 32f; see also Mahler's reaction to his first Bayreuth visit in his letter to his friend Friedrich Löhr, GMBN 20.
10. See McGrath for more detailed information about this society.

Nietzsche's writings.[11] His correspondence with Cosima Wagner reveals his Schopenhauerian interpretation of Wagner's works and his awe for Wagner and Bayreuth.[12] This reverence towards Wagner was still noticeable in 1907, when, in connection with his engagement with the Metropolitan Opera in New York, he insisted upon an additional clause in the contract which freed him from ever being required to conduct *Parsifal.* Mahler did not want to act contrary to Wagner's will.[13]

As we can deduce from the above, not only are Mahler's aesthetical, but also his ethical, outlooks heavily based on Wagner's and Schopenhauer's ideology — ethics and aesthetics being exceedingly intertwined in their way of thinking. In the following we will give an account of the main elements in Schopenhauer's philosophy (most of which elements occur in Wagner's writings, although Wagner interprets Schopenhauer to his own ends) since they most clearly and systematically present the basis of Mahler's ideology and since they had a significant influence on Mahler's conception of his Third Symphony, as we shall see later in this paper.[14]

As Mahler's ideas are based on the aesthetic and ethical theory (in short, the ideology) of Wagner and Schopenhauer, he believes that the universe is built up of two spheres. The one consists of the Will (*der Wille*), the force which is the basis of all existence — the very nucleus of life. According to Schopenhauer's theory, the mechanism of the world is such that the Will has the need to manifest and objectify itself. This it does by crystallising into form and material — the Will becomes apparent (*erscheint*), to use Schopenhauer's term. The materialised Will constitutes the other sphere — the World of Appearances, the *Erscheinungsswelt.*[15] Furthermore, the Will's manifestation in the World of Appearances is of a special nature. Not only does the Will manifest itself in manifold ways; its manifestation is also structured in a hierarchical way — with what Schopenhauer calls the "non-organic nature", that is matter, at the lowest level, succeeded by "organic nature", the plant and animal worlds, and with the realm of the human being at the highest level. These levels are defined by an ever-increasing individuation, culminating not with the species of the human being but with its most individually developed part — the part that enables it to realise consciously — its brain. On all levels of objectification the Will is, however, present as a whole; it is

11. Herbert Kilian (ed.): *Gustav Mahler in den Erinnerungen von Natalie Bauer-Lechner,* Hamburg 1984 (NBLN); Alma Mahler: *Erinnerungen und Briefe,* Amsterdam 1949 (AME).
12. Herta Blaukopf (ed.): *Gustav Mahler Unbekannte Briefe,* Wien, Hamburg 1983 (GMUB), pp.232–240.
13. AME p. 158; for more detailed information on Mahler's involvement with Wagner's and Schopenhauer's ideology see Floros I p. 59ff, p. 72ff and p. 150ff, and McGrath in general.
14. The influence of German romantic thought on all involved parties is obvious, but will not be dealt with expressedly in this paper.
15. Wagner also calls the Will *Urkraft,* as do the German romantics; the latter's concept of the poetic and the prosaic spheres lies close to Schopenhauer's dualistic concept of the universe in his otherwise in essence monistic theory.

indivisible and is as much present in microcosm as in macrocosm.

What is interesting to us is that Schopenhauer incorporates art in his philosophical system by creating an analogy between art and the world (which here comprises the Will and the World of Appearances) in which he sees music as the highest of the arts. Music expresses the Will directly, it is one with the Will, since it is non-conceptual: music is, in other words, the sounding aspect of the *Ding an sich,* which is the Will. All other art forms express the Will indirectly because they are conceptual and therefore part of the apparent sphere. Music is thus the only means by which man can get into direct contact with the Will. (The derivation of this view from the aesthetics of the German romantics is obvious.) This is an extremely important aspect of Schopenhauer's ideology, since it gives music an immediate ethical purpose. (Wagner calls this *das Erhabene.*) The human being is, in spite of being the highest level of the Will's objectification, subject to the Will in the everlasting cycle of striving and satisfaction, most explicitly in the sexual act. But *because* it has reached the highest level of individuation, the human being can break out of the cycle of the Will (which in Schopenhauer's ideology is regarded as an affliction) by comprehending this mechanism. Through this comprehension the human being realises the fundamental unity of the Will and in this state of *interesseloses Anschauen* feel sympathy (*Mit-Leid,* the Wagnerian way of spelling it) with all living creatures. As music is the immediate expression of the Will and the musician is chosen, so to speak, to comprehend the nature of the world, he can pass on to this cognition through his compositions. According to Schopenhauer's ideology — and Wagner's — this is more or less his duty, his vocation.

The musician can convey his understanding using music alone or by combining music with text, where he makes a connection to the conceptual, clarifying word. But the word must remain subordinate to the music: word and music belong to two different spheres.[16] According to this ideology, therefore, it is not important whether music is combined with words or not, the composer is able to convey content with or without the clarifying word.

Having looked at the essence of Schopenhauer's aesthetical and ethical ideology, where music is a communicator of content, we observe an obvious connection with the term programme music in our endeavour to re-define the term in connection with Mahler's music.

Liszt, the originator of the term, defines it broadly: a piece of instrumental music, connected with a verbal statement, of longer or shorter length. The programme expresses the composer's intention within the piece of music, and is intended by the composer to be a guideline for the listener. To speak of genuine programme music in Liszt's sense, however, the programme must

16. Arthur Schopenhauer: *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung,* Frankfurt a.M. 1859 (Zürich 1977), (= Schopenhauer), vol.I paragraph 52, p. 321ff; see also Richard Wagner: *Beethoven (1870), Gesammelte Schriften* ed. Julius Kapp, 14 vol, Leipzig n.d., vol VIII p. 182ff (= Kapp).

be the result of a "poetic necessity", an inseparable part of the whole and indispensable for the understanding of the music. For Liszt, the future of music lies with the "tone-poet" since the purpose of music is communication of the ideals of the time through a "poetic idea".[17]

Wagner takes up this notion of communication of a poetic idea in his essay on Liszt's symphonic poems.[18] Like Liszt, Wagner sees the communication of an idea rather than a realistic story as the most important feature of the symphonic poem, a term he uses instead of that of programme music, (the one time he uses the term programme music he puts it in quotation marks). It is the communication of ideas which gives the symphonic poem its historical legitimacy. In genuine Schopenhauerian spirit Wagner regards it as a musical form belonging to a higher level. However, this depends — and here Wagner contradicts Liszt — on the symphonic poem being written on the basis of musical logic. The word can only up to a point elucidate the content of music — a statement in which Wagner follows Schopenhauer closely.[19]

As mentioned above, Mahler is not consistent in his statements about programme music and in his use of programmes. His utterances about the subject are not free of polemic, and must be seen in the light of his having had to make up his mind about the question at a time when the subject of programme music was being discussed vehemently. One thing, however, is certain: he never regarded his music as programme music of a descriptive kind.

What is essential for Mahler is the communication of ideas: "the conceptual basis", or "the inner programme"[20] which provides "the understanding of a progression of feelings which match the ideas", to use some of Mahler's own words.[21]

In a speech, given in Munich in October 1900, he explains more thoroughly what he understands by this. He is of the opinion that the content of a piece of music can reach such a "high level" that it becomes necessary for the composer to make use of a text and the human voice in order to be able to express and communicate this content. In such cases music has reached "the highest level of expression". In this category he places Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony,* and also his own Second and Third Symphonies.[22]

17. Franz Liszt: "Berlioz und seine Harold-Symphonie", in *Gesammelte Schriften* vol. IV, p. 21ff, Leipzig 1882, (Wiesbaden 1978).
18. Richard Wagner: *Über Franz Liszts Symphonische Dichtungen,* Kapp VIII p. 102–118.
19. Richard Wagner: *Beethoven (1870),* Kapp VIII p. 182ff.
20. (GMBN 158) and (GMBN 165) respectively.
21. *"Das Verständnis für den Ideen-richtigen Empfindungsgang",* GMBN 165; all translations into English are mine unless otherwise indicated.
22. NBLN pp. 171 and 151; similar ideas can already be observed in Mahler's letters to Marschalk from the early nineties. The use of the formulation "the highest level of expression" and his advocacy of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and Beethoven in general bear witness to Mahler's adoption of Wagner's ideas and even Wagner's phrasings.

Until the time of this statement Mahler had more-or-less consistently adhered to the opinion that a programme as a guide in Liszt's sense of the word was necessary for a time, until the listener had got used to his music. However, it had turned out that the programme printed in the concert programme was being misinterpreted by the audience, and likewise by most critics as an illustrative explanation of his music.[23] He therefore rejected the use of a programme in the expository phase because of this misunderstanding. But he was far from consistent in this attitude; besides now and then allowing a programme to be printed in a concert programme, he continued to provide interpretations and comments about the contents of his symphonies verbally, in letters, and as recorded first and foremost in the memoirs of Natalie Bauer-Lechner.

Mahler's use of a programme (here used in the sense of underlying idea or idea-progression with its verbal manifestations such as programme drafts, programme-musical explanations, inscriptions in general entered into the sketches and or the manuscript, and the use of a text) occurred mostly with his first four symphonies. In his Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Ninth, and Tenth symphonies he used neither programmes, programme drafts (as far as we know) nor the word in the form of a song text to communicate the content of the works. The *Eighth Symphony* on the other hand is the symphony in which he most uses the sung word for the purpose of conveying an idea.[24] He has, however, made statements about all his works after the *Fourth Symphony* which show that his overall opinions about music have not changed from those he held when he composed the first four symphonies. As a consequence of his Schopenhauer-Wagner ideology, Mahler sees music as one with the Will, life's kernel. Music can therefore, with or without words (and in "words" we here include any kind of verbal utterance in connection with the specific piece of music, from programme notes for the concert to a sung text) communicate a specific content, as music is in itself the content. Mahler does not reject the idea of music as a communicator of a content, nor does he cease to believe that music is connected with content in general. The only thing he rejects is the use of a written and distributed programme in the expository phase, since it is being misinterpreted by his listeners as indicating that his music is illustrative, descriptive programme music, and this is precisely how he does not want his music to be interpreted.

23. See e.g. letter to Schiedermair in Kurt Blaukopf: Mahler: *A Documentary Study,* 1976 p. 225 and GMBN 310.
24. The resemblance between Mahler's *"inneres Programm"* and Wagner's *"poetische Idee"* and, on a more practical level, between the tone for Mahler's programmes to his First and Second symphonies and that of Wagner's *"Programmatische Erläuterungen"* is evident, but will not be explored further in this paper.

An analysis of his *Third Symphony*[25] gives us a picture of how Mahler worked with the problem of giving a musical form to an idea or idea-progression. For this purpose we will compare the musical structure of the symphony with Mahler's utterances about it in letters and as recorded in Natalie Bauer-Lechner's memoirs, in a form of hermeneutic documentation on the basis of the Schopenhauer-Wagner ideology.

The titles of the symphony and its movements[26] reveal a strong affinity with Schopenhauer's theory about the hierarchical structure of life, where the lifeless matter is at the lowest level and mankind, as the culmination of an increasing individuation of the organic matter, is at the highest level. As we will see later, Mahler provides in his own interpretation a more explicit formulation of Schopenhauer's hierarchy. Mahler himself describes his idea with the *Third Symphony* as a rendering of "an evolutionary development" on the basis of a musical logic (GMBN 195) and even explains quite explicitly the progression of the hierarchical structure of the movements: "And it is dreadful how from out of the lifeless, inert matter .... life gradually fights its way free, until it refines itself from level to level in ever-higher forms of evolution: flowers, animals, the human being, up to the realm of the spirits, to the angels" (NBLN p. 56).

With Schopenhauer's hierarchical structure in mind, we feel free to interpret the first part of the symphony as a musical metaphor or parable on the Will's increasingly persistent effort to loosen itself from the lowest level of the hierarchy, the "dead matter" (*unbeseelte, starre Materie*).[27]

The *introduction* to the *first* movement "Pan Awakens" (*"Pan Erwacht"*) and thereby the whole symphony starts out with the horns playing what Mahler calls the "Reveille" (*"Weckruf"*). This may be interpreted as a call upon the Will from the outside, as an evocation to wake. As the Will, according to Schopenhauer, is manifold in its appearances (*Erscheinungen*) this basic force of life and the principal character of the symphony, is given a variety of musical guises, all according to what state it is in.

The *first* time the Will appears, it is in its deadest form as non-organic nature, as "dead matter", in accordance with the name of the section, starting

25. The following analysis, and this article as a whole, is based on the author's master's thesis: *Gustav Mahler og programmusikken*, Aarhus University, Denmark, 1983 (in Danish) and on the author's current work.

26. Overall title: *"Ein Sommermittagstraum"*, First part: Introduction: *"Pan erwacht"*, , First movement: *"Der Sommer marschiert ein (Bacchuszug)"*, Second Part: Second movement: *"Was mir die Blumen auf der Wiese erzählen"*, Third movement: *"Was mir die Tiere im Walde erzählen"*, Fourth movement: *"Was mir der Mensch erzählt"*. Fifth movement: *"Was mir die Engel erzählen"*, Sixth movement: *"Was mir die Liebe erzählt"*, GMBN 188.

27. NBLN p. 56; all names of themes and motif material are derived from Mahler's own insertions in the manuscript or his utterances about the content and material of the symphony, see Floros I, p. 235, and Donald Mitchell: *The Wunderhorn Years*, London 1975, p. 194; see also Susanne Vill: *Vermittlungsformen verbalisierter und musikalischer Inhalte in der Musik Gustav Mahlers*, Tutzing 1979, p. 238ff for an extensive collection of Mahler's programmes and utterances on the *Third Symphony*.

out with almost nothing: a muffled funeral march rhythm on the big drum (bar 25 approx.).[28] This sound becomes a little more defined with the addition of a d-minor chord in the trombones carrying on the funeral march rhythm together with the big drum, and even more so with the entry of a melodic motif in the bassoons (b. 28) and another in the oboes and clarinets (b.30); the whole progression of the motifs expands from the little-defined drum sound to a chord and two melodic motifs, the first one extending over a fifth, the second one over a twelfth, all in the range of d-minor; also the length of the motifs gradually expands. With the motif in the trumpets (b.31), playing ff, the d-minor tonality is exceeded for the first time, the suspended g-sharp clashing with the surrounding d-minor in pianissimo. This motif belongs to the group of signals, that like the *"Weckruf"* call upon the Will to wake. It has, as has this group as a whole, the military connotation of "Attention".

Once all these motifs are started they are repeated with the same time interval. In this way Mahler creates a static atmosphere, that seems fitting for the "dead matter".

The *second* musical statement of the Will, and at the same time the first indication of beginning life, we see in a prominent upward moving scale in the deep strings as an upbeat to a suspended motif, which in the course of the section expands into a sometimes rambling melody of *fortspinnungs*-character, which we will call the "life-will" material (fig. 3 ff). The "life-will" material is the musical guise of the merging energy of the Will and the motif of the upward moving scale has the explicit task of pushing forward this energy or life (as if it is pushing the Will into waking up and the Will always falls asleep again); it always appears as an up-beat figure to the "life-will" material.

The general progression from the static to the dynamic is furthermore supported by the performance indications, which start out with a "heavy and dull" at the beginning of the "dead matter" section (fig. 2), but already at the first indications of the "life-will" material call for "wild" and "quick and violent" with many accellerandos and rubatos. After a number of attempts of the "life-will" material in general, the Will has gained enough strength for the "life-will" theme proper to appear (b. 83ff). With the help of the upbeat scale it is stated twice, the first time in c-minor, the second in e-flat-minor, thus having freed itself from the d-minor realm of the "dead matter" material. However, it is not strong enough yet: the structure collapses (fig. 7). Descending glissandos in the bassoons, trombones, and celli are played *"gedehnt"*, motifs are suddenly reduced to one or two bars, and the "life-will" material has disappeared. The structure revives itself (fig. 8), and some of the earlier "life-will" material re-appears; however, it cannot make

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28. All figure and bar numbers refer to the Kritische Gesamtausgabe. As I am interested in showing the overall structural development of the symphony, I have not found it expedient to illustrate the analysis with music examples. For a full understanding of the analysis, however, it is necessary for the reader to have a score at hand.

itself manifest, and the second and temporarily final collapse is inevitable: the structure collapses with a long chromatic scale downwards, and finally nothing more is left except the funeral march rhythm in the big drum that started the whole first raising of the "life-will" from the "dead matter".

In the next scene, which Mahler calls "Pan sleeps" ("*Pan schläft*"), we find the *third* guise of the Will, the dormant Will (fig. 11). It is expressed musically in a subtle chord progression in the flutes and piccolo and in a melody, first played in the oboes and later taken up by the solo-violin, stabilising tonally in D-major, and thus connecting to the same tonal area as the "dead matter" which was in d-minor. This idyllic interlude is interrupted harshly in d-flat minor by the "*Herold*" (fig. 12), yet another representative of the large group of military signals calling on the sleeping Will to awaken. The "Herold" is able to stir some movement in the deep strings, as if indicating that the Will is about to awaken, but the motion dies away and the section ends with a long general pause. After this interlude the whole sequence of the "dead matter", the "life-will" material, and the "sleeping Pan" is repeated, only on a slightly more intense level, with the underlying power of the "life-will" stronger (fig. 13ff). This time, however, the "Herold" succeeds in calling upon the Will and the movement in the deep strings does not die away, but carries on and leads right into the march, which starts the first movement "Summer marches in" ("*Der Sommer marschiert ein*") (fig. 20 approx.).

The march, which dominates the first movement, is the *fourth* musical guise of the Will, which here represents the awakened Will, in the process of gaining enough strength to manifest itself in the World of Appearances. The march is one of Mahler's generic marches, which does not allude to any specific march, but which seems familiar nevertheless. Mahler is here interested in the march idiom with its specific association of moving forward.

An interesting aspect of the march is shown in the "Rabble" ("*Gesindel*") material, which in the realm of the march idiom represents the more common side of the Will (fig. 44). According to Schopenhauer, the Will has also to incorporate this side of existence. The vulgarity of the march is obtained by using military instruments: the full range of percussion instruments and the e-flat clarinet, which gives the whole section a sneering sound. The motivic material is characterised by grace notes, snappy melodies, emphasis on the first and second beat of the bar, and the "um-pa-pa" rhythm, which receives the instruction to play "crudely" (b.545). The march is at this stage a grotesque caricature of its idiom. In the course of the section the musical structure is turned into the polyphony characteristic of Mahler.[29]

The final power needed for the Will to establish itself firmly is provided by the "South Storm" ("*Südsturm*") (fig. 51) after the decisive prelude "The Battle Begins" ("*Die Schlacht beginnt*") (fig. 49) which announces that this is a crucial turning point. Mahler has said of the South Storm that it bears

29. See for example NBLN p.165.

all fertility with it (NBLN p. 60). The polyphony from the "Rabble" section
has at this point reached the intensity of cacophony.

A positive sign that the Will has now been thoroughly awakened is given in
the recapitulation of the introduction, where the Pan-material, representing
the sleeping Will, does not re-occur. The recapitulation of the introduction
with the title "Pan Awakens" (*"Pan erwacht"*) is cut down from (approx.) 239
bars to 93 bars.[30] Another proof of the Will having been wakened finally, is
that the march engrosses everything, even the "Reveille" which started the
whole symphony. The Will is victorious. Mahler writes of the ending of the
first part of the symphony: "In a sweeping march tempo it roars nearer and
nearer, louder and louder, swelling like an avalanche, until this incredible
noise and this rejoicing pours over you" (NBLN p. 60). The movement, and
thereby the first part of the symphony, closes with the Will being sufficiently
strengthened to objectify itself in the second part, in a process of progressing
individuation (NBLN p. 56).

The following two levels in the hierarchy are comprised successively of
the plant world in the *second* movement, which Mahler calls the "most
unarticulated"[31] and the animal world in the *third* movement. The art-
less, impulsive world unspoiled by the rationality of modern civilisation
(an ideal world, according to the Schopenhauer-Wagner-Nietzsche ideology,
which takes the idea from the early German romantics), is not abandoned
without regret; in the third movement (figs. 14 and 27) we say farewell to the
naive, unreflecting world with a sentimental *Volkslied*-like solo, played on
the anachronistic post horn. This notion is confirmed with the following sec-
tion, fig. 28, where the *Volkslied* section played by the post horn is repeated
"wie nachhorchend", as Mahler writes in the music, by the violins: as if they
were listening to something, that has been lost to humankind. Of the end
of the third movement Mahler says that reminiscences of the lifeless matter
return here to emphasise the leap to the highest level in the hierarchy: the
articulated human (fig. 30; NBLN p. 56).

Mahler portions out into the next three movements the various stages of
the human being's realisation of the world's mechanism. The *fourth* move-
ment represents the human being's gradual emergence into the world of
appearances; the *fifth* movement represents the human being's conscious
realisation of its place in this world, and the *sixth* movement represents the
human being at the stage of its final fulfillment.

In the *fourth* movement Mahler combines music with the clarifying word:
a poem by Nietzsche from *Thus spoke Zarathustra,* in order to convey hu-
mankind's recognition of life's coherence, a becoming conscious of one's self
(*"sich-seiner-selbst-bewusst-werden"* NBLN p. 136), here again an allusion to
Schopenhauer (by way of Nietzsche), since becoming conscious of one's self

30. See the introduction, bars 1–239 (approx.), and the recapitulation of the introduction figs.
    55–62.
31. GMUB Mincieux 5.

is, in Schopenhauer's ideology, identical with the human being's recognition of the Will. Mahler here makes a very deliberate use of the human voice to communicate this idea.

Expressed with a musical logic, the content of the movement is conveyed by two main elements: the first consists of one aspect of the "life-will" material, the "life-will *an sich*".[32] This is developed, and gradually comes to dominate most of the material, reaching its climax at figs. 9–11. The second element consists of a kind of *perpetuum mobile* effect.[33] All the motif and thematic material is constructed in an arch form, the phrases always returning to their starting points. In its simplest form, this effect is seen in the undulating motif a-b-a, which starts and ends the movement; in a more complex form it is seen in the various stages of the life-will theme, and in its most complex form it is found in the overall structure of the movement, which starts and ends in the same way, as do the two verses of the movement (bars 74–82 approx.). These two elements, namely the specific use of the "life-will" material and the *perpetuum mobile* effect, can, in the context of the fourth movement, be interpreted as a rendering, based on musical premises, of humankind's recognition of his fate, determined by the Will's eternal cycle of alternate striving and satisfaction.

By force of this recognition, humankind is able to renounce the Will and set itself outside its power. Thereby, the human being comes to suffer with all living creatures, to feel itself at one with all that is living, without disparity between its own individuality and its surroundings.

This conscious break with the Will occurs in the *fifth* movement, where Mahler once again uses the clarifying word: a poem from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. This level of the hierarchy is represented by Jesus' compassion and death. Jesus is seen here as the denier of the Will in person. (This interpretation of Christianity is suggested by Schopenhauer.) Jesus breaks out of the cycle of the Will (indeed, he is not even a product of this cycle, since he was virgin-born) and shows compassion with his fellow beings, by taking upon himself all the sins of mankind in his crucifixion. Christianity is regarded by Schopenhauer as a simple mythical rendering of "the truth", as he very conveniently calls his ideology. Mahler, by choosing a *Wunderhorn* poem as a Christian text, and by setting it to a basically strophic lied in a *Volkslied* idiom, provides a corresponding simple popularisation of "the truth": The *Volkslied* idiom of the setting, together with the exclusive use of children's and women's voices, emphasises the purity and truthfulness of the statement. Wagner's *Parsifal*, which had a strong influence on the fifth movement, and on the symphony as a whole, can be seen as a more sophisticated version of the same "truth".[34]

32. Anticipated in the first part of the Introduction, bars 83–89.
33. Also anticipated in the first part of the Introduction at fig. 1.
34. Mahler also refers to Christianity as a myth in a letter to his wife, AME p. 430ff (p.353), where he speaks about the Christian "eternal bliss" (*"ewige Seligkeit"*) as a mythological re-

With the *sixth* movement, Mahler brings us to the highest of his hierarchical levels: to Love in the sense of *caritas,* compassion for humankind, a compassion which encompasses all living creatures. The motto, Mahler originally had intended for this movement, emphasises this content: "Father, see my wounds and let no creature be lost".[35] The motto is a paraphrase of yet another Wunderhorn poem with the title "Redemption" (*"Erlösung"*), where Mahler, significantly, substitutes the word "creature" (*"Wesen"*) for the word "sinner" (*Sünder"*) in the poem, thus confirming his accordance with Schopenhauer once again.[36] In this movement Mahler uses what is, according to his own musical set of values, the highest musical form — the adagio, which "resolves everything into peace and entity; the Ixion's wheel of appearance is finally brought to rest", a metaphor which Mahler takes from Schopenhauer (NBLN p. 68).

The main theme can be seen as a synthesis of all the central themes in the symphony. The "Reveille" theme, the "life-will *an sich"*, some of the central motif material of the fifth movement[37] and the main theme of the last movement[38] all have a strikingly similar structure. They are all variations on the following melodic and rhythmical pattern: an up-beat quarter note interval, usually a fourth, up to a series of half notes (from one to three), followed by a varying number of quarter notes, either in stepwise movement or as turning notes.[39] Mahler's own statement about the last movement: "Eternal love spins its web within us, over and above all else — as rays flow together into a focal point"[40] can be seen as a verbalisation of this thematic synthesis.

Mahler's intention with the *Third Symphony* was to expound the recognition of the world's coherence which he himself had obtained. This "Joyful Knowledge" (*"fröhliche Wissenschaft"*) (an overall title he initially gave the symphony) is, in all simplicity, that the Will, the driving force of life, manifests itself in a hierarchy of progressing complexity and individuation, with the compassionate human being at the highest level. This human being is not, however, the centre of life — it is part of a cosmic whole: "the universe", "macrocosm" "the eternal space" (*das All*), or "nature as a whole" — these are just other ways of saying "the world",[41] which Mahler here understands

presentation (*"mythologische Vorstellung"*). At other times he refers to it as *"Kinderglaube"* (AME p. 271, p. 450).

35. GMBU Mincieux 5: *"Vater, sieh an die Wunden mein, kein Wesen lass verloren sein".*
36. For the poem see Knud Martner (ed.): *Selected letters of Gustav Mahler,* London 1979, (= KM) p. 419.
37. For example bars 3ff, 16ff, 30ff, 86ff, and 99ff.
38. For example bars 1–8.
39. See Eggebrecht p. 111f, where he shows a similar kind of thematic synthesis in the final movement of the *Fifth Symphony;* see also ibid. p. 53. A similar synthesis is also found in the march material in the first part of the *Third Symphony,* as we have seen.
40. GMBN 146: *"Über alles hin webt in uns die ewige Liebe — wie die Strahlen in einem Brennpunkte zusammenfliessen."* Translation taken from KM 137.
41. GMBN 360, GMUB Mincieux 5, NBLN p. 59, and GMBN 195.

as a totality, a *wholeness,* in which every single part is dependent on the others and in which the split between the Will and the World of Appearances is suspended.

In as much as Mahler, just like Schopenhauer, Wagner, and Nietzsche, sees music as a "direct image of the Will", *(unmittelbares Abbild des Willen selbst)*[42] music must also express the multiplicity which the Will displays in its objectifications in time and space. The Will itself is indivisible, only its *Erscheinungen* are manifold and even in its manifestations the Will is always present as an indivisible unity; as we have seen, it exists as much in the micro- as in the macrocosm. Music is the metaphysical side of the physical world, or the *Ding an sich* of the World of Appearances. Therefore, says Schopenhauer, one could as well call the world (*Erscheinungswelt*) embodied music as the embodied (*verkörperte*) Will; this is the "reason why music articulates every picture, even every scene of the real life and the world with heightened significance".[43]

It is on the ground of this analogy between the Will's appearances and music, which is a specification of the *"an sich"* or the Absolute, and on the ground of the very special relationship between music and the Will that Mahler's statements about his Third Symphony, regarding it as "a great work, in which truly the whole world is mirrored" (GMBN 180) must be understood.

More generally he expresses what composing a symphony means to him: "To build a world, using all the technical means available" (NBLN p. 35). This statement was made in 1895, when he had just started composing the *Third Symphony*. He says the same to Jean Sibelius as late as 1907: "A symphony must be like the world, and therefore embrace everything" (Floros I, p. 152). Mahler's basic view of music has, as far as we can see, not changed. A search for a wholeness which contains both aesthetic and ethical elements is an essential part of Mahler's musical standpoint.

Whether or not, in this search, he uses a written programme or a song text to convey the content of his music is of no importance, since Mahler, with his Schopenhauer-Wagner ideology, believes that music in itself makes a statement about the totality, it *is* the totality. Under no circumstances did he say that he regarded his music as "absolute".

As we have mentioned above, Schopenhauer's ideology (following the German romantics' perception of the artist's role in society, as does Wagner) gives the musician and composer a special position. In as much as it is granted to the musician that he can comprehend the nature of the world, he is, during his inspired moments, in direct contact with the kernel of life. Through his insight he can break free from the boundaries of time and space and become at one with the Will. Mahler remarks time and again that he

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42. Schopenhauer vol.I, paragraph 52 p. 330.
43. Ibid. p. 330.

experiences himself as a medium for the Will (GMBN 180, NBLN p. 49). The special status of the musician, however, gives him a responsibility, a duty, to communicate his insight. Through his music it is possible for him to convey his comprehension of the world in its totality, and in this way to give other living beings the possibility to recognise the world's nature. As a consequence of this recognition they are, in turn, given the basis for rejecting the dominance of the Will, freeing themselves from their affliction, and becoming one with all living things: "The purpose of art is, for me, always to liberate and to raise up out of affliction", to use Mahler's own words (NBLN p. 46). The human being becomes a part of the totality that is life.

The establishment of this feeling of totality is the nucleus of Mahler's — and Schopenhauer's, Wagner's and the early Nietzsche's — ideology; in consequence the striving for this wholeness is the basic idea in all Mahler's works, most clearly and "programmatically" stated in the *Third Symphony*. In our opinion, this symphony can be regarded as a key to the interpretation of his other works.[44] It contains all the typical elements that we find in Mahler's other symphonies: the various idioms of *Gebrauchsmusik,* (the march, the *Volkslied,* salon-music, choral, etc.) the catastrophic incidents, the *Naturlaut* episodes, Mahler's special kind of polyphony, his variation technique of organic evolution, his musical statement of *das Erhabene,* etc. But although the establishment of totality is Mahler's ultimate intention, this does not mean that he succeeds in carrying it out. Only the Second, Third, and Fourth symphonies seem truthful in their overcoming of the split between the two worlds of the Will and appearance; the Fifth and Seventh are not convincing in their overdone finales and the Sixth is the most direct admittance of failure. The overcoming of the split between the two spheres is a problem that had been at the heart of artists' work since the early German romantics. Although Mahler was not politically active in the traditional meaning of the word, he conveyed with his music his very sensitive and personal reaction to and attempts of solving the problem of how to survive in the society he lived in. Mahler's remarks that he actually composes his life, support this statement (NBLN p.95, p. 192f, p. 194).

Mahler tried to materialise the ideal of wholeness not only in his symphonies but also in his productions at the *k.u.k. Hofoperntheater* in Vienna together with Alfred Roller. The Austrian version of Art Nouveau, the *Secession,* of which Roller was also a member, worked with similar ideas, for example for the Beethoven exhibition in 1902, at whose opening Mahler participated actively. Gustav Klimt's *Beethovenfries,* one of the main exhibits, attempted to communicate a similar belief in wholeness to that expressed in Mahler's *Third Symphony,* only here conveyed through a different medium of art.

Through the work of art as communicator of the concept of totality, they

44. See also Eggebrecht p. 166.

and their followers hoped to regenerate culture, and in the last instance society, for it seemed to them (as already to the German romantics) that industrialization and capitalization had produced a fragmented, unintegrated society, and, not least, a fragmented man.

Through the work of art — and that meant, for Mahler, through music — humankind would be able to regain its unity. For Wagner the means was the dramatic *Gesamtkunstwerk,* for Mahler a symphonic *Gesamtkunstwerk.* The symphony is here deliberately understood to be the bearer of ideology.