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MAHLER

LIEDER EINES FAHRENDEN GESELLEN
SONGS OF A WAYFARER

for Low Voice and Orchestra
für tiefe Stimme und Orchester



Eulenburg

GUSTAV MAHLER

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Edited by/Herausgegeben von
Franz Josef Schwarz



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PREFACE

The words of the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* were occasioned by events in Mahler's life, as the composer confided to his friend Fritz Löhr in a letter of 1 January 1885.

I have written a cycle of songs, six at present, all of which are dedicated to her. She doesn't know about them. What can they tell her that she doesn't know already? [...] The order of the songs is meant to show a wayfaring journeyman who has had a fateful experience, and who is now setting off into the world, travelling on alone.¹

The dedicatee of the poems² was Johanna Richter, a singer at Kassel, where Mahler was employed as music director between 1883 and 1885, and it seems to have been this unhappy relationship with the singer that spurred him into writing them. In subsequent years, however, Mahler revised the *Lieder*, creating a greater degree of detachment and freeing them of their autobiographical awkwardness.

In its epic and dramatic conception, the sequence is akin to the song cycles of Schubert. Its subject-matter – unrequited love (in the first song), the wayfarer's departure (in the fourth song) and, in the cycle as a whole, the connection between nature and the inner life – echoes the Romantic themes of *Die schöne Müllerin* and *Die Winterreise*. There are also many specific points of contact in both the music and the verbal text, from the literal reference to the 'Lindenbaum' in the fourth song to the premonition, in the same song, of a fatal outcome sounded by a funeral march.³

The only sources of the cycle that can be dated with certainty are the autographs of the verbal texts of the third and fourth songs (Decem-

ber 1884).⁴ Altogether six poems were written, all of which the composer had planned to set; four of the autographs are now lost. Mahler later revised the poems, discarded two of them and altered the order of those that remained.⁵ In an early essay,⁶ Fritz Egon Pamer pointed out the similarities between the style of the texts and the idiom of folk song, although it must be said that only the first song of the cycle, 'Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht', is based on an actual model, incorporating a folk-song text almost word for word.⁷ The musical settings bear an analogous relationship to folk music. Characteristic archaisms – irregular rhythms (first song, bb1–4), pedal points (second song, trumpet, bb32–42; second violin/viola, bb39–42) and ostinatos (fourth song, timpani/harp, bb18–37) – are used in a deliberate and contrastive manner.

The order of composition of the versions of the *Lieder* with, respectively, piano and orchestral accompaniment can no longer be known for certain. The oldest musical autograph of the collection is, according to its title, a 'piano arrangement for 2 hands'.

The evidence of the extant sources suggests that this is not an arrangement of an already inscribed score but a draft that Mahler proposed

¹ *Gustav Mahler: Briefe*, ed. Herta Blaukopf (Vienna/Hamburg, 1982), 35

² Mahler used the term 'Lied' in the sense of 'folk poetry'. cf. Elisabeth Schmierer, 'Die Orchesterlieder Gustav Mahlers', in *Kieler Schriften zur Musikwissenschaft*, Vol. 38 (Kassel/Basel/London/New York, 1991), 79f

³ cf. Schmierer, op. cit., 36 and 69

⁴ Mahler recorded the date on the autographs. The note 'Dezember. (1883)' in the first editions of the piano and orchestral versions of the *Lieder* is a slip on Mahler's or the publisher's part. cf. Monika Tibbe, 'Über die Verwendung von Liedern und Liedelementen in instrumentalen Symphoniesätzen Gustav Mahlers', in *Berliner Musikwissenschaftliche Arbeiten*, Vol. 1 (Munich, 1971), 126

⁵ cf. Schmierer, op. cit., 32f

⁶ 'Die Lieder Gustav Mahlers', in *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft*, Vol. 16/1929, 120

⁷ The poem is included in the collection *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. It is not clear, however, whether or not the composer based himself on this source when writing the poem. Pamer (op. cit.) maintains that Mahler first got to know the collection in Leipzig in 1888 and must therefore have come across the text in another source. Donald Mitchell, however, in *Gustav Mahler: The Wunderhorn Years* (London, 1975), 117–120, assumes that the anthology had been known to the composer since his student days in Vienna.

to orchestrate. In attempting to determine the date of this orchestrated version, however, we are also forced to resort to conjecture. The recollection of Natalie Bauer-Lechner, a close friend of Gustav Mahler, was that the composer did not orchestrate the songs until the year 1896, in preparation for the first performance.⁸ It is probable, though, that what he did on that occasion was to revise an already existing version of the orchestral setting. Certainly, he had earlier given a score of the cycle as a present to his friend Hermann Behn,⁹ at the end of 1895.

In a letter of 14 October 1891 Mahler, who was by then the first conductor at the Hamburg Stadttheater, offered the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, together with other compositions, to the head of the music publishers B. Schott's Söhne, Ludwig Strecker.¹⁰ Unfortunately, Mahler's letter does not make clear whether the offer concerned the version for piano or for orchestra. In the event, the publishers declined the 'Gesellenlieder', and the work was not published until six years later. On 27 September 1897 the composer concluded a contract with the Leipzig music publishers Josef Weinberger,¹¹ who brought out the work, in both versions, within the same year.

The various stages of re-working documented by the extant sources of the songs show that the compositional process was a painstaking one. This is evident from a comparison of the different versions of the orchestral setting, which the composer retouched in order to make the instrumental sound as vivid as possible.

Marked differences emerge when we compare the piano and orchestral versions: in the closing bars of the first song, for example, Mahler's intentions with regard to rhythm and dynamics seem to have been quite contrary in the two cases:¹²

Version for voice and piano bb89–97

Version for voice and orchestra bb89–96

This point has a bearing on the question whether the cycle is fundamentally one of songs with piano or songs with orchestra. The numerous differences between the two printed editions of 1897 give support to the view that the two versions are of equal standing. Monika Tibbe,¹³ on the other hand, argues that the songs were conceived as orchestral from the outset, since, by contrast with other orchestral songs of Mahler's that were also published in separate piano versions, the piano-accompaniment version of the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* has the characteristics of a 'piano arrangement'. Certainly, the first two songs of the cycle do not lie well on the piano. In the third and fourth songs, however, the writing is better suited to the instrument.

The surviving sources show that Mahler began work on the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* at the turn of the year in 1884–85. The orchestral version was probably written during his Hamburg period, some time between 1891 and the start of 1896. The work was first performed in Berlin on 16 March of the same year, with Anton Sisternans as soloist.

The significance of the work

The *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* look ahead to Mahler's later development as a composer. They show him turning to the song with orchestral accompaniment, with the use of the texts prefiguring the *Wunderhorn* songs; and

made, the dynamic gradations in the orchestral setting are not reproduced exactly.

¹³ cf. Tibbe, op. cit., 13 and 129f

⁸ Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Erinnerungen an Gustav Mahler* (Leipzig, 1923); cf. 21 and 30

⁹ Hermann Behn (1859–1927): lawyer and composer from Hamburg

¹⁰ The letter is reprinted in Knud Martner and Robert Beccuqué, 'Zwölf unbekannte Briefe Gustav Mahlers an Ludwig Strecker', in *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, Vol. 34/1977, 289f

¹¹ Reproduced in Mitchell, op. cit., 92

¹² In Mitchell, op. cit., 104, where this comparison is also

the settings also lay some of the foundations for the symphonies. The fact that from an early stage of the compositional process the work was intended to be a cycle, and not a sequence of four independent songs, is indicated by the heading in the oldest extant autograph of the music, 'Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen – ein Cyclus'.¹⁴ The musical cohesion of the cycle rests on its tonal scheme. None of the songs closes in the key in which it begins, and we have to wait till the very end before we return to the tonal region of the opening. (The pattern is D minor–G minor; D major–F sharp major; D minor–E flat minor; E minor–F major/minor. The final F major, the relative major of the D minor of the first song, takes on minor coloration when the funeral-march motif returns in the closing two bars.) Cyclical unity is also created by recurrences of content, with almost identical motivic material being used at vital points in the text in all four songs (an upward leap of a sixth or a fifth, followed by a stepwise descent):¹⁵

1. bb14–17



2. bb119–122



3. bb68–71



4. bb6–8



Of the role of song-writing in Mahler, Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht has said: 'Songs, for him, served as a form of preparatory study for the

symphonic works [...].'¹⁶ Viewing the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* from this point of view, we can see that they paved the way for the First Symphony in three respects.

(i) Mahler used material from the *Lieder* in the symphony: the second song became the main theme in the first movement, and the third movement quotes the 'Lindenbaum theme' of the fourth song.

(ii) In certain respects the song cycle anticipates overall symphonic form. The use of large orchestra and the unusual number of songs – four instead of the customary half dozen – look towards the symphony,¹⁷ and Mahler may have had such a purpose in mind when he reduced the number of songs to four from their original six.

(iii) The cycle is symphony-like in its internal make-up: the tension between two 'themes' – individual sorrow on the one hand, and nature's promise of happiness on the other – together with their development from one song to the next, produces a quasi-symphonic structure. At the same time, the *Lieder* clearly retain their character as words set for singing voice, and this kinship with speech also links them to the First Symphony.¹⁸

Editorial notes

The Sources

Since not all of the sources are extant, and since some of the source material is undated, much of the chronology of, and interrelations between, the sources must remain conjectural.¹⁹ The source sigla used here conform in the usage customary in the recent literature on Mahler.

¹⁶ *Die Musik Gustav Mahlers* (Munich/Zürich, 1982), 280

¹⁷ For the same point, see Schmierer, op. cit., 37

¹⁸ Mahler had laid the basis for a quasi-symphonic developmental scheme, without need for the four songs to be treated in an instrumental style, when writing his own original texts (see also Schmierer, op. cit., 31). Theodor W. Adorno (in *Mahler: Eine Physiognomik*, Frankfurt/Main, 1963, 35) sees kinship with speech as one of the roots of the symbiosis between song and symphony in Mahler.

¹⁹ For a survey of the literature on the genesis of the cycle, see Schmierer, op. cit., 77

¹⁴ I.E.Mary Dargie, in *Music and Poetry in the Songs of Gustav Mahler* (Berne, 1981, 89), emphasizes that the *Lieder* form a complete cycle and that omissions or additions are unacceptable.

¹⁵ Musical examples taken from Schmierer, op. cit., 72

VI

Autograph drafts of the verbal texts of songs 3 and 4

(a) 'Die zwei blauen Augen' (song 4), dated 15 December 1884; (b) 'Ich hab' ein glühend Messer' (song 3), dated 19 December 1884. Held by the Moldenhauer Archive, Spokane, Washington, USA.²⁰

Ms I

Autograph version for voice and piano. Title page: 'Geschichte von einem / "fahrenden Gesellen" / für eine tiefe Stimme mit Begleitung / des Orchesters / von Gustav Mahler / Clavierauszug zu 2 Händen' [Tale of a 'Wayfarer', for low voice with orchestral accompaniment by Gustav Mahler: piano arrangement for 2 hands]. The individual songs bear the heading: 'Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen – ein Cyclus'. Fair copy, undated, from the estate of Alfred Rosé, University of Western Ontario, London/Ontario, Canada. Schmierer suggests 1890–91 as the possible date of origin.²¹

StV

Engraver's copy-text (*Stichvorlage*) of the version for voice and piano. Held by the Gustav-Mahler-Gesellschaft, Vienna. Undated. Probably an early revision of Ms I, originating between the two autographs.²²

Ms II

Autograph score for voice and orchestra. Original title folio lost. Inscription on separate cover: 'Aeltere autographe Partitur der Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen / von Gustav Mahler, von dem Autor zum Geschenk erhalten Ende 1895. / (29 Blatt Partitur, für den Druck / vielfach umgestaltet.) Hermann Behn' [Older autograph score of the Songs of a Wayfarer by Gustav Mahler, received as a present from the composer, late 1895. (29 folios of score, considerably altered for press.) Hermann Behn].²³ Undated.

²⁰ The texts of the two autographs are given in Zoltan Roman (ed.), *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, in *Mahler-GA*, Vol. XIV/1 (Vienna/Frankfurt, London, 1982), X–XII

²¹ Schmierer, op. cit., 78

²² cf. Roman, op. cit. VIII

²³ On Behn, see fn. 9 above

Held by the Willem Mengelberg Foundation, Amsterdam. The date of commencement of work on this autograph is usually given as 1891.²⁴ The completion of the score, however, is variously dated as 1892,²⁵ 1893²⁶ and 1896.²⁷ In all four songs the orchestration differs from that of the first edition.

Autograph title folio

'Geschichte von einem "fahrenden Gesellen" / Eine Rhapsodie / in 4 Gedichten / für eine tiefe Stimme / mit Orchester / von / Gustav Mahler' [Tale of a 'Wayfarer': a Rhapsody in 4 Poems for low voice with orchestra, by Gustav Mahler]. Musical text not extant. Undated. Archive of the publishers B. Schott's Söhne, Mainz. Possibly written at some point before October 1891, this title folio was part of a batch of compositions which Mahler sent to the publishers, offering them for publication.²⁸

HsS

Autograph parts. Inscription on cover: 'Von einem "fahrenden Gesellen" / Rhapsodie in 4 Gesängen / für eine tiefe Stimme mit Orchesterbegl. / von / Gustav Mahler' [Of a 'Wayfarer', Rhapsody in 4 Songs for low voice with orchestral accompaniment, by Gustav Mahler]. Undated. Music collection of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna. The string parts contain notes of numbers of desks and rehearsal numerals. Alterations and additions in various parts, some by Mahler. The parts were presumably used for an early performance of the cycle.²⁹

²⁴ Without citing a specific source, Schmierer (op. cit., 87) maintains that the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* were probably orchestrated between 1890 and 1892. Tibbe (op. cit., 129) does not rule out the possibility that the orchestration was done earlier, in conjunction with the composition of the First Symphony – in other words, some time before March 1888.

²⁵ cf. Herta Blaukopf, 'Wann entstanden die "Gesellen"-Lieder? Ein Diskussionsbeitrag', in *Nachrichten zur Mahler-Forschung*, Vol. 12, publ. by the Internationale Gustav Mahler Gesellschaft, Vienna, 1983, 5f.

²⁶ cf. Mitchell, op. cit., 110f

²⁷ cf. Roman, op. cit., VI

²⁸ See above; see also Martner and Becqué op. cit., 288–292 and Rudolf Stephan, *Gustav Mahler. Werk und Interpretation* (Cologne, 1979), 26

²⁹ cf. Roman, op. cit., VII

EA I

First edition of the version for voice and piano.
Josef Weinberger, Leipzig, 1897.

EA II

First edition of the version of voice and orchestra.
Josef Weinberger, Leipzig, 1897.

Since there is no extant engraver's copy-text of the orchestral version of the *Lieder eines fahren-*

den Gesellen, and since both Ms II and HsS were revised for publication, EA II must be regarded as the composer's final version and the definitive source. The present edition of the *Lieder* for the Eulenburg edition is, accordingly, based on this source.

Franz Josef Schwarz
Translation: Richard Deveson

VORWORT

Die Texte zu den *Liedern eines fahrenden Gesellen* entstanden aus autobiographischem Anlass, wie Mahler in einem Brief vom 1. Januar 1885 seinem Freund Fritz Löhr mitteilte. Darin heißt es:

Ich habe einen Zyklus Lieder geschrieben, vorderhand sechs, die alle ihr gewidmet sind. Sie kennt sie nicht. Was können sie ihr anderes sagen, als was sie weiß [...] Die Lieder sind so zusammengebracht, als ob ein fahrender Gesell, der ein Schicksal gehabt, nun in die Welt hinauszieht, und so vor sich hin wandert.¹

Bei der Widmungsträgerin der Gedichte² handelt es sich um Johanna Richter, eine Sängerin am Kasseler Theater, an das Mahler von 1883 bis 1885 als Musikdirektor engagiert war. Seine unglückliche Verbindung mit der Künstlerin scheint den Anlass zur Dichtung gegeben zu haben. Gustav Mahler unterzog die „Gesellenlieder“ jedoch in den folgenden Jahren einer distanzschaffenden Revision, die sie aus ihrer biografischen Befangenheit herauslöste.

In ihrer episch-dramatischen Konzeption ist die Sammlung Schuberts Liederzyklen verwandt. Verschmähte Liebe (1. Lied), das Hinausziehen des Gesellen (4. Lied) und im gesamten Zyklus der Bezug von Innenleben und Natur verweisen auf das romantische Sujet der *Schönen Müllerin* und der *Winterreise*. Auch im Detail sind die Bezüge in Text und Musik zahlreich – von der wörtlichen Erwähnung des Lindenbaums (4. Lied) bis zur klingenden Vorahnung eines tödlichen Ausgangs (Trauermarschmotiv des 4. Liedes).³

Die einzigen sicher datierbaren Quellen des Zyklus sind die Textautographe des dritten und

vierten Liedes vom Dezember 1884.⁴ Insgesamt waren sechs Gedichte entstanden, die alle zur Vertonung vorgesehen waren, doch sind vier der Autographe verschollen; Mahler bearbeitete die Dichtungen später, eliminierte zwei und änderte außerdem die Reihenfolge der übrigen Lieder.⁵ Bereits Fritz Egon Pamer wies in seinem Aufsatz „Die Lieder Gustav Mahlers“⁶ auf die Nähe dieser Texte zum Idiom des Volksliedes hin. Allerdings lässt sich nur das erste Lied des Zyklus, „Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht“, auf ein konkretes Vorbild zurückführen: bei ihm handelt es sich um eine fast wortgetreue Übernahme einer Volksdichtung.⁷ Wie die Texte, so ist auch ihre Vertonung an der Volksmusik orientiert. Typische Archaismen wie unregelmäßige Rhythmik (1. Lied, T. 1–4), Orgelpunkte (2. Lied, Tr.: T. 32–42; VI. II/Vla.: T. 39–42) und Ostinati (4. Lied, Timp./Arpa: T. 18–37) werden planmäßig und differenziert eingesetzt.

Die Reihenfolge, in der die klavier- und die orchesterbegleitete Fassung der „Gesellenlieder“ entstanden, kann heute nicht mit Sicherheit bestimmt werden; beim ältesten Notenautograph der Sammlung handelt es sich nach Auskunft seines Titels um einen *Clavierauszug zu 2 Händen*. Dabei legt die aktuelle Quellenlage die Vermutung nahe, dass es sich nicht um den

⁴ Das Datum ist auf den Autographen von Mahler vermerkt worden. Bei der Angabe „Dezember. (1883)“ in der Erstausgabe der Klavier- und der Orchesterfassung der Lieder handelt es sich um ein Versehen Mahlers oder des Verlegers. Vgl. dazu Monika Tibbe: „Über die Verwendung von Liedern und Liedelementen in instrumentalen Symphoniesätzen Gustav Mahlers“, in: *Berliner Musikwissenschaftliche Arbeiten*, Bd. 1 (München 1971), S. 126.

⁵ Vgl. hierzu Schmierer, a. a. O., S. 32f.

⁶ In: *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft*, 16/1929, S. 120.

⁷ Das Gedicht ist in der Sammlung *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* enthalten. Es ist jedoch nicht sicher, ob der Komponist sich bei der Niederschrift seiner Dichtung an dieser Quelle orientierte. Pamer (a. a. O.) geht davon aus, Mahler, der die Sammlung erst 1888 in Leipzig kennen lernte, habe den Text aus einer an deren Quelle gekannt. Donald Mitchell (*Gustav Mahler – The Wunderhorn Years*, London 1975, S. 117–120) hingegen nimmt an, die Sammlung sei dem Komponisten bereits zu seiner Wiener Studienzeit bekannt gewesen.

¹ *Gustav Mahler: Briefe*, hg. v. Herta Blaukopf (Wien, Hamburg 1982), S. 35.

² Mahler benutzte den Begriff „Lied“ im Sinne von „volkstümlicher Dichtung“. Vgl. dazu Elisabeth Schmierer: „Die Orchesterlieder Gustav Mahlers“, in: *Kieler Schriften zur Musikwissenschaft*, Bd. 38 (Kassel, Basel, London, New York 1991), S. 79f.

³ Vgl. hierzu Schmierer, a. a. O., S. 36 und 69.