

# *MahlerFest XX*

Gustav Mahler

## *Das Lied von der Erde* and "Adagio" from *Symphony No. 10*

Boulder Colorado  
January 10 - 14, 2007

Robert Olson

Artistic Director & Conductor

Colorado MahlerFest Orchestra

*Recipient of the 2005 Mahler Gold Medal*

# MahlerFest XX

## Schedule of Events

### CHAMBER CONCERTS

Wednesday, January 10, 2007, 7:00 PM

Boulder Public Library Canyon Theater, 9th & Canyon

Friday, January 13, 7:30 PM

Rocky Mountain Center for Musical Arts, 200 E. Baseline Rd., Lafayette

Program: Songs on Chinese and Japanese Poems

### SYMPOSIUM

Saturday, January 13, 2007

ATLAS Room 100, University of Colorado-Boulder

9:00 AM – 4:30 PM

9:00 AM: Robert Olson, MahlerFest Conductor & Artistic Director

10:00 AM: Evelyn Nikkels, Dutch Mahler Society

11:00 AM: Jason Starr, Filmmaker, New York City

Lunch

1:00 PM: Stephen E Heffling, Case Western Reserve University, Keynote Speaker

2:00 PM: Marilyn McCoy, Newburyport, MS

3:00 PM: Steven Bruns, University of Colorado-Boulder

4:00 PM: Chris Mohr, Denver, Colorado

### SYMPHONY CONCERTS

Saturday, January 13, 2007

Sunday, January 14, 2007

Mackay Auditorium, CU Campus, Boulder

Thomas Hampson, baritone

Jon Garrison, tenor

The Colorado MahlerFest Orchestra, Robert Olson, conductor

See page 2 for details.

*Funding for MahlerFest XX has been provided in part by grants from:*

The Boulder Arts Commission, an agency of the Boulder City Council  
The Scientific and Cultural Facilities District, Tier III, administered by the Boulder County Commissioners  
The Dietrich Foundation of Philadelphia  
The Boulder Library Foundation  
The Van Dyke Family Foundation  
The Academy

and many music lovers from the Boulder area and also from many states and countries



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## Twenty Years and Still Going Strong

It is almost impossible to fully comprehend the fact we are celebrating our twentieth anniversary this year. Twenty years of Mahler! To say that the MahlerFest has exceeded my expectations would be the understatement of the year!

Who could have possibly predicted we would be celebrating this milestone anniversary performing with one of the world's greatest artists, Thomas Hampson, in one of Mahler's most intimate pieces of music, *Das Lied von der Erde*? From very humble beginnings in 1987 to receiving the Mahler Gold Medal in 2005, there is much to be thankful for, and many people to whom I could not possibly express sufficient gratitude.

Our accomplishments are many, our goals humble but noble. We want to continue experiencing a composer whose music touches us in ways that few others do, and we wish to share this experience with others, which is why so many wonderful musicians volunteer their precious time year in and year out, and why we have created our own small "Mahler community" from across the land, who gather in Boulder every January to celebrate that which binds us all.

Next year we will present two earlier works of Mahler: his very first major work, the oratorio *Das klagende Lied* (in its original three part version), and *Totenfeier*, the massive symphonic movement that later became the first movement for his Second Symphony. In 2009 we will conclude our second cycle of Mahler's works with our second performance of Mahler's Eighth Symphony. What better way to conclude an eleven-year endeavor than with his "Symphony of a Thousand"?

Since the conclusion of the very first year, I have been consistently asked "what about next year?" Since I never dreamed we would conclude our first cycle, let alone the second, I am hesitant but excited to confess that if our devoted musicians and board members, as well as you, our public, remain as supportive as in the past, the MahlerFest will continue in its unique explorative path, spreading the "Mahler word," and bathing in the incredible sounds of Mahler's great music as we undertake our *third* cycle beginning in 2010!

Thank you from the bottom of my heart,



Robert Olson

Very Dear MahlerFest Friends,

I have mixed feelings as I write this "Swan Song" as President. Since MahlerFest V, I have been privileged and honored to lead a wonderful MahlerFest Board, and now can look back with wonderful memories of great Symposia thanks to Prof. Steve Bruns, magnificent chamber concerts thanks to Patrick Mason, "Keeper" publications thanks to Sara Sheldon and Mike Smith, detailed program notes thanks to Kelly Hansen and others, a sound financial basis thanks to Treasurer L. David Lewis, and special thanks to Vice-President Barry Knapp for stepping in strongly to lead the Board when my beloved Patricia became ill with cancer and then when I too suffered several medical problems and found that I had less energy at my turning the corner of age 80.

I must also here lay tribute to our Artistic Director and Conductor, Robert Olson. In my humble opinion, he has the most instinctive feeling for Mahler's music of any conductor I have ever heard. When I need a "Mahler fix" it is always a MahlerFest CD that I take down from my CD shelf. Our MahlerFest Orchestra, also, must be honored here. There are still a handful of veterans of MahlerFest I, 1988, playing with us for the love of the music and the skill with which Olson gets them to play Mahler in the most exciting performances of my musical life. That 100 or so musicians each year give up personal time and endure six rehearsals and two demanding performances as volunteers is testimony to the magic of Mahler's music and the skill and artistic integrity of Maestro Olson.

And deepest thanks to you, our loyal audiences, including Mahlerites from all over the country and on occasion from Europe, Asia, or Australia. Your enthusiastic responses to the performances are stimulating rewards to the MahlerFest family of performers and volunteers, and your financial support, no matter of what magnitude, is deeply appreciated and tells us that we are doing something right for the cultural communities of Boulder and beyond.

As my energy level and physical abilities have declined, I feel that it is my duty to MahlerFest to step down from active leadership, and I feel sincerely that the present Board makeup has the many strengths needed to continue to make MahlerFest an annual event of great significance in Boulder. While I may have lost some energy, I am as enthusiastic as ever, and plan to continue to lend my capacities to MahlerFest as a Board member and helper--the annual MahlerFest week remains the highlight of my year.

Now to the MahlerFest XX program. I have had the privilege of hearing Thomas Hampson's *Das Lied* several times, and his coming to Boulder fulfils a dream that I have nourished and pursued since 1995 when I heard him at the great Mahler Festival in Amsterdam, a city where Mahler enjoyed great success and conducted the great Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra.

This dream became a reality at the 2005 Mahler Gold Medal award ceremony in Vienna, when Thomas, as a VP of the International Gustav Mahler Society and fellow Gold Medal honoree, said to me, "Well Stan, we really have to do it now, don't we. It'll be a hoot!" You will take away indelible memories of outstanding performances at MahlerFest XX.

Sincerely,



Stan Ruttenberg

# *MahlerFest XX*

Robert Olson,  
Artistic Director and Conductor

## SYMPHONY CONCERTS

**Saturday, January 13, 7:30 PM**

Pre-concert Lecture by Prof. Marilyn McCoy, 6:30 PM

**Sunday, January 14, 3:30 PM**

Pre-concert Lecture by Prof. Marilyn McCoy, 2:30 PM

**Macky Auditorium, CU, Boulder**

**Thomas Hampson, baritone**

**Jon Garrison, tenor**

**The Colorado MahlerFest Orchestra**

**Robert Olson, conductor**

***Mahler: Adagio from Symphony No. 10***

Intermission

***Mahler: Das Lied von der Erde***

*I. Allegro pesante: Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde*

*II. Etwas schleichend. Ermüdet: Der Einsame im Herbst*

*III. Behaglich heiter: Von der Jugend*

*IV. Comodo. Dolcissimo: Von der Schönheit*

*V. Allegro: Der Trunkene im Frühling*

*VI. Schwer: Der Abschied*

MahlerFest pays special thanks to so many of our friends who donate funds to support these concerts, as well as to our community and foundation donors, without whose help MahlerFest could not continue to provide you, our audience, with the wonders of Mahler's music.

# *MahlerFest XX*

## **Terese Stewart Memorial Chamber Concerts**

Wednesday, January 10, 7:00 PM  
Boulder Public Library Canyon Theater  
9<sup>th</sup> & Canyon, Boulder

Friday, January 12, 7:30 PM  
Rocky Mountain Center for Musical Arts  
200 E. Baseline Road, Lafayette

### **Songs on Chinese and Japanese Poems**

Patrick Mason, Gina Harvey, Robert Glaubitz,  
Jeong-Kwon Kim - singers  
Christopher Zemliauskas - piano  
Carey Harwood - guitar

**Liebesgeschenke, Op. 77, #1**  
Richard Strauss

**Kirschblütenlieder, Op. 8**  
Egon Wellesz

**Five Poems of the Ancient Far East, Op. 10**  
Charles Tomlinson Griffes

**Die geheimnisvolle Flöte, Op. 12, # 2**  
Anton Webern

**Ein junger Dichter denkt an die Geliebte**  
Japanisches Regenlied  
Joseph Marx

**Fünf Gedichte**  
Wilhelm Grosz

**Songs from the Chinese, Op. 58**  
Benjamin Britten

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Jerry Bruck and Eric Wagner

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Daryl Burghardt

MahlerFest acknowledges with sincere thanks the University of Colorado College of Music, Dean Daniel Sher, and administrative assistance from the Boulder Philharmonic

# Colorado MahlerFest XX Orchestra

## Violin I

Annamarie Karacson\*,  
 Concertmaster, Boulder  
 Jenlik Bodaubay\*\*, Superior  
 Cherilynn Cathey, Boulder  
 Martha Dicks, Longmont  
 Ruth Duerr, Boulder  
 Charles Ferguson, Denver  
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 Matthew Olson, Overland Park, KS  
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 Jane Uitti, Louisville

## Violin II

Debby Fuller\*, Denver  
 Rebecca Ruttenberg\*\*, Boulder  
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 Fiona Collins, Longmont  
 Emily Fenwick, Loveland  
 Jeralyn Friedli, Boulder  
 Elisabeth Kern-Ross, Westminster  
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 Marilyn Maxvold, Loveland  
 Mary Oldberg, Estes Park  
 Rob Rubin, Ridgewood, NJ  
 Susan Schade, Boulder  
 Lisa Sprengeler, Denver  
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## Viola

Ethan M. Hecht\*, Boulder  
 Megan Edrington, Boulder

Isaac Olson, Overland Park, KS  
 Christine Arden, Boulder  
 Judy Cole, Boulder  
 Debbie Corisis, Boulder  
 Suzie Doyle, Golden  
 Alexis John, Northglenn  
 James Knowles, Boulder  
 Hannah Kuchar, Lafayette  
 John Leininger, Littleton  
 Adwyn Lim, Boulder  
 Carin Ramirez, Denver  
 Miguel Ramos, Boulder  
 Eileen Saiki, Louisville

## Cello

Carole Whitney\*, Boulder  
 Beth Ringel\*\*, Boulder  
 Rowanna Bobo, Louisville  
 Rebecca Davis, Louisville  
 Darcy Dennison, Boulder  
 Nada Fisher, Berthoud  
 Rebecca Flintoff, Lafayette  
 Todd Murphy, Boulder  
 Phil Norman, Boulder  
 Mathieu D'Ordine, Boulder  
 Heather Plattenberger, Boulder  
 Beth Rosbach, Boulder  
 David Short, Cheyenne, WY

## Bass

Jared Conner\*, Aurora  
 Jennifer Motycka\*\*, Longmont  
 Dale Day, Boulder  
 Erik Habbinga, Broomfield  
 Nicolai Jacobsen, Houston, TX  
 Cameron Miller, Highlands Ranch  
 Karina Ogilvie, Boulder

Kevin Stiles, Longmont  
 Tom Virtue, Denver

## Harp

Rachel Starr Ellins\*, Longmont  
 Tanya Jilling, Boulder

## Flute/Piccolo

Kay Lloyd\*, Longmont  
 Peggy Bruns, Lafayette,  
 Sasha Garver, Golden  
 Jennifer Merrill, Erie

## Oboe/English Horn

Margaret R. Davis\*, Englewood  
 Rebecca Mindock, Boulder  
 Kimberly Brody, Boulder

## Clarinet/Eb Clarinet/Bass

### Clarinet

Aaron Diestel\*, Smithville, MO  
 Brad Behn\*, Fort Collins  
 Ian Buckspan, Boulder  
 Erin Douglass, Littleton  
 Brian Collins, Nederland

## Bassoon/Contrabassoon

Yoshi Ishikawa\*, Boulder  
 Kaori Uno, Boulder  
 Brian Jack, Boulder

## Horn

Richard Oldberg\*, Estes Park  
 Ralph B. Robison, Longmont  
 Kelly Drifmeyer, Potsdam, NY  
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## Trumpet

Keith Benjamin\*, Kansas City, MO  
 Leah Schuman, Chicago  
 T. J. Menges, Lenexa, KS  
 George Voellinger, Littleton

## Trombone

John Neurohr\*, Boulder  
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Thomas Stein\*, KC, MO

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Chuck Dillard, Boulder

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Carey Harwood, Boulder

\*principal

\*\*associate principal

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Alton (IL) Symphony • American Chamber Players • Anchorage Symphony • Ann Arbor Symphony • Arapaho Philharmonic • Aspen Chamber Ensemble • Austin Civic Orchestra • Bay Area Women's Orchestra • Boulder Bach Festival • Boulder Philharmonic Orchestra • Centennial Symphony Orchestra • Central City Opera Orchestra • Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra • Chicago Symphony Orchestra • Cincinnati Symphony and Pops • Civic Orchestra of Chicago • Civic Orchestra of KC • Colorado Ballet Orchestra • Colorado Music Festival • Colorado Springs Symphony • Colorado Symphony Orchestra • Columbine Chamber Orchestra • Concord (MA) Orchestra • Conservatory of Music, University of Missouri KC • Corpus Christi Symphony • Des Moines Symphony • Estes Park Chamber Orchestra • Evergreen Chamber Orchestra • Fairbanks Symphony • Fort Collins Symphony Orchestra • Ft. Worth Symphony • Fountain City Brass Band • Four Seasons Chamber Orchestra • Fresno Philharmonic • Greeley Philharmonic • Greensboro Symphony Orchestra • Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra • Jefferson Symphony Orchestra • Jerusalem Symphony • Kansas City Civic Orchestra • Kansas City Symphony • Las Cruces Symphony • Liberty Symphony (MO) • Longmont Symphony Orchestra • Lyric Opera of Chicago • Mansfield (OH) Symphony • Merced Symphony Orchestra • Meridian (MS) Symphony Orchestra • Midland-Odesa Symphony Orchestra • Mississippi Symphony • Mostly Strauss Orchestra • National Repertory Orchestra • New England Philharmonic (Boston) • New Jersey Symphony • New Orleans Philharmonic • New Zealand Symphony • New World Symphony • North Carolina Symphony • Northeast Symphony Orchestra (OK) • Northwest Indiana Symphony • Northwest Mahler Festival (WA) • Northland Symphony (MO) • Norwegian Chamber Orchestra • Oberlin Conservatory Orchestra • Pasadena Symphony • Portland (OR) Opera Orchestra • Reno Philharmonic • Ridgewood Symphony (NJ) • Rocky Mountain Symphony • Salt Lake Symphony • Santa Fe Opera Orchestra • Seattle Symphony • St. Joseph (MO) Symphony • St. Louis Symphony • St. Petersburg State Chamber Orchestra (Russia) • Sinfonia of Colorado • Sioux City Symphony • Spokane Symphony • Spoleto Festival Orchestra • Springfield (MO) Symphony • Strauss Symphony of America • Tallahassee Symphony • Temple Symphony Orchestra (TX) • Timberline Symphony • Tucson Opera Orchestra • Tucson Symphony • U.K. Philharmonic • University of Colorado Orchestra • University of Northern Colorado Orchestra • Utah Festival Opera • Utah Symphony • Westminster Symphony • Windsor (Ontario) Symphony

# MahlerFest XX

## MahlerFest Record of Works Performed

- Aria from Die Tote Stadt* (Korngold) 1999  
*Bei Mondaufgang* (Wolfes) 1998  
*Blumine* (Mahler) 2006  
*Brettli-lieder* (Schoenberg) 1995  
*Das Klagende Lied* (two-part version) 1991  
*Das Lied von der Erde* 1998, 2007  
*Das Lied von der Erde, Abschied*  
(voice & piano version) 1998  
*Das Lied von der Erde* (I, III, V)  
(voice & piano version) 2005  
*Das Lied von der Erde, VI*, (choreographed) 1994  
*Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (with orchestra) 2001  
Fanfare: "Our Time Has Come" (John David Lamb) 2006  
Five Poems, Opus 10 (Griffes) 1998  
Four Early Lieder (Mahler) 1996  
*Galgenlieder* (Graener) 1995  
*Greeting from Arias and Barcaroles* (L. Bernstein) 1997  
*Hochsommer* (Felix Weingartner) 1997  
*Hütet euch!* (Zemlinsky) 1997  
*Kindertotenlieder*, voice & piano, 1990, 1996, 2006  
*Kindertotenlieder*, voice & orchestra, 2002  
*Klavierstück, Opus 19, No. 6* (Schoenberg) 1997  
*Lieder* (Berg) 1996  
*Lieder* (Brahms) 2000, 2001  
*Lied* (Humperdinck) 2001  
*Fuge* (John David Lamb) 2001  
*Lied* (Josephine Lang) 2001  
*Lieder* (Alma Mahler) 1991, 1992, 2003  
*Lied* (Mendelssohn) 2001  
*Lieder* (Louise Riechart) 2001  
*Lied* (Max Reger) 2001  
*Lieder* (Schoenberg) 2001  
*Lieder* (Schubert) 2000, 2001, 2004  
*Lied* (Schumann) 2001  
*Lied* (Friedrich Silcher) 2001  
*Lieder* (Richard Strauss) 1993, 1995, 1998, 2000, 2001  
*Lieder* (Wolf) 1995, 2000  
*Lieder from Opus 2* (Zemlinsky) 1995, 2003  
*Lieder und Gesänge*  
aus der Jugendzeit (Mahler) 1988, 1993, 1997, 1999  
*Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, voice & piano,  
1988, 1993, 1995, 2005  
*Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, with orchestra, 2006  
*Marches & Ländler* by Schubert 2000  
*Non piu andrai* (Mozart) 2000  
Piano Quartet in A minor (Mahler) 1988, 1997, 2004  
*Prelude to Die Meistersinger* (Wagner) 2004  
*Rückert Lieder* (Mahler) 2006  
*Sieben frühe Lieder* (Berg) 1990  
*Suite from BWV 1067 and BWV 1068*  
(Bach/Mahler) 1989  
*Song* (Arnold Bax) 2000  
*Song* (Claude Debussy) 2000  
*Songs* (Kurt Weil) 2000  
*Song* (Roger Quilter) 2000  
*Song* (Sergei Rachmaninoff) 2000  
*Songs and Movie Songs* (Korngold) 1999  
*Songs* (Joseph Marx) 1998, 1999  
*Songs from Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, voice & piano  
1989, 1994, 1997, 1999, 2003, 2005  
*Songs from the Chinese, Op.* (Britten) 2007  
*Songs from the Land of Smiles* (Franz Lehar) 1998  
*Songs to Poems by Rückert* 1989, 1997  
*Songs, Opus 3* (Grosz) 1998  
*Songs, Opus 8* (Wellesz) 1998  
*Song to the Moon from Rusalka* (Dvorak) 2000  
*Symphony #1* 1988, 2006  
*Symphony #1* (Hamburg Version 1893) 1998  
*Symphony #2* 1989, 1999  
*Symphony #3* 1990, 2000  
*Symphony #4* 1991, 2001  
*Symphony #4, IV* (Schoenberg Society arrangement) 1991  
*Symphony #5* 1992, 2002  
*Symphony #6* 1993, 2003  
*Symphony #6* (I), two piano version (Zemlinsky) 1993  
*Symphony #7* 1994, 2004  
*Symphony #8* 1995  
*Symphony #9* 1996, 2005  
*Symphony #10*, J. H. Wheeler version 1997  
*Symphony #10, Adagio*, 2007  
*Tragic Overture, Op. 81* (Brahms) 2005  
*Vier Lieder, Op. 2* (Schoenberg) 1996  
*Vier Stücke für Klarinette and Klavier, Op. 4* (Berg) 1990  
*Der Zwerg* final scene (Alexander von Zemlinsky) 2002

# Thank You!

Presenting our annual MahlerFest is a labor of love for our volunteer MahlerFest Orchestra, Board of Directors and other volunteers. However, not all expenses are met by ticket sales and grants, and audience donations are a crucial and significant component of our funding base.

Your contributions of any amount are critical to our future success.

For those we offer our heartfelt thanks!

Please note our NEW "Mahlerian" donor categories (starting next year):

Friends – up to \$99

Wayfarer - \$100 to \$199

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Titan - \$500 to \$999

Symphony of a Thousand - \$1000 to \$4999

Gold Medal - \$5000 and above

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\* We greatly appreciate the sponsorship of the MahlerFest XX concerts by The Academy Group and Academy residents, as indicated above.

## *In-Kind Contributions*

Daryl Burghardt (Web Design)

AES Consulting & Michael Komarnitsky, Komar Consulting Group (Web-hosting)

Mindy Porche (Graphics Design & Publishing)

## Robert Olson, MahlerFest Artistic Director

"Electrifying! The most exciting musical experience I've had in eight years here. Period." -- *Kansas City Star*

"This great performance is the equal of any Eighth I've ever heard." -- *Fanfare magazine*

"One of the major American conductors." -- *Musique in Belgium*

"Exquisite Breathtaking. Spiritual. Noble." -- *The American Record Guide*

"A world class performance." -- *On the Air magazine*

"Magnificent! A fine orchestra and an outstanding conductor." -- *Longmont Times-Call*

"The orchestra loved you, the public loved you," said members of the Karlovy Vary Symphony Orchestra, Czech Republic.

Such is a sampling of reviews garnered by Maestro Robert Olson, Artistic Director and Conductor of the Colorado MahlerFest since its inception twenty years ago. He brings an amazingly active and varied career to the podium encompassing the entire spectrum of the concert stage, including symphony, opera, and ballet.

Currently a resident of Kansas City, Olson holds posts with two other orchestras. He is Director of Orchestras/Opera at the Conservatory of Music at the University of Missouri-Kansas City where his two orchestras and, in particular, the opera productions consistently receive critical acclaim. With a repertoire of over 60 operas, recent productions include *Turandot*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Manon*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and many others. He is also Music Director and Conductor of the Longmont Symphony Orchestra in Colorado, an orchestra that has consistently received rave reviews from Colorado critics. During his 24-year tenure, the orchestra has flourished, presenting an eleven-concert season to enthusiastic audiences, and Colorado residents hear the orchestra regularly on KVOD.

Prior to his move to Kansas City, he was on the faculty of the University of Colorado College of Music for sixteen years, where he was music director of the opera program and Associate Conductor of Orchestras. Local audiences also know him as conductor of the immensely popular Colorado Gilbert and Sullivan Festival.

Prior to this year he was conductor for the Kansas City Ballet for fourteen years, and has having conducted over 600 performances with the St. Louis and Kansas City Symphonies. He has held conducting posts with the Omaha Symphony, Boulder Baroque Chamber Orchestra, Boulder Civic Opera, Arapahoe Chamber Orchestra, Arvada Chamber Orchestra, Colorado Lyric Theater, and the Rocky Ridge Music Festival.

An active guest conductor, he has led many orchestras in the United States. He made his European debut in 1990 in Belgium. This resulted in engagements in Venezuela; return invitations to Belgium; Bergamo and Milan, Italy; the Czech Republic; the Ljubljana Music Festival; Oporto, Portugal; and the National Symphony of China in Beijing. In February, 2001 he conducted five major Stravinsky works in a Stravinsky



Festival sponsored by the Kansas City Symphony as well as five performances for the Miami City Ballet. In April, 2004 he took first place conducting the Korean National Symphony in a ten-contestant conducting competition in a concert that was televised live over much of Asia.

In addition to the success of his recording of Mahler's Eighth Symphony, Olson recorded the world premiere of the Wheeler version of Mahler's Tenth Symphony, both with the MahlerFest orchestra in 1997 and for Naxos records with the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra in 2002, to such reviews as "second only to Rattle and Berlin." Olson and a small international team of Mahler scholars spent over a year editing and preparing the Wheeler realization. His recordings of all the Mahler symphonies with the MahlerFest orchestra are known throughout the world.

He is married to Victoria Hagood-Olson and has two daughters, Tori and Chelsea, both budding musicians.

The Colorado MahlerFest, initiated by Olson on a dream and \$400 twenty years ago, has become not only "one of Boulder's most valuable cultural assets," but a world class festival, confirmed by the awarding of the Mahler Gold Medal by the International Gustav Mahler Society in Vienna in September, 2005, an honor shared that year with the New York Philharmonic.

## Press Quotes

**THOMAS HAMPSON**, baritone

"He's more than America's best baritone: right now, he's one of the world's greatest singers in any style."  
-- *St. Paul Pioneer Press*

"... probing intellectual curiosity and unalloyed emotional truth." -- *Chicago Sun-Times*

**ROBERT OLSON**, conductor

"Electrifying! The most exciting musical experience I've had in eight years here. Period."  
-- *Kansas City Star*

"This great performance is the equal of any Mahler Eighth I've ever heard." -- *Fanfare Magazine*

"One of the major American conductors." -- *Musique in Belgium*

"Small wonder that critics of previous MahlerFest performances rank Olson with Leonard Bernstein ..."  
-- Wes Blomster, Boulder *Daily Camera*

"Now that I have five complete works of Mahler conducted by Olson, I am more convinced than ever of his superiority over every other living Mahler conductor. He really understands the essentials of Mahler's unique creative world. And, most importantly, he makes the music sound fresh and new, not mainstream like Levine or Abbado." -- Remo Mazzetti, one of the five men in the world who has prepared a "realization" of Mahler's Tenth Symphony

"The entire evening was a triumph for Olson, whose pacing and control of often tricky rhythms was expert and who personally corrected every page of the score." -- *Denver Post*

# The Adagio from Mahler's Tenth Symphony

Dr. Steven Bruns

In September 1910, Gustav Mahler conducted the enormously successful premiere of his monumental Eighth Symphony (the so-called "Symphony of a Thousand") in Munich, which Deryck Cooke viewed as the "crowning artistic triumph" of the composer's life. Just nine months later, on May 19, 1911, Mahler died in Vienna at the age of fifty. He was never to hear the first performances of his last completed works, the Ninth Symphony and *Das Lied von der Erde*, which were premiered only after Mahler's death, under the direction of his close friend Bruno Walter. Mahler also left behind a significant body of compositional sketches for his unfinished Tenth Symphony, a work that was shrouded in mystery for years.

In the decade after the composer's death, rumors circulated about the draft for Mahler's Tenth, but his widow Alma kept the score private until 1924, when she showed the manuscript to composer Ernst Krenek. From the projected five movements, Krenek prepared a performance score for the two that were closest to being finished: the first movement, *Adagio*, and the third, *Purgatorio*. Franz Schalk conducted the first public performance in Vienna on October 12, 1924, followed by Mengelberg's performance in Amsterdam on November 27, 1924. The same year, a beautiful facsimile edition of Mahler's manuscript was published in Vienna, thus making most of the sketches accessible to the public.

Since then, the Tenth Symphony has cast an irresistible spell. The score fragments contain some of the composer's most original ideas, and a remarkable number of musicians have spent years of their lives patiently studying the sketches with the aim of preparing a complete performing version. There are now no less than *five* "realizations" of Mahler's Tenth, an unprecedented phenomenon. Joining this cadre of indefatigable, even obsessed, posthumous "collaborators" is a long list of scholars, myself included, who have also worked to decipher the secrets of Mahler's valedictory work.

The best-known version of the complete Tenth was prepared in the 1960's and 70's by British musicologist Deryck Cooke, assisted by Berthold Goldschmidt, and Colin and David Matthews. Another British musician, Joe Wheeler (1927-77) had actually begun working on his own completion of Mahler's Tenth some years before, and it is Wheeler's version of the *Adagio* that will be heard in Boulder. (Colorado MahlerFest X presented the world premiere of the complete Wheeler version in 1997.)

The opening *Adagio* presents three main ideas, and each theme evolves continually throughout the movement, a process that Mahler's younger contemporary Arnold Schoenberg referred to as "developing variation." Schoenberg was emerging as a leading new composer during the last decade or so of Mahler's life, and his students Alban Berg and Anton Webern joined him in venerating Mahler as a kind of musical saint. Many of the revolutionary technical innovations in the music of Schoenberg and his circle find their roots in Mahler, and his late works suggest that Mahler was in turn influenced by his younger contemporaries.

Among the challenges of the Tenth are Mahler's adventurous exploration of harmonic, tonal, and formal ambiguity, as well as sophisticated, sometimes puzzling thematic manipulations. A close study of the successive drafts of the first movement reveals that Mahler sometimes began with a relatively conventional harmonic and contrapuntal framework, which he then altered in a myriad of ways. His initial conception was often altered by adding curious dissonances, startling disruptions of musical continuity, and other features that one tends to associate with Schoenberg and later composers.

Quite remarkably, the *Adagio* opens with an unaccompanied introduction in the violas, a line so ambiguous that nearly every published analysis—and there are at least half a dozen—interprets it quite differently. The viola melody hints tentatively at the main key of F-sharp, a tonal center that is finally asserted clearly when the rest of the strings and trombones enter with the soaring principal theme in bar 16. Although the main tune in the violins is oriented to F-sharp major, the progress of the melody is repeatedly interrupted by abrupt changes from low to high registers, and the supporting harmonies quite often defy analysis.

Paired with the expansive first theme is a flowing second theme in the strings, this time suggesting F-sharp minor. This dance-like idea soon metamorphoses into the introductory theme; as it does here, the cryptic, wandering viola tune recurs at strategic moments throughout the *Adagio*. Later, a hushed duet version for first and second violins is heard just before a shattering outburst, the monolithic and sustained dissonant chord in the full orchestra. This thickly chromatic sonority—one of the loudest and most tension-filled sounds in all of Mahler—initiates the eloquent peroration of the movement, during which the thematic and tonal drama gradually winds down, ending as it does on a quietly sustained, high chord and a gentle pizzicato chord below.

As is often the case in Mahler, the formal design of the *Adagio* is difficult to describe. One hears elements of sonata form and variation, but none of the familiar designations seems adequate to capture the fragmented, yet relentless progress of events in this remarkable movement. One senses a compelling compositional logic, yet so many questions remain. Was Mahler's choice of F-sharp major a conscious allusion to Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony? (Haydn's is the only other symphony in the canon to use this awkward, highly unusual tonality.) Moreover, the solitary viola line at the opening of the *Adagio* is a kind of uncanny echo of Haydn's first and second violinists, who play alone on the stage at the end of his "Farewell." Some of the most memorable features of the *Adagio*—the viola introduction and the searing, climactic chord—were *not* yet present in the initial drafts. What other unpredictable changes would Mahler have made in the other movements?

Of course, we shall never know "what might have been," had Mahler lived to complete his Tenth Symphony. Even the *Adagio* may have turned out quite differently than anyone could imagine. Nevertheless, the movement as it stands remains one of the composer's most enthralling and deeply moving creations.

# The Song of the Earth

## I. Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde.

Schon winkt der Wein im gold'nen Pokale,  
Ich trinkt noch nicht, erst sing' ich euch ein Lied!  
Das Lied von Kummer soll auflachend in die Seele euch klingen.  
Wenn der Kummer naht, liegen wüst die Gärten der Seele,  
Welkt hin. und stirbt die Freude, der Gesang.  
Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod.

Herr dieses Hauses!  
Dein Keller birgt die Fülle des goldenen Weins!  
Hier, diese Laute nenn' ich mein!  
Die Laute schlagen und die Gäser leeren,  
Das sind die Dinge die zusammen passen  
Ein voller Becher Weins zur rechten Zeit  
Ist Mehr wert, als alle Reiche dieser Erde!  
Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod.

Das Firmament blaut ewig und die Erde  
Wird lange fest steh'n und aufblüh'n im Lenz.  
Du aber, Mensch, wie lang lebst denn du?  
Nicht hundert Jahre darfst du dich ergötzen  
An all dem morschen Tande dieser Erde!  
Seht dort hinab! Im Mondschein auf den Gräbern  
Hockt eine wild-gespenstische Gestalt —  
Ein Aff' ist's! Hört Ihr, wie sein Heulen  
Hinausgellt in den süßen Duft des Lebens!  
Jetzt nehmt den Wein! Jetzt ist es Zeit, Genossen!  
Leert eure gold'nen Becher zu Grund!  
Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod!

## II. Der Einsame im Herbst.

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

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

Mein Herz ist müde. Meine kleine Lampe  
Erlosch mit Knistern, es gemahnt mich an den Schlaf,  
Ich komm' zu dir, traute Ruhestätte!  
Ja, gib mir Ruh', Ich hab' Erquickung not!

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

## III. Von der Jugend.

Mitten in dem kleinen Teiche  
Steht ein Pavillon aus grünem  
Und aus weissem Porzellan.  
Wie der Rücken eines Tigers  
Wölbt die Brücke sich aus Jade  
Zu dem Pavillon hinüber,  
In dem Häuschen sitzen Freunde,  
Schön gekleidet, trinken, plaudern

## I. The Drinking Song of the Sorrow of Earth.

Already the wine beckons in the golden goblet,  
But do not drink yet, first I will sing you all a song!  
The song of trouble shall ring laughing in your soul.  
When trouble nears, the gardens of the soul lie barren,  
Joy and song wither away and die.  
Dark is life, is death.

Master of this house!  
Your cellar holds an abundance of golden wine!  
Here, this lute I call mine!  
To strike the lute and empty the glasses,  
These are the things that go well together!  
A full cup of wine at the right time  
Is worth more than all the kingdoms of this earth!  
Dark is life, is death.

The firmament shines blue forever and the earth  
Will long endure and blossom forth in springtime.  
But you, man, how long do you live?  
Not a hundred years may you delight  
In all the fragile trifles of this earth!  
See down there! In the moonlight on the graves  
Squats a wild ghostly form—  
It is an ape! Hear how its howls  
Shrill out into the sweet fragrance of life!  
Now take the wine! Now it is time, comrades!  
Empty your golden cups to the lees!  
Dark is life, is death!

After Li T'ai-po

## II. The Lonely One in Autumn.

Autumn mists float blue over the lake;  
Covered with frost are all the grasses;  
It is as if an artist had sprinkled jade dust  
Over the delicate blossoms.

The sweet odor of the flowers has vanished;  
A cold wind bends down their stems.  
Soon the wilted, golden leaves  
Of the lotus blossoms will drift on the water.

My heart is weary. My little lamp  
Has gone out with a sputter; I am put in mind of sleep.  
I come to you, dear resting-place!  
Yes, give me rest, I have need of refreshment!

I weep much in my times of loneliness.  
The autumn in my heart persists too long.  
Sun of love, will you shine no longer,  
To gently dry my bitter tears?

Origin uncertain

## III. Of Youth.

In the middle of the little pool  
Stands a pavilion of green  
And of white porcelain.

Like the back of a tiger  
The bridge of jade arches  
Over to the pavilion.

Manche schreiben Verse neider.  
 Ihre seidnen Ärmel gleiten  
 Rückwärts, ihre seidnen Mützen  
 Hocken lustig tief im Nacken.  
 Auf des kleinen Teiches stiller  
 Wasserfläche zeigt sich alles  
 Wunderlich in Spiegelbilde.  
 Alles auf dein Kopfe stehend  
 In dem Pavillon aus grünem  
 Und aus weissem Porzellan;  
 Wie ein Halbmond steht die Brücke,  
 Umgekehrt der Bogen. Freunde,  
 Schön gekleidet, trinken, plaudern

#### IV. Von der Schönheit.

Junge Mädchen pflücken Blumen,  
 Pflücken Lotosblumen an dem Uferrande.  
 Zwischen Büschen und Blättern sitzen sie,  
 Sammeln Blüten in den Schoss und rufen  
 Sich einander Neckereien zu.  
 Gold'ne Sonne webt um die Gestalten,  
 Spiegelt sie im blanken Wasser wider,  
 Sonne speigelt Ihre schlanken Glieder,  
 Ihre süßen Augen wider, Blüten,  
 Hei! Wie f]attern im Traumel seine Mähnen,  
 Dampfen heiss die Nüstern!  
 Gold'ne Sonne webt um die Gestalten,  
 Spiegelt sie im blanken Wasser Und der Zephyr hebt mit Schmeichel-  
 kosen das Gewebe  
 Ihrer Ärmel auf, führt den Zauber  
 Ihrer Wohlgerüche durch die Luft.  
 O sieh, was tummeln sich für schöne Knaben  
 Dort an dem Uferrand auf mut'gen Rossen?  
 Weithin glänzend wie die Sonnenstrahlen;  
 Schon zwischen dem Geäst der grünen Weiden  
 Trabt das jungfrische Volk einher!  
 Das Ross des einen wiehert fröhlich auf  
 Und scheut wad saust dahin,  
 Über Blumen, Gräser, wanken hin die Hufe,  
 Sie zerstampfen jäh im Sturm die hingsunk'nen wider.  
 Und die schönste von den Jungfrau'n sendet  
 Lange Blicke ihm der Sehnsucht nach.  
 Ihre stolze Haltung ist nur Verstellung.  
 In dem Funkeln Ihrer grossen Augen,  
 In dem Dunkel ihres heissen Blicks  
 Schwingt klagend noch die Erregung ihres Herzens nach

#### V. Der Trunkene im Frühling.

Wenn nur ein Traum das Leben ist,  
 Warum denn Müh' und Plag'!?  
 Ich trinke, bis ich nicht mehr kann,  
 Den ganzen, lieben Tag!  
 Und wenn ichl nicht mehr trinken kann,  
 Weil kehl' und Seele voll,  
 So tauml' ich bis zu meiner Tür  
 Und. schlafe wundervoll!  
 Was hör' ich beim Erwachen? Horch!  
 Ein Vogel singt im Baum  
 Ich frag' lhn, ob schon Frühling sei,  
 Mir ist als wie im Traum,

In the little house sit friends,  
 Beautifully dressed, drinking, chatting.  
 Some write down verses.

Their silken sleeves slip  
 Back, their silken caps  
 Perch comically low on their napes.

On the little pool's still  
 Surface everything appears  
 Wondrously in mirror image.

Everything standing on its head  
 In the pavilion of green  
 And of white porcelain.

Like a half-moon stands the bridge,  
 The arch inverted, Friends,  
 Beautifully dressed, drink, chat.  
 Origin uncertain

#### IV. Of Beauty.

Young maidens pick flowers,  
 Pluck lotus blossoms on the bank.  
 Among bushes and leaves they sit,  
 Gather flowers in their laps and call  
 Bantering to each other.  
 Golden sun weaves about the forms,  
 Reflects them in the bright water,  
 Sun mirrors their slender limbs,  
 Their charming eyes,

And the zephyr with caresses lifts the fabric  
 Of their sleeves, carries the magic  
 Of their perfumes through the air.  
 Oh see, what handsome youths romp  
 There on the bank on spirited steeds?  
 In the distance they gleam like the sunbeams;  
 Now between the branches of the green willows  
 The vigorous lads trot along.  
 The horse of one neighs merrily  
 And shies and gallops off,  
 Over flowers, grasses, its hooves stagger  
 Recklessly and stormily they trample the fallen flowers!  
 Ah! How its mane waves in frenzy,  
 Its nostrils steam hotly!  
 Golden sun weaves about the forms,  
 Reflects them in the bright water.  
 And the most beautiful of the virgins casts  
 Long glances of desire after him.  
 Her proud bearing is only pretense.  
 In the flashing of her large eyes,  
 In the darkness of her burning glance,  
 The agitation of her heart still trembles in lament.

After Li T'ai-po

#### V. The Drunkard in Spring.

If life is only a dream,  
 Why then trouble and care?  
 I drink until I can drink no more,  
 The whole day long!  
 And when I can drink no more,  
 Because throat and soul are full,  
 Then I stagger to my door  
 And sleep wonderfully!

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

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

Und wenn Ich nicht mehr singen kann,  
So schaf' Ich wieder ein.  
Was geht mich deun der Frühling an!?  
Lasst mich betrunken sein

## VI. Der Abschied

Die Sonne scheidet hinter dem Gebirge  
In alle Täler steigt der Abend nieder  
Mit seinen Schatten, die voll Kühlung sind.  
O sieh! Wie eine Silberbarke schwebt  
Der Mond am blauen Himmelssee herauf.  
Ich spüre eines feinen Windes Weh'n  
Hinter den dunklen Fichten!  
Der Bach singt voller Wohllaut durch das Dunkel.  
Die Blumen blassen im Dämmerchein.  
Die Erde atmet voll von Ruh' und Schlaf.  
Alle Sehnsucht will nun träumen,  
Die müden Menschen geh'n heimwärts,  
Um in Schlaf vergess'nes Glück  
Und Jugend neu zu lernen!  
Die Vögel hocken still in ihren Zweigen  
Die Welt schläft ein!  
Es wehet kühl im Schatten meiner Fichten.  
Ich stehe hier und harre meines Freundes;  
Ich harre sein zum letzten Lebewohl.  
Ich sehne mich, o Freund, an deiner Seite  
Die Schönheit dieses Abends zu genießen.  
Wo bleibst du! Du lässt mich lang allein!  
Ich wandle auf und nieder mit meiner Laute  
Auf Wegen, die von weichen Grase schwellen.  
O Schönheit! O ewigen Liebens — Lebens — trunk'ne Welt!

\* \* \* \* \*

Er stieg von Pferd und reichte ihn deu Trunk  
Des Abschieds dar. Er fragte ihn, wohin  
Er führe und auch warum es müsste sein.  
Er sprach, seine Stimme war umflort. Du, mein Freund,  
Mir war auf dieser Welt das Glück nicht hold!  
Wohin ich geh'? Ich geh', ich wand're in die Berge.  
Ich suche Ruhe für mein einsam Herz.  
Ich wandle nach der Heimat! Meiner Stätte.  
Ich werde niemals In die Ferne schweifen.  
Still ist mein Herz und harret seiner Stunde!  
Die liebe Erde allüberall blüht auf im Lenz und grünt  
Aufs neu! Allüberall und ewig blauen licht die Fernen!  
Ewig... ewig...

What do I hear on waking? Hark!  
A bird sings in the tree.  
I ask it whether it is already spring,  
It is like a dream to me.

The bird chirps, "Yes!"  
Springtime is here, it has come overnight!"  
Lost in gazing, I suddenly took heed,  
The bird sings and laughs!

I fill my cup again  
And empty it to the dregs  
And sing until the moon gleams  
In the black heavens!

And when I can sing no more,  
Then I fall asleep again  
What has the spring to do with me?  
Let me be drunk!

After Li T'ai-po

## VI. The Farewell.

The sun departs behind the mountains.  
Into all the valleys the evening descends  
With its shadows, which are full of coolness.  
Oh see! Like a silver barque  
The moon floats upward on the blue lake of heaven.  
I feel a soft wind blowing  
Behind the dark spruces.  
The brook sings, full of pleasant sound, through the dark.  
The flowers pale in the twilight,  
The earth breathes, full of quiet and sleep.  
All longing now wants to dream,  
Weary men go homeward,  
To learn again in sleep  
Forgotten happiness and youth.  
The birds perch quietly in their branches,  
The world falls asleep!

A cool breeze blows in the shade of my spruces.  
I stand here and await my friend;  
I await him for a final farewell.  
I long, O friend, to enjoy  
The beauty of this evening at your side.  
Where are you? You leave me alone so long!  
I walk up and down with my lute  
On paths that swell with soft grass.  
O beauty! O world drunk with eternal love and life!

\* \* \* \* \*

He alighted from his horse and offered him the draught  
Of farewell. He asked him where  
He was bound and also why it had to be.  
He spoke, his voice was veiled: My friend  
Fortune was not kind to me in this world!  
Where do I go? I walk, I wander into the mountains.  
I seek peace for my lonely heart.  
I go to my homeland, my abode!  
I will never roam in distant lands.  
My heart is still and awaits its hour.  
The beloved earth everywhere blossoms and greens in springtime  
Anew. Everywhere and forever the distances brighten blue!  
Forever... forever...

After Meng Haoran and Wang Wei

# *Das Lied von der Erde: The Most “Mahleresque” of Mahler’s Works*

Dr. Stephen E. Hefling

To those he trusted, Mahler frequently acknowledged that his life and creativity were always intertwined: “only when I experience do I ‘compose,’ and only when I compose do I experience,” as he put it ten years before writing *Das Lied von der Erde*. And his intertwining of art and experience is nowhere more touchingly apparent than in this, the next-to-last work Mahler was to complete. The circumstances of his life in 1907 reveal a number of reasons why this came to pass.

## *Mahler in 1907*

“It’s all quite true. I am going because I can no longer endure the rabble.” So Mahler wrote to his close friend the physicist Arnold Berliner in mid-June of 1907. Ten years earlier the meteoric rise of thirty-seven-year-old Mahler’s career had put him at the peak of European musical life: he became Director of the Imperial and Royal Court Opera in Vienna, arguably the finest theatre on the Continent. It was an appointment made personally by the Emperor, and between Mahler and the aging Kaiser Franz Joseph stood only one court official, Prince Montenuovo; thus, Mahler’s artistic and administrative authority was almost unlimited. This enabled him to carry out sweeping reforms in most aspects of the Opera’s operations. They included his famous refusal to allow latecomers to enter the hall until the end of an entire act (perhaps lasting an hour or more) in the later Wagnerian works, which Mahler performed for the first time in Vienna in their entirety, without any cuts.

Mahler was leaving Vienna for the Metropolitan Opera in New York, where he would not be director of the house, but only conductor of German repertory. Many European musicians had been lured o’er the Atlantic by the lucre quickly to be gleaned here, and it was not an altogether positive picture of the New World that Mahler’s colleagues brought back. Among them was Richard Strauss, who had actually conducted an orchestra at Wanamaker’s department store in Philadelphia, and during business hours at that. Yet when Mahler confided to Strauss his doubts about how he would fare in America, Strauss dismissed them: “Oh, but Mahler, you are and remain a child. Over there you just get on the podium and do this (gesture of conducting), and then you go to the cashier and do this (gesture of counting money).” Why, then, would Mahler consider coming to New York? Essentially because he had reached his limits in Vienna, and now wanted more time to compose and perform his own music, as well as more money for the security his family. He had achieved much at the Vienna Opera, yet in the process he had also to endure innumerable scandals, intrigues, criticisms, and resentments. And reluctantly, Mahler had become resigned to the realities of repertory theater: an institution such as Court Opera, which was engaged in the business of presenting different works on a daily basis, could never consistently maintain his standards, which were those of a festival consecrated to the highest level of performance. Throughout it all, Mahler kept a signed letter of resignation in the desk at his office—the last card to be played should his authority be seriously challenged.

During these years Mahler’s fame as a composer was gradually growing, which meant travels away from Vienna to conduct his works. Certain Viennese critics who were ever alert to the possibility of a scandal and the opportunity to attack the director had begun to claim, without justification, that Mahler’s absences were adversely affecting both the quality of the Opera’s performances and its box-office revenues. Mahler, meanwhile, allowed himself to fall into several collisions with Prince Montenuovo, all of which he could have avoided with a bit more prudence. Rumors of all sorts appeared in the press. Mahler illustrated his situation for his assistant conductor, Bruno Walter, by grasping a chair and tilting it forward on its front legs: “You see, that’s what they are doing to me: if I wanted to remain seated, all I would have to do is to lean back firmly and I could hold my place. But I am not offering any resistance, and so I shall finally slide off.” When his deal with the Met was finally done, Mahler was to be paid 100,000 crowns (about 20,000 dollars)—approximately seven times his Vienna salary—for a working season of only about four months (versus nine in Vienna).

Resignation from the Vienna Court Opera was only the first of three events during 1907 that would shake Mahler to his foundations. Gustav, Alma, and their two daughters left Vienna at the end of June for their summer home at Maiernigg on the Wörthersee. There, in a secluded composing hut (or *Häuschen*) Mahler had written his Fourth through Eighth Symphonies, as well as the *Kindertotenlieder* and other Rückert songs. But within a fortnight their elder daughter Maria, Mahler’s favorite, had contracted scarlet fever and died. In the aftermath Alma believed she was ill, and the local doctor examined both her and Mahler: he found that Mahler had a valvular heart defect, which was later confirmed by a specialist in Vienna. Viennese medicine was among the most advanced in the world, and it had long been known that there was a connection between damaged heart valves and bacterial endocarditis’ strings of dangerous microbes that grow on the damaged valves, which was a disease then incurable and the one from which Mahler ultimately died. As was customary at the time, Mahler, for whom bicycling, swimming, and mountain climbing had been essential summer exercise, was ordered greatly to restrict his physical activities, and to avoid sore throats and other infections.

Overwhelmed, the family abandoned their Maiernigg villa forever and went to a hotel in Schludersbach, near Toblach, in the area of the Tyrol where Mahler would spend the remainder of his summer composing holidays. According to Alma, these sad events “marked the beginning of the end for Mahler.” To be sure, however, it now seems that Alma’s accounts somewhat exaggerate Mahler’s physical and psychological frailty between the summer of 1907 and the crisis of her affair with the architect Walter Gropius in 1910—precisely to justify her involvement with a lover, which would be the greatest shock of Mahler’s life. But both Alfred Roller (Mahler’s set designer in Vienna) and Bruno Walter have left independent accounts of how deeply Mahler was distressed by his daughter’s death and his heart diagnosis. Following farewell performances of *Fidelio* at the Opera and

Mahler's own Second Symphony in the concert hall, he and Alma sailed to America on December 12. Alma reports that their arrival in New York "so took our breath away that we forgot our sorrow. But it would return."

### *The Genesis of Das Lied von der Erde*

Mahler made his successful Met debut on New Year's Day 1908 conducting his favorite opera, Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. He would lead a total of five new productions in New York that season, the most triumphant of which was Beethoven's *Fidelio*. The Mahlers returned to Europe for the summer in early May, although they did not arrive at their new summer retreat in Toblach until the 12th of June. Mahler had had a new composing hut built, but even so he had great difficulty getting down to work. "For years I had been used to persistent and vigorous exercise," he wrote Bruno Walter. "To wander around in mountains and forests, and to carry away my sketches from them in a kind of insolent robbery. I went to the desk only as a peasant goes to the barn: to give form to my sketches..." But now, because of his heart condition, he writes, "am supposed to avoid every exertion, monitor myself constantly, not walk much... I feel worse since coming to the country than I did in the city where distraction deceptively covered over much." By mid-July he had made little or no progress. Walter, who had been successfully treated by Sigmund Freud in 1906 when plagued by paralysis of his conducting arm, suggested Mahler consult a psychiatrist. Mahler refused, and wrote back to Walter: "If I am to find the way back to myself, then I must give myself up to the horrors of loneliness... without here trying to explain or describe to you something for which there are perhaps no words at all, I shall only tell you that quite simply at a stroke I lost all the clarity and reassurance that I ever achieved; and that I stood vis-à-vis de rien [face to face with nothing] and now at the end of a life I must learn to walk and stand as a beginner."

And so he did: the earliest date found in the manuscripts of *Das Lied von der Erde* is "July 1908," in what would become the second movement, "The Lonely One in Autumn" ("Der Einsame im Herbst"). Once underway, Mahler was carried full-speed-ahead by his inspiration, as he frequently had been in the past. By the first days of September, after just six weeks of concentrated effort, he could report to Walter that the new work was all but finished: "I myself do not know how to express what the whole thing might be called. A beautiful time was granted me, and I believe it is the most personal thing I have yet created."

Part of Mahler's hesitancy about a title for this unusual piece stemmed from his superstitious fear of christening a Ninth Symphony—the last such work for Beethoven and Bruckner. But he also realized that he had just created a unique fusion of symphony and song, a project that had long occupied him. (Each of his first four symphonies contains lieder or movements based on song). To make matters more complex, he had originally conceived the work to be sung either with orchestra or with piano: with one exception, all of his songs from 1892 on had been written, so to say, as "dual-purpose" lieder, for either orchestra or piano. There exists in Mahler's hand a complete piano score of *Das Lied*, now published in the Complete Edition of Mahler's works, and also available on CD.

The title he eventually came up with was: *Das Lied von der Erde* [i. e., *The Song about the Earth*]: *A Symphony for a Tenor and an Alto or Baritone Voice with Orchestra*. Bruno Walter in his book on Mahler characterizes *Das Lied* as "the most 'Mahleresque' of his works." And indeed it is, precisely because *Das Lied* is based throughout on Mahlerian polar oppositions, or binary pairings, at all levels and from beginning to end. The work is in the first place a complete about-face from the epic grandeur and soaring optimism of its immediate predecessor, Mahler's Eighth ("The Symphony of a Thousand"), written in a triumphant style to which Mahler would never again return. In the Eighth a vast chorus declaims the ancient hymn, "Veni, Creator Spiritus," as well as the conclusion of Goethe's *Faust*, in which Faust's soul is borne aloft to eternal life. By contrast, in *Das Lied* two individual singers representing the psychological polarities of a single being present a deeply personal vision from the threshold that bounds human life—yet only hint at what lies beyond it.

### *The Poetry*

An old friend of Alma Mahler's family had given Mahler the volume *Die chinesische Flöte* (The Chinese Flute), compiled by Hans Bethge, which was first published in October 1907. That is where Mahler got the texts for *Das Lied*. We must keep in mind, however, that these are not precise, scholarly translations of ancient poems from the eighth-century T'ang dynasty. Nor did Bethge claim they were. Rather, they are *Nachdichtungen*, or romanticized "paraphrase-poems," we might say: the entire collection is loosely based on earlier French and German translations, and is thus twice or even thrice removed from the original Chinese. Nevertheless, Mahler probably believed he had, through fortuitous fate, established a transcendent cross-cultural link from Oriental antiquity to his own dualistic worldview, which was deeply influenced by Nietzsche's polar categorization of the Dionysian (passionate, intoxicated abandon) versus the Apollonian (dreamlike harmonious restraint). Dionysus, also known as Bacchus, was the god of wine and fertility, and given to orgiastic rites; Apollo was the god of healing, music, and light, who was notably unsuccessful as a lover.

Mahler chose seven texts from the Bethge volume, and he retouched parts of the poetry himself. All of it is rife with the energy of polar oppositions: night and day, autumn and spring, youth and death, intoxication and meditation—and, in the division of the vocal material, bright and dark. Such dualistic dynamism had also long been recognized in the oriental doctrine of contrast between Yin and Yang (as, for example, Mahler's favorite philosopher Schopenhauer had noted); it is central as well to Goethe's thought, culminating in the celebrated allegory of Faustian striving and the eternal feminine, according to Mahler's interpretation of the poet.

Indeed, the organization of *Das Lied* as a whole is based on such polar oppositions. Like two of Mahler's earlier symphonies, the work is cast in two large parts: the first five movements (which are focused on the tonal area of A, minor and major) constitute the first part. The second consists of the long final C-minor (and major) movement, "Der Abschied [The Farewell]," which lasts approximately as long as the first five movements

combined. Two drinking songs frame the first part: “Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde [The Drinking Song of Earth’s Sorrow],” and “Der Trunkene im Frühling [The Drunkard in Spring].” Both are assigned to the tenor, who is here the singer of wanton Dionysian revelry.

### 1. *The Drinking Song of Earth’s Sorrow*

In the opening song, intoxicated Dionysian exuberance is bitterly juxtaposed against nihilistic despair in the face of Death, who is represented by the ancient Chinese symbol of a monkey howling on the gravestones—his shrill sounds are heard from the very opening of the piece in the flutter-tonguing of the flutes, backed by the trumpets. The singer proclaims that the wine is already sparkling in the golden goblet, but we are not to drink yet because he is going to sing us the song of sorrow, which must laughingly resound in our souls. There are three stanzas of his song, which are ingeniously woven into the sonata-form structure of a symphonic first movement. Each stanza is punctuated by the refrain “Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod [Dark is Life, dark is Death].” A symphonic sonata form has a recapitulation—the point when the opening material comes back—and so does this one. Shortly before it arrives, however, the singer asks a piercingly blunt question: “But you, O man, how long then do you live?” And he answers it: “Not even a hundred years may you amuse yourself with all the rotten trash of this earth!” Here the music verges on atonality, the emancipation of dissonance with which Schoenberg and his students were even then experimenting. The recapitulation then emerges from this musical chaos, right on the word “Erde,” or “Earth”—because this is, of course, the Song of the Earth. And only here are we finally told what all the howling is about: “the wildly eerie ghostlike form crouching on the gravestones.”

### *The Inner-movement Vignettes (2-5)*

The alto or baritone, on the other hand, represents the Apollonian. This voice sings of appeasing resignation, of an almost philosophical contemplation, and presents autumnal reflections on all that is transitory. That is the mood of the second song, “Der Einsame im Herbst [The Lonely One in Autumn],” a wistful meditation on the inexorable transition from autumn, the present season, toward frozen winter. Here the singer gives voice to *Todessehnsucht*, the world-weary longing for release in death registered by so many artists in turn-of-the-century Vienna. At the work’s premiere, according to the critic William Ritter, Mahler’s friend and admirer, at the lines “Ich kom’ zu dir, traute Ruhestätte! ja, gib’ mir Ruh... [I come to you, beloved resting place! Yes, give me peace],” Alma could no longer maintain her composure. The song culminates in passionate desire for the summer warmth of love, to dry up bitter tears—but that warmth is gone, never to be felt again.

In the third song, “Von der Jugend [Of Youth],” the perspective shifts entirely to the past. Accordingly, the tenor takes on a different role, describing sophisticated, carefree youths drinking tea, chatting, writing down verses, all in a little green-and-white porcelain pavilion surrounded by water, connected to land only by an arching bridge. Mahler captures the atmosphere perfectly in music the earliest critics characterized as “Chinese rococo.” Particularly noteworthy is his use of the Chinese pentatonic (five-note) scale (think: black keys of the piano, or Archie Bunker’s song “Those Were the Days”), which has a prominent role in the other movements of *Das Lied* as well.

“Von der Schönheit [Of Beauty]” is the fourth song, once again for the lower voice. Here a young girl picking lotus blossoms on the riverbank feels a mixture of tenderness, desire, and uncertainty that is almost Proustian. But beneath this placid surface flows a Dionysian current that erupts in a thrilling show of power by the boys who come riding in on horseback, among whom is the young girl’s secret beloved. This gives rise to some of the best horse music ever written (including a brief spoof of Tchaikovsky’s famous 1812 *Overture*), and soon the singer is, designedly, almost as breathless as the horse he or she is singing about. The contrast between the raw power of this music and the delicacy of the song’s opening stanzas underscores Mahler’s dualistic interpretation of erotic longing. But then in an instant the uproarious cavalcade vanishes, as though the leaf of a photo album had been flipped: thereby we realize that the horse episode is only a memory, or perhaps a fantasy. Yet the girl’s ardent longing remains, the agitation of her heart reverberating “in the glistening of her large eyes, in the darkness of her hot glance...”

In the fifth song, “Der Trunkene im Frühling [The Drunk in Spring],” the tenor has succumbed to denial, copping an attitude of eerie cheeriness. This movement is as well a sardonic representation of Dionysian impotence. The reawakening of spring, that great annual Dionysian event, is indeed at hand, but the orgiastic cortège consists of only a single Bacchant—and he’s an ebullient buffoon at that, who falls asleep drunk on his doorstep every night and can’t even remember what season is at hand. Yet even here the mystery of the earth abides amidst the drunkard’s ravings, as he pauses transfixed by the song of a bird, the harbinger of spring, which somehow “has come overnight”—a passage that impressed Anton von Webern at the premiere as “the most enigmatic thing ever.” The singer himself, however, remains unimpressed, filling his glass anew and draining it dry. His parting shot is “What does spring matter to me? Let me be drunk!” followed by a riotous orchestral flourish in bright A major.

### 6. *Finale: The Farewell*

What follows is *Das Lied*’s most powerful contrast: C minor, low register, oriental-sounding oboe arabesques, and especially, a deep gong. From one of Mahler’s sketches for “Der Abschied [The Farewell]” we know what he associated with these dark sounds: “Grabgeläute”—“death knell.” The movement itself comprises a binary pairing, based on two poems from the Bethge collection that appear on opposite pages from one another, entitled “In Expectation of the Friend” and “The Farewell of the Friend.” What Mahler attempts and achieves in this long finale is nothing less than the inexorable breakdown of ordinary musical time and space. It is an extremely repetitious movement: the ostinato-like figures of the opening recur again and again, becoming almost numbing in their relentlessness. The music seems to make little headway, and it is three times interrupted by the static, anachronistic style of recitative. The most passionate moment, which leads to the finale’s midpoint, is an ecstatic exclamation of nostalgia for the earth that Mahler himself added to the poetry: “O Schönheit! O ewigen Liebens, Lebens trunk’ne Welt! [O Beauty! O World, drunken of eternal love-and-

life!])”

But this gesture collapses, the endless recycling of material resumes, and there ensues a long, funereal march. Not, however, for a funeral: the “friend” being awaited here is none other than the archetypal German figure of death, Freund Hain. At the point of his arrival on horseback, Mahler did some extraordinary editing of the text: suddenly just who’s who in the story becomes altogether confused, because Mahler uses the third-person pronoun, “he,” both for the figure who has just dismounted *and* for the protagonist who has thus far been singing in the first person, “I.” It reads thus: “He stepped from the horse and offered him the cup of farewell. He asked him whither he was going, and why, why it had to be. He spoke, his voice was veiled: You, my Friend, for me Fortune was not favorable in this world.” Again, that confusion of pronouns is Mahler’s own; why?

Apparently because at that moment the singer has become fully united with, and no longer distinct from, Death. The strongest clue to this comes from the music itself: this “farewell” does not end gloomily, but in an ecstasy of pulsating light. Since the premiere of *Das Lied von der Erde* in 1911, six months after Mahler’s death, several commentators have noticed a resemblance between Mahler’s conclusion of “Der Abschied” and Isolde’s transfiguration music— the so-called *Liebestod*, or Love-Death (often heard as an orchestral piece, *sans* singer)— in Wagner’s *Tristan and Isolde*. The pairing of impulses toward love as well as death is much older than Freud’s famous linkage between Eros and Thanatos. Arthur Schopenhauer, whose work Mahler considered the most profound thing ever written about music, boldly declares that “Birth and death belong equally to life, and hold the balance as mutual conditions of each other— poles of the whole phenomenon of life.” That is the reason, Schopenhauer says, that Indian mythology gives the god Shiva, who represents destruction and death, both a necklace of skulls and the *lingam*, or phallus— the symbol of procreation that appears as the counterpart of death.

Wagner had also been deeply influenced by Schopenhauer. In *Tristan*, the ‘Love-Death’ music first appears in the second act, just as the lovers anticipate complete dissolution into each other: “I, Tristan,” she sings, and “I, Isolde” he answers; “No more Isolde! No more Tristan! Without naming, without parting, to know anew, enkindled anew, eternally, endlessly!” That is the probable precedent for Mahler’s poetic fusion of his musical persona with the archetypal figure of Death in “Der Abschied.” Understandably, the onset of rapture follows only when the hour of the still, waiting heart is fulfilled. And just that line— “Still is my heart and awaits its hour”— is another of Mahler’s own additions to the poetry of *Das Lied*. So, too, is the final ecstatic paean to the earth at the moment of dissolution— “The beloved earth all over everywhere blossoms forth in Spring and greens up anew, all over everywhere...”

The text of Mahler’s conclusion incorporates ideas from another of his favorite writers, Gustav Theodor Fechner. Fechner’s very popular *Das Büchlein vom Leben nach dem Tode* (The Little Book of Life after Death) promulgates the “daylight view” that dying is simply the transition to the third state of existence, which is that of eternal waking. Therefore, death is no more to be feared than birth from the womb; rather, it is a rapturous release:

...our future life will merge as one with waves of light and sound....

The spirit will no longer wander over mountain and field, or be surrounded by the delights of spring, only to mourn that it all seems exterior to him; but, transcending earthly limitations, he will feel new strength and joy....

Stilled is all restlessness of thought, which no longer needs to seek in order to find itself....

...when man dies, . . . as the waves roll forth into the sea of ether and the sea of air, he will not merely feel the blowing of the wind and the wash of the waves against his body, but will himself murmur in the air and sea; no more wander outwardly through verdant woods and meadows, but himself consciously pervade both wood and meadow and those wandering there.

Thus, colors can indeed become verbs in Mahler’s final lines of “Der Abschied” (the earth greens up anew, the heavens blue brightly). Spatial-temporal distinctions no longer obtain.

It was Mahler’s wish that Bruno Walter be entrusted with the task of introducing *Das Lied von der Erde* to the world. He did so not only in the concert hall, but also through a daring first recording made during a live performance with the Vienna Philharmonic in May 1936. Nazi persecution of Jewish composers and musicians was by then already a horrid reality: Walter had long since been banned from Germany, as had Mahler’s music, and within weeks Walter would face disruptions of his performances in Vienna by Nazi stink bombs. He would be forced to flee Austria in March 1938, just two months after cutting the premiere recording of Mahler’s Ninth in Vienna. Meanwhile, among those who acquired the discs of *Das Lied* was an enthusiastic young Benjamin Britten. Writing to a friend in June 1937, Britten characterizes the extraordinary close of “Der Abschied” perhaps better than anyone else ever has, or could:

It has the beauty of loneliness & of pain: of strength & freedom. The beauty of disappointment & never-satisfied love. The cruel beauty of nature, and everlasting beauty of monotony.

... And there is nothing morbid about it.... a serenity literally supernatural. I cannot understand it— it passes over me like a tidal wave— and that matters not a jot either, because it goes on forever, even if it is never performed again— that final chord is printed on the atmosphere.

# Capturing the Essence of the Chinese Poems in *Das Lied von der Erde*

Dr. Teng-Leong Chew

Mahler adapted seven poems from Hans Bethge's *Die chinesische Flöte* – *Nachdichtungen chinesischer Lyrik* for *Das Lied von der Erde*. The Chinese Flute is based on poems from the Tang Dynasty (618–907 C.E.), but Bethge did not translate any of the poems directly from the Chinese; *Nachdichtung* indicates a free version or adaptation, i.e., a poem inspired “after” an earlier source. In his 1985 book, *Gustav Mahler, Songs & Symphonies of Life and Death*, Donald Mitchell provides a helpful survey of Bethge's sources, which include two French translations, Le Marquis d'Hervey-Saint-Denys's *Poésies de l'époque des Thang* (1862) and Judith Gautier's *Livre de Jade* (1867), and Hans Heilmann's German anthology *Chinesische Lyrik* (1905). From this, one can well imagine that the poems had undergone extensive literary metamorphosis by the time they reached Mahler in 1907. As he had done in some of his earlier vocal works, Mahler treated his poetic texts rather freely—altering words, adding or deleting entire lines, and even rearranging longer passages to suit his conception of *Das Lied von der Erde*—thereby further compounding the difficulty of tracing the identity of the original Chinese poems.

In this essay, I highlight the special difficulties of translating classical Chinese poetry into European languages, in order to reveal the profound distance between the probable sources and Mahler's final text. Mahler's composition is based on the inspiration he derived from Bethge's *Nachdichtungen*, not the Chinese poems themselves or any of the intermediary translations. As we shall discover, however, Mahler somehow was able to convey essential qualities of the ancient texts that underlie *Das Lied von der Erde*. Much is lost in translation, but not everything.

## I. Syntactical Freedom versus Constraint

The extremely free syntactical framework of the Chinese language presents extreme challenges to Westerners who wish to understand Chinese poetry. Because of this “open” syntax, a Chinese poem may be perceived quite differently by each reader. Indeed, a single poem may stir new emotions in the same reader with each rereading, an effect comparable to that produced by music. Underlying classical Chinese aesthetics is the primary concept of *noninterference* with Nature's flow, and it was precisely this idea that engendered the freedom in Chinese syntactical structures. In most European languages, the construction of a sentence is governed by detailed and relatively strict syntactical rules. In striking contrast, such rules are nearly non-existent in regular Chinese usage, and they are often completely eliminated in poetry. The virtual absence of syntactical constraints opens up a seemingly limitless interpretive space, allowing readers to enter and re-enter the poem from multiple perspectives. The interpretive freedom enjoyed by Chinese readers is further enhanced by the extreme rarity of connective elements (e.g., prepositions, conjunctions), indeterminate parts of speech, and the complete absence of tense declensions for verbs. While Western poetry also allows for multiple interpretations, the complete lack of syntactical rules in Chinese poetry tends to make Western readers uncomfortable and confused. The essence of most Oriental languages resists efforts to define a fixed perspective, well-defined ideas, and so on.

To illustrate, let us examine Bethge's translation of Judith Gautier's French version of Wang Wei's original poem “Farewell,” which Mahler uses at the end of *Das Lied*, the second part of “Der Abschied.” A literal, word-to-word translation of the original five-character, six-line poem appears below. (A space separates each Chinese character equivalent.) This version suggests what would register in a Chinese reader's mind. The syntactical sparseness is immediately apparent.

下馬飲君酒	down/dismount horse drink you/your wine
問君何所之	ask you where- to- go-
君言不得意	you say not happy/satisfied (“happy/satisfied” takes two characters)
歸臥南山陲	return lie South Hill side
但去莫復問	but go do-not again ask
白雲無盡時	white cloud/s no end time

By making slight adjustments, we can create a version of the poem that incorporates minimal English syntax:

Dismount horse, drink your wine  
Ask you: “Where to?”  
You say: “At odds with the world,  
Return to rest by the side of South Hill.”  
Please go. Ask no more.  
Endless, the white clouds.

Even this translation remains enigmatic. Among the difficulties, the loose syntax of the Chinese here obscures the identity of the subject, the lyric speaker. Line 5 appears to be one instruction (“Please go”) followed by another (“Do not ask again”), but is in fact a command (“Please go”), followed by the assurance (“[I] ask no more”). In comparing my literal translation of the original Chinese poem with the final version in *Das Lied von der Erde*, one immediately appreciates how much the Chinese poem was embellished and altered. Below is an English translation of the passage in question.

He dismounted his horse and handed him the drink of parting.  
He asked him where he would go, and also why it must be.  
He spoke, his voice was choked:  
My friend, on this earth, fortune has not been kind to me!  
Where do I go? I will go, I wander in the mountains.  
I seek peace for my lonely heart.  
I wander to find my homeland, my home.  
I will never stray to foreign lands.

## II. Literary Distortion

While the differences in syntactical rules between Chinese and Indo-European languages present formidable challenges for translators, in several instances, the translators have unnecessarily distorted the meaning of the original poems. One of the most obvious alterations is discovered when comparing the original “Lotus-Plucking Song,” to the German text for Mahler's fourth movement, “Von der Schönheit” (“Of Beauty”). The Chinese version is a seven-character, eight-line poem. My English translation below uses minimal working syntax:

若耶溪旁采蓮女	By “Ruo-Ye” Brook, lotus-picking girls
笑隔荷花共人語	Laughter and chatters among lotus flowers,
日照新妝水底明	Sun shines on the painted beauty – clear in the water
風飄香袂空中舉	Breeze lifts fragrant sleeves in the air
岸上誰家游冶郎	At the bank, who are the wandering young men
三三五五映垂楊	Gathering in threes and fives by the willows
紫騮嘶入落花去	Purple horses neighing pass, flowers fallen
見此踟躕空斷腸	Witnessing this, troubled and lament in vain

The last stanza of this poem is incongruent with the German text in “Von der Schönheit.” The original poem depicts the lament of the lotus-picking girls, who are troubled by the sight of horses trampling the flowers. Bethge's version introduces an erotic element in the yearning glances of one of the maidens, a change that Mahler intensifies by further altering Bethge's poem. The composer's interpolations are underlined below in Deryck Cooke's translation:

And the loveliest of the maidens sends  
Long glances of yearning after him.  
Her proud bearing is only pretense.  
In the flashing of her dark eyes,  
In the darkness of her passionate glance,  
The tumult of her heart still surges painfully towards him.

Another poem that was drastically altered by Bethge is the poem he entitled “Der Pavillon aus Porzellan” (“The Porcelain Pavilion”), the text for Mahler's

third movement, “Von der Jugend” (“Of Youth”). The Chinese source is shown below.

李白 *Banquet at Tao's Family Pavilion*

宴陶家亭子 By Li Bai (or Li Tai Po)

Crooked path: personal residence in quietude  
曲巷幽人宅 Tall gate: great scholar's home  
高門大士家 Open pond, mirrors reflection  
池開照膽鏡 Protruding forest trees intersperse with colorful flowers  
林吐破顏花 Green water hides the Spring sun  
綠水藏春日 Green room camouflages evening amber  
青軒祕晚霞 If strings and woodwinds are delightful to hear  
若聞弦管妙 Unmatched by a valley of gold  
金谷不能夸

For many years, the identity of this poem by Li Bai could not be confirmed, because the text had been so heavily altered. In fact, the poem was mistranslated even in its title. Judith Gautier originally translated it as “The Porcelain Pavilion,” thereby revealing her limited understanding of the Chinese language. The word “Tao” can mean porcelain, as well as a Chinese family name. And in this case, it is clearly the latter. Her mistranslation caused many problems in locating the source in the anthology of Chinese poems.

Once the Li Bai source was identified, other extraneous elements in Judith Gautier's French translation were immediately apparent. These include the “bridge that arches like a tiger's back,” as well as the group of young friends who are drinking inside the pavilion. The original poem, on the other hand, puts almost its entire emphasis on describing the host's house and surrounding landscape, and certainly does not mention the guests. Gautier's French version provides rather detailed description of what the guests are doing, and her approach clearly inspired Bethge's version.

Substantial as the preceding alterations are, none of the literary changes is more important than Mahler's own textual additions to the conclusion of *Das Lied von der Erde*. We have already compared Bethge's version of Wang Wei's poem, after which Mahler adds the following lines at the end of “Der Abschied” (again, I cite Cooke's translation):

My heart is still and awaits its hour!

The dear earth everywhere

Blossoms in spring and grows green again!

Everywhere and forever the distance shines bright and blue!

Forever . . . forever . . .

The final repeated word, “ewig” (“forever”), is Bethge's. Though Mahler had no direct access to Wang Wei's suggestive image of white clouds and “no end time,” the composer's original poetry and music in this celebrated passage capture the ineffable qualities of the Chinese source.

Mahler's addition carries profound implications, summing up as it does the musical and spiritual essence of *Das Lied von der Erde*. This is Mahler's answer to the questions posed in the preceding movements. Moreover, Mahler's added lines at the close serve to highlight another aspect of the Chinese language that strategically links “Der Abschied” back to the opening movement, “Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde” (“The Drinking Song of the Misery of the Earth”). To understand this connection requires a closer look at the Buddhist and Taoist influence on the Chinese language, to which our attention now turns.

### III. Loss of Spiritual Context

Chinese arts and culture soared to new heights during the Tang Dynasty. Two major causes of this sudden surge in cultural development were the mapping of the Silk Road and the interest of the Tang Dynasty in Buddhism. The Chinese language was heavily influenced by Buddhism to an extent that, without this basic knowledge, we cannot fully appreciate *Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde*, as well as aspects of *Das Lied* as a whole.

Buddhists concern themselves with the idea of correct perception of the surrounding world. The central philosophy of Buddhism is in fact rather straightforward, as described in the Four Noble Truths: (1) There is an illness; (2) There is a cause of illness; (3) There is a possibility of a cure for the illness;

and (4) There is a prescription, something we must do to bring about a cure. The illness referred to here is *Dukkha*, a Pali word for imperfection or suffering (Suffering is also a central concept in Taoism). The poem that Mahler sets as *Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde* is imbued with this quality of *Dukkha*. I have translated Li Bai's poem with minimal working syntax in below.

李白

悲歌行

*Tale of Sorrowful Song*

by Li Bai (or Li Tai Po)

悲來乎 Sorrow comes;  
悲來乎 sorrow comes  
主人有酒且莫斟 Host has wine; pour not yet  
聽我一曲悲來吟 Listen to my singing a sorrowful song  
悲來不吟還不笑 Sorrow approaches, neither sob nor laugh  
天下無人知我心 This world - nobody knows my heart  
君有數斗酒 You have several measures of wine,  
我有三尺琴 I have three-foot lute  
琴鳴酒樂兩相得 Lute playing complements happy drinking  
一杯不啻千鈞金 One drink equals thousand taels of gold  
悲來乎 Sorrow comes;  
悲來乎 sorrow comes  
天雖長 Everlasting as the heaven and the earth  
地雖久 Yet roomful of gold and jade shall not last  
金玉滿堂應不守 Hundred years of wealth amounts to what?  
富貴百年能幾何 Everyone lives and dies only once  
死生一度人皆有 Lonely ape sits, howls at the moon over the grave  
孤猿坐啼墳上月 Must empty this cup of wine in one gulp  
且須一盡杯中酒

Even in translation, the concept of *Dukkha* is apparent from the first line onward: “life is suffering, suffering is life,” a refrain that is hauntingly consistent with Bethge and Mahler's “Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod” (“Dark is life, is death”). Understanding the nuances of the text, however, requires an awareness of Buddhist and other cultural influences. Consistent with the second Noble Truth in Buddhism, Li Bai identifies the causes of life's suffering as the thirst for wealth and fear of death. The Eastern solution to life's suffering is brought out in line 5: “Sorrow approaches, neither sob nor laugh.” This simple line sums up the Third and Fourth Noble Truths. The basis of Buddhist teaching is identification of the target for intervention and the liberation from it. Thus, Li Bai's poem is a poetic microcosm of the Buddhist prescription for life. The poem establishes the symptom (sorrow) and its causes, acknowledges life's transitory fulfillment in wealth and status, and places this alongside the cruel inevitability of death. The cure is prescribed in transcending life's illusory fulfillments and calmly accepting the eternity of *Dukkha*: as “sorrow approaches, neither sob nor laugh.” Such literary subtlety is impossible to translate faithfully into any language that does not share the same cultural influences.

One cannot help but speculate how the atmospheric sparseness of the Chinese poetry might have influenced Mahler's compositional style, had he been able to access the poems directly, rather than via translations that often stray from the original sources. Even so, there is a miraculous affinity connecting the poetic and musical world of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* with the very distant cultural and aesthetic world of classical Chinese poetry. The events of this year's Colorado MahlerFest, culminating in the performance of *Das Lied von der Erde*, should make it unquestionably clear that Mahler indeed captured the essence of the poems, shaping these “paraphrased poems” into a moving allegory of transient existence that dissolves into the embrace of eternal recurrence at the close of the unforgettable “Der Abschied.”

# MahlerFest XX

## Our Principal Participants



**Thomas Hampson:** To tell stories of the human existence, to bring them to life, to move and touch us, this is what matters most to Thomas Hampson when he appears on stage, and his performances at the world's major concert and opera stages are hailed by audiences and critics alike. Brought up in Spokane, Washington, Thomas Hampson studied with Sr. Marietta Coyle, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Martial Singher, and Horst Günther. He is renowned for his versatility, performing in opera, operetta, musical,

oratorio and recital, as well as his achievements in the fields of recording, research, and pedagogy.

Thomas Hampson has sung the title roles in Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*, Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, Massenet's *Werther* in the composer's original baritone version, Busoni's *Doktor Faustus*, Ambroise Thomas's *Hamlet*, Verdi's *Macbeth* and *Simon Boccanegra*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, as well as the world premiere of Cerha's *Der Riese vom Steinfeld*. Other roles include Germont in Verdi's *La Traviata*, Wolfram in Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, the Marquis de Posa in Verdi's *Don Carlos*, Orest in Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*, Amfortas in Wagner's *Parsifal*, Mandryka in Strauss' *Arabella*, and recently Renato in Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera* in London's Covent Garden.

Hampson is a passionate singer of the song repertoire, from German Lieder of Schubert, Mahler, and Wolf to the songs of American poets and composers, such as Walt Whitman and Aaron Copland. His dedication to American song and its history has resulted in several recital tours, recordings, multimedia projects and television programs. His passion for song as the diary of every culture, with enormous importance for the genuine understanding of each other, led him to found the HAMPSONG-Foundation. Its Internet platform, [www.hampsong.com/foundation](http://www.hampsong.com/foundation), networks and documents a wide range of activities and makes them accessible to the public.

Thomas Hampson holds honorary doctorates from Whitworth College, Spokane, Washington and the San Francisco Conservatory, and he has recently become a Member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts. He is an honorary member of London's Royal Academy of Music and bears the titles of Kammersänger of the Vienna State Opera as well as Chevalier de l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the Republic of France. He was awarded the Austrian Medal of Honor in Arts and Sciences in 2004 and the Netherlands' Edison Award for Life Achievement in 2005. His recordings have received many awards, including multiple Grammy nominations and the Grammy for best Opera recording 2002, Netherlands' Edison Prizes, Grand Prix du Disques, Gramophone Awards, and Echo Deutscher Schallplattenpreis.

**Jon Garrison, tenor:** The gifted American tenor, Jon Garrison, is a favorite of many of the world's distinguished conductors. At the Metropolitan Opera he was Cassio in *Otello*, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, Romeo in *Romeo et Juliette*, von Eisenstein in Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, and Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*. Mr. Garrison's European engagements have included the title role in Idomeneo with the Garsington Opera in Surrey; Adolar in Weber's *Euryanthe* with the Orchestra of the Enlightenment in London; and Birtwistle's *Mask of Orpheus* and Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* with the BBC Symphony—which he also performed with von Dohnányi and the Cleveland Orchestra. He was



in *Lobgesang* with the Gulbenkian Orchestra in Lisbon, and Scottish Opera engaged him for two seasons as Pedro in *Ines de Castro* for performances in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Porto, Portugal. He performed and recorded Markevitch's *Le Paradis Perdu* with the Arnhem Philharmonic. At the Prague Autumn International Music Festival he was in Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*.

Recent appearances include the roles of Jean le Jongleur in Massenet's *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame* with Central City Opera, Sam in *Susannah* with Hawaii Opera and Cedar Rapids Opera, Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* with Fresno Grand Opera, Bajazet in Handel's *Tamerlano* at Spoleto Festival USA, as well as Szymanowski's *Symphony #3* with the Montreal Symphony in Carnegie Hall, and Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* and *Symphony No. 9* with New Hampshire Music Festival. In the 2006/07 season, his appearances include Berlioz *Te Deum* with the New Mexico Symphony, Verdi *Requiem* with Helena Symphony, *Das Lied von der Erde* and *Messiah* with Westfield Symphony.

Mr. Garrison sang in the world premieres of Stewart Copeland's *Holy Blood, Crescent Moon* (Cleveland Opera), Jay Reise's *Rasputin* (New York City Opera), and Hugo Weisgall's *The Gardens of Adonis* (Opera Omaha). He participated in a tribute to Gian Carlo Menotti with the Little Orchestra Society at Lincoln Center and appeared in Claude Baker's *Into the Sun* with Leonard Slatkin and the National Symphony. He performed Henze's *Elegy for Young Lovers* with the London Sinfonietta and his *Kammermusik* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Sheng's *Songs of Majnun* for New York Chamber Symphony, and Britten's *War Requiem* with several orchestras. On the occasion of the farewell performances of Zubin Mehta's tenure with the New York Philharmonic, Mr. Garrison sang and recorded Schönberg's *Gurre-Lieder*. For EMI he recorded Szymanowski's *Symphony No. 3* under the baton of Simon Rattle and the *Evangelist* in St. Matthew Passion with Raymond Leppard conducting. Other recordings include the *Rake's Progress* and *Oedipus Rex* on the MusicMasters label, and Handel's *Roman Vespers* for RCA.



**Stephen E. Hefling** received the A.B. in music from Harvard and the Ph.D. from Yale, with a dissertation examining Mahler's *Todtenfeier* movement from the dual perspectives of programmatic influence and compositional process as documented in Mahler's surviving sketches and drafts. Currently Professor of Music at Case Western Reserve University, he has also taught at Stanford and Yale Universities as well as Oberlin College Conservatory. Prof. Hefling has written numerous articles and book

chapters for *19th Century Music*, *Journal of Musicology*, *Journal of Music Theory*, *Performance Practice Review*, the revised *New Grove Dictionary*, *A Mahler Companion* (Oxford, 1999), *The Nineteenth-Century Symphony* (New York, 1997), etc. He rediscovered Mahler's manuscript version of *Das Lied von der Erde* for voices and piano, and edited that work for the *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Vienna, 1989). At MahlerFest XI, he introduced Patrick Mason and Terese Stewart's performance of "Der Abschied" from the piano version. His monograph on *Das Lied* appeared in the Cambridge Music Handbooks series in 2000, and he has written program notes for Mahler recordings by leading conductors including Pierre Boulez and Lorin Maazel. Recently he has both edited and contributed to the volumes *Mahler Studies* (Cambridge, 1997) and (New York, 1998). Hefling is currently writing a two-volume study entitled *The Symphonic Worlds of Gustav Mahler* (Yale

University Press) and completing *The Reilly Source Catalogue of Mahler's Musical Manuscripts*, to be published in cooperation with IGMG.

For his work on Mahler, Prof. Hefling has been awarded grants from The Martha Baird Rockefeller Foundation and the American Philosophical Society, the Morse Junior Faculty Fellowship at Yale University, and the Baker-Nord Center for the Humanities at Case Western Reserve University. He has been a speaker at international conferences on the composer in Vienna, Paris, Hamburg, Rotterdam, New York, Montpellier, London, and Boulder.

Also a specialist in baroque performance practice, Prof. Hefling has performed widely with early music ensembles in the northeastern US, and has served as director of the Yale Collegium Musicum and the Cleveland Baroque Soloists; his book *Rhythmic Alteration in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth Century Music* (New York, 1994) is widely regarded as the standard reference on that topic.

Professor Hefling has been a guest lecturer for MahlerFest nearly every year since his first appearance at the international symposium held in 1996, during MahlerFest XI.



**Eveline Nikkels** is a graduate of the Sweelinck Conservatory of Music in The Netherlands, and has been active in arranging Dutch Mahler events, e.g., the 1995 MahlerFeest, in which all of Mahler's works were performed in an 18-day period, with lectures and films to provide one of the most wide-ranging Mahler events in recent years. She also arranged an outstanding symposium in Den Haag in 2002 on *Das Lied von der Erde*, which featured lectures by outstanding experts, and two performances of this work, one the full score, and then a reduction for chamber orchestra by a member of the Hague Residentie Orchest, which featured the gifted young Dutch mezzo-soprano, Margriet van Reisen. Dr. Nikkels is also active in the Dutch Mahler Society and is responsible for its excellent publication *Mahler Nieuws*. Recently she has spread her wings towards Mozart and Boulez ("les extrêmes se touchent"), as president of the Mozart 2006 Foundation in Holland and as vice president of the Pierre Boulez Foundation (the only one existing in the world). Dr. Nikkels participated in the MahlerFest XI and XVII Symposia, and we are delighted to welcome her back for the discussion of *Das Lied von der Erde*.

**Dr. Teng-Leong Chew** founded the Gustav Mahler Society of Chicago, "The Chicago Mahlerites," in 1999. Under the aegis of that organization, he has spearheaded several efforts to bridge the gap between scholarly research and the wider public appreciation of Mahler's music. This work includes the publication of a quarterly journal on Mahler's research, *Naturlaut*, as well as the creation of the Mahler Archives ([www.mahlerarchives.net](http://www.mahlerarchives.net)) to house the various Mahler resources available to the general public.



As a Malaysian-Chinese fluent in four Chinese dialects, Dr. Chew has studied the ancient Tang Dynasty poetry for nearly 25 years. He has published several studies on Mahler, performance practices of Mahler's music, and the literary challenges of translating ancient Chinese poems into the lyrics of *Das Lied von der Erde* (see his essay on the subject in this program).

Dr. Chew is a cell biologist by profession and focuses his research interest on breast cancer metastasis. He currently serves as the director of the Northwestern University's Center for Cell Imaging and as a faculty member at the University's Feinberg School of Medicine.

As a student of Mr. Mathias Tacke of the Vermeer Quartet, Dr. Chew plays the violin and is a musician in both the Evanston Symphony Orchestra and

the Northwestern University Summer Orchestra.



**Marilyn L. McCoy** is a musicologist, teacher, and lecturer active in the Boston area. Since moving to New England from California in 1999, she has served on the music faculties of the University of New Hampshire and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Though primarily a Mahler scholar, she worked at the Arnold Schoenberg Institute in Los Angeles for the last three years of its existence (1995-1998), serving as Assistant Archivist and co-author of *A Preliminary Inventory of Schoenberg Correspondence*. She contributed to *Schoenberg and His World*, edited by Walter Frisch, and *The Reader's Guide to Music: History, Theory, Criticism*, edited by Murray Steib. Her article "It is my very self": The Multiple Messages of Gustav Mahler's *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen*, was published in *Music Observed: Studies in Memory of William C. Holmes*, ed. Colleen Reardon and Susan Parisi (Harmonie Park Press, 2004). Professor McCoy presented authoritative lectures on Mahler's Fifth and Sixth Symphonies at MahlerFest XV and XVI, and she has been a regular Symposium participant ever since. Her pre-concert lectures are a popular favorite at each MahlerFest.

**Patrick Mason**, a baritone on the faculty at the University of Colorado, performs operatic and concert repertoire throughout the world. Most recently he has been heard in recitals at the Library of Congress and in the Cairo Opera House in Egypt, in contemporary music at New York's Alice Tully Hall, and in a leading role in the new opera *Sara McKinnon* in Las Cruces, New Mexico. In October of 2000 he sang the New York premiere of the opera, *Black Water*, by John Duffy and Joyce Carol Oates at the Cooper Union. Mr. Mason has been a guest soloist with the Syracuse Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic, and the Colorado Springs Symphony. He has recorded music from tenth-century chant to songs by Stephen Sondheim for Sony, Vox, l'Oiseau Lyre, and Erato. His most recent of many CD releases from Bridge Records is a critically acclaimed recording with pianist Joanne Polk of "Songs of Amy Beach" (BCD 9182), which has just been nominated for a Grammy Award. At the composer's request, Mason will give the world premiere in Philadelphia next fall of a new song cycle by George Crumb, *Voices from a Forgotten World*. Having been born and raised in the low clay hills above the Ohio River, his passions are (naturally) hiking and ceramics.



**Steven Bruns** is Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in the College of Music at the University of Colorado, where he has taught since 1987. From 2001-04 he was chair of the composition and theory faculty. As an NEH Summer Seminar participant, he studied Wagner's operas with Robert Bailey (NYU, 1990) and German modernism with Walter Frisch (Columbia, 1994). His research has focused on the music of Schubert, Mahler, Alma Schindler Mahler, and song analysis, and he has lectured at scholarly conferences and festivals in Europe and North America. His essays have appeared in several recordings, most recently Margaret Leng Tan's CD & DVD recordings of Crumb's *Makrokosmos I & II* (Mode Records 2004) and Vols. 6 and 9 of the complete George Crumb Edition (Bridge Records, 2003 & 2005); the latter recording was nominated for a 2006 Grammy Award. He edited and contributed to a new book, *George Crumb & the Alchemy of Sound: Essays on His Music* (Colorado College Music Press, 2005). Bruns has been on the Board of Directors of the Colorado MahlerFest since 1991. He was a founding board member of the Rocky Mountain Center for Musical Arts, Lafayette, CO, 1995-2000.

# MAHLER, MAHLER EVERYWHERE

Saturday, January 27, 8:00 PM, Lincoln Center, Fort Collins (417 West Magnolia Street): Fort Collins Symphony, Wes Kinney, conductor-**Symphony No. 4** with Jamie Chamberlin, soprano.  
(970) 221-6730. [www.fcsymphony.org](http://www.fcsymphony.org).

Friday-Saturday, February 23-24, 8:00 PM, Maurice Abravanel Hall, Salt Lake City, UT (123 South Temple): Utah Symphony, Keith Lockhart, conductor-**Symphony No. 7**.  
(801) 355-2787. [www.utahsymphony.org](http://www.utahsymphony.org).

Thursday-Friday, August 2-3, 7:30 PM, Chautauqua Auditorium, Boulder (900 Baseline Road): Colorado Music Festival Orchestra, Michael Christie, conductor-**Symphony No. 2**, "Resurrection" (soloists TBD).  
(303) 449-1397. [www.coloradomusicfest.org](http://www.coloradomusicfest.org).

National Repertory Orchestra, Carl Topilow, conductor.  
**Mahler Symphony No. 4**, soloist to be announced.  
July 14 (tentative), Riverwalk Center, Breckenridge (probably 7:30 PM).  
[www.nationalrepertoryorchestra.com](http://www.nationalrepertoryorchestra.com). Box Office: (970) 547-3100.

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March 3, 7:30 PM – Music of the Three Tenors with soloist Paul Hartfield. Also featuring William Tell Overture and Hindemith Symphonic Metamorphosis. Robert Olson, conductor.

April 21, 7:30 PM – Love Lost and Rhapsody in Blue with pianist Catherine Millis. Tchaikovsky Romeo and Juliet; and Stravinsky Petrouchka. Robert Olson, conductor.

May 12, 7:30 PM – POPS Concert. Colcannon.

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# MAHLERFEST XX

Gustav Mahler

## *The Song of the Earth*

(Das Lied von der Erde)

and "Adagio" from *Symphony No. 10*

Thomas Hampson, baritone

Jon Garrison, tenor

The Colorado MahlerFest Orchestra

Robert Olson, conductor

*Boulder Colorado*  
*January 10 - 14, 2007*

Photo by Jane Uitti