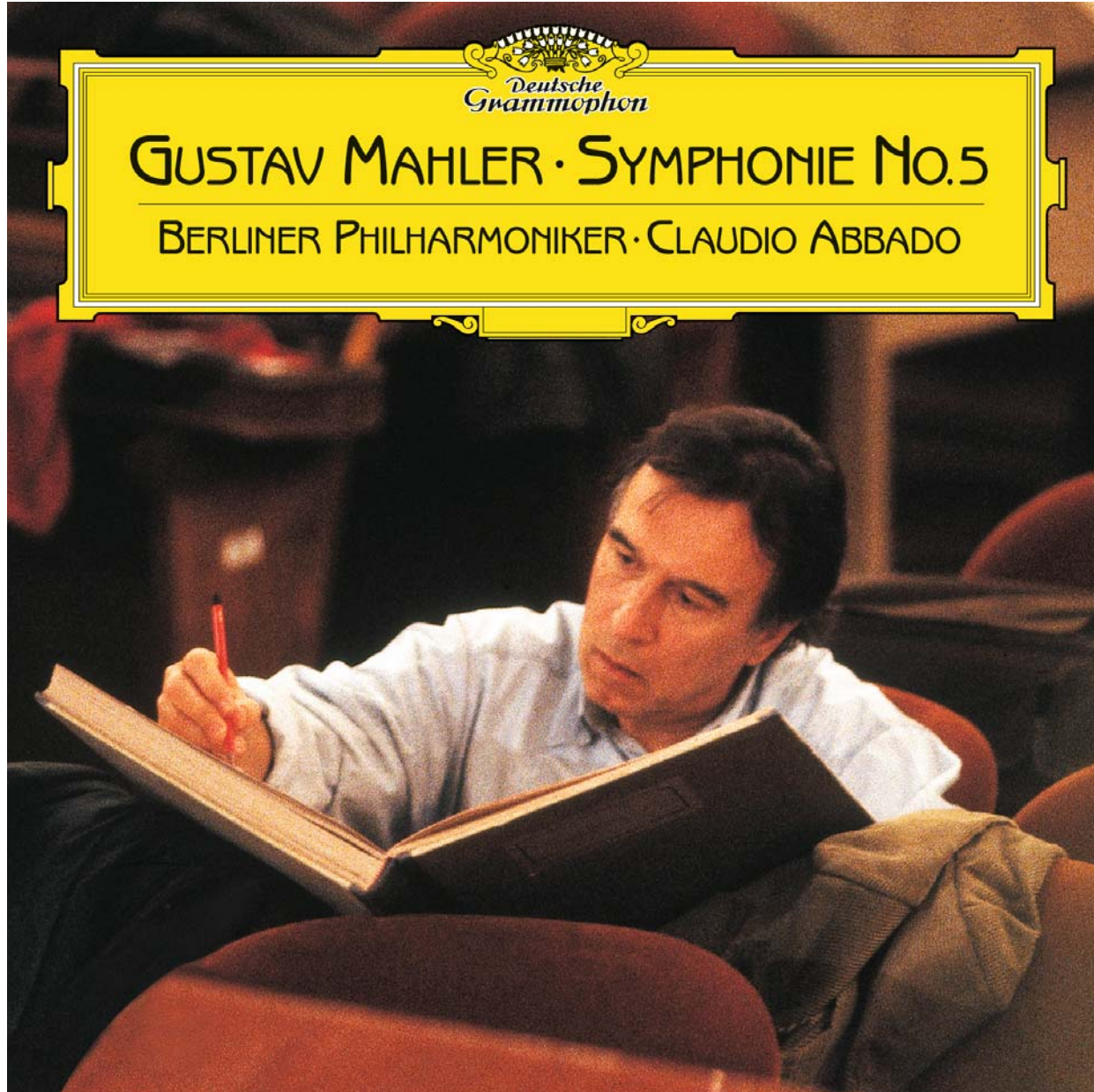




# GUSTAV MAHLER · SYMPHONIE NO.5

BERLINER PHILHARMONIKER · CLAUDIO ABBADO



GUSTAV MAHLER (1860–1911)

## Symphonie No. 5

### ERSTER TEIL/PART I/PREMIÈRE PARTIE

- |   |                                                                    |         |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| ① | 1. Trauermarsch. In gemessenem Schritt. Streng.<br>Wie ein Kondukt | [12'36] |
| ② | 2. Stürmisch bewegt, mit größter Vehemenz                          | [14'46] |

### ZWEITER TEIL/PART II/DEUXIÈME PARTIE

- |   |                                       |         |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------|
| ③ | 3. Scherzo. Kräftig, nicht zu schnell | [17'26] |
|   | <i>Horn/cor: Gerd Seifert</i>         |         |

### DRITTER TEIL/PART III/TROISIÈME PARTIE

- |   |                                                    |         |
|---|----------------------------------------------------|---------|
| ④ | 4. Adagietto. Sehr langsam                         | [9'02]  |
| ⑤ | 5. Rondo-Finale. Allegro – Allegro giocoso. Frisch | [15'40] |

Berliner Philharmoniker

CLAUDIO ABBADO

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## MAHLER'S FIFTH SYMPHONY

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Mahler's Fifth was composed in and between the summers of 1901 and 1902. It seems probable that the movement Mahler completed first was the central Scherzo which forms the pivotal Part II of the symphony. A draft list of titles for Mahler's Fourth shows that at one stage the composer had contemplated including in that work as its fifth movement a Scherzo in D major, together with an indication of what it might represent in the programmatic scheme of things: *Die Welt ohne Schwere* ("The world without care"). We may well conclude that the Scherzo we are familiar with, in the context of the Fifth, matches Mahler's description. It is undeniably in D and incontrovertibly a movement of exceptional exuberance and energy, if perhaps not quite as carefree as Mahler's title would suggest. As it turns out, an element of anxiety, of instability, of agitation, is indispensable if the Scherzo is to fulfil its crucial pivotal function.

Fascinating though the production line of Mahler's symphonies is, it is not that aspect of the relationship between the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies that I want to dwell on but, rather, two interrelated issues, discussion of which throws light on the fundamental character of the Fifth and enables us better to understand its role in the evolution of Mahler's symphonies.

It has often been said that the Fourth was the very work in which Mahler turned away from the programmatic symphony, where the incorporation of

vocal movements (solo or choral) played a key role, and embarked on the exclusively *instrumental* symphony, free of words, of texts, of programmes, where the concentration now was on musical architecture, on a supposed preoccupation with "pure" music. But I have begun to wonder if, like most received opinions, this one too stands in need of revision. Is it wholly true, in fact, that with the finale of the Fourth Mahler said goodbye to the setting of *Wunderhorn* texts in his symphonies? From a literal point of view, yes. But the *Wunderhorn* influence, or at least one highly significant aspect of it, persisted in the Fifth, above all in the first movement of the symphony, the great Funeral March.

It is sometimes forgotten that while the greater number of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* settings belong to the years 1892-98, there followed two later settings, both of them marches, and one of them — "Der Tamboursg'ssell" (composed in August 1901) — of particular importance, for two reasons. Whereas up to this point Mahler's symphonies had incorporated his songs, either taking them over to serve in a symphonic context, or as the basis or point of departure for a purely orchestral movement, "Revelge" (composed in July 1899) and "Der Tamboursg'ssell" introduce an innovation: these are orchestral songs of Mahler's that incorporate quite unmistakably symphonic characteristics. "Der Tamboursg'ssell", though not built quite on the scale of its predecessor, is not just an orchestral song but a symphonic

song; and it surely provided the model for the opening *Trauermarsch* of the Fifth. To be sure, the *Trauermarsch* is a *wordless* song. But its title gives us the clue to the hidden text, if in fact a clue were needed; and a comparison of the song and symphonic movement shows how Mahler was still, after the turn of the century, in vital touch with the *Wunderhorn* world. What the first movement of the Fifth offers — always excepting the two turbulent trios which, in miniature, enact the symphony's striving after an ultimate victory over mortality — is a *song for orchestra*, quite in the manner of the two late *Wunderhorn* settings.

If this suggestion encourages revision of a hitherto accepted view, then we must look afresh at another, though related, issue: the programme. Here again it has been commonly assumed that after the Fourth, the "programme" as such no longer had a role to play in Mahler's symphonies. But here we are at the beginning of the Fifth with a movement unequivocally entitled "Funeral March". If our knowledge of Mahler's Second is anything to go by, then we know that if a symphony opens with a Funeral March, something has to happen during the course of the ensuing movements to transcend, transform, justify, or in some other way fulfil the objectives which the March implies, i.e. a "programme" has been announced and has inexorably to move towards its dénouement. It seems after all that the Fifth, no less than the Fourth, *has* a programme.

The second movement of Part I — the stormy Allegro (A minor) — shows how fundamental to the concept of the symphony the Funeral March is. The unique feature of this second movement is that it is constantly interrupted by sudden, unexpected and even arbitrary intrusions of the March amid the turmoil of the surrounding Allegro.

The Allegro tries — unsuccessfully — to *absorb* the

Funeral March, with fascinating formal consequences. Indeed, Part I of the symphony reveals an exceptional relationship between the two movements that go to make it up: the first is used to interrupt the second. As we shall see, this remarkable formal principle is to have an undoubted influence on the shape of Part III.

But there is a further feature of the second movement that is of no less importance to how Mahler was to plan his final strategy in Part III; and interestingly enough it takes the shape of yet another "interruption", though differently conceived from the intrusions of the March.

In the midst of all the turmoil and struggle of the Allegro the music shifts to what seems to be a triumphal character; and for a brief moment, and in A major, all six horns, four trumpets and pounding timpani combine to project the beginning — of what exactly? We are not, at this stage, to have that question answered. Hardly has the sky cleared, than a cry of pain in the woodwind — a constant punctuation in the movement — cuts off the glimpse of a possible resolution, and the drama is resumed. The interruption, however, has not gone away. After a stretch of further storm and stress, the triumphal mood returns again, to top a powerful climax, this time in D major; and at the height of it we seem to be about to embark on a chorale that will represent a final victory over the intimations of mortality of the Funeral March and the channelling of the energy of the Allegro into a positive outcome. But once again the triumph does not stay the course. In a brilliantly imagined passage, the chorale fades along with the dynamics and a thinning out of the orchestral texture, the woodwinds' piercing shriek is heard again, and after a very brief resumption of the Allegro the movement ends quietly (and magically

scored) with the dénouement still in doubt and thus still to be achieved.

The “answer” takes the shape of the chorale returning at the very end of the finale, to crown the movement, to round off the symphony, to purge it of the shadows of its opening gesture, the Funeral March. This time round there are no interruptions. The chorale at last takes wing, dominant and dominating. But in fact the “interruption” principle, which is so important a feature of Part I, surfaces no less remarkably in Part III, providing us with hitherto little recognized symmetries. Parts I and III in fact prove to complement each other in the most singular manner. They comprise not only pairs of movements but pairs in which the second movement consistently quotes, or is interrupted by, the first. We have seen this unusual procedure in progress in Part I, with the interventions of the Funeral March in the ensuing Allegro. Likewise, the Rondo-Finale of Part III: it is the preceding Adagietto which, in various guises and disguises — parody is not excluded — forms the basis of the episodes that alternate with the Rondo’s genial and much counterpointed principal theme. Of course, these episodes show an integration that was not the case in the Allegro of Part I. But then, by the time we have reached the finale, the formal integration of the symphony’s contrasts and conflicts is exactly what the composer has in mind.

Another aspect of Part III which demands our attention is the character of the Adagietto. It has often been said that this movement inhabits the same world as the settings of poems by Rückert which Mahler made at about the same time as he was composing his Fifth, and especially that magical song “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen” (August 1901). It is indeed true that the new, largely string-based sound (often with harp) Mahler was exploring

in his Rückert Lieder, along with limpid arches of melody, is reflected in the Adagietto. But for the absence of voice and text one might think, without exaggeration, of the movement as another Rückert setting. Is it not in fact another *wordless* song, a song for orchestra alone?

Here we stumble on yet another of those parallels and symmetries which distinguish the Fifth. For there is not one orchestral song in the symphony but two, the first the Funeral March, with its roots in the *Wunderhorn* world, the second the Adagietto, which clearly derives from the new phase in Mahler’s orchestral song writing. Thus the Fifth spans two major song sources, one (the *Wunderhorn* series) ending, the other (the Rückert series) beginning; and in each case (the Funeral March, the Adagietto) the “word” is missing, thus providing a parallel to the general move towards the purely instrumental. Even the songs have now become exclusively orchestral in concept! The more we delve, the clearer it seems to become that it was the Fifth, not the Fourth, that represented a door closing on a past period and opening on a new one.

It seems too that the Adagietto (F major) — for which, surely, Bizet’s Adagietto from his first *L’Arlésienne* Suite provided the model — had an inner “programme”. The great Dutch Mahler advocate, Willem Mengelberg, has left us an account of how the Adagietto came to be written, inscribed at the front of the full score he used for performances of the Fifth. It was, he says — and the Mahlers themselves were the source of this information — offered to Alma at the time she was being courted by Mahler as a declaration of his love. She immediately understood the “message”: the song without words had perfectly discharged its function. There seems no reason to doubt the story.

There is yet another area in which Mengelberg’s recollection tells us something useful. The engagement of Alma and Gustav was made known publicly on 27 December 1901 and they were married on 9 March 1902. Mahler would hardly have needed to make a declaration of love in the wake of his engagement and certainly not after his marriage had taken place. The conclusion is inescapable that the Adagietto must have been composed before the end of 1901.

If the Adagietto belongs to 1901, what else was composed in that year? Here the reminiscences of Natalie Bauer-Lechner are helpful. The diary she kept shows that Mahler in the summer was working on the Scherzo; and it could well be the case that this was the movement — to be designated Part II of the symphony — that he was to bring first to completion. For the rest, the chronological story is obscure and backed up by very little factual evidence. I find it difficult to imagine that the two pairs of movements that comprise Parts I and III were not written in the internal sequence they appear in the symphony, i.e. that the quotations each second movement makes from the first imply in each case a pre-existing source. This leaves open the question of whether Part I or Part III took precedence in Mahler’s compositional schedule. Here again the evidence suggests that Part I — perhaps preceded by Part II — was largely sketched or completed in 1901; and, if the Mengelberg inscription holds water, by the end of that year the Adagietto too was composed or at least drafted. The finale could hardly have got under way without the Adagietto already, which means that the last movement must belong to the summer and autumn of 1902, when Mahler would have brought his new symphony to its triumphant conclusion.

I have employed the word “pivotal” already with re-

gard to the great central Scherzo, flanked on either side by a pair of movements; and it proves indeed to be the means by which Mahler effects his transition from the storm and stress of Part I to the calm and geniality (and eventual victory) of Part III. The movement is both characteristic and innovative, characteristic in that it unfolds a chain of diverse dances (ländler and waltz, the latter a particularly beguiling example of a Viennese waltz), innovative in that it includes a striking concertante element, a brilliant obbligato part for the solo horn. It is too easily assumed that Mahler wrote no concertos. But he did in the Scherzo of the Fifth.

There is nothing formally problematic or complex about this brilliant movement, which stands as a monument to the virtuosity of Mahler’s orchestration (its rhythmic complications and syncopations are another matter). The Scherzo, from the outset, was conceived in D, which was to be the symphony’s central tonality and tonal goal; we might say the symphony owes its tonality to the Scherzo. For Mahler, the problem must have been not to establish too early an affirmative D major (a problem he had already circumvented in the preceding movement). Thus it is that the Scherzo, while certainly offering the exuberance and relaxation that its original title promised (“The world without care”), uncovers and develops sufficient areas of anxiety and instability during its course to keep the symphony’s options open until, at last, the finale’s concluding chorale puts D major beyond all doubt. It seems — and it is — a long way back to the C sharp minor of the opening Funeral March. In between the March and the finale a whole world of tumultuous experience, in an unbroken narrative, has been traversed.

Donald Mitchell

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## MAHLER: SYMPHONIE NR. 5

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Seit dem *Tod in Venedig* ist es unrettbar in aller Ohren: das *Adagietto* aus Mahlers Fünfter Symphonie. Gerade als die Mahler-Welle ihren Gipfel erreichte, griff Luchino Visconti instinktsicher zu diesem Stück, das alle Chancen zur Beliebtheit eines Soundtracks hat – es ist zum Weinen anrührend, ein schmachsender Ohrwurm, dem Kitsch nicht mehr fern. (Richard Strauss – der anderen gegenüber recht kritisch sein konnte – hat dies genau getroffen, als er nach der Berliner Aufführung im März 1905 offenherzig an Mahler schrieb: »Ihre 5. Symphonie hat mir neulich in der Generalprobe wieder große Freude bereitet, die mir nur durch das kleine *Adagietto* etwas getrübt wurde. Daß dasselbe beim Publikum am meisten gefallen hat, geschieht Ihnen dafür auch ganz recht.«) Ob Visconti wußte, daß dieses süßliche Musikstück tatsächlich ein Liebeslied war? – wenngleich nicht in die morbide Atmosphäre venezianischer Homoerotik gehörend, vielmehr von Mahler für Alma Schindler geschrieben, die er im November 1901 kennenlernte, mit der er sich einen Monat später verlobte und vier Monate später verehelichte. Im Besitz Willem Mengelbergs – des holländischen Dirigenten, mit dem Mahler seit 1902 befreundet war – befand sich eine Partitur der Fünften Symphonie, die zum *Adagietto* folgende Eintragung von Mengelbergs Hand aufweist: »N.B. Dieses *Adagietto* war Gustav Mahlers Liebeserklärung an Alma! Statt eines Briefes sandte er ihr dieses im Manuskript; weiter kein Wort dazu.

Sie hat es verstanden und schrieb ihm: Er solle kommen!!! Beide haben mir dies erzählt! W.M.« Ferner ist am linken Rand der betreffenden Partiturseite, ebenfalls von Mengelberg, ein siebenzeiliges Gedicht eingetragen, das sich – bis auf die letzten Silben – vortrefflich der Geigenmelodie des Anfangs unterlegen läßt: »Wie ich dich liebe, / Du meine Sonne, / ich kann mit Worten Dir's nicht sagen / Nur meine Sehnsucht / kann ich Dir klagen / Und meine Liebe / Meine Wonne!« Ein orchestrales Liebeslied also, dieses *Adagietto*, nicht nur ein »Lied ohne Worte«, sondern beinahe mit Worten. Wie dies aber zu dem die Symphonie eröffnenden großen *Trauermarsch* passen soll, bleibt geheimnisvoll – wie so oft bei Mahler, der in seinen Symphonien vieldimensionale und rätselhafte, aber eben nicht eindeutige »Geschichten« erzählt.

Über die Fünfte Symphonie – komponiert 1901 und 1902 – sind nur wenige Aussagen Mahlers überliefert; diese beziehen sich auch nur auf das *Scherzo*, sind aber vage gehalten – einmal verglich Mahler den Satz mit einem »Menschen im vollsten Tagesglanz, auf dem höchsten Punkte des Lebens«, dann wieder zog er Metaphern einer heftig bewegten Natur heran, sprach von »Kometenschweif«, vom »Chaos, das ewig auf's Neue eine Welt gebärt, die im nächsten Moment wieder zu Grunde geht«, von »Urweltklängen« oder »diesem sausenden, brüllenden, tosenden Meer«. Dieses überaus brillante und virtuose *Scherzo*, mit zwei Trios und zu-

gleich auch in großer symphonischer Form mit Durchführung und Reprise gestaltet, von den Ausdruckscharakteren her eine Art Apotheose und Untergang des Walzers (lange vor Ravels *La Valse!*), ist buchstäblich das Zentrum der Symphonie: von der Zeitdauer her der längste Satz, steht er als eigener *II. Teil* für sich. *I. Teil* (1. und 2. Satz) und *III. Teil* (Sätze 4 und 5) sind jeweils etwa gleichlang und sind eng verbunden: Erster und zweiter Satz haben ein Thema gemeinsam, ebenso der vierte und der fünfte, und ein markantes Thema aus dem zweiten Satz wird im *Finale* wiederaufgenommen. (Laut Programmzettel der Uraufführung – Oktober 1904 in Köln – sollte auch der zweite an den ersten Satz ebenso *attacca* anschließen wie das *Finale* an das *Adagietto*.)

Marschcharaktere mancherlei Art, und oft genug Trauer- und Begräbnismärsche – »Kondukte« im österreichischen Jargon –, kommen bei Mahler immer wieder vor, und zwar von früh an, in Liedern wie in den Symphonien. (Der dritte Satz der Ersten Symphonie etwa, diese groteske Montage von »Bruder Jakob«-Kanon, böhmischer Blaskapelle und »Lindenbaum«-Romantik, war in den begleitenden Programmtexten mit *Totenmarsch in »Callot's Manier«* betitelt.) Ein Novum ist dies seit der *Marcia funebre* von Beethovens *Eroica*-Symphonie nicht; aber die Häufigkeit, mit der Mahler zu solchen Elementen greift – die ja nicht nur dazu dienen, durch ihre rhythmische Kontinuität größere Zusammenhänge zu errichten, sondern bei Mahler vor allem besondere Ausdruckswerte haben –, ist auffällig und hat immer wieder Deutungsversuche provoziert. Auffällig ist auch, daß vor allem gerade in solchen Sätzen das geschieht, was in der »Mahler-Welle« nach 1960 Hörer und Deuter als »moderner« Zug besonders ansprach, von den damaligen Zeit-

genossen aber meist aufs schärfste verurteilt wurde: das Zitieren und Einarbeiten »niederer«, banaler, ja vulgärer Musik. 1905 etwa schrieb ein Hamburger Kritiker zum *Trauermarsch* der Fünften Symphonie: »Selbst die ordinäre Melodie der Straße ist Mahler nicht zu plebejisch, und wenn er uns das scheußliche Trompeterlied des ersten Satzes an den Kopf wirft, dann könnte man glauben, Mahler habe uns in diesem Trauermarsch zum Begräbnis des Trompeters von Säckingen eingeladen. Ein Stück von ähnlicher Geschmacklosigkeit gibt es in der ganzen Symphonieliteratur nicht wieder...« Der *Trauermarsch* (übrigens der einzige Symphoniesatz Mahlers, der im Titel den Marschcharakter benennt) ist für uns heute jedenfalls großartige Musik, in der wir das Kunstvolle der Komposition – in den polyphonen Gegenstimmen etwa, der Brillanz der Instrumentation, der reich gewürzten Harmonik – gerade im Kontrast mit dem Einschlag von Ordinärem genießen. (Freilich mag dabei auch eine Rolle spielen, daß wir heute solche »Kondukt«-Musik kaum noch aus der Wirklichkeit kennen, sie also schon wieder museal wirkt.)

Den vehementen zweiten Satz, in dem zentrale Themen aus dem *Trauermarsch* wiederbegegnen, wollte Mahler als den »Hauptsatz« der Symphonie verstanden wissen, d.h. als (nachgestellten) »ersten Satz«, dessen übliches Formmodell mit Exposition – Durchführung – Reprise zwar stark modifiziert, aber noch erkennbar ist. Seltsam und ergreifend ist in diesem Satz nicht nur der fortwährende Stimmungswechsel, sondern auch, wie – ganz anders als etwa bei Bruckner oder Tschaikowsky – am Kulminationspunkt des Satzes, gegen Ende, ein vom Blech geschmettertes hymnenartiges Thema keineswegs in eine Apotheose führt, sondern, ebenso wie gleich darauf eine Wiederaufnahme des Satzanfangs, rasch

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in sich zusammenstürzt, und wie schließlich, nach einer letzten Trauermarsch-Intonation, das Ganze im kaum Hörbaren verstummt, gespenstisch beinahe. — Wenn das feierliche Blechbläserthema am Ende des *Rondo-Finale* erneut eintritt, hat es freilich keine Geheimnisse mehr — nur eben die längst erwartete Schlußüberhöhung eines Satzes, der in ungebrochener tagheller Heiterkeit und mit unverdrossen arbeitsamer, wenn auch kunstfertiger Kon-

trapunktik abläuft und nach diesem »kirchlichen Choral« (wie Alma Mahler ihn nannte, aber er hat doch eher den Ton weltlicher Musikfeste) mit einer brillanten Wendung, effektsicher wie bester Tschai-kowsky, sozusagen direkt in den Applaus mündet. Zweifellos nicht eine der stärksten Eingebungen Mahlers — aber daß gerade Finalsätze schwach sein können, hat in der Geschichte der Symphonie Tradition schon seit Haydn. *Wolfgang Dömling*

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## MAHLER: SYMPHONIE N° 5

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En choisissant Cologne pour la création de sa Cinquième Symphonie (18 Octobre 1904), Mahler renouvelait, inconsciemment ou presque, le processus qui avait présidé à la première audition de la Quatrième, trois ans plus tôt à Munich. Les deux villes avaient chacune »adopté« une symphonie (la Seconde pour Munich en 1900 et la Troisième en 1904 pour Cologne), faisant d'elles leur chemin de Damas mahlérien. La médaille avait son revers car la Cinquième désorienta les rhénans comme la Quatrième avait scandalisé la capitale bavaroise. La critique déversa son flot d'acide habituel. A travers la presse quotidienne, nous lisons que la nouvelle symphonie donna une impression de »bizarrerie et d'absurdité«. Pour les uns, »l'enchaînement des idées est aussi incompréhensible que le style est énigmati-

que«; pour d'autres, Mahler utilise son métier pour produire »des foules de sons échappant à toute logique musicale«. De cette mare de venin s'échappe parfois une voix plus nuancée, comme celle de Rudolf Kastner qui, dans les *Münchener Neuesten Nachrichten*, cherche à défendre la pensée du musicien: »la nature profonde des symphonies mahlériennes ne m'a jamais semblé équivoque et ce qui éloigne beaucoup de gens constitue au contraire pour moi l'originalité la plus savoureuse du maître«.

Une partie du public se joignit à la majorité de la critique pour regretter que la nouvelle symphonie ne possédât aucun programme. Bien que Mahler ait toujours eu une attitude plutôt négative envers cet expédient, il y sacrifia, afin de conjurer l'angoisse de

n'être pas »compris«, dans ses deux premières symphonies. La Troisième ne se contentait plus que de titres pour chaque mouvement; quant à la Quatrième, la ductilité même de son »programme« reniait toute charpente littéraire précise pour ne plus apparaître que comme l'exuvie de l'œuvre symphonique. La Cinquième marque ainsi un tournant: la musique seule doit s'y exprimer par elle-même, libérée de toute tutelle. La dimension narrative des symphonies, leur côté »romanesque« comme le souligne Adorno, doit pour Mahler s'organiser autour de la nature et du comportement du matériau musical, rejaillissant ainsi sur l'architecture du tout.

La structure générale de la Cinquième est conçue en trois parties: la première regroupant la Marche funèbre et le premier Allegro (*Stürmisch bewegt*), la troisième l'*Adagietto* et le Rondo-Finale. Le Scherzo se présente ainsi comme la clé de voûte de tout l'édifice.

Ce mouvement, d'une extraordinaire densité, est l'un des plus complexes que Mahler ait écrit. »Quelle peine il me donne, confie-t-il à Natalie Bauer Lechner en 1901, tu ne peux t'imaginer les obstacles et les épines innombrables qu'il sème sur mon chemin, surtout par la simplicité des thèmes, qui sont presque tous basés sur des accords de tonique et de dominante. Personne d'autre n'oserait faire cela aujourd'hui; pour cette raison, l'articulation harmonique présente des difficultés redoutables, surtout à cause de mon principe selon lequel rien ne doit se répéter, et tout doit se développer sans cesse, et de soi-même«.

Mahler exprime ici une des données fondamentales de son langage. Sa conception thématique à cette époque s'affirme en effet non plus de façon unique-ment linéaire mais essentiellement »modulaire«, composée d'une multitude d'idées ayant leur vie

propre et assujetties à l'irréversibilité du temps musical. A Natalie, il explique que dans le Scherzo ce matériau organique »est si bien pétri qu'on n'y trouve pas un seul petit grain qui ne soit mélangé et transformé. Chaque note est animée d'une vie suprême et tout y tourne en rond, comme un tourbillon ou une queue de comète«. Le style polyphonique qui en résulte (et que partagent d'ailleurs les autres mouvements de la Symphonie) l'amène à constater que »les voix individuelles sont si difficiles à jouer que chacune exigera un soliste«; mais, ajoute-t-il, »comme dans une cathédrale gothique, la confusion apparente doit se résoudre en un ordre et une harmonie suprêmes«.

De part et d'autre de ce monumental Scherzo se situent deux »parties« bicéphales. En les examinant de plus près, on s'aperçoit que l'on pourrait les considérer comme deux mouvements vifs précédés chacun d'une longue introduction lente. La relation qui unit ces couples est bâtie sur un même principe: le premier Allegro cite de nombreux passages de la Marche qui précède, en intégrant ce matériau à une forme sonate complexe; de même le Rondo-Finale héberge des transformations »physiologiques« de l'*Adagietto*. Ces mouvements vifs, véritables mouvements phagocytes, agissent cependant dans deux directions opposées. Autant les injections de la Marche dans l'Allegro donnent l'impression de freiner le parcours musical par une référence au passé, autant les transfigurations de l'*Adagietto* dans le Rondo-Finale propulsent le discours symphonique vers le véritable dénouement de l'œuvre annoncé par un choral clamé aux cuivres.

Ce choral, réminiscence contrôlée d'un réflexe brucknérien, subtilement apparenté à celui de l'Allegro (soulignant ainsi la symétrie des deux parties extrêmes), sert d'apothéose à un Finale dans lequel,

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come per lo Scherzo, tutte le frontiere della forma classica sono state abolite. La natura stessa del materiale musicale non poteva che provocare la dislocazione di repères strutturali fissi.

Da questo punto di vista, le alcune citazioni reali o «d'atmosfera» dei lieder contemporanei della Cinquantesima che l'on ha spesso rilevato in questa Sinfonia (*Der Tamboursg'sell*, le cinque *Rückert Lieder* e tre *Kindertotenlieder*) sono tutti nati nel 1901-1902, al di fuori del fatto che esse testimoniano di questa immersione totale nella creazione che, per Mahler, tendeva a trasformare delle reminiscenze fortuite in valori ossessivi, sono da interpretare, nel caso in cui esse sono troppo palpabili per essere accidentali, come l'autonomizzazione di un materiale espressivo integrato a una dialettica sinfonica, e

non, come si ha talvolta suggerito (la tentazione era forte), come una proiezione letteraria «esplicativa» permettendo di illuminare il discorso musicale. Le cose sarebbero state tradite dalla risonanza reale dell'estetica musicale mahleriana che, con la Cinquantesima Sinfonia, subì al grande giorno una mutazione determinante per la produzione da venire.

«La creazione musicale attuale», dichiara Mahler nel 1901, è quella di un adulto, di un uomo fatto. Se non l'avevo raggiunta come un'altra volta al vertice dell'entusiasmo, essa è stata sostituita dalla piena forza e per un mestiere compiuto. Io me ne sento oggi del tutto padrone dei miei mezzi tecnici e per lungo tempo capace anche di tutto realizzare.»

Bruno Plantard

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## MAHLER: SINFONIA N. 5

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Composta tra il 1901 e il 1902 la *Quinta* conobbe più di ogni altra sinfonia mahleriana un tormentato percorso di ritocchi e di revisioni. Al di là di evidenti innovazioni del linguaggio — lo «Scherzo» della *Quinta* non ha precedenti nell'impiego costruttivo di vasti procedimenti polifonici — il nuovo stile di questo lavoro segna effettivamente se non una cesura, almeno un allontanamento dalle precedenti concezioni sinfoniche.

Si affievolisce in particolare l'idea che il programma interiore della *Sinfonia*, originato dalla necessità di ripercorrere ciò che secondo le sue parole è il corso di «oscure sensazioni», possa proiettarsi sullo sfondo di immagini esteriori, utili assai meno a costituire la traccia di percorsi formali quanto a fornire una sorta di filo conduttore all'ascolto. Scortati da immaginarie scenografie narrative avevano preso corpo infatti l'eroismo della *Prima*, il misticismo fi-

losofico della *Seconda*, il panteismo della *Terza* e il sogno di un Paradiso infantile della *Quarta*. Ora, tanto le eventuali suggestioni letterarie e poetiche, quanto le esperienze soggettive dell'autore mirano ad assimilarsi nell'autonomia della forma musicale. Un'autonomia alla cui obbligo la sua musica è sempre sul punto di sottrarsi, ma che qui tende comunque a revocare la confusione estetica fra sinfonia e poema sinfonico. Il percorso che si inaugura è allora verso una musica non più fecondata dal mondo poetico dei lieder, ma soltanto affratellata ad esso, verso un linguaggio che non ha dimenticato gli incubi, le esaltazioni e le ossessioni passate, ma può riviverle e momentaneamente risolverle in un organismo che aspira a diventare indipendente. Nella *Quinta* il prezzo richiesto da questa autonomia, da questa progressiva oggettivazione, di procedimenti costruttivi, sembra essere quell'itinerario *per aspera ad astra* sulla cui sincerità Adorno, che lo ha così etichettato, non manca di esprimere qualche perplessità. Mentre nessun dubbio avrebbe necessità di esistere se solo si desse credito all'evidenza di una assoluta continuità dell'intero *corpus* mahleriano, da concepire come una sorta di immane, unica e totalizzante manifestazione d'un pensiero in cui complessità e ambiguità costituiscono elementi inscindibili, ed ogni conclusione di un lavoro rimanda inevitabilmente al seguito che il successivo è pronto ad offrirgli, magari per smentirlo.

Le asperità della *Quinta* sono tutte relegate nella prima parte, in quei due primi movimenti intrecciati da un singolare e inedito legame, tale che se da una parte il secondo si costruisce indipendentemente come una forma-sonata, dall'altra può apparire con altrettanta plausibilità come sviluppo della marcia iniziale (un complesso binario di cui si ricorderà Alban Berg nel suo *Quartetto per archi op. 3*). Dopo la

*Seconda*, è ancora una volta un corteo funebre a inaugurare l'itinerario sinfonico, con quella fanfara alla tromba che interviene nel silenzio come severo e sinistro richiamo di morte, per poi spegnersi affondando nei trilli del basso. La lunga melodia che introduce distende per tre strofe agli archi quella commistione di consolazione e di amarezza che è tra le voci più radicate alle origini dell'umanità di Mahler. Un'improvvisa ondata di violenza si alza al ritorno della fanfara per un episodio di selvaggia e febbrile passione: una di quelle irruzioni che sembrano ferire l'ordine sinfonico, segnando il corso del tempo con l'invasione dell'innaturale, dell'indesiderabile, dell'inaudito. Dopo che una citazione dal primo dei *Kindertotenlieder* ha chiuso la ripresa della melodia principale, ritorna più stanco in un nuovo episodio ai violini il canto dell'elegia, mentre alle viole un sospiro di nona ascendente fa ascoltare quella che si rivelerà una cifra unificante destinata a ripresentarsi nel corso della *Sinfonia*.

Al lamento e alla memoria del pianto ascoltati nella marcia, il secondo movimento oppone, in un inizio frammentario e quasi inestricabile, il caos e l'urlo primigenio. Il mondo entra dall'esterno come presenza fatalmente spuria, ma non revocabile. È come se il dolore incanalato dal *conductus* ritmico e dai toni elegiaci della marcia tornasse a farsi sentire in tutta la sua inaccettabilità, nell'inarrestabile misura dello scandalo. I due temi della forma-sonata sono un disegno acerbo dei violini, e il canto dei violoncelli ripreso e variato dal primo movimento. Il drammatico sviluppo, momentaneamente sospeso da un lungo rullare dei timpani su cui ancora i violoncelli recitano la loro elegia, si agita nel tumulto di una demoniaca tempesta orchestrale. Demoniaci è il conflitto ineguale tra l'ostilità del mondo di fuori e la mestizia interiore che attutisce l'angoscia della

morte. Poi, come un miraggio celeste, quasi una fata morgana, si anticipa agli ottoni il limpido corale che concluderà l'ultimo movimento, mentre la chiusa riscopre in un fantomatico timbro del mistero il gemito della nona ascendente.

Il grande "Scherzo" costituisce da solo la seconda parte della *Sinfonia* e ne avvia la svolta verso la distensione. Si snodano e poi s'intrecciano contrappuntisticamente temi di danze austriache: un *Ländler* dal sapore più malizioso che rustico, un valzer dove il rubato agisce come stilizzazione del movimento. Un secondo trio ai corni, sedotto dal suo potere evocativo, è in grado di distendere sulla pagina qualche ombra di rimpianto. Poi, dove la nostalgia si fa più intensa, un estatico pizzicato degli archi immobilizza la scena in una sorta di *tableau vivant*, mentre l'oboe riprende nel tenero profilo di una serenata il motivo del valzer. Solo la stretta finale rompe l'incanto e trasforma la danza, con un tempestoso avvio della percussione, in un feroce tripudio.

L'"Adagietto" e il "Rondo-Finale" formano, ancora in dittico, la terza parte. Ridotto l'organico orchestrale ai soli archi e a un'arpa che increspa con irregolari terzine le lunghe distensioni della melodia, l'"Adagietto" non è come troppe volte creduto una

pagina decadente e sfatta, ma un angolo di solitudine ricavato nel *melos* di "Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen" (il lied su testo di Rückert "Sono perduto per il mondo"), un trepido e malinconico incanto, nell'esitare di ritardi e di acciacature. Apre il "Rondo" un dialogare dei fiati che in poco più di venti battute raggruppa molto del materiale tematico successivo, con un frammento ripreso da uno dei più sarcastici lieder del *Wunderhorn* ("Lob des hohen Verstandes", "Lode del superiore intelletto"), e poi l'apertura al corno del tema principale appoggiato su agresti quinte dei bassi. Lo scenario è quello del gioco e della festa, della commedia che intreccia i ritorni del tema con vari impetuosi inserti fuggiti, in una progressiva esaltazione della loro scienza. Vi sono coinvolti fra argentei sospensioni all'acuto degli archi e dei flauti tre episodi "Grazioso", dove trova spazio, senza contraffazioni, anche la metamorfosi di un tema dell'"Adagietto". Il manifestarsi della volontà creativa, memore delle sane baruffe dei *Meistersinger*, culmina nel rigoglioso, diatonico corale già ascoltato nel finale del secondo movimento. La fierezza dell'affermazione di sé ha ormai l'apparenza di un chiaro e voluto incontro con la coscienza del passato e con la prepotente efficacia dell'oggettività musicale. *Ernesto Napolitano*



Recording: Berlin, Philharmonie, 5/1993

Produced by Christopher Alder

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Recorded, edited and mastered by Emil Berliner Studios

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Cover Photo: © Marco Caselli

Gustav Mahler: Archiv für Kunst und Geschichte, Berlin

Art Direction: Lutz Bode

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