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**The transformation of Mahler's symphonic
poem in two parts into his Symphony 1**

*(Development of a masterpiece in the workshop of a composer-
conductor)*

Thesis

November 20, 1889 is a special date in the history of the Hungarian Musical Life. On this day at the Pest Vigadó an event took place whose importance reached beyond the borders of Hungary and opened a new chapter in the universal history of music. The Budapest Philharmonic Society, at a subscription concert, played at the first time the first major symphonic work in two parts, written by the chief musical director of the Hungarian Royal Opera at the time, the Symphonic Poem in two parts.

The concert was conducted by the composer himself: Gustav Mahler.

We know Mahler's enthusiastic letter, written after the very successful final rehearsal, in which he cordially congratulated the musicians of the orchestra and seemed really satisfied.

„Dear Sirs,

Still being under the influence of our final rehearsal today, I feel an irresistible urge to thank you and all the participants for the devoted and truly artistic performance that helped to realize my humble work.

The final rehearsal has convinced me that I will never ever have the chance of hearing my work performed with such perfection.

I am proud to head a company like yours which serves art with such dedication, putting aside any personal interests, and I ask you to remain as good to me, as I am grateful and dedicated to you.

Sincerely yours

Gustav Mahler”

Unfortunately, we do not know the version played then. Mahler worked over the piece three times, and the final version is known today as his Symphony 1.

In my treatises, I make an attempt to reconstruct the original work based on the relatively numerous existing manuscripts.

I am assisted in achieving my goal by the fact that composers like Brahms, Liszt, Tchaikovsky and Dvorak worked at the time the piece was performed in Hungary.

These composers mostly compose for the traditional romantic orchestra with double woodwinds, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, tympany, percussions and, possible, harp.

When Mahler took over, the total number of musicians in the orchestra of the Hungarian Royal Opera was 70.

Obviously, Mahler composed his symphonic poem with this staff, typical at the time, in mind. At the turn of the century, the demand for staffing level exploded for the new musical pieces, but at the end of the 80s the above number still prevailed.

Consequently, I have looked for the sources which comply with the requirements of the original orchestration.

In the case of reconstructing the movements 1, 3 and 5, the situation is relatively simple since we have in the Alfred Rosé collection of the University of Western Ontario (UWO) a copy of the original that contains the above mentioned movements. From the dates indicated on the back of the two-volume score we can be sure that it is the version they played in Budapest, and the notes made later in it by Mahler himself most probably reflect the lessons from the rehearsals and the performance of the concert in Budapest. It is enough to analyze the parts Mahler deleted or changed drastically. I try to find an explanation for the whys of the changes.

The question obviously arises, why the second and fourth movements are missing from the UWO manuscript.

The missing second movement may be understood by the fact that Mahler intended to delete it several times, but we do not have such explanation for the fourth movement.

We may assume that the content of the second movement is one of the outstanding movements of his *Trompeter aus Sackingen*, a work thought lost. Maybe there was no copy at all but the original was inserted in the copy Mahler conducted.

The score of the fourth movement, also in the later versions, shows significant differences compared to the other movements, partly due to the more chamberlike character of the orchestration. Thus, it is quite possible that Mahler initially reworked only the movements 1, 3 and 5, and simply used the manuscript of the fourth movement for the later versions.

In my thesis I intend to provide the proofs of the above assumptions in detail.

The practical use of the research is that it helps to reconstruct work in its original form.

I am positive that the Symphonic Poem in two parts was an extraordinary artistic achievement even in its original form and certainly deserves the attention of music lovers all over the world in general, and in Hungary in particular.

Mahler wrote a new kind of music for the orchestra available at his time, breaking conventions within the existing frame.

Obviously, the piece cannot be considered by any means as an alternative of the final composition which Mahler would have considered a final version.

The comparative analysis can be of a considerable use for the performing artists as well.

The first performances of the work were conducted by Mahler himself, who as an excellent conductor, immediately made notes and corrections of the errors he spotted in the course of the rehearsals.

From the perspective of a conductor, the dynamical corrections, the changes of tempo instructions and phrasing signs, and the changes of orchestration, of course, are very interesting. Probably many changes were the result of problems that arose as a result of the performing experience, but we can track changes and the dropping of ideas after the young composer-conductor could hear the musical effects live, not imagined from the paper.

From the perspective of a conductor, in the course of studying and analyzing the sources I would like to point at the most important issues of the performer. I give a detailed analysis of tempos and tempo character definitions, the selection of volume proportions of general dynamics and among the instruments, and another important conductorial task: the conceptual definition of the length of notes in the score. Good orchestral sound cannot exist without consistent note lengths and phrasing, the places where a sound should breeze or split, the knowledge of which note should be the peak of a phrase, how the sound evolves with respect to dynamics or the notes take a rest, all in relation to tempo.

In addition, I would like to offer explanations for artistic issues like why the fanfare of awakening hunters in the first movement played, by horns at the Budapest premiere, passed on to the clarinets in the final version of Symphony 1, or what the term *gestopft*, often used for horns, mean for trumpets..

The research methodology has been the analysis of existing manuscripts from the point of view of the performing artist, and the expected result is that we get to know the original version of Mahler's Symphonic Poem and we can track the changes of the work over 15 years. This may facilitate our navigation within the notation of Mahler's music.

In my research I have used the following manuscripts:

- Manuscript made by a copier, currently at the possession of the Mahler Rosé Collection of the Library of the University of Western Ontario. It contains three movements in two volumes. The first volume contains the first movement and the Scherzo, while the second volume, the Finale. Within the volumes we find the dates of 89 11.21 and 89 11. 20, which means that the date is the same as the date of the Budapest premiere, November 20, 1889. So the manuscript can be justifiably considered as the Budapest version. The orchestration is 2-2-2-2, 4-2 (in certain parts of the fifth movement there are 3 trumpets)-3 1-harp, tympany and percussion. The manuscript contains corrections and notes of multiple colours by Mahler's own hand. The fourth movement is missing. The fifth movement has no numbering.

-The next source is an autograph manuscript made by the composer and incorporates the above-mentioned changes, now part of the Osborn Collection of the Yale University. This manuscript contains all five movements. The dates of review are: January 19, 1893 at the end of the fifth movement, January 27, 1893 at the end of the third movement, and August 16 at the end of the second movement. It was made for the performance in Hamburg (October 27, 1893).

The Scherzo movement is first indicated as Nr.2, then corrected to Nr.3. The orchestration was 3-2-2-2, 4 2-3-1 harp, tympany and percussion in the first movement, 2-2-2-2, 4-1 harp and tympany in the third, 3-2-2/3-2, 4-2-3-1 in the fourth and 3-3-3-3, 4-4-3-1 +tympany and percussion in the fifth. The fifth movement is marked by Nr. 5.

- The third source is the manuscript made by the copier, which is currently part of the Bruno Walter Collection of the New York Public Library, apparently the corrected version of the Yale autograph, made for the premiere in Weimar (June 3, 1894).

In comparison with the Hamburg version, the orchestration had not changed much, only one more trumpet in the first movement. The Blumine movement is included here as well, and it has even some performer's instructions added later. There is a clear reference of a possible omission eventually.

- The printed Philharmonia No. 446 score, published by the Editio Musica Budapest, which is the critical publication of the final version of the work..

I have used the following works in the course of my work:

Bauer-Lechner Natalie: Erinnerungen an Gustav Mahler, Killian 1984

Ferenc Bónis: The one hundred and fifty years of the Budapest Philharmonic Society, 1853-2003, Balassi Publishing House, 2003.

Ganz Jeffrey: Missing movement? The provenance of Blumine in Mahler's First Symphony, www.mahlerfest.org, March 16, 2010.

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Mcclatchie Stephen: The 1889 Version of Mahler's First Symphony: A New Manuscript Source, 19th-Century Music XX/2 The Regents of the University of California 1996

Mitchell Donald: Gustav Mahler the Wunderhorn Years, Faber and Faber 1975

Lóránt Péteri: The Pécs version? Muzsika, June 2005.

Zoltan Roman: Mahler and Hungary, Geopen 2010

Bruno Walter: Mahler, Gondolat 1981

Gustav Mahler-Richard Strauss Correspondence 1888-1911 Herta Blaukopf 1984

Gustav Mahler: Unbekannte Briefe, ed. Herta Blaukopf (Vienna/Hamburg: Paul Zsolnay Verlag, 1983)

Richard Strauss Briefe aus dem Archiv des Allgemeinen Deutschen Musikvereins 1888-1909, Irina Kaminiarz Weimar 1995,

Wilkins Sander: Preface to the Revised Edition of the First Symphony, Mahler Gesamtausgabe 1995

Protocols of the Board Meetings of the Budapesti Philharmonic Society.

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Programmes and revenues of the Budapesti Philharmonic Society.