DERYCK COOKE

GUSTAV MAHLER

An Introduction to his Music

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PREFACE

THIS book has its origin in a booklet which Deryck Cooke wrote for the BBC for publication in 1960, as a companion to the BBC's celebrations of the centenary of Mahler's birth. In fact, the introductory essay, 'Mahler as Man and Artist', is taken direct from that text – written at a time when it was still possible to talk of the 'growing recognition of Mahler's stature also moving forward in Germany and Spain, and beginning even in France and Italy'. The remainder of the original text, dealing with Mahler's music, has been considerably expanded: we have been able to draw on programme notes and articles which Deryck Cooke wrote in more recent years, where he was able to discuss individual works in greater depth than was permitted by the scope of his BBC commission.

A glance through the pages will show that each symphony has been dealt with in three sections: a brief opening paragraph giving dates of composition and first performance, orchestration, etc.; an essay; and a description. While it is hoped that the book as a whole will give an illuminating picture of Mahler both as a composer and as the very human being who was that composer, it is intended primarily as a kind of handbook, which can be easily referred to before or after listening to the music itself. We have also included the texts of all Mahler's vocal works, together with English translations. These translations are by Deryck Cooke, except for the *Lieder und Gesänge* by Berthold Goldschmidt and Colin Matthews, *Das klagende Lied* by David Matthews, and Part II of Symphony No. 8 where Louis MacNeice's translation of the closing scene from Goethe's *Faust* has been used.

The editing of this book has been a joint project; and the appearance of our names below should not imply that we bear a greater responsibility for it than our collaborators, Berthold Goldschmidt and Hazel Smalley.

Colin Matthews
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MAHLER AS MAN AND ARTIST

THE belated recognition of Mahler as one of the great symphonists is among the most remarkable features of our post-war musical life. To understand why it was so long delayed, we must get a clear historical perspective. Mahler, born in 1860, belonged to the generation of Sibelius and Richard Strauss; but he died in 1911, aged only fifty, whereas Strauss died in 1949, aged eighty-five, and Sibelius in 1957, aged ninety-one.

During their long lives, these two composers saw their music overcome early opposition to its 'modernity' and enter the normal concert repertory. Sibelius, the independent, is recognized in this country as an outstanding figure in twentieth-century music; this is largely due to the persistent advocacy of conductors, notably Bantock, Wood and Beecham, for in countries where his music has found no conductor-advocate, musical opinion has never caught up with him. Strauss, the last great romantic, is recognized everywhere as a leading composer of the twentieth century; the advocate largely responsible for this was he himself, though his music was soon taken up by conductors the world over. Thus Strauss and Sibelius have been familiar for half a century, and are now inevitably suffering from the swing of fashion: in an age which has repudiated its immediate predecessors, they are being written off by the characteristic contemporary musician – rather prematurely, one feels.

The case of Mahler is entirely different. In many ways more forward-looking then either Strauss or Sibelius, he encountered much stronger opposition; nevertheless, he was winning his cause as a composer with his own baton, when death cut off his promised development into a twentieth-century figure. His music was eventually accepted in Vienna, due to the advocacy of his disciple Bruno Walter; in Holland and Belgium it is extremely popular – a legacy of the Mahler festivals given by Willem Mengelberg; and in America, since Bruno Walter settled there, it has won favour. But elsewhere,

until recently, it found no persistent advocate, and consequently no recognition.

In England, Sir Henry Wood presented four of the symphonies before 1914, but this small seed did not take root. The war intervened, and Mahler became a forgotten 'lesser romantic'. In the twenties, the critics, full of the new English school and the new anti-romantic reaction, began to attack Wagner and Strauss; they could hardly damage the reputation of these composers, but they did prevent any further Germanic romantics from being accepted. When the enthusiasm of a conductor (usually Wood) brought a Mahler symphony to performance, the press mainly voiced the spirit of the age, dismissing the work with contempt. Understandably, few concert promoters cared to engage huge forces to perform works too unpopular to guarantee an adequate box-office return – yet how could they become popular unless they were frequently performed? Mahler's name disappeared into musical dictionaries, usually heading an ill-informed, derogatory article.

This situation persisted until the end of the last war. But since then, Mahler's music has become more generally available, thanks to the BBC, the recording companies, the growing advocacy of conductors, and the open-minded attitude of a new generation of critics; and it has captured the public imagination, drawing full houses and receiving prolonged ovations. Of whom does this public consist? Largely of ordinary music-lovers, who enjoy great music, whether by Bach, Mahler or Stravinsky, once they have the chance to discover it; and of young musicians who, unaffected by the dated polemics of anti-romanticism, are prepared to judge a 'romantic' composer on his merits. This growing recognition of Mahler's stature is also moving forward in Germany and Spain, and beginning even in France and Italy. Mahler, widely scoffed at in his own day, declared, firm in the conviction of his genius: 'My time will come'. It seems that it *has* come – a hundred years after his birth, and nearly fifty years after his death.

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A contributory factor has been the favourable attitude of certain modern composers. Some, like Schoenberg, Berg and Britten, have expressed unstinted admiration; but others have given only qualified approval, admitting Mahler's status as an important historical figure. Aaron Copland, for example, in *Our New Music* (1941), sees clearly the paradox that of all the romantics, this arch-romantic 'had most to give to the music of the future'. He says: 'Two facets of his musicianship were years in advance of his time. One was the curiously contrapuntal fabric of the musical texture, the other, more obvious, his strikingly original instrumentation. Viewed properly, these two elements are really connected. It was because his music was so contrapuntally conceived . . . that his instrumentation possesses that sharply-etched and clarified sonority that may be heard again in the music of later composers. . . . Unusual combinations of instruments, sudden unexpected juxtapositions of sonorities,

thinly-scored passages of instruments playing far apart in their less likely registers – all such effects are to be found again in the orchestral works of Schoenberg, Honegger, Shostakovich, or Benjamin Britten.'

Others have noticed how Mahler's harmonic explorations advanced the disruption of tonality begun in Wagner's *Tristan* towards the early free atonality of Schoenberg. Moreover, his method of 'constant variation' looks forward to serial procedures; the linear counterpoint of the Rondo-Burleske of the Ninth Symphony foreshadows Hindemith, and its wry modulations anticipate Prokofiev. Mahler was a focal point of the age: he stepped up the psychological tension in romanticism until it exploded into the violent patterns of 'our new music'.

All this is very true and interesting; but to regard Mahler as a mere predecessor is to ignore ninety per cent of his significance – to make the mistake of the romantics who saw Mozart purely as the 'precursor of romanticism'. Mahler is an outstanding composer in his own right: the foreshadowings in his music are only fascinating by-products of its own original genius, which often enough foreshadows very little. Aaron Copland sensed this: 'When all is said, there remains something extraordinarily touching about the man's work, something that makes one willing to put up with the weaknesses. Perhaps this is because his music is so very Mahler-like in every detail. All his nine symponies are suffused with personality – he had his own way of saying and doing everything. The irascible scherzos, the heaven-storming calls in the brass, the special quality of his communings with nature, the gentle melancholy of a transitional passage, the gargantuan Ländler, the pages of an incredible loneliness – all these, combined with his histrionics, an inner warmth, and the will to evoke the largest forms and the grandest musical thoughts, add up to one of the most fascinating composer-personalities of modern times.'

Yes, there is something strangely compelling about Mahler. He was, it is being realized, a great composer with something entirely new and significant to say. But his case is peculiarly difficult: he was a romantic, and therefore suspect; but he was a romantic with a difference, which complicates matters considerably. This 'difference' – what was entirely new and original in his music – has nothing to do with romanticism as such, but still seems to many as odd and impermissible as in his own day. However, it is the very stuff of his genius, and until it is understood, his music will still continue to perplex. Again, we must see the problem in its historical perspective.

During the twenties and thirties, the romantics were derided for using music to express 'extra-musical' ideas, and their stature was measured by the classical yardstick of 'pure music'. The attitude still persists, but now that the revolution is over in the creative sphere, it is possible to take a more objective historical view of the romantics: to realize that we are just as misguided in condemning them for their greatest achievement – the extension of music's expressive power to voice to the full the discontents, longings and

aspirations of humanity – as they were in depreciating the classics for *their* greatest achievement – the elevation of music on to the highest plane of pure beauty. Expression of feeling is an integral part of romanticism; to repudiate this element is to ignore the music's true signficance. We are always led back from technical and aesthetic considerations to the question 'What does the music express?' – and thence to the composer himself, as a man. What sort of a man was Mahler?

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First of all, he was a late romantic. But what exactly is a romantic, and further, a late one? Romanticism has many facets: at its best it is an exploration of the wonder and mystery of life, and of the powerful unconscious urges which impel human action; at its worst, an addiction to vague mystification and turgid sentimentality. But ignoring side-issues, romanticism was ultimately this: the liberation of man's confined spirit, at the time of the French Revolution, after centuries of tyrannical restraint on freedom of thought, feeling, and action. For the first time men were free to vent their long-suppressed yearnings and aspirations; to discover what man was and what he might become; to create their own destiny according to natural human needs and desires.

In music, the first proud mood of confidence was supremely voiced by Beethoven: the Eroica, the Fifth, the 'Choral', *Egmont* and *Fidelio* blazed a trail of humanistic optimism from 1803 to 1824. Unfortunately, the new world delayed, and disillusionment followed. Wagner conceived his Siegfried as 'the new man of the communistic paradise'; but the 1848 German revolution failed, and Siegfried went under in *The Twilight of the Gods* (completed in 1873). The doubt had arisen – could man achieve his ends? God, as Nietzsche said, was dead; man was now his own god; but could he attain to a god's fullness of being and fashion a perfect world? There followed the 'world-weariness' of the later romantics: discouraged by the failure of too-eager hopes they withdrew into imaginary paradises, to nurse their unfulfilled longings. In Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* (1898), the hero retreats into bitter-sweet resignation; Strauss, Delius and others lamented poignantly the sunset of the romantic ideal.

But since then, new tyrannies and new wars have shaken Europe, and we find ourselves the uneasy heirs of the first romantics, still committed to their ideal of refashioning the world, though more soberly in view of bitter experience. Their central problem – the discrepancy between human aspiration and human weakness – is still ours, manifest in Europe's powerlessness to fulfil boundless potentialities for progress, owing to the diversion of human energy into preparations for a possible war of annihilation.

Of all the late romantics, Mahler speaks most clearly to our age. An heir of Beethoven and Wagner, he was intensely preoccupied with this discrepancy between aspiration and weakness. His persistent theme is 'The spirit is willing,

but . . .' – no, not 'the flesh is weak'; rather, the spirit is willing, but is undermined by its own fatal weakness – faced by life's frustrations, it is a prey to discouragement, bitterness, emptiness, despair. This general human dilemma was acute in Mahler's case, as we can see by considering him as an individual.

Mahler was born on 7 July 1860. His father was a Jewish innkeeper in the Bohemian village of Kalischt (now Kaliště); shortly after Mahler's birth, the family moved to the nearby town of Iglau (now Jihlava). Bohemia was then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; Mahler's native tongue was German, and he ranked as an Austrian subject of Jewish descent. He was thus from the beginning affected by racial tensions: he belonged to an unpopular Austrian minority among Bohemians, and to an unpopular Jewish minority within the Austrian one. Throughout his life, he felt a sense of exile. He once said: 'I am thrice homeless, as a native of Bohemia in Austria, as an Austrian amongst Germans, as a Jew throughout the world. Always an intruder, never welcomed.' And when faced with an unpleasant situation, he would fall back smilingly on a favourite quotation: 'Who hath brought me into this land?'

Then there was the intensely unhappy family background of his childhood. The brutal father ill-treated the delicate mother, creating a father-hatred and a mother-fixation in Mahler himself; despite the family's poverty, the mother bore fourteen children; seven died in infancy, five of them when Mahler was a growing boy. When he was thirteen, his favourite brother Ernst, one year younger than himself, died after a long illness; and Mahler saw it through to the end, sitting for hours by his bed, telling him stories. Of those who survived, Alois grew up to be a crazy character, wildly parading delusions of grandeur; Otto, musically gifted, shot himself at the age of twenty-one.

Looking at Mahler in his childhood, we see a moody, introspective boy, with short spare figure and worried eyes, roaming the countryside and wondering how a world so fresh and beautiful can contain so much cruelty. We see him day-dreaming, listening to the fascinating sounds that echo around the landscape: cries of birds and indeterminate noises of nature, country song and dance, bugle-calls and tattoos from a nearby barracks. All these were later to be woven into his songs and symphonies.

He showed an early aptitude for music, picking out tunes on the piano as a child, and it was as a pianist that he first made his mark, with a recital in Jihlava at the age of ten. Skipping over his schooldays, we see him next as a youth in Vienna, studying at the Conservatoire. Outwardly, he is a normal (if specially gifted) student: he wins piano and composition prizes; revolts against authority and indulges in the customary pranks; gets to know Bruckner, a man of fifty-odd teaching at the University, and Hugo Wolf, a fellow-student with whom he shares rooms. But tension still surrounds him: his two closest friends are both mentally unstable (one, Hans Rott, a talented composer, later died in an asylum, as did Wolf). Mahler's inner preoccupation with the riddle of existence, the inescapable facts of cruelty, pain and death, persists. He seeks an answer in German romantic literature, in the philosophy of Schopenhauer

and Nietzsche, and above all in the music of Beethoven and Wagner. In his darkest moments, he contemplates suicide.

Fortunately, life claimed him. His tension, never to be resolved, found an outlet in activity. Such was the wealth of his nature that this activity had to be twofold – creative and re-creative, composing and conducting; and he pursued both callings with heart and soul. No other musician, except Wagner, possessed in such equal measure the introvert's capacity for self-absorption, the extrovert's capacity for self-assertion, and the iron will to weld them together and force them to do its purpose.

What preserved him was his genius as a composer, which flowered in *Das klagende Lied*, before he ever thought of being a conductor. At the age of twenty, Mahler was a composer and a pianist; but he obtained his first badly-needed job as conductor at the theatre of an Austrian health resort, taking up the baton from sheer necessity. He was never to lay it down again: although he often cursed the drudgery of a conductor's life, it obviously fulfilled an inner need, for he continued it long after it was materially necessary. During the first part of his career, he was dogged by the necessity of providing for his brothers and sisters; nevertheless, we see him slowly climbing the ladder of fame, moving from subordinate positions in provincial Austrian and German towns to important posts in Hamburg and Budapest, until at thirty-seven he reaches the very height of ambition – the Directorship at the Vienna Opera.

Still slight of physique, still idealistic of temperament, still haunted by dark questionings, he has acquired a keen, sceptical intellect, a terse ironic wit, and an extraordinary power of command. Flashing his piercing eyes through his glasses, and impatiently gnawing his lower lip, the man seems to be driven by a demon. Absorbed in his study, he penetrates to the inmost heart of the great masterpieces; in theatre and concert hall he strives ruthlessly for perfect performances of them, riding roughshod over the usual slackness and lack of imagination, sparing neither himself nor anyone else. Making enemies right and left by his utter indifference to personal considerations, he nevertheless exerts such a spell over singers, players and technicians alike that he achieves matchless realizations of the works of the great masters. As a conductor he becomes a legend in his own lifetime.

But all this only in the winter months. Every summer, retiring to the heart of the Austrian countryside, he bends his apparently inexhaustible energy to what is, after all, the real task of his life – the creation of an entirely new kind of music: vast symphonies in which the riddle of human existence shall find at once a full statement and a resolution. Then in the autumn, with a symphony fully sketched, back to the routine of the opera-house, any spare time from which is devoted to the labour of completing the symphony in full score. Small wonder that this man, living two full lives and never taking a proper holiday, should find his heart failing before he was fifty. We see him in his last years burning out before his time, knowing he is soon to die. Forced to leave Vienna in 1907, owing to official and public antagonism (fomented by anti-Semitism),

he goes to America to conduct the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and the Metropolitan Opera Company; but he still returns to Austria each summer to compose his last works. He died in Vienna on 18 May 1911, fifty days before his fifty-first birthday.

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To understand Mahler's personality, we have to set it in its proper framework – that of the 'great artist', as the term was understood in the nineteenth century. A 'great artist' was more than a composer, a painter or a poet: in an age which had lost faith in religious doctrines, and felt the need of human prophets, he was a kind of superman, a far-seeing visionary with a mission and a message. To this category belonged such various figures as Wagner, Flaubert, Rodin and Rilke – men who devoted their whole vital power to artistic creation, leaving neither time nor energy for the affairs of everyday life. Mahler, like all 'great artists', shouldered humanity's burden and took himself very seriously. What he felt and thought about life, and expressed in his music, seemed to him of the utmost consequence, and he was accustomed to having it regarded in this light: after the first performance of the Eighth Symphony, Thomas Mann wrote to Mahler, calling him 'the man who, as I believe, expresses the art of our time in its profoundest and most sacred form'. Like Wagner, he inevitably surrounded himself with the portentousness inseparable from the cultural atmosphere of those days, and in pursuit of his 'mission' entirely absorbed the lives and personalities of his wife and his friends. Yet it would be wrong to regard this as the whole picture.

Beneath all this, the man was very human. There was his strong sense of humour, his constant willingness to help other musicians, his final remorse and attempted atonement for having unwittingly starved his wife of love and affection. Above all, there was the fact that, like other 'great artists', he was not simply concerned with himself, but tormented by human problems in general. Bruno Walter describes how Mahler's expression would plunge suddenly from cheerfulness to gloom, and he would say: 'What grim darkness underlies life! Whence have we come? Whither are we bound? Is it true, as Schopenhauer says, that I willed this life before I was conceived? Why do I fancy I am free, when my character constricts me like a prison? To what purpose is all this toil and suffering? How can cruelty and evil be the work of a loving God? Will death at last reveal the meaning of life?' The equivalence of 'I' and 'we' shows clearly Mahler's sense of oneness with humanity, as his contrast of 'freedom' with 'constricting character' reveals him facing the crucial romantic (and human) dilemma. The true justification of Mahler the 'great artist' is that he did have something vital to say, and, like Wagner, devoted his whole existence to saying it.

What was it that he said? Mahler's inner conflict was the eternal one between innocence and experience, idealism and realism, affirmation and denial. Of a basically life-loving nature, he was confronted from the beginning with

the problems of cruelty, pain and death, and thus with the question of the value and purpose of human life. He could not fall back trustingly on an inherited faith, like Bruckner; he could not accept either the Jewish religion (his own father was a free-thinker) or the official Austrian Catholic religion (though he did undergo baptism and struggled hard for faith, even achieved it at times). Nor could he ignore the question, like Strauss, nor give a firm negative answer and embrace hedonism, like Delius. The problem persistently tormented him, and his life and art became a quest for the truth.

He was one of those like Keats, for whom 'the miseries of the world are misery, and will not let them rest'. Or, to substitute his name for Webster's in T. S. Eliot's lines: 'Mahler was much possessed by death and saw the skull beneath the skin'. But the other side of the picture should be stressed. His obsession with suffering was the inverse product of an instinctive belief in life. Too much has been made of Mahler's 'self-pity' and 'pessimism', on the strength of his last works, written under the shadow of death. He was a healthy lover of life – a swimmer, a walker, a hill-climber; even after the doctor's death sentence he could say 'I am thirstier than ever for life'. And there is much exultant energy of spirit in his music: six of his eleven symphonic works reach out all-embracingly towards humanity, like Beethoven's. Many of his movements are full of the sheer joy of living; this even shines through the unutterable sadness of the valedictory finale of the Ninth Symphony, and springs up resurgent in the (unfinished) scherzo of the Tenth. Only because Mahler's instinctive, positive side was beset by 'the spirit that denies', did he become the quintessential voice of romantic discontent.

But there was more to it than romanticism. What affronts the idealist – the cruelty, vulgarity, triviality and apparent meaninglessness of life – he stared boldly in the face: he neither escaped from it into a private paradise like the late romantics, nor ignored it altogether as a non-artistic element like the classics, but acknowledged it and fought against it. This is the 'difference' that sets Mahler apart from the romantics, and indeed from all other composers. If half of him was a romantic, the other half was that characteristic twentieth-century figure: the restless seeker for the naked truth (whether 'beautiful' or 'ugly'), ridden with doubt and perplexity, ill-at-ease in an unfriendly cosmos.

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Obviously, a man like Mahler would never achieve the Olympian calm of a Beethoven or the cool detachment of a Stravinsky; nor, on the other hand, the nihilism of an Alban Berg. In fact, there is no one like Mahler; he is a composer *sui generis*. To justify this statement requires special pleading – of the kind which once had to explain that Wagner's operas contained no arias and Hugo Wolf's songs no tunes.

Mahler chose for his musical medium the symphony – the 'pure' musical form – which naturally invites a straight comparison with Beethoven, Brahms,

or Sibelius. But in fact no such comparison is possible. His symphonies are of a different kind – a kind of their own, which can only be judged on their own standards.

Let us begin by tracing his musical antecedents. His symphonies stem from the 'programme symphony' originated by Beethoven. Beethoven stood between two worlds, classic and romantic; and the romantics' view of him as programme-symphonist, derived from the Eroica, Fifth, Pastoral and 'Choral', was no less legitimate than the moderns' view of him as pure symphonist, derived from the Fourth, Seventh and Eighth. But in Beethoven's programme symphonies, so classical in form, the programme is largely implicit; it was Berlioz who inaugurated the romantic symphony with a detailed programme, which was followed by Liszt and others. From Beethoven then, but through Berlioz and Liszt, Mahler inherited his conception of the symphony as a work concretely expressive of aspects of human life.

But Beethoven's expressive symphonic style was also developed by Wagner, in the explicit world of music-drama; and in using this style to express the emotions of his dramatic characters, Wagner increased the expressive power of symphonic music to an unprecedented degree. Mahler adopted this new expressive power. He once said: 'Wagner appropriated the means of expression of symphonic music; and now, in the same way, the symphonic composer . . . will avail himself of the expressive power gained for music by the achievement of Wagner'. He also derived from Wagner (through Bruckner) his vast time-scale. Mahler's symphonies stand in relation to Mozart's as *The Ring* does to *Don Giovanni*: as Wagner expanded operatic form to express an all-embracing view of life, and as Beethoven expanded the classical symphony for the same purpose, so did Mahler expand the Beethoven symphony to express a whole world of feeling.

From Beethoven's Ninth, he inherited the idea of including a chorus and soloists in a symphony; from Beethoven's Pastoral and Berlioz's *Fantastique*, he derived the liberty to have five movements if necessary, instead of the usual four; from Wagner the freedom to expand the orchestra according to expressive need, and (partly through Bruckner) a preference for brass tone for powerful affirmation. What he did not derive from Wagner was his orchestral style; only a few hints from Berlioz went to the creation of his fantastic and uniquely expressive instrumentation.

Mahler's symphonies, then, are vast ambitious works in the programmatic tradition. But the word 'programmatic' needs clarification. A programme may be purely inward-emotional, as in Beethoven's Eroica, or part inward-emotional part outward-factual, as in Beethoven's Pastoral and Berlioz's *Fantastique*. And the factual element is always an embarrassment; since music, which can so profoundly express human feeling, seems childish when trying to portray concrete actuality. Hence Berlioz advised against printing the 'story' of the *Fantastique* in concert programmes, desiring the work to stand on its musical (and, we may add, emotionally expressive) merits.

Likewise Tchaikovsky, providing a programme for his Fourth, to please Nadezhda von Meck, stressed the danger of expounding music in words, describing his attempt as 'chaotic and incomplete'.

Nevertheless, programmes were not just a game. The romantics intended their symphonies to be expressive of life; the difficulty was explaining in words just what they expressed. Thus Tchaikovsky, when Taneyev objected to the Fourth Symphony's programmatic nature, replied: 'I . . . don't see why you should consider that a defect. On the contrary I should be sorry if symphonies that meant nothing flowed from my pen. . . . Most assuredly my symphony has a programme, but one that cannot be expressed in words: the attempt would be ludicrous. But is not this proper to a symphony? Should not a symphony reveal those wordless urges that hide in the heart, asking earnestly for expression?'

The trouble is that words tend to produce concrete images, and these distract from the music's real purport, which is emotional or psychological. Hence Mahler, asked by a journalist for the 'meaning' of his Second Symphony, replied: 'I believe I have expressed my intention clearly enough in the music. When I conceived it, I was in no way concerned with a detailed programme of events, but at most with an emotion.' Yet he eventually gave the Second a programme – only to reject it later! But this is understandable: he wanted, he said, to leave the interpretation to the 'individual insight of the listener'; finding little insight, he tried to explain in words; finding the words taken literally instead of symbolically, he withdrew them.

This discussion of romantic musical 'meaning' may be summed up by the clear-headed Wagner. 'When the musician feels prompted to sketch the smallest composition, he owes it simply to the stimulus of a feeling that usurps his whole being at the hour of conception. This mood may be brought about by an outward experience, or have risen from a secret inner spring; whether it shows itself as melancholy, joy, desire, contentment, love or hatred, in the musician it will always take a musical shape. . . . But grand, passionate, lasting emotions, these drive the musician to those vaster, more intense conceptions to which we owe, among other things, the origin of a Sinfonia Eroica. These greater moods, such as deep suffering of soul or potent exultation, may date from outer causes . . . but when they force the musician to creation, they have already turned to music in him, so that at the moment of creative inspiration, it is no longer the outer event that governs the composer, but the musical sensation it has begotten in him. . . .'

The programmes of Mahler's symphonies, then, are largely interior ones, concerned with deep-seated emotions rather than with external actuality. Their overall form normally derives from Beethoven's Fifth and Tchaikovsky's Fourth: presentation of a conflict in the opening movement; descent to a more relaxed mood in the second; return to the plane of the first movement in the finale, which brings a resolution. But this form is considerably expanded: the first movement is larger and more discursive; the central two (or three, or