

The Newly Discovered Source for Mahler's First Symphony: Issues of Context

by James L. Zychowicz and Susan M. Filler

In November 2002 the apparent discovery of a new source for Mahler's First Symphony came to light, and articles in various newspapers covered the prospect that such a document could offer. Unfortunately, the item was not what the press led the public to believe; but the situation is useful for what it reveals about our knowledge of Mahler's music and the manuscripts associated with it.

On 22 November 2002 an announcement of the discovery of the score was made by Noam ben Ze'ev in the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz. The composer Charles Zachary Bornstein of the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance had found what was described as "a score containing revisions for Gustav Mahler's First Symphony written in the composer's own hand." The Associated Press version of the story, entitled "Rare Mahler Score Found" (dateline Jerusalem, 22 November 2002, and published in the New York Times and elsewhere) included the comment that "Musicologists said the discovery of such a rare manuscript held enormous value, shedding light on the composer's thought process." Presumably the report was indebted to the opinion of the French Mahler specialist, Henry-Louis de La Grange, who was consulted by Bornstein and who rendered the opinion that the alterations in the score were in Mahler's own handwriting. On 8 December 2002 the New York Times published an article by Paul Griffiths entitled "What Mahler Had in Mind (Or Was It?)" Griffiths began his article by referring to the "astonishing discovery of a fresh manuscript source for Mahler's First Symphony." Later in the same article, he called the new source "a copy of the first edition" and wondered why Mahler's publisher at the time, Universal Edition of Vienna, ignored the revisions; he further stated that "there is no single authentic source" for a work like this. On 17 December the Associated Press released an article by George Hahn, "Recently found Mahler score possibly revised by someone else" (dateline Vienna, 17 December 2002). In that article, Renate Stark-Voit was quoted as stating that the revisions were possibly made by someone other than Mahler. Further, in a letter published in the New York Times on 29 December 2002, Reinhold Kubik of the *Internationale Gustav Mahler Gesellschaft* of Vienna questioned the assumptions that Griffiths made and stated that the IGMG would give the new source further study.

Score, manuscript, copy of the first edition, what is at the core of this discovery? Would the existence of this source make it possible to question the nature of other sources of Mahler's First Symphony? Is it truly difficult to know how to deal with sources like this one? These are questions that come to mind when reading the various published accounts of this putative discovery.

The press reports suggest confusion and bewilderment, but manuscript study offers some assistance. It is unfortunate that specialists familiar with Mahler's manuscript sources, including La Grange, Edward Reilly and Donald Mitchell did not have the opportunity to review the entire score prior to the publication of these comments. While the first reports about the score were uniformly positive judgements, a later report retrenched the verdict. Ultimately, the value of the score was questioned because the score may have included markings in a hand other than Mahler's. The reports raised some eyebrows among those who have firsthand experience with Mahler's manuscripts. The first report included technical terms which were conflicting and misleading; the second report, containing a reassessment of the source, was of concern because of the sudden about-face on the matter. Yet a clear understanding of terminology associated with manuscript study would have been helpful in both cases so that the public could understand the value of the source that is now known. The divergence of opinions between La Grange and the musicologists at the Mahler-Gesellschaft also suggests that professional divisions among Mahler specialists were a factor in the valuation of the score.

Those who work with source materials for Mahler or any composer must make a clear distinction between manuscripts (documents entirely handwritten) and printed sources formally typeset or engraved. This is necessary for understanding the provenance of materials in the process

of composition; without such clarification it becomes easy to assume that establishing authoritative texts for Mahler's music would be impossible. While musicological and philological terminology may appear cumbersome, it offers a way to evaluate sources and establish a context for discussion.

Mahler's Manuscripts and His Compositional Process

JLZ: Mahler's manuscripts are written evidence of his compositional process. He used the various sketches and drafts to compose the finished work; thus, such materials are best understood as documents critical to Mahler's thinking rather than a replacement for them. It is possible to view and understand sketches, but it is also important to refrain, as much as possible, from inferring too much from our privileged vantage point of knowing the completed works.

The manuscripts for Mahler's symphonies comprise differing materials, including written-out plans of movements, sketchbooks, preliminary sketches, short scores, draft orchestral scores and fair copies of completed works. In addition, some manuscripts comprise verbal texts which Mahler copied by hand and, at times, annotated. Distinctions between such materials reflect the assessment of sources which should help to place a manuscript at some point in the compositional process. Without such information it is difficult to grasp the relevance of a source and the context in which it stands. A list of manuscript types with brief descriptions of each is given in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Manuscript Sources

Sketches: Plans of movements. Includes lists of movements, sometimes with planned keys.

Handwritten Texts: Copies of text in longhand, sometimes with indications of voicing.

Sketchbooks: Two sketchbooks are known to exist, but Mahler used others. Accounts of use date to the time he was working on the Fourth Symphony.

Sketchbook Leaves: Variable pages from probably complete sketchbooks exist, including sketches from the time of the Eighth and Ninth Symphonies.

Preliminary Sketches: Single leaves of large-size paper, usually inscribed broadside (oblong) on one side; often one or two staves, sometimes as many as four; a single set may include both simple and complex sketches, depending on what Mahler chose to preserve; continuity indicated at the top of the page with either Roman numerals or Arabic numbers.

Short Score: First continuous version of a work, handwriting consistent for the entire manuscript; usually four staves per system, but can vary; sometimes called by the German term *Particell*.

Draft Score: First orchestral score of a work, often inscribed broadside, as in the cases of preliminary sketches and short scores; includes tempo markings and expression marks.

Holograph/Fair Copy: Revised orchestral score of a work, sometimes in the hand of a copyist rather than Mahler; may include revisions in Mahler's hand in that case.

SMF: The sketchbooks we have seen, as well as the leaves from such sketchbooks, are small-sized, since Mahler would jot down thematic ideas in such books when they occurred to him at times when he was not working at his desk. The preliminary sketches mentioned above are on large-sized paper, which would be awkward to carry around on a walk; therefore we can assume that, at that stage, Mahler was formally working at his desk and not simply scribbling down ideas. It is interesting to note that the oblong paper used in the preliminary sketches and the short score is a feature of Mahler's period in Vienna beginning in 1897 and continuing into his American period. It is rarely found in the works before that period, and when we see this oblong paper it usually carries the logo of "J. E. & Co." (standing for Josef Eberle, the Viennese lithographer). This helps in dating some of these materials.

JLZ: It is important to realize that terminology used in connection with Mahler's sketches is connected directly to his systematic compositional process. Existing manuscripts represent the order through which he notated, revised and ordered his ideas. Short thematic ideas may be found in sketchbooks or on some early single pages of preliminary sketches. Since Mahler did not preserve all materials en route to finishing a composition, it is difficult to determine the full extent of his work at his stage. Yet the ideas that he wanted to use do emerge, and at some later point he would organize them prior to creating the short score. He would usually establish such order prior to the short score by the use of Roman numerals or Arabic numbering, probably after he considered a variety of ideas and versions of ideas; he would choose the pages he wanted to use in the preparation of the short score.

The short score represents a much more regular phase of work than do sketchbooks or page sketches. At this point of composition, Mahler attempted to establish continuity within individual movements; as a result, the short score is relatively continuous and even, the handwriting is regular, and the number of staves within a system is generally constant. While the shape of individual pages might differ in a set of preliminary sketches (being both upright and oblong, and of different sizes), the short score is likely to be uniform in that respect. This would not preclude the possibility of second thoughts; but, in pursuing them, Mahler made revisions in a more orderly fashion than in preliminary sketches. While in early materials he would cross out passages and continue, at the short score stage he would inscribe revisions or insertions at the bottom of a page or even on a separate page (usually labeled with the word *Einlage*). Differences between the short score and the finished work are less profound than we would find when comparing sketches with the finished work. An excellent example of a short score for the third movement of the Fourth Symphony is found in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York; this source includes pages labeled with Roman numerals and insertion pages labeled *Einlage* which Mahler composed after he had numbered the original set of finished pages.

SMF: A short score is a great leap past sketches because it lays out the form of a whole movement. Mahler obviously wanted to be sure of form relatively early in the compositional process. But sometimes even he would be taken by surprise as he developed the form of a movement. In the case of the Third Symphony, he began with the movements we know today as the second through the last, and only while he was writing the short score of the first movement did he realize (and he mentioned this in his correspondence) that it would be about half an hour long. He must have understood then that the length of that movement would throw the balance of the whole symphony out of kilter!—Also, at the short score stage, he would sometimes circle individual bars rather than cross them out, and this was a signal that he wanted to rethink them but not necessarily omit them.

JLZ: The short score is essentially a working score that is laid out in systems comprising, most often, four staves but is not yet orchestrated. Only in the draft orchestral score (*Partiturentwurf*) would Mahler lay out the score for orchestra. He sometimes wrote individual verbal notes about instrumentation in preliminary sketches and short scores, but only in the draft score did he have the opportunity to realize orchestration throughout the work. Among the holdings of the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center is a set of materials for the Seventh Symphony which include a page of the short score for the first movement inserted between pages of the draft orchestral score at the corresponding passage. While not unique, this is an excellent example showing how individual stages of composition connect to each other in the working process.

As the first orchestral score of a symphonic work, the draft score should be treated carefully. It was not intended for performance, but was rather a provisional version of the score that Mahler would use in the score that he intended to perform. In fact, the draft score—often appearing on oblong paper (*Querformat*)—had a different appearance from that of Mahler's fair copy or other copyists' manuscripts, which were usually written on upright paper (*Hochformat*). It was unusual for Mahler to make substantive changes in the draft score, but sometimes he did change his mind. A dramatic example of such substantive differences occurred in the first movement of the Ninth Symphony.

The fair copy (*Reinschrift*) is the score of the finished work. It is usually in upright rather than oblong format, and is usually in Mahler's hand and occasionally in that of a copyist. Historically the fair copy is the final version of the work as sanctioned by the composer, and does not necessarily refer to the condition of the physical manuscript. In some works, Mahler annotated the fair copy. An example of this is in the case of the Fourth Symphony, where Mahler had second thoughts and, in turn, crossed out, including the doubling of the lowest horn part with the tuba in the Scherzo. Other revisions included rephrasing of tempo markings or performance indications which, in turn, reflect Mahler's attempts to improve as many details as possible. The fair copy was also the basis of the first published edition of a work. It was essentially the manuscript that Mahler sent to his publisher; yet, he did not cease to revise his compositions even after they were in print.

SMF: In the fair copy of the Seventh Symphony, Mahler actually wrote in the part for mandolin in the fourth movement. It sticks out like a sore thumb because he wrote it in a different color from the black ink predominant in the score, and it appears to have been written rather hastily.

It might be a good idea to make distinctions between certain terms. "Manuscript," as we have been using it here, can refer to any handwritten musical score, whether the composer or somebody else did the writing, at any stage of composition from sketches to fair copy. "Autograph" can mean something similar, but it is often used to refer to a complete handwritten score ("the autograph") rather than early handwritten materials which don't represent a whole work. "Holograph" is specifically used by musicologists to refer to a whole score in the composer's own handwriting, and thus differentiate it from an autograph, which could have been written by either the composer or a professional copyist.

Revisions after Publication

JLZ: When Mahler finished the fair copy of a symphony, the work essentially had its shape. It remained for him to perform the work, have it published, and—for most of his music—revise details in the score afterward. The process of revision after the completion of a work is complex but not impossible to fathom. But it is important to keep in mind that specific autograph materials are associated with each stage of work, and knowledge of the provenance of materials is critical to understanding of their value.

SMF: Mahler was a compulsive reviser, but it is important to note that he made certain types of revisions at certain stages of the compositional process. The changes he might have made in manuscript sources usually involved melody, harmony, rhythm, form and overall balance between the movements of a symphony. In subsequent stages, from the fair copy through publication, he was more likely to make additions and changes in performance markings and orchestration. A rare exception is in the case of the Sixth Symphony, where he changed the order of the two inner movements after the first edition was published. There is still argument among Mahler specialists today about whether that change was temporary—did Mahler go back to the original order with the scherzo preceding the andante—or permanent, did he let the andante stand preceding the scherzo?

JLZ: The publisher would use the fair copy as the basis for the engraved score; but, en route to the final approved copy, the publisher would create a set of proofs, which would give Mahler the opportunity to correct any errors that might have been made and to make any final revisions. In general, publishers in Mahler's time who worked with engraved plates wanted to reduce the number of revisions in the proof stages. For this reason, most changes would have been made in the fair copy or, by necessity, left until later if the publisher prepared a new edition of the work. (Some publishers allowed for corrections of individual pages between printings; but that is the exception, not the rule, and it often leads to complications when valuing sources.) When corrections were made and the proofs were checked, the publisher would proceed with printing and binding the score.

But that was not the end of Mahler's involvement with the published scores. In various letters, he mentioned sending to a conductor a copy of a score in which he included his latest revisions that he wanted performed. Such changes seem more amorphous than the formal

revision that occurred before publication of a revised edition of a work. When he made revisions prior to a new edition, Mahler generally worked with a set of proofs made from plates, since he could not work with the metal plates themselves. These kinds of revisions can be extensive corrections of details, often made in blue crayon (*Blaustift*); however, annotations in this color are not unique to Mahler. It is important to read any corrections in context and with a critical eye for the handwriting.

SMF: Blue crayon can often be found in manuscript sources too. Mahler generally used three types of writing instruments: plain pencil, blue crayon and black ink. He used the blue crayon very extensively on the title pages of the movements of the Tenth Symphony, especially when making changes in the numbers indicating the order of the movements in that work. Another example is the use of large Arabic numbers in the manuscripts of the unknown Scherzo in c minor and Presto in F major.

JLZ: In addition to making revisions in a set of proofs or a printed score, Mahler left lists of corrections. All of these are possible sources for the increasingly precise changes that he wanted to bring to his scores. Rather than arbitrary changes, these are improved and, perhaps, more effective ways to express ideas which were sometimes difficult to notate. For example, a passage with eighth-notes originally including staccato dots to indicate separations between the notes might be re-notated as sixteenth-notes followed by sixteenth-rests. Also, conventional expressions in Italian might be replaced by instructions in German; and that might be revised several times until Mahler thought it was as clear as possible for the performers.

SMF: I'd like to see a comparative study of Mahler's publishers and their priorities. The question of language in a score--Italian or German, or both--is only one of several points that would be interesting to address. It might be worth considering whether publishers differ because of location and history. Mahler's publishers were located in Vienna, Leipzig, Berlin and Mainz, and there were distinctions between the Germans and Austrians because of politics. The Seventh Symphony was published in Berlin. A few years later, rather than issuing a new edition incorporating Mahler's emendations, Bote & Bock published a list of errata. That was very different from the way Mahler's changes were handled in Vienna, when the early works published by Josef Weinberger were taken over by Universal Edition. The scores themselves were done over.

JLZ: Some sets of revisions are numerous, and it is important to determine the order in which revisions were made before drawing conclusions about any single source. It is helpful when a source is dated on the document itself, since a publisher often stamped a date on revisions when they were submitted to prevent confusion with other sets of revisions. But there are cases when a task is more difficult, sometimes requiring correlation of Mahler's remarks in his letters with a revised score. See Table 2 for a summary of terms dealing with printed sources.

TABLE 2. Printed Sources

Published Music/Publisher's Proofs: Often unbound; may include the impression of the engraved plate on the edge of the page.

Publisher's Proofs with Autograph Corrections: May include handwritten annotations by the composer or editor; verify the date which is usually inscribed on the first page.

First Edition: First published version of a work; may include a plate number (Platen Nummer) at the bottom of the page.

Printed Score with Autograph Corrections: Printed edition with handwritten markings from the composer or, possibly, another conductor; verify the publication date through the plate number.

Lists of Corrections: Handwritten or typed corrections to be made in a score. Performance Parts: Useful in verifying the edition used for a performance; not always reliable for specific information since the provenance of markings can vary.

SMF: A word of caution about performance parts: since these are used by the individual members of the orchestra at their stands, it is not unusual for handwritten markings in the parts to come from them rather than the conductor or the composer. If the changes are made simply to clarify performance standards--for instance, bowings in the string sections--there is no harm done; but there are changes that can result in conflict between the players' parts and the conductor's score, which could really be disastrous.

Critical Editions

JLZ: Given the number of materials that might exist for a single work, the prospect of an edition may be daunting for some. It is important to realize that a critical edition is usually based on a fundamental text corroborated with other sources. The editor may choose to present a historic edition of the work (an edition with its basis on a specific source, perhaps the first edition).

SMF: This was the decision made by the musicologist Hans Redlich in the case of his edition of the Sixth Symphony. He chose the first edition, which predated many of Mahler's changes in the orchestration and definitely predated the problem of the order of the two inner movements. It appears that he made that decision because the symphony had already been published in the Critical Edition, in the later version incorporating Mahler's revisions in the orchestration. It was a question of copyright, since C. F. Kahnt had published the score first, and Redlich's Mahler scores were published by Ernst Eulenberg.

JLZ: Another possibility is to prepare an Ausgabe letzter Hand or an Ausgabe letzter Fassung (an attempt to present the last known version of the work that the composer prepared). The latter approach is the basis of the critical edition (*Kritische Gesamtausgabe*) prepared by the Internationale Gustav Mahler Gesellschaft of Vienna; it seems to be a desirable goal for that publication. Since Mahler's revisions reflected his refinements to the presentation of musical notation, the last revisions should represent the culmination of years of consideration after conducting his works himself or hearing them performed by others.

A problem, however, with using the last set of corrections in an edition is the question of sanctioning changes. It is not a matter of whether the revisions are authentic, but whether they should be taken as the composer's final statement on the work. Some musicologists believe that the last corrections taken into performance should be used, but others hold that whatever Mahler wrote last is enough. In this article space does not allow for explication of the comparative value of these choices; a reliable edition should clearly identify the sources and the editorial approach in a critical introduction that clarifies the process for anyone reading the score.

SMF: Any controversy about whether Mahler or an editor made handwritten changes should take into consideration that there are examples of other Mahler works in which such changes are definitely not in Mahler's handwriting. This is not so crucial if you bear in mind that such changes may well have been made according to Mahler's instructions to the publisher; not even Mahler would have hand-written changes in every single score in a publisher's archive. That's what editors and proofreaders are hired to do. The proof of the importance of the changes in the score in Jerusalem will be in their use in a new edition of the First Symphony.

JLZ: Whatever the approach chosen by an editor, the actual job of editing usually involves many hours of reviewing all details involved with the score including musical notation, text underlay in vocal works, verbal markings and other graphic elements in the score. In this time-consuming process the editor prepares a critical report containing detail about kinds of changes made to the basic text and the reasons for making them. The report is useful in calling attention to differences between the critical edition and the source, and the reasons for making changes.

The editor should be familiar with all known sources for the work and should prepare for the editing process by assigning priority to each source. In each volume of the Mahler critical edition, it has rightly been considered important to identify the fair copy, first edition and various sets of revisions that Mahler made later. The editor's expertise and consistency influences the basis on which priority is given to each

source and thus remains faithful to Mahler's work while improving on our understanding.

Critical editions can include materials which are unresolved or allow multiple solutions. In addition to the critical report, the editor may use musical notation within the score to indicate choices which the performer may wish to consider. (For example, in the Verdi edition, slurs from instrumental parts that might be useful are added to the score but are notated as dashed rather than continuous curves.) Likewise, editorial dynamic signs may be added in bold type rather than the bold-italic type traditionally used for dynamics in a source.

SMF: An edition of the *Vier Lieder* (Four Songs) of Alma Mahler scheduled for publication shortly shows how important it is to give careful attention to differences between sources. A comparison of the versions of these songs for voice and piano resulted in a critical introduction of six pages, much of which was devoted to actual changes in the music itself. It seemed best to incorporate this information into the introduction rather than try variants on the page with the music.

JLZ: Lists of variants in the critical report are useful in affording the performer understanding of the nature of the source materials. An editor who considers a source important, but chooses not to implement various readings which may be inconclusive, may consign variant readings to this list as an effective means of presenting the information in proper context.

Toward a Context for the New Source for the First Symphony

JLZ: Only by evaluation of sources is it possible to understand their context, and this framework is important in discussion of new sources when they emerge, which has now happened in the case of the First Symphony. Without some idea of sources for the work which were previously known when the critical edition of the symphony was published in Vienna, it is difficult, if not impossible, to make a sound judgment of the value of the score in Jerusalem. This is unfortunate because an almost unknown document was over-valued before it was available to the community of scholars who could have assessed it on the basis of years of experience with Mahler sources.

At this point, we have seen only a few newspaper accounts which hardly represent the newly discovered score accurately: a single page of the source was published in facsimile in Ha'aretz and reproduced in the New York Times. Placing the score in the context of published Mahler sources, it is probably a page of the first edition marked for editing when Universal Edition took over publication of the First Symphony in 1906. While it is difficult to assess such a source from a single page, the revisions on it are of interest for their place in the score as it was refined, and the source clearly merits further investigation.

SMF: The discovery of the five-movement version of this symphony in the Osborn collection in 1967 was, perhaps, more significant than this one, since it not only introduced us to the completely unknown "Blumine" movement but educated us to Mahler's methodology in revising orchestration. However, this too is an important discovery. It will be interesting to see if a new edition of the symphony, and new performances and recordings, happen in the future.

Christoph Eschenbach's Farewell Season at Ravinia Music Festival

Before beginning his tenure as the Music Director of the Philadelphia Orchestra, Christoph Eschenbach will be celebrated as conductor, pianist and mentor through the music of Beethoven, Berlioz and Bernstein in his final season as music director of Ravinia Festival. His leaving is undoubtedly a great loss for every music-lover in the Chicago area.

For more information, please visit the official website of the Ravinia Music Festival: <http://www.ravinia.org>

"Mahlerthon" Announcement:

The First Mahlerthon of 2003 will be held, as usual, at Mr. Leslie Schwartz's place on Sunday, March 15. We will listen to the Seventh and the Eighth Symphonies, and the listening session will begin promptly at 1:30 pm. Please e-mail Teng-Leong Chew if you would like to attend this event.

In the Next Issue...

Mahler – Last of the Romantics

Mahler's life spanned the critical period that saw the end of the great Romantic period, and the beginning of something new. Mahler died in 1911, a year which also appeared to be a major transition for many composers. Schoenberg finished his *Gurrelieder*, Sibelius produced his bare, and enigmatic fourth, and after the completion of *Rosenkavalier*, Strauss took an abrupt turn in style. Winthrop Sargeant explored the curious position of Mahler as the pivotal figure during this great transition in the musical landscape in his 1940 article in "Chord and Discord".

How to be an Angel in Mahler's Eighth

... with special thanks to Sir Georg Solti and Margaret Hillis for showing the way to heaven! In the next section of "A Member Remembers..." Susan Filler recalls her experience singing in the chorus of Mahler's mammoth Symphony No. 8. Solti conducted the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in this performance at the Civic Opera House in 1971, the first time since the symphony was premiered in the Windy City in 1917. (* We have postpone the release of this article to bring you the critical essay on the manuscript of the First Symphony in this issue.)

FEATURED ESSAY

Mahler's Unknown Scherzo in c minor and Presto in F major

At the turn of the twentieth century Mahler drafted two symphonic movements, a Scherzo in c minor and a Presto in F major, which do not correspond to any of the movements in the ten known symphonies. Susan M. Filler has been working with the manuscript materials for over twenty years, having first made a critical transcription and then developed a performing version based on similar guidelines to those Deryck Cooke used in his performing version of the Tenth Symphony. This article will include an analysis of Mahler's manuscript materials and the principles allowing for a performing version, a subject which has been controversial among Mahler specialists.

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