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***Canonising late and early Mahler: sentimentality, authenticity, and ‘historically informed’ arrangements and completions***

Gustav Mahler’s symphonies and mature songs have long been staples of the performing canon--itself an institutionalised driving force of classical music culture. His oeuvre is relatively small, and there is a palpable sense of loss in both scholarly and popular criticism regarding what might have been had he not died aged only 51 in 1911. As such, it is perhaps unsurprising that there have been widespread efforts to bring to life the incomplete music from both ends of his compositional career: Deryck Cooke’s is only the most famous of many ‘completions’ of the tenth symphony, while Alfred Schnittke was among those drawn to filling out the fragmentary scherzo of Mahler’s youthful abandoned piano quartet. The many later orchestrations of Mahler’s early *Lieder und Gesänge*—the only volume of songs he didn’t orchestrate himself—do similar canonising work in bringing the songs into a prized orchestral state.

In this paper I situate such arrangements and completions within a mid- to late-twentieth-century culture that privileged ‘man and music’ scholarship and ideas of greatness, where symphonic completions were academic pursuits of utmost prestige, and where pastiche compositional techniques were foregrounded on curricula. Focusing on orchestrations and re-orchestrations of Mahler’s music by Colin and David Matthews (including C. Matthews’s corrective orchestration of *Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde*, which Mahler ‘would surely’ have altered himself had he lived to hear its premiere), I demonstrate that deeply entrenched, institutionalised ideas of authenticity and authorial fidelity often go hand-in-hand with practices of ‘historically informed’ arrangement. Further, I consider the sentimental dimension of such endeavours, which display, above all, a committed admiration and dedication to Mahler—both the music and the man.

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