POPULAR GREEK MELODIES

AWAKENING OF THE BRIDE
O joie de mon ame,
Joie de mon coeur, tresor qui m'est
si cher;
Joie de l'ame et du coeur,
Toi que j'aime ardemment,
Tu es plus beau, plus beau qu'un
ange.
O lorsque tu parsis, ange si doux,

ANGE SI DOUX DEVANT NOS YEUX.

CHANSON DES CUEILLEUSES DE

TOURISMES

CHURCH

TOUT GAI!

GALLANT CAN COMPARE

ME?

SUNG, Brought Together in

NUMBER.

WORLD, O Holy Virgin,

Bravest in the World!

GUSTAV MAHLER

BORN July 7, 1860, Kalisch, Bohemia.

DIED May 18, 1911, Vienna, Austria.

THREE RÜCKERT SONGS

Mahler composed “Ich atmet einen
linden Duft” and “Ich bin der Welt
abhanden gekommen” in the summer of
1901; “Liebst du um Schönheit” was
composed in August 1902. The first two
songs were premiered on January 29,
1905, in Vienna, with the composer
conducting. “Liebst du um Schönheit”
was sung, in its original version for voice
and piano, on February 8, 1907. It was
later orchestrated by Max Putzman; the
score calls for two oboes and English
horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, two
horns, harp, and strings. “Ich atmet
einen linden Duft” is scored for flute,
oboe, clarinet, two bassoon, two horns,
of "Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen") were given at Orchestra Hall on February 19, 20, and 22, 1981, with Hanna Schwarz as soloist and Claudio Abbado conducting. The Orchestra first performed the complete Rückert songs at the Ravinia Festival on July 5, 1980, with Tatiana Troyanos as soloist and James Levine conducting, and most recently on August 10, 1990, with Birgitte Svendsen as soloist and Christoph Eschenbach conducting.

On June 5, 1901, Mahler moved into his new house at Maiernigg, where he would spend the next seven summers, savoring the lake view and composing the music that would one day make him famous. He began to write songs almost the day he arrived—the first sketch of "Ich atmet einen linden Duft" is dated June 9—and, although he eventually threw himself into the composition of a new symphony, his fifth, he was preoccupied with the sounds of hammering and sawing as workmen finished construction next door. (On July 25, however, he was disturbed by a crowd of arch-conservative concert-goers, who yelled their disapproval of his music from the shore, and the very next day, by a motorboat of squawking young women, intent on catching a glimpse of the controversial musician.) This was a particularly serene and easy-going summer; he even enjoyed listening to the birds, which in previous years had irritated him with their songs ("the first composers," he had called them, dismissively).

Of all Mahler's summer holidays, none was as productive as this—he finished two movements of his Fifth Symphony and seven of his greatest songs, including three from the Kindertotenlieder, and their "contained sensibility, true lyricism, and deep melancholy." Mahler spent his days composing, sequestered in a little hut a short distance from the house, and he worked with such concentrated intensity that he did not even notice the sounds of hammering and marking the plans. (He joked that the adjacent old Vienna Opera house hardly stood up to wait till they could resume work on the same old story, with too little time, closing up the house, and have to leave it in the middle of some scene.)

But his time at Maiernigg proved to be only a respite. On November 22, 1901, in the Viena of Zuckerkandl's two-year-old daughter Schindler, and of himself, and with them were student Zemlinsky.) All his impressions were if he were leading a relationship quite incompatible, and with were married. This
another four settings of texts by the German romantic poet Friedrich Rückert. On August 10, he invited his friend Natalie Bauer-Lechner to the hut so that he could play his new songs for her. He had hoped to take a few days off before returning to Vienna, but he was suddenly drawn to one more Rückert poem that he had wanted to set all summer. On August 16 he finished "Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen," one of his most deeply personal works.

Mahler seemed unusually satisfied by his progress that summer, and he wrote to a friend that perhaps someday, when he was more readily appreciated, his little composing hut would bear a plaque marking the place he sat every day. (He joked that they might nail it on the adjacent outhouse by mistake.) Mahler was more depressed than usual about returning to his job at the Vienna Opera, and he could hardly stand the thought of having to wait till the following June to resume work on his music. "It's the same old story, too much haste and too little time," he remarked before closing up the house. "And I always have to leave when I'm right in the middle of something."

But his time back in Vienna proved to be unexpectedly happy. On November 7, at a dinner party in the Vienna home of the Zuckerkandls, Mahler met twenty-two-year-old Alma Schindler, the daughter of the popular Austrian landscape painter Emil Jacob Schindler, and a budding composer herself. (Both she and Schoenberg were students of Alexander von Zemlinsky.) Although Alma's first impression was that Mahler spoke as if he were leading a meeting, their relationship quickly grew more intimate, and within four months they were married. The next August, back in Maiernigg, this time with his new wife, Mahler set one last Rückert poem as a love song for Alma: "Liebst du um Schönheit."

The three Rückert songs included on this program epitomize a fragile and highly personal lyricism that had begun to run through Mahler's music at the time. "Liebst du um Schönheit" is, perhaps inevitably, the most conventional in its melodic outline and hymnlike accompaniment, since it was intended as no more than a little love song for Alma. Mahler sketched it for voice and piano and saw no reason to orchestrate it—this is the only one of his Rückert settings not conceived orchestrally. Later, at the publisher's request, Max Puttmann rendered its relatively straightforward accompaniment in orchestral colors.

"Ich atmet' einen linden Duft" calls for only a few instruments—there are no lower strings and just solo winds—and Mahler uses them sparingly and with great restraint; the vocal line is yet another thread in his cool and transparent counterpoint. (Mahler enjoys a play on words: "Duft" means "delicate," while "linden" means "lilac tree.") Mahler told Natalie that the song captured "the way one feels in the presence of a beloved being of whom one is completely sure without a single word needing to be spoken."

"Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen," with its hushed harmonies and fragile harp arpeggios, shares something of the otherworldly beauty of the Adagietto from the Fifth Symphony, which Mahler also was writing at the time. He was overwhelmingly drawn to the image of man's withdrawal from the world's commotion, and the poem inspired some of his most restrained and profound music. "It is I myself," he said of the song.
ICH BIN DER WELT ABHAN DEN GEMEHN
Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen,
Mit der ich sonst viele Zeit
verdorben;
Sie hat so lange nichts von mir
vernommen,
Sie mag wohl glauben, ich sei
gestorben!
Es ist mir auch gar nichts daran
gelegen,
Ob sie mich für gestorben hält.
Ich kann auch gar nichts sagen
dagegen,
Denn wirklich bin ich gestorben der
Welt.
Ich bin gestorben dem Weltgetümmel
Und ruh' in einem stillen Gebiet!
Ich leb' allein in meinem Himmel,
In meinem Lieben, in meinem Lied.

OLIVIER MESSIAEN
Born December 10, 1908, Avignon,
France.

L'ascension

Messiaen composed these four "symphonic meditations" for orchestra in 1932-33. (He arranged the first, second, and fourth for organ in 1934.) The first performance of the orchestral version was given in February 1935, in Paris. The score calls for three flutes, two oboes and English horn, two clarinets and bass clarinet, three bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba, triangle, cymbals, tambourine, bass drum, timpani, and strings. Performance time is approximately twenty-three minutes.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra's only previous subscription concert performances of L'ascension were given at Orchestra Hall on March 12, 13, and 14, 1981, with Erich Bergel conducting. The

I AM LOST TO THE WORLD
I am lost to the world,
on which I squandered so much
time;
it has for so long known nothing of
me,
it may well believe that I am dead!

Not that I am in any way concerned
if it takes me for dead;
nor can I really deny it,
for truly I am dead to the world.

I am dead to the world's commotion
and at peace in a still land!
I live alone in my own heaven,
in my love, in my song.

Orchestra has performed L'ascension at
the Ravinia Festival only once, on June 30,
1960, with Pierre Monteux conducting.

From the beginning of his first
published composition,
Messiaen spoke with a voice
new to music. Le banquet céleste, a
work for organ, opens with a single
chorus that lasts seven seconds. The
whole piece is only twenty-five mea
sures long, yet at Messiaen's extreme
and deliberate tempo it takes six min
utes to play. Messiaen calls Le banquet
celête a meditation; it allows not only
for contemplation and reflection, but
it suggests that distinct, otherworldly
sensation of time standing still. In this
and the pieces which followed over
the next sixty years, Messiaen estab
lished himself, as Paul Griffiths has
written, as "the first great composer
whose works exist entirely after, and
to a large degree apart from, the great
Western tradition.

There are several elements in
Messiaen's life that gave him an