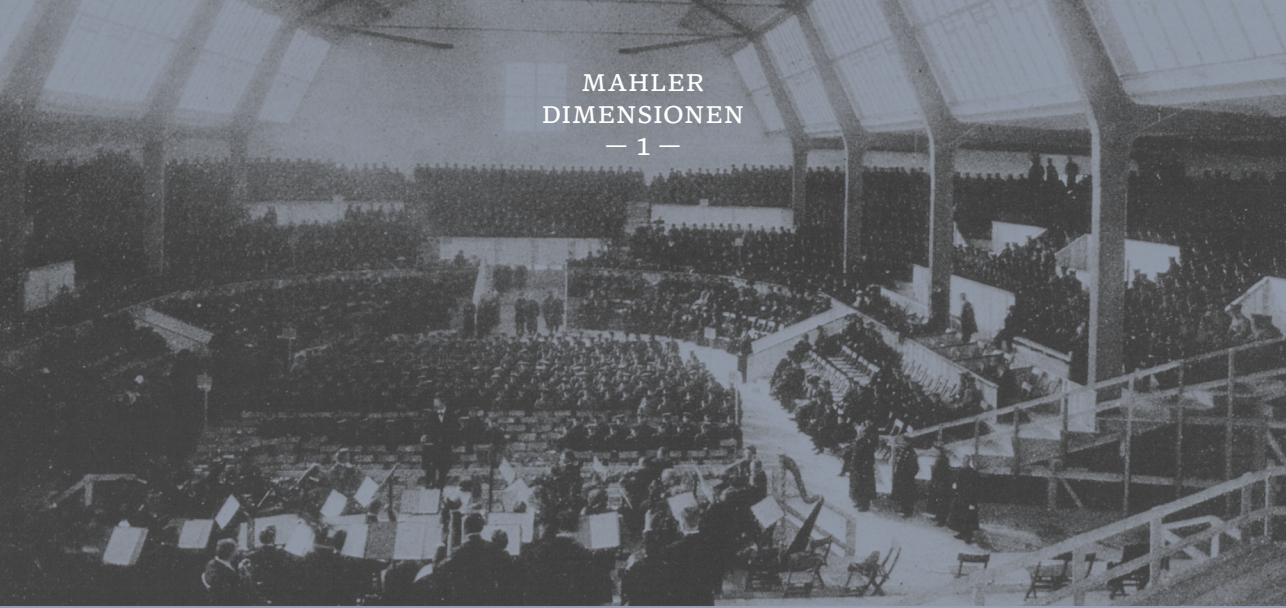




MAHLER
DIMENSIONEN

— 1 —

TOBIAS JANZ & CHRISTIAN UTZ (HG./EDS.)

Gustav Mahlers Klang

*Zwischen Schaffensprozess,
Interpretation und Rezeption*

Gustav Mahler's Sound

Between Compositional Process,
Performance, and Reception

HOLLITZER
H

Forschungsergebnisse von | Research findings from:
Austrian Science Fund (FWF): <https://doi.org/10.55776/P34710>

Veröffentlicht mit Unterstützung des | Published with the support of the
Austrian Science Fund (FWF): <https://doi.org/10.55776/PUB1347>

FWF Österreichischer
Wissenschaftsfonds

<https://doi.org/10.83452/9783990946893>

Open Access: Die vorliegende Publikation ist – wo nicht anders festgehalten – gemäß den Bedingungen der internationalen Creative-Commons-Lizenz Namensnennung 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>) lizenziert, die die Nutzung, gemeinsame Nutzung, Anpassung, Verbreitung und Vervielfältigung in jedem Medium oder Format erlaubt, solange Sie den:die ursprüngliche:n Autor:in bzw. die ursprünglichen Autor:innen und die Quelle in angemessener Weise anführen, einen Link zur Creative-Commons-Lizenz setzen und etwaige Änderungen angeben.

Creative-Commons-Lizenz: Die Bilder oder anderes Material Dritter in der vorliegenden Publikation sind durch die Creative-Commons-Lizenz der Publikation abgedeckt, sofern in einem Verweis auf das Material nichts anderes angegeben ist. Wenn das Material nicht durch die Creative-Commons-Lizenz der Publikation abgedeckt ist und die beabsichtigte Nutzung aufgrund von gesetzlichen Bestimmungen nicht gestattet ist oder über die erlaubte Nutzung hinausgeht, muss die Genehmigung für die Nutzung direkt von dem:der Urheberrechtsinhaber:in eingeholt werden. Sämtliche Angaben in dieser Publikation erfolgen trotz sorgfältiger Bearbeitung ohne Gewähr; eine Haftung des:der Autor:in, des:der Herausgeber:in oder des Verlags ist ausgeschlossen.

Für diese Publikation wurde ein Double-Blind-Peer-Review-Verfahren durchgeführt.

Tobias Janz und Christian Utz (Hg./eds.),

Gustav Mahlers Klang. Zwischen Schaffensprozess, Interpretation und Rezeption

Gustav Mahler's Sound: Between Compositional Process, Performance, and Reception

Hollitzer Verlag, Wien 2026

Umschlagabbildung: Generalprobe von Gustav Mahlers Achter Symphonie, München, Ausstellungshalle, 11. September 1910 (Jaeger & Goergen, Generalprobe zur Uraufführung von Mahlers 8. Sinfonie, September 1910, aus: Richard Specht, *Gustav Mahler*, Berlin und Leipzig, Schuster & Loeffler, 1913, Bildtafel 52. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3618578>).

Redaktion: Tobias Janz, Christian Utz, Thomas Wozonig, Dimitrios Katharopoulos, Dieter Kleinrath und Mahak Sadeghzadehpishjari

Lektorat: Marion Linhardt

Englisches Lektorat: Gabriel Jones

Umschlaggestaltung und Satz: Gabriel Fischer

Gedruckt und gebunden in der EU

Die Nutzung für Text und Data Mining i. S. v. Art. 4 (3) Richtlinie (EU) 2019/790 vorbehalten.

Hollitzer Wissenschaftsverlag

Trautsongasse 6/6, A-1080 Wien

kontakt@hollitzer.at

www.hollitzer.at

HOLLITZER



ISBN 978-3-99094-689-3

ISSN 3061-1970

The Philology of Sound¹

Nikolaus Urbanek

Sound and Philology, or: From Stage to Page

The laconic wording of this chapter's title conceals a problem: for a long time, aspects of sound were regarded as merely "secondary parameters" in musicology, which, since its foundation as an academic discipline, has operated primarily as a philologically oriented science of the musical score,² identifying the written text with the musical work – to the detriment of considering the dimensions of musical sound. The occasional diagnosis of musicology's "forgetfulness" in relation to sound occupies a precarious position within the history of the discipline, precisely in its juxtaposition of "sound" and "philology."³ Insofar as it can only be experienced through its mediatization, the catchword "sound" refers directly to a work's performance, and thus to interpretation. Accordingly, the question of a "philology of sound" finds itself at the centre of the debate between "music as text" and "music as performance," which is often staged as a conflict. The disciplinary developments in the field of musicology in recent years that emphasize performative aspects – exemplified by Nicholas Cook's much-cited *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance*, which has served as a cornerstone of research into the performative space⁴ – may largely be seen as an explicit departure from musicology as a primarily philological science. This shift towards performativity goes hand in hand with a special attention to sonic phenomena.

The specific circumstances surrounding the musical works of Gustav Mahler seem to be relevant to a productive discussion of a "philology of sound." On the one hand, it is well known that a fascinating variety of sonic phenomena can be observed in Mahler's musical works, which pose considerable challenges for the formulation of an adequate concept of "sound." The discursive reception history of Mahler's symphonies is consequently marked by intense discussions of questions of sound, with diverse sonic phenomena constituting a critical aspect of their performative history – an aspect that can ultimately be traced back to the

1 This chapter is linked to Anna Ficarella's chapter in the present volume, which discusses the theoretical and historical aspects presented here in relation to the revision processes of Mahler's Fifth Symphony.

2 For a general discussion of musical philology see Nikolaus Urbanek, "Was ist eine musikphilologische Frage?," in: *Historische Musikwissenschaft: Grundlagen und Perspektiven*, ed. by Michele Calella and Nikolaus Urbanek, Stuttgart: Metzler 2013, 147–183.

3 See the basic outline of this issue in Tobias Janz, *Klangdramaturgie: Studien zur theatralen Orchesterkomposition in Wagners "Ring des Nibelungen"*, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann 2006. I have already made some comments on this discussion in Nikolaus Urbanek, "Vom Sinn des Klangs: Ein Vortrag in posthermeneutischer Perspektive," in: *Klang und Semantik in der Musik des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Jörn Peter Hiekel and Wolfgang Mende, Bielefeld: transcript 2018, 47–69, Nikolaus Urbanek, "Spur des Klangs: Eine posthermeneutische Skizze zum Eigensinn der Musik (nicht nur) in der Wiener Schule," in: *Organized Sound: Klang und Wahrnehmung in der Musik des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts* (musik.theorien der gegenwart, vol. 6), ed. by Christian Utz, Saarbrücken: Pfau 2013, 113–136, <https://doi.org/10.25366/2023.87>, and Nikolaus Urbanek, "Vom Zögern der Wiener Schule zwischen Klang und Sinn," *Musiktheorie* 26 (2011), no. 1, 55–68.

4 Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance*, New York: Oxford University Press 2013.

composer-conductor Mahler himself.⁵ On the other hand, it is evident that Mahler's musical texts pose specific challenges which are particularly related to sound. The developmental process that many of his symphonies underwent resulted in a strikingly large number of different sources and a remarkable heterogeneity of source types. In addition to the usual sketches and workshop materials, score manuscripts, and sources relating to the printing process (engravers' copies, proofs, etc.), further documents often point to the particular relevance of performative aspects: conducting scores, annotated orchestral parts, correspondence with performers, etc. Many retouchings, modifications, additions and corrections resulted directly from rehearsals, from performances directed by the composer, and those by other conductors – events that sometimes took place after a work's premiere or after the score was printed. These sources demonstrate the significance and textual relevance of revision processes. While this leads to a multitude of text variants, it also gives rise to a creative process that can by no means be adequately described as linear. To a certain extent, these revision processes represent a field of performative experimentation that is reflected in the text structure.

While addressing the general problem implied by this chapter's title, the following discussions are basically concerned with the specific situation of Mahler's works as a way of understanding the extent to which a "beyond" can creep into the "score," settle there, as it were, and – in a counter-movement "from stage to page"⁶ – exert its own influence.

Sound

Banality and Brokenness: Mahler's Sound

Reflections on aspects of sound accompanied the reception of Mahler's œuvre from the very beginning, characterizing various reviews of the premieres of his symphonies.⁷ In his famous Prague speech of 1912, Arnold Schoenberg discussed the beauty of the "delicate, airy sounds" in the Seventh Symphony and, with this reference to the art of orchestration, also reacts to a line of (positive and negative) Mahler criticism that had developed since the first premieres of his works. Schoenberg's Mahler lecture and the essay that later emerged from it, published in English translation in *Style and Idea* in 1950,⁸ is of fundamental importance for the Mahler reception of the 20th century with regard to central themes such as the relationship between musical thought and its representation; between structure and sound, and form and content; the question of objectivity, clarity, and distinctness of instrumentation (and inseparably linked to this, the avoidance of anything of a merely ornamental nature); the significance of Mahler's dual role as composer and conductor; and, not least, questions relating to performance theory. The following passage, for example, is often referred to:

5 The reference to an authorial performance tradition, as it were, which can be traced back to Mahler himself, has always played a decisive role in the historiography of interpretations of Mahler's symphonies – especially with regard to conductors who worked with Mahler himself, such as Willem Mengelberg or Bruno Walter.

6 See Cook's original inversion of this formulation in Cook, *Beyond the Score*, Chapter 2: "Page and Stage", 33–55.

7 For an overview, see Juliane Wandel, "Mahler und die zeitgenössische Kritik," in: MH, 408–417, including a list of relevant contemporary reviews by symphony.

8 Arnold Schoenberg, "Gustav Mahler," in: *Style and Idea*, New York: Philosophical Library 1950, 7–36.

What first strikes one about Mahler's instrumentation is the almost unexampled [*sic*] objectivity with which he writes down only what is absolutely necessary. His sound never comes from ornamental additions, from accessories that are related not at all or only distantly to the important material, and that are put down only as decorations. But where it soughs, it is the theme which soughs; the themes have such a form and so many notes that it immediately becomes clear that the soughing is not the *aim* of the passage, but its *form* and its *content*. Where it grunts and groans, the themes and harmonies grunt and groan; but where it crashes, gigantic structures clash against one another; the architecture crumbles; the architectonic relationships of tension and pressure are in revolt. But among the most beautiful sounds are the delicate, fragrant ones. Here, too, he brings unheard-of novelty, as, for example, in the middle movements of the Seventh Symphony, with their sonorities of guitar, harp, and solo instruments. This guitar in the Seventh is not introduced for a single effect, but the whole movement is based on this sonority. It belongs to it from the very beginning, it is a living organ of the composition; not the heart, but perhaps the eyes, whose glance is so characteristic of its aspect. This instance is very close – in a more modern way, naturally – to the method of the classical composers, who built whole movements or pieces on the sonority of a specific instrumental group.⁹

Notions already introduced here by Schoenberg persisted in the same form for a long time in the discourse surrounding Mahler's symphonies – largely due, no doubt, to the dense network of protagonists committed to the Viennese School in the early history of Mahler reception.¹⁰ To pick out a few examples, several articles in the magazine *Pult und Taktstock* of the Vienna Universal Edition in the late 1920s were devoted to various aspects of sound, starting with an essay by Erwin Stein on "Mahlers Instrumentations-Retuschen."¹¹ The 1930 issue of *Anbruch* dedicated to Mahler contains Hanns Gutmann's essay on Mahler's "banality," which is frequently referenced in the Mahler literature.¹² With this keyword, Gutmann focuses on an aspect to which Schoenberg had already devoted himself intensively and which at various points touches on the concept of sound (I need only mention the sound of the "military" E $\flat$ clarinet, which is semantically loaded in many respects, or the nostalgically sentimental charge that is often attributed to the "scandalous" post horn). Gutmann's essay is framed by an essay by Erwin Stein on "Mahlers Sachlichkeit" (Mahler's Objectivity)¹³ and an essay by Egon Wellesz on "Mahlers Instrumentation."¹⁴ Not only is the article by the Schoenberg biographer Wellesz

⁹ Schoenberg, "Gustav Mahler," 25.

¹⁰ As is well known, the Mahler reception of the Viennese School represents an important strand in the history of Mahler reception until well into the 1960s; see Bernd Sponheuer, "Grundzüge der Mahler-Rezeption seit den 1920er Jahren," in: MH, 419–436.

¹¹ Erwin Stein, "Mahlers Instrumentations-Retuschen," in: *Pult und Taktstock* 4 (1927), no. 9/10, 117–122.

¹² Hanns Gutmann, "Der banale Mahler," *Anbruch* 12 (1930), no. 3, 102–106. Like *Pult und Taktstock*, the [*Musikblätter des*] *Anbruch* was a Universal Edition journal and a key publication medium of the Viennese School, not only during the years in which Theodor W. Adorno was on the editorial board. See for example Stefan Müller-Doohm, *Adorno: Eine Biographie*, Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp 2003, 163–166. In addition to the texts by Adorno that appeared there during this period, see also the proposal for the reorganization of *Anbruch*, Theodor W. Adorno, "Zum 'Anbruch'" and "Zum Jahrgang 1929 des 'Anbruch'," in: *Musikalische Schriften VI* (Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 19), 595–604 and 605–608 respectively.

¹³ Erwin Stein, "Mahlers Sachlichkeit," *Anbruch* 12 (1930), no. 3, 99–102.

¹⁴ Egon Wellesz, "Mahlers Instrumentation," *Anbruch* 12 (1930), no. 3, 106–110.

clearly relevant to the topic at hand, but the essay by the Schoenberg student Stein also contains aspects that are central to a critical analysis of Mahler's sound. As Stein notes:

the sound of this music was also truly unacademic. What struck one at first were the new colours, muted trumpet, E $\flat$ clarinet, *col legno* strings, percussion. Only later did one realize that the uniqueness of Mahler's sound was primarily based on his manner of composition, which is extremely economical and objective, dispensing with any ornamentation. [...] Clarification of the structure and, in particular, vivid elucidation of individual voices are the essence of a specifically Mahlerian instrumentation.¹⁵

The aspect of lucidity – understood as the clarification of structure so as to render the musical organization as vividly as possible – together with the demand for an economical orchestral setting that dispenses with mere ornamentation, are essential aspects of Mahler's approach to sound that inform many contributions to the discourse during the following decades.

Representing an important turning point in the reception of Mahler,¹⁶ Theodor W. Adorno's "Musical Physiognomy" (1960) deals substantially with the question of sound. The famous chapter on Mahler's "tone" is particularly relevant in this context. Even if the terms "tone" and "sound" are by no means synonymous, our discussion can pick up on this point, as the concept of "sound" remains a subcutaneous reference throughout Adorno's remarks in this regard. Thus, there is frequent mention of characteristic timbral effects such as the "screeching" oboe (21) or the "piercing trumpets" (21). The term "tone" is explained by the somewhat strange comparison with the Riesling grape, which is supposedly called "schmeckert" in Austria (23). In any case, this once again addresses the perception and perceptibility of sensual qualities that is so important for a concept of sound, since to talk about sound implies a discussion of relational qualities.¹⁷ In our present context, Adorno's remarks on the keyword "Kapellmeistermusik" are particularly noteworthy: "The conductor as composer has an ear not only for the sound but for the practice of the orchestra, the capabilities of the instruments as well as the exertions, weaknesses, exaggerations, and dullnesses that can be turned to his purposes."¹⁸

15 Stein, "Mahlers Sachlichkeit," 100–101, my translation („Wahrlich unakademisch war aber auch der Klang dieser Musik. Was zunächst auffiel, waren die neuen Farben, gedämpfte Trompete, Es-Klarinette, *col legno* der Streicher, Schlagzeug. Erst später merkte man, daß die Eigenart von Mahlers Klang in erster Linie auf seiner Satzweise beruht. Und die ist äußerst ökonomisch und sachlich: auf jegliche Ornamentik ist in ihr verzichtet. [...] Verdeutlichung der Struktur und namentlich plastische Klarlegung der Stimmen sind das Wesen der spezifisch Mahlerschen Instrumentation.“)

16 Theodor W. Adorno, *Mahler: Eine musikalische Physiognomik* (Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 13, 149–319), Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp 1971, Theodor W. Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, translated by Edmund Jephcott, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1992. The following page numbers in the main text refer to the English edition.

17 See Tobias Janz, "Qualia, Sound, Ereignis: Musiktheoretische Herausforderungen in phänomenologischer Perspektive," in: *Musiktheorie / Musikwissenschaft: History – Methods – Perspectives* (Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie 7, Special Issue), ed. by Tobias Janz and Jan Philipp Sprick, Hildesheim: Olms 2010, 217–239, <https://doi.org/10.31751/565>.

18 Adorno, *Mahler* (trans. Jephcott), 30–31; German original: "Dem Kapellmeister als Komponisten ist nicht bloß der Orchesterklang im Ohr sondern auch die Orchesterpraxis, das Wie der instrumentalen Spielweisen samt jenen Anspannungen, Schwächen, Übertreibungen und Mattheiten, welche seine Intention sich erobert." (Adorno, *Mahler*, 179.) The translation here seems to be inaccurate in relation to the "'how' of instrumental playing."

Adorno uses this very aspect to link Mahler's dual role as composer and conductor directly to the influential "idea of brokenness"¹⁹. This idea in turn marks the central point of Adorno's concept of Mahler's compositional thinking and is developed – and it seems important to point this out here – at precisely this juncture in connection with the aspect of sonority. Thus, it is not only about the question of a "breaking" of the sonorous texture, but also about the role sonority itself plays in this fracturing process: "But where Mahler's music does not itself appear as fractured, it must be broken." (34)²⁰

Adorno addresses further aspects of sound in the later chapter "Dimensions of Technique," which focuses on the subject of instrumentation. In line with the Viennese School, he writes that Mahler's instrumentation is "appropriate," subject to the "demand of clarity," and that color becomes "the function of the compositional structure" (116). In addition, Adorno argues that Mahler is concerned with a critique of the "ideal of euphony" (117) in regard to the characteristics of orchestral texture. Even if the relationship between the terms "tone" and "sound" in the context of Adorno's theorizing needs to be clarified further, there is a significant area in which these two terms overlap: by introducing the aspect of "brokenness" Adorno establishes a trend-setting perspective of Mahler interpretation, which is essentially linked to sonic phenomena. The idea that Mahler's symphonic music formulates a "critique of the ideal of euphony" can be made musically plausible by locating Mahler within a history of instrumentation,²¹ which necessarily implicates the model of Hector Berlioz's orchestration and his treatise on instrumentation.²² Against the background of operatic practice,²³ sonic characteristics of a descriptive, rough, ugly, gloomy, or grotesque²⁴ nature are integrated into Mahler's music as constituent elements of symphonic instrumentation. In the traditionally established conflict between the aesthetics of the beautiful and the aesthetics of the sublime, Mahler's compositional work with sonic phenomena could thereby be assigned to the latter sphere.

Celesta and Hammer: Mahlerian Sounds

Even on the basis of these brief remarks on the discursive history of Mahler's works, some aspects of the conceptual areas cultivated for the discussion of musical sound in Mahler should be highlighted.²⁵ With regard to questions of sound in relation to philology, reference should be made to both the expansion of Mahler's orchestral apparatus and the use of "unusual sound generators" – instruments that at Mahler's time were not (yet) integrated into the symphony orchestra. Indeed, the very integration of unfamiliar sound generators raises philological questions, as it necessarily leads to unusual forms of notation.

19 See Adorno, *Mahler* (trans. Jephcott), 31; Jephcott here translates "Gebrochenheit" with "rupture."

20 German original: "Wo aber Mahlers Musik nicht selbst als gebrochen auftritt, muß sie zerbrechen." (Adorno, *Mahler*, 183). Here, too, the German original contains further facets that are lost in the translation.

21 See among others: Jürgen Maehder, "Orchesterbehandlung und Klangfarbendisposition im Spätwerk Gustav Mahlers: *Das Lied von der Erde*," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 70 (2013), no. 1, 31–65, and Altug Ünlü, *Gustav Mahlers Klangwelt: Studien zur Instrumentation*, Frankfurt/M.: Lang 2006.

22 Hector Berlioz, *Instrumentationslehre*. Supplemented and revised by Richard Strauss, Leipzig: C. F. Peters [1905].

23 See Tobias Janz, "Über das Opernhafte von Mahlers Musik," in: MH, 140–152.

24 See Federico Celestini, *Die Unordnung der Dinge: Das musikalisch Groteske in der Wiener Moderne (1885–1914)* (Beihefte zum Archiv für Musikwissenschaft, vol. 56), Stuttgart: Steiner 2006.

25 See the useful compilation by Peter Jost, "Mahlers Orchesterklang," in: MH, 114–116.

The way in which the instruments are handled is also of considerable interest. This touches on questions of contemporary performance practice,²⁶ while equally concerning specific characteristics of Mahler's own composition, orchestration, and performance practices. The passage handed down by Natalie Bauer-Lechner in which Mahler comments on his special approach to instruments and instrumentalists is often quoted:

To this day, I don't think anyone has caught on to my way of achieving it. If I want to produce a soft, subdued sound, I don't give it to an instrument which produces it easily, but rather to one which can get in only with effort and under pressure – often only by forcing itself and exceeding its natural range. I often make the basses and basson squeak on the highest notes, while my flute huffs and puffs down below. [...] I always enjoy this effect; I could never have produced that powerful, forced tone if I had given the passage to the cellos (the most obvious choice here).²⁷

The question of the “‘how’ of instrumental playing”²⁸ is thus directed towards Mahler's “undomesticated sounds,”²⁹ which originate in, among other things, this specifically physical instrumental practice of “excessive demands.”³⁰ In some respects, this corresponds to the aspect of lucidity in the sense of a sonic “clarification” of musical structure. In many of the surviving revision documents, the particular relevance of this maxim is evident in the omission of filler parts; in the instrumental amplification of leading voices; in the establishment of new timbres for structural emphasis; and in the marking of desired particularities of dynamics, articulation, and playing technique.

Crucial in any approach to sonic phenomena in Mahler's symphonies is consideration of his compositional work with spatial sound and spatial effects. Of course, spatiality in music has a long history before Mahler's symphonies; Mahler, however, makes excessive use of the resulting possibilities. On the one hand, the actual spatial arrangement of instruments plays a role, as is the case, for example, when working with distantly positioned instrumentalists (“offstage ensemble”). On the other hand, virtual spatial effects also play a role, as they are sometimes created by way of specific performance directions – for example, the famous post horn episode in the Third Symphony is accompanied by performance instructions such as “wie in weiter Ferne” (“as if in the distance,” m. 255) or “wie aus der Ferne sich nähernd” (“as if approaching from far away”).

26 See Hartmut Krones and Reinhold Kubik (eds.), *Musikinstrumente und Musizierpraxis zur Zeit Gustav Mahlers 2*, Vienna: Böhlau 2020, and Reinhold Kubik (ed.), *Musikinstrumente und Musizierpraxis zur Zeit Gustav Mahlers*, Vienna: Böhlau 2007.

27 NBL-E, 160. German original: “Und es ist, glaube ich, in der Tat noch niemandem eingefallen, wie ich das erreiche. Wenn ich einen leisen, verhaltenen Ton hervorbringen will, lasse ich ihn nicht ein Instrument spielen, das ihn leicht hergibt, sondern lege ihn in jenes, welches ihn mit Anstrengung und gezwungen, ja oft mit Überanstrengung und Überschreitung seiner natürlichen Grenzen zu geben vermag. So müssen mir Bässe und Fagott oft in den höchsten Tönen quieken, die Flöte tief unten pusten. [...] Auf diese Wirkung freue ich mich immer und nie hätte ich den gepressten, gewaltsamen Ton hervorbringen können, wenn ich sie den hierin leicht ansprechenden Celli gegeben hätte.” (NBL 2, 175–176.)

28 Adorno, *Mahler* (trans. Jephcott), 30–31, and Adorno, *Mahler*, 179.

29 See the chapter by Federico Celestini in this volume.

30 But what, one might ask, does this mean for historically informed performance practice in an age like ours, in which the best-trained instrumentalists have already clearly moved these “natural boundaries”? What might be considered as an instrumental overload is certainly very different today.

This points to the highly significant role played by performance directions in Mahler's works in establishing links between sound and philology. In terms of their textual status, they oscillate between "structural sense" and "performance sense."³¹ Numerous sources show that performance instructions were revised particularly intensively in reaction to the realization of a work in concert. However, whether such changes are to be qualified as valid textual revisions or entries specific to a particular performance situation remains to be clarified. At this point, it becomes clear how closely philological and performative questions are intertwined with regard to the musical text. Furthermore, some performance instructions are not unproblematic in their polyvalence. Some concern physical matters ("Schalltrichter nach oben" – "with raised bell"); some explicitly evoke "undomesticated sounds" and point to the sphere of tonal brokenness and instrumental "excessive demands"; some are formulated negatively ("nicht eilen" – "do not hurry," "nicht schleppen" – "do not drag"); some are situational, referring to particular performance spaces, performers, or circumstances; some are linked to specific conditions, for example in the third movement of the First Symphony: "Wenn der Tubaist den Ton nicht ppp herausbringt, dann lieber durch einen Contrafagott durchführen lassen" ("If the tuba player cannot produce a *pianissimo*, the passage should preferably be played by the contrabassoon," m. 109³²), or in the third movement of the Fourth Symphony in the clarinets: "Nur im Notfall zur Unterstützung der Trompeten" ("only in cases of emergency, to support the trumpets," m. 320). The latter instruction begs the question – and not only for the philologist – under what conditions the emergency is to be declared?

Sound and Performance

By way of an interim summary, we might pose the following questions: How can a viable concept of sound be formulated with regard to Mahler's symphonies? What is the relationship between the concept of sound and aspects of instrumentation, orchestration, and timbre? And are we talking about one Mahlerian "sound" or many Mahlerian "sounds"? To complicate matters further, following the above references from the discursive history of interpretation, I would like to refer to two brief examples from the rich performative history of the interpretation of Gustav Mahler's symphonies, namely two interpretations of the transitional passage leading to the recapitulation in the first movement of the Second Symphony, demonstrating how the question of sound is inextricably linked to its realization in performance. This example also clarifies how the dimension of the sound may influence the musical text. With this juxtaposition, I am not interested in an in-depth interpretative analysis nor in an adequate historical classification, but rather in the direct confrontation of two different approaches to the shaping of sound in performance: Otto Klemperer in a live recording with the Concertgebouw Orchestra from 1951³³ and Sir Simon Rattle in a live recording with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra from 2010.³⁴ The difference is as clear as it is striking: while Klemperer and the Concertgebouw Orchestra play this passage as a cadential transition aiming

31 See Hermann Danuser, *Gustav Mahler und seine Zeit*, 2nd edition, Laaber: Laaber 1996.

32 See the chapter by Jack Adler-McKean in the present volume.

33 Gustav Mahler, Symphony No. 2. Concertgebouw Orchestra, Otto Klemperer. Live recording, 12 July 1951, Guild GHCD 2210.

34 Gustav Mahler, Symphony No. 2. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Simon Rattle. Live recording, 28–30 October 2010, EMI Classics LC 06646.

towards the recapitulation, Rattle and the Berliner Philharmonic use all available means to stage a climactic apotheosis of the entire movement, the effect of which strangely oscillates between a fulfilling conclusion, an ecstatic breakthrough, and a caesura suspended in time.³⁵ However one chooses to verbalize and plausibly communicate the subjective aesthetic listening experience, it should become clear that how the sound of the passage is shaped becomes an essential aspect of form, impacting the structure of the entire movement. Exponents of the Viennese School are likely to become somewhat nervous in the face of such interpretations, because they seem to suggest that the realization of sound in performance may exceed its potential in clarifying structure: sound itself turns into form.

The Concept of Sound: Materiality – Mediality – Performativity

As the above references to the history of interpretation clearly show, a viable concept of sound must be able to address all of these aspects adequately. With regard to the Viennese School, I have attempted elsewhere to outline a comprehensive concept of sound on the basis of three aspects: materiality – performativity – mediality.³⁶

Materiality

With regard to Mahler's symphonic music, Federico Celestini has already put forward a number of considerations on the "materiality of sound," suggesting that this "materiality" should be understood in a very concrete manner tending towards corporeality:

The bodily nature of music-making that emerges in this way affects the sound by intensifying its material, raw quality, thus making audible a kind of sonic, physical materiality that before Mahler was generally excluded from the realm of the artistic.³⁷

The conceptual field of materiality would therefore entail questions of instrumentation and the use of particular instruments – including characteristic features of articulation and playing style. The above-mentioned category of "overexertion," in the sense of a "physicality of music-making" and the production of "undomesticated" sounds, also belongs to this concep-

³⁵ Even though one might of course argue for a more far-reaching interpretation of these two renditions, I am deliberately drawing on categories that Adorno coined in his Mahler monograph under the heading of a "material theory of form." The relevance and potential of this idea has already been developed on various occasions. See Hermann Danuser, "'Materiale Formenlehre' – ein Beitrag Adornos zur Theorie der Musik," in: *Musikalische Analyse und Kritische Theorie*, ed. by Adolf Nowak and Markus Fahlbusch, Tutzing: Schneider 2007, 19–49. The idea of a material theory of form, whose potential for Mahler and beyond is, in my opinion, by no means exhausted, would gain particular plausibility if it were also discussed in terms of a physiognomy of sound; after all, one could make clear in this way that, and to what extent, sound and structure stand in an oscillating reciprocal relationship to one another.

³⁶ See Urbanek, "Spur des Klangs."

³⁷ Federico Celestini, "Zur Materialität des Klangs," in: *Von der Autonomie des Klangs zur Heteronomie der Musik: Musikwissenschaftliche Antworten auf Musikphilosophie*, ed. by Nikolaus Urbanek and Melanie Wald-Fuhrmann, Stuttgart: Metzler 2018, 33–48: 35, my translation ("Die auf diese Weise hervortretende Körperlichkeit des Musizierens affiziert den Klang, indem sie dessen materielle, raue Eigenschaft intensiviert. Es wird somit eine Art klangliche, körperlich behaftete Materialität vernehmbar, welche vor Mahler in der Regel vom Bereich des Künstlerischen ausgeschlossen blieb.")

tual field, as do of course, sonic brilliance and euphony, which undeniably also exist in many of Mahler's unbroken "beautiful passages."

Performativity

The subject of the materiality of sound is closely related to questions of performativity and realization in sound. The performative aspect is not conceived as a category lying "beyond" the text: sound and structure are interwoven and interact with each other. As we know, Mahler's method of trying out aspects of his music in performance represents an essential stage of his creative process, with a direct effect on the shaping of the work's text. This is documented not only in changing performance instructions, but also in subsequent changes, adaptations, and developments of the musical text during this try-out process. Therefore, the performative element is not only a constitutive aspect of sound but has philological relevance for the work's text in at least two respects: it is a process of shaping the text and producing new textual witnesses, such as performance materials that document revisions of the text.

Mediality

The concept of mediality serves a strategic intermediary function in my discussion of sound, connecting to those phenomena that Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht more or less appropriately attempted to capture with the concept of "vocabulary."³⁸ I believe that the questions of semanticity of sound discussed by Karol Berger³⁹ and the reflections on the relationship between meaning and sound discussed by Tobias Janz⁴⁰ also have their place in this context. Whether "Bohemian doodling," fanfares or post horns, military or funeral marches, these musical phenomena are shaped not only by music cultures and semantically charged, but are also essentially marked by particular sounds – or, *eo ipso*, themselves represent sonic indicators. Adorno's concept of "tone" also contains nuances relating to this concept of mediality. However, since this concept in its specific form is very much bound to a certain traditional line of Mahler interpretation, it seems helpful to propose a more neutral term, one that can be established as constitutive for a concept of sound as such.

We might point out here that, against this background, our concept of sound must be formulated on a (more) comprehensive basis. When we talk about sound, we are not merely concerned with instrumentation, timbre, or the instrumental shaping of musical substance, but also, to a larger extent, with more general performative considerations, such as relational properties pertaining to subjective aesthetic experience, aspects of discourse history, and culturally shaped and historically located aspects of semanticity. As we learn through the close coupling of the disputes between discursive and performative interpretations,⁴¹ an identical concept of sound cannot be formulated at all times.⁴² The search for such a comprehensive

38 See Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, *Die Musik Gustav Mahlers*, Munich: Piper 1982.

39 See the chapter by Karol Berger in the present volume.

40 See the chapter by Tobias Janz in the present volume.

41 On the dispute between interpretations and the constitutive significance of aesthetic experience and aesthetic discourse for a concept of the musical work of art between musical text and performance, see in particular Albrecht Wellmer, *Versuch über Musik und Sprache*, Munich: Hanser 2009.

42 Tobias Janz has impressively pointed out the historicity of aesthetic experience in the "ever new ways of listening to Mahler"; see Tobias Janz, "Über naive und sentimentalische Arten Mahler zu hören: Beobachtungen zu seiner gegenwärtigen Rezeption," *Musik & Ästhetik* 15 (2011), no. 60, 51–65: 51.

concept represents a rather unfamiliar situation and challenge for the philologist, who has been used to focusing primarily on texts, as the resulting changes in the framework of aesthetic categories are also of significant relevance with regard to philological decisions on the smallest scale.

Philology

Some facets of the history of philology may now be used to shed further light on points pertinent to our discussion. My intention here is not to give an exhaustive account of the history of philology,⁴³ but rather to focus on some issues that are relevant to musical philology against the background of the question of musical sound.

History of (Music) Philology

I will refrain from the usual discussion of the question of whether *φιλολογία* should be thought of as “love of the word,” “love of the text,” or rather as “love of meaning” and, for reasons of textual economy, I will take a shortcut: a history of philology with all its theoretical and methodological paradigm shifts can plausibly be conceived as a history of the philological dispute over textual errors – the question of textual error is, so to speak, the “Gretchenfrage”: the pivotal question of philology.⁴⁴ In the history of philology, the endeavor to define what constitutes a textual error, to determine the rules available to the (editorial) philologist for eliminating such errors, and to justify her own interventions in a well-founded and comprehensible manner has always marked a neuralgic point at which the discipline’s decisive theoretical and methodological developments become visible.

We must bear in mind that initial efforts to establish a theoretical and methodological foundation for philology focused primarily on ancient texts, which were often handed down in the form of incomplete, flawed documents from sometimes very precarious sources. The problems of classical philology were, and are fundamentally different from those of a philology dealing with more recent literature or the field of music since 1600. This seems to me of considerable importance with regard to an assessment of the areas of epistemological interest, the problems, and ultimately the methods developed in the history of philology, as it is not only the question of the quality but also the quantity of the sources that is called into question. In many cases, there is a multitude of heterogeneous sources *in musicis* to be dealt with philologically, which, not least in terms of their sheer quantity, pose particular challenges for philology as a “Detailwissenschaft par excellence.”⁴⁵

⁴³ See for example the brief description in Bodo Plachta, *Editionswissenschaft: Eine Einführung in Methode und Praxis der Edition neuerer Texte*, 2nd edition, Stuttgart: Reclam 2006, 27–45, and, with regard to questions of music philology, Maria Caraci Vela, *Musical Philology: Institutions, History, and Critical Approaches. I Historical and Methodological Foundations of Musical Philology*, Lucca: Edizioni ETS 2015, here especially Chapter II: “Historical Outline of Philology,” 29–112.

⁴⁴ For more comprehensive discussion of this matter, see Nikolaus Urbanek, “Was ist eine musikphilologische Frage?”

⁴⁵ Klaus Hurlbusch, “Steckt für Quellen- und Editionsphilologen nur der liebe Gott im Detail? Über eine Detailwissenschaft par excellence und ihr kulturwissenschaftliches Reflexionspotential,” *editio* 25 (2011), 1–31: 8.

Emendation – Divination – Conjecture

At the turn of the 19th century, the classical philologist Friedrich August Wolf spoke of two types of philological textual criticism: historical criticism and grammatical criticism. Historical criticism contains the rules “according to which one examines the authenticity, the age and the author,” while grammatical criticism contains the principles “according to which one examines the correctness of the text, partly in detail, partly as a whole, and where possible restores it.” The necessity of text-critical, emendatory, or conjectural intervention is obvious to the classical philologist: “All monuments of antiquity are damaged and spoiled by many accidents.”⁴⁶ It is therefore a question of cleansing the text of all “corruptions” in order to present it as error-free and as complete as possible.

In his *Encyclopaedia and Methodology*, August Boeckh, who, as an influential professor of classical philology, held the introductory philological lecture at the universities of Heidelberg and Berlin from 1811 to 1867, invokes in reference to the necessary correction of errors a “divinatory power of the mind,” which, in an interplay of criticism and hermeneutics, is capable of “healing” faulty and defective passages:

But we have indeed such an oracle in the divinatory power of the mind. The critical artist [scil. the philologist, n.u.], completely imbued with the spirit of the writer, completely filled with his manner and purpose and equipped with the knowledge of the surrounding circumstances, produces what is true in an instant, he breaks through the barriers of the mind and knows what the author meant, even if the author himself is to blame for the incorrect expression.⁴⁷

The influential classical philologist Karl Lachmann also proved to be an enthusiastic proponent of conjecture, stating as a methodological guideline that one should “look into the author’s intellectual workshop and completely reproduce his original activity.”⁴⁸ This ultimately implies the concept of an ideal text, which is revealed to the editor through a synopsis of all surviving textual sources. However, this ideal text is not necessarily tangible in the surviving textual evidence; rather, it is one that the editor must first create by contaminating the various textual sources. Thus, Lachmann demands in a review of an edition of the *Nibelungen Lied*:

46 Friedrich August Wolf, *Encyclopädie der Philologie*, cited in Kai Bremer and Uwe Wirth (eds.), *Texte zur modernen Philologie*, Stuttgart: reclam 2010, 75–87: 76–77, my translation (“Alle Denkmäler des Alterthums sind beschädigt und durch viele Zufälle verdorben.”).

47 August Boeckh, *Encyclopädie und Methodologie*, Leipzig: Teubner 1886, 184, my translation (“Wir haben aber in der Tat ein solches Orakel in der divinatorischen Kraft des Geistes. Der kritische Künstler [der Philologe, n.u.], ganz durchdrungen von dem Geiste des Schriftstellers, ganz erfüllt von dessen Weise und Zweck und ausgerüstet mit der Kenntnis der umgebenden Verhältnisse, producirt in einem Augenblick das Wahre, er durchbricht die Schranken des Geistes und weiss, was der Autor gemeint hat, sogar wenn jener selbst schuld an dem unrichtigen Ausdruck ist.”).

48 Karl Lachmann, “Zum Lessing,” in: *Kleinere Schriften zur deutschen Philologie*, ed. by Karl Müllenhoff, Berlin: Reimer 1876, 548–576, my translation (“dem Verfasser in seine geistige Werkstatt schauen und ganz die ursprüngliche Thätigkeit desselben reproduzieren”).

We should feel obliged and want to represent from a sufficient number of good manuscripts an underlying text upon which all of these manuscripts are based, which must either be the original itself or come very close to it.⁴⁹

It is interesting to note that Lachmann not only focuses on texts from antiquity and the Middle Ages, but also transfers his methodological approach to more recent literary texts, specifically to an edition of Lessing's works for which he was responsible.⁵⁰ This transfer is ultimately also of crucial importance to music philology, which in many respects follows in the footsteps of Lachmann – not least in its recourse to the stemmatic method.⁵¹ Particular mention should be made of Otto Jahn, who – as a student of Lachmann and Boeckh, and trained in classical philology – played a significant role in the first major musical editions and was instrumental in establishing the scholarly standard of the Bach Complete Edition.⁵²

Music Philology

In Germany, the “country of complete editions,” as Reinhold Brinkmann once aptly remarked,⁵³ the theoretical foundation of musical philology essentially consists of a collection of the pragmatically motivated (editorial) principles of the national “Denkmäler” editions and complete editions of composers' works.⁵⁴ Music philology in the German-speaking academic world is therefore first and foremost committed to editorial practice in the context of critical musical editions⁵⁵ – to date, there has only been a rudimentary development of music philological theory that is independent of editorial questions and that also deals with the foundations of its discipline.⁵⁶

49 Karl Lachmann, “Rezension zu ‘Des Nibelungen Lied’ [hg. von Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen, Breslau 1886],” in: *Kleinere Schriften zur deutschen Philologie*, ed. by Karl Müllenhoff, Berlin: Reimer 1876, 81–114: 82, my translation (“Wir sollen und wollen aus einer hinreichenden Menge von guten Handschriften einen allen diesen zum Grunde liegenden darstellen, der entweder der ursprüngliche selbst seyn oder ihm doch sehr nahe kommen muss.”).

50 *G.E. Lessings sämtliche Schriften*, ed. by Karl Lachmann, 13 vols., Berlin: Voß 1838–1840.

51 See Vela, *Musical Philology*, 40–48.

52 See *ibid.*, 89, and Reinmar Emans and Sven Hiemke, “Editionen der Werke Johann Sebastian Bachs,” in: *Musikeditionen im Wandel der Geschichte*, ed. by Reinmar Emans and Ulrich Krämer, Berlin: de Gruyter 2015, 227–260: 238–249.

53 Reinhold Brinkmann, “Dankesworte,” in: *Ernst von Siemens Music Preis 2001: Reinhold Brinkmann*, Zug: Siemens Stiftung 2001, 54–71: 55.

54 See also Carl Dahlhaus, “Zur Ideengeschichte musikalischer Editionsprinzipien,” in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, ed. by Hermann Danuser, Laaber: Laaber 2000, 233–246. I would like to emphasize that national traditions differ significantly here; see Maria Caraci Vela, *La filologia musicale*, 2 vols., Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana 2005 and 2009, and Vela, *Musical Philology*. Authoritative and significant for the German-speaking world: Georg Feder, *Musikphilologie: Eine Einführung in die musikalische Textkritik, Hermeneutik und Editionstechnik*, Darmstadt: WBG 1987, Georg von Dadelsen (ed.), *Editionsrichtlinien musikalischer Denkmäler und Gesamtausgaben*, Kassel: Bärenreiter 1976, Bernhard R. Appel and Joachim Veit (eds.), *Editionsrichtlinien Musik*, Kassel: Bärenreiter 2000, and Reinmar Emans and Ulrich Krämer (eds.), *Musikeditionen im Wandel der Geschichte*, Berlin: de Gruyter 2015.

55 See Bernhard R. Appel and Reinmar Emans (eds.), *Musikphilologie: Grundlagen – Methoden – Praxis*, Laaber: Laaber-Verlag 2017. In this publication, which is described as a “compendium” that “offers a comprehensive insight into the current state of traditional music philology and [...] can also serve as a basis for further discourse among experts” (cover text, my translation), it is primarily the editors of the major complete musical editions who have their say and essentially generalize author-related editorial problems.

56 This also means that theoretically sound groundwork still needs to be done: see in particular the efforts promoted by Bernhard Appel to create a ‘glossary’ of musical philology (“Philologie Glossar und digitaltechnische Begriffe” in the project *Beethovens Werkstatt. Genetic Text Criticism and Digital Music Edition*, <https://beethovens-werk->

It is a striking fact that numerous complete musical editions, as the central endeavors of music philology, have continued for so long to be oriented towards the principles of Lachmann's method – often in a form that was codified by Paul Maas in the early 20th century,⁵⁷ when this very method had already fallen into crisis.⁵⁸ The guiding principle remains the notion of an ideal text, which is presented as the goal of editorial work, whereby it is argued that the exigencies of musical practice require decisions that favor a playable, unambiguous, and fixed text. The theoretically questionable consequence of this⁵⁹ is a form of editorial work that in principle considers the practice of contaminating sources and thus the creation of “ideal” mixed versions, into which information (readings) from sources other than the edited master manuscript are incorporated, as a possible *modus operandi*.⁶⁰

Shifting Theoretical and Methodological Paradigms

Even if the history of German music philology, which primarily acts as editorial philology, seems to branch off here in theoretical and methodological terms, the general history of philology certainly does not end with the ideas of Karl Lachmann and Paul Maas. The further history of the discipline can be told *cum grano salis* as a history of criticism of Lachmann's method, which is also (but not only) due to the fact that the field of philology is increasingly shifting from texts from antiquity and the Middle Ages to those from modern times and the present, and the problems in this regard – in particular the situation of surviving sources – are becoming increasingly different.

Central paradigm shifts in the history of philology constitute a turning away from the practice of conjectural textual emendation, from the divinatory method, and from the contamination of different textual sources. In the course of its orientation towards the scientific method in the late 19th and especially in the 20th century, editorial philology successively abandoned more or less transparent editorial interventions. Friedrich Ritschl, the teacher of the Basel classical philologist Friedrich Nietzsche, offers a pithy motto that clearly identifies this paradigm shift: “Better to err methodically than to find the truth unmethodically – that is to say, by chance.”⁶¹ It is no longer the ideal text, but the text in its specific historical form that is becoming the increasing focus of interest in edition philology – philological practice is therefore increasingly concerned with the “ability to historicize.”⁶² As a result, every doubtful or deviating passage in a text is no longer regarded as an *error* to be eradicated. Instead, the idea of *variants* has become dominant, which are presented in sometimes highly complex variant

statt.de/glossar [30/06/2026]); and also the efforts to develop a theory of musical writing (see Carolin Ratzinger, Nikolaus Urbanek, and Sophie Zehetmayer [eds.], *Musik und Schrift: Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf musikalische Notationen*, Paderborn: Fink 2020).

57 See the editor's preface with reference to the “Textkritik” by Paul Maas, in: *Editionsrichtlinien musikalischer Denkmäler und Gesamtausgaben*, ed. by Georg von Dadelsen, Kassel: Bärenreiter 1976, 7–16.

58 Paul Maas, *Textkritik*, Leipzig: Teubner 1927.

59 See also Caraci Vela, *Musical Philology*, 42.

60 On the further problems of this assumption, see Urbanek, “Was ist eine musikphilologische Frage?,” especially 156–157.

61 Friedrich Ritschl, “Zur Methode des philologischen Studiums,” in: *Kleine philologische Schriften* (Opuscula Philologica, vol. 5: Vermischtes), Leipzig: Teubner 1879, 19–39: 26, my translation (“Lieber methodisch irren, als unmethodisch d.h. zufällig das Wahre finden”).

62 See for example Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Die Macht der Philologie*, Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp 2003, 128. Of course, this notion can be found in numerous places in the history of philology.

apparatuses in order to illustrate the genesis and development of a text in its respective historical context. Against this background, a contamination of different sources is naturally forbidden as constituting a wholly ahistorical approach. To put it bluntly: the formerly crucial issue, the open “Gretchenfrage” of how to deal with textual error is no longer at the center of attention; indeed, it is no longer raised in this form at all, in favor of other questions. Practices of emendation, conjunctive textual criticism, and divinatory intervention thereby lose their relevance, while questions of the adequate presentation of textual variants become increasingly pressing.

New Approaches: Critique génétique – Musical Text Genetics

Against this background, new theoretical and methodological approaches have been developed in the field of philology in recent decades. *Critique génétique*,⁶³ a field of research that emerged in Paris in the 1960s and 1970s in relation to literary archives, has proven to be particularly productive for philological questions pertaining to music. Almuth Grésillon can be regarded as the central protagonist of this field of research, having repeatedly commented on questions of musical philology. In contrast to traditional editorial philology, *critique génétique* sees itself as a field of research in which the genesis of texts is examined on the basis of surviving traces or sources in order to gain a better understanding of writing processes. This has a number of theoretical and methodological consequences, which can be summarized as follows, after Grésillon:⁶⁴

1. The fundamental philological research interest lies not in the constitution of a final, fixed text, but in an analysis of the writing process.
2. This is based on a fundamentally altered concept of text: the text is in principle to be thought of as open, flexible, “unfixed.”⁶⁵
3. While a teleological perspective is directly inherent in traditional philology, which is oriented towards a fixed text to be presented in a unique, unambiguous form, the idea of process-oriented *critique génétique* is to a certain extent “rhizomatic.”⁶⁶
4. Against this background, the material traces of writing itself are crucial sources for research in the context of *critique génétique*: workshop materials of all kinds, sources of various types, diverse writing materials, etc. In this respect, there is a close cooperation between archival and philological research.
5. With regard to the editorial presentation of writing processes in a broader sense, the field of *critique génétique* has from the very beginning been closely affiliated with digital hyper-text editions in order to be able to present the diverse – “rhizomatic” – textual movements appropriately.

63 See in particular Almut Grésillon, *Literarische Handschriften: Introduction to the “critique génétique”*, translated from the French by Frauke Rother and Wolfgang Günther, Bern: Lang 1999. See also Almuth Grésillon, “Bemerkungen zur französischen ‘édition génétique,’” in: *Textgenetische Edition*, ed. by Hans Zeller and Gunter Martens, Tübingen: Mohr 1998, 52–64, as well as Louis Hay, “‘Den Text gibt es nicht.’ Überlegungen zur critique génétique,” in: *Texte zur Theorie des Textes*, ed. by Stephan Kammer and Roger Lüdeke, Stuttgart: Reclam 2005, 74–90.

64 See the concise account in Almuth Grésillon, “‘Critique génétique’: Gedanken zu ihrer Entstehung, Methode und Theorie,” in: *Texte zur modernen Philologie*, ed. by Kai Bremer and Uwe Wirth, Stuttgart: Reclam 2010, 288–307.

65 On this keyword see Joachim Bumke, “Der unfeste Text: Überlegungen zur Überlieferungsgeschichte und Textkritik der höfischen Epik,” in: *Texte zur modernen Philologie*, ed. by Kai Bremer and Uwe Wirth, Stuttgart: Reclam 2010, 269–286.

66 On this recourse to Derrida (and especially to Deleuze/Guattari), see Grésillon, “‘Critique génétique,’” 291.

Musical Text Genetics

These considerations of *critique génétique* now prove to be very appealing to musical philology. The interest evoked by the Parisian manuscript researchers in the processes of writing itself or, as Bernhard Appel puts it in a Kleist paraphrase, the interest in the “gradual production of musical thoughts while writing,”⁶⁷ also allows us to focus on the act of composing as a creative practice, namely as research into the compositional spirit that is conveyed, as it were, in concrete traces of writing. It is no longer about the divinatory insights of an ingenious editor into the ideal intellectual workshop of the composer, but rather about a visit to his real, materially mediated places of work.

With a view to Beethoven philology, Bernhard Appel has processed essential contributions from *critique génétique* and linked them with the tradition of musical sketch research, to which Almuth Grésillon had already referred.⁶⁸ The aim is to formulate a practice of “genetic textual criticism in the field of music,” which Appel has outlined in several authoritative research contributions.⁶⁹ Against the theoretical background of *critique génétique*, the following aspects of genetic textual criticism can be identified as essential to our line of inquiry:

1. The fundamental research interest lies not in the product of writing, but in the analysis of the creative writing process itself. Thus, research in the field of musical text genetics is not aimed at the editorial production of a clearly fixed text, but at the representation of the genesis of the text.
2. Composing is thus understood as a practice (and not primarily in a *poietic* sense); accordingly, the analysis of acts of writing, work routines, and strategies of compositional problem-solving becomes the focus of attention.
3. Sketches and workshop materials are understood – in their respective historical form – as sources in their own right, and not as incomplete preliminary stages of a work’s ideal text. The traditional, hierarchically defined relationships between different genres of text and source therefore also change.
4. The relationship between a work’s text and its variant text also changes in terms of their respective philological evaluation. Variants are no longer errors or deviating readings of a text that is thought of as fixed and error-free, but rather independent textual stages that, at a certain point in the creative process, indicate a certain compositional possibility, a certain compositional path, a certain compositional decision.
5. With regard to the presentation of variants, there is a high level of affinity between such a research method and the possibilities and further developments in the field of digital editions.⁷⁰

67 Bernhard R. Appel, “Über die allmähliche Verfertigung musikalischer Gedanken beim Schreiben,” *Die Musikforschung* 56 (2003), 347–355.

68 Grésillon, “Critique génétique,” 307.

69 See also, for example, Bernhard R. Appel, “Sechs Thesen zur genetischen Kritik kompositorischer Prozesse,” *Musiktheorie* 20 (2005), 112–122, and Bernhard R. Appel, “Zum Textstatus von Kompositions-Skizzen und -Entwürfen,” in: *Jahrbuch des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung Preußischer Kulturbesitz* 1999, ed. by Günther Wagner, Stuttgart: Metzler 1999, 177–210.

70 This has led to the establishment of the pioneering research project *Beethovens Werkstatt: Genetische Textkritik und Digitale Musikedition*: <http://beethovens-werkstatt.de> (30/06/2026).

The Philology of Sound in Mahler

In summary, I would like to conclude by drawing attention to some of the problematic issues in the relationship between sound and philology, with a particular focus on Mahler. These issues are exemplified by some comparative remarks on the scores of the Fifth Symphony by Erwin Ratz (1964) and Reinhold Kubik (2002) in the context of the Critical Complete Edition, since some of these points become particularly pressing in concrete editorial work. How editors position themselves from a theoretical, methodological, historical, and aesthetic perspective is particularly significant for our discussion.

Ratz writes in the revision report of his 1964 edition, which is subtitled “first edition of the final score” (“Erstausgabe der endgültigen Fassung”):

Einso wie die IV. Symphonie unterzog Mahler auch die in den Jahren 1901 bis 1903 entstandene V. Symphonie wenige Jahre vor seinem Tode einer sehr sorgfältigen Revision, bei der er die Erfahrungen, die sich ihm bei der Aufführung seiner Werke ergaben, verwerten konnte, um so den höchsten Grad an Deutlichkeit und Ausgewogenheit in der Darstellung seiner musikalischen Ideen zu erzielen. Wie bereits in den bisher erschienenen Bänden der kritischen Gesamtausgabe wiederholt erwähnt wurde, zeugen die Retuschen Mahlers von einer außerordentlich hohen künstlerischen Intelligenz und gewähren beim näheren Studium wertvollste Einblicke in den künstlerischen Schaffensprozeß. War mit der Reinschrift der Partitur die Endgestalt des Werkes in seiner konstruktiven Idee erreicht, an der Mahler sich niemals zu einer Änderung bewogen fühlte, so ergaben sich ihm bei der klanglichen Realisierung immer wieder Möglichkeiten, seine Vorstellungen noch deutlicher zu gestalten. Gerade weil er ein Meister der modernen Orchesterbehandlung war, konnte er, getrieben von größter künstlerischer Gewissenhaftigkeit, überhaupt jene Retuschen vornehmen, die unmittelbar überzeugend sind, obwohl bereits das vorhergehende Stadium vollkommen schien. [...]

Diese dritte und endgültige Fassung, die über 270 wesentliche Änderungen gegenüber der bisher bekannten 2. Fassung aufweist, wird hiermit zum ersten Mal der Öffentlichkeit zugänglich gemacht und es ist zu hoffen, daß 50 Jahre nach dem Tode Gustav Mahlers endlich die Notwendigkeit empfunden wird, seine Werke in der Gestalt aufzuführen, die Mahler selber als die endgültige bezeichnet hat.⁷¹

Just like the Fourth Symphony a few years before his death, Mahler also subjected the Fifth Symphony, composed between 1901 and 1903, to a very careful revision in which he was able to utilize the experience he had gained from performing his works to achieve the highest degree of clarity and balance in the presentation of his musical ideas. As has already been mentioned repeatedly in the previous volumes of the Complete Critical Edition, Mahler's retouchings bear witness to an extraordinarily high level of artistic intelligence and, on closer study, provide valuable insights into the artistic creative process. While the final form of the work in its constructive idea was achieved with the fair copy of the score, which Mahler never felt moved to change, he repeatedly had the opportunity to shape his ideas even more clearly through the realization in sound. Precisely because he was a master of the handling of the modern orchestra, he was able, driven by the greatest artistic conscientiousness, to make those retouchings that are immediately convincing, even though the previous stage already seemed perfect. [...]

This third and final version, which contains over 270 essential changes compared to the previously known second version, is herewith made available to the public for the first time and it is to be hoped that 50 years after Gustav Mahler's death, the necessity will finally be felt to perform his works in the form that Mahler himself described as final.

⁷¹ Erwin Ratz, “Revisionsbericht,” in: Gustav Mahler, *Symphonie Nr. 5 in fünf Sätzen für großes Orchester: Erstausgabe der endgültigen Fassung* (KGA, vol. 5), ed. by Erwin Ratz, Frankfurt/M.: C. F. Peters 1964, 1, my translation.

The editorial self-awareness of Schoenberg's pupil Ratz is clearly indebted to the tradition of the Viennese School; essential keywords that we already know from Schoenberg's Prague speech reappear here as editorial principles or lines of supporting argument. The guiding principle is the maxim of a "final score," construed as a "definitive" final version, for which the author's intention provides an essential justification.

The area of scholarly analysis and contextualization has grown immensely in Reinhold Kubik's edition compared to that of Erwin Ratz, with the incorporation of findings from the historiography of interpretation and research into performance practice playing a considerable role in the argumentation. A table of performances of the Fifth Symphony during Mahler's lifetime, as well as a table of surviving information on the duration of performances of the Fifth Symphony are included.⁷² Source material is significantly more extensive than in Ratz's edition, and in order to clarify the interdependency of the sources, orchestral materials are also listed.⁷³

Kubik writes in his editorial report:

Wie bereits aus den im Stemma der chronologischen Übersicht skizzierten Abhängigkeitsverhältnissen der Quellen untereinander hervorgeht, repräsentiert der Stimmensatz St2 Mahlers letzte Verfügung über die Gestalt seiner V. Symphonie. Es ist sicher, daß der Redaktionsstand von [GM-Dp] hinter demjenigen von St2 zurückgeblieben war, sonst wäre die New Yorker Revision überflüssig gewesen. Bedauerlicherweise fehlt jene Partitur, die von Mahler im Winter 1910/11 in New York zugleich mit St2 revidiert wurde. Zwar hätte Mahler mit Sicherheit weitere Revisionen durchgeführt, wenn er die Symphonie tatsächlich wieder aufgeführt hätte. [...] "Fassung letzter Hand" scheint bei Mahler lediglich die "letzte erhaltene Revisionsstufe" zu bedeuten [...] und kann keinesfalls den Rang der letztwilligen, sozusagen "perfekten" Redaktion als definitive Vollendung des gesamten Kompositionsprozesses beanspruchen. Dennoch ist die prinzipielle Entscheidung, die bereits Erwin Ratz für seine Ausgabe von 1964 getroffen hatte, diese letzte Revision der Edition zugrunde zu legen, ohne Alternative und gilt ungemindert ebenso für die vorliegende Kritische Neuausgabe. [...]

Wenn trotz der ungeschmälernten Rolle von St2 als Hauptquelle auch Lesarten aus anderen Quellen (hauptsächlich aus Aut, St1 und W-Dp) Eingang in die vorliegende Edition gefunden haben, so war doch keineswegs eine "Mischfassung" beabsichtigt, in der wahllos alles Erhaltene zusammengetragen wurde. Nicht alle Lesarten aus allen Revisionen sind von Mahler beibehalten worden. Das wird schon aus dem nachfolgenden Verzeichnis der Lesarten

As can already be seen from the interdependency of the sources outlined in the stemma of the chronological overview, the orchestral part set St2 represents Mahler's final disposition of the shape of his Fifth Symphony. It is certain that the editorial status of [GM-Dp] lagged behind that of St2, otherwise the New York revision would have been superfluous. Unfortunately, the score that Mahler revised in New York in the winter of 1910/11 at the same time as St2 is missing. Mahler would certainly have carried out further revisions if he had actually performed the symphony again. [...] For Mahler, the "final version" seems to mean merely the "last surviving stage of revision" [...] and can by no means claim the status of the final, so to speak "perfect" editing as the definitive completion of the entire compositional process. Nevertheless, Erwin Ratz's decision in principle to base his 1964 edition on this final revision is without alternative and applies equally to the Critical New Edition. [...]

If, despite the undiminished role of St2 as the main source, readings from other sources (mainly from Aut, St1 and W-Dp) have also found their way into the present edition, it was by no means intended to produce a "mixed version" in which everything that has survived has been indiscriminately brought together. Mahler did not retain all the readings from all the revisions. This becomes clear

72 Gustav Mahler, *Symphonie Nr. 5 in fünf Sätzen für großes Orchester: Kritische Neuausgabe* (KGA, vol. 5), ed. by Reinhold Kubik, Frankfurt/M: C. F. Peters 2002, XII–XIII.

73 Reinhold Kubik, "Kritischer Bericht," in: Gustav Mahler, *Symphonie Nr. 5 in fünf Sätzen für großes Orchester: Kritische Neuausgabe* (KGA, vol. 5), ed. by Reinhold Kubik, Frankfurt/M: C. F. Peters 2002, 334–384: 334–335.

aus St1, die nicht in St2 eingegangen sind, deutlich; nicht zu reden von den Partituren aus Amsterdam und Triest, die konkrete Aufführungssituationen spiegeln, deren Lesarten nicht zur Gänze oder überhaupt nicht von Mahler in spätere Redaktionen übernommen wurden.⁷⁴

from the following list of readings from St1 that were not included in St2; not to mention the scores from Amsterdam and Trieste, which reflect specific performance situations whose readings were not adopted in their entirety or at all by Mahler in later revisions.

The comparison of the two editions gives rise to numerous further questions that are relevant to the dynamic relationship between philology and sound. Firstly, the status of the text presented is of considerable interest. Ratz and Kubik both proceed from the idea of a definitive form of the work intended by Mahler, or a quasi-authorized final version. Against the background of Mahler's creative process in general and the specific situation of the repeatedly revised Fifth Symphony in particular, this assumption raises a point of contention. In view of the fact that further revisions may have been expected at any stage during Mahler's lifetime, owing to the highly volatile situation surrounding a desired sounding result in performance, should not the orientation towards a "final version," particularly in Mahler's case, be seriously called into question? Apart from the fact that the source situation sometimes makes it difficult to determine what actually should be considered the source of a "definitive final version," the question remains as to whether the orientation towards such a "final version" as an editorial guideline should remain unchallenged. Such an orientation has always stood on a rather weak rational foundation, since in practice it sometimes forces the editor to set a merely assumed authorial intention relating to the (lack of) evidence of the sources. Like Lachmann, one risks peering into the "intellectual workshop" of a creative mind instead of consulting Mahler's actual workshop, which exists in material form in the surviving sources.

Against the background of the inclusion of annotated parts as primary source material and conducting scores as further relevant sources, the question also arises as to how this can be justified philologically. The list of sources referred to during the editorial process for Kubik's and Ratz's editions of the Fifth Symphony,⁷⁵ and the extensive, though somewhat confusing work of Sander Wilkens⁷⁶ (now outdated by the research of Kubik), clearly show the heterogeneity of the source situation: autograph scores; printed study and conducting scores with entries in the hand of Mahler; and others (e.g. Willem Mengelberg and Bruno Walter) relating to specific performances; annotated proofs and correction documents; arranged and revised orchestral material. In addition, the inclusion of revision processes is in many respects dependent on further information, ranging from biographical information from ego-documents, to questions of room acoustics and organological issues.⁷⁷ If, in the context of Mahler's creative working process, fundamental revision processes are of particular relevance to sound, and are taken into account in the editorial work, the philological evaluation of the sources to be consulted may be anything but trivial.

⁷⁴ Kubik, "Kritischer Bericht," 352–353, my translation.

⁷⁵ See *ibid.*, 334–335 and Ratz, "Revisionsbericht."

⁷⁶ Sander Wilkens, *Gustav Mahler's Fifth Symphony: Sources and the Instrumentation Process*, Frankfurt/M: C. F. Peters 1989.

⁷⁷ See, for example, the chapters by Klaus Aringer and Jack Adler-McKean in the present volume.

Furthermore, it is evident from various sources that a single sonic idea (such as the elucidation of a melodic line) can evoke a multitude of small interventions in the musical text. The micrological view of the philologist, in all her love of detail, is severely challenged by the sheer number of resulting modifications in the text. Under these conditions, the question of an adequate presentation of philological analysis, evidence, and results also becomes increasingly pressing. In view of the above-mentioned considerations of *critique génétique* and genetic textual criticism, hope can be found in the possibilities offered by digital technology. This would also open up new possibilities for musical practice, enabling performers to engage more accurately with the highly volatile source material on a philologically sound basis, reflecting the flexible performance practices of Mahler's time and beyond.

Comparison of the editions clearly shows that musical philology's scholarly interest has gradually shifted. The inclusion of specific author-related practices relating to the creative working process⁷⁸ is becoming increasingly important in the context of editorial research for complete editions – a shift that may force musical philology of Mahler's revision processes to leave the comfort zone of purely textual scholarship. An elaborated “philology of sound” in Mahler could thus make a considerable contribution to explaining the intrinsic correlation between work, performance, and text in greater detail.

The seemingly unproblematic link between sound and philology turns out to be rather fragile on closer inspection. For a long time, aspects of sound were regarded as “secondary parameters.” As a result, tools for their analysis were not developed to the same degree as those for text-related aspects. It is precisely this confrontation between music as text and music as sound, in which the critique of a musicological “forgetfulness of sound” has a precarious starting point in the history of the discipline. This chapter is concerned with a step-by-step mapping of the intersection between “sound” and “philology.” After briefly surveying discussions of sonic phenomena in the history of the reception of Mahler's work, it argues for the formulation of an integral concept of musical sound that includes aspects of materiality, mediality, and performativity. Against the background of a historical and systematic positioning of philology as a scientifically founded and oriented discipline, some virulent fundamental questions of musical philology, encompassing author-related editorial philology and philological research into creative musical processes, are worked out. This is further elaborated with regard to specific issues raised by philological approaches to the sound world(s) of Mahler's symphonic works.

Schlagworte/Keywords: critique genetique, Klang, Mahler's symphonies, Mahlers Symphonik, Philologie, philology, sound, text-genetic criticism, textgenetische Kritik

⁷⁸ For a summary of Mahler's creative process, see Peter Andraschke, “Mahlers Schaffensprozess,” in: MH, 127–138, with further references in particular to publications by Peter Andraschke, Reinhold Kubik, Stephen E. Hefling, Sander Wilkens, and James L. Zychowicz. Essential with regard to the situation of the Fifth Symphony: Anna Ficarella, *Non guardare nei miei Lieder! Mahler Compositore Orchestrale Interprete*, Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana 2020. Studies beyond Mahler include Nicolas Donin (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Creative Process in Music*, New York: Oxford University Press 2018, and William Kinderman, *The Creative Process in Music from Mozart to Kurtág*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press 2012.

Nikolaus Urbanek is Professor for Musicology and Dean of Research Studies at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. He earned his doctorate in 2008 with a music-philosophical thesis on Adorno's Beethoven fragments at the University of Vienna. His main research areas of research include the philosophy of music, music historiography, and theory of musical writing. Current book publications: *Arnold Schönberg und Luigi Nono. Leseszenen*, ed. by Stefan Jena, Matteo Nanni, and Nikolaus Urbanek, München: edition text + kritik 2026 (forthcoming); *Lesen und Schreiben* (special issue: *MusikTheorie. Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft*), ed. by Federico Celestini and Nikolaus Urbanek, Lilienthal: Laaber 2025; *Xenakis – Back To The Roots. Philological Approaches to Electroacoustic Music*, ed. by Reinhold Friedl, Thomas Grill, Nikolaus Urbanek, and Michelle Ziegler, Bielefeld/Wien: mdwPress 2025; *Worte ohne Lieder. Sprachästhetik und musikalisches Schreiben bei Adorno*, ed. by Wolfgang Fuhrmann, Gabriele Geml, Han-Gyeol Lie, and Nikolaus Urbanek, München: edition text + kritik 2024.
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2720-544X> | urbanek@mdw.ac.at



Urbanek, Nikolaus. 2026. "The Philology of Sound." In *Gustav Mahler's Sound: Between Compositional Process, Performance, and Reception*, edited by Tobias Janz and Christian Utz, 205–224. Vienna: Hollitzer Verlag.
→ https://doi.org/10.83452/9783990946893_12