



International Conference

## Nature in Musical Modernism Since Mahler

23 July 2023 10:00 AM

24 July 2023 08:00 PM

Euregio Kulturzentrum Toblach / Centro Culturale Euregio Dobbiaco

Dolomitenstraße / Via Dolomiti 41,

39034 Toblach/Dobbiaco, Südtirol/Trentino-Alto Adige, Italien/Italia

**Programme, Abstracts and Biographies**

## 23 JULY

10:00 Welcome

10:15 Milijana Pavlović (Univ. Innsbruck): “The Nature of Nature in the First Movement of Mahler’s Third”

11:00 Angelo Pinto (Gustav Mahler Research Centre, Univ. Innsbruck): “Schopenhauer’s and Wagner’s Anti-Anthropocentrism in Mahler’s Third and Today’s Environmentalist Thought”

11:45 *coffee break*

12:00 Carlo Serra (Univ. of Calabria): “Form and Emergence in the Development of the First Movement of Mahler's First Symphony”

12:45 *lunch break*

15:00 Marcus Zagorski (Comenius Univ. of Bratislava): “Stockhausen's Nature, Deep Ecology, and a Nod to Mahler's Third”

15:45 Julian Johnson (Univ. Royal Holloway, Univ. of London): “The (Un)Natural Horn: from Mahler to Haas”

16:30 End of the first conference day

## 24 JULY

09:30 Thomas Peattie (Univ. of Mississippi): “‘...Music’s Time Is the Time of the Trees...’. Schubert-Mahler-Berio and the Sound of Nature”

10:15 Sherry Lee (Univ. of Toronto): “Adorno’s Mahler and Modernist Music ‘After Nature’”

11:00 *coffee break*

11:15 Mathieu Schneider (Univ. of Strasbourg) “‘... *Sicut in Caelo et in Terra...*’. Essay on the Disenchantment of Nature in 20th Century Musical Theater”

12:00 Daniel Grimley (Univ. of Oxford): “‘Auf den Bergen’: Delius, Nietzsche and the Numinous”

12: 45 *lunch break*

14:30 Raffaele Pozzi (Univ. of Rome 3): “Cosmic Vision and ‘Sound of Nature. Mahler Shadows in the Monumental Dimension of Olivier Messiaen’s Symphonism”

15:15 Paolo Somigli (Univ. of Bozen): “‘Naturläute’ in Salvatore Sciarrino’s Music Between Environmental Evocation and Listeners’ Inner Dramaturgy”

18:00 Film screening: RIAFN by Hannes Lang. Round Table with Angelo Pinto, Milijana Pavlović, Julian Johnson, Hannes Lang, Stefan Hakenberg and the young composers of the Project *Young Composers and Gustav Mahler in Toblach/Dobbiaco*

*Concept: Angelo Pinto*

*Organisation: Angelo Pinto, Federico Celestini, Milijana Pavlović*

*The conference originates from the Gustav Mahler Research Centre ‘Music and Nature’ Study Group (<https://mahler-centre.net/musik-and-nature>)*

Milijana Pavlović (University of Innsbruck)

## The Nature of Nature in the First Movement of Mahler's Third

The colossal first movement of the Third Symphony had a very peculiar genesis. Not only was it written last, but it also went through a series of not-so-minor transformations, with constantly evolving concept and content, before it took the form we know today.

Upon arriving to Steinbach in June 1896 with the intent to work on the remaining movement of his Third Symphony, Mahler realised in panic that he had forgotten the existing sketches to that movement at home and urged his friend Hermann Behn to go collect them and send them to Steinbach. While waiting for these precious pages to arrive, Mahler sketched – without any previous plans to do so – what would first be an introduction to the first movement and at the end of that summer its integral part. This introduction profoundly changed the nature of the movement and created a balance between the elements of Nature alluded to in various comments Mahler made to his friends and family. A manuscript found in a private collection and another one in Vienna, seen together, take us to the early stages of this transformation and tell us the tale of the evolution of one of the most monumental movements Mahler wrote.

Dr. Milijana Pavlović is a researcher at the Department of Musicology of the University of Innsbruck, Austria, and the Deputy Director of the Gustav Mahler Research Centre Innsbruck-Toblach. She earned her doctoral degree at the University of Ferrara, Italy, in 2009, with a dissertation on Gustav Mahler. Since 2013 she has held a position at the University of Innsbruck that became permanent in 2018. The central spot among her research interests is occupied by music as a means of violence, with special focus on music-related antisemitism through history, i.e. before, during and after the Shoah (her current book project).

Angelo Pinto (Gustav Mahler Research Centre, University of Innsbruck)

## Schopenhauer's and Wagner's Anti-Anthropocentrism in Mahler's Third and Today's Environmentalist Thought

Knowing Mahler's inspiration from nature, we see in his readings of natural philosophers and scientists of his time that he shared their conception of nature in anti-anthropocentric or instinctual terms. Most notably, philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer and Richard Wagner, as an essayist, constitute the basis of Mahler's philosophical culture.

Starting from an analysis of these two authors' ideas that have been seen as the anti-anthropocentric origins of today's environmental and animalistic thought, the paper sees the reception of their philosophical worldview in the last four movements of Mahler's Third Symphony, a work that is well-known as taking inspiration from nature.

As a result, we find that in this symphony Mahler, drawing on Schopenhauer's and Wagner's ideas, sets a musical dialectics between the human and nature, which is overcome in the last movement within a holistic conception of nature that has evident analogues with some elements of today's environmental thought.

Angelo Pinto teaches music history at 'Luigi Canepa' Conservatoire, Sassari (Italy). He graduated from the Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna (Italy) gained a Ph.D. at The Open University (UK) and has been a DAAD fellow at the University of Tübingen (Germany). His peer review articles appeared in academic journals published in Italy, Austria, and the USA, and has been invited to conferences and academic seminars in the UK, Austria, Australia, Italy, the USA, Germany, and Ireland. Currently, he is an Associate Scholar at the Gustav Mahler Research Centre where chairs the *Music and Nature* study group.

Carlo Serra (University of Calabria)

## Form and Emergence in the Development of The First Movement of Mahler's First Symphony

The morphological theme in Mahler's writing is an elusive aspect, often related to the difficulty of identifying linear modularities within the melodic development in the three first symphonies. People often speak of melodic developments, but, in reality, different patterns are meant by this expression. Since Bekker's monograph, in fact, the metamorphic aspects of the musical form of Mahler's First Symphony are localized and juxtaposed, according to indications of continuity that are difficult to identify. All this, of course, happens because of problems internal to the very form of the Austrian composer's writing. For this reason, an investigation of the returns of intervallic forms in the analysis of the first movement of First Symphony calls into question a seminal text, Goethe's *Morphology*, long examined by Mahler, probably because of the methodological checkmate, which brings into play, the idea of the impossibility of finding a recognizable primary form, which does not pass through the interaction of force fields, in which identity is always given by emergence or contrast. The outcomes of the problem are remarkable and interesting: from Erwin Stein to Donald Mitchell, in fact, descriptive forms are created in which the phenomena of assonance between intervals become a trace for the analysis of melodic forms. It is perhaps worthwhile to take up these aspects from a phenomenological point of view, placing ourselves back in the terrain of developmental forms in the First, in the serene awareness that this is still a local analysis, which can, however, teach us a great deal about a composer's style of working.

Carlo Serra is Associate Professor at the University of Calabria and at the University of Turin. He teaches Aesthetics and the Theory of Image and Sound. He taught at the Fiesole School of Chamber Music for several years. His field of research moves within the Philosophy of Music, declined according to a phenomenological interpretation, which treasures its perceptual bearings. His investigations have as their object the musical space, understood as a musical analysis of melodic structures and as a description of sound-environment relations: on these topics, he has published essays, and some monographs, including *Musica Corpo Espressione*, (*'Music, Body, Expression'*), *La voce e lo spazio* (*'Voice and Space'*) and the recent *Come Suono di Natura: Metafisica della melodia nella Prima Sinfonia di Mahler* (*'Like a Nature Sonds. Metaphysics of melody in Mahler's First Symphony'*). He is the editor of the journal *De Musica*.

Marcus Zagorski (Comenius University of Bratislava)

## Stockhausen's Nature, Ecology, and a Nod to Mahler's Third

The most obvious place to look for Karlheinz Stockhausen's views about nature would seem to be in his cosmology—clearly visible from the mid-1970s onward in his embrace of *The Urantia Book* and his opera *Licht*. But the roots of the composer's understanding of the universe can be traced much further back: to his theoretical writings and compositional work of the early 1950s. These sources reveal Stockhausen's view of cosmic nature (which the later period only affirms) as well as his own personal nature. In both cases, Stockhausen is thoroughly anthropocentric: he may not have placed humans literally at the center of the universe, but he organized his view of the universe according to human and personal interests. And worse yet, he claimed to understand the cosmos. This paper will show how Stockhausen's views were expressed in his theoretical writings, and it will contrast his anthropocentrism with an alternative view proposed by contemporary environmental philosophy and perhaps suggested in Mahler's Third Symphony.

Marcus Zagorski studied composition and musicology at McGill University and Stanford University, respectively, and currently teaches at Comenius University in Bratislava. His past research focused on modern music and aesthetics after 1945. His current work combines sound studies and ecocriticism and examines the soundscapes of non-urban areas.

Julian Johnson (Royal Holloway, University of London)

## The (un)natural horn: from Mahler to Haas

Taking Mahler as a historical axis, this paper explores musical constructions of Nature through the materiality of a single instrument: the horn. Mahler's use of the horn as a musical symbol of nature looks back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century (from Bach to Beethoven, Weber to Wagner) while also having a legacy that extends into the 21<sup>st</sup> century (from Berg to Britten, Ligeti to Haas). The tension between the instrument's natural origins and the technologically advanced design of the modern valve horn offers an exemplary case of the tension between a Mahlerian *Naturlaut* and the technologically mediated second nature of symphonic music. Far from taking the horn merely as a symbol of nature, this paper explores how Mahler initiates a musical critique of second nature through the materiality of instrument design, sound production, tuning, and performance. In doing so, it provides a case-study of how music's thinking-in-sound enacts a critical philosophy of nature.

Julian Johnson is Regius Professor of Music at Royal Holloway, University of London. Before a career in musicology, he was a horn player and a composer. His books include *Webern and the Transformation of Nature* (1999), *Mahler's Voices* (2009), and *Music and the Making of Modernity* (2015).



Thomas Peattie (University of Mississippi)

## ‘...Music’s Time Is the Time of the Trees...’. Schubert-Mahler-Berio and the Sound of Nature

Luciano Berio’s attentiveness to the relationship between music and nature in Romantic thought remains among the least explored aspects of the composer’s creative practice. In this paper I argue that the newly composed interpolations in *Rendering* (1988–90) are in dialogue with a wide range of nature *topoi* drawn from the standard repertory of nineteenth-century operatic and symphonic music. Whereas Berio’s interpolations have often been heard as ‘voids’ that project qualities of ‘neutrality’ and ‘emptiness’ (Metzer, Byrne Bodley, Brodsky, Rose), these metaphorically distant episodes can also be interpreted as vibrant ‘dream spaces’ that share important similarities with the expressive power of Mahler’s landscape evocations in the Sixth and Seventh Symphonies. What lends added potency to Berio’s reconstituted ‘music from afar’ is the way in which it comments on this well-known Mahlerian idea through the incorporation of quotations from pieces by Schubert in which landscape and memory play a central role.

Thomas Peattie is an Associate Professor of Music at the University of Mississippi. His most recent research explores the relationship between Romanticism and modernism with a particular emphasis on the music of Gustav Mahler and Luciano Berio. He is the recipient of fellowships from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Paul Sacher Foundation (Basel), the Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America at Columbia University, and the Northrop Frye Centre at the University of Toronto.

His essays have appeared in *Mahler and his World* (Princeton), *Music, Modern Culture, and the Critical Ear* (Routledge) *Giacinto Scelsi: Music Across the Borders* (Brepols), *Mahler in Context* (Cambridge), and *The Cambridge Companion to Music and Romanticism*. His articles and reviews have appeared in *Acta musicologica*, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, *Music and Letters*, *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, and *Contemporary Music Review*. He is the author of *Gustav Mahler’s Symphonic Landscapes* (Cambridge, 2015) and is currently preparing a monograph on the transcribing practice of Luciano Berio.

Sherry Lee (University of Toronto)

## Adorno's Mahler and Modernist Music 'After Nature'

Modernist music of the 20C sounds an 'after-ness' in the wake of musical romanticism, wherein a 19C consciousness, crucially shaped by the sense of a severed relationship with nature in the shadow of the industrial revolution, frequently became audible in mimetic-musical evocations of the natural world. Thus Mahler's music, seemingly bridging late romanticism and early modernism, incorporates sounds of 'nature' – whether through explicitly mimetic instrumental gestures or textual themes – referencing a seemingly naive romantic sensibility whose qualities of nostalgia, irony and loss signal its modernity. It seems, though, that the prominence of nature as a musical concern evaporates with a modernist turn toward abstraction and against mimesis, or what Adorno referred to as a rebellion against semblance, such that, if much of 19C music was 'after' nature in the 'allusive or imitative' sense, modernist music sounds like a music 'after' nature in the sense of 'post.' Under this perception, nature's emergence as a subject of musical interest later in the 20C appears as part of a neoromantic turn. Yet for Adorno, who never fell prey to the misconception that musical engagement with ideas of nature equated merely with programmaticism, the artistic object of aesthetic judgment in modernity was always a site for the subject's dialectical awareness of its alienation from nature. This talk considers how Adorno's aesthetic concept of 'nature' allows it to interact with the investment in autonomy and abstraction that characterized much of 20C musical preoccupations with modernist structures and technologies.

Sherry Lee is Associate Professor of Musicology at the University of Toronto. She is a fellow of Trinity College and Victoria College, and currently serves as the Director of the Northrop Frye Centre. Her research and teaching interests include music and modernist culture, music and philosophy, sound media and technology studies, and discourses of music, sound, landscape and environment. She is presently leading an international research cluster in the environmental humanities, in partnership with Oxford University and the University of Pennsylvania.

Mathieu Schneider (University of Strasbourg)

## ‘... *Sicut in Caelo et in Terra...*’. Essay on the disenchantment of nature in 20<sup>th</sup> century musical theatre Symphonism

The German *Naturphilosophie* initiated a tradition of sublime and transcendent representation of nature in the arts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, of which Mahler's work represents somehow a culmination. Starting from the transfiguring role of the horns and birdsong in the finale of his *Second Symphony*, this paper will attempt to show how the successive traumas of the 20<sup>th</sup> century led to a progressive secularisation of nature, to an inversion of the sublime and even to a kind of 'denaturing of nature'.

I will use three examples, all of them showing a particular representation of the sky in its natural environment. After an analysis of the role of the night sky in the crime scene of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* (1925), I will turn to Pasqualita's astonishing Indian lullaby in Act 2 of John Adams' *Doctor Atomic* (2005). Finally, I will return to Mahler's *Second Symphony* in Romeo Castellucci's staging (Aix-en-Provence, 2022), in which the chimera of heaven is transformed into an earthly nightmare. Almost 100 years after Berg's *Wozzeck*, the process of secularisation of nature seems to have reached its achievement and raise ecological and anthropological questions that have curiously their roots in the romantic tradition.

Mathieu Schneider is Professor in history of music at Strasbourg University. He is member of the Laboratory of excellence CREAA and, since 2014, vice-president of the University of Strasbourg. His research focuses on postromantic German music (especially the symphonic works by R. Strauss and G. Mahler) and on the construction of national identities in music, especially in the German speaking world and in Switzerland. He has also been curating many exhibitions (on Wagner's reception in France, on the musical life in Strasbourg at the turn of the 20th century, on Mahler, on the Marseillaise...) and has published over 200 titles worldwide.

Daniel Grimley (University of Oxford)

## ‘Auf den Bergen’: Delius, Nietzsche and the Numinous

Frederick Delius’s music often dwells on the tension between an overwhelming sense of the ecstatic—from a defiantly secularist world-view—and his preoccupation with an earthy, bodily materiality. This tension is captured most acutely in his protean *Mass of Life* (1898/1904), a setting of texts from Nietzsche’s *Also Sprach Zarathustra* assembled by the composer with the assistance of his friend and colleague, Fritz Cassirer.

This paper proceeds from an analysis of a newly discovered source—a short score draft, amounting to *circa* 110 bars in total, for the orchestral prelude to the opening movement of the second part of the *Mass*, entitled ‘Mittag’—and offers a critical reading of Delius’s response to Nietzsche’s text. The prelude is an intensive study in mountain calls and distant sounds that has led some commentators (such as Deryck Cooke and Derrick Puffett) to compare the *Mass* with Mahler’s closely contemporary Third Symphony. Delius’s work is less concerned with irony, parody or alienation, however, but rather with a search for the numinous, expressed particularly radiantly in the ‘Mittag’ prelude. *A Mass of Life* hence occupies a very different register to Mahler’s symphony, suggesting not so much a process of transcendence and release as a narrative of drift and ecological contingency, a reading that is no less consonant with Nietzsche’s philosophy.

Daniel M. Grimley is Head of Humanities at the University of Oxford, a Fellow of Merton College. He has published 4 monographs and edited 5 further volumes. His most recent books are *Jean Sibelius: Life, Music, Silence* (Reaktion, 2021), and *Vaughan Williams and his World*, which he co-edited with Byron Adams (University of Chicago Press, 2023).

Raffaele Pozzi (University of Rome 3)

## Cosmic Vision and “Sound of Nature”. Mahler Shadows in The Monumental Dimension of Olivier Messiaen’s Symphonism

In Olivier Messiaen's great orchestral works, the dimension of the cosmic and the sense of nature are fundamental features of his symphonic style. In the *Turangalila-Symphonie* (1946-48), work for large orchestra in 10 movements, lasting about 80 minutes, inspired by the myth of Tristan and Isolde, Messiaen shows a cosmic vision of the relationship between Love and Death. In the composer's later symphonic works, the monumental dimension and the representation of Nature become central to Messiaen's poetics. In the *Transfiguration de Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ* (1965-69) for choir and large orchestra, lasting about 90 minutes, the reinvention of birdsong and the evocation of light of the mountain landscape defines the composer's "sound of Nature". Few years later, in *Des Canyons aux étoiles* (1971-74) for solo piano, horn, xylophone, glockenspiel and orchestra, lasting about 100 minutes, the representation, through a polyptych in 12 movements, proceeds from the earth to the interstellar spaces and the Celestial City. The three works cited highlight the existing analogy, in terms of a long shadow and not of direct and/or conscious influence, between the monumental conception and the concept of Symphony as a “world” in Gustav Mahler, in which the "sound of Nature" plays a fundamental role, and the cosmic-naturalistic inspiration of the Olivier Messiaen great symphonic works.

Raffaele Pozzi is Full Professor of Musicology and Pedagogy and Didactics of Music at the University of Roma Tre. He wrote the first Italian book on Olivier Messiaen (Lucca, 2002) and several articles on the music and the criticism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: *L'ideologia neoclassica*, in *Enciclopedia della Musica*, edited by J.-J Nattiez (Torino, 2001); *Criticism in Italy in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, in *History of Music Criticism* (Cambridge, UK, 2019); articles for the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London, 1992) and *Musik in Italien von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart* for *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Kassel, forthcoming). He has been regularly invited to do researches, to teach and to give lectures by several international academic institutions (Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel, King's College London, IRCAM, Sorbonne and Paris VIII Universities, Humboldt, Technische and Freie Universities – Berlin, Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, Peking University – China, Tokyo College of Music - Japan etc.).

Paolo Somigli (University of Bozen)

## “Natlrläute” in Salvatore Sciarrino’s Music Between Environmental Evocation and Listeners’ Inner Dramaturgy”

In Salvatore Sciarrino’s musical work, ambient sounds are a constant presence. They can refer as much to the natural environment as, but more rarely, to the artificial context. Effects like onomatopoeias and animal cries, sounds of rain or wind, or even ticking of electric clocks, are part of a poetic and communicative vision that transcends the aspect of realistic imitation (which, however, can be present and deliberately pursued) and responds to an intention of an expressive and aesthetic order. With such means, in fact, the composer aims at implementing a communicative strategy that aims to involve the listener as an active subject of the listening and ultimately of the music itself. They indeed aim to evoke and to recall profound experiences and emotions in listeners in a perspective that has been defined by the composer himself as the “utopia of a *listening man*” (“utopia di un uomo in ascolto”). The lecture will address this topic by means of the analysis of works written by Sciarrino from the 1970s to the present day.

Paolo Somigli is associate professor in Musicology and Music History at the Faculty of Education of the Free University of Bozen/Bolzano. His research topics include the relationship between tradition and contemporary music, dodecaphony and art music in twentieth-century Italy, song in Italy from the 1930s onwards, and music pedagogy with a focus on music education at school. His most recent publications include the edition of the writings of A. Virgilio Savona (*Oltre il Quartetto Cetra. A. Virgilio Savona. Scritti critici e giornalistici 1939-1998*, Florence 2022), *Musica in azione. Movement and Dance for Music Education* (with Giulia Gabrielli; edited by) and two essays about works of Sciarrino (“*Luci mie traditrici*” and “*Quaderno di strada*”). He is the editorial director of «*Musica Docta. Rivista digitale di Pedagogia e Didattica della Musica*» a class A ANVUR-listed journal. As a pianist, he specialises in the performance of 20th-century music and is active as a soloist and in duet four hands.

SAVE THE DATE

## **(Re-)mediating Mahler Symposium**

Toblach, 15–16 September 2023

This symposium explores the ‘second life’ of Mahler in which his music and persona have been appropriated, re-processed, re-imagined, and modelled in various forms of stage, screen, dance, and visual arts media. From the 1914 *Mahler-Lichtbildkonzert* to Todd Field’s *Tár* (2022), via plays, choreographies, novels, paintings and experimental real-time visualizations, the composer has long proved to be ripe for (re-)mediation. As part of the event, multi-media artist Johannes Deutsch demonstrates his interactive visualization of Mahler’s Second Symphony, and acclaimed pianist Uri Caine performs a unique live-score Mahler improvisation to *Sunrise*, Friedrich Murnau’s classic 1927 silent film.



In Zusammenarbeit mit / In collaborazione con

