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## Gustav Mahler's Kindertotenlieder: Connecting The Movements Of The Song Cycle Through Schenkerian Analysis

Gabriel Quinton Fleetwood

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**GUSTAV MAHLER'S KINDERTOTENLIEDER: CONNECTING THE  
MOVEMENTS OF THE SONG CYCLE THROUGH SCHENKERIAN ANALYSIS**

A Masters Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate College of

Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Music

By

Gabriel Quinton Fleetwood

July 2016

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Music

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**ABSTRACT**

Gustav Mahler composed the song cycle *Kindertotenlieder* at the beginning of the 1900s. Depicting a mournful subject based on the poems of Friedrich Rückert, the *Lieder* explore the different emotions and perspectives of a grieving parent who has lost his children to death. This discussion connects the movements of Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* through a discussion of discoveries unveiled through Schenkerian analysis; harmonic, melodic, and motivic connections are highlighted throughout the composition. The tonal centers of the movements are discussed in an effort to illustrate the work as a whole, and not just as individual *Lieder*.

**KEYWORDS:** Gustav Mahler, Kindertotenlieder, Schenker, analysis, music theory, Rückert, *Lieder*.

This abstract is approved as to form and content

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Chairperson, Advisory Committee  
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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I dedicate this thesis to my mom and to my dad. There are not enough words to write how I feel, so I will simply say this: I thank you and I love you.

I would also like to thank the following people for their support during the course of my graduate studies: my music professors, who have offered me their time and their wisdom; my students, who have kept my flame burning; and, my friends, who told me I could when I thought I could not.

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## INTRODUCTION

Gustav Mahler composed the song cycle *Kindertotenlieder* after reading the work of German poet Friedrich Rückert. These poems depict the struggles of a parent who is mourning the loss of his children. Rückert's poetry fascinated Mahler enough that he set ten of the hundreds of poems into individual *Lieder*, and these compositions are categorized into two separate compilations. Five of the ten *Rückert-Lieder* loosely form a song cycle but are not specified by Mahler to be performed in a certain order or necessarily as a whole set. The remaining five of Rückert's poems appear together in *Kindertotenlieder*. Mahler specifies that this piece is "intended as a unified, indivisible whole, and therefore in performance the continuity must be maintained (even by disregarding interruptions such as applause at the end of a number.)"<sup>1</sup> The following pages discuss and connect the different movements of Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* as being an indivisible whole by applying the concepts and analytical techniques of Heinrich Schenker, musicological opinions, and analysis. Additionally, the melodic, the harmonic, and the motivic material that connect the movements of the cycle highlight and enhance the discussion of the work. Some common misconceptions regarding the composition of *Kindertotenlieder* are also dispelled.

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<sup>1</sup> Gustav Mahler, *Songs of a Wayfarer and Kindertotenlieder*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1990) 58.

## ***KINDERTOTENLIEDER* BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Mahler scholars believe Mahler began the composition in the summer of 1901; however, these scholars cannot say with any certainty which *Lieder* in *Kindertotenlieder* were completed in which years. Egon Gartenberg believes Mahler composed three *Lieder* of the cycle during 1901, and he finished the remaining two members of the set in 1904.<sup>2</sup> This assumption aligns with the journal writings of Natalie Bauer-Lechner, Mahler's friend and confidante. Ms. Bauer-Lechner wrote in her diary that Mahler composed seven *Lieder* based on the writings of Rückert that summer. Moreover, she documented that three of the *Lieder* establish part of a song cycle, presumably *Kindertotenlieder*.<sup>3</sup> The other four songs are assumed to be some of the aforementioned members of the separate *Rückert-Lieder*.

Several musicologists and theorists have tried to solidify their arguments for which *Lieder* were written in which years, yet none of them can yield conclusive evidence in favor of their opinions. In his article "Kindertotenlieder," Mitch Friedfeld catalogues the opinions and findings of different researchers. He believes Henry-Louis de la Grange justifies his investigations most thoroughly and with reliable sources. De la Grange hypothesizes that the first, second, and fourth movements were written in 1901, and the second and fifth movements followed in 1904. He bases these assumptions on the types of manuscript paper used by Mahler, and the amount of detail Mahler exerted when

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<sup>2</sup> Egon Gartenberg, *Mahler: The Man and His Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1978), 287.

<sup>3</sup> Kurt Blaukopf and Herta Blaukopf, eds, *Mahler: His Life, Work and World*, trans. Paul Baker, et. al. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 154.

correcting the orchestral drafts of the second and fifth movements. Other orderings in which the composition was completed include first, fourth, and fifth in 1901 and second and third in 1904; another indicates first, second, and fifth in 1901 and third and fourth in 1904.<sup>4</sup> Although not the central argument pertaining to this discussion, the confusion of Mahler's compositional output of the song cycle has and continues to intrigue many, and the discussion deserves to be mentioned.

One seemingly unanimous opinion among these different musicologists is that Mahler did begin the cycle in 1901, thus, disproving a common misconception regarding *Kindertotenlieder*: Mahler composed this music as a coping mechanism to lament the loss of his daughter. Unlike Rückert, whose deceased children were the catalyst for his poetry, Mahler had not yet experienced the loss of a child. Composing *Kindertotenlieder* as a response to the death of his daughter would be impossible for two reasons: Mahler had not met his future wife—the mother of his children—and his daughter did not pass away until the summer of 1907.<sup>5</sup> In 1901, before his children were born and while he was composing the cycle, Mahler's friend Ms. Bauer-Lechner wrote the following in her journal: “. . . he [Mahler] said he felt sorry he had to write them [*Kindertotenlieder*] and he pitied the world that would one day have to hear them, so terribly sad was their content.”<sup>6</sup> It was not until three years after the completion of the cycle that Mahler would lose his precious daughter Maria to a similar tragedy that paralleled Rückert's loss.

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<sup>4</sup> Mitch Friedfeld, “Kindertotenlieder,” *Classical Net*, Last modified 2001, <http://www.classical.net/~music/comp.lst/works/mahler/kindertotenlieder/index.php>.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Franklin, *The Life of Mahler* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1997) 163-64.

<sup>6</sup> Blaukopf and Blaukopf, *Mahler: His Life, Work and World*, 154.

## THE MELODIC LINES OF MAHLER'S *KINDERTOTENLIEDER*

During his lifetime, German music theorist Heinrich Schenker engineered a process of analyzing and understanding music. The combination of his concepts and techniques is typically referred to as Schenkerian analysis. In their book *Analysis of Tonal Music: A Schenkerian Approach*, authors Allen Cadwallader and David Gagné emphasize that Schenkerian analysis is designed to enlighten the musician and reveal details that may not be visible from a surface-level harmonic analysis.<sup>7</sup> Details, such as motivic and thematic connections, reveal themselves to the analyst when he reduces the music to structurally significant harmonic events using techniques of melody and counterpoint. Schenker intended these reductions to reveal the important motives that connect the music—whether it be highlighting the significance of an eight-bar phrase, the structure of a whole movement, or, in the case of this discussion, connecting the movements of *Kindertotenlieder* as an indivisible whole.

In Schenkerian analysis, an *Urlinie* is the fundamental line.<sup>8</sup> This particular concept of Schenker's process focuses on the melodic line (the fundamental line) and what significance it plays in the music. Because *Urlinie* can exist on many different levels within a piece of music (as previously mentioned, they can represent just a small phrase or a whole movement in music), a Schenkerian analysis of *Kindertotenlieder* identifies several significant melodic lines. One fundamental line, which will be referred to as Melodic Line A, defines a recurring melodic phrase that is replicated multiple times

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<sup>7</sup> Allen Cadwallader and David Gagné, *Analysis of Tonal Music: A Schenkerian Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2011), 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> Cadwallader and Gagné, *Analysis of Tonal Music*, 113.

throughout the song cycle, and this particular melodic line contains several motives that establish connections between the movements of the song cycle. As a more localized fundamental line, Melodic Line A lends itself well to the idea that the movements of *Kindertotenlieder* are connected. Mahler himself states that this piece is conceived to be an indivisible whole, not performed just as individual *Lieder*. To represent Mahler's desire of a unified work, an *Ursatz* represents the entire work as a whole. From a Schenkerian standpoint, the *Ursatz* of the entire cycle glues together the movements to connect what Mahler himself desired of *Kindertotenlieder*: a cohesive, uninterrupted work of art.

*Urlinie* only refers to the main functioning melodic line; Schenker identifies the bass motion underneath an *Urlinie* as the *Bassbrechung*. Together they—the *Urlinie* and the *Bassbrechung*—form the melodic and harmonic counterpoint that represent an entire work of music. These combined Schenkerian concepts shape what is called the *Ursatz*, or fundamental structure of the music.<sup>9</sup> The *Ursatz* is similar to the *Urlinie* because one piece of music can yield multiple different Schenkerian graphs. An analyst could examine just a small phrase in the music or the larger piece as a whole. Matthew L. BaileyShea implies in his journal article that the different levels of the *Urlinie* in a piece of music help formulate an organized and related work. BaileyShea further specifies that the voice-leading graphs obtained through these Schenkerian techniques often aid in unifying the different layers of analysis.<sup>10</sup> Understanding these analytical techniques is

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<sup>9</sup> Cadwallader and Gagné, *Analysis of Tonal Music*, 109-113.

<sup>10</sup> Matthew L. BaileyShea, "Musical Forces and Interpretation: Some Thoughts on a Measure in Mahler," *Society for Music Theory* 18, no. 3 (Sept. 2012): 8, <http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.12.18.3/mto.12.18.3.baileyshea.php>.

essential to the study and to the work of Schenker, and these methods are employed in this discussion of *Kindertotenlieder*.

### Melodic Lines of the First, Third, and Fifth Movements

The first movement of *Kindertotenlieder* opens with a contrapuntal exchange between solo oboe and solo horn. This harmonic and melodic event foreshadows many musical events throughout the entire cycle. Following this melodic and harmonic play, the vocalist enters and gives the listener his first experience of the interaction between the vocal line and orchestra part. Figure 1 illustrates the reduction of the melodic lines from the musical phrases contained in mm. 4-15. The *Kopftone*—the initial note of the *Umlinie* in Schenkerian analysis—is identified as an A. In Schenkerian analysis, the *Umlinie* will outline a musical progression descending through  $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ ,  $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ , or, rarely,  $\hat{8}-\hat{7}-\hat{6}-\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ . In the first movement of *Kindertotenlieder*, mm. 4-15 reduce to a  $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2} \parallel \hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$  progression. (The  $\parallel$  is called an interruption and represents the space in time before the return back to the original *Kopftone*.) Examining Melodic Line A, which is the melodic line revealed via Schenkerian analysis, highlights Mahler's key thematic material throughout the entire work: a constant struggle between grief and acceptance paralleled through shifts in major and minor modalities and tonalities.



Figure 1. Reduction of mm. 4-15, first movement.

The Schenkerian concept of a neighbor tone is also illustrated in Figure 1. Schenker's concept of neighbor tone is similar to the conventional concept of a neighbor tone. He pointed out that specific pitches of importance should be reflected in an *Urlinie*, and neighbor tones can lead to important revelations. Melodic Line A consistently highlights a neighbor tone B-flat before it descends; therefore, it is reflected in the reduction of the different phrases from the first movement. This neighbor tone, which helps connect the movements together in the song cycle because of the similarity of fundamental lines, also appears in the other movements.

The five-progression discussed in the reduction of Melodic Line A is similar to that of the reduction of the main phrase in the third movement of the song cycle. This phrase, represented by Figure 2, is repeated a second time in the movement with one small alteration that is addressed later. In the reduction of the third movement's melodic line, the neighbor tone motion up to  $\hat{6}$  in the first movement of *Kindertotenlieder* is similarly replicated. The difference is that an incomplete neighbor enhances the melodic line in the third movement. An incomplete neighbor tone is another Schenkerian concept that occurs when the neighbor tone does not directly resolve back to the pitch from where it came. Examining Figure 2 shows that the first incomplete neighbor is an A-natural that comes from but does not resolve back to a G. Another interesting aspect of that incomplete neighbor tone is the expected A-flat that should appear in the key of C minor does not appear until after the interruption. Instead, an A-natural appears in the first half of the melodic line. In the second half of the descent to tonic, however, A-flat is representing the incomplete neighbor tone.



Figure 2. Reduction of mm. 8-33, third movement.

As previously stated, Figure 2 represents the main section of music that repeats itself to form the structure of the third movement. The only difference in the reductions of these two phrases is the A-natural. When the phrase repeats, the A-natural is an A-flat. This is significant because the A-flat helps cement the tonality of C minor and does not allow the music to drift away from this tonal center before the final push to tonic. The reduction of the melodic phrase ends with the final resolution to C in m. 64, but the orchestra part continues and does not end on a C minor cadence; instead, a half cadence using a G major chord appears. This is not pertinent to the discussion of the melodic lines of the first, third or fifth movements, but it will prove important when discussing the connection between all five movements as an indivisible work.

The fifth movement of the cycle is the longest and, oftentimes, employs every instrument in the orchestra. The final movement also continues the pattern of using a five-progression in the melodic line, one that almost mirrors the first movement. Figure 3 depicts the fundamental line contained within the fifth movement of *Kindertotenlieder*. Most Schenkerian analyses begin with the *Kopftön* in the melodic line; however, the *Kopftön* A does not appear in the vocal line until m. 100 of the fifth movement. This occurs after the music has finally begun to transition permanently to D major. Ignoring the first 100 or so measures would not be acceptable, but this can be explained with a Schenkerian concept called the ascent. Schenker's work focused on the contrapuntal aspects between the melodic line and the bass line. Because all music is different, the



*Kopft*on starting as the first note of the *U*rlinie does not always hold true. For that reason, Schenker began graphing the ascent to the *Kopft*on. Interestingly, the ascent in the fifth movement outlines a melodic sixth—a point to be further addressed later in the discussion. Focusing on Figure 3, the ascent begins on the tonic D and proceeds to B-flat before the modal change from D minor to D major. The B-flat is the final pitch heard from the vocalist in the key of D minor, and it precedes several measures of interlude by the orchestra. When the vocalist re-enters, the *Kopft*on A is finally established while the orchestra continues its transition to D major. Then, the descent can finally begin. Following the modal change to D major, the reduction of the fifth movement’s melodic line almost exactly mirrors that of Melodic Line A in the first movement. These melodic lines further highlight the connection between the movements of the song cycle. Movements 1, 3, and 5 all feature five-progression descents that are enhanced with a neighbor tone or incomplete neighbor tone—a correlation between the *Lieder* that may not have been discovered without the aid of Schenkerian analysis.



Figure 3. Reduction of the melodic line from the fifth movement.

### **Melodic Lines of the Second and Fourth Movements**

While the melodic lines of the previously examined movements highlight five-progression descents, the melodic lines of the second and fourth behave quite differently and do not feature structural descents to their tonics. Additionally, the second and fourth movements are more chromatic, especially the second. The second movement features

eight changes of mode and/or key. For the melodic line of the second movement, music theorist V. Kofi Agawu best explains the lack of a strong structural pull toward any centralized tonic. He believes that the second *Lied* in *Kindertotenlieder* is simply prolonging  $\hat{3}$  established near the beginning of the movement.<sup>11</sup> In Schenkerian analysis, prolongation is a technique described as a scale degree or pitch maintaining importance throughout a section or piece of music, which would be the E-natural or E-flat in the somewhat C minor rooted second movement. Because the *Lied* does not fully settle on a firm usage of either pitch exclusively, the absence of a structural descent seems reasonable considering the lack of strong tonal center. Here, Agawu believes that the  $\hat{3}$  holds control over the constant shifts of mode that occur in the second movement, and thus signals no descent toward tonic. His other elaboration on the Schenkerian background is that of a lower neighbor tone D in the middle of the movement. When examining Agawu's analysis, he notes a shift in control away from E-natural/E-flat to D in m. 36 of the movement. E-flat later gains control, and the movement ultimately ends on an imperfect authentic cadence in C minor with E-flat acting as the top voice in the chord.<sup>12</sup>

For the listener or analyst, the constant blurring of tonic leaves much more to be desired and transitions him into the much more stable third movement. Figure 4 summarizes Agawu's discoveries via his Schenkerian analysis of the second movement of *Kindertotenlieder*. The C minor based movement leaves  $\hat{3}$  in control through the movement with the exception of the neighbor tone D.

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<sup>11</sup> V. Kofi Agawu, "The Musical Language of Kindertotenlieder No. 2," *Journal of Musicology* 2, no. 1 (Winter, 1983): 90.

<sup>12</sup> Agawu, "The Musical Language of Kindertotenlieder No. 2," 90-92.



Figure 4. Summary of Agawu's analysis of the second movement.

Similar to that of the second song in the cycle, the fourth movement also lacks a descent to its tonic. Figure 5 shows the Schenkerian background of the fourth *Lied*'s melodic line and its lack of descent. Opposite of the somewhat minor tonality in the second movement, the fourth movement starts with a convincing introduction in E-flat major. This is quickly distorted upon the entrance of the vocalist with a sixth leap from B-flat to G-flat. The constant struggle of the fourth movement seems to be between the orchestra suggesting E-flat major but the vocal line opposing with statements beginning in E-flat minor. Figure 5 highlights this repetition of G-flat that juxtaposes the orchestra's major tonal center.



Figure 5. Background melodic line from the fourth movement.

In between each occurrence of G-flat are a series of important episodes highlighted with a series of incomplete neighbor tones. The first and second episodes seem to feature neighbor tones—E-natural and F-sharp—that do not exist in the tonal center of E-flat. Both instances leave the listener longing for a convincing cadence, which is eventually given when the orchestra stabilizes a tonal center. It is in the third and final episode that is significantly longer that the listener hears a return of both the E-natural

and the F-sharp to prolong the lack of resolution. Mahler uses the cadence of both the E-natural and F-sharp to extend the phrase of the third episode. Interestingly, the cadence of the vocal line is on a B-flat, not the G-flat that has been steady throughout the movement. This allows the movement to end securely in the tonic E-flat major, also on another imperfect authentic cadence similar to that at the end of the second movement. Additionally, the B-flat is the same pitch that acts as a neighbor tone in the first and fifth movements of *Kindertotenlieder*.

### **Summary of the Melodic Lines**

A Schenkerian analysis of the melodic lines in the *Kindertotenlieder* reveal that the first, third, and fifth movements are connected via five-progression descents, which include neighbor tones accenting  $\hat{6}$ . Additionally, the second and fourth movements both feature a prolongation of  $\hat{3}$ . The highlighted neighbor tones and incomplete neighbor tones also tie together all five movements of the cycle, which further joins them together as movements indivisible from one another. The next sections of the discussion link together how these melodic lines function to form an *Ursatz* representative of the entire song cycle and the motivic connections revealed through the Schenkerian analysis.

## THE TONAL SCHEME AND *URSATZ* OF KINDERTOTENLIEDER

Peter Russell, author of *Light in Battle with Darkness: Mahler's Kindertotenlieder*, discusses how Mahler depicts the tumultuous states a parent goes through when experiencing such a cataclysmic loss. Russell notes that Mahler symbolizes the oscillation between grief and acceptance of the tragedy by constantly shifting between minor and major modalities.<sup>13</sup> This is further enhanced when taking into consideration the text of Rückert's poetry during these shifts between minor and major. The switching between modalities exists immediately within the first *Lied* of the song cycle. Even within the first fifteen measures of *Kindertotenlieder*, Mahler blurs the tonal scheme and establishes the pervading battle between minor and major modalities throughout the entire work. Further examination of Melodic Line A only validates Russell's theory that Mahler paints the emotions of an anguished parent through these shifting modalities. Russell also highlights that the key scheme of the entire cycle is symmetrical with the first and last movement being centered in D minor/D major; movements 2 and 4 sharing the key signature of C minor/E-flat major; and, the third movement, although in C minor, acts as its own entity, not wavering outside of the tonality of C minor.<sup>14</sup>

### The First Movement

The first half of Melodic Line A demonstrates a descent in the key of D minor from the *Kopftön* A through a neighbor tone B-flat, back to A, and finally down to E.

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<sup>13</sup> Peter Russell, *Light in Battle with Darkness: Mahler's Kindertotenlieder* (Berlin: Peter Lang, Inc., European Academic Publishers, 1991), 69.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

When the interruption occurs and the descent begins again, it is usually in the same key. Here, however, Mahler changes the F-natural to an F-sharp and brings the listener away from the D minor mode to the major, and once again the neighbor tone B-flat is highlighted before the final descent to the tonic occurs. This unexpected jaunt into D major, although abrupt, is subtle. The phrase finishes on a strong cadence in D major; nonetheless, Mahler shifts back and re-establishes the dominance of D minor by m. 20. Melodic Line A appears three times. Each time, it begins in D minor, transitions to D major, and returns to D minor—never providing a convincing or sufficient cadence in the major mode. This not only leaves the listener unfulfilled but also sets up the ending of the entire cycle.

Melodic Line A is clearly multi-functional in the first movement. It functions well on a symbolic level to aid in both the audible and visible display to darkness and light, grief and acceptance, and minor and major. It also foreshadows the tonality of the entire composition in a brief, eleven measure section of music. In his blog, musician Jonathan Powles mentions the descent of Melodic Line A (illustrated in Figure 1) in relation to the first movement of the *Kindertotenlieder*. He argues that the repetition of this phrase throughout the movement represents a parent who has not finished grieving the loss of his child. Because it never shifts fully into D major and always leaves the listener expecting a change in mode, Powles states that these repetitions of Melodic Line A make the movement static and lacking forward motion. He believes Mahler does not actually shift fully to D major to maintain this feeling of unresolved grief.<sup>15</sup> If the listener were

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<sup>15</sup> Jonathan Powles, “Nun will die Sonn' so hell aufgehn: Presence in Absence” *Blogspot*, May 14, 2011, <http://jonathanpowles.blogspot.com/2011/05/nun-will-die-sonn-so-hell-aufgehn.html>.

satisfied with a significant shift to D major within the first movement, what purpose would this movement serve as being indivisible from the other movements in the cycle? Although Powles' musings about the first *Lied* in the *Kindertotenlieder* cycle are well justified, they do not consider the other movements of the cycle and should go beyond just the first movement. Melodic Line A and the constant shift between minor and major leave an unsettled feeling and allow for the connection of other movements to continue *Kindertotenlieder*.

### **The Second Movement**

Russell believes the shifting between minor and major represents the grief-stricken parent's emotional turmoil, and Powles states the static nature of the first *Lied* symbolizes a parent who has not yet accepted the loss. Both of these opinions can be applied to the other movements of the cycle. In the second movement of *Kindertotenlieder*, the vocalist and orchestra shift through eight key changes, including D major. Mitch Friedfeld writes that this is the last reference to D major until the conclusion of the cycle in the fifth movement.<sup>16</sup> When D major appeared in the first *Lied*, it was never fully established. The second movement features a more complete, yet brief, modulation away from C minor to D major that represents hope for the lost child. With more mode and key changes than any of the other movements, the second movement further represents a parent in denial about the loss while the first movement symbolizes a parent who is just beginning to cope with the tragedy. It is not until the end of *Kindertotenlieder* that a fully convincing cadence in D major is achieved. Similarly, a

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<sup>16</sup> Friedfeld, "Kindertotenlieder."

convincing cadence in C minor does not occur until the end of the second movement.

Agawu's article on the second *Kindertotenlieder* focuses on the prolongation of  $\hat{3}$  through the entire movement. The only time  $\hat{3}$  did not represent the melodic line was during the appearance of the neighbor tone D, which aligns with the D major section in the middle of the movement. Moreover, D major represents the final resolution of the song cycle and the parent who has accepted the loss of the child. Because the final resolution does not occur until the fifth movement, this prolongation technique perpetuates the continuation of the parent facing the tragedy of the death of his child when the neighbor tone D returns to E-flat/E-natural.

### **The Third Movement**

The third movement of the *Kindertotenlieder* features the most stable tonal structure of the song cycle. Rarely straying from the key of C minor, the movement uses counterpoint, diminution, and augmentations of melody and harmony to continue the representation of sorrow of the grieving parent. The form of this movement is also straightforward. The melodic and harmonic material presented from the first half of the *Lied* repeats with some variations in orchestration in the second half. The descent of the melodic line that was previously examined in Figure 2 indicates the melodic structure of the third movement to be the least complicated. Friedfeld points out that there are twenty changes of time signature in the third movement.<sup>17</sup> Although the movement's tonal structure is stable, the symbolism of grief is represented in the constant, yet smooth, change of time signature. Furthermore, the sense of needing resolution for the tragedy is

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<sup>17</sup> Friedfeld, "Kindertotenlieder."



enhanced with the ending cadence. As mentioned earlier, the third movement is the only *Lied* featuring a half cadence at the end. This leaves this listener desiring a resolution that helps transition into the fourth movement.

### **The Fourth Movement**

Coming from a half cadence in C minor on a G major chord, a listener or an analyst would assume a resolution to that previously established tonic. However, E-flat major provides a deceptive resolution and a glimpse into a major tonality for the first time since the second movement. To summarize musicologist Oana Andreica, the fourth movement may seem bright and upbeat, but the overall prolongation of the emotional state of being of the parent has not yet been resolved.<sup>18</sup> Explained in Schenkerian terms, Figure 5 highlights this prolongation via G-flat. The lack of a strong structural descent in the melodic line to the tonic E-flat symbolizes that a state of acceptance or peace has yet to be achieved in the cycle. (This mirrors the effect achieved in the second movement.) Additionally, the final resting cadence on B-flat in the vocal line leaves the music needing to continue in order to reach fulfillment. The B-flat that appears at the end of the fourth movement helps transition into the fifth movement and enhances the cohesion of the neighbor tone B-flat featured in Melodic Line A. The first note of the vocal part in the fifth movement is a D—a sixth away from the final note of the fourth movement. Further, the orchestra part extends the fourth movement for a few measures after the vocal line concludes, and the orchestra part finishes on an imperfect authentic cadence that mirrors

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<sup>18</sup> Oana Andreica, “An Outline of Mahler’s *Kindertotenlieder*,” *Latest Advances in Acoustics and Music* (2012): <http://www.wseas.us/e-library/conferences/2012/Iasi/AMTA/AMTA-02.pdf>.

the ending of the first and second movements. The appearance of the G at the end of the movement is what continues the prolongation effect of  $\hat{3}$ . Although it is not a G-flat (as  $\hat{3}$  often appeared in the vocal line throughout the movement), it parallels the shift between E-flat and E-natural that occurred in the second movement, aiding the transition to the next *Lied*.

### **The Fifth Movement**

The culmination of the song cycle and the combination of the previously examined melodic lines arise in the fifth movement. The vocal line and orchestra part fuse together to fully replicate the emotions of the grieving parent. The orchestration is also at its fullest in this movement, perhaps symbolizing and depicting the turmoil. Melodic line A is paralleled in this movement after a long initial ascent to the Kopfton A. The B-flat in the vocal line at the end of the fourth movement carries over through the entire fifth movement to moments before the *Kopfton* of the fifth *Lied* is established when the transition into D major begins. (See Figure 3.) The first 100 measures of this movement portray the thematic material on which Mahler builds the entire *Kindertotenlieder*. The text of the fifth movement portrays a parent who blames himself for the tragedy. Describing a terrible storm that is represented by loud dynamics, disjunct melodic leaps, and full orchestration, the parent laments allowing his children to leave his sight, and he blames himself for their deaths. Firmly rooted in D minor, the movement builds to a climax, which coincides with the appearance of the neighbor tone B-flat from the end of the fourth movement and from the motion that is outlined in Melodic Line A. The ascent in the first 100 measures parallels the mourning parent. When the transition

into the major mode occurs, the parent seems to have found relief when realizing the children have gone to be with God, and they are protected as if in their mother's house. In the final forty measures, the parent finally finds solace, and Mahler illustrates this with the permanent arrival of D major. This is paralleled by the descent to the tonic D major that was originally foreshadowed in the first fifteen measures of the cycle.

### **The *Ursatz* of *Kindertotenlieder***

Figure 6 depicts the *Ursatz* of the entire *Kindertotenlieder* as opposed to the local backgrounds of the individual movements presented earlier in the discussion. The melodic lines examined in the previous figures connect the movements together and describe the background of the individual movements. Furthermore, the connections made between movements based on the five-progression descents and the prolongation techniques highlight only similarities between the movements and how they are related to one another. The *Ursatz* combines the *Urlinie* and *Bassbrechung* together in melodic and harmonic counterpoint to illustrate the background of the entire *Kindertotenlieder*. Mahler directed that the cycle be performed as an indivisible whole, and this graph highlights that: a work that does not function as individual *Lieder*, but rather as an interdependent series of tonal shifts that symbolically represent the emotions that a parent must face when losing his child.

The melodic lines of the first, third, and fifth movements are five-progression descents. The *Ursatz* of the entire *Kindertotenlieder* illustrates a three-progression descent. The prolongation technique that connects the second and fourth movements together is the same glue that connects the movements in the cycle as a whole. The cycle

begins in D minor. Although the *Kopftón* in the first movement is A, the *Kopftón* for the entire cycle is F. The concluding measures of the first movement are shown in Figure 7. Within the final measures of the movement, the vocal line reaches the tonic D in m. 77. The first movement continues, however, with a small coda from mm. 79-84. It is during this coda that the *Kopftón* of the cycle is established. At the end of the first movement, the vocal part repeats the last few words of the poem, and, instead of providing the same cadence as in m. 77, the vocal line ends on F instead of tonic.

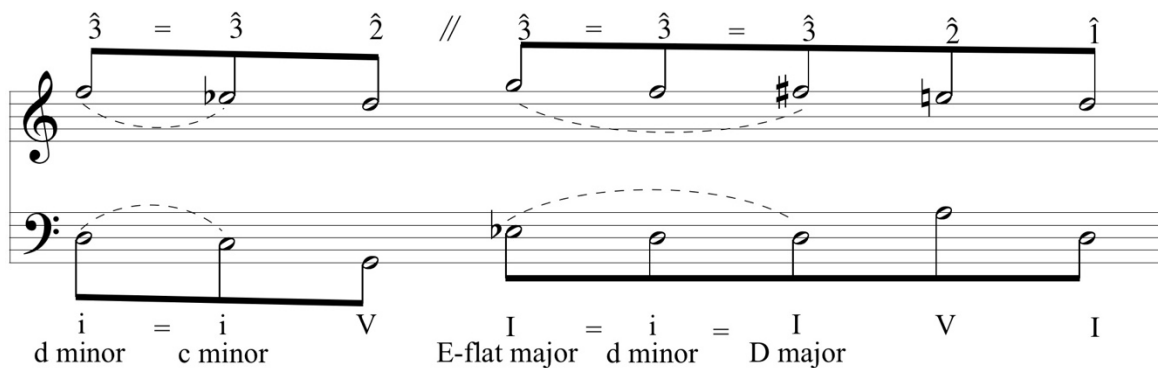


Figure 6. *Kindertotenlieder Ursatz*.

The prolongation effect of  $\hat{3}$  in the second movement is replicated in the *Ursatz* of the entire cycle. In a typical *Ursatz*,  $\hat{3}$  descends to  $\hat{2}$  before the interruption. In *Kindertotenlieder*,  $\hat{3}$  is prolonged from the first movement through the second with the change of key from D minor to C minor, as illustrated in Figure 6. In addition to extending the cycle, the *Kopftón* F is now E-flat because of the key change.  $\hat{3}$  at the end of first movement is still in control through the second, just as Agawu claims. The second *Lied* ends with the orchestra providing a quiet resolution to an imperfect authentic cadence, featuring the *Kopftón* E-flat on top of the chord.



Figure 7. Mm. 76-84, first movement.

Source: Gustav Mahler, *Kindertotenlieder*, Score, (Leipzig: C.F. Kahnt Nachfolger, 4459, 1905), 5.

In addition to extending  $\hat{3}$  from the first movement to the second, the cadence in C minor at the end of the second *Lied* allows for a smooth transition into the third *Lied*, which begins in C minor and ends on a half cadence. This is important because an *Ursatz* usually features a descent to the supertonic over a dominant harmony. When the vocal part concludes in the third movement, a perfect authentic cadence is created, yet, as in the previous two movements, the orchestra continues. However, the half cadence in the third movement is where the descent to  $\hat{2}$  over the dominant harmony of G major occurs. As with the previous movements, the use of orchestral coda drives forward and links together the individual movements of the cycle, further enhancing the connection as an indivisible whole and symbolically representing the inner turmoil of a grieving parent.

Following the interruption of the melodic line in the *Ursatz*, the *Kopfton* is typically re-established in the *Urlinie*, and there is a return to tonic harmony. The melodic line features  $\hat{3}$  over a tonic harmony in D minor at the beginning of the cycle; however, the return of  $\hat{3}$  following the interruption is in E-flat major. The prolongation effect that connects the second movement to the fourth still holds true in the *Ursatz* of the entire cycle. Here, however, it is a pre-prolongation. This event precedes the return to the D minor tonality and the *Kopfton* F that will eventually descend to the final resolution. Although represented in the local background as a G-flat in the melodic line of the fourth movement, the fourth *Lied* as a whole is rooted in E-flat major represented by G-natural. The G-natural in the *Urlinie* of the *Ursatz* of the entire cycle indicates this. The movement begins with an introduction in E-flat major, and the final cadence occurs during a coda in the orchestra part with G-natural winning control of  $\hat{3}$ .

The fifth movement begins with the orchestra part establishing the tonality of D minor and the harp, the cellos, and the basses highlighting the *Kopfton* F in a descending scalar passage. Reflecting the local background of this *Lied*, there is not yet a descent to the tonic. Instead, the *Kopfton* F-natural changes to F-sharp when the mode changes from D minor to D major. As the parent learns a method to cope with his unimaginable tragedy, the melodic line, too, finds a way to descend to tonic. The orchestra part finalizes and stabilizes the final descent after the vocal line has concluded.

Figure 8 shows mm. 126-134 of the piano reduction of the fifth movement. The melodic line in the right hand of the piano represents the melody played by a solo horn. Interestingly, the horn is one of the first instruments heard in the cycle as it accompanies the oboe in a note-against-note counterpoint. It is also the last melodic line heard in

*Kindertotenlieder*. Donald Mitchell points out that the horn represents the parent achieving peace and acceptance over the tragedy because it plays one of the only melodic lines in the whole cycle that begins and ends clearly in D major.<sup>19</sup> In the first measure of the excerpt from Figure 8 (m. 126), the *Kopft*on F-sharp appears above the tonic harmony of D major, and the F-sharp is played by the horn. The descent to E occurs in m. 130. The E is first heard above a  $V^7/V$ , which then descends to D in m. 131 above the  $V^7$ . This does not represent the structural descent because the primary dominant harmony is not present underneath  $\hat{2}$  when it resolves to  $\hat{1}$ . Instead, the D in the melodic line is a prolongation of the E and enhances the pull to tonic during a 4-3 suspension over the  $V^7$ . The descent of  $\hat{2}$  to  $\hat{1}$  is implied over mm. 132-133 when the leading tone C-sharp resolves the suspension in m. 131 and then leads to the resolution of a perfect authentic cadence in m. 133. Because the E appeared in the melodic line above a secondary dominant harmony in m. 130 and was then resolved via its leading tone counterpart above the dominant harmony in mm. 132-133, the highlighted prolongation effect depicts the structural descent from  $\hat{2}$  to  $\hat{1}$ —providing closure to the cycle.

### Summary of the Tonal Scheme and *Ursatz*

The previous section of the discussion connects the *Kindertotenlieder* movements via their individual and similar melodic lines. This section highlights the connections via the harmonic cadences and relationships between the harmonies that make the piece an indivisible and unified whole. The key changes between D minor, C minor, E-flat major, and back to D minor/D underline a background harmonic progression that is not apparent

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<sup>19</sup> Donald Mitchell, “Mahler’s ‘Kammermusikton,’ in *The Mahler Companion*, Donald Mitchell and Andrew Nicholson, eds., (Oxford: Oxford University, 1999), 220.

at the surface level but explained through the *Ursatz*. In the following pages, the discussion examines the motivic connections discovered through the Schenkerian analysis.



Figure 8. Mm. 126-134, fifth movement.  
Source: Mahler, *Kindertotenlieder*, 29.



## MOTIVIC CONNECTIONS AMONG THE *LIEDER*

Figure 1 shows the descent from the *Kopft*on to the supertonic and then eventually to the tonic. This descent is ornamented by a brief neighbor tone B-flat around the *Kopft*on A. This may seem trivial; however, this small musical event fuels the melodic and thematic material on which Mahler builds the entire *Kindertotenlieder*. The constant return to B-flat (and its  $\hat{6}$  equivalents in other keys) is a significant melodic and thematic event that creates the interval of a sixth between the tonic D and the neighbor tone B-flat ( $\hat{1}$  and  $\hat{6}$ ). The consistent push to and pull from the neighbor tone represents the symbolic state of stability and instability in the mind of the parent who recently lost his child. Although the interval of a sixth is tonally consonant, its appearance throughout *Kindertotenlieder* creates a sense of longing and unresolved emotional conflict that helps connect the movements of Mahler's composition because the sixth always seems to be searching for a resolution. Furthermore, Mahler's use of the ascending sixth leap in the vocal melody and in the instrumental accompaniments pervades and connects the other movements of the cycle—helping maintain the sense of unresolved conflict.

### Revisiting the First Movement

The opening melody of the first movement, presented in Figure 9, highlights the neighbor tone B-flat in the vocal line between measures 4 and 5. This B-flat is repeated immediately in measures 8 and 9 in the accompanying oboe as an echo. Edward Kravitt also points out the similarities between the vocal line and the orchestration. His motivic analysis is not Schenkerian, but his discoveries highlight similarities that are also

discovered via Schenkerian analysis. When the vocal line enters again in measure 10, the melody ascends to the neighbor tone B-flat before gravitating back toward tonic.<sup>20</sup> The only vocal leap in the opening phrase (and one of the only leaps in the entire first movement) is a sixth, illustrated in m. 14. (See Figure 9.)

Langsam und schwermütig, nicht schleppend

*p* Nun  
Once

will die Sonn' so hell auf-geh'n, als

*pp*

*con suono smorzare  
mit verhaltener Stimme*

sei kein Un-glück, kein Un-glück die Nacht ge-

*pp*

Figure 9. Mm. 1-14, first movement.  
Source: Gustav Mahler, *Kindertotenlieder*, 1.

Mahler's instrumentation in the first and fifth movements also gives the sixth interval emphasis throughout the cycle. Kravitt's thoughts regarding the opening vocal

<sup>20</sup> Edward F. Kravitt, "Mahler's Dirges for his Death: February 24, 1901," *Music Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (July 1978): 342-345.

line and Donald Mitchell's earlier opinion about the horn in the fifth movement representing the peace gained by the mourning parent further point to the importance of these sixths. Figure 9 shows the beginning of the cycle featuring an interplay between two voices—the oboe on top and the horn on bottom. Interestingly, the oboe interrupts and echoes the vocal line between phrases and during the interruption of Melodic Line A in mm. 8-10. The first half of the melodic line is from the D minor mode, and it is the descent in minor that the oboe repeats. The horn, however, continues with a new melodic phrase that echoes the end of the vocal phrase, beginning in m. 15, and maintains the newly sounded D major mode. The melodic line of the horn is illustrated in Figure 10 below. The horn begins with the leap of a sixth that is further enhanced by reaching B-flat at the peak of the phrase before resolving to a D minor cadence. The ascent from F-sharp to B-flat that is shown in Melodic Line A in Figure 1 is accentuated by this horn line. The sixth leap up to F-sharp and then the rise to B-flat before falling back down to F-natural provide a cadential return to the D minor mode even though the phrase began in D major. The reduction in Figure 1 summarizes the descent to tonic by the vocal line with the interruption, but this takes place over 11 measures of music. The oboe and horn reiterate Melodic Line A in only a few beats.

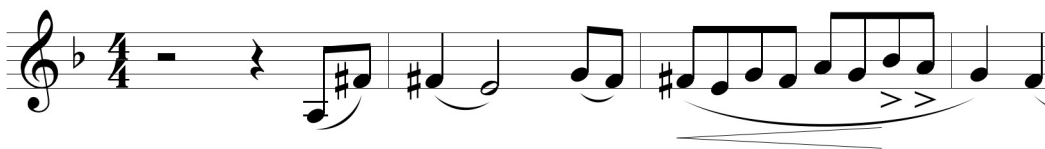


Figure 10. Horn line, mm. 15-18, first movement.

The ambiance created by the opening counterpoint signals the representation of each instrument in *Kindertotenlieder*. The oboe symbolizes the grief of the parent and the

sorrow felt dealing with the tragedy. On the other hand, the horn represents the peace and acceptance that the child has gone to be in a better place, even if that is not with the parent. Because the horn never fully establishes D major in the opening measures of the cycle, its use at the end of the fifth movement intensifies the importance of its role in the cycle to represent peace. The lack of other brass instruments in the cycle is curious, perpetuating the idea of the horn representing peace. The symbolism is further enhanced when considering the melodic lines performed by these instruments, highlighting the neighbor tone B-flat and interval of a sixth. Melodic Line A is repeated several times through the first movement, providing additional occurrences of these sixths and echo effects.

### **Connecting the Second Movement**

In his article discussing the second *Lied*, Agawu uses Schenkerian analysis to connect together the melodic and harmonic aspects of the movement. He examines the lack of structural descent to tonic and explains this musical event through the Schenkerian concept of prolongation. He states his opinion that the seemingly unrelated sections of music in the through-composed second movement are connected through the use of melodic ascending and descending sixth intervals. He points out at least three occurrences of sixth intervals joining the different parts of the movement, specifically citing the descent from E-flat in m. 6 to its final destination of G in m. 22 that joins these sections of music.<sup>21</sup> His findings are unique because this movement is the only *Lied* in the cycle lacking a distinct or strophic-like form. These revelations about the use of

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<sup>21</sup> Agawu, "The Musical Language of Kindertotenlieder No. 2," 90.

melodic and harmonic sixths help strengthen the argument that the second movement is connected to the other parts of the song cycle, even if it seems oddly different in the context of the other *Lieder*.

Agawu's findings on the second movement highlight larger, more structural sections in the music and some of the smaller motivic connections. However, it is not in an attempt to connect the movement to other *Lieder* in the cycle. Figure 11 depicts a line performed by the horn in mm. 51-53 of the second movement. The descent from E to G outlining the sixth interval not only parallels the melodic lines of the first movement but also connects to and parallels the melodic lines of the third movement. Further, it outlines the descent of a sixth within a two measure section of music—the same outline of the broader section Agawu pointed out from m. 6 to m. 22. Highlighting connections between smaller sections to larger structural sections in a piece of music is a goal for the Schenkerian analyst. This line does not seem to fit into the context of the second movement when examined by itself. Rather, it seems it should belong somewhere in the first, third, or fifth *Lied*; however, by examining the different background layers created in Schenkerian analysis, these motivic connections are revealed. Further, the horn—arguably the loudest instrument in the entire cycle—brings this seemingly unrelated melodic line to the listener's attention.



Figure 11. Horn line, mm. 51-53, second movement.

## Relationships of Sixths between the Vocal Melody and Orchestration

The interval of a sixth often appears at the end of phrases throughout the cycle, emphasizing the importance of the sixth interval. Figure 9 depicted the only leap of a sixth that occurs in the vocal line in the first movement. Although this excerpt of music highlights the first 15 measures of the movement, this phrase is repeated two other times in the first *Lied*. Further, the vocal melody repeats that leap of a sixth in m. 35 and near the end of the movement in m. 76. Similarly, this same melodic fragment is sequenced in the first movement in m. 39 by the horn, as illustrated in Figure 12. Using the only brass instrument in the orchestra to echo the only large vocal leap in the movement is significant. It signals a motivic connection in the other vocal lines and accompaniments in the other *Lieder* in the cycle.

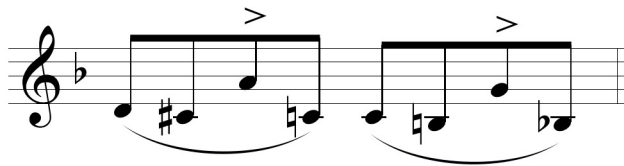


Figure 12. Horn line, m. 39, first movement.

The penultimate notes of the vocal melody in the second movement—displayed in Figure 13—outline a descending sixth. The fall from E to G is only interrupted briefly by the chord tone member C. The same melodic contour occurs at the end of the phrase in mm. 35-36 of the second movement. The appearance of the sixth here at the very end of the vocal phrase ties movement 2 to the first movement and also connects the other movements of *Kindertotenlieder*. The sixth interval also appears in a different layer of the second movement. As Agawu states, the major sections of movement 2 are connected via sixth intervals. Here, the vocal phrase also helps add cohesion to the cycle.

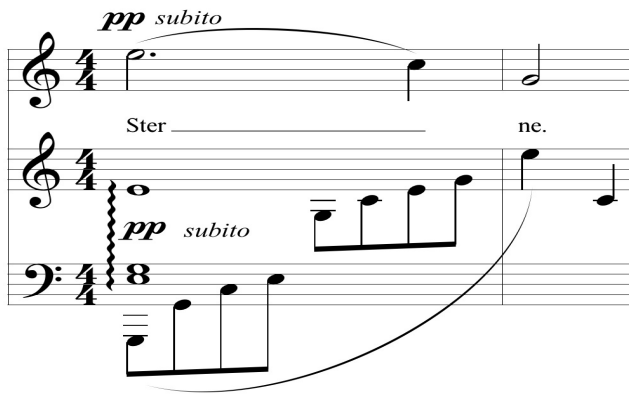


Figure 13. Mm. 66-67, second movement.

Figure 14 highlights the connections of movement three's vocal line to the others in the cycle in the last few measures of the phrase. Similar to that of the first movement, the melodic line is repeated once to create a strophic-like structure. Therefore, the appearance of the vocal line sixth interval occurs twice in this movement. The highlighted incomplete neighbor tone that was previously discussed when examining the melodic line from this movement also appears twice. Both the vocal leap of a sixth and the incomplete neighbor tone are emphasized in the same six measure section of music. The A-flats between mm. 27-28 highlight the incomplete neighbor tone in the vocal melody. This same incomplete neighbor tone is represented in the reduction of the entire melodic phrase through mm. 8-33 of this movement. The incomplete neighbor tone is highlighted in the smaller segments of the phrase as well as the larger, more structural sections. Further, the B-natural in the vocal melody in m. 30 leaps the interval of a sixth to G in m. 31. This intensifies the connections among the vocal melodies of all movements via use of sixth intervals. The melodic line at the end of the third movements mirrors this passage almost note-by-note between mm. 58-64. There are a few differences

in orchestration, but the incomplete neighbor tones and the vocal leap of the sixth are the same.

wenn du freu - den-hel-le trä - test mit her - ein, trä-test mit her -

*poco ritard.* *Come al principio*  
Wie zu Anfang

ein wie sonst, — mein Töch - ter - lein.

*f* *dimin.* *pp* *quasi pizz.*

Figure 14. Mm. 27-33, third movement.  
Source: Mahler, *Kindertotenlieder*, 13.

The use of melodic and harmonic sixths is most abundant in the fourth movement. Figure 15 shows mm. 1-7 of the fourth movement, highlighting several occurrences of these sixths. Similar to the other strophic movements of the cycle, the beginning of the melodic line in m. 5 repeats several times throughout the movement. The immediate leap from B-flat to G-flat emphasizes the tonic of E-flat minor, yet clouds the previously established tonality of E-flat major. The orchestra part seems to indicate E-flat major in the opening five measures, but the vocal line stresses E-flat minor. The modal conflict between the orchestra and the vocal line continues the battle of peace versus grief in the



mind of the parent. The constantly recurring sixth interval—mirrored in both the parallel sixths in the orchestra part and the vocal leap of a sixth— brings attention to the modal shifting between E-flat major and E-flat minor. The same harmonic battle permeates the majority of the cycle.

*Tranquillo con moto, senza fretta*  
*Ruhig bewegt, ohne zu eilen*

*con sentimento*  
*mit Empfindung*

*p*

*Semplice, con calore*  
*Schlicht, aber warm*

Oft denk' ich, sie sind nur

*pp*

Figure 15. Mm. 1-7, fourth movement.  
 Source: Mahler, *Kindertotenlieder*, 16.

In mm. 4-5 of the fourth movement, C-flat appears as a non-chord tone. This note is more than just a chromatic non-chord tone. In a movement that seems to be establishing E-flat major, why would C-flat exist in the introduction? Here, it represents the lowered  $\hat{6}$  that connects the movements of the cycle. It is then further emphasized by the lengthening of note duration and its appearance at the end of the orchestral phrase. The C-flat pairs with A-flat to create a harmonic sixth, which further intensifies its importance. Similar to the vocal leap of B-flat to G-flat that repeats throughout the

movement, this C-flat returns frequently, most notably in m. 58, as shown in Figure 16. In this passage, the parallel sixths that appeared at the beginning of the movement return beginning in m. 54. The emphasis of C-flat is heightened in several ways: by the repetition of the pitch, by the pitch being the highest in the phrase, and by the instruments performing the pitch. The first three occurrences of C-flat are played by the horn. The final C-flat is played by the oboe and cellos as the phrase dies away. The transfer from horn to oboe on the non-chord tone C-flat further represents the parent not attaining a sense of closure from the tragedy.



Figure 16. Mm. 54-58, fourth movement.

The vocal line in Figure 17 displays the final measures of the fourth movement. Here, the vocal part cycles through a series of escape tones and appoggiaturas that result in the climactic leap of a sixth from A-flat to F-natural between mm. 67-68, further connecting this movement to the similar melodic events that occur at the end of the vocal phrases in the other movements.

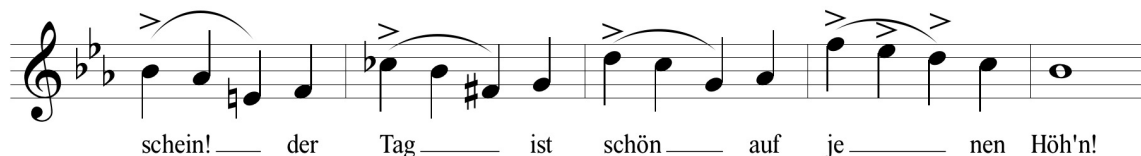


Figure 17. Mm. 65-69, fourth movement.

The beginning of the fifth movement features leaps larger than a sixth in both the orchestra and vocal parts. These larger leaps began occurring in the fourth movement in both the vocal part and orchestra parts as well. Those leaps in the fourth movement foreshadow the beginning sections of the fifth movement. In Rückert's poem, the parent is describing the terrible storm into which he sent his children. These disjunct leaps of sixths, sevenths, and octaves emphasize the physical storm in the poem and the symbolic storm inside the mind of the parent. As previously stated, the orchestration is at its fullest in this movement—another method Mahler used to intensify the end of the cycle. The vocal line and the melodic lines of the orchestra part often echo each other, sometimes overlapping. These elisions perpetuate the sorrow of the mourning parent. Figure 18 illustrates one example of a descending melodic sixth, not ascending like the other similarities. This vocal phrase starts during an elision of these large, accented leaps in the orchestra and concludes with the descending melodic sixth from D to F. Additionally, the vocal line translates to “I was afraid they’d die tomorrow,” a textual line enhanced by the descending and not ascending sixth leap.

As the vocal line concludes with the appearance of a sixth in the other movements, the same connection is made to the end of the fifth movement. Figure 19 shows the final leap of a sixth in the vocal part in m. 119. *Sie ruh'n* translates to They're safe. Donald Mitchell points out that the convincing arrival of D major in m. 119 on the

word *ruh'n* symbolizes the music reaching peace as well as the parent finding acceptance in coping with the tragedy.<sup>22</sup> The repetition of *Sie ruh'n* occurs following the ascending leap of a sixth. The vocal line continues for a few more measures following this melodic sixth, then cadences for the final time in m. 124, signaling the acceptance gained by the parent that his child has gone to be with God.



Figure 18. Mm. 58-61, fifth movement.  
Source: Mahler, *Kindertotenlieder*, 25.

The inclusion of B-flat in the final vocal phrase is also interesting. The modal shift from D minor to D major is stabilized in m. 119, and the listener does not expect to hear the lowered  $\hat{6}$  in m. 121. The B-flat, however, is not offensive to the ear because Mahler established a very similar melodic phrase at the beginning of *Kindertotenlieder*. The B-flat in m. 121 behaves similarly to the other appearances of  $\hat{6}$  throughout the cycle by acting as a neighbor tone to emphasize the sorrow felt by the grieving parent. Even though the parent realizes his children have gone to be with God, the parent will always cope with the loss. B-flat reminds the listener of this.

<sup>22</sup> Mitchell, "Mahler's 'Kammermusikton,'" 220.



Figure 19. Mm. 118-121, fifth movement.  
Source: Mahler, *Kindertotenlieder*, 28.

### Summary of the Motivic Connections

A composer often establishes melodic fragments to be elaborated upon within the first few measures of a piece of music. Mahler did the same with *Kindertotenlieder*. The Schenkerian analysis of the entire cycle reveals the importance of the melodic and harmonic sixth in connecting the vocal lines and orchestra part of the individual movements to the other songs of the cycle. Further, the use of neighbor tones and incomplete neighbor tones to ornament the melodies also highlights connections between the movements, emphasizing that the music should be performed as an indivisible whole.

## CONCLUSION

Performing *Kindertotenlieder* without pause represents Mahler's belief in eternity. The connections between the individual movements of the cycle are revealed through Schenkerian analysis and perpetuate the thought of eternity. Further, the motivic and thematic material enhancing the songs emphasize Mahler's intention that *Kindertotenlieder* be performed as an indivisible whole. Motivic importance of melodic and harmonic sixths throughout the entire cycle is accentuated by the *Ursatz* of the individual movements and *Ursatz* of the cycle as a whole. Additionally, the frequent use of neighbor tones and incomplete neighbor tones between  $\hat{5}$  and  $\hat{6}$  are revealed in the different levels of analysis.

From the vocal lines to the symbolic representation of grief and acceptance by the instruments, Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* is a thought-provoking work of art, and, in a strange twist of fate, Mahler created a gut-wrenching paradox. He did not compose the cycle to echo the same emotions as Rückert; however, Mahler would eventually endure a tragedy paralleled by the one expressed in the cycle. Mahler's wife wrote about the love he had for their daughter by saying "She was not granted long to live but that was how it had to be. She was destined to be his joy for a few years, and that in itself was worth an eternity."<sup>23</sup> Her choice of words is interesting because the final theme of the cycle is that of eternal life provided by God. Even though Mahler only had his daughter for a short while, he found comfort in knowing that he was fortunate enough to experience such joy in his lifetime—a similar comfort expressed at the conclusion of *Kindertotenlieder*.

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<sup>23</sup> Françoise Giroud, *Alma Mahler or the Art of Being Loved*, trans. by R.M. Stock (Oxford: Oxford University, 1991), 67.

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## APPENDIX OF SONGS AND THEIR TRANSLATIONS

### 1.

"Nun will die Sonn' so hell aufgeh'n"

"Now the sun wants to rise as brightly"

Nun will die Sonn' so hell aufgehn,  
Als sei kein Unglück die Nacht geschehn! Das  
Unglück geschah nur mir allein!  
Die Sonne, sie scheint allgemein!  
Du mußt nicht die Nacht in dir verschränken,  
Mußt sie ins ew'ge Licht versenken!  
Ein Lämplein verlosch in meinem Zelt! Heil  
sei dem Freudenlicht der Welt!

Now the sun wants to rise so brightly,  
As if no catastrophe happened during the night.  
The tragedy happened to me alone.  
The sun, it shines on everyone.  
You must not shut up the night inside you,  
Must immerse it in eternal light.  
A little lamp went out in my tent.  
Greetings to the joyous light of the world.

### 2.

"Nun seh' ich wohl, warum so dunkle  
Flammen"

"Now I see well why such dark flames"

Nun seh' ich wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen  
Ihr sprühtet mir in manchem Augenblicke. O  
Augen!  
Gleichsam, um voll in einem Blicke  
Zu drängen eure ganze Macht zusammen. Doch  
ahnt' ich nicht, weil Nebel mich  
umschwammen,  
Gewoben vom verblendenden Geschehe,  
Daß sich der Strahl bereits zur Heimkehr  
schicke,  
Dorthin, von wannen alle Strahlen  
stammen. Ihr wolltet mir mit eurem Leuchten  
sagen: Wir möchten nah dir bleiben gerne!  
Doch ist uns das vom Schicksal abgeschlagen.  
Sieh' uns nur an, denn bald sind wir dir ferne!  
Was dir nur Augen sind in diesen Tagen: In  
künft'gen Nächten sind es dir nur Sterne.

Now I see well why such dark flames  
You flashed at me sometimes,  
Oh eyes!  
Just as if, totally in one instant,  
To concentrate all your power.  
But I didn't suspect, because fog surrounded  
me,  
Trapped by blinding fate,  
That the ray was already preparing to depart  
To that place from where all rays come.  
You wanted to tell me with your  
flashing: We'd love to be able to stay with  
you!  
But that has been denied us by fate. Just look  
at us, for soon we will be far from you. What  
are only eyes to you in these days,  
In future nights will be only stars.



### 3.

"Wenn dein Mütterlein"

Wenn dein Mütterlein tritt zur Tür herein, Und  
den Kopf ich drehe, ihr entgegen sehe, Fällt auf  
ihr Gesicht erst der Blick mir nicht, Sondern auf  
die Stelle, näher nach der Schwelle, Dort, wo  
würde dein lieb Gesicht sein, Wenn du  
freudenhelle trätest mit herein, Wie sonst, mein  
Töchterlein.

Wenn dein Mütterlein tritt zur Tür herein, Mit  
der Kerze Schimmer, ist es mir, als immer  
Kämst du mit herein, huschtest hinterdrein, Als  
wie sonst ins Zimmer!  
O du, des Vaters Zelle, Ach, zu schnell  
erloschner Freudenschein!

"When your dear mother "

When your dear mother walks in through the  
door, and I turn my head to look at her, my  
gaze doesn't rest on her at first,  
but rather on that place, closer to the  
threshold, where your sweet face would be, if,  
bright with joy, you entered with her, as you  
used to do,  
my dear daughter.

When your dear mother walks in through the  
door, With the candle's glow, I feel as I  
always did,  
That you came in with her, slipped behind into  
The room as you always did. Oh you, ray of  
happiness in your father's cell, too quickly  
extinguished!

### 4.

"Oft denk' ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen"

Oft denk' ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen! Bald  
werden sie wieder nach Hause gelangen! Der  
Tag ist schön! O sei nicht bang! Sie machen  
nur einen weiten Gang!

Jawohl, sie sind nur ausgegangen  
Und werden jetzt nach Hause gelangen!  
O, sei nicht bang, der Tag is schön!  
Sie machen nur den Gang zu jenen Höh'n!

Sie sind uns nur vorausgegangen  
Und werden nicht wieder nach Hause  
gelangen! Wir holen sie ein auf jenen Höh'n  
Im Sonnenschein!  
Der Tag is schön auf jenen Höh'n!

"I often think: they have only just gone out"

I often think they've only gone out.  
Soon they will get back home.  
The day is fine. Oh, don't be afraid.  
They're only taking a long walk.

Indeed, they've only gone out  
And will soon come back home.  
Oh, don't be afraid; the day is fine.  
They're only walking up to those heights.

They've only gone on before us  
And will soon come back home.  
We'll catch up with them on those heights  
In the sunshine.  
The day is fine upon those heights.

**5.**

"In diesem Wetter"

In diesem Wetter, in diesem Braus,  
Nie hätt' ich gesendet die Kinder hinaus; Man  
hat sie getragen hinaus,  
Ich durfte nichts dazu sagen!

In diesem Wetter, in diesem Saus,  
Nie hätt' ich gelassen die Kinder hinaus, Ich  
fürchtete sie erkranken;  
Das sind nun eitle Gedanken.

In diesem Wetter, in diesem Graus,  
Nie hätt' ich gelassen die Kinder hinaus; Ich  
sorgte, sie stürben morgen,  
Das ist nun nicht zu besorgen.

In diesem Wetter, in diesem Saus,  
in diesem Braus, Sie ruh'n als wie in der  
Mutter Haus, Von keinem Sturm erschreckt,  
Von Gottes Hand bedeckt.

"In this weather"

In this weather, in this raging wind,  
I should never have sent the children out;  
Someone carried them away,  
I didn't have anything to say about it.

In this weather, in this tempest,  
I should never have let the children go out,  
I was afraid they'd get sick,  
Now that's just a futile thought.

In this weather, in this dreadfulness,  
I should never have let the children go out,  
I was afraid they'd die tomorrow,  
That's not a problem now.

In this weather, in this tempest,  
in this wind, They're at peace as if in their  
mother's house, Frightened by no  
storm, Protected by God's hand.

**Translations by Celia Sgroi**