The Hybrid Forms of Mahler’s Late Symphonies

Sam Reenan
Eastman School of Music | University of Rochester
sreenan@u.rochester.edu | sam-reenan.com/SMT2018.html
I. Introduction

II. Der Abschied, “Das Lied von der Erde” VI

III. “Symphony No. 9, iv, Adagio

IV. Conclusion

Rotation 1

Rotation 2

Rotation 3

Rotation X
A Rotational Template for Sonata Form

Exposition

I. Introduction

II. Symphony No. 9, iv, Adagio

III. “Symphony No. 9, iv, Adagio

IV. Conclusion

Development

Recapitulation

P material
S material
Retrans
Rotation Functions in Late Mahler

Two Functional Types:

Expositional

Recapitulatory

Contrasting Themes with Opposite Modes

Original Contrasting Theme Doesn't Materialize
Mahler, Symphony No. 9, i: A model for late sonata-like movements

Rotation 1 (Expositional)

```
Intro        P1.1       P1.2       S1        S2        S3
DM           1          7          18         29         39         42
```

“Expositional” Rotation

Contrasting Themes with Opposite Modes

“Recapitulatory” Rotation

Original Contrasting Theme Doesn't Materialize
Mahler, Symphony No. 9, i: A model for late sonata-like movements

**Rotation 5 (Recapitulatory)**

```
Rotation 5 (Recapitulatory)

P
DM
Re-Intro
P1.1
P1.2
P motives
S1, S2, & S3
each try and fail

316
347
357
365
372
```

**“Expositional” Rotation**

- Intro
- A
- B
- Contrasting Themes with Opposite Modes

**“Recapitulatory” Rotation**

- Re-Intro
- A!
- Original Contrasting Theme Doesn’t Materialize
Rotation Functions in Late Mahler

"Expositional" Rotation

Intro → A → B
Contrasting Themes with Opposite Modes

"Recapitulatory" Rotation

Re-Intro → A!
Original Contrasting Theme Doesn’t Materialize
Mahler’s Late Sonata-Like Movements
What is the *virtue* of a sonata form reading?
Das Lied von der Erde, vi

Symphony 9, iv
Mahler’s Late Sonata-Like Movements

Outline

- Part I. Introduction
- Part II. “Der Abschied,” Das Lied von der Erde, VI
- Part III. Molto Adagio, Mahler 9, iv
- Part IV. Conclusion
Mahler's Late Sonata-Like Movements

Is sonata form even generically available in these slow movements?
Mahler, “Der Abschied”: A cross between song cycle and symphony (1908)

1. More clear connections to sonata form are recognizable

2. M. 303 as a dividing point in the movement

3. A tonal teleology exists: the move from cm to CM (per aspera ad astra)

To what degree should the movement be considered in dialogue with sonata form?
Exposition I (Rotation 1)

Schwer.

New Philharmonia Orchestra
Otto Klemperer, Christa Ludwig, 1966
Exposition I (Rotation 1)

Fließend. Im Tak.
Abstimme (in gleichbleibenden Ton, ohne Ausdruck)
Tempo =

Die Sonne scheint hinter dem Gebirge. In alle Täler steigt der Abend nieder
mit seinen Schatten,

Flute

pp

Cellos

(Tam-Tam)

“The sun sinks behind the mountains
Evening descends into all the valleys
with its shadows, full of coolness.”

New Philharmonia Orchestra
Otto Klemperer, Christa Ludwig, 1966
Exposition I (Rotation 1)

“I. Introduction
II. Der Abschied,” Das Lied von der Erde
III. “Symphony No. 9, iv, Adagio
IV. Conclusion

“The brook sings its beautiful song through the darkness.
The flowers grow pale in the twilight.
The earth breathes filled with rest and sleep,
All longing wants to turn to dreams now.”
**Exposition I (Rotation 1)**

- P
- S
- P1
- P2
- Tr
- S0
- S1
- Collapse

**“Expositional” Rotation**

- Intro
- A
- B

Contrasting Themes with Opposite Modes
Exposition II (Rotation 2)

I. Introduction

II. Der Abschied,” Das Lied von der Erde VI

III. “Symphony No. 9, iv, Adagio

IV. Conclusion

“'long, o friend, to enjoy the beauty
Of this evening at your side.”
Recapitulation (Rotation 3)

Expanded Funeral March
Apotheosis
March Continues
Kindertotenlieder Quote

303 374 382

Funeral “Hymn” warps into frenzied Funeral “March”
Recapitulation (Rotation 3)

Expanded Funeral March  
Apotheosis  
March Continues  
Kindertotenlieder Quote  

Re-Intro  
A!  

“Recapitulatory” Rotation

Original Contrasting Theme Doesn’t Materialize

I. Introduction
II. Der Abschied,” Das Lied von der Erde VI
III. “Symphony No. 9, iv, Adagio
IV. Conclusion
Recapitulation (Rotation 3)

"He descended from his horse and handed him the farewell drink. He asked him where he was going, and why it had to be."
Recapitulation (Rotation 3)

Expanded Funeral March
Apotheosis
P
March Continues
Kindertotenlieder Quote
P1

303 374 382
Recitative III

“Recapitulatory” Rotation

Re-Intro
A!

Original Contrasting Theme
Doesn’t Materialize
Recapitulation (Rotation 3)

Expanded Funeral March
Apotheosis
March Continues
Kindertotenlieder Quote

303 374 382

S1 S2 S2

"Die Liebe Erde..."
Dissolves infinitely

Durchbruch

“The dear earth everywhere blooms in spring and grows green again! Everywhere and forever the distant horizons shine blue! Forever... forever...”
Recapitulation (Rotation 3)

Tragedy Transcended

“Recapitulatory” Rotation

Re-Intro

Original Contrasting Theme Doesn’t Materialize
Mahler 9, iv, Rotational Form Chart, *First Rotation*

**Rotation 1**

- Lead-in: 1
- A1
- A2
- B
- A3
- A1
- A2
- B

### Key Elements:
- Bassoon interlude
- Contrasting section
- Non-thematic mosaic of motives

### Symbols and Notes:
- A: Main theme
- B: Contrast section
- A1, A2, A3: Variations
- DbM: Key Signatures
- V: Harmonic Progression
- C#: Mode Shift
- Bassoon interlude
- Contrasting section
- Non-thematic mosaic of motives
Mahler 9, iv, Rotational Form Chart, *First Rotation*

**Rotation 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead-in</th>
<th>A1</th>
<th>A2</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>A3</th>
<th>A1</th>
<th>A2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Fb</td>
<td>D♭M</td>
<td>(d♭m)</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>D♭M</td>
<td>c♭m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

bassoon interlude ➞ contrasting section

non-thematic mosaic of motives

Sehr langsam und noch zurückhaltend

*a tempo (Molto adagio)*

3

großer Ton

Strings

Vlns *lang gezogen*

*dim.*
Mahler 9, iv, Rotational Form Chart, *First Rotation*

**Rotation 1**

- **Lead-in**
  - A
  - of Fb
  - D♭M

- **A1**
  - A
  - 1

- **A2**
  - 3

- **B**
  - (D♭M)

- **A3**
  - 7

- **A1**
  - 11

- **A2**
  - 13

- **A1**
  - 17

- **A2**
  - 21

- **B**
  - 28

- **Non-thematic mosaic of motives**

---

Sehr langsam und noch zurückhaltend

a tempo *(Molto adagio)*

3 *großer Ton*

*Strings*

Vlns *lang gezogen*

---

*p molto espressivo*
Mahler 9, iv, Rotational Form Chart, *First Rotation*

**Rotation 1**

Lead-in  A1  A2  B  A3  A1  A2  non-thematic mosaic of motives

1  3  7  11  13  17  21  28

*Sehr langsam und noch zurückhaltend*  
*a tempo (Molto adagio)*

\[ \text{Vlns } \text{lang gezogen} \]  
\[ \text{Strings} \]
Mahler 9, iv, Rotational Form Chart, *First Rotation*

**Rotation 1**

- **A**
  - Lead-in
  - A1
  - A2
  - B
  - A3
- **B**
  - Bassoon interlude
  - Contrasting section
  - Non-thematic mosaic of motives

**Score Illustration**

- **Straffer Im tempo**
  - 13
- **ff molto espressivo**
  - Muzak notation
Mahler 9, iv, Rotational Form Chart, *First Rotation*

**Rotation 1**

Lead-in A1 A2 B A3 A1 A2

D♭ M (d♭ m) V D♭ M

A1 A2 B A3 A1 A2

non-thematic mosaic of motives

Plötzlich wieder sehr langsam und etwas zögernd

28 Vlns 8va

\[ \text{pp ohne Empfindung} \]

Cellos 8va

Cellos and Basses
“Expositional” Rotation

Rotation 1

Rotation 2

Added material

Added material

Retransition

Contrapuntal outburst

“Modified Repetition” may be more appropriate than “Double Exposition”
II. Der Abschied, “Das Lied von der Erde”

III. “Symphony No. 9, iv, Adagio”

Rotation 3

climactic lead-in

sfz, fff

A

D♭M

A1

A2

A

motivic dissolution

118

126

130

134

148

Sehr fließend

Pesante

Viel bogen

Berlin Philharmonic, Herbert von Karajan, 1982
Mahler 9, iv, Rotational Form Chart

I. Introduction

II. Der Abschied,” Das Lied von der Erde VI

III. “Symphony No. 9, iv, Adagio

IV. Conclusion

“A glorious moment of recapitulatory reprise”
Rotation 3

climactic lead-in
sfz, ff

$\hat{5} \hat{4} \hat{3} \hat{2}$
of $F^b$

$A!$

$A_1$

$A_2$

$A$

motivic dissolution

(subtle lead-in)

$V^7$

$D^b M$

fragments of $A_3$
replace B and dissolve

118
126
130
134
148
159
Rotation 3

climactic lead-in
sfz, ff

\[ \text{climactic lead-in} \]
\[ \text{sfz, ff} \]

A!

\[ A! \]

A

\[ A \]

A

\[ A \]

A

\[ A \]

D\(^b\)M

\[ D^bM \]

 Ditto

\[ \text{Ditto} \]

motivic dissolution

fragments of A\(_3\)

replace B and dissolve

\[ \text{fragments of A}_3 \text{ replace B and dissolve} \]

“Recapitulatory” Rotation

Re-Intro

\[ \text{Re-Intro} \]

A!

\[ A! \]

Original Contrasting Theme

Doesn’t Materialize

\[ \text{Original Contrasting Theme} \]

\[ \text{Doesn’t Materialize} \]
Thank you!
The Hybrid Forms of Mahler’s Late Symphonies

Sam Reenan
Eastman School of Music | University of Rochester
sreenan@u.rochester.edu | sam-reenan.com
Works Cited


