

a long night's journey into day
17 November 2007

Toru Takemitsu: *Signals from Heaven* (1987)—*Day Signal* and *Night Signal*

Toru Takemitsu was born in Tokyo in 1930 and died there in 1996. He is generally regarded as one of the leading Japanese composers of the 20th century. Although he primarily wrote for Western instruments and was considered a representative of the avant-garde movement in music, his aesthetic outlook was essentially Japanese. As Martin Demmler writes:

An ambassador between musical cultures, there is no other Japanese composer of the 20th century who moved with such virtuosic agility between the Western avant-garde and traditional Far Eastern ideals as did Toru Takemitsu. He succeeded in combining these disparate traditions within a musical world that embraced the most advanced techniques, while at the same time remaining indebted to the ritualistic and rigorous language of Japanese music.... By concentrating on tone color and large-scale harmonic structures and by avoiding contrast, Takemitsu creates a subtle musical cosmos whose almost impressionistic style has led commentators to describe him as the "Japanese Debussy." Mediating between East and West, he has turned to musical advantage this tightrope walk.

Takemitsu was a giant in Japanese cultural life and in international contemporary music. He wrote hundreds of works for the concert stage, as well as 93 film scores, a detective novel and critical works on music, film and literature. A leading intellectual, he also had an insatiable appetite for popular culture. He was a fanatical cinema-goer, and had an encyclopaedic knowledge of Western pop music. He had a famous sense of humor and a prodigious gift for friendship, counting among his close friends John Cage, Morton Feldman, Oliver Knussen, Seiji Ozawa and many other leading artists and musicians.

Edgard Vărese once famously described himself not as a composer, but as an "organizer of sound." Takemitsu, on the other hand viewed himself more as a *collector* of sounds; as he wrote: "What I don't want to do is use my control to set sounds moving in the direction of a particular goal. Rather, I'd like to release them, if possible without controlling them. It would be nice enough to collect the sounds around me and then gently set them in motion. To move sounds around, as though you were driving a car, is the worst thing that you can do with them." Takemitsu's music is inspired by the natural phenomenon of breathing: sound was conceived as a living force in a permanent state of change and yet—like breathing—it does not develop in the direction of a fixed goal (as music does in a functionally harmonic system). As Takemitsu remarked: "One must first concentrate on the simple act of listening. One then comes to appreciate to what the sounds themselves aspire.... [T]he role of the performer is not to produce sound itself, but to listen to it, to strive constantly to discover sound in silence. Listening is as real as making sound; the two are inseparable."

In his two *Signals of Heaven* (1987) for antiphonal brass, Takemitsu is able to juxtapose silence with sound dramatically. Only rarely do the antiphonal groups play in unison (and then, only at structural junctions); instead one group is often silent while the other creates sounds (engaging in a sort of call-and-response, most prominently displayed in the fleet canons of *Night Signal*). Thus, while there are always audible sounds, just as poignantly, one can also observe the palpable silences. [Takemitsu once said: "I'd like to produce sounds that are as intense as silence"—perhaps in his antiphonal music, he does just that?] This acute sensitivity to the nature of both individual sounds and the absence of intentional sounds is the hallmark of Takemitsu's style. Although Takemitsu once joked that his teachers were "Duke Ellington and nature," perhaps the most significant influence on Takemitsu was John Cage, who he met in 1964 and who encouraged him to begin his first serious exploration of the traditional music of his native country. With Cage's guidance and example, Takemitsu wrote music that was concerned not with the creation or control of sound-objects, but rather with the experience of profound listening. As Takemitsu wrote in 1971:

John Cage speaks of the "insides of sounds." This may seem like mysterious talk, but he is only suggesting that we include all kinds of vibrations in what we accept as a musical sound. We tend to grasp music within the confines of the smothering superficial conventions of composed music. In the

midst of all this, the naïve and basic act of the human being, listening, has been forgotten. Music is something to be listened to, not explained.

Although the two *Signals from Heaven* were composed at different times and for different groups—*Day Signal* was written for the *Select Under the Sky* jazz festival in Tokyo in July 1987, while *Night Signal* was written for the Scottish National Orchestra in September 1987—the fact that they are related perhaps also betrays Takemitsu spiritual belief that the line that divides day from night may be less clear than we believe.

Darius Milhaud: *La Création du monde, Op. 81* (1923)

Out of all this has come one real masterpiece, one full-length, fully developed jazz work that had such character and originality that even today it sounds as fresh as it did when it was written in 1923. It is a ballet called *The Creation of the World*, by the brilliant French composer Darius Milhaud. I take the liberty of calling this work a masterpiece because it has the one real requisite of a masterpiece—durability. Among all those experiments with jazz that Europe flirted with in this period, only *The Creation of the World* emerges complete, not as a flirtation but as a real love affair with jazz.

Leonard Bernstein

Milhaud's *Création du Monde* was the first and remains the best jazz piece from a classical European composer.

Dave Brubeck

American popular culture became an international trendsetter with the emergence of the jazz at the end of World War I. While much of the American artistic establishment dismissed jazz as unworthy, European composers, including Paul Hindemith and Igor Stravinsky, recognized it as a valid and exciting art form, incorporating this style into new works. With its freedom of interpretation, its complex rhythmic vitality, and its unique and subtle timbral combinations, jazz influenced the works of a generation of composers seeking alternatives to the extreme Romanticism of the end of the 19th century. As S. Frederick Starr observes:

New popular dance rhythms and new textures of sound have always excited and inspired composers in the classical tradition of Western music. Bach was intrigued by such popular dances of his day as the *chaconne* and the *pavanne*. Chopin found inspiration in his native Polish *mazurka*.... Other popular influences came and went, often within a few years or at most a decade. But American popular dance rhythms—especially ragtime and jazz—have given rise to great classical compositions for a century already, and the love affair between the two is still as fresh as spring. The syncopated rhythms and distinctive tonalities of America's multi-ethnic music seem to have a special appeal to classical composers, especially those on the cutting edge.... Nowhere was the jazz age more intense and jazz's impact on avant garde composers more profound than in Paris in the 1920s. Visiting American jazz groups like Sam Wooding's band were all the rage. The African-American singer-dancer Josephine Baker found a cult following in the nightclubs of Montmartre [where Milhaud lived].... Soon the young rebels of French classical music, dubbed "Les Six," were all experimenting with jazz rhythms and jazz sonorities. Darius Milhaud was a leader of this movement.

Among the most prolific of twentieth-century composers with a catalogue running well past 400 works and in every conceivable genre, Darius Milhaud (1892-1974) absorbed music wherever he went and transmuted the received impressions into his own work. Be it the popular music of Brazil (*Le boeuf sur le toit* or *Suadades do Brazil*) or the folk music of France (*Suite française*), Milhaud constantly demonstrated his belief that to try to assimilate was to create; while "other musics" would serve to fire his imagination, there is no doubt that Milhaud's unique imprint is on each of his works. Milhaud became intrigued with the latent potential of jazz when he heard the Billy Arnold Jazz Band playing in a Hammersmith dance hall in London in 1920; he became obsessed after a trip to New York City in 1922. He spent many evenings listening to the Leo Reisman band and the Paul Whiteman orchestra, trying to analyze and assimilate this music. He took many trips to Harlem to hear the black musicians play in clubs which were still wholly unfrequented by white musicians, and he took home to France a collection of Black Swan "race" records which he played again and again. As he commented:

“This authentic music had its roots in the most remote elements of the black soul, in vestigial African traces perhaps. It moved me so that I could not detach myself from it.” [As Milhaud’s wife Madeleine comments, perhaps helping to forge an interesting connection between *La Création du monde* and Schwanter’s incorporation of speeches by Martin Luther King, Jr., into his *Morning for the World*: “[Darius] discovered the jazz music that expresses the sorrow of a people complaining of the injustice of which they were victims.”) Milhaud was determined to use jazz—which he described as “music that was completely different, the melodic lines, set off by the percussion, overlapping contrapuntally in a throbbing mixture of broken, twisted rhythms”—as the basis of a chamber work.

Ballet, not chamber music, ultimately provided the advantageous framework for a sophisticated, sensitive evocation of such jazz performances. As with other Paris composers Debussy and Stravinsky, writing for the ballet became for Milhaud the impetus for writing a work that would become a significant monument of early twentieth-century music. When the impresario Rolf de Maré of the Ballets Suédois asked him to write a new ballet based on African creation myths in collaboration with the surrealist writer Blaise Cendrars, the scene designer Fernand Léger and choreographer Jean Börlin, Milhaud had found the outlet needed. The primitivism of Cendrars’ scenario centered not on a violent, turbulent clash of primeval forces (as is often encountered in western cultures), but rather on a more confident and congruous development, on the love between Man and Woman. *La Création du monde* premiered on October 25, 1923 (a year before Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*, despite the apparent “borrowings!”), creating scandal and meeting initial critical bewilderment. (As Madeleine recounts: “It was a superb spectacle! I have rarely seen such beautiful décors and costumes as those of Léger for this production. It had a tremendous success, although the critics considered it music for the nightclubs, at least for a year.”) While immediate critical reaction to Milhaud’s score was that it was frivolous, Darius noted dryly in *Notes Without Music*: “Ten years later the selfsame critics were discussing the philosophy of jazz and learnedly demonstrating that *La Création* was the best of my works.”

As Milhaud admitted, he “used the style of jazz without reserve, mixing it with a classical feeling,” even adopting the exact instrumentation of the jazz opera *Liza* of Pinkard which he heard in Harlem: a chamber orchestra of eighteen instruments, including a string quartet with a saxophone replacing the viola, and with a rhythm section of drums (plus timpani), piano, and bass. The work opens in darkness, an inchoate mass of dancers poised on stage. Over subtly shifting harmonies (betraying Milhaud’s burgeoning love of poly-modality, the overture opens in a combination of major and minor modalities), a sweet, almost Bach-like melody played on the saxophone elicits slinking responses from the two trumpets that provide the first hints of jazz in the work. Over a hailstorm created by the piano and drum, the prelude gives way to, of all things, an intricate jazz fugue; depicting the African gods of creation Mzamé, Mebère, and Nkwa creating the world out of a chaotic mass, each new fugue statement portrays the sprouting and hatching of a new world—explosive, yet tightly organized. The frenzy stops suddenly, and the next developmental section parallels the evolution of the creatures of the natural world. As Rory Gury has written:

Out of the central mass of entwined bodies, life commenced to erupt. Trees shot up, leaves fell from their branches and, touching the earth, metamorphosed into strange animals. Each creature evolved individually. At last human appendages began to appear—a leg, a torso, and finally a complete man and a complete woman.

One can hear the slow evolving tree in the oboes, the rapidly developing animals in the fragments that continually pop through the texture, the excited world anticipating the arrival of Man and Woman in the tense, twittering flutes, and the humans arrive, testing their new bodies in a restless, oft-clumsy capriccio. As Man and Woman notice each other, a sensual dance combines the capriccio in mellow flutes with the oboe melody, now in the two violins. From this emerges the seductive dance of desire, a long-arching clarinet solo punctuated by jazz rhythms derived from the fugue subject, only to explode into a veritable rhythmic tempest, with music coming from seemingly every corner of the world—the dance of fulfillment, the dance of creation. The saxophone returns us to the gentleness and serenity of the opening (although with ethereal harmonies which are decidedly brighter, more optimistic than in the overture)—the opening darkness of Chaos supplanted by the radiant light of the newly created world. (And while Milhaud may not usher in the change

from darkness to light, from night to day in quite the obvious way that Haydn does in his *Creation*, Milhaud still illustrates this transition, if subtly.) Cendrars' script ends with the following:

The couple is joined.

The dance subsides, is slowed and restrained, everything grows calm.

Group by group, the dancers disperse, and the couple, locked in an embrace, drifts offstage as if borne by a wave.

It is spring.

David Bedford: *Sun Paints Rainbows on the Vast Waves* (1982)

Described by *The Guardian* as “one of the most creatively alert and endearing figures in modern British music” and by *The Daily Telegraph* as “a composer who is instinctively creative to his very fingertips,” David Bedford (b. 4 August 1937) is also one of the most versatile. Born into a musical family—his grandmother was the composer Liza Lehmann, and his mother, Lesley Duff, was involved in several Britten premières as a member of the English Opera Group—Bedford began composing at the age of seven and went on to study at the Royal Academy of Music with Lennox Berkeley and with Luigi Nono in Venice. Upon returning to London, though, Bedford realized that “in those days it was impossible, especially if you were writing avant-garde music, to earn a living, so I did music copying and teaching, all sorts of things.” By “all sorts of things,” Bedford is alluding to his double-career—as an avant-garde composer and as a rock musician.

In the late 1960s, Bedford was engaged to orchestrate Kevin Ayers' album *Joy of a Toy*, which led him to joining Ayers' cult band, *The Whole World*, as keyboardist. Through Ayers, Bedford met the bass guitarist Mike Oldfield, which led to him conducting and orchestrating Oldfield's well-known and highly-regarded *Orchestral Tubular Bells* album, the Virgin record label's first major success. He subsequently made a number of records for Virgin (some using orchestral players, others featuring his own keyboard solos), including his 1976 “progressive rock concept album” *Odyssey*. He also created the experimental album *Nurses Songs With Elephants* (1972), which mixes classical ensembles with poems, voices, and on one track, the use of twenty-seven plastic pipe twirlers. Bedford has collaborated with a wide variety of musicians, including Elvis Costello, A-ha, Enya, Billy Bragg, Lol Coxhill, Roy Harper, and Frankie Goes to Hollywood, and has orchestrated a number of films including Oldfield's *The Killing Fields*. As Mick Dillingham observes, it was Bedford's “musical erudition and lucid eccentricity, in equal amounts” which enabled to him creatively work with so many different musicians and in such disparate styles.

At this time, Bedford was also writing avant-garde classical works, such as *With 100 Kazoos* (1971), where an instrumental ensemble is joined by the audience invited to play kazoos, and also *Star Clusters, Nebulae and Places in Devon* (1971) for chorus and brass instruments. From 1969 to 1981, he was Composer in Residence at Queen's College, London, and from 1968 to 1980 taught music in a number of London secondary schools. He is noted for the large amount of educational music he has written for children. The musical notation he uses is often unconventional, frequently making use of graphics, thus opening his works up to be performed by children and others who cannot read standard notation. His innovative approach has led to such works as *Seascapes* (1986) and *Frameworks* (1989), in which students are encouraged to create their own music in the context of a public concert with a professional orchestra; these two pieces have so far involved over 4000 students. His largest major educational piece is *Stories from the Dreamtime*, (1991) for 40 deaf children and symphony orchestra.

For over 30 years he has received commissions from major orchestras, festivals, ensembles and soloists, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, John Alldis Choir, Endymion Ensemble, Sir Peter Pears, the Aldeburgh, Harrogate Spitalfields, and Chelmsford Festivals, and many BBC commissions including 4 for the Proms. In fact, as Bedford recently remarked: “there's never been a year since 1963 when I haven't had 2 or 3 commissions to do.” His most recent commission is from a consortium led by Evan Feldman and The College of William and Mary Wind Symphony—and that includes the Williams Symphonic Winds—for a wind ensemble work, to be premiered during the 2008-2009 season, that will have layers suitable for middle-school, high school, and

collegiate bands. This will actually be Bedford's sixth work for wind ensemble—earlier works include *Sun Paints Rainbows on the Vast Waves* (1982), *Ronde for Isolde* (1985), and *Praeludium* (1990), all of which have been recorded by the Royal Northern College of Music Wind Orchestra, led by conductor Clark Rundell—but the first in over ten years. As conductor Timothy Reynish indicates: “The most successful work internationally is still *Sun Paints Rainbows on the Vast Waves*,” written for the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival. Bedford, for his part, has mused: “What I find most interesting about my entrance into the world of the wind band is that any success that I may have had with *Sun Paints Rainbows*, and any originality it may have had which helped create its success, is due to the fact that as a newcomer I wasn't aware of how I was supposed to write for the medium—I was inventive through ignorance.” Bedford's unique sound comes from his keen ear for timbral combinations; by focusing on creating smaller chamber ensembles within the large ensemble (rather than replicating the homogenous, dull *tutti* sound evident in many band transcriptions of orchestral works), Bedford is able to create a fresh, transparent texture of shifting timbres, allowing bright, clear instrumental colors (especially of auxiliary instruments such as piccolo, English horn, alto and bass clarinet, baritone saxophone, and euphonium—and a percussion section which is extended to include numerous cymbals, tambourines, and tuned wine glasses) to be abruptly juxtaposed or subtly overlapped. As Reynish comments: “[Bedford] was writing minimalist scores before it was fashionable,” evident in the unique synthesis of classical development, harmonic stasis, rhythmic layering, and pop/rock energy of *Sun Paints Rainbows*.

In 1975 Bedford created an album (on the Virgin label) that juxtaposed a reading by Robert Powell of Samuel Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* with his original keyboard music and bass improvisations by Mike Oldfield. In the preparation for that composition he first encountered Coleridge's sketchbooks, which became the inspiration for *Sun Paints Rainbows on the Vast Waves*, as he comments:

The title comes from a jotting in Coleridge's notebook during the period when he was working on *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and is a reference to a passage which the poet had read in the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society. This was a letter from a Father Bourzes, of which the pertinent paragraph reads: “I shall add an Observation more concerning *Marine Rainbows*, which I observed after a great Tempest off of the Cape of Good Hope. The Sea was then very much tossed, and the Wind carrying off the Tops of the Waves made a kind of Rain, in which the Rays of the Sun painted the Colours of a Rainbow.” (Italics and capitals in original.) It is this evocative description that provided the stimulus for this composition and influences the feeling and atmosphere of its sound-world.

Gustav Mahler: “Nun will die Sonn so hell aufgehn” from *Kindertotenlieder* (1901)

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) once famously quipped to Sibelius that a “symphony should be like the world: it must embrace everything.” When viewed as a total oeuvre, Mahler's works create a world of their own, embracing and expressing psychological concepts and philosophical ideas ranging from birth to death, from love to loss, and everything in between. His compositions were initially regarded by some as eccentric, by others as novel expressions of the “New German” modernism widely associated with Richard Strauss. Only during his last decade did they begin to enjoy the critical support and popular success that helped to ensure the posthumous survival of his reputation as a composer. (During his lifetime, he was, perhaps, more famous as a conductor, particularly of the Vienna Hofoper, where he provided a model of post-Wagnerian idealism for the German musical theatre.) He wrote large-scale symphonic works and songs (although even this distinction was quite blurred—four of Mahler's symphonies incorporate solo voices and/or chorus, while over half of his lieder were conceived with orchestral accompaniment) that mediated between the Austro-German musical tradition and early 20th-century modernism, and which—due to their broad emotional range, passionate engagement, and often cathartic power in performance—have acquired canonic status. As Peter Franklin indicates: “Historical and theoretical musicologists have found in them a persistently rich and provocative field of study; his continuing popularity and influence on other composers further justifies his description as one of the most important figures of European art music in the 20th century.”

As Donald Mitchell, in his landmark *Gustav Mahler: Songs and Symphonies of Life and Death* (1985), conjectures:

For Mahler, the turn of the century was also a musical turning point in his creative life. As I have suggested, it was in the Fourth Symphony, the composition of which neatly spans the transition from the end of the nineteenth century to the onset of the twentieth, that he wrote himself out of “Wunderhorn” period and into the next phase of his composing.... Now Mahler, as the new century began—and perhaps he felt, as many creative and sensitive people must have felt, that the old century giving way to the new was a moment when fresh thinking might be undertaken, when questions about the future were lent a special immediacy—was going to have a new shot at solving them.

And so, before beginning work on the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, Mahler began to set poetry of the early 19th-century poet Friedrich Rückert, one group as an intended cycle (*Kindertotenlieder*) and the rest a less formally related collection of five songs (including *Um Mitternacht*). As Mitchell states, though: “Each of the Rückert songs seems to occupy a lyric world as distinct and as individual as the miniature dramatic worlds that the ‘Wunderhorn’ songs embody.” Unlike the other great German Lieder composers, Mahler rarely chose to set the finest poetry to music; as his wife Alma mentioned: “It even seemed to him a profanity when composers ventured to set perfect poems to music; it was as if a sculptor chiseled a statue from marble and a painter came along and colored it.” While he was directly inspired by words, he was often at a loss to find words other than his own that suited his aims. Mathias Hansen believes, however: “In Rückert’s verse he encountered poetry which, thanks to its own musicality, conveys a sense of musical meaning. Mahler was now able to break free from an illustrative or psychologically interpretative relationships between words and music in favor of music with latently linguistic character that emerges from the fusion between both these formative levels.” Mahler even admitted that his Rückert songs were among his most personal works he believed *Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder* was “so typical” of him that he could have “written the words” himself, while about *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen*, he simply commented: “This is my very own self.” While the conservative Rückert may not seem to first glance to be a poet to whom Mahler would have been attracted, musicologist Elizabeth Schmierer believes that what sets Mahler’s Rückert songs apart from other German lieder is not just his individualist choice of poetry, but rather more the profound artistic motivations that led to such a choice:

Mahler’s full awareness of the aesthetic and formal implications of genre is the defining feature of his Lieder. Their formal disposition, the technical process of their composition, and their connection with the symphony demonstrate that he must have grappled intensively with the aesthetics of the genre. For, unlike other contemporary composers of orchestral Lieder, Mahler did not create that freer type of song based entirely on the details of the text, but rather followed the principles of the Lied and referred back to an aesthetic which had originated a century earlier and seemed long outdated. His ability to raise the music to an extremely high level of expression despite such a backward glance and its all-important implications for the use of formal schemes, is attributable to his particular kind of dialectical interaction with conventional forms which were brought into play to intensify both music and text.

Most of the songs to texts by Friedrich Rückert were composed during Mahler’s first summers at his idyllic Carinthian retreat (1901-2), around the time of his marriage to the young Alma Schindler. Few commentators on his music have failed to note how odd it is that at one of the happiest periods of his life he should be have been drawn to the poet’s verses on the death of his own children. Was Mahler perhaps revealing long-sublimated grief over the deaths of his siblings in childhood? Was he offering a Requiem as a premonition of the death of his daughter? Did a brush with death in 1901 simply intensify his already latent preoccupation with death and immortality? Jeremy Noble offers a less-subjective, perhaps more artistic motivation, indicating: “We can understand what it was in Rückert’s poetry that appealed to Mahler. Their combination of misleadingly simple diction with highly sophisticated rhyme-schemes and word-play has a direct parallel in Mahler’s own style—and so too does the depth of the feeling that is only half-concealed by the technical polish.” As Mahler himself stated, he found inspiration for these songs only when “I placed myself in the situation that a child of mine had died”—and so Mahler’s meeting with death here in his *Kindertotenlieder* (“Songs on the Death of Children”) is in the first person. (As Lorraine Gorrell writes: “The view of death comes from the eyes of the bereaved.”) After Mahler’s daughter Maria did die in childhood (in 1907), Mahler looked upon these songs

differently: "When I really lost my daughter, I could not have written these songs anymore"—he no longer could even allow himself "to study or to conduct *Kindertotenlieder*."

"Nun will die Sonn' die aufgehn" is the first of the five songs that comprise *Kindertotenlieder*. As Philippe Mougeot describes the work: "An overwhelming, monochromatic score, whose immense expressive power stems, paradoxically, from the very bareness of the instrumentation and counterpoint, making us alive to the presence of another world without space or time, empty, grey—and for that reason harrowing and infinitely sad: the void of the palpable." Jeremy Noble goes so far as to state that "The subtle economy with which Mahler rings the changes on a deliberately restricted orchestral palette (no trumpets or trombones) is extraordinary." And while the bare orchestration and predominance of solo instruments serves as an unerring, expressive counterpoint to the texts, the addition of the glockenspiel to the orchestra in "Nun will die Sonn" is both subtle and poignant. As Mitchell observes:

No one will miss the significance of the glockenspiel strokes that punctuate the mourning of the first song... Mahler's very use of the glockenspiel was doubtless itself related to the subject matter of the cycle, i.e., these are songs *about* children and thus these are childlike bells. (For this reason, one supposes, Mahler eschewed introducing the larger, deeper [tubular] bell, though that would naturally have brought with it in this context its traditional funerary associations.) It is typical of the poetic precision with which he organized his sonorous images that he chose the glockenspiel to function as a miniature tolling bells in Song I, where the instrument adds its own level of poignancy to their punctuation.

Mahler uses every technique available to him to bring out the deepest meaning of the poem. For example, while the individual grief (extinguished lamp) is reflected in austere woodwind counterpoint and a severely diatonic (almost Baroque) D-minor melodic line, while acceptance (the rising sun) is suggested by a richly inflected D minor/major over strings and harp. As Schmierer writes:

The first of the *Kindertotenlieder* in particular shows how subtly Mahler treats traditional forms: the dialectic of light and darkness, presented in a different textual formulation in each of the two-line verses is realized in an extremely sophisticated musical manner on the basis of this strophic form. Mahler does not "compose" the details of the text here, but highlights the contrast through two disparately formed halves of the verse which themselves are very subtly altered from verse to verse.

By focusing on the experience of a solitary grieving parent—and by exploring the symbolic meanings attached a never-ending night, or a never-beginning morning, as representative of the profound mourning—Mahler here evokes a world of tragedy and loss far more powerful than he could in even his monumental "Tragic" Symphony.

Oswaldo Golijov: *Night of the Flying Horses* (2001)

"To me," composer Oswaldo Golijov (b. 5 December 1960) writes, "music is simply the possibility of exploring in sound the range of human experience and emotion and everything." With his broad-but-potent view of musical expression, coupled with his unique and highly personal musical background, Golijov has become one of the most popular and active composers alive today. In 2000, the premiere of Golijov's *St. Mark Passion* took the music world by storm. Commissioned by Helmuth Rilling for the European Music Festival, to commemorate the 250th anniversary of J.S. Bach's death, the piece featured the Schola Cantorum of Caracas, with the Orquesta La Pasión (especially assembled for this work by Golijov together with percussionist Mikael Ringquist), all conducted by Maria Guinand. The CD of the premiere of this work received Grammy and Latin Grammy nominations in 2002. In 2005, his second CD—a recording of his *Ayre*—was also nominated for a Grammy; finally, last year, the recording of his opera *Ainadamar* earned two Grammy awards: for best opera recording, and best contemporary composition. He was composer-in-residence for the 2007 Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center and he is composer-in-residence (together with Marc-Anthony Turnage) with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for the next two seasons. This meteoric rise to prominence is no doubt related to the fact that Golijov's volatile music—which often culls source material from myriad "world music" sources—defies

easy categorization. As *New Yorker* music critic Alex Ross has observed: "The most striking aspect of Golijov's work is not what he assimilates but how he does it. Early in the 20th century, the likes of Falla, Janáček, Bartók, Stravinsky, and Villa-Lobos infused their music with folk material, bending their notation to make room for informal expression. Golijov goes a step further; he routinely collaborates with folk and popular musicians, leaving room for improvisation in his scores and he seeks out classical performers who are willing to roughen up their conservatory-trained techniques. His work hovers on the border between notated and oral traditions. It remains, however, a fiercely personal vision, the outward echoing of a solitary voice."

Oswaldo Golijov's life and music reflect an enormously complex personal geography. Born into an Eastern European family transplanted to Argentina, he was profoundly influenced by his years in Jerusalem. As Ara Guzelimian (Senior Director and Artistic Advisor at Carnegie Hall) remarks: "[Golijov's] work grows naturally out of those experiences, true to music's ability to be deeply rooted in a specific place and, paradoxically, at the same time to transcend borders and cultural boundaries." At his childhood home in Argentina, Golijov heard European chamber music, Jewish traditional chants and klezmer melodies, as well as encountering the new tango pioneered by Astor Piazzolla. He moved to the United States in 1986 to study with George Crumb at the University of Pennsylvania and with Oliver Knussen at the Tanglewood Music Center; however, while he may have developed the *techniques* to compose with these teachers, Golijov never ceased to be enamored with the music of his youth. His exploration-in-sound of "the range of human experience and emotion and everything" has led him to collaborate with musicians such as Dawn Upshaw and Yo-Yo Ma, the Kronos and St. Lawrence string quartets, the Romanian Gypsy band Taraf de Haïdouks, the Mexican rock group Café Tacuba, and tablas virtuoso Zakir Hussain.

Golijov's critics complain that his work lacks originality: "The melodies are lifted directly from traditional folk tunes," grumbled one reviewer of his song cycle, *Ayre*. Golijov answers his critics, though, by stating that: "When I compose, I attempt to create a certain world with various chemical elements, and see how they react. And you don't just borrow; you have to give something, to help re-contextualize the elements you're working with. That way, you recharge the symbolic power of the material." Karen Rile from the University of Pennsylvania goes even further with the rebuttal, though, asserting that:

to complain that Golijov's music is merely a salad of trendy ethnomusical styles is to miss the point. Golijov is stepping completely away from our preconceived assumptions about what makes a Western classical composer. The idea of authorship does not particularly interest him. It's the art that matters, not who created it or how it got there.... Golijov is a ringmaster, borrowing freely from other traditions, revising his works extensively while in rehearsal, and valuing his performers' input as part of the collaborative creative process. In a world where individual artists are obsessed with marketing their personalities, Golijov's success is a paradox. He is happiest when he can disappear into the background because his work is larger than himself.

Golijov's most recent work includes a cello concerto written for Yo-Yo Ma and the Boston Symphony, and the score for Francis Ford Coppola's latest film, *Youth Without Youth*, which was premiered just last month (October 20, 2007) at the Rome Film Festival. As Coppola remarks: "There are two sides of Oswaldo Golijov that attracted me: consummate musicianship and classical training, and, as well, a sense of modern life, clashing cultures and the integration of past and present into a generous musical canvas. As it turned out there was a third side—a kind and interesting human being and a wonderful friend." Coppola came to know Golijov after hearing Golijov's first and highly regarded film score, written for Sally Potter's 2001 film, *The Man Who Cried*, which explores the fate of Jews and Gypsies in the tragic mid-years of the 20th century through a love story between a Jewish young woman (played in the film by Christina Ricci) and a Gypsy young man (Johnny Depp). Like numerous composers before him, Golijov assembled music from the film into a mini-suite: *Night of the Flying Horses*. The version performed this evening is actually a combination of two different versions—"Lullaby and Doina" for instrumental sextet (flute, clarinet, violin, viola, cello, bass) without voice, and the first movement of Golijov's *Three Songs* for soprano and large orchestra (recently recorded by Dawn Upshaw with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra). The opening lullaby—set to a text by Potter that was then translated into

Yiddish by Barry Davis—was intended by Golijov to not only stand alone, but also to function as a countermelody to another important musical theme in the film: Bizet's tenor aria "Je crois entendre encore," from his opera *The Pearl Fishers*. The lullaby metamorphoses into a dense and dark doina (a musical style indigenous to both Romanian and klezmer musics, characterized by complex ornamentation and liberal use of rubato) featuring improvisatory solos by flute, clarinet, and viola. The piece ends in a fast gallop boasting a theme that, as Golijov readily admits, he "stole from my friends of the wild gypsy band Taraf de Haïdouks."

Joseph Schwantner: *In Evening's Stillness* (1996)

Joseph Schwantner (b. 1943) was the first composer-in-residence with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra as part of the Meet the Composer/Orchestra Residencies Program in 1982-1985; now, Schwantner has been recently selected as the composer for the second cycle of the nation's largest commissioning consortium of orchestras, the Meet the Composer/American Symphony Orchestra League "Ford Made in America" program, which has given 65 small-budget orchestras representing all 50 states an opportunity to engage their communities with the work of established American composers of international repute. (The first composer selected was Joan Tower, whose *Made in America* has already had over eighty performances since its 2005 premiere by the Glens Falls Symphony; Schwantner's new works will be premiered by the Reno Chamber Orchestra in the autumn of 2008.) Now living in Spofford, New Hampshire, Schwantner is originally from Chicago, receiving his musical and academic training at the Chicago Conservatory and Northwestern University (M.M. 1966, D.M.A. 1968), where he studied with Alan Stout and Anthony Donato. Previously, he served on the Yale, Eastman and Juilliard faculties and is a member of the Board of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Among numerous accolades and awards, Schwantner won three BMI Student Composer Awards for his early works, received two Grammy nominations (for *Magabunda* and *A Sudden Rainbow*, both recorded by the Saint Louis Symphony, Leonard Slatkin conducting) and won the 1979 Pulitzer Prize for his *Aftertones of Infinity* (1978). He was the subject of a television documentary entitled *Soundings* produced by WGBH in Boston.

While his earliest ensemble experiences were playing tuba in his high school orchestra, it was his training on guitar (classical, folk, jazz), began at the age of eight with Robert Stein, that influenced his compositional style most significantly. As Schwantner recalls:

I didn't realize until many years later just how important the guitar was in my thinking...to get to the bottom line, when I think about my music, it's absolutely clear to me the profound influence of the guitar in my music. When you look at my pieces, first of all is the preoccupation with color. The guitar is a wonderfully resonant and colorful instrument. Secondly, the guitar is a very highly articulate instrument. You don't bow it, you pluck it and so the notes are very incisive. My musical ideas, the world I seem to inhabit, is highly articulate. Lots of percussion where everything is sharply etched, and then finally, those sharply articulated ideas often hang in the air, which is exactly what happens when you play an E major chord on the guitar. There are these sharp articulations, and then this kind of sustained resonance that you can easily do in percussion—a favorite trick of mine! I think it is right in my bone marrow. I don't think there is any question about that. I think my music would look differently if I were a clarinet player. So it doesn't mean I sit around thinking about the guitar when I am writing a piece. Not at all! There is something fundamental about how I think about music, that I think comes from my experiences as a young kid trying to play everything I could on the instrument.

While many Schwantner's early works were freely serial, his more recent works exhibit an idiosyncratic, eclectic compositional style marked by an individual brand of tonality and a fascination with timbre (especially in his typically extended percussion sections and his impressionist tone colors), extreme instrumental range, juxtaposed instrumental groupings, and pedal points. As James Chute comments: "Tonal centres are created through pitch emphasis, rather than tonic-dominant function. Like his atonal music, his tonal music employs a variety of pitch sets (but rarely major or minor scales) that are often symmetrical in design. His later works show the influence of minimalism, particularly in the repeated rhythmic and melodic figurations of works such as the Percussion Concerto, and his interest in orchestral colour remains paramount. His most extroverted pieces

have a boisterous, even theatrical quality, and have earned an important place in the American orchestral repertory, and have helped win an audience for new music."

Just as important as Schwantner's music is to the contemporary orchestral repertory, it has found an equally secure and appreciative home in the wind ensemble repertory, too. As University of Connecticut Wind Ensemble conductor Jeffrey Renshaw asserts: "Schwantner's first work for wind band, *and the mountains rising nowhere* (1977), became a landmark composition in the wind band repertoire. His second work for wind band, *From a Dark Millenium* (1980) [a re-orchestration of the second movement, "Sanctuary," from his *Music for Amber*], has found a similar place in the repertoire without the extreme technical demands of the previous work." *In Evening's Stillness* (1996) is the third work that Schwantner wrote for wind ensemble, and as he indicates, it "forms the middle movement of a trilogy" with the other two works as the frame. As he continues: "In all three works, the piano is responsible for presenting the primary melodic, gestural, harmonic, and sonic elements that unfold in the music. While each work is self-contained, I always envisioned the possibility that they could be combined to form a longer and more expansive three-movement formal design." *In Evening's Stillness* was commissioned by the Illinois College Band Directors Association and is based loosely, like many of his works, on an austere poem (this one of his own composition):

In evening's stillness,
a gentle breeze,
distant thunder
encircles the silence

The form of the work is that of a large mosaic: ultimately, there are only a few different types of large sound blocks that are manipulated and violently juxtaposed. (The work is akin to a greatly magnified translation of Stravinsky's *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*: both works move between adjacent sections through strict metric modulations, and both contain "blocks" of sound that develop independently of the other blocks with which they are abruptly juxtaposed; however, while Stravinsky's work is a study in concision and economy, Schwantner's tiles allow for expression and greater development.) Throughout the piece, Schwantner employs a timbral and textural technique he refers to as "shared monody"—when a melody is shared by partial doublings among several instrumental voices. According to Schwantner, this technique is "a single, linear event that is melodically shared by many players, with each single player entering and sustaining a different pitch of the theme in order." With this technique, Schwantner is able to convert his irregularly-swaying, minimalist-leaning rhythmic ostinati into shimmering harmonic masses (the rhythmic becomes harmonic, the horizontal becomes vertical).

David Kechley: "Midnight Reflection" from *Stepping Out* (1988)

Since the 1968 premiere of *Second Composition for Large Orchestra* by the Seattle Symphony, David Kechley has created works in all genres, which have been commissioned and performed throughout the USA and abroad by many of the nation's most prestigious ensembles, including the Cleveland Orchestra, Colorado Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Louisville Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Boston Pops, Kronos Quartet, Lark Quartet, Amherst Saxophone Quartet, Vienna Saxophone Quartet, and the United States Military Academy Band. His two most recent premieres are *BOUNCE: Inventions, Interludes, and Interjections*, premiered at the World Saxophone Congress in July, 2006 in Ljubljana, Slovenia by the Ryoanji Duo; and *WAKEFUL VISIONS/MOONLESS DREAMS: Three Movements for Orchestra*, which was premiered in March 2007 by the Orchestra of Indian Hill and in May by the Vermont Symphony. A new work, commissioned by Williams faculty members Doris and Stevenson and Matthew Gold, will be premiered later this year.

Especially prolific in writing music for saxophone, Kechley's catalog includes two saxophone quartets (*Stepping Out*, 1988; *Rush*, 2003), two works for saxophone soloist and quartet (*Music for Saxophones*, 1985; *Tsunigari*, 1988), three works for saxophone and guitar duo (*In the Dragon's Garden*, 1992, which won the 1995 Lee Ettelson Composer's Award; *Driveline*, 1997; *Bounce*, 2006), and a saxophone concerto (*Restless Birds before the Dark Moon*, 2000, which won the 24th Annual National Band Association/William D. Revelli Composition Contest). *Stepping Out* was commissioned by the Saskatoon Saxophone Quartet who premiered it at the 1989

Navy Band Symposium at George Mason University. Performed widely throughout North America, Europe, and Japan, *Stepping Out* was selected for performance at the Southwest Contemporary Music Festival at Southwest Texas State University (1990), College Music Society National Conference in Washington, DC (1990), New England Saxophone Symposium at University of Massachusetts-Amherst (1998, 2001), and the 4th British Saxophone Congress in Yorkshire (1996) and World Saxophone Congress at the University of Minnesota (2003); *Stepping Out* has also been recorded twice, by the Empire Saxophone Quartet for Liscio Recordings on a disc titled *In the Dragon's Garden* and by the Kumoi Saxophone Quartet, Japan on a disc titled *Chamber Symphony*. As Kechley writes about the piece:

Stepping Out is an appropriate, if not the most original, title for a work in which each of the movements is based on the interval of a step up and back. Thus the title seems to describe a changing state of being in those who listen to or perform the work and is similar to terms such as *mellowing out*, *tripping out*, *stressing out*, *chilling out*, or even *pigging out*. By the end of the piece, the audience, performers, and even the composer will be "totally stepped out."

"Midnight Reflection," the second movement of the work (other movements are: "Minimum Overdrive," "Anonymous" and "An Easy Burden"), alludes to "fragmented and slightly nostalgic thoughts experienced late at night or in the early morning hours. The 'steps' are changed from whole to half and turn into long lyrical lines interspersed with silence and the irregular ticking of a distant clock."

Currently Chair of the Music Department at Williams, David Kechley was born in Seattle, received a Bachelor's Degree in 1970 and Master's in 1974 from the University of Washington, where he studied composition with Paul Tufts, Williams Bergsma, James Beale, and Robert Suderberg, and completed a DMA in Composition at the Cleveland Institute of Music in 1979, studying with Donald Erb. Kechley has won numerous awards for his compositions, including two grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (1976, 1979), a Guggenheim Fellowship (1979), and continuous ASCAP awards for over twenty years; additional recognition for his work includes: First Prize Winner of the 1980-81 Shreveport Symphony Composers' Competition, and First Prize and Winner of the 1979 Opus I Chamber Orchestra Contest for Ohio Composers. Kechley has received grants from the North Carolina Arts Council, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Barlow Foundation, and recent commissions from The American Composers Forum Commissioning Program and the New England Orchestra Consortium. In 2002 he was an artist resident at Bellagio, a retreat for artists and scholars funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. His wind ensemble work *BANG!* was commissioned and premiered by the Williams Symphonic Winds in 2005.

Gustav Mahler: *Um Mitternacht* (1901)

Yet each of the [Rückert songs] is a highly wrought expression of a distinctly Mahlerian mood."

-Jeremy Noble

While Mahler turned to an orchestral language of chamber-like transparency in the loose collection of songs known informally as the Rückert Lieder, in *Um Mitternacht* specifically, he responded fully to the extraordinary visionary fervor of the text. As Noble continues: "*Um Mitternacht* is a grandly rhetorical song of religious affirmation, with strings replaced by organ-like choirs of brass and winds. The semitonal refrain "Um Mitternacht" anchors the music in a minor mode from which it constantly strives to escape—and escape it finally does, into a major which transcends (with a supreme effort) both protest and resignation." Donald Mitchell, in a wonderful moment of understatement, comments that: "*Um Mitternacht* leaves, rather, a monumental impression." Mahler presents yet another unique sound world, this time with no strings, but only with winds, brass, harp, piano, and timpani—and featuring the archaic (and so, perhaps, timeless?) oboe d'amore instead of its modern equivalent. While the opening scalar material (particularly the downward glissandi of the oboe d'amore and the descending scales of the horn and bassoon) seems to be an almost precise quotation of a similar moment from the slow movement of his Fourth Symphony (and so symbolic of the same sentiments of *collapse*), Mahler, in the words of Mitchell: "ingeniously changes tack in the concluding section and by harmonizing the scale as if it were a kind of chorale tune, that is, by realizing its harmonic

implications, brings off a majestic coda, as dense and solid and affirmative in sound as the opening stretches are austere and questioning." With the triumphant emergence of light from the depths of the darkness of midnight, the long night's journey is concluded

Joseph Schwantner: *New Morning for the World: Daybreak of Freedom* (1982)

Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice.

Martin Luther King, Jr. (January 15, 1929–April 4, 1968), was one of the main leaders of the American civil rights movement. A Baptist minister by training, King became a civil rights activist early in his career, leading the Montgomery Bus Boycott and helping to found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. His efforts led to the 1963 March on Washington, where King delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech, raising public consciousness of the civil rights movement and establishing King as one of the greatest orators in American history. In 1964, King became the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to end segregation and racial discrimination through civil disobedience and other non-violent means. Dr. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee. He was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Jimmy Carter in 1977, and Martin Luther King Day was established as a national holiday in the United States in 1986.

Joseph Schwantner composed *New Morning for the World: Daybreak of Freedom* as a memorial to "a man of great dignity and courage whom I had long admired." Commissioned by the American Telephone and Telegraph Company for a tour of the Eastman Philharmonic under its conductor David Effron, the work was premiered with the Pittsburgh Pirates star Willie Stargell as narrator, on January 15, 1983—the date that would have been King's 54th birthday.

Schwantner chose to incorporate several of King's most prominent texts in the work and, as in Copland's *Lincoln Portrait*, the ensemble and speaker carry an equal narrative burden, with Dr. King's words supported and illustrated by an instrumental fabric of unusual variety and flexibility that confirms that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery: in his score, Schwantner tries to evoke the dignity, passion, conviction, and strength that were the hallmarks of King's character. Schwantner chose four texts of King's to serve as the foundation of the piece: *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* (1958), which is King's early autobiography and his full account of the Montgomery bus strike, the classic story of nonviolent resistance in America; "I Have a Dream" (1963) the speech, regarded alongside Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address* as one of the finest speeches in the history of American oratory, given from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to over a quarter million people who sprawled onto the National Mall after the march on Washington; "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (1963), a passionate statement of his crusade for justice; and "Behind the Selma March" (also known as "How Long, Not Long") (1965), the speech given on the steps of the Alabama state capitol building after the second march from Selma, two weeks after the brutality of "Bloody Sunday" led to the abrupt end of the first attempted march.

With a strong reliance on local tonal centers, a stirring, noble chorale, and a kinetic energy that propels the work inexorably, *New Morning for the World* is Schwantner's best-known and often performed orchestral works. Tonight's performance is the second—and the New England premiere—of the wind ensemble transcription created by Nikk Pilato, member of the University Louisville music faculty.

Whenever [the dream] is fulfilled, we will emerge from the bleak and desolate midnight of man's inhumanity to man into the bright and glowing daybreak of freedom and justice for all of God's children.