



After Mahler: Britten, Weill, Henze and Romantic Redemption

Stephen Downes

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Gustav Mahler is often thought of as one of the last of the Romantic composers and, as a result his influence on the development of twentieth-century music has been little explored. In this ground-breaking study, Stephen Downes shows that Mahler's music was in fact greatly admired by major composers Benjamin Britten, Kurt Weill and Hans Werner Henze. Despite their initial admiration being notably dissonant with the prevailing Zeitgeist - Britten in 1930s England, Weill in 1920s Germany and Henze in 1950s Germany and Italy - Downes argues that Mahler's music struck a profound chord with them because of the powerful way in which it raised and intensified dystopian and utopian complexes and probed the possibility of fulfilment or redemption, an ambition manifest in ambiguous tonal, temporal and formal processes.

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