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# **Penderecki's *Sixth Symphony*, "Chinesische Lieder": Heir to *Lied von der Erde* and *Lieder der Vergänglichkeit***

Krzysztof Penderecki's last symphony is based on eight poems from *Die chinesische Flöte* [The Chinese Flute] by Hans Bethge, a collection in which the German poet (1876-1946) makes selected works by China's greatest poets available to German readers. Penderecki was already familiar with the collection. He not only knew and admired the seven poems that form the basis of Gustav Mahler's *Lied von der Erde* [Song of the Earth]. Even before composing what was to become his *Seventh Symphony*, Penderecki had begun work on a cycle of orchestral songs that he would, many years later, expand and rename *Sixth Symphony* "Chinesische Lieder."<sup>1</sup>

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1 In an interview on the occasion of the 2018 European premiere of the symphony in Dresden, Penderecki mentions that since 1995 he has regularly visited China two or three times a year. His *5th symphony* having been completed in 1992, he started conceiving a cycle of "Chinese songs," which he intended to become his *6th symphony*. In the following years, he skipped this number when he received commissions for two more symphonies, but the plan for the "Chinese" *Sixth* was only postponed, never discarded. (Jan Brachmann, *Pendereckis Sechste in Dresden. Hören, wie der Tau im Gras perlt*, „Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung“, 25.05.2018).

Bethge's volume contains 83 German translations of Chinese poems. While the first six date from several centuries B.C. and the last 22 from the 18th to the early 20th centuries, the focus of the collection is on forty poems from the time of the Tang Dynasty (618-907). During this economically and politically largely stable epoch, the arts, especially poetry, painting, music and dance, experienced a heyday, and writing poetry even became an obligatory part of the civil service examinations. The most famous poet of the era and of Chinese poetry in general is Li Bai (701-762).<sup>2</sup> His poet friend Du Fu (712-770), who was also highly esteemed, counted him among the "eight immortals of the wine bowl," and according to a widespread legend, which attributes his death to his often excessive drinking, Li Bai is said to have drowned in a river while sitting in a boat, drunk and trying to embrace the reflection of the moon. Indeed, in many historical depictions Li Bai is seen lifting his wine bowl toward the moon on the water's surface. Other topics in his poetry are friendship, nature, loneliness and the transience of earthly life.<sup>3</sup> Mahler, who received Bethge's little volume as a gift from a friend shortly after it was published, was profoundly moved.

Bethge himself did not know any of the Asian languages whose poetry he endeavored to render into German, and his Chinese collection in particular has a most adventurous ancestry. It begins on the European continent in the collection of a Parisian library, where it was discovered by both the renowned French sinologist Marie Jean Léon Marquis d'Hervey-Saint-Denys (1823-1892) and by Judith Gautier (1845-1917), a poet who loved the exotic imagery but spoke and read only the colloquial Chinese of her time. Both soon published selections from the large collection in French translation. In 1862 appeared Hervey's *Poésies de l'époque des Thang, traduite du chinois* [Poetry from the Tang dynasty, translated from the Chinese], followed in 1867 by Gautier's *Le Livre de Jade* [The Book of Jade]. According to the judgment of today's sinologists, the first offers translations that remain respectfully close to the literal sense of the Chinese wording, whereas the second presents poetically free retellings, often embellished with additional details. Among French amateur readers though, these latter adaptations enjoyed such popularity that Gautier published a considerably enlarged and lavishly illustrated new edition in

- 2 Li Bai – the usual transcription of his name today besides Li Tai Bai, the courtesy address with the addition "great" – is also known as Li Bo, Li Po, Li Tai-Po and Li Tai-Pe.
- 3 Wolfgang Kubin, *Die chinesische Dichtkunst. Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende der Kaiserzeit*, Saur, Munich 2002, pp. 133-134.

1902. In 1905, a selection of the French translations by Hervey and Gautier including Hervey's erudite commentary appeared in German in a book by Hans Heilmann entitled *Chinesische Lyrik vom 12. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis zur Gegenwart* [Chinese Poetry from the 12th century B.C. to the present day]. Bethge then undertook to mold Heilmann's second-hand translations into poetic form, often using iambic pentameters and in some cases even rhymes. However, neither Heilmann nor Bethge were able to recognize Gautier's embellishments, much less could they have questioned them. As a result, there are poems in Bethge's *Die chinesische Flöte* – among them the two Du Fu poems Penderecki chose – for which the identification of the Chinese originals seems impossible. Yet as German poetry with an exotic touch, these texts are most appealing.

While Mahler had limited his choice of Chinese poetry for his *Lied von der Erde* to texts from the Tang Dynasty, Penderecki includes two poems by Li Qingzhao (1084-ca. 1155), the greatest female poet in China, who lived three and a half centuries later than the four male poets on whose work the other symphonic movements are based. He structures his eight-part composition into 3 + 2 + 3 movements, with Li Qingzhao's two poems in the center, treated very distinctly both with regard to their texts and their musical setting. For the first three movements, Penderecki chooses shorter texts that are linguistically more complex owing to their enjambments and the renunciation of strophic forms. Conversely for the three movements following the central pair, he selects longer poems, which Bethge had transposed into iambic pentameters and, strophically formed into trios or quartets, dressed in a folksy tone. Moreover, Penderecki's arrangement of the texts creates a frame insofar as the first and last poems deal with song and the sound of the flute – possibly as a remote reference to the framing mention of the lute in the first and final movements of Mahler's *Lied von der Erde*.

An early version of Penderecki's *Sixth Symphony* "Chinesische Lieder," commissioned by a Belgian real estate agent and entitled *Three Chinese Songs for High Baritone and Orchestra*, was performed in the Flemish city of Ieper on 31 December 2008, with Thomas E. Bauer as vocal soloist and the Sinfonia Cracovia under the direction of the composer. The full eight-movement version, commissioned jointly by the Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra and the Dresden Philharmonic, was premiered on 24 September 2017 in the southern Chinese city formerly known as Canton, with baritone Yuan Chenye and the Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra under the baton of the internationally renowned conductor Long Yu. For the first German

performance, which followed on 5 May 2018 in the Dresden Kulturpalast with baritone Stephan Genz and the Dresden Philharmonic conducted by Cristian Măcelaru, Penderecki enlarged the work further with four solo interludes played on the *erhu*, the two-stringed “Chinese violin.” In its final form, the *Symphony* comprises three different *erhu* solos between movements I and II, III and IV, and VI and VII respectively, while movements IV and V merge seamlessly and the last solo, between movements VII and VIII, repeats the first. By means of the four very simple and short pentatonic interludes, the composer apparently intends to remind his listeners that, despite the Western language of the lyrics, the texts evoke images from a great cultural distance and bygone time.

In the course of the two years since its performance in the “Dresden final form,” the *Symphony* has been performed five more times: in Warsaw on 17 November 2018, in Shanghai on 13 April 2019, in Sopot near Gdansk on 2 August 2019, and in Zurich on 25 and 26 January 2020. In the two Swiss performances, the vocal soloist was once again Thomas E. Bauer.

## 1. Die geheimnisvolle Flöte

An einem Abend, da die Blumen dufteten  
 Und alle Blätter an den Bäumen, trug der Wind mir  
 Das Lied einer entfernten Flöte zu. Da schnitt  
 Ich einen Weidenzweig vom Strauche, und  
 Mein Lied flog, Antwort gebend, durch die blühende Nacht.

Seit jenem Abend hören, wann die Erde schläft,  
 Die Vögel ein Gespräch in ihrer Sprache.

## 1. The Mysterious Flute

One evening, when the flowers were fragrant  
 And all the leaves on the trees, the wind carried to me  
 The song of a distant flute. Then  
 I cut a willow branch from the bush, and  
 My song flew, answering, through the blooming night.

Ever since that evening, when the earth sleeps,  
 The birds hear a conversation in their language.

(Bethge after Li Bai)

The poem on which the first movement is based describes a wordless "conversation" between two flutes: one flute, sounding from far away, is heard one evening in the woods; a second flute, quickly carved from a willow cane by the lyrical subject who is deeply moved by this unexpected greeting, sounds in response.

In Penderecki's music, the title-giving flute determines large parts of the instrumental layer with two closely related thematic motifs. They are presented in the prelude, where a repeatedly rising two-note "call" frames a threefold figure whose rhythmically condensing upbeats lead into the falling fourth/fifth arpeggio F/E-flat/B-flat.



Ex. 1: *Sixth Symphony* I: The flute motif with "call" and fourth/fifth arpeggio

The motif is accompanied by the same fourth/fifth stacking in its vertical and horizontal execution: A horn and two trombones play the pedal B-flat/E-flat/F, doubled in the first violins, while marimba and second violins add a fast chain of falling tremoloed F/E-flat/B-flat arpeggios. The remaining instruments complement the fourth/fifth chord to the pentatonic scale A-flat/B-flat/D-flat/E-flat/F.

When the baritone sets in after the end of this motif, his contour up to the word "flowers" sounds quite tonal in E-flat minor. However, as soon as he mentions the leaves on the trees, his chant unexpectedly rises to B-natural instead of B-flat. The flute takes this as an invitation also to shift its motif up a semitone. Its framing call that now sounds as A-B, and the threefold central figure is shorter, simpler, and more uniform. At the same time, the framing call receives a first "response" from a parallel of second flute and bassoon, even before the text mentions that there will be an answer.



Ex. 2: *Sixth Symphony* I: The variant of the flute motif with the first response

How much the lyrical subject is touched by the song of the distant flute can be heard in the long melisma the baritone sings to the syllable “fern” (far away). By means of the end of this vocal line Penderecki comfortably integrates the lyrical subject into the evening mood: The singer’s falling fourth/fifth arpeggio E-D-A joins the sound that has been heard in the background throughout the six previous measures.

The music in the first interlude, which divides the poem’s first stanza, shows listening nature lover startled by the unexpected greeting from far away: Against a *fortissimo* eruption of the winds and strings, horn and trumpets emit three mighty blasts, each underlined by strokes on the hanging cymbal and the O-daiko, one of the set of powerful drums often heard in performances of Japanese music. Above this rises the first genuine flute conversation, led by the first flute with a version of the flute motif that is once again varied and transposed, answered by an octave parallel of oboe and bass clarinet and accompanied by a four-note extended falling fourth/fifth chord in three instruments. In the last couplet of the poem’s first stanza, the singer shows his delight in this exchange by means of two rising sixths at the words “Weidenzweig” and “mein Lied, mein Lied.” Thereafter, the flutes and some violins use trills to tell of the whispering wind, while the baritone’s contour is supported by low strings.

The following second interlude leads with a change of character to the second stanza. The music now adds a new color: Instead of the somewhat elegiac call of the distant flute with fourth/fifth chords in the background, we hear a flute duet in cheerful staccato, followed by two glissandos shooting up one after the other – on the vibraphone in chromatic steps rising over one and a half octaves, on the harp in a whole-tone scale over four octaves.

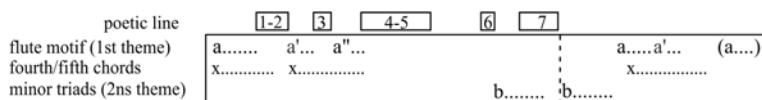
As an immediate introduction to the second stanza of the poem, the orchestra plays a two-bar unit of falling, rising and curving arpeggios, each in a different rhythm. In the process, the whole-tone chord G/A/B/D-flat/E-flat/F, previously initiated by the harp, is shattered into a whirring polymetric play of 5:6:8:12:16:18 fractions of the quarter-note beat. Yet the song’s thematic two-note call is not entirely absent here either: Amidst the swooshing sounds surrounding it, the oboe plays a fourfold G-A.

In the short second stanza of the poem, Penderecki once again entrusts all thematic material to the orchestra. After the baritone’s entry with words doubled by the cello, words that declare the singular experience

of the flute melody carried by the wind to be the basis of a wordless conversation that is henceforth ("Ever since that evening ...") heard in nature, the mid-stanza interlude begins with a transparent mesh of staccato figures, overlaid after the first measure by a denser layer of repeated minor triads. At the level of the symphonic movement, these repeated minor triads function as the secondary theme. For the final verse of the poem, the composer enriches the triadic mesh with viola arpeggios and a fourfold ringing of the jingle tree. The vocal stanza concludes – now without the dense accompaniment – with G-flat/A-flat/B-flat/C/D/E, the whole tone sound a semitone lower than the one heard before.

The remaining 29 purely instrumental measures present the symphonic recapitulation by recalling the thematic components in reverse order. After the secondary theme with its layer of minor triads, a joint ascent in flute, bass clarinet, and double bass leads back to the first pentatonic field of the movement and then continues with a resumption of the flute motif including its slightly varied accompaniment. The first variant of the motif follows in the bassoon, supplemented by four extending measures above the same accompaniment.

The structure of the music Penderecki composes for this mysterious flute dialogue thus shows a remote similarity to the symphonic or sonata allegro form, while at the same time leaving room for the fact that it is a conversation "in the language of birds": The 77 measures of the dialogue that, as Hans Bethge learned from the Chinese poet Li Bai, does not need words, are divided into 48 measures in which passages with and without vocal participation have equal weight, followed by 29 measures of purely instrumental music.



Ex. 3: *Sixth Symphony* I: Structure with vocal lines and thematic components

In the final nine measures, Penderecki creates a mysterious mood: Repetitions in polymetric superimpositions seem to describe with musical means the nature in which Bethge's "Chinese" poem unfolds. Topped by some last flute calls (F-G) and their very slow echoes in the horn, the symphonic movement concludes with this whirring sound.



## 2. In der Fremde

In fremdem Lande lag ich. Weißen Glanz  
Malte der Mond vor meine Lagerstätte.  
Ich hob das Haupt, – ich meinte erst, es sei  
Der Reif der Frühe, was ich schimmern sah,  
Dann aber wusste ich: der Mond, der Mond...  
Und neigte das Gesicht zur Erde hin,  
Und meine Heimat winkte mir von fern.

## 2. In Foreign Lands

I rested in a foreign land. The moon  
Painted a white glow in front of my bedstead.  
I lifted my head, – at first I thought that  
The gleam I saw was the frost of daybreak,  
But then I knew: the moon, the moon . . .  
And I bowed my face toward the ground,  
And my homeland beckoned to me from afar.

(Bethge after Li Bai)

The longing for home that stirs the stranger at the sight of the moonlight is heard quite literally in Penderecki's delicate and very transparently orchestrated *Andante*. The movement begins and ends with a figure of the two orchestral horns, echoed by two other horns sounding "from afar" (i.e., played backstage). A triple clarinet gesture over a timpani roll and the chromatically falling line of the singer's first words lead over to a lowered second echo.

□

The musical score consists of four staves. The top staff is for Clarinet, showing a melodic line with a chromatic descent. The second staff is for Horns, with a rhythmic pattern and the text 'In fremdem Lande lag ich' written below it. The third staff is for Horns from afar, with a similar rhythmic pattern. The bottom staff is for Timpani, showing a roll. The time signature is 9/8.

Ex. 4: *Sixth Symphony II*: The horn call beckoning from the homeland

When describing the magic created by the white glow of the moon on the floor of the bedchamber, the orchestra sounds warm and lush. The moonlight illuminates the vocal part with a comforting interval pattern made up of many sixths and sevenths, often followed by echoes or duplications in one of the melodic instruments. The music traces the message of the text with a chromaticism in the vocal contours that evolves several times from these sixths: Three times – twice in line 1, once in line 4 – the contour swings steeply upwards and then descends slowly; two more times, the singer dives into the depths on the occasion of the grey shimmer presumed to announce the next dawn, only to rise all the more gradually. The exclamation "the moon, the moon" as well as the concluding "from afar" are cloaked in rising sixths, which linger, surrounded by the celesta and the chimes, as if filled with an inner strength.

Tempo and meter trace the psychological development of the nocturnal observer. At first, while he perceives the bright light on the floor of the bed chamber with nothing but a mild amazement, the music swings in *9/8-Andante*. The moment he realizes that the gleam is a message from afar, there is a change to *4/4* time. When he stops in reverential joy at the renewed connection to his homeland, the pace slows to *Lento*. At the end of the short movement, we hear a bell stroke, followed by the recurring motif of the horns with its distant echo, which this time fades away in a prolonged waning.

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(horns)

(horns from afar)

Ex. 5: *Sixth Symphony* II: More beckoning sounds from the distant homeland

### 3. Auf dem Flusse

Mein Schiff treibt durch das Wasser leicht dahin, –  
 Ich seh sein Spiegelbild auf klarer Flut.  
 Am Himmel gehn die Wolken, stumme Wanderer,  
 Und auch den Himmel seh ich in der Flut.  
 Wenn eine Wolke an dem blauen Monde  
 Vorübergleitet, fein wie ein Gedanke,  
 So seh ich, wie sie unter mir verschwebt,  
 Ein Märchenbild...

Mir ist, mein Schiff zieht selig durch den Himmel,  
 Ich fühle mich den Wolken nah verwandt, –  
 Und plötzlich weiß ich: Wie der Himmel sich  
 In diesem Wasser spiegelt, also blüht  
 Das Bild meiner Geliebten mir im Herzen.

### 3. On the River

My ship drifts through the water lightly, –  
 I see its reflection on the water's clear surface.  
 Clouds pass in the sky, silent wanderers,  
 And I also see the sky in the water.  
 When a cloud glides by the blue moon,  
 Delicate like a thought,  
 Then I see it hovering and waning beneath me,  
 A fairy-tale picture . . .

I sense my ship sailing blissfully through the sky,  
 I feel kin to the clouds, –  
 And suddenly I know: Just as the sky  
 Is mirrored in this water, so also blooms  
 The image of my beloved in my heart.

(Bethge after Du Fu)

This poem is all about reflections. The water in the river reflects not only the ship floating on it but also the clouds and the sky. This image of the above in the below displaces the beholder for a moment into the sky and among the clouds, before he sees through the illusion and learns to interpret it as a metaphor of his love.

After a fermata at the end of the second symphonic movement, the third movement begins with a new gesture while expanding the tonal field of the most recently heard F minor. The polymetric accompaniment underpinning the first two stanzas recurs in the postlude, suggesting a recapitulation. Meanwhile the strings, playing with mutes and avoiding all downbeats by means of tied notes, create the impression of a diffuse, not entirely still projection screen – a fitting picture for the characteristics of reflections in flowing water.

The instrument that traces the delicate ripples on the surface of the water, the solo oboe, strings together small, slowly changing decorative figures that also omit all beats.

Ex. 6: *Sixth Symphony* III: The polymetric texture of rippling water

The vocal contour anchors in C, the fifth of the underlying F minor tonality; see the beginning and end of the first stanza in the poem ("Mein ... [da]hin, [da]hin") as well as the central word "Monde" and the beginning and end of the second stanza. Moreover, the singer produces some unusual displacements from "here below" to "there above" and vice versa, resulting in leaps of a minor ninth.

Ex. 7: *Sixth Symphony* III: Vocal displacements between the water surface and the sky

Effects of enchantment are created by interjections of the tuned percussion: The xylophone comments on the reflection of the sky in the river, a vibraphone tremolo on the “fairy tale image”; a tam-tam beat marks the breath held in awe by the suddenly enlightened beholder, and the triangle underlines the image of the beloved, which “blossoms” in the heart. In the postlude, the gradual disappearance of the oboe figure from the beginning of the movement is accompanied by a long roll on tubular bells and cymbals.

#### **4. Die wilden Schwäne and 5. Verzweiflung**

In the way he places the movement titles in the score, Penderecki gives the impression that the music to these two poems by the poet Li Qingzhao, which follow one another in *Die chinesische Flöte* and both speak of swans and tears, consists of two symphonic movements. In fact, however, the composer shortens the texts considerably. In Bethge’s volume, both poems are made up of three-line stanzas: six in the text talking about the swans getting ready to depart, seven in the one about the returning birds. The two torsos are then combined to a single poem without stanzaic grouping. Likewise, the music fuses the two movements by extending the instrumental epilogue of the fourth into the opening bars of the fifth without interruption. In performance the two poetic excerpts are therefore heard as a single text:

#### **4. The Wild Swans / Despair**

Ein grauer Regen düstert in der Landschaft.  
 Der Nebel weht. Der Fluss wälzt schwere Wogen, –  
 Doch meinen Jammer wälzt er nicht hinweg.  
 Auf meines Umhangs dunkelm Tuche schimmert  
 Der Regen meiner bitterlichen Tränen;  
 Die wilden Schwäne schreien unter mir.  
 Ich schüttele meine armen Tränen nieder  
 Auf die erwachten Vögel, – fliegt, o Vögel!  
 Bringt meine Tränen ihm, der mich verzehrt!  
 Jetzt kommen die wilden Schwäne wieder;  
 Mein Herz ist voller Qual. Wie oft

Sah ich euch gehn und kommen, wilde Vögel!  
Auf leisen Sohlen steigt die Dämmerung nieder,  
Der Abend kommt, die Nacht umfängt die Erde, –  
In mir jedoch bleibt alles, wie es war.  
Wer zieht den Dorn aus meinem wunden Herzen?  
Verzweiflung wühlt in mir und tötet mich...!

A grey rain darkens the landscape.  
The fog is blowing. The river rolls heavy waves, –  
Yet it does not roll away my sorrow.  
On my cloak of dark cloth shimmers  
The rain of my bitter tears;  
The wild swans cry beneath me.  
I shake down my poor tears  
Onto the awakened birds, – fly, o birds!  
Bring my tears to him who devours me!  
Here come the wild swans again;  
My heart is in filled with agony. How often  
Did I see you go and come, wild birds!  
On quiet soles the twilight descends,  
Evening comes, night engulfs the earth, –  
In me, however, everything remains as it was.  
Who will pull the thorn from my wounded heart?  
Despair roams within me and kills me...

(Penderecki, abridged and welded together  
from Bethge after two poems by Li Qingzhao)

Musically, the double movement presents itself as a three-part structure: The 27-bar section from "Die wilden Schwäne" begins with triplets of repeated E-flat-minor triads played staccato in the high woodwinds and ends with a long, fading tam-tam beat below a fermata. The 20-bar final section, in which the baritone begins with the second verse of the much abbreviated poem "Despair," follows after a pause stretched out with a timpani roll by another fermata. It is also launched with repeated triplets in E-flat minor, this time sounding in the high strings. The two interruptions in the musical flow and the beginnings of the two major sections, which are analogous in harmony and accompaniment pattern, frame a seven-bar central passage, which also begins with E-flat minor triads but is accelerated in tempo. This passage serves as a backdrop for the short line confirming the return of the wild swans.

The double movement in the center of the composition differs from the other symphonic movements also in thematic terms. Many of the vocal lines contain small figures whose interval sequences reveal that they are quotations from earlier movements. By allowing the mostly cheerful and relaxed wording of the original passages to resonate through the music in this new movement, Penderecki seems to mitigate the sadness of Li Qingzhao agony-filled poems.

To give some examples: The four-tone beginning of the vocal part in movement IV (and its transposition) refers back to the beginning of movement III, evoking the image of a gently drifting ship to shine through grey rain and fog. Similarly, the vocal entry in movement V presents the return of the wild swans as a variant of the stranger greeted from his homeland in movement II.

IV line 1  
Ein grau - er Re - gen

IV line 1  
der Ne - bel weht.

III line 1  
Mein Schiff treibt durch

V line 1  
Jetzt kommen die wil - den Schwä - ne

II line 1  
In frem - dem Lan - de lag ich.

II line 1  
[mei]ner La - - gerstätte.

Ex. 8: *Sixth Symphony* IV and III, V and II: Backward glances in the opening lines

Three further short quotations in movement IV also stem from movement III: At the beginning of line 2, the music contrasts the swollen river with the calm radiated by a “blue moon”; at the beginning of line 4, the wild swans recall silently wandering clouds; and the whole-bar image of tear-stained birds at the end of line 5 draws on the symbolic power of the sky reflected in the water.

IV line 2  
Der Fluss wälzt schwere Wogen

III line 3  
an dem blauen Mon - - - de

IV line 4  
Die wil-den Schwä-ne

III line 2  
geh'n die Wolken, stumme Wanderer

IV line 5  
auf die er-wach-ten Vö-gel

III line 6  
und plötzlich weiß ich:  
der Him - mel sich in diesem

Ex. 9: *Sixth Symphony* IV and III: Commotion and tears at moonlight and reflection

Conversely, Penderecki links the third lines of the two songs united in a double movement with two shared motifs:

IV line 3  
Auf meines Um-hangs dun-kelem Tu - che schimmert der Re-gen meiner bitterlichen Trä-nen,

V line 3  
Auf leisen Soh - len ... der A-bend kommt, die Nacht umfängt die Er - - de,

Ex. 10: *Sixth Symphony* IV and V: Rain of tears and twilight

The melodically most impressive and, in its emotional statement, most dramatic figure, sounds in movement V to the words "Mein Herz ist voller Qual" to the return of the staccato triplets of E-flat-minor triads. This figure thus acts as a kind of second beginning to the poem of despair. Its central four-tone group recalls a similar one in movement III, which was starkly contrasted in its emotion.



V line 2



Mein Herz ist vol - ler Qual

III line 1,



leicht da-hin, da-hin

Ex. 11: *Sixth Symphony V*: Agony of the heart, now taken lightly

In the “despair” movement, the music lingers on this contour, which is repeated by the baritone in augmented rhythm after a few connecting notes, then taken up by the two horns and immediately stretched again by these instrumental partners:

V line 2



Mein Herz ist vol - ler Qual.

V line 2, mm. 8-9



[Wie oft sah ich euch gehn und] kommen wil-de Vö - gel.

V mm. 10-12 (2 horns)



Ex. 12: *Sixth Symphony V*: The threefold extension of the agony of the heart

With *tranquillo* and *più lento*, these lines express the never-ending agony over the loss of the now distant lover. The oppression does not diminish but rather increases over time, and the suddenly agitated tempo of the last seven measures seems to indicate that the sorrowful woman now surrenders fully to despair.

*8th Symphony*, mvt. I, mm. 12-13



*6th Symphony*, mvt. IV, mm. 19-21 and mvt. V, mm. 3-5

*coll'8va*



*coll'8va*



Ex. 13: *Eighth Symphony*, mvt. I und *Sixth Symphony*, mvts. IV-V: The bell motif

An even greater surprise than the singer's recourse to contours that played a role in previous movements of the *6th Symphony* occurs in a twofold non-vocal quotation from Penderecki's preceding symphony – the *8th Symphony* "*Lieder der Vergänglichkeit*" [Songs of Transience]. Both segments of the double movement feature a repeated motif stemming from the first movement of the *8th Symphony*, where it is introduced by the tubular bells in close conjunction with the mezzo-soprano. In the earlier work, the singer expands this motif to a virtuoso vocalise that is joined by various instruments to form a vocal-instrumental fugato. The text there, "von fern schlagen die Glocken," refers to the barely perceptible passing of time in the nocturnal forest.<sup>4</sup> In the context of the desolation expressed in the Chinese poet's two texts, the chiming of the bells describes the devastating disappointment: The measurable passing of time does not always heal one's pain; the mourner's state of mind is the same at the time of the departure and the much later return of the swans.

Through the numerous musical cross-references and the underlaying of verses marked by tears, agony and despair with feelings of serenity, acceptance and joy, Penderecki shapes his *Symphony's* center piece into an ambitious palimpsest.

4 On this see my book, "*Dunkel ist das Leben*": *Liedsinfonien zur Vergänglichkeit von Mahler bis Penderecki*, Gorz, Waldkirch 2020, pp. 180-185; music example on pp. 181-182.

## 6. Mondnacht

Hinter der schroffen Felsenkuppe sinkt  
Das goldene Gestirn des Tags zur Ruh,  
Aus feuchtem Tale steigt der Mond herauf.

Ich schlage meines Wagens Dach zurück,  
Mit unbedecktem Haupte lenke ich  
Mein weißes Pferd durch schöne kühle Nacht.

O Welt um mich herum! Ein feiner Wind  
Bringt mir den Duft von unbekanntem Blumen,  
Der Tau liegt perlend auf dem Wiesengras.

Du meine Laute, hätt ich jetzt dich hier!  
Wie wollt ich dich rühren, um den Stimmen  
Der Nacht zu künden, dass ich sie versteh.

Mein Herz ist voll von unbestimmter Sehnsucht,  
Wie wär ich selig, wenn ich singen dürfte, –  
O meine Laute, hätt ich jetzt dich hier!

## 6. Moonlit Night

Behind the rugged rocky crest  
The golden star of the day sinks to its rest,  
From a damp valley rises the moon.

I open the roof of my chaise,  
With my head uncovered I steer  
My white horse through the lovely cool night.

O world around me! A delicate wind  
Brings me the scent of unknown flowers,  
The dew lies pearling on the meadow grass.

My dear lute, if only I had you here.  
How would I stir you to announce to the voices  
Of the night that I understand them.

My heart is full of indefinite longing,  
How would I be blessed if I were allowed to sing –  
O my lute, if only I had you here!

(Bethge after Li Yue)<sup>5</sup>

5 Bethge identifies as the origin of the poem only the *Tangshi biecai*, a collection of poems from the Tang period. I thank Prof. Chan-Fai Cheung from the Chinese University of Hong Kong for identifying the author. Li Yue lived around 751-810.

After the desolation of the central double movement, Penderecki *Sixth Symphony* once again offers a view that shows the lyrical self in harmony with nature. The evening, filled with the scent of flowers and the glow of moonlight, almost calls for a translation into music. As in the opening movement with its quickly carved flute, the lyrical subject wishes that he had the means to express his longing in music.

For this movement, too, Penderecki cites one of the thematic components from his *8th Symphony*. In this case, he turns to the most complex of the three central motifs in the *Songs of Transience*: a minor triad falling from the octave not to the keynote but to its lower semitone neighbor and supplemented, after a brief transition with descending chromaticism, by a rising sixth. This motif, which is heard in the preceding symphony with individual appearances in five different movements, emerges in particularly high concentration in the penultimate movement with the setting of Hermann Hesse's *Herbsttag* [Autumn Day].<sup>6</sup>

In its original context within the *8th Symphony*, this component refers to human loneliness. But as in the double movement that forms the center of the *6th Symphony*, Penderecki once again recasts a musical emblem with a text of contrasting emotional associations, endowing it with a completely different message: The images of the golden sunset and the moon rising over a valley shining with dew evoke a serene evening mood. The white horse, of which the text tells in a third complete variation of the motif, appears in the poem as a faithful companion of the lyrical subject, who is thus obviously not exposed to loneliness. In the final link, the figure is even extended by a second upwards leap of a sixth interval in "schöne kühle Nacht," as if to underline this now positive connotation of the motivic component.<sup>7</sup>

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6 For more on this see "*Dunkel ist das Leben*"..., op. cit., pp. 234-239 and 256-257.

7 As in all similar cases, I retain the interval definition as "major sixth" also in cases where Penderecki writes the leap enharmonically as a diminished seventh – as he does here with B–A-flat and E–D-flat.

## 8th Symphony, mvt. XI

auf den Flu-ren lass die Win-de los.  
 (wird es) lan-ge blei-ben, wird wa-chen,  
 und wird \_\_\_\_\_ in den Al-le-en hin und  
 lan-ge Brie-fe schrei-ben

## 6th Symphony, mvt. VI

sinkt das goldene Ge-stirn  
 aus feuchtem Ta-le steigt  
 [der Mond herauf]  
 len-ke ich mein wei-Bes Pferd  
 durch schö-ne küh-le Nacht.

Ex. 14: *Sixth Symphony*: Melancholy as a counter-image to the comforting moonlit night

Further melodic details that contribute to the comforting overall impression of the vocal part in this symphonic movement are the rocking intervals and small figures immediately followed by their transposition.<sup>8</sup> In stanza V, a pattern of complementary fifths and fourths that descend chromatically through G–G-flat–F–E describes overwhelming longing.<sup>9</sup> In terms of tonality, this symphonic movement performs a gradual descent, which the orchestra interrupts in the first half with several pedals before transferring the descent in the second half directly to falling lines. After the D-minor ending of the central double movement IV/V, movement VI begins in D-flat minor. This extremely unusual key, which is notated with continuous accidentals and therefore difficult to read,<sup>10</sup> is recast as C-sharp minor in the refrain-like line Bethge placed at

8 For the rocking intervals see under my square brackets: D-sharp–B–D-sharp ... D-sharp–B–D-sharp–B–D-sharp; for the small figures followed by their transposition see verses III and IV under curved brackets: D-flat–C–B–A-flat / A-flat–G–G-flat–E-flat as well as F–E–B / E–E-flat–B-flat.

9 See in the following example under square brackets: G–G–C–C ... C–G–G, G-flat–C-flat–G-flat, F–F– B-flat–B-flat–F– B-flat ... F as well as E–A–A–A ... A–E–E–E.

10 The harmonic D-flat-minor scale Penderecki employs, D-flat–E-flat–F-flat–G-flat–A-flat–B-flat–C-flat–D-flat, presents a visual challenge not least because of the tones heard as B and E but read as C-flat and F-flat. For the sake of clarity, I have replaced D-flat minor with C-sharp minor in the musical excerpt.

the end of his recapitulation, and continued from there to C, ending another semitone lower. At the same time, the solo oboe also strives for C in an ornamented ascending cantilena, while the singer, harp, and high strings find peace in the open fifth A/E. The movement ends with a fermata.

## 7. Nächtliches Bild

Vom Wind getroffen, schäumt der Teich empor,  
Dann ruht er wieder still in seinen Ufern.  
Die Fische springen: ihre Leiber leuchten,  
Als blühten Lotosblumen durch die Nacht.

Der Mond schwimmt durch die Wolken, durch die Bäume  
Verklärt dahin. Der Silberreif der Nacht  
Wandelt den Tau zu wundersamen Perlen,  
Die leuchten durch die wundersame Nacht.

## 7. Nocturnal Image

Hit by the wind, the pond foams up,  
Then rests again quietly in its banks.  
The fish leap: their bodies glow  
Like lotuses blooming through the night.

The moon swims through the clouds, through the trees,  
Transfigured. The silver ring of the night  
Turns the dew into wondrous pearls  
That shine through the wondrous night.

(Bethge after Zhang Ruoxu<sup>11</sup>)

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11 Bethge's poetic adaptation gives only a short excerpt from this most famous and very long poem by Zhang Ruoxu (c. 660-720), one of the greatest poets of the early Tang period. In *Die Chinesische Flöte* the author's name is transcribed as Tschan-Jo-Su. Bethge located this poet in the 19th century, probably thinking of Chang Yu Su. Thankfully, on the occasion of the premiere of Penderecki's *6th Symphony* in Guangzhou, the orchestra's musical advisers were able to identify the poetic source, whose author was a contemporary of Li Bai and Du Fu.

This poem belongs to a large group of lyrical evocations of nature whose prominent pictorial elements are the night, moonlight, and sparkling dew as well as wind, water and clouds. What distinguishes the two stanzas from many others is above all the absence of a lyrical subject. The facets of this “wondrous night” are described without becoming metaphors of individual moods or feelings. Rather, the impression the visual image creates on the beholder is revealed in the poetic comparisons and interpretations – leaping fish appear as blooming lotuses and the moon seems “transfigured” – as well as in the striking repetitions of the words night, glowing and wondrous. The conjunction of these characteristics, the depiction of a nature without explicit reference to a human being and the limited choice of words, gives the composer all the more freedom. In Penderecki’s music, especially in the orchestral part, the brief verses with their evocation of a mysterious mood are translated into the most diverse parameters.

This begins with the overall impression of the “wondrous night.” Through polymetric accompaniment patterns, listeners hear an orchestral evocation of atmospheric vibrations whose details remain in the realm of the mentally unfathomable. The patterns consist of segments in which up to nine instruments or groups of instruments repeat neutral figures such as rising and falling scales, trills, arpeggios, etc. at varying intervals within the 3/4 measures. All strands use the notes of the same scale and play either with mutes or very softly. The result is a harmonious but indeterminable murmur, as if from a mysterious source: an effect similar to what a receptive walker may perceive in the sounds emitted by nocturnal nature.

In melodic terms, stanza I begins in the manner of a baroque obbligato aria: the baritone is joined by instrumental duet partners. In verse 1 this is a unison of piccolo, flute, oboe, and bassoon, in verse 2, the solo bassoon alone. Verse 3 begins again with a partnering voice in the form of a parallel of flute and bassoon. Then the baritone sings soloistically, doubled first by the cello, then by the bass clarinet.

After a four-bar interlude, in which the accompanying patterns of stanza 1 are replaced by new small figures in the polymetric juxtaposition 5:4:3:2, Penderecki shapes the structure of the vocal part independently of the enjambments in Bethge’s verses, according to the text’s units of meaning. The bassoon, previously one of the baritone’s duet partners,

is reduced to a mere doubling support before it falls away. Here too, the other instruments play small-scale repeated patterns of asynchronously subdivided figures. The shimmering backdrop reaches its climax in the closing words "leuchten, leuchten durch die wundersame Nacht": the piccolo flute rises in contrapuntal independence to the loftiest heights, while strings and harp over cymbal rolls create a network of differently rhythimized trills.

While the polymetric play of the instruments, which produces an atmospherical flicker, does not warrant to be perceived in its details, this does not apply to the vocal part. Despite the fact that this text makes no poetic reference to a human being exposed to the natural scene, the composer writes a contour that is characterized by emotional upheaval and rapture. This begins with the articulation of the words themselves: Three times does the singer dwell on word repetitions, thirteen times – and thus incomparably more frequently than in the other movements of the *Symphony* – does he stretch a syllable over three, four or even five notes, often including large intervallic leaps. The tonal basis of his vocal lines shifts chromatically from one minor triad to another,<sup>12</sup> often independently of the orchestral anchor.

The rhythmic arrangement of the vocal part is also emotionally charged: Quarter-note triplets, eighth-note triplets, and dotted eighth-notes are set against the given 3/4 time, while twelve additional syncopations create the impression that this image of nature does not fall within the realm of everyday human experience. In fact, within the vocal part of altogether 32 measures, only 12 measures are composed without rhythmic alterations. We have to wait for the 13-bar epilogue to witness the flickering of the landscape gradually fading into the background. The mysterious "nocturnal picture" ends with a general pause extended by a fermata.

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12 See the minor triads in lines 1-3 on G, A-flat, and A, and in lines 5-6 on F-sharp, F, E, and E-flat.



## 8. Das Flötenlied des Herbstes

Du armer Wanderer! Fern dem Vaterlande  
Und müd und ohne Freunde, sehnst du dich  
Umsonst nach deiner Heimat Mutterlaut.

Zwar blüht der Sommer so verschwenderisch,  
Dass du noch reich scheinst. Auch der Vögel Sang  
Ertönt wie in der Heimat dir vertraut.

Doch wehe! Wenn das Flötenlied des Herbstes  
Dein Ohr trifft: das Gezirpe der Zikaden, –  
Und wenn der Sturmwind durch die Wolken wühlt!

Dann wirst du das Gesicht in beide Hände  
Vergraben, und dein Aug wird überfließen,  
Und deine Seele wird sich heimwärts wenden

Voll Qual in das geliebte Vaterland.

## 8. The Flute Song of Autumn

You poor wanderer! Far from the fatherland  
And tired and friendless, you long  
In vain for your native sounds.

True, summer blooms so extravagantly  
That you still seem rich. Even the song of the birds  
Rings like the one you are familiar with from home.

But woe! When the flute song of autumn  
Hits your ear: the chirping of cicadas, –  
And when the storm rushes through the clouds!

Then you will bury your face in both hands  
And your eye will overflow,  
And your soul will turn homewards

In agony to the beloved fatherland.<sup>13</sup>

As if it had been written for the final position in this *Symphony*, the eighth poem unites various images from the texts in the preceding movements: The “flute song” harkens back to the first movement, even though it stands

13 Bethge lists the Tang dynasty poet Du Fu as author of the underlying Chinese poem, following Judith Gautier (op. cit., *La Flûte d'automne*). However, Dr. Liu Huiru, a sinologist from the University of Trier specializing in the work of this poet and whom I consulted, knows of no poem by Du Fu that could have inspired these verses.

here for the singing of crickets; life in a foreign country and the longing for home are reminiscent of the theme of the second movement, while agony, bitter tears and general "woe," metaphorically concentrated in the harsh wind, are reminiscent of the mood in the central double movement.

The finale begins with a mighty blow on the big gong. This marks the start of a triple F played *fortissimo*, in which clarinets, bassoons, and strings are joined by the sonorous bells. Above a low F picked up in the double bass and horn, the flute rises with a cantilena taken once again from Penderecki's *Songs of Transience*. As in the previous cross-symphonic quotations, the emotional expression changes to its opposite: In the earlier work, the motif of the bamboo flute expresses the joy a beholder feels at the sight of the beautiful flower gardens; conversely, its echo in the *Chinese Songs* leads into the opening line, which introduces a "poor wanderer" as the poem's addressee.

*8th Symphony*, mvt. VIII, beginning  
introduction of the bamboo-flute figure



*8th Symphony*, mvt. VIII, last interlude  
recapitulation of the bamboo-flute figure



*6th Symphony*, mvt. VIII, beginning  
introduction of the flute figure



*6th Symphony*, mvt. VIII, conclusion  
waning flute sounds



Ex. 15: *Eighth Symphony*, mvt. VIII and *Sixth Symphony*, mvt. VIII: Related flute motifs

The identical opening figure, the chromatic descent – although not interrupted here by an octave leap as in the “Flower Garden” – and the conclusion with the opening figure establish a direct connection between the two symphonic passages. In the first interlude, which after the end of the first poetic stanza emerges musically from the descending lines of all instruments and lyrically from the word “Mutterlaut,” the bass clarinet begins with a cantilena. In staggered garlands it climbs to the soprano register, where it passes its contour to the flute, which in turn, after two more bars, leads into the baritone’s next entry.

In the vocal part, Penderecki expresses the inconsolable mood of the poem in an overwhelming density of chromatically falling lines. This begins in line 1 with the twice repeated D-flat–C, a semitone step that has been heard for centuries as a “sigh” and is reminiscent of one of the primary motifs in the *Songs of Transience*. It is taken up again at the beginning of lines 7 and 8. Thereafter, each line within the framing verses shows semitone descents of three, four, or five steps.

At the end of the second poetic stanza there is another extensive interlude. It is notated in the score without bar lines, in a bar that owing to a fermata and a *de facto* suspension of the meter extends to 12 quarter-notes, thus showing exactly the same extension as the three-bar first interlude. This time, a solo alto flute plays two quotations of the “bell motif” from the *8th Symphony* and then lets it fade away. Penderecki had previously used this motif, prominently in the high woodwinds, in both halves of the *Symphony’s* central double movement. A powerful stroke on the big gong, underlined by a cymbal stroke, connects this emblem of passing time with the “Doch wehe” that follows.

Stanza III, in which the “flute song of autumn” is identified as the chirping of the cicadas, is underlined by dark string colors. A bass-clarinet trill, followed by a ghostly parallel made up of a trumpet trill, a clarinet tremolo and a rising whirl on the hanging cymbal, evoke the gale mentioned in the text. Instead of a further interlude, the much slower stanza IV is preceded by a pause extended with a fermata.

This final complete stanza is supported by the orchestra even more sparsely than the preceding ones. After the ending of the first line with “deine Hände vergraben,” the great gong sounds again, this time very softly. The conclusion of the stanza with the evocation of the soul turning homewards is accompanied by nothing but a whispering cymbal.

The single verse Bethge adds to his four stanzas is underlined by the first violins with celesta and, in its extension, the flute with chromatic circling. This starts out from the bamboo-flute motif heard at the beginning of the movement, initially appears as if emotionally engaged with rapid tremolos, but then fades away in ever shorter fragments. In the other instrumental parts, the tritone B/F initially moves from a pedal of bassoon and clarinet to the trumpets and from there to the "distant horns," while the low strings pluck the falling interval of the equidistant tritone A-flat/D. The singer's contour also moves exclusively within the notes of the two tritones, with the goal of his longing, the return to the beloved fatherland, sung on an eight-fold A-flat. In the context of the instrumental parts, this vocal A-flat stands for the diminished seventh of the harmonically unresolved seventh chord B/D/F/A-flat. The music thus releases the sorrowful lyrical subject of this symphonic movement (and of the whole *Symphony of Chinese Songs*) metaphorically "unredeemed."

## **Images of longing for of enchanted nature**

The early version of the *Symphony*, performed in 2008 as *Three Chinese Songs*, consisted of the movements based on the poems "Die geheimnisvolle Flöte," "Mondnacht," and "Nächtliches Bild." All three texts depict a soulful nature resonating in the human beings who experience it. Penderecki creates the sensual mood of these images through the emphatic use of appropriate instruments: In the context of the "mysterious flute" these are the antique cymbals, which enchant the beginning and end of the movement with their color, as well as marimba, celesta, vibraphone and harp. When the baritone sings of the "Moonlit Night," he is accompanied almost continuously by harp, glockenspiel, and celesta, before a solo oboe joins him as a duet partner when he repeatedly regrets the absence of his lute. In the music for the "Nocturnal Image," the function of the orchestral instruments is also onomatopoeic: the ringing of a jingle tree underlines the beginning of the movement with soft beats of the bass drum together with marimba and harp. A similar combination sounds again at the final word "night," before a solo wind player – this time the English horn – seems to integrate the poetically absent lyrical subject into the natural surroundings.

When Penderecki expanded the three movements to conceive his *6th Symphony*, he chose “Die geheimnisvolle Flöte,” the longest movement, for the opening, while the two shorter songs form a new beginning after a central contrast.<sup>14</sup> In a next step he balanced the flute song with the “Flötenlied des Herbstes” as its palindromic counterpart at the end of the *Symphony*, and the two images of nature in movements VI and VII with two poems of similar mood, describing the moonlit bed chamber “In der Fremde” and the ship moving through clouds reflected in the water in “Auf dem Flusse,” for the symmetrically placed movements II and III.

The two framing blocks of three movements each, whose performing time is a little over seven minutes each and can thus be considered as corresponding, frame the thematically and emotionally contrasted central double movement. Its text is neither about a moonlit evening mood nor about trees or flowers, clouds or water. Rather, the image of the seasonally moving and returning swans speaks above all about the passing and rhythmic recurrence of time – a time that heals no wounds, does not relieve any misery and, not least because of this immutability, turns despair into unbearable torment.

Musically, Penderecki connects the movements of this *Symphony* in a variety of ways. Thematically, one hears the echo call of the “horns from afar” in movement II as a continuation of the flute call and its answers and echoes in movement I. In the center, the poetic torsos by the female poet Li Qingzhao, fused into a double movement, are linked with the preceding movements as the composer quotes contours from movements II and III in small figures, emphasizing them in movements IV and V by their position within the vocal lines and by their interval patterns. At the same time, he interweaves the two sections of the double movement not only by means of a continuous accompanying layer but also thematically, both by means of an essential motivic relationship of the third vocal lines in each case and by an external component: the bell motif from his *8th Symphony*. The latter, in turn, serves as a model for the link between the central double movement and movements VI, VII and VIII. The three component parts of this movement block follow the example given in the bell motif quotation of movement IV/V by also drawing their motivic reminiscences

<sup>14</sup> In the live recording of the first performance in Guangzhou, “Die geheimnisvolle Flöte” has a playing time of 3’40”. Compare this with the combined duration of 4’50” for “Mondnacht” and “Nächtliches Bild.”

not from the preceding movements in the same work, but from the *Songs of Transience*, composed ten years earlier.

Each of these external quotations implicitly imports the emotional or spiritual context in which it originally sounded. The "bell motif" is heard in the *8th Symphony* as a sonic emblem of the indefinite passing of time. The complex structure of the second echoes motif, a falling minor triad, lowered keynote followed with descending chromaticism, and upward-leaping sixth, introduced in the earlier work with undertones of melancholy, adds a meditative dimension to the carefree enjoyment of the moonlit night. In contrast, the figuration with which the bamboo flute introduces the music of the only "Chinese" poem in the *8th Symphony* serves in the *6th Symphony* to evoke the topos that lingers in the background of so many descriptions of nature in classical Chinese poetry: the "wanderer" who has drifted off into distant lands where he is a foreigner and now pines for a return to his homeland. Finally, with the sighs of the closing movement, this *lied symphony* like those of Gustav Mahler (*Das Lied von der Erde*), Alexander Zemlinsky (*Lyrical Symphony*) and Dmitri Shostakovich (*14th Symphony*) presents moving musical images to conjure up the loneliness and transience of human life.

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**Szósta symfonia Pendereckiego „Pieśni chińskie”:  
dziedzictwo *Lied von der Erde* i *Lieder der Vergänglichkeit***

## Streszczenie

Szósta symfonia „Pieśni chińskie” Krzysztofa Pendereckiego powstała w oparciu o osiem niemieckich wierszy wybranych ze zbioru luźnych tłumaczeń starożytnej poezji chińskiej *Die chinesische Flöte* Hansa Bethge’go, który również stanowi inspirację *Lied von der Erde* Gustava Mahlera. Oktawa ta została pomyślana jako wolny palindrom zarówno pod względem struktury – dwa razy po trzy części, z których każda obraca się wokół centralnego motywu dwuczęściowego – oraz pod względem emocjonalnej i duchowej treści – celebracje natury kojącej otaczające wyrazy smutku i rozpaczy wobec przemijania i rytmicznej powtarzalności czasu, który wydaje się chłodny i bynajmniej nie leczy ran. Na poziomie muzyki, Penderecki łączy części *Symfonii* poprzez zawarcie ech motywów części poprzednich w centralnej, podwójnej części oraz poprzez cytowanie trzech pamiętnych motywów swojej przedostatniej *Symfonii* (*Lieder der Vergänglichkeit*) w ostatnim trzyczęściowym fragmencie.

**Słowa kluczowe:** poezja chińska, Hans Bethge, palindrom, motywy cykliczne, autocytat

**Keywords:** Chinese poetry, Hans Bethge, palindrome, cyclical motifs, self-quotation