

Gustav Mahler

“Three angels were  
singing a sweet song...”

*from Des Knaben Wunderhorn*

(1895–6)

Transcribed by Joshua Roach

(2008)

*for Brass Ensemble  
with optional voice and 1 percussion*



Alte deutsche Lieder

## Transposed Score

Duration *ca.* 3:45

### Instrumentation

Bb Trumpet 1 / Piccolo Trumpet

Bb Trumpet 2

Bb Trumpet 3

Bb Trumpet 4 (*flugelhorn if possible*)

F Horn 1 (*doubling recommended*)

F Horn 2 (*doubling recommended*)

Trombone 1

Trombone 2

Bass Trombone

Euphonium

Tubas (*2 recommended*)

Optional Voice

Optional Percussion

<sup>1</sup> Player: *Glockenspiel,  
Xylophone, Tam-Tam,  
Triangle, Sus. Cymbal*

1. I had two players in mind when I transcribed the tuba part. There are extended passages without breaks. F tuba is recommended for the material that appears in the upper register.
2. If a vocalist is used: depending on the voice type, they may require amplification.

### Introductory Notes:

Gustav Mahler cast his setting of *Es Sungen drei Engel einen süßen Gesang* as the fifth movement of his Third Symphony during his summer retreats at his “Häuschen” in Steinbach am Attersee in 1895 and 1896. I have always loved this symphony, and this movement in particular because of its use of two choirs and the colors that the composer creates with them and the orchestra. In this setting for brass, I have tried to capture the changes in character and timbre.

The text of this *Lied* comes from the third volume of Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim’s famous collection of folksongs entitled *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1805–8).

## Text and Translation:

Es sungen drei Engel einen sü-ßen Gesang,  
mit Freuden es selig in dem Himmel klang.  
Sie jauchzten fröhlich auch dabei:  
daß Pe-trus sei von Sünden frei!  
Von Sünden, von Sünden, von Sünden frei.

Und als der Herr Jesus zu Tische saß,  
mit seinen zwölf Jüngern das Abend mahl aß,  
da sprach der Herr Jesus: "Was stehst du denn hier?  
Wenn ich dich anseh', so weinst du mir!"

Und sollt' ich nicht weinen, du gütiger Gott,  
ich hab' übertreten die zehn Gebot!  
Ich gehe und weine ja bitterlich!  
Ach komm und erbarme dich!  
Ach komm und erbarme dich über mich!

"Hast du denn übertreten die zehn Gebot,  
so fall auf die Knie und bete zu Gott!  
Bete zu Gott nur alle Zeit,  
so wirst du erlangen die himmlische Freud'!"  
Die himmlische Freud', die kein Ende mehr hat,  
die himmlische Freude war Petro bereit',  
war Petro bereit'  
durch Jesum und Allen zur Seligkeit,  
durch Jesum und Allen zur Seligkeit!

Three angels were singing a sweet song,  
with joy it rang happily in Heaven.  
They shouted happily there also:  
Peter is free from sin!  
Of sin, of sin, free of sin!

And when the Lord Jesus sat at the table,  
with his twelve disciples ate supper,  
thus spoke Jesus: "Why are you standing here?  
If I look at you, you weep for me!"

Shall I not cry, you benevolent God,  
I have broken the Ten Commandments!  
I go and cry bitterly!  
Oh come and have mercy!  
Oh come and have mercy upon me!

"If you have broken the Ten Commandments,  
then fall on your knees and pray to God!  
Pray to God allways,  
you will gain heavenly joy!"  
The heavenly joy, that has no end,  
the heavenly joy was bestowed upon Peter,  
was bestowed upon Peter  
through Jesus and for all a blessing!  
through Jesus and for all a blessing!

# "Three angels were singing a sweet song..." from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*

Transposed Score

Gustav Mahler (1895–6)  
Trans. Joshua Roach (2008)

$\text{♩} = 120$

Voice

Trumpet 1

Trumpet 2

Trumpet 3

Trumpet 4 (Flugelhorn)

Horn 1

Horn 2

Trombone 1

Trombone 2

Bass Trombone

Euphonium

Tubas

Percussion

1 2 3 4

VOIC E

*f*

Es sun - gen drei En - gel ei - nen sü - ßen Ge - sang, mit

TRUMPETS

*f* *mf*

HORNS

*f* *mf*

TROMBONES

*f* *mf*

EUPH

TUBAS

PERC

5 | 6 || 7 | 8

The image shows a page of a musical score for a choir and orchestra. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The vocal line is in the top staff, with lyrics in German: "Es sun - gen drei En - gel ei - nen sü - ßen Ge - sang, mit". The instrumental parts include Trumpets, Horns, Trombones, Euphonium, and Tubas. The percussion part is currently blank. The score is marked with dynamics such as *f* (forte) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The page is numbered 5, 6, 7, and 8 at the bottom. A large, diagonal watermark reading "PERFORMANCE" is overlaid across the entire page.

VOIC E

Freu - den es se - lig in dem Him - mel klang. Sie jauchz - ten fröh - lich auch da - bei: daß

(picc or Tpt)

mf

mf

mf

H ORNS

T R O M B O N E S

E U P H

T U B A S

P E R C

Glock.

mf

p

p

9 10 11 12

The image shows a page of a musical score for a choir and orchestra. The score is written in G major and 4/4 time. It features a vocal line with German lyrics, and staves for Piccolo Trumpets, Horns, Trombones, Euphonium, Tubas, and Glockenspiel. The vocal line starts on measure 9 and continues through measure 12. The instrumental parts are arranged in a standard orchestral layout. Dynamics include mezzo-forte (mf) and piano (p). A 'picc or Tpt' instruction is present above the first trumpet staff. A 'Glock.' instruction is present above the Glockenspiel staff. The page is numbered 9, 10, 11, and 12 at the bottom.

VOICE

Pe - trus sei - - - von Sün - - - den frei! Von

*f*

T R U M P E T S

*mf*

*mf*

H O R N S

*mf*

T R O M B O N E S

*p*

E U P H

*p*

*mf*

T U B A S

*p*

*mf*

P E R C

*mf*

13 14 15 16

The image shows a page of a musical score for a choir and orchestra. The score is for measures 13 through 16. The vocal line (VOICE) is in the top staff, with lyrics: "Pe - trus sei - - - von Sün - - - den frei! Von". The vocal line is marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The trumpet section (T R U M P E T S) has two staves, with dynamics of mezzo-forte (mf) and accents (>) in measures 15 and 16. The horn section (H O R N S) has two staves, with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic in measure 16. The trombone section (T R O M B O N E S) has three staves, with a piano (p) dynamic in measure 13. The euphonium (E U P H) has one staff, with a piano (p) dynamic in measure 13 and a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic in measure 16. The tuba section (T U B A S) has one staff, with a piano (p) dynamic in measure 13 and a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic in measure 16. The percussion section (P E R C) has one staff, with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic in measure 16. A large diagonal watermark "PERFORMING ARTS - WOMEN FOR PERFORMING ARTS" is overlaid on the score.

VOIC E

Sün - - - den, von Sün - - - den, von Sün - den frei. - - - -

Piccolo

TRUMPETS

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

HORNS

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

EUPH

*mf*

TUBAS

*mf*

PERC

17 | 18 | 19 | 20

A musical score for a choral and orchestral piece. The score is written for a choir (VOICE) and an orchestra. The choir part is in the top staff, with lyrics in German: "Sün - - - den, von Sün - - - den, von Sün - den frei. - - - -". The orchestra includes Piccolo, Trumpets, Horns, Trombones, Euphonium, Tubas, and Percussion. The score is divided into measures 17, 18, 19, and 20. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The dynamics are marked as *mf* (mezzo-forte). There are various musical notations including notes, rests, slurs, and accents.



VOICE

*f*  
Und als der Herr Je - sus zu Ti - sche saß, mit sei - nen zwölf Jün - gern das

TRUMPETS

*mp*  
*mp*  
*mp*

HORNS

*mf*  
*mf*

TROMBONES

*mf*  
*mf*

EUPH

TUBAS

PERC

21

22

23

24

VOICE

*p*

A - bend mahl aß, da sprach der Herr Je - sus: "Was stehst du denn hier? Was

TRUMPETS

*pp* *mf*

HORNS

*p* *mf*

TROMBONES

*p* *mf*

EUPH

*p* *mf*

TUBAS

*pp*

PERC

*mf*

25

26

27

28

VOICE

stehst du denn hier? Wenn ich dich an - seh', so wei - - nest du

*p*

TRUMPETS

*mf*

*p*

HORNS

TRUMPETES

*p*

*p*

EUPH

TUBAS

*mf*

*p*

PERC

*p*

29 | 30 | 31 | 32

Zuruckhaltend.

VOICE

mir, so wei - - - nest du mir!"

TRUMPETS

HORNS

TROMBONES

EUPH

TUBAS

PERC

33 | 34 || 35 | 36

A musical score for a choir and orchestra. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'Zuruckhaltend.' (retardando). The vocal line (VOICE) has lyrics: 'mir, so wei - - - nest du mir!'. The instrumental parts include Trumpets (3 staves), Horns (2 staves), Trombones (3 staves), Euphonium (EUPH), Tubas (TUBAS), and Percussion (PERC). The score is divided into measures 33, 34, 35, and 36. A large diagonal watermark 'PERFORMANCER' is overlaid on the score.

Meno mosso

VOIC E

Und sollt' ich nicht wei - nen, du

T R U M P E T S

*sf* *sf*

H O R N S

*fp*

T R O M B O N E S

*pp*  
*pp*  
*pp*

E U P H

*mp*

T U B A S

P E R C

37 | 38 || 39 | 40

VOIC E

gü - - ti - ger Gott, ich

*f*

T R U M P E T S

*fp*

*sf* *sf*

Bb Tpt(or picc) with St. Mute

*mf*

*sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

*f*

H O R N S

*fp*

*f*

T R O M B O N E S

E U P H

*f*

T U B A S

P E R C

Xylo.

*mf*

41 | 42 | 43 | 44

**Slower** **A Tempo**

VOICE  
hab' ü - ber - tre - ten die zehn Ge - - - bot!

TRUMPETS

HORNS  
*mf* *mp*

TROMBONES

EUPH  
*p* *mp*

TUBAS  
*mf* *mp*

PERC  
Tam-Tam  
*p*

45 | 46 || 47 | 48

The image shows a page of a musical score for a choir and orchestra. The score is divided into systems for different instruments and voices. The top system is for the VOICE, with the lyrics 'hab' ü - ber - tre - ten die zehn Ge - - - bot!'. The tempo markings 'Slower' and 'A Tempo' are placed above the voice staff. Below the voice staff are staves for TRUMPETS, HORNS, TROMBONES, EUPH, TUBAS, and PERC. The PERC staff includes a 'Tam-Tam' instrument. The score is marked with dynamics such as *mf*, *mp*, *p*, and *f*. The page number '-12-' is at the top, and the title '"Three angels were singing a sweet song..."' is at the top right. The bottom of the page shows measure numbers 45, 46, 47, and 48.

**V O I C E**

*molto espr.*

Ich ge - - - he und

**T R U M P E T S**

*mp*

*molto espr.*

*p*

**H O R N S**

*p*

**T R O M B O N E S**

*p*

*p*

*p*

**E U P H**

*p*

**T U B A S**

**P E R C**

49 | 50 | 51 || 52



VOICE

wei - ne ja bit - - - ter - - - - lich!

TRUMPETS

*mp*

Bb Tpt(or picc) with St. Mute

*sf* *sf*

*mf*

HORNS

TROMBONES

*p*

*sf* *sf*

*sf* *sf*

EUPH

TUBAS

*sf* *sf*

*sf* *sf*

PERC

Xylo.

*mf*

53

54

55

56

*pp* **Slower**

VOICE  
Ach komm und er - bar - - - me dich! Ach

TRUMPETS  
*sf* *sf*

HORNS  
*pp*

TROMBONES  
*sf* *pp* *pp* *pp*

EUPH  
*pp*

TUBAS  
*pp*

PERC  
*pp*

57 || 58 | 59 | 60

A Tempo

VOIC E

komm und er - bar - me dich ü - - - ber mich!

T R U M P E T S

H O R N S

T R O M B O N E S

E U P H

T U B A S

P E R C

Sus. Cymb. (soft mallet)

61 | 62 || 63 | 64

The image shows a page of a musical score for a choir and orchestra. The page is numbered 16 and is titled "Three angels were singing a sweet song...". The tempo is marked "A Tempo". The score is for a voice part and a full orchestra. The voice part has the lyrics "komm und er - bar - me dich ü - - - ber mich!". The orchestra includes Trumpets, Horns, Trombones, Euphonium, Tubas, and Percussion. The percussion part includes a suspended cymbal (soft mallet). The score is divided into measures 61, 62, 63, and 64. There is a double bar line between measures 62 and 63. The music is in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. The voice part has a melodic line with lyrics. The trumpet and horn parts have rests. The trombone part has a melodic line. The euphonium and tuba parts have rests. The percussion part has a soft mallet on a suspended cymbal.

VOIC E

TRUMPETS

HORNS

TROMBONES

EUPH

TUBAS

PERC

*p*

*p*

*p*

Tam-Tam

65 | 66 | 67 | 68

VOIC E

Bb Tpt w/St. Mute

ff p ff

St. Mute

T R U M P E T S

ff p ff

H O R N S

ff p ff p ff p

T R O M B O N E S

ff p ff p ff p

E U P H

ff p ff

T U B A S

f f

P E R C

f

69 | 70 | 71 | 72

This musical score page, numbered 18, features a large, diagonal watermark reading 'PREPARED FOR ADVANCE'. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout with the following sections from top to bottom: VOICE (with a 'Bb Tpt w/St. Mute' instruction), TRUMPETS (with 'St. Mute' instructions), HORNS, TROMBONES, EUPHONIUM, TUBAS, and PERCUSSION. The music is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The score spans measures 69 to 72. Dynamics include fortissimo (ff), piano (p), and forte (f). The percussion part is marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The overall texture is dense, with many instruments playing sustained notes or moving lines.

VOICE

TRUMPETS

HORNS

TROMBONES

EUPH

TUBAS

PERC

73 | 74 | 75 | 76

The image shows a page of a musical score for a brass and woodwind ensemble. The score is divided into systems for different instruments: VOICE, TRUMPETS (two staves), HORNS (two staves), TROMBONES (three staves), EUPH (one staff), TUBAS (one staff), and PERC (one staff). The music is in 4/4 time and features dynamic markings such as *p* (piano), *ff* (fortissimo), and *fp* (fortissimo piano). The score includes various musical notations like notes, rests, slurs, and accents. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'PERFORMANCE' is overlaid across the entire page. The page number '73' is at the bottom left, and '74', '75', and '76' are at the bottom of the subsequent measures.

VOIC E

T R U M P E T S

H O R N S

T R O M B O N E S

E U P H

T U B A S

P E R C

77 | 78 | 79 | 80

VOICE

*f*

"Hast du denn ü - ber - tre - ten die ze - hen Ge - bot, so fall auf die Knie - e und

Picc. (open)

TRUMPETS

HORNS

TROMBONES

EUPH

TUBAS

PERC

Triangle

81

82

83

84



V  
O  
I  
C  
E

*p*

be - te zu Gott! Be - te zu Gott nur al - le

T  
R  
U  
M  
P  
E  
T  
S

*mf* *pp*

H  
O  
R  
N  
S

T  
R  
O  
M  
B  
O  
N  
E  
S

*pp* *mf*

E  
U  
P  
H

T  
U  
B  
A  
S

P  
E  
R  
C

85

86

87

88

V  
O  
I  
C  
E

*f*

Zeit, so wirst du er - lan - - - gen die himm - li - sche

T  
R  
U  
M  
P  
E  
T  
S

H  
O  
R  
N  
S

*mf*

*mf*

T  
R  
O  
M  
B  
O  
N  
E  
S

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

E  
U  
P  
H

*mf*

T  
U  
B  
A  
S

*mf*

P  
E  
R  
C

Triangle

Glock.

*f*

*f*

89

90

91

92

V  
O  
I  
C  
E

*f* *p*  
Freud!" Die himm - li - sche Freud', die kein En - de mehr hat, die himm - li - sche

T  
R  
U  
M  
P  
E  
T  
S

*mf* *pp*  
*mf* *pp*  
*mf* *pp*  
*p*

H  
O  
R  
N  
S

*mf* *pp*  
*mf* *pp*

T  
R  
O  
M  
B  
O  
N  
E  
S

*mf* *p*

E  
U  
P  
H

*mf* *p*

T  
U  
B  
A  
S

*mf* *p*

P  
E  
R  
C

*mf* *p*

VOICE

Freu - de war Pe - tro be-reit't, war Pe - tro be-reit't durch Je - - sum und

*f*

TRUMPETS

*mf*

*mf*

HORNS

*mf*

*mf*

TROMBONES

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

EUPH

*f*

TUBAS

*mf*

PERC

Glock.

*p*

97

98

99

100

VOIC E

Al - - - len zur Se - lig - - - keit, durch Je - sum und

T R U M P E T S

H O R N S

T R O M B O N E S

E U P H

T U B A S

P E R C

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*f*

Solo

*f*

*mf*

*mf*

101 | 102 | 103 | 104

VOIC E

Al - len zur Se - lig - - keit!

T R U M P E T S

H O R N S

T R O M B O N E S

E U P H

T U B A S

P E R C

105 | 106 || 107 | 108

The image shows a page of a musical score for a choir and orchestra. The page is numbered 27 and contains measures 105 through 108. The vocal line at the top has the lyrics "Al - len zur Se - lig - - keit!". The instrumental parts include Trumpets, Horns, Trombones, Euphonium, and Tubas. The score features various dynamics such as *f* (forte) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). A large, diagonal watermark reading "PREPARED FOR PERFORMANCE" is overlaid across the entire page.

VOICE

TRUMPETS

HORNS

TROMBONES

EUPH

TUBAS

PERC

like bells

*sfzmf*

like bells

*sfzmf*

like bells

*sfzmf*

like bells

*sfzmf*

like bells

*sfzmf*

like bells

*sfzmf*

Triangle

*f*

109 110 111 112

VOIC E

TRUMPETS

HORNS

TROMBONES

EUPH

TUBAS

PERC

mf

like bells

sfzmf

Glock.

mf

113 | 114 | 115 | 116

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a large ensemble and includes a vocal line. The vocal line is mostly silent, with a few notes in measure 114. The trumpets and horns play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The trombones and euphoniums play a sustained chord with a 'like bells' articulation. The tubas play a similar sustained chord. The percussion part features a glockenspiel playing a rhythmic pattern. Dynamics include mf, sfzmf, and sfzmf. The score is divided into measures 113, 114, 115, and 116.



VOICE

TRUMPETS

HORNS

TROMBONES

EUPH

TUBAS

PERC

117 | 118 | 119 | 120