

EXPRESSIVE AND STRUCTURAL INTERACTIONS BETWEEN TEXT AND MUSIC IN PAUL RICHTER'S *SECHS LIEDER NACH CHINESISCHEN TEXTEN FÜR EINE FRAUENSTIMME UND ORCHESTER* (SIX LIEDER ON CHINESE TEXTS), OP. 95: A HERMENEUTIC APPROACH

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SUMMARY. The year 2025 marked a double anniversary connected to the name of Paul Richter: 150 years since his birth and 75 years since the death of the Braşov-born composer. This study centers on the *Sechs Lieder nach chinesischen Texten für eine Frauenstimme und Orchester*, Op. 95. The composer's attention to the subtleties of the poetic text, the diversity of musical imagery and timbral nuances, as well as his refined handling of all elements of musical language (melody, harmony, rhythm, agogics, dynamics), become particularly evident. In this cycle of vocal miniatures, Richter reveals a refined capacity for synthesizing a broad spectrum of distinct yet fundamental images within a concise formal framework. He carefully selects and deploys, at structurally and expressively decisive moments, those components of musical language best suited to articulate the desired affect and poetic imagery with clarity and precision. The intrinsic beauty and subtle refinement of these miniatures persuaded me to undertake a chamber adaptation, one that proves considerably more practical to stage, requiring a reduced number of performers.

Keywords: Paul Richter, Six Lieder on Chinese Texts, musical dramaturgy, chamber music, voice

Introduction

The year 2025 marked - in addition to the 70th anniversary of the passing of Romanian composer George Enescu - another double anniversary connected to the name of Paul Richter: 150 years since his birth and 75 years since the

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death of the Braşov-born composer. In order to celebrate the personality of Paul Richter - a Transylvanian Saxon composer unjustly unknown to the Romanian public, especially outside Transylvania - I proposed to the *Forum Arte Foundation for Culture and Heritage* the idea of a chamber recital entitled *In memoriam Paul Richter*. The event took place on August 31, 2025, at the Fortified Evangelical Church in Codlea, Braşov County, and was part of the *Musica Barcensis Festival*, a project by the *Forum Arte Foundation* team. The recital program included: *Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano, Op. 89* (Gina-Mihaela Pavel - piano; Theodora Bălănică Ciurezu - violin); *Three Lieder: Du, Op. 84 No. 4; Wenn ich dir blickt ins Auge, Op. 84 No. 7; Lied, Op. 104 No. 1* (Gina-Mihaela Pavel - piano; Maria Pană - soprano); *Meditation for Violin and Piano Op. 90* - transcription for flute and piano (Gina-Mihaela Pavel - piano; Diana Cristea - flute); *Sechs Lieder für Sopran und Orchester nach chinesischen Gedichten Op. 95* - transcription for soprano, flute, and piano (Gina-Mihaela Pavel - piano; Maria Pană - soprano; Diana Cristea - flute). The chamber version was undertaken on my own initiative, and the arrangement is my own, realized in collaboration with Diana Cristea, who also engraved the scores.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Kurt Philippi, who offered a comprehensive and warm presentation of Paul Richter's personality during the recital.

I will not dwell too much on Paul Richter's biography, as others before me have done so in a far more thoroughly documented manner. The most substantial research on his life and works is Hans Peter Türk's book *Paul Richter* (Kriterion Publishing House, Bucharest, 1975). Mr. Kurt Philippi has also prepared a brochure - *The Estate of Paul Richter (Nachlass von Paul Richter)*, a document preserved at the Casa Mureşenilor Museum in Braşov. The inventory of compositions included there was compiled by Dr. Hans Peter Türk.

I will mention only a few biographical details that ultimately shaped Paul Richter's professional path and led him toward his true vocation. As was expected at that time, Paul Richter was supposed to pursue a prestigious profession rather than a career in music, since music was regarded merely as a hobby in middle-class families. For this reason, he began studying medicine in Graz, although he was not genuinely drawn to the field². The unpleasant experiences during his medical studies - particularly those in the dissection room and his participation in a surgical operation alongside his father - ultimately led him to abandon this career path.

² This situation also recalls aspects of his teacher Rudolf Lassel's life, who had been compelled to study theology and philosophy.

Although he possessed remarkable musical talent, Richter received a fragmented education, which influenced his later artistic development. After completing his musical studies at the Leipzig Conservatory, he chose to return to his hometown - Braşov, even though he had been offered the opportunity to conduct the choir of the *Weltlichen Oratorien Vereins* in Leipzig. The decision that caused the regret of the Leipzig Society was later regarded by Richter himself as a mistake. His return home, however, contributed to promoting a high standard of musical excellence in his native city. His career, spanning 35 years, was marked by numerous obstacles and did not achieve the artistic impact he had hoped for. Richter later acknowledged that the sacrifices he had made were not rewarded as he had expected. And I believe his works have yet to receive the recognition they deserve.

Materials and Methods

This study centers on the *Six Lieder on Chinese Texts for Female Voice and Orchestra, Op. 95* (*Sechs Lieder nach chinesischen Texten für eine Frauenstimme und Orchester, Op. 95*), owing to the compositional complexity, expressive diversity, and, above all, the distinctive beauty that characterize these vocal-instrumental miniatures.

I wish to express my profound gratitude to Mr. Steffen Schlandt, whose generous assistance granted me access to the full score of the *Six Lieder on Chinese Texts for Female Voice and Orchestra, Op. 95*. Published in Sibiu in 2006 with the support of the Axel Azzola Foundation in Berlin, this edition constituted the primary source for the arrangement for soprano, flute, and piano discussed above. Within Paul Richter's oeuvre, Op. 96 comprises a further cycle of *Lieder on Chinese texts*, conceived on this occasion for male voice (*Sechs Lieder nach chinesischen Texten für eine Männerstimme und Orchester*)³.

The manuscripts of Paul Richter's compositions are preserved in the archives of the Casa Mureşenilor Museum Braşov, and the museum's website also provides a number of documents concerning his life and activity⁴.

A particularly valuable recording of these female Lieder in their orchestral version is available on the YouTube platform, featuring soprano

³ This information can be found in the brochure prepared by Mr. Kurt Philippi – *The Estate of Paul Richter (Nachlass von Paul Richter)*.

⁴ <https://muzeulmuresenilor.ro/>;
https://culturalia.ro/search?page=1;size=10;view=LIST;searchType=NORMAL;q=casa%20muresenilor;mode=FUZZY;qf=METADATA_PROVIDER_FILTER%28Muzeul%20Casa%20Mure%C8%99enilor%20-%20Bra%C8%99ov%29

Bianca Luigia Manoleanu and the Sibiu State Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Petre Sbârcea. According to the information provided in the video description, the recording dates from October 12, 2006, and documents a concert held at Thalia Hall in Sibiu, an event that marked the world premiere of the cycle. It is, however, necessary to note a correction regarding the information presented in that post: the titles of the Lieder are not those indicated in the video description, which in fact reproduces the incipits (opening lines) of each Lied as titles. In Paul Richter's score, the following titles are given for the six Lieder:

1. *Das älteste Volkslied* (The Oldest Folk Song)
2. *Nachtdienst im Kaiserpalast* (Night Watch in the Imperial Palace)
3. *Der Pavillon aus Porzellan* (The Porcelain Pavilion)
4. *Die Einsame* (The Lonely Woman)
5. *Die verstoßene Freundin des Kaisers* (The Emperor's Banished Beloved)
6. *Der Tanz der Götter* (The Dance of the Gods).

Results

With an extensive catalogue of works written for the orchestra, Paul Richter demonstrated a remarkable vocation as a symphonist - a genre in which he achieved particular distinction. At the same time, he cultivated chamber music with equal seriousness, as evidenced by *Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano*, Op. 89, *Meditation* for violin and piano, Op. 90, the three *string quartets* Op. 98, Op. 99, and Op. 122, the *Piano Quartet*, Op. 110, and the *Quartet for piano, flute, violin, and cello*, Op. 111. His output also includes a substantial number of art songs for voice and piano, among them *Vier Lieder für eine Singstimme und Klavier*, Op. 101 and 102, and *Fünf Lieder für eine Singstimme und Klavier*, Op. 103 and 104, in addition to numerous other works in the genre. Furthermore, he composed extensively for the piano - pieces (*Stücke*), mazurkas, and sonatas - an instrument which he mastered with particular authority.

The *Six Songs on Chinese Texts for female voice and orchestra*, Op. 95 (out of a total of 122 opus numbers), represent a work of maturity within his oeuvre. Although these orchestral miniatures still reveal the influence of major European composers at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the cycle displays a refined and varied musical language, enriched by original features and characterized by a discourse that is at times vigorous and compelling, at others sensitive and profoundly expressive. The six-song cycle once again attests to Richter's ingenuity and subtlety as a symphonist. The poetic

texts of the first two Lieder are based on the German translations by Zoltán Franyó⁵, published in the volume *Chinesische Gedichte/Chinese Poems* (1940), whereas the final four songs draw upon the translations by Hans Bethge, included in *Die chinesische Flöte/The Chinese Flute* (1929)⁶.

I should note that Hans Peter Türk likewise provides an analysis of this song cycle⁷. However, his approach focuses primarily on its harmonic and formal structure, while also drawing parallels with other works by Paul Richter and with the compositional language of other composers, such as Debussy and Mahler.

The text of the first song - *Das älteste Volkslied* (*The Oldest Folk Song*) - conveys a message that is at once profound and disarmingly simple: true happiness and freedom are to be found in the modesty and simplicity of life rather than in power or wealth. Conceived as a meditation on essential values, the Lied is notable for its highly condensed symphonic-vocal form, with a duration of approximately one minute and thirty seconds.

Table 1

<i>Das älteste Volkslied</i>	Cel mai vechi cântec popular⁸	The oldest folk song
<i>Die Sonne steigt; ich greife zu. Die Sonne sinkt; ich geh zur Ruh. Ich grab den Born und trink daraus,</i>	<i>Soarele răsare - eu m-apuc de lucru, Soarele apune - mă-ntorc la odihnă. Sap un izvor și beau din unda lui,</i>	<i>The sun climbs; I take up my toil. The sun falls; I return to rest. I dig the spring and drink its water,</i>

⁵ https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zolt%C3%A1n_Frany%C3%B3

⁶ In the preface to the supplement of *Muzica* magazine - *Piese vocale și instrumentale de Paul Richter/Vocal and Instrumental Pieces by Paul Richter*, (*Muzica*, Revista Uniunii compozitorilor din Republica Populară Română și a Ministerului Învățământului și Culturii, Editura Muzicală, p. 2) - the organist and musicologist Victor Bickerich reports that the verses are attributed to Paul Bethge, but it probably refers to Hans Bethge. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Bethge_\(poet\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Bethge_(poet)). Nonetheless, in his book *Paul Richter*, Hans Peter Türk specifies that the translations of the first two Lieder are by Zoltán Franyó (*Chinesische Gedichte/Chinese poems*, 1940), while the subsequent four are based on Hans Bethge's translations from *Die chinesische Flöte/The Chinese Flute* (Türk, Hans Peter. *Paul Richter*. Kriterion Verlag, Bukarest, 1975, p.146). At the same time, in *Bibliografia generală a etnografiei și folclorului românesc, 1956–1964/The General Bibliography of Romanian Ethnography and Folklore* (Bugeanu, Dan; Dăncuș, Elena; Fochi, Adrian; Taloș, Ion. Bucharest: Editura Saeculum I.O., 2004), Zoltán Franyó is cited as the translator of the text *Das älteste chinesische Volkslied / The Oldest Chinese Folk Song* (p. 281).

⁷ Türk, Hans Peter. *Paul Richter*. Kriterion Verlag, Bukarest, 1975, pp.141-155

⁸ The Romanian and English translations of the verses are my own, and they do not aim at a poetic rendering, but rather at remaining as close as possible to the original German text. The Romanian version also appearing in the concert program booklet for the Musica Barcensis Festival.

<i>Das älteste Volkslied</i>	Cel mai vechi cântec popular⁸	The oldest folk song
<i>mich nährt die Frucht des Ackerbaus.</i>	<i>Rodul pământului îmi ține viața.</i>	<i>the harvest of the fields sustains my life.</i>
<i>Des Kaisers Macht, was hätte nun sie noch für mich zu tun?</i>	<i>Iar puterea-mpăratului, ce rost mai are asupra mea?</i>	<i>The Emperor's might - what concern is it of mine now?</i>

**Unknown author (from the time of Emperor Gao, 1257–1277 A.D.),
Das älteste Volkslied, German translation by Zoltán Franyó**

The verses of the unknown author express the life of the simple man, closely connected to nature and daily labor, where the rhythm is set by the sun: work begins in the morning, and rest follows in the evening. Paul Richter masterfully succeeds in rendering this scene in music: the opening of the cycle is constructed through a series of ascending parallel fourths (only the first being a fifth), vividly depicting a sunrise. This parallel ascending motion also serves as an archaic musical indicator, alluding to the intonations of Chinese music.

E.g. 1

Six songs on Chinese poems

I. Das älteste Volkslied (Aus der Zeit "Kaiser Gao" 1257-1277 n. Chr.)

Paul Richter (1875-1950)

Aranjament: Mihaela Pavel
Aranjament și tehnoredactare: Diana Cristea

Allegretto ***p***

Paul Richter, *Das älteste Volkslied*, ms. 1-7

In the orchestral version, the initial phrase is first entrusted to the first and second violins (solo), performed in parallel motion and at a *piano* dynamic level, the musical idea then being taken over by the flutes and clarinets. The

musical examples presented in this study are derived from the reduction mentioned previously, arranged for soprano, flute, and piano, one of the main motivations for this choice being spatial economy within the analytical presentation. The previous example illustrates the manner in which the orchestral texture has been redistributed within the trio reduction.

Richter extends the depiction of the morning soundscape by portraying birdsong through the flute, employing appoggiaturas and trills to articulate the effect. The harp is assigned two ascending sextuplets, arpeggiated chordal figures, and, subsequently, a four-octave *glissando*, all of which mirror the unfolding of sunrise and the progression of daily human activity. The vocal line then enters, articulating verses that further enhance the impressionistic character of the tableau: "*Die Sonne steigt; Ich greife zu/The sun climbs; I take up my toil.*" (measure 14).

In the dramaturgical framework of this miniature, the representation of sunset follows shortly at the *Langsamer* indication, occurring within a highly compressed temporal span (the Lied having a duration of approximately one minute and thirty seconds). The sunset is suggested through the timbral combination of the celesta and harp, which introduces descending arpeggiated figurations in measures 28-29.

The atmosphere gradually becomes more restrained (*Langsamer, mp, pp*), suggesting the fatigue associated with the completion of a day of labor. For the first time in the cycle, in measure 36, Richter introduces the gong immediately following the verses "*Die Sonne sinkt, ich geh zur Ruh/The sun sets; I return to rest.*" Traditionally associated with marking the beginning or conclusion of a ritualistic, temporal, or contemplative process, the gong here accentuates the image of sunset and symbolically signals the end of the working day.

The subsequent verses evoke spring water and the fruits of the field, symbolizing the human being's harmonious relationship with nature. The concluding line - "*Des Kaisers Macht, was hätte nun sie noch für mich zu tun?/What use is the Emperor's power to me?*" - suggests a withdrawal from worldly authority, conveying the idea that the simple individual finds fulfillment not in material splendor, but in nature and in the dignity of personal labor.

From a musical perspective, Richter shapes the dramaturgical architecture of this miniature tableau by employing the lower register of the soprano voice in the passages associated with the sunset imagery, the melodic contour itself adopting a descending trajectory. As the Lied approaches its conclusion, the vocal line, together with the orchestral ensemble, gradually ascends toward the upper register, culminating in the structural and expressive climax of the work.

E.g. 2

Paul Richter, *Das älteste Volkslied*, ms. 48-55

The conclusion of the miniature tableau is marked by a harp glissando in the home key of G major, a sonority associated with luminosity, joy, and contemplative serenity. Through this compact musical structure, Richter demonstrates his capacity to synthesize a variety of expressive images within a highly concentrated and economically constructed formal space.

This is followed by another tableau, "*Nachtdienst im Kaiserpalast/Night Watch at the Imperial Palace*", whose verses originally written by Wang Anshi⁹ present a deeply contemplative nocturnal scene characterized by refined and subtle imagery, in which the protagonist's inner emotional state is mirrored through natural elements. The expressive discourse is once again marked by concision, the Lied exhibiting a duration of approximately three minutes.

Table 2

Nachtdienst im Kaiserpalast	Veghea de noapte la palatul împărațesc	Night Watch in the Imperial Palace
<i>Der Weichrauch glimmt im Goldgefäß, Still steht die Wasseruhr!</i>	<i>Tămâia fumegă în vasul de aur, clepsidra stă tăcută!</i>	<i>The incense glows in the golden vessel, the water clock stands still!</i>
<i>Die scharfen leichten Winde wehn stets kühler durch die Flur.</i>	<i>Vânturi iuți și subțiri adie, tot mai reci peste câmpie.</i>	<i>The sharp, light winds blow ever cooler through the meadow.</i>
<i>Des Frühlings Pracht hat mich verwirrt, ich kann nicht schlafen gehen...</i>	<i>Splendoarea primăverii m-a tulburat, nu pot să merg la somn...</i>	<i>The splendor of spring has confused me, I cannot go to sleep...</i>

⁹ <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/biography/wang-anshi>;
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wang_Anshi

Nachtdienst im Kaiserpalast	Veghea de noapte la palatul împărațesc	Night Watch in the Imperial Palace
<i>Der Mond rückt höher auf den Zaun der Blumen Schattenspur.</i>	<i>Luna se ridică tot mai sus, luminând gardul pe care joacă umbrele florilor.</i>	<i>The moon moves higher, onto the fence the shadow-trace of flowers.</i>

**Wang Anshi (1021-1086, A.D.), Nachtdienst im Kaiserpalast,
German translation by Zoltán Franyó**

For the opening of the Lied, Richter restricts the orchestral palette primarily to the string section, allowing only two brief interventions of the celesta. The passage is marked *piano*, *con sordino*, and *Andante*, features that collectively generate an atmosphere of introspection and solemn stillness in which temporal flow appears suspended - "*stillsteht die Wasseruhr/the water clock stands still!*" - a metaphor suggesting immobility, meditative contemplation, and a nocturnal state in which reality itself seems temporarily held in abeyance. The setting is of an imperial and quasi-sacred character, where the rising incense smoke ("*Der Weihrauch glimmt im Goldgefäß/The incense glows in the golden vessel*") contributes to a ritualistic atmosphere reminiscent of religious ceremony, reinforcing the silence and solemn dignity of the nocturnal scene.

E.g. 3

II. Nachtdienst im Kaiserpalast

(Wang An Shi 1026-1086 n. Chr.)

Paul Richter (1875-1950)

Andante

Aranjament: Mihaela Pavel
Aranjament și tehnoredactare: Diana Cristea

Paul Richter, *Nachtdienst im Kaiserpalast*, ms. 1-6

In the trio reduction, the piano part incorporates the material originally assigned to the second violin, viola, cello, and double bass, while the flute assumes the melodic line of the first violin.

Following eight measures characterized by a slow melodic progression articulated exclusively in quarter and half notes, the introduction of eighth-note motion - first in the flute and Clarinet I (m. 9), subsequently taken up by the cello - signals a shift in atmosphere and the emergence of a subtle agitation (*“Die scharfen leichten Winde wehn stets kühler durch die Flur/The sharp, light winds blow ever cooler through the meadow”*). The insistent, reiterative, and slightly hesitant character of the figuration, enriched by chromatic inflections, evokes the sharp gusts of cold wind and intensifies the expressive tension of the passage.

E.g. 4

Paul Richter, *Nachtdienst im Kaiserpalast*, ms. 16-20

The reiterative eighth note figures progressively generate a crescendo, giving rise to a brief yet intense surge of expression that culminates in measures 24-25. The evocation of spring - a season traditionally associated with renewal, vitality, and joy, yet also with heightened emotional sensitivity and nostalgia - elicits in the protagonist a complex affective response, combining wonder and delight with inner unrest. Suspended between the splendor of nature and his own introspective disposition, the character experiences an emotional tension that ultimately manifests as insomnia.

At this juncture, the musical discourse undergoes an abrupt reduction in dynamic intensity; however, through the deployment of reiterative thirds and tremolo figuration, Richter momentarily intensifies the underlying atmospheric tension. Simultaneously, the soprano line is shaped by the descending augmented fifth $F\sharp - Bb$, an intervallic gesture that reinforces the prevailing sense of unease.

The Lied concludes by returning to the same climate of solemn tranquility that characterized the opening of the miniature. The moon emerges as the final symbolic image, suggesting beauty, transience, temporality, and a fragile, ethereal realm. The musical discourse gradually dissipates into silence (*ppp*), dissolving into an atmosphere of suspended stillness.

E.g. 5



Paul Richter, *Nachtdienst im Kaiserpalast*, ms. 35-40

For a more comprehensive understanding of the orchestral dimension of the work, reference may be made to the recording available on YouTube featuring Bianca Luigia Manoleanu and the State Philharmonic Orchestra of Sibiu, conducted by Petre Sbârcea¹⁰. This interpretation convincingly illustrates the composer's ability to capture, within a remarkably limited temporal framework, a moment seemingly suspended in time - an instance of introspection framed by a grand yet serene landscape.

The third Lied exhibits a series of distinctive features that confer upon it a singular position within the architecture of the cycle. Most striking is the abrupt contrast it establishes in relation not only to the first two miniatures, but also to those that follow. The agogic indication *Allegro*, coupled with the expressive marking *sehr leicht und scherzend*/very light-hearted and playful, generates a musical discourse characterized by agility, buoyancy, and playful vivacity. This expressive orientation stands in pronounced opposition to the contemplative, restrained atmosphere that defines the preceding two tableaux, thereby effecting a significant shift in affective and structural perspective within the cycle.

¹⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0kpySDGHyk4&list=RD0kpySDGHyk4&start_radio=1

Another aspect of particular interest resides in Richter's decision to employ, in this instance, verses by the Chinese poet Li Po (Li Bai) - the very same poems that were set to music by Gustav Mahler in his celebrated symphonic song cycle *Das Lied von der Erde/The Song of the Earth*, specifically in the third movement, *Von der Jugend/On Youth*. It appears that Mahler had obtained a copy of *Die chinesische Flöte/The Chinese Flute* by Hans Bethge, a volume comprising eighty Chinese poems rendered into German in free poetic translation.

In his biographical study of Paul Richter, Hans Peter Türk offers a detailed parallel analysis of the two Lieder: Mahler's setting and Richter's¹¹. Regrettably, in the absence of precise documentation concerning the year in which Paul Richter composed the Lieder under discussion, any chronological correlation must remain hypothetical. Given that Mahler completed *Das Lied von der Erde* in 1909, with its premiere taking place in Munich in November 1911 under the baton of Bruno Walter, it is nonetheless plausible to advance the assumption that Richter may have been acquainted with, and potentially influenced by, Mahler's work. Such a hypothesis, while not yet substantiated by definitive archival evidence, remains stylistically and historically tenable within the broader context of early twentieth-century musical intertextuality.

It is equally important to underscore that Paul Richter, although established in Braşov after 1900, following the completion of his studies in Leipzig, maintained a sustained and active connection with the broader European musical milieu. Consequently, he was well informed regarding the most recent compositional developments of his time and cannot be regarded as operating in aesthetic isolation. At the same time, one must also consider the possibility that the convergence in poetic choice occurred independently, as a result of both composers drawing upon the same literary source. Hans Bethge's volume *Die chinesische Flöte* appears to have enjoyed considerable circulation within German-speaking cultural circles in Europe during that period, which renders entirely plausible the hypothesis that the shared textual basis may have arisen from parallel, rather than directly mediated, artistic impulses.

The inherent refinement and apparent simplicity of the verses appear to have constituted a fertile source of inspiration for both composers, prompting musical settings marked by elegance and subtlety. The imagery evoked is suggestive of traditional Chinese pictorial aesthetics: a tranquil pond, a delicate porcelain pavilion, a jade bridge, and a gathering of friends united in serene companionship. The poetic text articulates, with notable clarity, an atmosphere of harmony, cultivation, and contemplative repose. To this is added a further dimension of symbolic depth - the motif of reflection in the water - which subtly alters and refracts reality, transfiguring it into a poetic projection. This interplay

¹¹ Türk, Hans Peter. *Paul Richter*. Kriterion Verlag, Bukarest, 1975 (pp. 146-152).

between image and mirrored image not only enriches the descriptive layer of the text but also invites a more nuanced interpretative reading, situated at the intersection of perception and illusion.

Table 3

Der Pavillon aus Porzellan	Pavilionul de porțelan	The Porcelain Pavilion
<i>Mitten im kleinen Teiche steht ein kleiner Pavillon aus grünem und aus weißem Porzellan.</i>	<i>În mijlocul iazului mic se ridică un mic pavilion din porțelan verde și alb.</i>	<i>In the middle of the small pond stands a little pavilion made of green and white porcelain.</i>
<i>Wie der Rücken eines Tigers wölbt die Brücke sich aus Jade zu dem Pavillon hinüber.</i>	<i>Ca spinarea unui tigru se arcuiește podul de jad până la pavilion.</i>	<i>Like the back of a tiger, the jade bridge arches toward the pavilion.</i>
<i>In dem Häuschen sitzen Freunde schön gekleidet, trinken, plaudern, manche schreiben Verse nieder!</i>	<i>În căsuță stau prieteni frumos îmbrăcați, beau, stau de vorbă, unii aștern versuri pe hârtie!</i>	<i>Inside the little house sit friends, beautifully dressed, drinking, chatting, some writing down verses.</i>
<i>Ihre seidnen Ärmel gleiten rückwärts, ihre seidnen Mützen hohen lustig tief im Nacken.</i>	<i>Mâncile lor de mătase alunecă, coifurile lor de mătase se clatină vesel, lăsate pe ceafă.</i>	<i>Their silken sleeves glide backward, their silken caps sit high and jauntily deep at the nape of their necks.</i>
<i>Auf des kleinen Teiches stiller Oberfläche zeigt sich alles wunderbar im Spiegelbilde.</i>	<i>Pe suprafața liniștită a iazului se oglindește totul, ciudat și minunat.</i>	<i>On the still surface of the small pond, everything appears strangely mirrored.</i>
<i>Wie ein Halbmond scheint der Brücke umgekehrter Bogen</i>	<i>Ca o semilună lucește arcul răsturnat al podului</i>	<i>Like a half-moon, the bridge's inverted arch appears.</i>
<i>Freunde schön gekleidet trinken, plaudern, Alle auf dem Kopfe stehend</i>	<i>Prieteni frumos îmbrăcați beau, vorbesc, Toți cu capul în jos</i>	<i>Friends, beautifully dressed, drink and chat, All upside down</i>
<i>In dem Pavillon aus grünem und aus weißem Porzellan!</i>	<i>În pavilionul din porțelan verde și alb.</i>	<i>In the pavilion made of green and white porcelain.</i>

**Li Tai Po/Li Bai¹² (701-762), „Der Pavillon aus Porzellan”,
German translation by Hans Bethge**

Accordingly, following the contemplative and tranquil character established by the first two musical tableaux of the cycle, the third Lied decisively interrupts this quietude. From its very outset, it introduces a surge of exuberant vitality, as indicated by the expressive markings „*Sehr leicht und scherzend/very light and playful*” and *Allegro*, thereby effecting a marked contrast in both affective tone and kinetic energy within the structural trajectory of the cycle.

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Li_Bai; <https://mypoeticside.com/poets/li-po-poems>

E.g. 6

III. Der Pavillon aus Porzellan (Li Tao Po)

Paul Richter (1875-1950)

Aranjament: Mihaela Pavel

Aranjament și tehnoredactare: Diana Cristea

Allegro
Sehr leicht und scherzend.

Soprano

Flute

Piano

6

S.

Fl.

Pno.

Mit - ten-im

klei - nen Tei-che steht ein klei-ner Pa-vil-lon aus grü - nem

mf

p

f

mf

p

p

p

Paul Richter, *Der Pavillon aus Porzellan*, ms. 1-9

The green-and-white porcelain, which assumes a distinctly metaphorical significance within this context, imparts to the musical discourse a sense of delicacy, refinement, and an almost ethereal beauty. Within Asian cultural symbolism, it additionally connotes transience and impermanence. These qualities are palpably manifested in Paul Richter's orchestration; yet the most arresting musical image remains the brilliant C major glissando in the harp (measures 11-14). Unsurprisingly, this effect is also preserved in the trio arrangement, where the glissando is executed across five octaves on the piano, maintaining both its virtuosity and its symbolic resonance.

Jade - another emblematic element - conveys a sense of purity and nobility, while the motif of the "jade bridge" functions as a symbolic passage from the tangible world (or, in an alternative reading, from nature) into the poetic (or artistic sphere). Richter further demonstrates his compositional finesse through the deliberate deployment of contrasts in tempo and character: following a brief moment of repose on the glissando (*Ruhig/calm, quiet*), the introduction of the tiger imagery prompts a shift toward a more apprehensive expression (*mit komisch-ängstlichem Ausdruck/with a comically anxious expression*) accompanied by increased animation (*Belebter/more animated*). Consequently, the musical discourse acquires heightened tension. The depiction of the jade bridge, "arching like the back of a tiger," proves particularly striking, the tiger itself serving as a potent symbol of strength and vitality.

In measure 31, the soprano's opening melodic line returns, preserving the same playful and light-hearted character of the musical discourse. At this juncture emerges the poetic image of a gathering of poets in a natural setting, evoking an ancient Chinese and Japanese cultural tradition in which nature is conceived as an ideal space for contemplation and artistic creation, a realm where time unfolds in a gentle, unhurried manner and human interaction is expressed through relaxed conversation, celebration, or poetic composition.

Demonstrating a high degree of sensitivity in his musical depiction of this scene, Richter employs appoggiaturas in the oboe, bassoon, violin, and cello, strategically aligned with the words „trinken/drinking“ and „plaudern/chatting“. These ornamental figures contribute to the reinforcement of the vivacious and animated character of the musical discourse, enhancing both the semantic-musical correspondence and the overall expressive dynamism of the passage.

What follows is a detailed, poetic depiction of the poets' attire, evoking aristocratic elegance and refinement. This passage warrants particular attention, as it appears - at least from my interpretative perspective - that Paul Richter partially distances the musical expression from the semantic content of the text. Beginning at measure 44 (*Tempo I*) and continuing through measure 53, the orchestration enters a noticeably more tense and slightly dramatic phase, marked by the first introduction of the timpani. This heightened tension occurs precisely at the point where the verses describe the participants' clothing. From an analytical standpoint, one might contend that a lighter, more serene treatment would have better aligned with the textual imagery, suggesting that Richter's choice reflects a deliberate expressive decision rather than a straightforward programmatic correspondence.

E.g. 7

46

S. *Ih-re seid-nen Är - mel glei-ten rück - wärts, ih - re*

Fl. *f*

Pno. *f*

50

S. *seid-nen Müt-zen ho-chen lu - stig tief im Na - ken.*

Fl. *f*

Pno. *f*

Paul Richter, *Der Pavillon aus Porzellan*, ms. 46-52

It is plausible that Richter sought to construct the climax of the Lied at this juncture, an objective that he succeeds in realizing from a strictly musical standpoint. It is perhaps the only moment within the entire cycle in which the composer appears to depart, to a certain extent, from a literal alignment with the textual meaning. In this respect, it may be observed that Mahler's musical treatment of the same verses demonstrates a particularly refined sensitivity to the semantic and expressive nuances of the poem, resulting in what could be considered a more organically integrated setting.

The musical discourse subsequently enters a more restrained and tranquil phase beginning at measure 53, marked by a *decrescendo* and a *piano* dynamic indication. Nevertheless, the imagery of the water's reflection

of the entire pictorial scene - described as "strange and wonderful," where "everyone is upside down" - generates new layers of imaginative projection and introduces a multiplicity of perceptual perspectives. Despite this play of illusion and mirrored reality, the real world and its reflected counterpart on the placid surface of the pond are presented as coexisting in a state of expressive harmony.

Once again, Richter integrates stylistic elements associated with East Asian musical idioms, particularly the whole-tone melodic motion occurring in the soprano line in measures 67-68, as well as in the flute, oboe, and clarinet parts. Similar scalar motion reappears in measure 70 in the flutes, oboe, and harp, and later in measures 75-76, where the soprano and celesta proceed in unison, reinforcing the impression of linear melodic continuity and timbral delicacy associated with these influences.

E.g. 8

65

S. Wie ein Halb-mond scheint der Brücke um-ge-kehr-ter Bogen

Fl. *mf* *pp*

Pno. *pp*

Paul Richter, *Der Pavillon aus Porzellan*, ms. 65-69

The concluding verses return the listener to the spatial and symbolic setting in which this celebration of art and fleeting precious moments unfolds. Once again, the composer underscores the semantic and symbolic weight of the word „*Porzellan*” through the use of parallel motion in whole tones and perfect fourths in the two flute parts. Following this passage, the musical atmosphere gradually subsides into extreme softness, reaching a *ppp* dynamic level, thereby restoring a state of contemplative stillness.

S. Por - zel - lan!

Fl.

Pno. *ppp*

Paul Richter, *Der Pavillon aus Porzellan*, ms. 86-89

Richter's Lied achieves a convincing musical rendering of the symbolic content of the text, effectively conveying notions of refinement, delicacy, and subtle aesthetic beauty, as well as the broader semantic fields of harmony, fragility, and ephemerality associated with porcelain, the emblematic element already suggested by the title itself, notwithstanding the minor interpretative divergence previously noted.

Among the movements of the cycle, this Lied presented the greatest challenges in terms of arrangement for small instrumental ensemble, owing to the greater complexity of its orchestration. Consequently, any attempt at reduction risks producing a version that may appear comparatively less complete, as certain timbral and textural layers are difficult to reproduce without compromising the integrity of the original sonic architecture.

The fourth Lied, *Die Einsame/The Lonely Woman*, follows, representing perhaps the most dramatic movement within the entire cycle. Like the other miniatures, it unfolds within a highly concentrated temporal and formal space, with a duration of approximately two minutes. In the orchestral score, the author of the text is indicated as Wang Seng Chu; however, my research has not yielded verifiable historical or biographical information regarding this purported Chinese poet, suggesting either a possible transcriptional variation of the name or the use of a pseudonymous or otherwise undocumented source.

Table 4

Die Einsame	Singuratica	The Lonely Woman
<i>Am dunkeln Himmel steht der Mond.</i>	<i>Pe cerul întunecat stă luna.</i>	<i>In the dark sky stands the moon.</i>
<i>Ich habe meine Lampe ausgelöscht, schwer von Gedanken ist mein einsam Herz.</i>	<i>Mi-am stins lampa, iar inima-mi singuratică e grea de gânduri.</i>	<i>I have extinguished my lamp; heavy with thoughts is my lonely heart.</i>
<i>Ich weine, weine meine armen Tränen rinnen so heiß und bitter von den Wangen, weil du so fern bist meiner großen Sehnsucht, weil du nie begreifen wirst, wie weh mir ist, wenn ich nicht bei dir bin.</i>	<i>Plâng, plâng - sărmănele mele lacrimile se preling fierbinți și amare pe obraji, pentru că tu ești atât de departe de dorul meu imens, pentru că tu nicicând nu vei înțelege cât mă doare, când nu sunt lângă tine.</i>	<i>I weep, I weep—my poor tears run so hot and bitter down my cheeks, because you are so far from my great longing, because you will never understand how much it hurts when I am not with you.</i>

Wang Seng Chu, „Die Einsame”, German translation by Hans Bethge

Composed in the relatively uncommon key of E-flat minor and set at a very slow tempo indication (*Langsam*), the miniature projects an expressive universe characterized by profound solitude, inner suffering, and an atmosphere suggestive of unfulfilled or possibly unrequited love. The poetic text unfolds as a nocturnal inner monologue, articulating the lament of a woman confronted with the experience of loneliness in the absence of the beloved.

E.g. 10

IV. Die Einsame (Wang Seng Chu)

Paul Richter (1875-1950)

Aranjament: Mihaela Pavel

Aranjament și tehnoredactare: Diana Cristea

Langsam *p*

Soprano

Flute

Piano

pp

p

Am dun - keln Him - mel steht der Mond. Ich

Paul Richter, *Die Einsame*, ms. 1-4

To evoke stillness, oppressive sorrow - *schwer von Gedanken ist mein einsam Herz/heavy with thoughts is my lonely heart* - and a sense of desolation, Paul Richter shapes the orchestration around sustained note values (half notes, dotted half notes, and whole notes), which impart weight and gravity to the musical texture. Only the soprano's melodic line introduces a hint of restlessness through its shorter rhythmic values. Within this prevailing stasis, the orchestra's sudden *sfz* accent in measure 6 stands out as the sole abrupt rupture of the silence. The extinguishing of the lamp symbolizes an inward turn - a gesture of isolation and withdrawal from the external world - marking a descent into the intimate sphere of personal suffering.

Yet this state of apparent calm proves fleeting. Beginning in measure 9, marked *Belebter/More lively*, the atmosphere is suddenly set in motion, initiating a gradual intensification that leads toward the climactic point. The poetic text mirrors this emotional escalation, conveying helplessness and fervent anguish: "*Ich weine, weine... meine Tränen rinnen so heiß und bitter/I weep, I weep - my poor tears run so hot and bitter*". Richter reinforces and amplifies the musical discourse through the introduction of dotted triplet figures across all instrumental parts, including the soprano's melodic line. This rhythmic device generates heightened dramatic tension and propulsive energy, significantly intensifying the expressive impact of the passage.

E.g. 11

12

S. *wei - ne mei - ne ar - men Trä - nen rin - nen so heiß und bit - ter von den*

Fl.

Pno.

f

EXPRESSIVE AND STRUCTURAL INTERACTIONS BETWEEN TEXT AND MUSIC IN PAUL
RICHTER'S *SECHS LIEDER NACH CHINESISCHEN TEXTEN FÜR...*

15

S. Wan - gen, weil du so Erregt

Fl. *f* 3 3

Pno. 3 *f* *p*

Paul Richter, *Die Einsame*, ms. 12-16

Simultaneously, the pervasive tremolos in the string sections serve to heighten and prolong the accumulating tension, sustaining it until the climactic apex in measure 24. At this decisive moment, the underlying source of profound emotional anguish is revealed: the separation between the two figures is not one of physical distance, but of mutual misunderstanding. The beloved remains emotionally inaccessible, and it is precisely this inner estrangement that inflicts the most devastating wound.

E.g. 12

23

S. *f* rit. - - - wenn ich nicht bei dir bin.

Fl. *f* *p*

Pno. *f* *p*

Paul Richter, *Die Einsame*, ms. 23-27

This orchestral passage also presents considerable challenges in the piano reduction. Nevertheless, through a thorough study of the complete score, the pianist can successfully recreate the tension of the moment even within the more limited sonic framework of the reduction. After this climax of intensity, the concluding measures of the Lied restore the initial atmosphere of painful solitude through a marked expressive contrast. The sound of the gong is placed in the final measure, marked *p*, functioning as a last dramatic accent that underscores the emotional closure of the piece.

It is perhaps one of the most accomplished Lieder in Paul Richter's vocal oeuvre - a finely crafted miniature that conveys emotional vulnerability, inner conflict during a nocturnal spiritual ordeal, profound loneliness, and a love that remains ultimately misunderstood.

Table 5

Die verstossene Freundin des Kaisers	Prietena alungată a împăratului	The Emperor's Banished Beloved
<i>Wie aufgelöst ist meine Seele, ich hab geweint, dass meine Kissen durchnässt sind.</i>	<i>Cât de tulburat este sufletul meu, am plâns până ce pernele mi s-au îmbibat de lacrimi.</i>	<i>How dissolved my soul is; I have wept until my pillows are soaked.</i>
<i>Ohne Schlaf und ohne Träume wälz ich mich nachts auf meinem Bett.</i>	<i>Fără somn și fără vise, mă zvârcolesc noaptea în pat.</i>	<i>Without sleep and without dreams I toss about on my bed at night.</i>
<i>Schon ist Mitternacht vorüber, doch dringen immer noch Gesänge und Lautenspiel aus dem Palaste des Kaisers an mein wachsam Ohr.</i>	<i>E trecut deja de miezul nopții, dar din palatul împăratului răzbat încă cântece și sunete de lăute până la urechea mea trează.</i>	<i>Midnight has already passed, yet songs and the sound of lutes still drift from the Emperor's palace to my wakeful ear.</i>
<i>Mein Hals ist zart wie die Apfelblüte und schlank wie sonst sind meine Glieder.</i>	<i>Gâtul meu e gingaș precum floarea de măr, iar trupul meu, la fel de suplu ca odinioară.</i>	<i>My neck is delicate as an apple blossom, and my limbs are slender as ever.</i>
<i>Sag, Herr, warum hat deine Liebe sich grausam von mir abgewandt?</i>	<i>Spune-mi, stăpâne, de ce dragostea ta s-a întors de la mine cu atâta cruzime?</i>	<i>Tell me, my lord, why has your love cruelly turned away from me?</i>
<i>Ich liege schlaflos bis zum Morgen, ich starre in das Kohlenbecken und finde keine, keine Antwort auf meine Frage wilde Qual.</i>	<i>Zac fără somn până în zori, privesc doar în jăraticul din vatră și nu găsesc, nu găsesc răspuns la întrebarea chinuitoare ce mă macină.</i>	<i>I lie sleepless until morning, staring into the brazier, and find no, no answer to my question, to my wild torment.</i>

**Unknown author, „Die verstoßene Freundin des Kaisers”,
German translation - Hans Bethge**

A similar mood and expressive nuance can be found in the following Lied - *Die verstoßene Freundin des Kaisers/The Emperor's Banished Beloved* - whose verses are equally intense and emotionally charged. The dramatic text once again refers to the suffering of a woman who has been rejected by the most powerful figure - the Emperor. Unlike the previous poem, the pain here is also perceived as a form of humiliation, since the Emperor's love represented not only an emotional bond, but also a marker of social and symbolic status.

The turmoil and inner unrest are also conveyed musically through agogic transformations, as Richter inserts numerous indications in the score concerning both tempo and character: *Andante con moto* (at the opening), *crescendo-stringendo*, *Tempo I*, *Langsam*, again *Tempo I*, *etwas bewegter/a little more lively*, *drängend/pressing* and *leidenschaftlich/passionately*, *Sehr erregt/very agitated*, *ritenuto*, and finally, once more, *Langsam*. At the same time, the choice of key - E minor - is far from incidental, as its specific tonal color contributes significantly to the expression of suffering, passion, and heightened dramatic intensity.

E.g. 13

V. Die verstossene Freundin des Kaisers Paul Richter (1875-1950)

Aranjament: Mihaela Pavel
Aranjament și tehnoredactare: Diana Cristea

Andante con moto

Soprano *p* *mf* *p*

Flaut *fp*

Pian *fp* *p* *p*

Wie auf - ge - löst ist mei-ne See - le, ich hab ge - weint, daß mei-ne Kis - sen durch - näßt

Paul Richter, *Die verstoßene Freundin des Kaisers*, ms. 1-7

Once again, in the opening of the miniature, the composer employs predominantly long note values alongside extensive tremolo writing, evoking a state of stagnation - a kind of paralysis rooted in despair and profound suffering that prevents the protagonist from finding rest. The soprano's melodic line is likewise relatively static, characterized by frequent repeated pitches and hesitant chromatic motion. The orchestration is initially restrained, limited to the string section and the horn.

The expressive contrast emerges through the evocation of the courtly celebrations at the palace surrounding the Emperor, an image that serves to intensify the protagonist's nocturnal anguish. The dramaturgy is thus built upon a sharp opposition between light and darkness, joy and sorrow, as well as between power and vulnerability. The musical tension culminates in a first climax in measure 19, where a fuller orchestral sonority is achieved through the entrance of the wind instruments alongside the strings. The parallel fourths and fifths in measures 16-20 reintroduce a subtle suggestion of Asian musical color, employed with notable compositional ingenuity precisely at the moment when the poetic text refers to "Gesänge/songs" and "Lautenspiel/lute playing" within the palace setting.

E.g. 14

16

S. *ff Langsam* *p*

drin-gen im - mer noch Ge - sän - ge und Lau - ten - spiel aus dem Pa - la - ste des Kai - sers

Fl. *mp* *f* *p*

Pian *p*

Paul Richter, *Die verstoßene Freundin des Kaisers*, ms. 16-21

The protagonist continues her confession, expressing her inability to comprehend why she is being rejected without any apparent reason, despite the persistence of her physical attributes. Confronted with the sense of abandonment and uselessness, her inner agitation intensifies, and her emotional wounds deepen further. Once again, Richter exhibits a high degree of compositional inventiveness by integrating whole-tone scale motion and parallel writing into the orchestral texture, employing the full complement of woodwind and brass instruments - 1st and 2nd Flutes, 1st and 2nd Oboes, 1st and 2nd Clarinets, and 1st and 2nd Trumpets (measures 37-39).

E.g. 15



Paul Richter, *Die verstoßene Freundin des Kaisers*, ms. 37-39

The sense of pain intensifies as the arrival of dawn paradoxically deepens despair and reinforces the feeling of helplessness, while the soul remains metaphorically engulfed in darkness. In this passage, the burden of expressive tension is carried by the lower string sonorities - cellos and double basses - which sustain and gradually amplify the atmosphere of anguish. As the phrase approaches its climactic point in measure 47, the timpani further accentuate the bitterness of the emotional discourse. The confession, marked by profound and heartrending sincerity, gradually dissolves in the closing measures, suggesting the protagonist's realization that the answers to her existential questions will remain forever inaccessible.

The sixth and final song of the *Lieder on Chinese Texts* cycle for female voice represents the most elaborate architectural and orchestral design within the set and is also the longest, with an approximate duration of four minutes. Its middle section unfolds almost like a short development section, contributing to the overall structural complexity of the work. Through a striking expressive contrast, particularly in relation to the two-preceding *Lieder*, *Der Tanz der Götter/The Dance of the Gods* brings the cycle to a close in an optimistic and luminous tonal atmosphere.

The original Chinese verses, attributed to Li Tai Po - the same poet mentioned in connection with the third Lied - trace the symbolic journey of the musician across the stages of artistic existence. The first stage depicts the artist's isolation and misunderstanding while singing to humanity, representing a phase of suffering and existential struggle. The second stage portrays his encounter with the divine realm, where the gods receive him and dance to his music, signifying transcendence. The final stage marks the return to humankind, now capable of understanding his artistic message, thus illustrating the transformative power of creation. At its core, the poem conveys the universal narrative of art and its spiritual journey.

Table 6

Der Tanz der Götter	Dansul zeilor	The Dance of the Gods
<i>Zu meiner Flöte, die aus Jade ist, sang ich den Menschen tief bewegt ein Lied; die Menschen lachten, Sie verstandens nicht.</i>	<i>La flautul meu de jad am cântat un cântec, din adâncul inimii l-am dăruit oamenilor; dar oamenii au râs, nu m-au înțeles.</i>	<i>To my flute, which is made of jade, I sang a song to the people, deeply moved; the people laughed, they did not understand it. Then, in sorrow,</i>
<i>Da hob ich schmerzvoll meine Flöte, die aus Jade ist, zum Himmel auf und brachte mein Lied den Göttern dar.</i>	<i>Atunci, cu durere, am ridicat flautul, flautul meu din jad, spre ceruri, și am închinat cântecul meu zeilor.</i>	<i>I raised my flute, which is made of jade, up to the heavens and offered my song to the gods.</i>
<i>Die Götter waren beglückt und huben auf erglühenden Wolken nach meinem Lied zu tanzen an.</i>	<i>Iar zeii s-au bucurat pe nori aprinși s-au pornit să danseze pe cântecul meu.</i>	<i>The gods were delighted and began to dance upon glowing clouds to my song.</i>
<i>Nun singe ich mein Lied den Menschen auch zur Freude, nun verstehn sie mich auch spiel ich das Lied auf meiner Flöte; die aus Jade ist.</i>	<i>Acum cânt din nou și oamenilor spre bucuria lor; iar ei mă înțeleg când sufletul meu se revarsă în sunet din flautul meu, flautul de jad.</i>	<i>Now I sing my song to the people also for their joy; now they understand me too when I play the song upon my flute, which is made of jade.</i>

**Li Tai Po/Li Bai (701-762), „Der Tanz der Götter”,
German translation by Hans Bethge**

For the final tableau of the cycle, Paul Richter selects a key associated with festive brilliance and radiant sonority - D major - which confers upon the symphonic ensemble a ceremonial, luminous, and vibrant orchestral character. The Lied opens, however, in a serene expressive frame, marked *p* and *Andante con moto*, where the melodic writing of the violins and violas suggests a calm, flowing motion, over which the delicate sonority of the jade flute emerges. The flute functions not merely as a medium through which the artist addresses the external world, but also as a symbol of purity, artistic refinement, and perhaps even of the inner essence of the artist's soul.

VI. Der Tanz der Götter (Li Tai Po) Paul Richter (1875-1950)

Andante con moto Aranjament: Mihaela Pavel
Aranjament și tehnoredactare: Diana Cristea

The musical score is presented in three staves. The Soprano staff (top) shows rests for the first six measures. The Flute staff (middle) has rests for the first three measures, followed by a melodic line starting in measure 4. The Piano staff (bottom) features a complex harmonic texture with chords and a bass line. The tempo is marked 'Andante con moto'.

Paul Richter, *Der Tanz der Götter*, ms. 1-6

The atmospheric stability of the passage is sustained by the cello and double bass, which maintain a nine-measure pedal point on D and A, respectively. In measure seven, the introduction of the harp timbre further enhances the celestial and transcendent character of the sonic landscape.

The musician's inner drama soon becomes apparent when he is met with distrust and rejection by the people who fail to comprehend his artistic expression - a symbolic reference to the notion that the artist's recognition often comes only at a later stage of maturity. The soprano's delivery of the text "*Sie verstanden's nicht/They did not understand it*" should convey a subtle nuance of scornful irony, as indicated by the composer's own expressive marking (*etwas verächtlich*).

The sensation of suffering is further intensified through the use of sustained tremolos in the string section, which also function as a transitional device leading into the developmental-like segment spanning measures 17-43, marked "*etwas bewegter/somewhat more lively*". Emotionally wounded, the artist transcends worldly expectations, redirecting his creative act toward a higher spiritual plane, renouncing the need for earthly recognition and entering into communion with the divine by offering his song to the gods. To articulate this more animated expressive moment, the musical discourse introduces a persistent dotted rhythmic pattern, creating a dynamic contrast with the initial atmosphere of serenity.

E.g. 17

18 *mf*

S. Da hob ich schmerz - voll mei - ne Flö - te, die aus Ja - de ist,

Fl.

Pno.

Paul Richter, *Der Tanz der Götter*, ms. 18-20

This section also represents the moment in which Richter makes the most extensive use of percussion in order to reinforce the construction of the central developmental passage. Throughout the cycle, percussion is employed sparingly, with the gong appearing once in the first Lied, twice in the third, and once again at the close of the fourth, while the timpani are used only in two brief interventions in the third song and in two short tremolo figures at the end of the fifth. In the final Lied of the cycle, however, the composer expands the percussion palette by introducing, in addition to the timpani and gong, the glockenspiel and tambourine (measures 23-40). As previously noted, the gong carries symbolic associations with the closure of a cycle, stage, or ritual process, and may also signify the opening of a new beginning, as observed in theatrical, educational, or sporting contexts.

Accordingly, in the passage under discussion - which also represents, in my view, the climactic apex of the entire cycle - the percussion writing plays a decisive role in shaping the sonic and dramatic architecture of the musical tableau. The poetic image of the dancing gods constitutes the most powerful expressive moment of the poem, reflecting the artist's realization that his creative endeavor acquires value through its recognition by higher, transcendent forces; thus, his artistic struggle is revealed not to have been in vain. In this section, Richter allows the orchestral sonority to unfold in a broad and solemn manner (*Breit*, measures 32-43), the full orchestral ensemble constructing the vision of the gods engaged in their celestial dance. The harp glissandi are particularly noteworthy for their expressive and timbral impact.

E.g. 18



Paul Richter, *Der Tanz der Götter*, ms. 33-34

The closing measures of the developmental section (mm. 40-43) symbolically mark the artist's return from the transcendent sphere to the human realm. The descending trajectory of the musical line suggests a movement from the divine toward the earthly world, thus musically illustrating the process of reconciliation between the two dimensions. The reintroduction of whole-tone scale motion and parallel writing further enhances structural cohesion while sustaining the expressive unity of the passage.

The initial atmosphere of serenity is reinstated through the return to the calm quarter-note motion (*Tempo I*), establishing a cyclical relationship with the opening of the tableau. The protagonist once again directs his artistic message toward the human community. However, unlike the earlier episode of rejection, his art is now received with understanding and appreciation, generating a sense of expressive and existential resolution. Consequently, the cycle closes in a mood of reconciliation and inner equilibrium. From a broader hermeneutic perspective, the song articulates the idea of art as a transformative and regenerative force. Genuine artistic creation is thus portrayed as a mediating principle capable of elevating the human condition and facilitating reconciliation between the divine and the human realms.

Conclusion

Thus, although at the end of the summer of 2025 I had the opportunity to perform before an audience the cycle of *Six Lieder on Chinese Texts*, Op. 95, a more in-depth analysis of these inspired miniatures revealed additional facets of Paul Richter's compositional personality. His attention to the subtleties of the poetic text, the diversity of musical imagery and timbral nuances, as well as his refined handling of all elements of musical language (melody, harmony, rhythm, agogics, dynamics), become particularly evident. In this cycle

of vocal miniatures, Richter reveals a refined capacity for synthesizing a broad spectrum of distinct yet fundamental images within a concise formal framework. He carefully selects and deploys, at structurally and expressively decisive moments, those components of musical language best suited to articulate the desired affect and poetic imagery with clarity and precision.

I would also like to reiterate the relevance of Türk's analysis (see the aforementioned work, pp. 141-155), which constitutes an important and highly useful complement to the present study. While my own investigation has been oriented primarily toward an interpretative approach, with particular emphasis on orchestration and on the intricate relationship between text and music, Türk's contribution is grounded more firmly in the examination of harmonic architecture and formal design. Taken together, these perspectives prove mutually enriching: his structurally focused analysis provides a solid theoretical foundation, whereas the present research seeks to illuminate the expressive, semantic, and timbral dimensions of the cycle. In this way, the two approaches converge to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the work, integrating both its technical construction and its interpretative potential.

Evidently, the transcription for voice, flute, and piano - with the optional addition of a violin - does not recreate the same atmospheric depth as the orchestral version, whose expanded timbral palette and heightened expressive intensity generate a more substantial impact on the audience. However, the intrinsic beauty and subtle refinement of these miniatures persuaded me to undertake a chamber adaptation, one that proves considerably more practical to stage, requiring a reduced number of performers and, at the same time, a more intimate performance space.

I leave open the prospect of further research into Paul Richter's vocal oeuvre, with potential avenues including the song cycles Op. 4, Op. 84, Op. 103, and Op. 104, all published by MusikNoten-Verlag Latzina (Karlsruhe) in 2000.

I remain hopeful that this concise investigation will foster increased scholarly interest in Richter's oeuvre and artistic legacy, reaffirming his significance as a prominent presence in the musical life of Braşov.

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