

Chord and Discord



THE KILENYI BRUCKNER MEDAL

BRUCKNER'S FOURTH

BRUCKNER'S EIGHTH

THE CONDUCTOR GUSTAV MAHLER

A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY

BY ERNST J. M. LERT

SYMPHONIC CHRONICLE

January 1938

"MY TIME WILL YET COME"



THE KILENYI MAHLER MEDAL

1935 was the seventy-fifth anniversary of the birth of Gustav Mahler. 1936 marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of his death.

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RADIO TALKS

by Gabriel Engel

BRUCKNER'S FOURTH: THE ROMANTIC SYMPHONY

You are about to hear the original version of Anton Bruckner's *Fourth Symphony*, commonly known as the Romantic. It was composed in Bruckner's fiftieth year and is the first of an unbroken line of six major works dominated by a joyful mood. To grasp the spiritual content of this series of happy symphonies a knowledge of the events in Bruckner's life surrounding the conception of the Romantic is necessary, for that symphony marks the sudden turning-point from darkness to light in the master's artwork. Following upon the compositions which preceded it the Romantic is like the sun bursting forth from the clouds after a long stretch of stormy weather.

At first glance there seems to be no logical explanation of this sweeping change in the composer's world outlook. The fact that Bruckner created only joyful works during the ten years of bitter privation shows how little outer things affected his artistic expression. Perhaps the "storm and stress" that raged in the younger Bruckner's soul, desperately battling for unhampered expression, gave way to spiritual calm with the passing years. Yet that does not tell all.

The *Third Symphony* begins with an air of impending tragedy and lays bare an epic of inner strife unparalleled for earnestness save by Beethoven's *Eroica* and *Ninth*. It closes, like those symphonies, in a hymn of triumph. In this convincing victory lies the first clue to the abrupt change that took place in Bruckner's tempest-torn soul just before composing his next symphony, the *Romantic*.

For the moment he himself became the hero who had triumphed in the symphony just completed. Aroused from a long, sullen lethargy, he exclaimed, "Must I continue to endure with bowed head the scorn of a world which does not and will not heed my message? No. I shall go to the master of all masters, Wagner himself, and ask him to accept the dedication of my new symphony. Then the scoffers will be silenced." None but the ingenuous Bruckner could have ventured upon that remarkable pilgrimage to Bayreuth in 1873, when Wagner was so busy with his plans for the Festival Theatre that he had no time even for the score of his own "Ring". Whatever the details of that meeting, it is common knowledge that the *Third Symphony* was accorded the highest praise by Wagner. That was the proudest moment in

Bruckner's life. He never tired of telling how much beer Wagner and he consumed as they discussed the score (I fear, Bruckner drank far more than his share) and how, afterwards, the master of all masters, (as he always referred to Wagner) in a burst of jolly good fellowship, took him out in the garden and showed him his grave.

Thus it was a regenerated, supremely happy Bruckner who returned to Vienna. The scoffers were not silenced, but the scorn of all the rest now seemed as nothing before the wonderful fact of Wagner's recognition! Joyfully Bruckner plunged once more into composition, oblivious of the jeers of his colleagues at the Conservatory, who pointed meaningfully at the trash-basket whenever his huge symphonies were mentioned. They sensed that for some reason Bruckner was now applying himself with greater enthusiasm than ever to musical creation. Teasingly, they would ask him, "Come, now, Bruckner, look at the way you're neglecting yourself. Why don't you get married?" Whereupon feigning the utmost terror he would reply, "But, dear friends, I have no time now. I must finish my *Fourth Symphony!*"

Many years after he had finished the original version of the work, when its premiere was at last being planned, a friend said to him, "Bruckner, I know you must have had some story in mind when you wrote this symphony. It is so vividly descriptive. Come, tell us about it." "Well, let's see," said Bruckner, obligingly, "Perhaps you're right. The first movement is a scene out of the days of chivalry. You know, knights and such things. The second is a rustic love scene. A peasant lad makes love to his sweetheart, but she scorns him. The third movement is a hunt interrupted by a village dance, and the last—the Finale—really, I'm sorry, but I've forgotten just what it was about." In reality Bruckner, who knew and cared nothing about literature, was the most purely musical of all composers. To him a symphony must stand or fall on its merits as sheer music. There is no more need of reading a story background into Bruckner's *Romantic* than into Beethoven's *Pastorale*. Both these works and their various movements bear authorized titles suggesting literary props, but the composer in each case urged extreme caution in drawing any literal analogy between the music and the scenes or events which inspired it.

What reasonably certain comment may then be made upon the *Romantic Symphony*? We may safely say it is a symphony of Nature; that the scenes which inspired it were the charming valleys, luxurious woods, and towering mountain ranges of the composer's own Upper Austria, the region actually called "Bruckner Land" to-day. The first movement is radiant with the rich colors of Bruckner's native landscape on a bright summer day. The music is all sunshine translated into melody, harmony, and rhythm. One senses the rustling of leaves and the singing of birds, but the score resorts to no realistic device beyond the unassuming precedent set by Beethoven in the immortal "Brook Scene" of the *Pastorale*.

In the second movement we find the composer in the very heart of the woods. Under the spell of its deep solitude he gives himself up to meditation and wistfully reviews the past. In the mournfully amorous melody which keeps returning after brief interruptions of elusive, coquettish nature, one can almost visualize the rustic love scene

Bruckner mentioned half in jest when describing this movement. He himself is the unhappy peasant lad, the victim of the maiden's scorn. A gently persistent march rhythm relieves the gloomy burden of this reminiscence and lends the entire movement a striking air of abandon. The sum of its significance is, "Yes, it seemed very tragic at the time, but it was only a passing cloud, after all."

The third part commonly known as the "Hunting Scherzo," is just that. Bruckner described it as a hunt interrupted by a village dance, but it is the very spirit of medieval chivalry we hear rejoicing in glorious sport, during the sway of the march rhythm in the opening section. The interruption reveals not a mere village dance but the very essence of that irresistible triple-pulsation peculiar to the Austrian soil, the *Laendler*, the rhythmic source of the waltz.

The last movement, the inspiration for which Bruckner himself could not recall, begins like the last act of a drama. The plot is at its climax. Over an ominous muttering in the strings, suggesting clouds, there is heard a whirling phrase, like the rushing of the wind. Elements of darkness and storm gather, threatening to dispel the happy mood of the foregoing section. They too prove to be only passing clouds, for presently they give way to sunshine and a clear view of the beautiful landscape that was momentarily obscured. The symphony ends as it began on a note of unmistakable joy.

MAHLER'S SECOND and the KINDERTOTENLIEDER

Gustav Mahler's symphonies and songs abound in passages reflecting a great spiritual loneliness, in moments crying out with a tortured world suffering, and in moods ominous, grim, and austere, evoking visions of Death and the Hereafter. Haunted throughout life by the fear of death, the composer regarded the mystery beyond as a terrifying specter, from whose fearful spell mankind must be freed. Almost frantically he sought to unmask Death, to identify it as merely a miraculous instant in eternal life, as the soul's transition from mortality to immortality. It is the feelings aroused by such metaphysical contemplation that Mahler kept constantly translating into tonal moods.

It was just as natural for Mahler at 42 to compose the mystic, gloomy song-sequence, *Kindertotenlieder*, as it had been for him at 23 to conceive that mighty, wordless drama of the Hereafter, known as the *Resurrection Symphony*. Paraphrased, the title, *Kindertotenlieder*, means songs inspired by the premonition of death hovering over children, in this case, the composer's own first-born child. When the little Maria Anna died soon afterwards at the age of four, Mahler told his friends in great sorrow, "Under the agony of fear that this was destined to come I wrote the *Kindertotenlieder*." Yet these songs are more than the anguished expressions of a father's fears concerning his child's life. They reveal the creative artist Mahler as a ghost-seer, the victim of somnambulism, and reflect to a still more intensified degree the spiritual perplexity and pain which sway the opening movement of the *Resurrection Symphony*. In the symphony all this suffering is finally allayed, appearing transfigured in the halo of eternal glory surrounding the vision of Resurrection; but the weirdly ethereal, piercing sweetness with which the *Kindertotenlieder* closes transcends all

pathos. A farewell whispered to the soul of his dead baby by a broken-hearted father is beyond all consolation. Strangely, perhaps, the five songs which constitute this sequence are not depressing. They have in rich measure that moving, ennobling quality which true beauty invariably possesses, however sad and hopeless the yearning with which the artist has clothed it. As art their appeal is unailing, because they are the sincere expression of a soul-shattering experience vividly realized in the composer's imagination. For Mahler himself they served as auto-biographical confessions which he felt compelled to set down in tone, although to do so meant self-torture hardly less painful than the very occurrence of his child's death afterwards proved. To understand the death-haunted Mahler of the *Kindertotenlieder* one must turn back to the death-fearing Mahler of the *Resurrection Symphony*.

From early youth he had steeped himself in the study of Oriental Philosophy, occultism, and religion. He was intensely concerned with the speculation of those ultimate questions, "What is the life of man? To what end is all his world-suffering? Is it but a colossal joke played upon mortals by Fate?" To the solution of these questions the young composer dedicated his entire soul. Thus the *Resurrection Symphony* begins at the brink of the grave, with a veritable hiss, invoking man's fear of death. The whole first movement is at once a titanic Dance of Death and a retrospect of life's joys and sorrows, longings and despairs. Its frequent outbursts of terror are all the more vivid, being the natural expression of a sensationally inclined mind, nourished upon the fantastic tales of Hoffman, the great German forerunner of our own genius of the grotesque, Edgar Allan Poe.

Many well-authenticated anecdotes are current proving the important role terrors of the imagination played in the life of young Mahler. To relate just one of these: One night, after a triumphal premiere at the opera, he sat in his study for hours, engaged upon a highly exacting problem in orchestration, the musical portrayal of birds and woods voicing the miracle of nature. At last, completely exhausted, he lifted his tired eyes from the intricate web of written notes. His wandering gaze rested upon wreaths of flowers and trophies heaped in profusion upon the table in the center of the room. Slowly an uncanny feeling crept over him. In vain he sought to fix his uneasy gaze once more upon the score before him. Some mysterious influence drew his eyes irresistibly to the table, the appearance of which had suddenly undergone a complete change. He now saw it surrounded by weirdly flickering candles! And in the middle, among the wreaths, lay a human form! A corpse! And its features were his own! With a cry of horror he rushed from the room.

To return to the *Resurrection Symphony*, with a reminder of young Mahler's intense interest in Oriental philosophy and religion; the powerful contrasts of mood which sway the opening movement may very well mirror the struggle that the powers of light and darkness are constantly waging for the soul of man. The movement ends on a note of spiritual exhaustion, the soul's questions concerning the meaning of life still unanswered. In the brief, simple, charming interlude that follows, the listener is introduced to a very human spirit, Mahler the dreamer, the true son of Austria, more particularly, of Vienna, the

city of Johann Strauss. The music is sheer melody throughout. It is directly sprung from the minuet and waltz and takes the place of a long, slow, second movement, which clearly would have been tedious, following upon a first movement as serious and extended as that of the *Resurrection Symphony*.

The third movement, corresponding to the traditional symphonic scherzo, reveals Mahler in a highly satirical mood. It was a frequent practice with him to transplant complete themes from his own songs into his symphonies. The main musical ideas of this particular scherzo are borrowed from a song the text of which ridicules equally the spiritual instability of mankind and the futility of all attempts to uplift mortals to a state of perfection on earth. The question of the significance and purpose of life still remains unanswered at the close of the scherzo. The fourth and fifth movements, in which the singing voices share the chief role with the instruments of the orchestra, present in word and tone the final solution of the problem. Transfigured visions of the Milky Way and the Last Judgment lead to the revelation of Eternal Life after death. Mahler himself searched for years for the most effective means of portraying in music the Resurrection of all humanity. The actual inspiration finally came to him when he heard the choir singing at the funeral services of the great conductor, Von Buelow. The text of that chorus became the foundation of Mahler's own Resurrection text. The overwhelming grandeur of the symphony's conclusion witnesses the fervor and sincerity of Mahler's faith in life both on earth and in the Hereafter.

As the composer desired that the five songs of the *Kindertotenlieder* never be presented except as an unbroken sequence, they will be so given this evening. They will be followed by the lighter second and third movements of the *Resurrection Symphony*, the former of which, a charming, sunny interlude, has often been performed by great orchestras independently of the symphony.

Performances Announced for Season 1937—1938

- Boston Symphony, Mahler's *Fifth*. (Serge Koussevitzky, Conductor.)
 Boston Symphony: Bruckner's *Seventh*. (Serge Koussevitzky, Conductor.)
 Cleveland Symphony: Bruckner's *Seventh*. (Artur Rodzinski, Conductor.)
 Chicago Symphony: Wolf—Prelude and Entr'acte, from *Der Corregidor*, Italian Serenade, Songs with Orchestra. Symphonic Poem, *Penthesilea*.
 Mahler—Andante and Scherzo from Symphony No. 1, D Major, *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, Rondo from Symphony No. 7 in E Minor. (Frederick Stock, Conductor. Soloist: Kerstin Thorborg.)
 Cincinnati Symphony: Mahler's *Sixth*. (Eugene Goossens, Conductor.)
 Illinois Symphony: Mahler—*Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, (Sonia Sharnova, Soloist; Albert Goldberg, Conductor.)
 Los Angeles Philharmonic: Mahler's *Second*. (Otto Klemperer, Conductor.)
 Philadelphia Orchestra: Bruckner's *Fifth* or *Seventh*. (Eugene Ormandy, Cond.)
 Philadelphia Orchestra: Mahler—*Das Lied von der Erde*. (Eugene Ormandy, Conductor. Soloists: Enid Szanthe and Charles Kullman.)
 Swedish Choral Club: Bruckner's *Te Deum*. (Harry T. Carlson, Conductor.)

BRUCKNER'S EIGHTH SYMPHONY

By John N. Burk

This article is reprinted by permission of the author and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. It appeared in the Program Notes of the Boston Symphony Orchestra of April 16th and 17th, 1937.

This symphony, begun in 1884 and finished in revision in 1890, was first performed by the Philharmonic Orchestra in Vienna, December 18, 1892, Hans Richter conducting. The symphony had its first performance in this country by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Max Fiedler conductor, March 12, 1909. There was a second performance "by request" in the following month (April 24). The symphony was revived by Serge Koussevitzky on March 22, 1929, and again performed April 22, 1932.

It is scored for three flutes, three oboes, three clarinets, three bassoons and contrabassoon, eight horns (four interchangeable with tenor and bass tubas), three trumpets, three trombones, contrabass tuba, timpani, triangle, cymbals, three harps and strings.

The symphony is dedicated to "His imperial and royal apostolic Majesty Francis Joseph I, Emperor of Austria and apostolic King of Hungary".

WHEN he reached the age of sixty, Anton Bruckner's seven symphonies, into which he had put the heart's blood of a lifetime, had had scant attention—scant performance or none at all. At the end of 1884 (December 30), the Seventh Symphony was brought out by Artur Nikisch at the Leipzig Gewandhaus. The symphony made a sensation, was performed in German and Austrian cities, and further afield. At last Bruckner found himself famous. The Brahms camp, which had heretofore scarcely deigned to notice the satellite of Wagner who presumed to write symphonies of Wagnerian lengths, now honored Bruckner with their open hostility.

In the same year of the success of the Seventh (1885), Bruckner was at work upon his Eighth (which occupied him in the years 1884-86). He rewrote it in the winter of 1889-90.* The Eighth Symphony had its first performance in Vienna, December 18, 1892, by the Philharmonic Orchestra which, until the advent of the Seventh Symphony, had carefully excluded Bruckner from its programmes. Hans Richter conducted. The success of the symphony was such, even in this Brahms stronghold, that even the ferocious Eduard Hanslick, while denouncing the music in the terms fully expected of him, was compelled to acknowledge it a popular triumph. "How was the symphony received? Boisterous rejoicing, waving of handkerchiefs from those standing, innumerable recalls, laurel wreaths, etc." Hanslick pointedly strode from the hall before the *Finale*. Another critic called it "The masterpiece of the Bruckner style." Hugo Wolf wrote: "The work renders all criticism futile; the *Adagio* is absolutely incomparable." And Kalbeck of the opposite clan, henchman and destined biographer of Brahms, was forced to admit Bruckner "a master of instrumentation" whose symphony was "worthy of its sole position on the programme."

*The Eighth Symphony does not bring up the problem of authenticity in revision about which so much has lately been written in Central Europe. The "improvements" in orchestration by Bruckner's pupil, the conductor Ferdinand Löwe, apply particularly to the Fifth and Ninth Symphonies. The revision of the Eighth seems to have been Bruckner's own.

The Bruckner who had been an unknown in Vienna for so many years became a public figure, a celebrity whom one pointed out on the streets. But Bruckner never acquired city ways. He never changed his manner of dress nor lost his provincial accent. To the end he was a true son of the small Austrian village of Ansfelden. The following description of his quarters and daily routine in Vienna is taken from the monograph of Gabriel Engel:

"He lived in a small, simple apartment of two rooms and kitchen which were kept in order by an old faithful servant, Kathi, who for twenty years had spent a few hours each day attending to the bachelor's household. In the blue-walled room where he worked stood his old grand piano, a harmonium, a little table and some chairs. The floor and most of the furniture were littered with music. On the walls hung a large photograph and an oil painting of himself. From this room a door led to his bedroom, the walls of which were covered with pictures of his 'beloved Masters.' On the floor stood a bust of himself which he was pleased to show his friends, who relate that he would place his hand upon its brow, smile wistfully, and say: 'Good chap!' Against the wall stood an English brass bed presented to him by his pupils. This he called 'My Luxury.' At home he would go dressed even more comfortably than on the street, merely donning a loose coat if a guest was announced. Kathi knew exactly at what hours guests were welcome. If the Master was composing, no one was permitted to disturb him. At other times he went in person to meet the caller at the door.

"Bruckner worked, as a rule, only in the morning; but sometimes he would get up during the night to write down an idea that had suddenly occurred to him. Possessing no lamp, he did this night work by the light of two wax candles; but if Kathi saw traces of these in the morning he scolded him severely, warning him to be more careful about his health. When she insisted that he compose only in the daytime, he would say contemptuously: 'What do you know about such things? I have to compose whenever an idea comes to me.'

"Sometimes, other answers failing him, he tried naively to impress her with his importance, crying: 'Do you know whom you are talking to? I am Bruckner!' 'And I am Kathi,' she retorted; and that was the end of the argument. After his death, she said of him: 'He was rude, but good!'"

The following description of the Eighth Symphony was written by Alfred H. Meyer for the *Boston Transcript*:

"Bruckner has sometimes been accused of formlessness. In reality no criticism could be wider of the mark. His handling of form is merely different from that of symphonists like Beethoven. Witness the course of this symphony in C minor. A single note, sustained through several measures, serves as introduction. Basses sing the first theme. It comes in low register, at first hesitatingly, then in full melodic contour. It is gloomy, forbidding, of the essence of tragedy. There are several repetitions, there is some development. Then the second theme emerges. It is in G major, a typically Brucknerian theme. Its first motif com-

prises two quarter-notes followed by a triplet of three quarters, a formula which Bruckner especially liked. This theme is the brightest in the symphony—a theme of cheerfulness tinged with sentiment. Bruckner uses it persistently in this first movement, often in inversion. That is, in descending form, whereas originally it is chiefly ascending. An important subdivision of the theme occurs considerably later in horns followed by wood winds over a *pizzicato* bass in triplets. Cheerfulness has now gone out of the mood, which is one of quiet solemnity. The development treats these themes by every known contrapuntal and rhythmical device, mainly in the order in which they originally occur, with a repetition of suggestions of the first theme near the end, to lead into the recapitulation. The recapitulation is much less a direct repetition of themes than is the custom of the classical composers. The first theme is now introduced in high wood winds, where at first it entered in low basses. Not only is the register changed, but it is now heard also in inversion. And it comes not in the direct forthright form of the beginning, but in a more developed state. Further, there is less obvious preparation for the second theme, which enters in a solo trumpet, '*ausdrucksvoll*' (expressively).

"In the symphonies before the Eighth, Bruckner followed his first movement with an *Adagio*. In the Eighth and the Ninth a *Scherzo* succeeds. The gloom at the end of the first movement is too deep to permit a slow movement to come next. Rightly or wrongly the appellation '*Der deutsche Michel*' has come to be associated with this *Scherzo*.* To translate the phrase into 'The German Michael' is to lose all its significance. It represents the naive stupidity, the ponderous and thick-headed humor which one associates with country bumpkins. The theme of the principal division of the *Scherzo* well deserves the label '*Der deutsche Michel*', for its blunt, awkward, square-toed, or better square-headedness. But it is cast against a background of fantastic and almost fairy-like delicacy. It receives due portion of repetition and development. Of the Trio Bruckner is reported to have said, '*Der deutsche Michel träumt ins Land hinaus*'—'The German Michael dreams (or would it be better under the circumstances to translate "*träumt*" by "stumbles".) his way into the country.' The theme, at first in the strings, is beautifully lyrical. The *Scherzo* is then literally repeated.

"The *Adagio* is one of the longest slow movements in existence, and one of the most lovely. One can best understand it by remembering that it consists of three separate developments, each more extended and more climactic than the preceding, of the two themes of the movement. The first theme is of exceedingly long breath, haunting, pleading, in character. It is introduced by the first violins. The

*Among the many "interpretations" laid upon the symphony by the analysts, with references to "The Æschylean Prometheus," "The all-loving Father of mankind," etc., was the characterization of the *Scherzo* as typical of "The German Michael." "*Der deutsche Michel*" is the plain, honest, lumbering peasant type of Germany. Hanslick saw a breach here in the armor of Brucknerian enthusiasm and wrote: "If a critic had spoken this blasphemy, he would probably have been stoned to death by Bruckner's disciples; but the composer himself gave this name, the German Michael, to the *Scherzo*, as may be read in black and white in the programme." These were unfair tactics. Bruckner gave no clue whatsoever in his published score. (Ed.)

second theme is sung by 'cellos, as if in answer to the pleading of the first. It too is wondrously lyric. Near the height of the third development, brasses intone the 'Siegfried *motiv*' from Wagner's 'Ring.' The coda is given to the first theme.

"The *Finale* is grandiose, a culmination in the truest sense. The figure with which it begins (suggestive of galloping horses) continues throughout the long, warlike first theme. A second theme is in part lyric, in part choral-like and churchly in mood. The development is exceedingly complex contrapuntally, with the choral *motiv* frequently heard throughout. The recapitulation makes a powerful entry with the first theme, while the second enters as a *fugato*. The main climax of the whole work comes in the coda, which is begun by trombones proclaiming the first theme of the Symphony against the trumpets with the theme of the *Scherzo*, and ends at the last with a combination of the main themes of the four different movements in a triumphant C major."

GOELLERICH-AUER BRUCKNER BIOGRAPHY COMPLETED

Just thirty years ago Max Auer wrote the first skeletal version of his Bruckner biography. It was merely a hasty, brief gathering of the outstanding facts in Bruckner's career, calculated to fill the gap in the still sparse Bruckner literature then available to the layman. It was written in the language of the average human being, little interested in the technical verbiage of the usual musical *vademecum* of the day, drily compiled for the avid music-student.

The death of August Goellerich some fifteen years ago left the whole treasury of Bruckner documents he had amassed in the course of a life-time to his friend and collaborator, Max Auer. The latter had long since vowed to devote his whole life-work to the shaping of an exhaustive and authoritative account of Bruckner's life and work, based upon the incontrovertible evidence of these documents.

As volume after volume of this Bruckner treasury made its appearance in beautifully printed and bound format, the world of music expressed its amazed delight and hoped nothing would occur to interrupt Max Auer's inspired work of authorship and editing.

The fourth and final part of this monumental Bruckner biography has at last been published.* Heavily documented as its predecessors, written for layman and scholar alike, and containing a host of musical illustrations, it offers a wealth of fact, analysis, and anecdote, which will undoubtedly be for many years to come a rich source for anyone engaged in Bruckner research. As a special feature, of particularly timely interest, the final volume contains a chapter which records the progress of the Bruckner movement outside Austria practically to the present day. Beyond all question, the biography, Max Auer's life-work, is a great and lasting contribution to the literature of music.

*For full discussion, see *Chord and Discord*, Nov. 1932.

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THE CONDUCTOR GUSTAV MAHLER

A Psychological Study by Dr. Ernst J. M. Lert

No attempt (as far as I know) has yet been made at a scientific analysis of orchestral conducting in the light of modern psychology. There are, to be sure, textbooks on conducting, but they teach only the technicalities of the profession. There are also histories of conducting, but they are, in the main, mere records of the development of those technicalities. As for the numerous biographies of outstanding conductors—these are hardly more than fictional life-stories, records of triumphs and struggles, eulogies or arraignments of the individual art of their subjects, achieved by citations from newspaper criticisms, edited and colored by the personal bias of the biographer. In short, there exists no scientifically reliable description of the artistic nature of any conductor's work.

Almost twenty years ago, in the course of a short biography, I tried to trace the development of the personality of a typical operatic conductor.* This juvenile attempt, however, stopped at the point where the real task should have begun: the psychological analysis of conducting in general and of Lohse's in particular.

I shall now try to make up for that omission of long ago by analyzing Gustav Mahler's art of conducting.

Some will ask, "Why Gustav Mahler? Why not Toscanini or Stokowski?" Gustav Mahler the conductor is unknown to the present generation, for he left no gramophone records of any of his interpretations, while Toscanini and Stokowski are still here to testify to the relative accuracy of any analysis of their conducting art.

True; yet while Toscanini and Stokowski are with us, Mahler, the conductor, stands aloof in the distance, a safer historical subject, because he is free from the distortions of partisanship still inevitable with the other two. Besides, Mahler's published correspondence is a fund of evidence, a veritable revelation of his approach toward music. His compositions, his method of scoring are incontrovertible facts illuminating his mentality as conductor. Finally, and perhaps most important and intriguing of all, Mahler's career as a conductor reached its peak just when the European mentality was passing through the crisis between Victorian bourgeois-individualism and twentieth century mass-mindedness.

Philosophically, Mahler was an idealist in the days when Schiller's individualistic idealism was being supplanted by Hegel's and his school's absolute idealism, that world outlook which later degenerated into a collectivistic dogmatism out of which, in turn, sprang all the pseudo-philosophic "isms". Therefore, Specht's elaboration on the following anecdote is, at best, a sorry joke indeed. At the close of a concert featuring Mahler's *Third* Symphony, Richard Strauss, who had conducted, said jestingly, "During the first movement I had a vision of interminable battalions of workers marching in the (socialistic) May-Parade at the Prater." Quite obtusely Specht adds, he is sure that Mahler, had he

*Otto Lohse ein Deutscher Kapellmeister (Leipzig, Breitkopf und Haertel, 1918)

heard this Straussian *bon-mot*, would have exclaimed: "That's it! I didn't know it myself until this moment, but that's it!" (Strange! Because the printed score of this first movement bears the programmatic title: "Pan awakens, summer marches in.")

What a hopeless misconception on the part of Specht to imply that Mahler hi-jacked Marxist music from the Kurt Weills and Hanns Eislers before they were born. He has literally made "Capital" of the Absolute. That Mahler the idealist should have portrayed in tone masses of proletarians marching for higher wages and shorter hours is simply unthinkable. Mahler's marches (like Beethoven's) celebrate the progress of no man-made factors. In his music it is only the march itself that marches. To Mahler, whose entire boyhood was spent in the atmosphere of a military barracks, the march pulsation was a general human expression, to use his own favorite term, a "sound of nature"—*Naturlaut* (Letters 215). "It cannot be denied", he wrote, "that our music involves the 'purely human' (all that belongs to it, including 'Thinking') (sic!) If we wish to make music, we must not think of painting, poetic imagery, description. By making music one expresses only the integral (i. e. the feeling, thinking, breathing, suffering) human being (Letters 277). To him music is beyond all that is matter-of-fact. "The realm of music starts where the dark, shadowy feelings assume full sway, at the threshold of that 'other world', where things are no longer bounded by time and space" (Letters 187). So thought the mind that called Schopenhauer's explanation of music (as expressing "the essence of all things") the best definition of music (Letters 126); the mind which contended that the musician lives "inwardly" (Letters 202) with little interest for and capacity of understanding the outside-world. (Mahler unconsciously proved the truth of this when he traveled through Italy without visiting museums and cathedrals (Letters 482).

A musician standing at the borderline between two civilizations, he is compelled to admit programmatic tendencies in modern music: "There is no modern music since Beethoven which has not an inner program," says he (Letters 296), but proceeds at once to separate himself from the tone-painters and describers. "You are right in saying that my music eventually arrives at a program as the ultimate revelation of a dominating conception, while with Richard Strauss such a program is presented at the outset as a given task to be performed In evolving a major musical conception I always come to the point where I have to reach for the 'Word' as the *indispensable bearer of my musical ideas* (Letters 228).

This is a blank affirmation of Mahler's conception of music both as spiritual and rhetorical. According to him, music does not imitate, it tells; it evokes no reality, but expressing the world beyond our senses, only the idea of reality.

Corroborating my description of Mahler as a mystic* the recent Mahler book by Bruno Walter tells us that his favorite readings were Lotze's *Mikrokosmos*, Fechner's *Zend Avesta* and *Nanna, oder das Seelenleben der Pflanzen*, Eduard von Hartmann's *Philosophy of the Unconscious*, and the philosophical poems of the mystic Angelus Silesius; philosophers all, and, if not outspoken mystics, with a decided inclination

*Chord and Discord, December 1936.

toward mysticism. Mahler studied these authors to confirm his own painful experiences of the double personality of the limited man and the limitless artist.

It is his rhetorical conception of music which makes him feel so close to Siegfried Lipiner, a Viennese dramatist. Lipiner treated great mythical subjects (Adam, Hippolytos) as transcendental philosophies personified. His characters are not lifelike individuals. They are impersonal megaphones declaiming high sounding commonplaces, packing involved ideas into skeleton-formulas, much like Wagner's philosophic libretto-slogans. Lipiner, also a case of borderline-crisis between Victorian Romanticism and modern mass-ideology, anticipated the manner of the collectivistic expressionists, while remaining philosophically the enlightened individualist. His practice, as dramatist, of expanding the individual to a universal symbol brought him into close kinship with Mahler; his skeleton-language literally crying out for fulfillment through flesh and blood, or through music, was thoroughly Mahlerian. "My dear Siegfried", Mahler wrote to him (Letters 283), "You are really creating music. Nobody will ever understand you better than the musician, and I may add, particularly myself! Sometimes it strikes me as almost absurd how akin my own 'music' is to yours."

An important admission!

Mahler confesses his rhetorical conception of music as an expression paralleling transcendental poetry achieved by simple, sloganlike formulas. In fact, for his texts Mahler not only used, but himself produced such poetry as evidenced both by his adoption of humble folklore verse from the *Wunderhorn*, and by the creation of such lines as his own (*Vater, sieh an die Wunden mein: Kein Wesen lass verloren sein*—Letters 161). In the *Eighth* Symphony his treatment of the mighty medieval hymn: *Veni Creator Spiritus* and the transfiguration passage from *Faust* evidence the workings of this rhetorical conception on an exalted plane.

Mahler's abstract idealism in life and music has been demonstrated.

II.

"But Mahler was attacked for his stark realism as conductor and composer", objects my honored opponent.

"The real mystic is the real realist", I answer with the New York lady of a former article of mine.* Unfortunately the superficial textbook-and-magazine-philosophers fail to realize that the "idea of reality" includes "reality" as an object to be spiritualized and this process of spiritualizing is a mental struggle of stirring passion. Mahler's despotism, his sudden angers, his terrible nervousness, his unbearable sarcasm, his fanatical insistence on the accurate execution of all his intentions, his (apparent) absentmindedness, his insatiable greed for correcting and improving,—all these personal features of the musician,

**Chord and Discord*, December 1936.

which so often contradicted the soft hearted man, are but symptoms of his enforced struggle to project ephemeral reality into the timeless form of the idea. He himself relates the following significant instance:

Taking part in the funeral services for Buelow he hears the chorus sing "*Auferstehen, ja auferstehen*" (*Arise, yea, arise*). These words move him profoundly; he has found the finale for his *Second Symphony*, that finale which expresses the resurrection of all flesh on Judgment Day. This personal experience at the obsequies of an acquaintance (Buelow was nothing more to Mahler) combines with his ever-present childhood impressions of marches and military signals, and they become, through his subtle alchemy, abstracted and magnified into the "Great Roll-Call" and the tremendous Resurrection chorus of all humanity.

As modern directors of Shakespearean plays, heedless of the clock of time, produce *Julius Caesar* in modern costumes and uniforms; as Connelly, in *The Green Pastures*, merely expressed the Bible in terms and characters of New York's Harlem of today, so Mahler, the first modern artist to conceive humanity as an army marching to its destiny, Resurrection, midst the fanfare of military trumpets, read into Beethoven's *Ninth* the mass-minded orchestral message of spiritual propaganda for the super-national unification of humanity. Reality and ideology: in every fiber of his being the typical Austrian, he was a traditional individualist, yet he claimed New York, the world-core of modern standardized collectivism as his "spiritual homestead" (Letters 393).

Another proof of his spiritual world outlook is the almost complete absence of romance in his life. We know that many conductors virtually live on the sex-appeal they exercise on their audience and on the female singers. In Mahler's case we know of but one romance during his entire career as conductor prior to his marriage. That lone love incident occurred in his early twenties and so disrupted his inner life that he fought down and overcame the sensual impulses it evoked as though they had been his worst enemies. He married rather late to remain a one-woman-man to the end of his life. Thus the boy who wanted to become a martyr lived up to his idealism until he died. As was his life so is his music—never sensual, and even so was his conducting.

Beside that of other famous conductors, whose spiritual life oscillates between their scores and friendly bridge, *skat* or *tarock*-tables, Mahler's mental education seems to have excelled by far the usual learning of professional musicians. Nevertheless he reveals himself exclusively the musician to the uttermost boundaries of his rather considerable learning. His letters show an almost complete absence of humor, much as the letters of Wagner (but unlike those of Buelow or Reger). He expresses his thoughts by means of keen formulas tinged with sentiment and, often, with violent sarcasm. Whatever the subject of his commentary, he always returns to the two integral problems of his personality: the double life of the musician and the problem of expressing a given reality by music (*program in absolute music*). Yet he fails consistently to find any solution, or, at least, any new or convincing solution.

Furthermore, his life and his letters betray the notoriously poor taste characteristic of musicians in all matters outside of music. He

himself admits that the musician has no appreciation of the visible world. Strangely enough even in the world of the audible Mahler is not highly discriminating. It is very significant that he speaks of Halevy's *La Juive* as "a wonderful, sublime work; I number it among the loftiest ever created."

III:

Although idealism is a permanent feature with Mahler, the expression of this *Weltanschauung* (world outlook) is anything but permanent. Like most idealistic artists he shows no striking, deviating development. *Das klagende Lied* and *Das Lied von der Erde* are, from conception to orchestration, unmistakable expressions of the same mentality through the same style. Mahler's development is one of expansion, of increasing depth, refinement, and differentiation, without any accompanying material change or growth in his artistic personality. Beethoven started in the Haydn style, and Wagner in the Meyerbeer manner, but Mahler the composer started as Mahler.

So too was it with Mahler the conductor. His conception of the works he interpreted was the same, from Olmuetz (1882) to New York (1907). It was not the matter, but only the manner of expressing them that changed as he matured.

Mahler connoisseurs will shake their heads and point to Mahler's violent, often grotesque movements of baton, hand, head, feet, body, and eyes during his early years, in contrast to his statuesque, almost affected-looking immobility towards the end of his career. It is true that Mahler (when I, as a little boy, saw him conduct at Vienna) made upon me the weird impression of a frenzied gnome. He frightened and fascinated me at the same time. Yet many years after, when he conducted the premiere of his *Sixth Symphony* (perhaps the most typically Mahlerian of all his works) his statuesque immobility before the huge orchestra, even when it exploded into an indescribable turmoil of temperament and despair, created just the same uncanny impression, nay, an even more frightening one, because a single impulsive movement of his hand or head would have relieved the almost unbearable tension. That immobility of his was anything but calmness. Frau Mahler relates how at Essen, at the general-rehearsal of the same symphony, Mahler "ran up and down in his dressing-room, irrepressible sobs literally bursting from his lips" (Letters 13).

That external change (his abandonment of the baton-waving manner) has no counterpart in any inner development. Mahler was at first little understood by the orchestra because he did not "beat" the trodden path of tradition. Any given aggregation of performers, prior to a proper grasp of his style, had to be trained to the intensity of polyphonic thought and expression which was Mahler's orchestral ideal. Mahler too had to find the proper technique for his new polyphonic method of handling an orchestra. Gradually the orchestras grew accustomed to this new style. Eventually he found that he could eliminate most motion as superfluous and concentrate on that subtle *fluidum* which establishes a deeper communion between leader and his men than any amount of waving and signaling.

"But Mahler did change continually!" I hear many object. "Why, he even changed his own works!" Well let us see what Mahler has to

say for himself on that score. He writes to Bruno Walter from New York, 1909 (Letters 417): "Just as I want my scores edited anew every fifth year, so I require fresh preparation each time for conducting the scores of other composers. My only solace is that I REALLY NEVER HAD TO ABANDON MY WAY FOR A NEW ONE, BUT WAS ALWAYS IMPELLED TO CONTINUE ON ALONG THE OLD PATH."

The "changes" he made never affected the meaning of a work, they served only to intensify, to clarify that meaning for the immediate environment by means of the particular group of players on a given occasion and in accordance with that relentlessly evolving spirit of change which we call the "march of time".

IV.

"The essence of every reproduction is exactness", Mahler used to say in his crisp, slogan-like manner, apparently contradicting another favorite expression of his: "The best music is not written in the notes." Yet a reconciliation between these two apparently clashing ideas is not out of the question. A subtle, invisible band joins them inseparably. That uniting psychological force is the conception of the artwork by its conductor-interpreter.

Since our understanding of the words or works of others depends entirely on the sum of our inborn individuality and our private fund of acquired experience, we cannot grasp their "exact" meaning. We can only understand them as our own mind receives them. This personally tinged understanding of a thing is, in fact, our "conception" of it. Not only does our personal color qualify the "view-point" with which we regard a work, but so do impulsive changes we unconsciously inflict upon the original by our own individuality.

To the interpreting artist the Re-Production of a work is "correct", if all the written notes and marks of the author are reproduced literally. This process is, after all, merely technical; and it can be, is being, and always has been done by every technically reliable artisan, for

"He has the parts well in hand,"

But

"Alas, without the spiritual band."

This "spiritual band" is the sole key to the inner meaning of the original, that "best music not written in the notes" which even the utmost of sheer technical prowess cannot conjure forth in sound. This imponderable quintessence of an artwork achieves revelation through that power of mental assimilation possessed only by one able to switch off his own ego completely in order to merge it with the ego dominating the work itself. Furthermore, an intense power on this part of this new, assimilated self is required for the expression of this quintessence through the actual orchestral re-production. The most amazing example of such genius and power in the world today is Arturo Toscanini. Yet Toscanini is a realist by nature, mentality, and education. His intuition functions exactly like that of a great scientist; his power of re-producing an artwork is the very instinctiveness of nature itself. In short, he possesses the supreme faculty of *Einfühlung*, i. e., of so merging his own ego with the object of his attention that his own life becomes one with the life of that object. However, the madman who identifies him-

self with Napoleon, and Toscanini, who assimilates his spirit to Verdi's *Requiem* so that Verdi's own spirit seems to interpret his work, are certainly two opposite poles, although they revolve on the same axis.

Though the power of such identification of work and interpreter was not natural to Gustav Mahler, he often came quite close to it. He once wrote to Bruno Walter: "In a word: one who does not have genius, should keep away from the work; but whoever has it needn't be afraid of anything Any prattling back and forth about the matter strikes me as if one, who has made a baby, racks his brain afterwards over the question whether it is really a baby and whether it was produced with the right intentions, etc. The thing is simple. He just loved and—could. Period. And if one doesn't love and can't, why, no baby comes of it. Period again. As one is and can—so the child will be. Once again: Period!" (Letters 277).

V.

The idealist is, by nature, a split-personality. Therefore, that happy fusion of work and interpretation, which is the prerogative of the objective, naive, realistic artist Toscanini, was denied to Mahler the idealist.*

Mahler himself throws considerable light upon this matter in the following synthesis of cited extracts.

"What is it that thinks within us? And what is it that acts within us?" (Letters 415.)

"Why do I believe that I am free while I am imprisoned by the walls of my character as in a cell?" (Walter, p. 90.)

"I experience strange things with all of my works while conducting them. Wondering curiosity, as poignant as a burning sensation, takes hold of me. What is that world which mirrors such sounds and shapes? **BUT ONLY WHILE I AM CONDUCTING!** For afterwards, it is all extinguished suddenly; (otherwise, one could hardly resume living). This strange reality of visions, which suddenly melts away like the chimera of a dream, is the deepest cause of the split-life of an artist. Condemned to a twofold existence, woe to him if life and dream become confused. for then he must answer terribly for the laws of the one world in the other." (Letters 419)

This discord between man and artist, this eternal struggle between reality and the idea of reality is the bitter legacy of transgressing idealism.

Here is the key to Mahler's individual conception of music. Here is his contradictory position between a world which has been and a world to come. Here is the intuition which made his interpretation, even of the old classics, point to the future.

And not to a happy future. He foresaw the breakdown of our civilization—through the all-too-comprehensive realization of absolute idealism; hence his fundamental sarcasm, perhaps the most striking feature of the man and the musician. "Why did you live? Why did you suffer? Is all this nothing but a gross, terrible JEST? We must solve these problems in some way, if we are to continue living—even if we shall only continue dying." (Letters 189.)

*Notwithstanding the great progress of modern psychology, the best psychological explanation of the difference between the realistic and idealistic artist is still Schiller's study, "On Naive and Sentimental Poetry."

Not only did this outlook on a world, present and future, express itself in his own music, but he also imposed it on whatever music he conducted. Its constant theme was the conflict between two worlds, a tragic struggle, in which triumph meant the attainment of the "other world, where things are no longer bounded by time and space," in short, the world where the *unio mystica* is a fact.

This is the goal toward which all his symphonies strive. No less appropriately, he might also be called the *finale-conductor* because everything he conducted was subjected to a dominating *Finale-concept*. Everything else in the world itself was subordinated to that idea. Take his production of Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro*. Some great French *bon-motier* said of the play by Beaumarchais: "*Voilà, c'est la révolution qui marche.*" Mahler revealed in Mozart's *opera buffa* the bitter social arraignment of Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe*. From the sarcastic, devilish hurry of the overture he continuously built up to the slow movement of the finale, where pure humanity opened yearning eyes for a moment only to be eclipsed again by the commonplace of the noisy *stretta-finale*, implying that the old order will go on and on. The central idea of rebellion was ever present. All the *sforzati*, sudden *ff* and *pp*, all the apparently sweet melodies with their bitter underlying meaning, were aimed at that climax. Specht (p. 95), describing Mahler's reading of this work, only mentions how the little wedding-march seemed irritated by "accents of stinging painfulness", played against the "dark background of a silent crowd of people behind the iron garden-fence, while two big bowls of sinister red fire lit up the wedding-ceremony". Actually, Mahler even reinterpolated the original trial in court and composed biting *secco-recitatives* for it, to point out the modern revolutionary trend of Mozart's work.

To him the *demiourgos* was in everything. Since he was convinced that the central idea created the artwork according to an architectonical plan (*blueprint*), everything had to be subordinated to that idea. To Mahler there could be no independent episodes in an art-work. His was this Fascist ideology half a century before Fascism; everything functions only as a cog in the machine of the artwork's microcosm.

His absolute unity of idea and execution, his despotic insistence on architectonic structure, his *finale-conducting* were but the natural consequences of the split-personality of the idealist striving and struggling for final amalgamation.

The clash of reality and idea is the very core of dramatics. Mahler the musician dramatized everything he conducted. Yet the factors of his dramatizations were never personified. He never portrayed the struggle of petty humans, but only of ideas. Impersonal abstracts alone clashed in the world of his creation.

VI.

What were the technical means employed by Mahler during a performance to transmit to an orchestra his complicated conception of a musical composition?

Analyzing a conductor's art from a technical viewpoint means testing it for the following:

His sense of rhythm, his sense of tempo, his dynamics, his agogics, his reading of harmony and counterpoint, his treatment of orchestration.

Rhythm is music in its most primitive state. When the impish, impious Buelow, punning on the Bible and Goethe, exclaimed: "In the beginning there was Rhythm", he unwittingly uttered a scientific truth, amply corroborated in our own day: viz., that the first musical expression of animal and man is purely rhythmic. The drum is the earliest musical instrument; the dance is the very backbone of music. Rhythm retains its natural, pristine correctness so long as it is the pulse of music performed by a coordinated group of musicians. The moment an appointed leader superimposes his individual rhythmic conception upon the group's collective (almost instinctive) sense of rhythm, there arise discrepancies in the styles of performance. Rhythm now becomes a problem. As early as the sixteenth century critics protested against the "arbitrary rhythmical movements" of the conductors. The sense of rhythm is inborn. It may be subtilized, but it cannot be acquired.

Toscanini brought a copy of his recording of Mozart's symphony in D major (Koechel 385) to Italy and played it for his colleagues. The first movement of the symphony finishes in the middle of a record, leaving no indication as to the exact moment the second section will begin. Involuntarily the Maestro, who had been beating the time during this record, with the close of the first movement, gave the up-beat for the second section on the very dot it actually began. This showed that for Toscanini the pause between the two movements had an exact rhythmical value. At a concert this pause cannot be observed faithfully because of the disturbing conditions in the reactions of the audience. In the enforced calm of the recording laboratory, however, it can be so observed. Originally measured before a living orchestra, this pause was reproduced in exact facsimile by the same conductor, although he now beat the time to a mere mechanical instrument—the gramophone.

Toscanini is, of course, an extreme example of rhythmical sensitivity matched by few human beings. Yet his case shows that there exist natural laws of rhythm, still awaiting adequate scientific clarification, although they function unerringly in the subconscious of exceptional musicians and music-lovers.

I can recall striking instances of Mahler's rhythmical logic.

Pauses emphasized by *Fermatas*, technical marks of prolongation, separate the three fanfaresque chords which begin the overture to *The Magic Flute*. When Mahler finished the first chord, the ensuing pause was so long that I looked up from my score to find out why the conductor did not continue. Just then he attacked the second chord. Now came a pause that seemed still longer. When the third chord finally sounded the audience had grasped the idea Mahler wished to convey: the solemnity of the "trumpet"-call. He was the herald whose pronouncement awaited the reaction of his listeners. "Compose your thoughts for this message!" Thus Mahler established the central-idea of the Realm of Sarastro.

When, after the fugue, the same three chords returned, Mahler made the pauses even longer than before. That was quite logical and natural; for the mind, having been swept along with the tide of the *Allegro*, was now in a turmoil and needed still more time to recompose itself. Out of this breathlessness the central-idea must emerge again, more impressive and clear than at first. Its solemnity must be revealed on a still higher level.

A similar rhythmical presentation of an idea by Mahler during his early years (Leipzig) has been transmitted by Max Steinitzer (Stefan, page 43). "It was something to remember, the way he took the first four measures of the great Leonore-Overture (No. 3). In the most simple manner each one of the descending octaves became a moment of increasing import for us, until finally the low F-sharp lay revealed in its majestic, calm immobility."

These few instances (I could have cited many more) suffice to show how Mahler made rhythm a primary spiritual element of his interpretations. Rhythm to him was not the natural pulse-beat of a composition but rather the rhetorical accentuation of the evolving content of the work. His was a logical, perhaps a psychological, but certainly not an instinctive treatment of rhythm. Therefore the rhythmic element was a highly subtle matter for him. It would oscillate between rigid strictness and reckless daring. It was dominated by thematic considerations alone. Even beneath an apparent rigidity there was a world of almost imperceptible degrees of pulsation that was in open disagreement with the normal rhythmic beat of the music, sacrificing that to intensify the music's underlying spiritual content. He treated rhythm in the works of Wagner and Beethoven just as he did in his own symphonies: with freedom and flexibility, introducing startling accents and irregular melodic scansions.

In a word, Mahler's reading of rhythm was primarily rhetorical, not uniformly measured. He unhesitatingly disobeyed the letter of a score in this respect so that he might be more faithful to its spirit.

VII.

Tempi! The first disputed and still the most debatable of all the characteristics of conducting. "He takes all the tempi. wrong!" is the commonest criticism one conductor whispers to you about another, implying that the so-called *right tempo* is the *sine qua non* of all correct interpretation.

When is the tempo *right*?

The great Monteverdi, in the preface to his eighth book of Madrigals (1683) distinguishes between two different species of tempo; the tempo "della mano" (of the hand) and the tempo "dell 'affetto dell' animo" (affected by the mind). By this delphic distinction Monteverdi means the tempo beaten by the hand of the conductor as opposed to that produced by the effect of the music upon the performers. To him the latter is the only right tempo, for he adds, somewhat maliciously, that it "operates without anyone beating time", meaning that the right tempo does not need a conductor.

Yet there can be no scientifically demonstrated *right tempo* just as there is no set, objectively correct interpretation. There is only a subjectively right tempo, i. e., the tempo which is *right* for one particular conductor.

We have a very precise, scientifically accurate device for fixing the right tempo: Maelzel's metronome. It is over a hundred years old. It stands on every piano; composers have used and still use it freely and frequently to indicate the exact tempo they want. However, musicians and especially conductors don't pay much attention to it. Even those who haven't read Beethoven's letters will cite Beethoven's dictum on

the metronome the moment you mention it to them: "It (the metronome) is a stupidity; you must FEEL the *tempi*!"

That's just what Monteverdi said in 1638 A. D.—and what Sibelius said (to Rodzinski) in 1937 A. D.

Yet subjective feeling is an unreliable means of achieving correctness of tempo, unless . . .

The late Max Smith devoted the last years of his life to a study of Toscanini's conducting-art. Smith assisted at all the Maestro's rehearsals and performances and, stopwatch in hand, measured carefully the minutes, seconds, and split-seconds Toscanini required for performing certain compositions. He timed at least twenty different performances of the *Eroica* and of Debussy's *La Mer* and found that Toscanini's readings of the same compositions on various occasions never differed in the slightest in this respect.

The late Otto Lohse used to look at his watch before giving the first upbeat and after the last note of an opera-act. His various timings of the same act of an opera, including the first act of *Götterdämmerung* and the last act of *Meistersinger*, never varied more than a few seconds.

Yet the majority of conductors, when sounded upon this very stability of tempo, will scornfully sweep the question aside, insisting that they are not metronomes, but free artists, conducting only according to the dictates of their heart and mood.

Nevertheless it is just stability that sets off the creative artist (even as interpreter) from the arbitrary gipsy. Toscanini illustrated this axiom once for all when he said, "I can't understand arbitrary changes in anything which is evident. If I study and reread a work until I have attained a clear vision of it, then that vision becomes final. It cannot be altered thereafter." He meant that that conception could never entertain any essential, organic changes, such as revisions in tempo. What IS the real essence of any artwork? It is its integrity crystallized in the unalterable impression: Thus it is; so it must be; it cannot be otherwise. One may not alter the smile of Mona Lisa, nor the inscription on the door to Dante's *Inferno*, nor the prelude to *Tristan und Isolde*, nor for that matter, Toscanini's reading of Beethoven's *Pastorale*. A work of art (and conducting also has to be such a work) is irrevocably fixed, if it is really a work of art.

Though innumerable books, booklets, and articles have been written on Mahler, there never was, unfortunately, a Max Smith with his stopwatch to report whether Mahler subscribed to that rather amateurish notion of the artist being swept along by his momentary whims, or whether his tempi were as unchanging as his general conception of a composition, for the steady integrity of his tempi is the test of the artistic integrity of a conductor.

We have only a few rather contradictory, documents pertaining to this subject. There is, for instance, a mythical letter (unpublished and anonymous*) supposedly written by a member of the Vienna Philharmonic

*It seems to be the common fate of great revolutionary musicians to find biographers who overflow with praise and orthodox zeal, but who lack reliability, scientific seriousness, and sincerity of research. Neither of Richard Wagner nor of Mahler have we biographical works which can be compared with Wyczewa and Saint Foix on Mozart or with Kurth on Bruckner. The Stefans, Spechts, etc., are fanatical fighters against anybody who dares the slightest criticism of their idols, but they themselves do nothing of real importance to explain these idols.

Orchestra after Mahler's first performance of *Lohengrin* at the Vienna *Hofoper*. The writer asserts that he had played *Lohengrin* under Wagner's own direction and claims that, since that time, Mahler's was the first conductor with the *Right tempi*. He stresses especially Mahler's conception of the prelude, which he took just as slowly as Wagner himself, and the prelude to the third act, which he led in genuinely *Furioso* manner. In short, his conducting was Wagnerian, because Mahler "knew how to modify the tempi" to conform with Wagner's intentions.

If that letter is authentic it is a revelation. If it is apocryphal, i. e., trumped up to defend the conductor against the criticisms of the profession, it is still more eloquent, for then it proves that Mahler was inclined to slow up the slow tempi and speed up the swifter ones. A very primitive and crude statement, perhaps, but it hits the nail on the head. It implies that in order to bring out the central ideas as clearly as possible, Mahler accentuated every detail of contrast as sharply as possible, and especially contrasts of tempo. The Romantic tradition in music was all for the transitional evasion of violences; it doted on so-called medium-tempi and standardized, unobtrusive contrasts. Into that atmosphere of old-time Viennese mellowness Mahler crashed like a bomb-shell. Even at Hamburg, some years before, when he took over some concerts for von Bülow (who was quite a violent dramatizer himself) the orchestra rebelled against Mahler's tempi (Letters 136) just as they rebelled anywhere against his scorn of the classical tradition (Letters 102), against his habit of acceleration (Letters 477).

Furthermore, our letter implies that Mahler used to "modify" the tempo. That again (along with our disclosures concerning Mahler's rhythmic) means that he subordinated the tempo to the central idea of the composition. Thus, according to Steinitzer (Stefan p. 43), he began the *terzetto* of the dying Commendatore (in *Don Giovanni*) in a rather fast tempo, but immediately started to slow down very gradually and steadily, until the few bars of the postlude resulted in an "Adagio of the most moving effect." I remember this gradually expiring music well, because it was the first time that an operatic death-scene did not make a ridiculous impression on me, for I really had the feeling of the inexorable (steadily retarding!) approach of Death. Steinitzer does not mention that this effect was achieved in the first place by the reluctantly drumming monotony with which Leporello stammered his fast-beating counter-melody.

We see by this little instance how the general idea, in this case the concept of the dying father, modified the interpretation. Mahler's modifications consist not only in the striking *pp* Steinitzer notes relative to beginning of the *Allegro* of the third *Leonore*, but also in the slow beginning of that movement and its subsequent acceleration. Here we have the *finale-conductor* again, introducing the spiritual significance of architecture into his interpretation.

VIII.

His highly individual employment of dynamics was one of the features by which one could single out Mahler's conducting.

An examination of the dynamics in Mahler's orchestral works reveals most interesting data concerning the orchestral language in vogue during the period of transition from Romanticism (Wagner, Strauss) to modern realism and expressionism (Alban Berg, Stra-

winsky). Such a study, moreover, throws particular light on Mahler's style as a conductor.

Mahler was so sensitive dynamically, that he himself rehearsed *Le Nozze di Figaro* (one of his most carefully prepared standard performances at the Vienna *Hofoper*) with orchestra and complete stage personnel throughout six successive general-rehearsals, when he brought that production to Salzburg. And why? Only because he wished to accommodate the opera perfectly to the acoustics of the Salzburg theatre.

The conductor's (Mahler's) treatment of dynamics was also subordinated to the demands of rhetoric.

In Mahler's time the outstanding style of dramatic interpretation on the legitimate stage was that for which Max Reinhardt (inspired by Stanislawski's *Russian Art Theatre*) was held responsible. It consisted in a rather fervid naturalism expressed through exaggerated declamation, exploiting all the possibilities of dynamics, from the hushed whisper to the stentorian shout in opposition to the pleasant transitions favored by tradition. The audience was to be taken by surprise. It was not characters, part of real, unobtrusive Nature, who acted the drama, but mere ideas personified, overstated by actors who were forced to be "symbols". As Mahler puts it (Letters 281) "all that is material must be dissolved into form; a higher realm of phenomena where types are individualities."

It is in keeping with such principles that Mahler reproaches the singer cast as Ortrud (*Lohengrin*) for having been too "loud" during her first scene with Elsa. "That was not the right tone for the hypocritical Ortrud with her mysterious behavior, her assumed meekness" (Letters 155). It made no difference to Mahler that Elsa would see through Ortrud's too obvious dissimulation. What mattered to him was that Ortrud be established as a regular villainess regardless of logic and psychology. (Logic and psychology were, and still are, despised by the idealists of expressionism.) I remember that scene very well: it was my first *Lohengrin*. In order to stress his idea of an innocent, sweet Elsa as contrasted with a saccharine, yet dangerous Ortrud, Mahler exaggerated all the musical marks Wagner wrote into this scene, the little *crescendi* and *dim.*, the sudden *sfz* and *pp*. Thus he created a magnificent suspense; he led up to the outburst "*Entweihte Götter*" in a way, that caused the audience to applaud that invocation if only to relieve its own tension; then he literally drenched the following scene, Ortrud's poisoning of Elsa's confidence, with the colors of a thrilling mystery-play. I could not help the feeling of overemphasis, unnatural declamation, cheap obviousness. *Lohengrin*, which (musically and dramatically) borders perilously on bad taste, attained with Mahler a strange flavor of artistic perfection through ham-acting singers and a ham-declaming orchestra. He engineered the dreamy prelude, from the *pppp*, (not the original *pp*) up to the *ff* of the brasses in such a way, that these brasses, instead of portraying the climax of an organic growth (usually one of Mahler's strong points) exploded like a sudden onslaught of blunt reality. Speidel, Vienna's most renowned dramatic critic, described this effect as "magical" (*zauberhaft*), while I remember only a harsh awakening from a dream. Yet the Wagnerian idea, the "program," was carried out; the Holy Grail descended to "earth," to be sure, but in this

case it reached "earth" with a crash. What was Mahler's reason? At the very end of the opera one knew it. There the *motif* returned again, austereley elevated, *fff* instead of the original *f*. The outburst in the prelude had been but a foreboding of this final touch. The linking central idea stood out above all. The effect was striking, a real delight to every intelligent theatregoer.

However, in the theatre and in the concert-hall I don't want to be "intelligent".

Mahler doted on dynamic contrasts. That anecdote concerning the premiere of his *First Symphony* is significant of Mahler's sudden dynamic assaults.* He loved the "drastic treatment of the orchestra", (Stefan, p. 65), claiming that Beethoven favored it. When he edited Beethoven's *Ninth*, he intensified the markings, freely reinforcing or muting sound effects. In fact, such was his general practice.

One of his instructions given to the conductor of his *Second Symphony*, portrays, perhaps better than anything else, the theatrical nature of Mahler's dynamics.

He writes (Letters 316): "The audience is raised to the highest tension by the fanfares of the trumpets; now the mystical sound of the human voices (which may enter *ppp*, as if out of the remote distance) must come as a surprise. I suggest that the chorus (which has been seated until this point) remain seated, and rise only with the E-flat major '*Mit Flügeln, die ich mir errungen.*' I have found this to be an infallibly astonishing effect."

IX.

By the term *agogics* we mean not only "the process and the result of modifying strict tempo to bring out the full expression of a phrase" (*tempo rubato*) (Pratt). We include within the limits of that term also any details of execution pertaining to the expressiveness of an interpretation.

In this connection the conductor-composer speaks best for himself in a letter full of good advice to a beginner in composition (Letters 191): "You are still too intent on 'sound and color'! That is a defect of all talented beginners doing creative work today. I know of a similar stage in my own development . . . Mood-music (*Stimmungsmusik*) is a dangerous foundation (*Boden*). Take my advice, for these things are no different than they were. Aim at THEMES clear and plastic, which may be readily recognized in any transformation or development whatever; next, at abundant variety, heightened by the clear contrasting of opposing themes, but above all, rendered interesting by the unfailingly logical development of the *central idea*. With you all this still seems confused. Furthermore: you must get rid of the pianist in you! Yours is not a setting for orchestra, but one conceived for the piano, and then somehow translated into the orchestral language. I too suffered from the same trouble. Today we all originate from the piano, while the old masters came from the violin and from singing."

You see? "Sound and color" are not Mahler's primary concern. He finds the expression of "moods" dangerous. Plasticity (which means distinctness) and the "logical development of the central idea" are his

*At the *attacca* introducing the last movement, a dignified lady, shocked by the violence of the "attack," dropped her handbag, spilling its contents on the floor. (Letters 477)

leading principles. Therefore you will find no sweet sentimentality in Mahler's interpretation. The "soulful" *vibrato*, the sensual devices are alien to his ascetic intellectuality. He prefers to oppose phrases of "genuine contrast" against each other. He does not want the orchestral score approached from the pianist's viewpoint, for he regards pianistic phrasing (especially that instrument's wealth of *rubati* and *gruppetti*) as anti-logical, knowing it to spring from the chordal nature of the piano, a basic trait at variance with the melodic, singing quality of the orchestra.

Mahler would say to his orchestra: "I breathe every breath with you" (Letters 156). In other words he formulated even the small details of agogical expression in the rhetorical way, ever intent on the content of the single phrase, the meaning, to which the sound and color were to be subordinated.

X.

He was a "linear musician," one who reads the orchestral score horizontally, perceiving melodies, as opposed to one who reads "vertically," concentrating on the harmonies.

"There is no harmony; there is only counterpoint" is an utterance legend ascribes to him (Stefan, p. 94). He proved this principle when he was a youngster, when he arranged Bruckner's *Third Symphony* for piano for four hands. He followed the orchestral score faithfully, striving "particularly hard to render the single voices in the characteristic range of the instruments, even though such practice sacrificed facile and convenient rendering on the piano" (Stefan, p. 29).

Mahler experienced music thematically, not harmonically. To him "accompaniment" did not exist. Every part of the orchestra expressed itself independently. It was Mahler who first showed that even second violins of Verdi were not monotonous *fillers-in*, giving them thought, life, and importance of their own. If Mozart is called the savior of the woodwinds (especially of the clarinet), Mahler justly may be called the savior of the *middle voices* (the *filling-in parts*) of the orchestra. His jest on his own style of composing also applies to his style of conducting when he quotes an imaginary critic and writes: "My musicians play without paying the slightest attention to each other and my chaotic and bestial nature reveals itself in all its vile nakedness" (Letters 220).

Listening to Mahler's music today we regard it as comparatively tame and harmonious. Yet in his own interpretation it sounded anything but simple. Similarly he made Beethoven and Wagner anything but the mellow classics they had seemed before him. We must remember that Schoenberg and his school were born out of the performances of *Tristan und Isolde* conducted by Mahler, for his *Tristan* often sounded like that modern *atonality* it actually created. Mahler's daring in leading of discordant parts against each other, regardless of traditional harmonic and esthetic tenets, created the revolution we call "modern music". The central idea, Day vs. Night, manifested itself by clash and discord, even during moments of the most peaceful transfiguration. Only the design counted, never the color. Today Mahler's polyphonic conducting does not appear revolutionary at all since almost every conductor born east of Munich calls himself a "pupil" of Mahler, though he never gave

a single lesson in conducting during his entire career. Result: the orchestras execute faithfully the most extravagant stupidities of their conductors.

The *Vienna Philharmonic* of 1900 was a band calculated to inspire fear in a conductor. "Suppose I did come to Vienna," wrote Mahler (Letter 102) "What tortures would I not have to undergo there with my manner of handling things musical? If I were only to attempt teaching my conception of a Beethoven Symphony to the famous Richter-trained *Philharmonicum* I would at once find myself in the midst of the most disgusting squabbles. That was my experience even here (at Hamburg), though, thanks to the support of Brahms and Buelow, I occupy here a position of unquestioned authority."

XI.

Mahler was the father of that huge orchestra of our period of mass-minded superlatives that has to be furnished every conductor who has even a modicum of self-esteem. They can't perform with less than the now accepted 20-20-16-10-10 proportion of strings. Mahler transplanted his own magnified orchestral conception to the classics, particularly to Beethoven. He explained his principal notions of orchestral treatment when he justified his retouching of Beethoven's *Ninth*. In an announcement to the public he said:

"The unsatisfactory condition of the brass instruments at that time (Beethoven) rendered impracticable certain sequences of sound necessary to the undisturbed maintenance of the melodic line. It was that defect which gradually brought about the perfection of those instruments. Failure to utilize these improvements in order to achieve as fine a performance of Beethoven's works as possible would be a crime.

"The ancient device of multiplying (*Verfielfachung*) the string instruments eventually resulted in a corresponding increase of the wind instruments in order to attain a balancing reinforcement of certain parts without the slightest emendation of the orchestral voices. It can be demonstrated by means of the orchestral score . . . that the conductor was concerned only with following Beethoven's intentions to the smallest detail. Though he refused to be hampered by 'Tradition' in this regard, he wished neither to sacrifice the slightest intention of the master nor to permit such an intention to be lost in an overwhelming concordance of sounds" (Stefan, p. 66).

By "concordance of sounds" Mahler meant the result of the traditional practice of conducting Beethoven from the melodic-harmonic viewpoint, for he knew Beethoven as one who created not in harmony, but in counterpoint. Therefore (in his edition of Beethoven's *Ninth*) to balance the preponderance of the strings, he doubled the woodwinds, he added a third and fourth pair of French horns, and in the last movement a third and fourth trumpet. In 1900 such an innovation was attacked as a sacrilege; today it is a common practice.

Mahler dethroned the first violins from their ancient absolute sovereignty over the orchestra. The hitherto apathetic state of the second violins and violas was elevated to one of equality with the first violins and cellos respectively. The ascetic Mahler did away with the constant,

sweetish *vibratos*, with the sensuality and pompous glamour of the string section. The *Vienna Philharmonic*, glorying in the popularity of their emotional soarings, the sensuous, almost gypsy-like sobbing of their strings, resented being banished from the golden Viennese heart to the limbo of the Mahlerian transcendent brain, but the rich *Schmalz* they lost was amply compensated by a proportionate gain in deliberate, impressive delivery. Never before and never since Mahler did they play the prelude to *Lohengrin*, the *Adagio* of Beethoven's *Ninth*, the transfiguration music of Bruckner's *Fifth* with such unearthly, breathtaking spirituality. Mahler wanted singing passages in the strings played with the whole length of the bow, to contrast them with the short figures gasped at the frog or tittered at the point. He reveled in the higher positions of the violin G and D strings without indulging in the sentimentality natural to such fingerings. His *secco* of short, hard chords played by the whole section had the reckless, despotic dryness of a volley of gunfire; his tremolo was insidious rather than weird, for it sounded completely dematerialized. In general (if I may be permitted the comparison) Mahler's treatment of the string section had something of the intellectual style, the severe chastity of the Busch-Quartet's playing today; not much sex-appeal, but lots of logic.

It was through Mahler that the woodwind-section attained the importance it enjoys in all good orchestras today. He tempered the different colors of the various instruments to organ-like equality. When (especially in his beloved Beethoven) the different woodwinds alternated *concertante*, you never felt a break in color unless it was intentionally so marked, to achieve contrast. He even trained the single instruments to make imperceptible transitions from one position to the other. On the other hand, he exaggerated the tonal differences between those positions, if the dramatic expression so required. He made the naturally dark low register of the flute or clarinet sound almost black and urged the high register to shrillness. (Note the "vulgar" use of the C and the higher E-flat clarinets in his own symphonies.)

Often in unisons of strings and winds (flutes with violins or cellos and double-basses with bassoons) he forced the weaker winds to dominate the strings, even by doubling the winds, if necessary.

Mahler's pet hobbies in the orchestra, however, were the brass and percussion. (He grew up near the military barracks in Moravia.) The French horns, the group which tradition made transitional from the woodwinds to the brasses, were (strange enough for a basically Romantic musician) the most indifferent group to Mahler.* I can't remember any particular feature of his treatment of them.

*EDITOR'S NOTE.—"The horn (in the treatment of which authorities agree Mahler was one of the greatest masters of all time) had never had so important a role. To the noble level of expressiveness it had attained in Bruckner's hands Mahler added a new power, enabling it by means of dying echoes to carry smoothly an idea already exploited into a changed musical atmosphere. Sometimes a solo horn would issue with overwhelming effect from a whole chorus of horns among which it had been concealed, or singing in its deepest tones it would lend a passage the air of tragic gloom. In Mahler's resourceful use of the horn every register seemed possessed of a different psychological significance." Gabriel Engel, *Gustav Mahler—Song Symphonist*.

The trumpets and trombones, especially the trumpets, were his chief concern. These are the instruments most often mentioned in his letters. What he denied to his strings, he gave to his trumpets: sensuality, sweetness, even sexuality. This is one of the ironical "twists" in his musical nature. His exultant, solo-like projection of the climactic trumpet-passage in the second *Finale* of *Aida* still rings in my memory. It yelled like a joyous animal while the violins sounded restrained. The disciple of the wonderful Austrian military bands became a master in blending the brasses. They also were never mere accompaniment, "padding" of the highlights of a composition. Theirs were dramatic functions throughout. Somehow I always had the impression, when Mahler made the brasses enter, that they seemed to have already been playing, though they were certainly silent until that moment; or, with typically Mahlerian contrast, they came in as a sudden surprise. To them too he gave what he denied to the strings; sensuality, even a certain *vibrato* to the trombones and particularly to the Bayreuth Tubas, whenever they sobbed out their theme. Again, for contrast's sake, he had a certain way of getting a *secco* from his trombones that made you shiver: that hard, short *sfz*, almost like barking. He featured short but violent *crescendi* exaggerating them as in rearing *glissandi* (e. g., in the prelude to *The Flying Dutchman*). He blended woodwinds and brasses to a unity of sound never realized before. It is no idle praise of his conducting to assert that even specialists could not differentiate between woodwinds and brasses in the "offstage" passages of the cemetery-scene in *Don Giovanni*.

His percussion-battery shows equally the influence of his military boyhood surroundings. All his symphonies employ a large battery, culminating in the *Sixth*, where he used an especially constructed gigantic drum (an entire bull-hide stretched over a huge square sounding-board, beaten by a gigantic wooden hammer). This instrument really sounded like "fate pounding at the door", a programmatic nuance which Beethoven had been content to express with a modest kettle-drum. Mahler's percussion declaimed heavily. Glitter and despair, roughness and delicacy, literally ran amok in his percussion. He showed marked differences in his handling of timpani and bassdrums, piatti and tam-tam. Their rhythm was always dominating; the entrance of the battery had somewhat the effect of outstanding solo-work.

XII.

The conductor Mahler, consistent idealist by temperament and mentality, built up his reproductions (interpretations) on a rhetorical development of the central idea of a work to its final climax and exit (*the finale conductor*). All tectonic features (rhythm, tempo, dynamics, agogics, polyphony, orchestration) were subordinated to the archi-tectonic structure and had no independent significance. Mahler's rhythms were rhetorically accentuated, his tempi dramatically modified, his dynamics and agogics histrionically declaimed, his reading multi-voiced, contrapuntal rather than harmonic, his emphasis one of design rather than color; in short, interpretations which individualized the orchestral parts, making them carriers of integral, yet interdependent ideas.

The net result of such conducting was an unabashed intellectualism* vehemently presented, almost placarded, by clairvoyant brainwaves.

Beethoven's dictum: "Music must beat fire from a man's mind", is often quoted, seldom felt, and rarely grasped in its ultimate meaning. Yet it was fully realized by Mahler the conductor.

With the *Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra*, Mahler performed 77 concert-works. Twenty five of them were by Beethoven.

*In our times of rugged collectivism and instinctivism, the nomenclature "intellectual" is regarded as an insult equaled only by that of "individualist." Therefore, we must bear in mind that in Mahler's time brains and personality were the most honored property of man.

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Note: Numerals after the word "Letters" in this article refer to pages in Gustav Mahler Briefe, copyright by Paul Zsolnay Verlag.

THE KILENYI MAHLER MEDAL AWARDED TO OTTO KLEMPERER

In appreciation of his efforts to create a greater interest in and appreciation of Mahler's music in this country, the Kilenyi Mahler Medal of Honor was awarded to Otto Klemperer after a performance of *Das Lied von der Erde* in Los Angeles. The presentation was made by Mr. Gurney Newlin, Vice-President of the Southern California Symphony Association.

LIEDER EINES FAHRENDEN GESELLEN, ANDANTE AND SCHERZO FROM SYMPHONY No. 1. RONDO FROM SYMPHONY No. 7 UNDER STOCK'S DIRECTION WITH THORBORG AS SOLOIST.

Kerstin Thorborg sang Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* at Orchestra Hall last night. She was in superb voice: she had provided herself with music that glowed with orchestral color; and she added, particularly in *Ich hab' ein glühend Messer* and *Die zwei blauen Augen* telling highlights of her own that gave a new significance to this tone picture. Not only enthusiastic salvos of applause but many cheers greeted her when she concluded the cycle. It made one realize that the steadfast efforts of Dr. Stock to bring Mahler to the hearts of Chicago concert-goers have not been in vain.

The slow movement and the scherzo from Mahler's *First Symphony* were played with delightful finish and effect. A listener would be dour indeed who could resist the contrapuntal meanderings of *Frere Jacques!* But the palm of this memorable Wolf-Mahler evening must go to Dr. Stock's rendition of the Rondo from Mahler's *Seventh!* Under his baton it became a thing of stirring climaxes. It waked the imagination. One might easily vision the victor at the portals of eternity suddenly saluting the distant battlefield of life now agleam with pennants of conquest and glory and reverberating with the clamor of a bell of triumph!

MARY R. RYAN

LIEDER EINES FAHRENDEN GESELLEN ON WABC

Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* sung by Fritz Lechner on May 4th was broadcast over WABC. Mr. Lechner sang the cycle with feeling and intelligence.

THE VERDICT OF THE PUBLIC

The December 1936 issue of *Chord and Discord* contained an article entitled *The Case for Bruckner and Mahler*, a resume of public and critical reaction to all the Bruckner and Mahler symphonies that have been performed since the end of 1930. Certainly the receptions accorded Bruckner and Mahler performances in various cities should leave no doubt in the minds of program committees and program makers as to the growing interest in these composers.

Since our *resume* was published there have been more performances of Bruckner and Mahler at which listeners have continued to express their approval. Miss Isabelle Workman Evans (*Buffalo Courier Express*) reports that Bruckner's *Third*, Shuk conducting, was received "with much enthusiasm" and, according to Mr. Alfred Metzger, the same symphony under Shuk's direction was heard by one of the largest audiences that had attended the Federal symphony programs in San Francisco. In Rochester, according to Mr. S. C. Sabin (*Democrat and Chronicle*), "the audience was enthusiastic throughout the evening" (Bruckner's *Te Deum* was on the program and Genhart conducted). In Minneapolis "the audience approved of it heartily" (Bruckner's *Fourth* as conducted by Harrison), according to Mr. Victor Nilsson (*Progress Register*). Mr. Warren Storey Smith (*Boston Post*) tells us that "Koussevitzky's signal success with Bruckner's Seventh Symphony last season was yesterday repeated with the Eighth, and the answering applause was almost as hearty and long continued." Bruckner's *Fourth* was heard by one of the largest audiences that had gathered in the Brooklyn Museum last season and the applause was spontaneous and long continued. (Plotnikoff conducted.)

The music of Mahler too, has continued to stir audiences. Unmistakable evidence of this enthusiasm manifested itself in Boston last October after a performance of Mahler's *Fifth* followed by Wagner excerpts, under the direction of Koussevitzky, the conductor whose pioneering spirit has won him a place in American musical life which will outlive the memory of conductors who have been content to feed little but the accepted *war horses* to their audiences. Said Mr. Williams of the Boston Herald whose admiration for Mahler's *Fifth* can hardly classify him as a pro-Mahler fanatic: "Mahler's Fifth Symphony had an amazingly cordial reception from yesterday afternoon's audience. This was a good sign first because it floated the rather lop-sided genius of Mahler for once on an even keel and, second, because it was a credit to the attentive powers of the audience. You cannot call the Friday afternoon public stuffy—and there used to be regrettable sneers on that head—if it is going to take Mahler to its bosom Unpredictably enough yesterday's hero was Mahler." And Mr. Durgin's comment (*Globe*) concerning the audience reads as follows: "Word that the hall was sold out, received before the concert began, suggested that Wagner more than Mahler was responsible. Yet the cordiality with which the Fifth Symphony was received tempts one to revise his opinion. There was spontaneous applause after the Scherzo and the slow movement; at the end the audience applauded with more than customary warmth and there were a few cries of 'Bravo!' Mr. Warren Storey Smith of the Post calls the performance of Mahler's *Fifth* a momentous re-

vival and thinks that "this well-named 'Giant' Symphony deserves by reason of its intrinsic greatness and of its reception by yesterday's audience, to remain in the active repertory, to which Dr. Koussevitzky has at length restored it in a performance which proved a triumph for both composer and conductor." Mr. Bruno David Ussher wrote in the *Symphony Magazine* of the Los Angeles Philharmonic: "Gustav Mahler's simple and profound second symphony is programmed for this pair (Nov. 24 and 26, 1937) in response to numerous requests. Given here first May 24 and 25, 1935, the musical and symbolic immensity of this work, often couched in almost naively folksong-like idiom resulted in a continuous demand for another hearing. After Koussevitzky conducted *Das Lied von der Erde* in New York, Mr. Winthrop Sargeant reported in the *N. Y. American* that "the audience showed its approval of the work in unmistakable terms." According to Mr. Olin Downes (*Times*), Tibbett "was long and warmly applauded for this performance" (*Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, Ormandy conducting). Miss Mildred Norton (*Evening News*) reported that in Los Angeles *Das Lied von der Erde*, Klemperer conducting, "met with a royal reception," while "not only enthusiastic salvos of applause but many cheers greeted her (Thorborg) when she concluded the cycle" (*Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, Stock conducting the Chicago Symphony), according to Miss Mary R. Ryan.

In the *N. Y. American* (Nov. 29, 1936) Mr. Winthrop Sargeant summed up the general attitude towards Bruckner and Mahler. He said in part:

"I have yet to witness a Mahler performance that was not well attended. The people, who religiously rise and leave the hall in the middle of every Bruckner symphony, are an insignificant minority, and one usually feels that they are acting on principle rather than on any spontaneous impulse. All the recent performances that I have heard have been at least reasonable successes, from the standpoint of box office and applause. Yet the superstition remains deeply rooted that Bruckner and Mahler must be fed to the public, if at all, in very small doses. And the large body of concert-goers has had so little chance to hear them that it retains only a hazy impression of either master.

"The suggestion has been made in some quarters (Mr. Pitts Sanborn made the suggestion) that a complete Bruckner cycle be held. Why not indeed? . . . Even for those who are hopelessly anti-Bruckner and anti-Mahler a complete hearing of their works would have one advantage. It would silence once for all that annoyingly pertinent argument of the Bruckner-and-Mahlerite, that you can't claim to dislike music you haven't heard."

Judging by the reactions of audiences to Bruckner and Mahler performances, these composers offer a real opportunity to broaden the standard repertoire. In Europe Bruckner and Mahler festivals are not uncommon. Festivals are not expected here, as yet. All that can be hoped for is that Bruckner and Mahler be given a *fair* hearing in concert halls and on the air, that Brucknerites and Mahlerites be given some consideration. The public is the jury, as the late W. J. Henderson declared, and the public has expressed its verdict in no uncertain terms.

BRUCKNER AND MAHLER RECORDINGS ON WQXR AND WNYC

Last spring Mr. Eddy Brown, the progressive musical director of the Interstate Broadcasting Co., suggested that the Bruckner Society cooperate in arranging a Bruckner-Mahler Radio Festival over WQXR. As a result Mr. Gabriel Engel gave several radio talks on Bruckner and Mahler and the Interstate Broadcasting Co. sent out thousands of copies of the following introduction (prepared by Mr. Engel) to supplement its regular monthly programs.

ANTON BRUCKNER

Picture a charming, old Upper Austrian village that has been slumbering for centuries not far beyond the walls of a stately monastery, still more ancient. Immediately surrounding it on every side, like an emerald setting, deep woods; in the distance the snow-capped Alps of Bavaria; the soil and atmosphere everywhere rich in mystic folk-lore and blessed with an inexhaustible fund of folksong unsurpassed for melodious wizardry. Sum up these wonders of environment—peace, faith, nature, romance, grandeur, mysticism—and you have the subtle alchemy which Providence applied to the nurture of Anton Bruckner's genius. In the sum of those ingredients is hidden the only reliable key to the profound message of Bruckner's symphonies. They are the word symbols of the powerful influences which swayed his soul from infancy until, a man close to middle age (if we must reckon biblically) Bruckner shyly ventured forth beyond the sheltering borders of his native Eden countryside to bring to an outer world convulsed with strife and skepticism his symphonies of assuagement and affirmation.

These symphonies were nine in number. Viewed as we have suggested they clearly mirror the trials of the soul midst its earthly environment. The *First Symphony* reflects the tremendous inner struggles of a spirit that would transcend all, though confined by the narrowest of barriers. The *Second* is a quest for consolation, a soothing reaction from the preceding tempest of unrest and futile aspiration. It sings the lure and charm of the contented Upper Austrian countryside. The *Third* is again a tocsin of revolt, urging the spirit to loftier flights. The *Fourth* is a shining Pastoral, a romantic song of Nature. The *Fifth* is the triumphant Faith-song of the unconquerable soul, revelling in the full glory of its power. The genius has at length gained the summit of the mountains and, like Zarathustra, beholds the whole cosmos revealed in a flame of universal Love. From now on, all is affirmation and gladness. The *Sixth* sings the goodness of mortal existence as a whole. The *Seventh* is an Ode to Heavenly Joy, a Te Deum for all the preceding revelations. The *Eighth* is the colossal auto-biography of human genius, the Titan overcoming all opposition. The *Ninth* is the composer's "Farewell" from the world and his exultant greeting to the Hereafter, actually attained in the midst of his last symphony's still unfinished song.

Bruckner's *Fourth* Symphony is the earliest of which a complete recording exists. This work has been more or less aptly nicknamed the *Romantic*, for it is primarily a symphony of Nature, its background the charming valleys, luxurious woods; and towering mountain ranges of Upper Austria. Compared with his first three symphonies, the *Fourth* is like the sunrise of a new day after a long stretch of stormy weather. It is the first of an uninterrupted line of four joyous symphonies conceived in the major mode. The *Seventh Symphony*, which has also been recorded in its entirety, is the last of this happy line. When Bruckner finished it he was a man of sixty, spiritually at the zenith of his power. No wonder that for

sheer melodic beauty, for pure joy in music, the *Seventh* is unexcelled. On this account it has become one of the most popular of Bruckner's symphonies.

GUSTAV MAHLER

When Mahler finished his *First Symphony* he wrote to his dearest friend:

You alone will understand it, because you know me. To others it will sound strange.

That was half a century ago.

After a recent performance of the work by the N. Y. Philharmonic under Bruno Walter one of the foremost American critics said:

At one time I, too, in less mature judgment, denied Mahler any outstanding worth at all, except that he had mastered a method of colorful orchestration. I feel that I have come to see more than that in Mahler.

Upon the same occasion another critic predicted for the *First Symphony* a popularity rivalling that of Tschaikowsky's *Pathétique*.

Mahler went on to compose symphony after symphony, and as his individuality attained more and more vivid expression the misunderstanding of his listeners increased. Twenty years after his *First* he completed his *Sixth Symphony*, that gloomy composition generally known as the *Tragic*. One of his friends, shocked by the extreme bitterness which swayed this work to its ultimate echo, asked him reproachfully, "How could a man as kind-hearted as you have written a symphony so full of bitterness?"

Mahler replied, "It is the sum of all the suffering I have had to endure at the hands of life."

Yet, of all his symphonies, this is the only one that ends on a note of pessimism. Even that tempest of spiritual pain, *Das Lied von der Erde*, subsides midst a rainbow of hope, the promise of eternal rebirth.

The *Ninth*, the last completed symphony Mahler left the world, is a deep, soul-stirring paean of faith, such as most would associate with that great symphonic voice of unshakable affirmation, Anton Bruckner.

Because Mahler was one of the world's foremost conductors hosts of music-lovers admired him, but, almost without exception, these greeted his creative efforts with pitying bewilderment. Mahler, understanding their failure to understand him, smiled wistfully and said, "My time will yet come."

He did not live to share the instant triumph of *Das Lied von der Erde*, a victory confirmed by every subsequent performance given the work down to this very day. Since his death the progress of most of his music in the public esteem has been slow but sure, bearing out his own patient prophecy in that famous laconic utterance of confidence, "My time will yet come."

Still in the case of the only one of his symphonies as yet recorded, the *Second*, or *Resurrection Symphony*, that prophecy was never pertinent. From the very first hearing given this stupendous choral work (Richard Strauss himself conducted the premiere at Hamburg in 1895) each performance has lent it added lustre until its unfailing human appeal has stamped it as an undeniable classic of the symphonic repertoire. Curiously enough, this *Second* is spiritually Mahler's first symphony, conceived and planned several years before he began to write his real *First Symphony*. Thus it is in every way the true "open sesame" to the understanding of all his works.

Few are aware that Mahler ever tried his hand at poetry. Shyness caused him to suppress practically all his verses. Fortunately, one of the short poems written during the period when he was planning his *Resurrection Symphony*, has survived.

It seems to throw some light upon the first movement, the only authorized clue to the dark, ominous character of which is the one phrase, "Death-Celebration."

The night looks softly down from distances
Eternal with her thousand golden eyes,
And weary mortals shut their eyes in sleep
To know once more some happiness forgotten.

See you the silent gloomy wanderer?
Abandoned is the path he takes and lonely,
Unmarked for distance or direction;
And oh! no star illuminates his way,
A way so long, so far from guardian spirits,
And voices versed in soft deceit sound, luring,
When will this long and futile journey end?
Will not the wanderer rest from all his suffering?

The Sphinx stares grimly, ominous with question,
Her stony, blank gray eyes tell nothing,—nothing.
No single, saving sign, no ray of light—
And if I solve it not—my life must pay.

Resurrection and eternal life, triumphantly envisioned in the colossal closing chorus, represent the composer's solution of the enigma of existence.

Every available Bruckner and Mahler recording was broadcast during March and again in November. Various recordings of works of these composers were included on the programs of WQXR every month by Mr. Douglas MacKinnon, Musical Commentator of this station. As a supplement to its October programs, WQXR again sent out thousands of copies of the introduction, which also contained announcements of free lectures to be sponsored by the Society in cooperation with the New York Public Library and the Music Club of Hunter College during the season 1937/38.

Soon after the Interstate Broadcasting Co. had demonstrated its pioneering spirit, another station, WNYC., fell in line. Through the cooperation of Dr. Seymour N. Segal and Mr. Henry Neumann thousands of copies of the introduction printed above were sent out by the municipal station with its quarterly programs in April and October. Mr. Engel gave short talks on Bruckner's *Fourth* and *Seventh* and Mahler's *Second* and *Kindertotenlieder* preceding the broadcasts of the recordings of these works. Broadcasts of recordings of Bruckner's *Fourth* (Victor) and *Seventh* (Victor), Mahler's *Second* (Victor) and *Das Lied von der Erde* (Columbia) may be heard on both stations (WQXR and WNYC) from time to time. No doubt other recordings of Bruckner and Mahler works will be heard over these stations as soon as Victor or Columbia releases them.

BRUCKNER'S FOURTH BY THE WPA

The Brooklyn Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Eugene Plotnikoff performed Bruckner's *Fourth* before one of the largest audiences that had gathered in the Brooklyn Museum last season, according to an announcement made by the commentator over Station WNYC. If spontaneous and enthusiastic applause is the means used by an audience to show its approval, then one must wonder why the work has not been repeated, especially in view of the satisfactory attendance.

NEW RECORDINGS

Das Lied von der Erde, the recording of which was advocated by Mr. Lawrence Gilman several years ago, has recently been released by Columbia. According to Mr. Aaron Stein of the *N. Y. Post* "what must have been one of the memorable concert hall experiences of our time has been impressed on records with extraordinary success For the Mahler cult, whose devotion is notorious, these records will, of course, be a must. They should, however, receive wider attention than that It is in every sense a perpetuation of an epochal musical event."

"With a long and wide ranging list of recordings behind him (Walter), for sweep and effect that never lapse," writes Mr. Compton Parkham of the *N. Y. Times*, "he has not done anything so impressive as this for the gramophone."

The RCA Victor Co., the first of the gramophone companies to release recordings of complete Bruckner and Mahler symphonies in this country, has presented to the American music loving public a first recording of the original version of Bruckner's *Fourth Symphony*. Mr. Jerome D. Bohm of the *Herald Tribune* writes: "Since I am a devout Brucknerite, I cannot but feel that the great Austrian's formal shortcomings have been greatly exaggerated and I do not propose to defend him since I do not feel that he needs defending. Bruckner's utterances in the *Romantic* symphony are profoundly moving and will undoubtedly stir the world long after the last anti-Brucknerite has joined his forefathers. Anyone who can listen to the mysterious, unearthly strains of its opening pages or to the dirge-like andante without being deeply affected, is merely insensitive to the message of one of the most spiritual of all composers. The interpretation here transmitted to the discs is for the most part felicitous and veracious"

AVAILABLE RECORDINGS

BRUCKNER

SYMPHONY No. 3 IN D MINOR—Scherzo

By Vienna Sym. Orch. Victor.

SYMPHONY No. 4 IN E FLAT MAJOR ("Romantic")

Saxonian State Orchestra, cond. by Karl Böhm. Victor.

SYMPHONY No. 7

By Eugene Ormandy and Minn. Sym. Orch. Victor Album.

SCHERZO FROM THE POSTHUMOUS "YOUTH SYMPHONY"

By Berlin State Orch. Victor.

MAHLER

SYMPHONY No. 2 C MINOR

By Eugene Ormandy—Minneapolis Symphony Orch. Victor Album.

DAS LIED VON DER ERDE

Bruno Walter, conductor; Vienna Philharmonic. Soloists: Kerstin Thorborg and Charles Kullman. Columbia Album.

KINDERTOTENLIEDER

Heinrich Rehkemper, Soloist. Polydor Album.

SYMPHONIC CHRONICLE

A Record of Critical and Popular Reaction

GUSTAV MAHLER— DAS LIED VON DER ERDE

Boston Symphony Orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky, conductor; assisting artists, Maria Ranzow and Paul Alt-house, Nov. 6 and 7, 1936.

... No score exists in modern music to parallel the qualities of this spiritual testament of an artist who conceived it toward the end of his days—when life had become for him a heavy burden and a mocking presence. For this reason it really ought not to share a concert program with anything else. Small wonder that a superb performance of Mozart's work yesterday afternoon was almost obliterated in memory by the searing intensities of Mahler's music

. . . Many another poet has written of these things. But Mahler's treatment of them, with music of indescribable emotional depth resulted in a lonely masterpiece in which are inextricably mingled poetry, music and philosophic thought. Such intimate speaking from a full heart is not for those who merely "enjoy" music; they will be unmoved by "The Song of the Earth", and they will not have the slightest understanding of it. Without extravagant claim, this masterpiece may be said to be felt rather than heard, since Mahler concerned himself less with art than with life itself. Full realization of what "The Song of the Earth" meant to the composer is possible only when one has a notion of the troubled heart of Mahler, whose idealistic dreams were cruelly wounded by the rougher side of his experience

—C. W. D., *Boston Globe*

... It is one of the finest tributes that can be paid to Mahler's music to say that none but Mahler could have written it. There are reminiscences of other composers, but they are few and unimportant. We are only beginning to realize, I think, how original a composer Mahler was. His originality is exhibited in his formal schemes, obviously; in his melodic line and his harmonic vocabulary; above all, in the color of his instrumentation. The individuality of Mahler is reflected in his influence on other composers; an influence which, far from being negligible, is in some respects the mainspring of the whole Viennese school of Schoenberg

... Yesterday's performance was glorious. Dr. Koussevitzky was in one of his best elements. (It is strange, not that he should present the music of Mahler as often as he does but that he does not include it even more frequently on his programs.) His orchestra was with him at every stage in a presentation that seemed exceptionally well prepared

—MOSES SMITH,
Boston Evening Transcript.

Within the space of five weeks the current season of Symphony Concerts has yielded two "occasions"; first, the double anniversary performance of Liszt's "Faust" Symphony, and now a repetition of Mahler's "Song of the Earth", 25 years almost to a day after the first performance of it in Vienna. And by the word "occasion" something much more than mere ceremonial and observance is intended.

Two pieces made the programme which Dr. Koussevitzky offered yesterday and will repeat this evening, Mozart's Symphony in C major, No. 34, an early yet delightful work, and the symphony, if it may be so styled, of Mahler. Yet it is only when there is a need to review the concert as a whole that the symphony of Mozart comes even to mind, so overwhelming was the impression made by the music of Mahler and by the performance of it at the hands of Dr. Koussevitzky and his orchestra

—WARREN STOREY SMITH, *Boston Post*

GUSTAV MAHLER— LIEDER EINES FAHRENDEN GESELLEN

Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, conductor; Enid Szanthe. Soloist December 16, 1936.

... Mahler's songs are delicately molded and call for an interpretative style which can command a variety of expression without suggesting complication. No singer who has sung them in recent seasons has met the requirements as brilliantly as Miss Szanthe met them last night. The soloist's manner and method suggested simplicity itself, but the effect embraced all the subtleties of Mahler's musical and poetic expression.

—HENRY PLEASANTS, *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin.*

... These qualities were best shown in the four "Songs of a Wayfarer" of Gustav Mahler, works which are among the most difficult in the repertoire to make effective. Mme. Szanthe did so, however, and her style of singing varied with the emotional content of each number as expressed in the music, the text and the instrumentation.

As Mahler wrote the words himself, there is unusual unity between them and the music, a point of which Mme. Szanthe made the most. Mr. Ormandy gave her a sympathetic accompaniment.

SAMUEL LACIAR,
Philadelphia Evening Ledger.

ANTON BRUCKNER— THIRD SYMPHONY

Buffalo Philharmonic, Lajos Shuk, conductor. January 8. 1937.

... The program claimed this as the first local performance of any Bruckner symphony. This virile work is a powerful expression of an imaginative mind and a profound spirit. The first two movements are particularly strong, with their lyric thematic material and talented orchestration. The audience received the Bruckner opus with much enthusiasm

—ISABELLE WORKMAN EVANS,
Buffalo Courier Express.

... This Third has dramatic force especially in the first and last movements, and it can boast a wide-awake Scherzo

—EDWARD DURNEY, *Buffalo News.*

... The Scherzo has a compelling rhythm, and the last movement presents some beautiful lyric phrases. The texture is closely wrought and there is adept scoring, the fresh strong color of the wind instruments being often and effectively used.

The presentation of the work was very enjoyable, arousing great applause for Mr. Shuk and his players

—MARY M. HOWARD, *Buffalo Times*

ANTON BRUCKNER— TE DEUM

Eastman School Orchestra, Paul White, conductor; Eastman School chorus, Herman H. Genhart, conductor; soloists Hazel Gravel, Lodema Legg, Sidney Carlson, Kenneth Spencer, Jamina Gorecka; Rochester, N. Y., Jan. 21, 1937.

... Five sections of Bruckner's Te Deum came as music entirely new to Rochester audiences. The music appeal is conceived with sincerity to the text,

with fine form in writing for both chorus, orchestra and ensemble. It has dramatic fervor. The solo quartet adds some of the most appealing performance to the whole. Last night's quartet sang well. Sidney Carlson, its tenor, was an asset to success. And the chorus, obedient to its conductor, met the climax and effects realized by sharp contrasts to give its work dramatic significance

... The audience of last night was enthusiastic throughout the evening.

—STEWART C. SABIN, *Democrat and Chronicle*

ANTON BRUCKNER— FOURTH SYMPHONY

Minneapolis Symphony, Guy Fraser Harrison, conductor. Feb. 11. 1937.

... Nor could we find any trace of the Wagnerian influences we hear so much about when this composer's works are discussed. There were in nearly every movement evidences of a passion for tones in the brass; these, however, were by no means in the Wagner idiom; they are distinctly individual, sonorous, and through them some of the finest effects of the evening were achieved

—JAMES DAVIES, *Minneapolis Tribune*

... Quite unproblematic also is the music of Bruckner's Fourth Symphony. The orchestration and the harmonic structure are as uncomplicated as the content is simple and sincere. Combining intelligent clarity and freshness of feeling in his reading, the conductor interpreted aptly the atmosphere of the first movement, with its simple themes recalling the clear bugle calls of Alpine regions, and its quiet breath of an organ choral leading to the ending in a blaze of brass.

For the pensive tunes of the slow movement, tinged with a resigned sadness, the conductor showed a sympathetic understanding, calling out rich sonorities from the orchestra

—JOHANN STORJOHANN EGLSKUD,
Journal

... The symphony was the Bruckner Fourth, in E flat, called the "Romantic." Some seem to wonder how it has won this surname. They have probably never been at Mondsee where when the symphony was written poet and peasant rubbed shoulders with emperors and queens and roused by the nature beauty and mystery of Alps and lake imagination ruled. Strindberg there lived through an excruciating act of his

second matrimonial drama leading up to his "Inferno." In such a nature it comes natural for great simple souls to write Bruckner symphonies or Andersen fairy tales, and as in this case, with both allegros and slow movement filled with wonderful horn music, and the scherzo echoes some hunting party with an old laendler of Kuhreigen harmonies for trio. A very fine interpretation was given of the Bruckner E Major and the audience approved of it heartily, not least for the very beautifully made viola music in the andante...

—VICTOR NILSSON, *Progress Register*

GUSTAV MAHLER—

DAS LIED VON DER ERDE

Boston Symphony Orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky, conductor; soloist, Maria Ranzow and Paul Althouse; New York, Febr. 12 and 13, 1937.

... As one listened to Mr. Koussevitzky and his great orchestra traverse the pages of Mahler's poignantly moving score, the conviction grew that this was perhaps the most enduring music in its genre created by any composer since Wagner. This is especially true of the concluding movement, "Abschied", which, with its ineffably tender breathing of the word "Ewig," at the close, is unforgettablely touching.

Again the impression was renewed that the school of polytonal composers stems directly from Mahler. Here, in "Das Lied von der Erde", one finds the origin of the procedure of juxtaposing horizontally conflicting melodies regardless of the harmonic acerbities resulting. And here, too, the hearer will discover the sources of the newest type of instrumentation.

The interpretation by Mr. Koussevitzky and his players was often affecting and always satisfying tonally. One has heard certain portions of the work set forth with greater inwardness, but the silence of the audience before bursting into applause at the conclusion bespoke the integrity of the conception

—JEROME D. BOHM, *Herald Tribune*

... "Das Lied von der Erde," which, if memory serves, has not been given in Carnegie Hall since Bruno Walter's performance of it with the Philharmonic-Symphony Society some four years ago, is a work that suffers from undue neglect here. Its six sections contain many pages of poetic loveliness; music that rises up in glorious tumult, following as it does the mercurial lines of Hans Bethge, upon which it is based...

An audience of good size and great enthusiasm attended.

—R. C. B., *N. Y. World Telegram*

Gustav Mahler's profoundly touching "symphony" entitled "The Song of the Earth," for tenor, contralto and orchestra, was presented with reverence and passion last night at Carnegie Hall by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Serge Koussevitzky. The soloists were Paul Althouse and Maria Ranzow, whose voice has a quality peculiarly effective for her poetic role in this work

—H. B., *New York Post*

Last night in Carnegie Hall, Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra provided New York with its first hearing this season of a work by Gustav Mahler. The work was one of the most ingratiating of the great romantic master's compositions, "Das Lied von der Erde."

... "Das Lied von der Erde," or "The Song of the Earth," represents the intimate rather than the heroic Mahler. It is a work of pastel shades and delicate moods. And yet its message is one of poignant emotion expressed in fantastic and imaginative terms. For those who have learned to appreciate its subtle mysticism, it remains a product unique in the whole repertoire of symphonic music. Without question it should be accorded its place among the most profound and beautiful musical works that have graced our century The large audience showed its approval of the work in unmistakable terms

—WINTRHOP SARGEANT, *N.Y. American*

GUSTAV MAHLER—

FOURTH SYMPHONY

Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Frederick A. Stock, conductor; Claire Dux, soloist. Feb. 25—26, 1937.

... Aside from her "Morgen" (of which more anon) Mme. Dux's most remarkable interpretative gesture of the evening was a performance of that astonishing bit of whimsey which Mahler wrote into the finale of his fourth symphony. "Brightly, and with childlike expression," commanded the composer. Bright and childlike was the singer's delivery, with a seraphic innocence which is implicit in the words of the song (a list of heaven's gustatory delights—meat, wine, bread, vegetables, fruit—preceded and followed by tributes to the mirth and gayety of the place).

... Frederick Stock made much of the curious Mahler symphony, keeping the performance light and transparent and emphasizing the attractive naivete of the themes. The capricious twists which the composer succeeds in introducing into these straightforward themes help make the symphony absorbingly interesting, at least . . .

—EDWARD BARRY, *Chicago Tribune*

... Her participation as soloist accomplished the addition to the repertoire of two works of great interest and occasioned a revival of one of the most entertaining and least symphonic of all symphonies. This light-hearted work is the fourth of the series left the world by Gustav Mahler, and the cues to its quaint psychology are many. It glorifies the folk-songs of Moravia, which are German as often as they are Bohemian. Not that the intriguing themes which Mahler has employed are quotations. Rather they are idealizations, fascinating in their originality, their humor, occasionally in their nobility, and always by reason of their unexpected rhythms and the soft and varied luster of the orchestral setting . . .

—GLENN DILLARD GUNN,
Chicago Herald and Examiner

... The symphony is one of Mahler's most beautiful and straightforward works, although in it his skill continues inventive to an almost distracting degree. Nevertheless, the score does breathe the German love of nature and the German love of a warmth of inner contentment, and it proceeds so intensely that the quietness with which he sets the folk-song text in the final movement comes with a felicity of restraint and simplicity that leaves one breathless at the gentleness of his touch . . .

—EUGENE STINSON, *Chicago Daily News*

GUSTAV MAHLER— LIEDER EINES FAHRENDEN GESELLEN

Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, conductor; Lawrence Tibbett, soloist, New York, March 9. Philadelphia, March 12, 13, 16.

... The Mahler songs were very welcome and the singer most successful in the second and third . . .

... Mr. Tibbett was long and warmly applauded for this performance . . .

—OLIN DOWNES, *New York Times*

... Mr. Tibbett's share in last night's proceedings was of an engrossing nature. He had chosen for his initial

number Mahler's song-cycle, the "Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen"—music less often heard here today than formerly . . .

... In his First Symphony, begun at this period, Mahler used themes from two of the songs.

The real Mahler is indeed disclosed in these songs—not only in the exquisite and characteristic scoring, but in the whole texture of the music. In nothing else that he wrote does the best of him shine forth as it does in the second of the songs, "Ging heute Morgen über's Feld"—that enchanting evocation of the loveliness of the morning earth, with only man's immitigable grief to mar it.

It was in this song that Mr. Tibbett last night was most persuasive (though he sang all four with obvious devotion) . . .

—LAWRENCE GILMAN, *Herald Tribune*

... The four songs of this group communicated a personal message, for they were written after the unhappy ending of a love affair. They have a directness and simplicity of utterance which makes them singularly touching . . .

These songs possess an unaffected spirit and their sincerity breathes vitality into them. Mr. Tibbett sang them very well, indeed, despite one or two bits of uncertain tone production. His interpretation was well planned and his delivery was marked by fine restraint and a noteworthy dignity . . .

—W. J. HENDERSON, *New York Sun*

... The four songs, patterned to a certain extent on folk-song lines, represent Mahler in his happiest mood. The melodies of two of them have served also as material for his First Symphony, where their genial, naive lines contribute to a vaster structure. Here in the cycle their treatment is simple enough, and yet imbued with that strange melancholy that is part and parcel of everything Mahler wrote . . .

—WINTHROP SARGEANT, *N.Y. American*

... The outstanding number of the concert, from the point of view of performance and high artistry, was Mr. Tibbett's rendition of the four songs with orchestral accompaniment forming Gustav Mahler's "Songs of a Wayfarer" . . .

... The songs are extremely difficult to make effective, requiring a very considerable amount of dramatic ability as well as great singing in actual voice production, in its color and in dramatic feeling, even in facial expression.

Mr. Tibbett left nothing to be desired. Each of the four, all radically different in character, was a masterpiece and was so recognized by the audience, which gave him a tremendous reception at the close

—SAMUEL L. LACIAR, *Evening Public Ledger*

. . . The songs are as much orchestral as vocal, and the melodic line is often dependent on the orchestral commentary for the full projection of the mood. The delicately fashioned commentary was most expressively played by Mr. Ormandy and the orchestra . . .

—*Evening Bulletin*

GUSTAV MAHLER— DAS LIED VON DER ERDE

Los Angeles Philharmonic, Otto Klemperer, conductor; Hertha Glatz and John Heinz, soloists. March 18 and 19, 1937.

Last night's capacity audience in attendance at the Philharmonic Auditorium to hear the excellent program offered at the regular symphony pair of the Philharmonic Orchestra, was held overtime for the ceremony of presenting Dr. Otto Klemperer, the popular conductor, with a Mahler Medal of Honor, from the American Bruckner Society, an organization which is interesting itself in the proper performance of both the Bruckner and the Mahler works. Gurney Newlin made the presentation

. . . The music is intricately beautiful, abounding in short melodic turns that carry the feelings from one thrill to another unceasingly. Momentarily it is the first violin that voices its impulse, then it is the oboe, then the brasses and finally every instrument has seemed to have added its own individual word. . . .

. . . The orchestra personnel from first to last deserved the acclaim that it received from the audience and Dr. Klemperer has never given a work with more careful and ingenious feeling. Being somewhat of a mystic himself, he made Mahler's last composition a page of real life, creating a spell in the beginning which he held until the last note

—CARL BRONSON, *Herald and Express*

Bach and Mahler made a distinguished program for the Philharmonic Orchestra led by Otto Klemperer at the Auditorium last night

. . . The presentation of the Mahler Medal of Honor to Klemperer from the American Bruckner Society was made after the performance. Mr. Gurney Newlin, vice-president of the Southern California Symphony Association, made a brief speech followed by an audience demonstration

. . . The mystic symbolism of the poet's welcome of eternal rest has been used by Gustav Mahler to inspire transcendent music in "The Song of the Earth." The "songs"—there are six settings to the word of Chinese poets, Li Tai-Po, Tschang-Si, Mong-Kao-Jen and Wang-Wei, in German from Bethge's anthology—are as baffling as life . . .

—ISABEL MORSE JONES, *Times*

Before an almost capacity audience, Otto Klemperer presented Gustav Mahler's "Song of the Earth" for the first time in Los Angeles at Philharmonic Auditorium last night

. . . While the vocal score follows an individual line, the orchestra is never merely an accompaniment. It affiliates with the singers, whose voices become in reality like another instrument

—FLORENCE LAWRENCE, *Examiner*

The gently festive air that hovered over Philharmonic auditorium last night reached a climax at the conclusion of the program when Otto Klemperer, conductor par excellence of the Philharmonic orchestra, was honored with the Kilenyi Mahler medal by the Bruckner Society of America

. . . The tribute came opportunely, the orchestra having just completed the Los Angeles premiere of the Bohemian composer's "Song of the Earth," which met with a royal reception

—MILDRED NORTON, *Evening News*

ANTON BRUCKNER— EIGHTH SYMPHONY

Boston Symphony Orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky, conductor. April 16 and 17, 1937.

. . . To lead up to these charming numbers we had Bruckner's Eighth Symphony, the one that extracted unwilling recognition from the boorish Hanslick, who could hear nothing in music but Brahms, hated Wagner and, to his sorrow, sat as a model for Beckmesser.

It is a glorious symphony, with such

"heavenly lengths" as Schumann admired in Schubert. It lasts for more than an hour, but it is so full of sheer loveliness that I fancy only a minority of the audience would have wished it shorter

. . . Bruckner loved the orchestra and our Boston strings plainly love him, for they put an ecstasy into the master's music that revealed them at their best, and I do not think the world can show any better. There are noble raptures for brass which, risking a contradiction in terms, may be called golden sonorities. That Adagio is an inspired composition and the Finale, ending in "the great C major of our life", is Olympian

—REDFERN MASON, *Evening Transcript*

. . . Dr. Koussevitzky's signal success with Bruckner's Seventh Symphony last season was yesterday repeated with the Eighth, and the answering applause, to turn from the performance to its reception, was almost as hearty and long continued

. . . The later Bruckner is the most tremendous symphonic music we have in spirit as well as in dimensions and volume. Before it the listener may well

feel dwarfed and crushed, as men are over-awed and humbled by certain things in the natural world

. . . Now that the Seventh and Eighth Symphonies have been so magnificently restored to us surely the long-neglected Ninth should have its turn

—WARREN STOREY SMITH, *Post*

GUSTAV MAHLER— ADAGIETTO, FIFTH SYMPHONY

WPA Orchestra, N. Y., Fritz Mahler, conductor. July 18, 1937.

A nephew paid tribute to his uncle from the conductor's stand of the Federal Symphony Orchestra at the Theater of Music last evening. Fritz Mahler, leading the WPA orchestra for the first time, included in his initial program the adagio for strings and harp from Gustav Mahler's Fifth Symphony.

Needless to say Mr. Mahler, who had made his local bow at the Hippodrome last season, directed his uncle's music with reverence and devotion. One of the finest things ever penned by the Viennese composer, the adagio came off in a wealth of sustained expressiveness.

—L. B., *New York World Telegram*

BRUCKNER'S THIRD BY WPA

Lajos Shuk, the energetic progressive conductor, recently introduced Bruckner's *Third* to San Francisco concert-goers with great success. According to Mr. Alfred Metzger, the audience was one of the largest that had attended the Federal symphony programs. Miss Marjorie Fischer reported that the symphony was "of primary musical interest, a truly magnificent work which Alfred Hertz wanted to present here years ago with the San Francisco Symphony but could not do because of the high royalty fee charged at that time." Mr. Charles Poore thought that the work has "a kind of native bigness that often expresses Homeric grandeur." Mr. Fried opined that "the work was as impressive and as baffling as Bruckner always is."

BRUCKNER AND MAHLER ON WOR

Alfred Wallenstein, whose hour and half hour-long broadcasts have caused considerable favorable comment, has included the *Adagio* from Bruckner's *Quintet* on several of his programs and more recently he broadcast the *Adagietto* from Mahler's *Fifth Symphony*. The fine readings given both excerpts must cause Brucknerites and Mahlerites to hope that Mr. Wallenstein will not only repeat them occasionally, but that he will enlarge the Bruckner and Mahler repertoire.

BRUCKNER'S TE DEUM IN CINCINNATI

Bruckner's *Te Deum* was performed in Cincinnati during the May Festival. Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* preceded the Bruckner opus. Beethoven's *Mass* was broadcast, but the *Te Deum* could not be heard by the invisible audience. Mr. Eugene Goossens conducted.



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