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THE KILENYI BRUCKNER MEDAL

THE SYMPHONIES OF ANTON BRUCKNER (I-IV)

THE IMPERSONATION OF HANS SACHS

MAHLER'S USE OF THE ORCHESTRA

BRUCKNER AND MAHLER: THEIR SPIRITUAL MESSAGE

SYMPHONIC CHRONICLE

January 1939

"MY TIME WILL YET COME"



THE KILENYI MAHLER MEDAL



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The Symphonies of Anton Bruckner

BY GABRIEL ENGEL

I - IV

Introduction

BRUCKNER'S *First Symphony* is the awakening cry of the long dormant spirit of a giant symphonist. Though he was already forty at the time of its composition, the unbridled enthusiasm of an ambitious first opus infuses the work with convincing sincerity. Bruckner's *Mass in D Minor*, composed a year earlier, proved him not only a master in the field of ritual music, but already an adept orchestrator with strikingly progressive tendencies. The resourceful instrumental idiom revealed in the 28-bar prelude to the *Et Resurrexit* in that work is an eloquent symphonic prophecy. Though the fact that this consummately orchestrated Mass originated during the days of Bruckner's first acquaintance with Wagner's music is no mere coincidence, examination of over a dozen Bruckner compositions penned in the course of the two preceding decades reveals that the dominant features of the orchestral language of his entire symphonic cycle (I refer to the recently published, original, unadulterated versions) were firmly rooted in his own fantasy. He was from the outset a linear orchestrator, a tonal draughtsman; Wagner was primarily a colorist, whose chief instrumental contribution was the magnification of the classic (Beethoven) orchestra to the heroic proportions demanded by epic stage conceptions. Therefore Bruckner's orchestral debt, if any, to Wagner is limited to those moments when he employs the full complement of instruments in sonorously blended harmony. The rest is pure Bruckner, whose ideal of orchestral tone prescribed the rigid economy of instrumental volume and coloring indispensable to the clear framing of a fundamentally polyphonic message.

In the days when Wagner was still a young, struggling, provincial conductor who had written but one remarkable work, *The Flying Dutchman*, Bruckner was already tirelessly busy with the composition of sacred music, unconsciously laying down the idiomatic foundations for his symphonic labors to come, at the time mere dreams, hopes, and resolves, quickened by rare, reverential hearings of Beethoven and Schubert symphonies. Noting the vivid effect of unprepared changes of tonal-

ity in these masters he ventured a more liberal use of that principle, framing in a new key each progressive link of a sequential passage. His predecessors, regarding sequences much as melodic steps in a single scale, had deemed it necessary to adhere strictly to one tonality lest the harmonic unity of the passage be imperilled. Bruckner's symphonies abound in sequences marked by rapid changes in tonality (most often, ascending by half-steps). This alone accounts for the fact that the first movement of such a work as the *Romantic* exploits every possible color of tonality even before the close of the exposition section (See Th. Otterstroem: *Bruckner As Colorist*, C. & D., No. 2).

Appreciating the harmonic richness of abrupt mood contrast in Schubert's lightning transformations from major to minor, and vice versa, Bruckner exploited the possibilities of this device, further enriching it by the addition of a world of enharmonic nuances, prophesied, but scarcely explored, by his short-lived "romantic" countryman.

Interpreting all musical idiom in the light of the only tonal dialect with which he was thoroughly conversant, he recreated the charming melodic cadences of Haydn and Mozart in the "Amens" of his sacred music, lending them increased depth and interest by the introduction of frank dissonances. So daring did these "Amens" of Bruckner seem to his original publishers that they "corrected" them for public consumption, as may readily be seen by comparison with the original manuscripts which still display Bruckner's scorned "mistakes" in this regard. The "general pauses" (G.P.) which his contemporaries found so disturbing in his symphonies also had their spiritual origin in church music, paralleling the punctuation of choral responses and recitative intonations in the ritual. The slow movement of Bruckner's *Romantic Symphony* is an amazing instance of an extended movement largely reared along this unusual melodic principle.

Many other melodic and harmonic principles outstandingly characteristic of Bruckner's symphonic idiom were nurtured in his early church music. Adequate analysis of these would fill a large volume. More than mere mention of one or two is beyond the scope of the present article. Particularly noteworthy is the impassioned effect of sudden sixth and octave leaps in Bruckner's melodies, spreading an air of fervent aspiration when ascending, one of prayerful humility when descending, literally mirroring the act of a penitent sinking to his knees in worship. From his church music also Bruckner drew those step-wise, parallel progressions of the outer voices in their gradual, irresistible rise to a climax; those moments of full major tonic grandeur bursting dazzlingly out of fortissimo unisons; those broad-winged melodic flights in sixths above sustained organ points; even that most typical rhythmic characteristic of his, the division of a measure in broad double-rhythm into "two plus three-note" phrases, or vice versa. (An eloquent example of this device is to be found in the second motive of the opening theme-group of the *Romantic*.)

I. SYMPHONY

His *First Symphony*, often called *Storm and Stress*, reflects a powerful conflict between the individual message of a symphonic genius and the traditional means at his disposal for its expression. The opening theme, springing softly, but recklessly, out of its harmonic source, the stubbornly punctuated tonic bass which begins the work, is a striking idea, the characteristic nature of which caused Bruckner to name it *Das Kecke Beserl* (The Saucy Maid). This naive phrase has been the accepted nickname of the symphony ever since. The theme itself, marked by simple, spontaneous song, rugged rhythm, and sharply defined orchestral setting, at once evidences Bruckner's inventive genius. There can be no cadence for so impatient a motive. Ignoring the traditional point of rest at the eighth measure it pushes tauntingly on, gathering momentum for swift flight, and speedily rears itself to a towering climax. In the forceful, self-evolving progress of this very first theme is revealed the dominating principle of Bruckner's method of symphonic melody-treatment, aptly called by experts "dynamic evolution."

Upon the attainment of this summit of power, firmly established by a brief heroic episode, a series of stirring fanfares over a swiftly moving, blustering motive in the basses, customary full-throated repetition of the theme would be an anticlimax. The three motives already sounded constitute the first theme-group and become the chief driving forces of the whole movement. A subtle interlude, drawn from the opening theme, descends like a narrow mountain-path winding down to a sunny Upper Austrian valley. In this calmer atmosphere is born the second theme, a song of ardent love in the violins above a transformed fragment of *Laendler* melody. The artist who conceived this vision of beauty is clearly the same who penned the celebrated *Zizibe* double-theme of the *Romantic Symphony* a decade later.

Supplementing the two contrasted themes or theme-groups already set forth, Bruckner now introduces a third subject, the most striking of all. In after years the mere mention of the symphonist's name would cause Wagner to exclaim, "Bruckner, the trumpet!" Wagner, the Shakespeare of character portraiture in tone, recognized at once the heroic nature of Bruckner's soul in the trumpet-theme of the *Third Symphony*. In later symphonies Bruckner, a being of superior spiritual poise and deeper introspective powers, was to substitute for this heroic third theme a hymn of indomitable faith. Yet in old age's retrospect, referring to the allegedly un-Bruckner-like quality of the *First Symphony*, he would confess, "I was always in love in those days." Hence it was natural that the love-theme in that work should be followed by a daring trumpet theme, brilliantly heralded by an exultant march motive.

In all respects, save its careful observance of smooth transitions between contrasted passages, this first movement suggests the chief features of Bruckner's individual symphonic style. The development section, de-

spite a brevity sprung from anxious subservience to the traditional notion of "correct form," sets forth such an abundance of thematic detail that the listener readily believes that here is but a synopsis of an extended tale of adventure, similar to those told in lavish detail in the far longer corresponding sections of the later symphonies. Even in this first essay Bruckner glimpses the recapitulation as more than a mere re-statement of the original themes. In his greatest symphonies the return of the themes will have a new, revolutionary significance as the actual climax of the development section. Already here they follow as a logical sequel surprisingly fresh in their wealth of accompanying thematic detail. Like a skilful novelist, reserving his most telling utterance till the last, Bruckner purposely denies the end of this initial opening movement conclusive character. The "story" of the symphony is far from ended, having but reached a moment of suspense, during which it must remain poised until the turbulent air is calmed for the profound, soul-searching revelation of the coming *Adagio*.

The *Adagio Composer*, some scornfully called him twenty years later, when instant world recognition greeted the premiere of the slow movement of his *Seventh* at Leipzig. The nickname clung and lost its jeering connotation. They might, with justification, have so named him even with the *Adagio* of the *First*, for here, at the very outset, Bruckner, in despair at the unhappy outcome of his life's chief love episode, poured out his sorrows in the sustained melodic language of which he thenceforth became one of the world's greatest masters. Not even beside his celebrated last *Adagios* does this initial slow-pulsed expression pale. Far more than the other three movements of the *First* it was an expression impelled by inner necessity, a fervent prayer for solace, rising out of the abject confession of the sufferings of a stricken soul. Its noble message is the wresting of ultimate spiritual triumph from deep, personal tragedy. Traditional *Adagio* form, employing two contrasted song-themes, is eminently suited to the framing of such a message. Hence Bruckner was faced with no structural problem in the composition of this movement. From the yearning song of consolation, which follows upon the gloomy first subject, issues a melody of naive joy, the spontaneous charm and light-heartedness of which caused one of the earliest Bruckner critics to speak of him as a "modern Mozart."

The *Scherzo* reveals Bruckner a master of the concise form quickened and perfected by Beethoven. A rugged, boisterous unison-passage climaxes the first portion. Hearing the graceful, purely Austrian themes, particularly that of the *Trio*, we at once recognize the composer as a countryman of Schubert.

The very first stern notes of the *Finale*, thundered forth by the full orchestra, blot out completely the happy scene of the dance. They are an ominous reminder that the path to victory, barely glimpsed in the heroics of the opening movement, is beset with a world of hostile elements still to be conquered. As in the first movement, here also, three

contrasted themes are presented. Brief, sharply defined, these are highly felicitous motives for Bruckner's predominately contrapuntal style of development. The long delayed return to the tonic key (following the abrupt advent of the powerful closing hymn of triumph) may be regarded by classically-minded listeners as a formal defect. In later years Bruckner himself was amazed at the revolutionary nature of this sudden daring conclusion set down in a moment of sweeping inspiration. Reminiscing he said, "I didn't care a hang what anybody would say; I composed just as I wanted to."

II. SYMPHONY

During the interval of six years separating the creation of Bruckner's first two symphonies occurred the most radical inner and outer changes of his career. A shy provincial by nature, he nevertheless ventured in a moment of desperate resolve to cast his lot with the shrewd "go-getters" who constituted the bulk of Vienna's musical aristocracy. Naively he sought as organ virtuoso to gain the applause and riches usually denied to all musicians save master pianists and fiddlers. It was at London, whither one of his pathetic concert tours had taken him in the summer of 1871, that he began his *Second*. His very choice of key (C minor, the same as that of the *First*) evidences the spontaneity of the new symphony's origin. Here too (as in the former work) he showed the integrity of his conception by setting down the *Finale* before any of the other movements, as he explained, "lest there be a let-down from my inspiration at its highest intensity." He knew instinctively that faultless logic and perfect unity in symphonic form depend upon the careful planning and rearing of the four-movement structure to the convincing, triumphant climax best reserved for the closing portion of the *Finale*. Although, technically considered, the *Second* was destined to be a clearer, surer expression than its predecessor, it proved, all in all, a work of inferior power and emotional appeal. The reason for this is perhaps best given in Bruckner's own words: "They (the Viennese musicians and critics) had scared me so, that I actually feared to be myself in that symphony." "They" had pronounced the score of the *First* too difficult to play, the thematic material too free, the instrumental and dynamic contrasts too violent. Overawed by the consensus of opposing critical opinion, Bruckner, for the first and only time in his life, persuaded himself to cater. The resulting symphony, a clear-cut, plastic creation, certainly improved his standing in the Viennese musical world, but damaged his self-respect. When, after its successful premiere under his own direction, he showed the score to Wagner at Bayreuth, the mighty music-dramatist merely brushed it aside with an eloquent grunt and steeped himself in the far more interesting revelations of the *Third*, which Bruckner had by that time also completed.

Yet the Viennese criticism of his preceding works proved helpful in some respects. The opening and closing movements of the *Second* mark

the birth of those broad-winged, song-like first themes which became typical of Bruckner's subsequent symphonic style. These are themes of a centralized power, bearing within them the seeds from which springs the entire musical life of the movement in which they appear.

The orchestration, far simpler than that of the *First*, is easier to perform, but in place of smooth, transitory passages within the movements, Bruckner hit upon the almost childish device of full pauses. Struck by this feature one of the Philharmonic musicians, during a rehearsal, remarked contemptuously, "This ought to be called the *Rest Symphony*." The nickname caught on at once, to become a permanent chuckle among the invectives heaped upon him by his enemies. Naively Bruckner sought to defend these prominent pauses, arguing, "Whenever I have something new and momentous to say, I just have to stop to catch my breath." "Grand Pauses" occur occasionally in his subsequent symphonies, but they are never due to the demands of external form; they are inevitable results of inner, contextual necessity. Never again did Bruckner permit external influences to determine any structural feature of his symphonies. When he prepared the final, definitive version of the *Second* he did away with almost a score of the offending pauses. The work as now performed no longer includes them.

The *Adagio* is a radiant song of inner communion. Appropriately, the ecstatic *Benedictus* theme of the *F Minor Mass*, in symphonic garb, marks the most eloquent moment of this section, devoted to the soul's contemplation of superearthy things.

The *Scherzo* and *Trio*, a robust idealized dance in triple-rhythm followed by a graceful *Laendler*-like song sprung from the very heart of Bruckner's rustic homeland, caused his delighted adherents to call the symphony the "Upper-Austrian." Bruckner was an instinctive master of the *Scherzo*-form, finding it a ready, perfect vehicle for the expression of some of his life's most vivid experiences, the landscape, the songs, and folk-dances of his native country-side.

The *Finale*, its somewhat unusual combination of sonata and rondo form sprung from the composer's desire to develop each of his themes, represents a distinct formal advance over the corresponding section of the *First*. In place of the rather stereotyped, generally excited *Finale*-character practised by his symphonic predecessors Bruckner, grasping the prophecy of Beethoven's *Fifth*, introduces a clear, intentional relationship between the thematic material of the opening and closing movements, a kind of symphonic summing-up, immeasurably strengthening the unity of the entire work. How well Bruckner realized the value of this innovation is witnessed by the increased care with which he effected similar summations in his subsequent symphonies. This fact alone should suffice to confound those of his critics who, while granting him almost every other symphonic virtue, insist that he lacked the intellect indispensable to the convincingly logical shaping of a huge symphonic labor.

Throughout the composition of the *Second* the mood of his then recently completed *F Minor Mass* was still strong upon him. Most dramatically, after an extended passage in the *Finale* marked by violent, exhausting conflict, the orchestra is suddenly hushed, and like the very voice of Faith (for Bruckner devoutly believed Faith the soul's only hope of eternal salvation), the *Kyrie* theme of the *Mass* is heard sounding the promise of surcease from earthly trial and tribulation.

III. SYMPHONY

So great an abyss of mastery and power divides the *Second* from the *Third* that one is involuntarily reminded of an analogous difference between Beethoven's *Second* and *Third* (*Eroica*). Predominately heroic too is Bruckner's *Third*, commonly called the *Wagner Symphony* because the music-dramatist, having singled it out for signal praise, had accepted its dedication to himself, saying "I know of only one symphonist worthy to be called Beethoven's successor, and his name is Bruckner."

Perhaps it was Beethoven's *Ninth* that Bruckner had in mind when he chose for his new work not only the key D minor but also a stern, majestically descending theme in double-rhythm issuing out of a background quickened by cosmic murmurings in the strings. Yet never before had the opening theme of a symphony been sounded by a solo trumpet. No wonder Wagner felt at once, when confronted with this striking symphonic beginning, that a new, significant voice had arisen in the field of absolute music! The origin of the soul of man, destined to heroic adventure, seems to be portrayed in this awe-inspiring theme emerging mysteriously out of vast, ominous space, as though it sang that mightiest of all earthly mysteries, first given expression through the gospel phrase, "In the Beginning. . ."

Not until the whole epic plot of the work has been unfolded and the heroic soul has emerged victorious on the final reutterance of the opening theme midst the fullest imaginable glory of massed instruments, does one realize how masterfully Bruckner planned every detail of this symphony before setting down a single note. A true mystic, for him this theme was to mirror the origin and end of all. It was to govern every episode of the gigantic drama performing through four movements, attaining apotheosis in its final expression, a veritable revelation of the Prime Source framed in the utmost auditory majesty.

In this symphony, as in all that followed, the opening and closing movements must be regarded as logical sequels, indispensable and supplementary to each other. Conflict, triumph, and apotheosis constitute their content, while invincible faith, supporting the heroic soul through its every trial, cloaks the whole in the spirit of affirmation which foreordains the ultimate victory. Hence the first movement closes, as does that of Beethoven's *Ninth*, in the midst of conflict. There must follow interludes setting forth the communion of the soul with God (*Adagio*) and a retrospect of the joys of existence (*Scherzo*). As the opening move-

ment ends, the central theme, at first sounded mysteriously out of infinite distances, has but arrived at the center of the battle-scene, to stand revealed as a mighty warrior fully armed for the decisive fray still to come.

The *Adagio* of the *Third* is the first of Bruckner's celebrated, long slow movements. In place of the tragic bitterness characterizing the *Adagio* of the *First* and the mystic, contemplative quality dominating that of the *Second*, this *Adagio* is swayed by an air of soaring, unquestioning faith. The devout Bruckner is naturally most eloquent in such sustained expressions of affirmation, for his inner life was a constant exposition of the tale of indomitable faith and optimism set forth in his *Adagios*. The extended length, yet unimpaired formal perfection, of his last three and greatest slow movements proves that this experience of faith became for him an ever more fruitful source of revelation of that higher, mystic world transcending all earthly pain and struggle.

The *Adagio* of the *Third* begins with a deep, noble song of communion, rising like a prayer uttered by one worshipping on bended knee. The answering theme, a consoling melody, is like a message of recognition and encouragement from Above. A third theme, like a hymn of gratitude for this divine reassurance, completes the exposition of the movement's simple, yet inevitable, devotional content. The melodic and harmonic magnificence of the ensuing development section reflects the decades which Bruckner spent in the baroque splendor of ancient cathedral surroundings. More overwhelming with each symphony grows this air of grandeur, suggestive of the mighty, domelike structures of the Houses of God which nurtured and mirrored Bruckner's sole spiritual aspiration.

The *Scherzo* is full of Bruckner's typically naive humor and laughter. Childlike, straight from the heart, it differs from Beethoven's subtler humor, qualified by frequent, ominous shadows sprung from inward bitterness. Beethoven's is the dauntless, sometimes even desperate laughter of a mighty warrior doomed to solitude, but confident in his own, unaided strength. The *Scherzo* of Bruckner's *Third* is an idealized happy dance that takes place in some higher realm, beyond every darkening cloud. The *Trio* is full of the life and sunshine drawn from the musical sources of his childhood, the Upper-Austrian folksong.

The *Finale* is a stirring record of elemental conflict on a scale so gigantic that it dwarfs any attempt at verbal description. Perhaps Milton, no longer hampered by outer limitations of sight, viewed some such conflict when he conjured up the inner vision of the primal decisive battle between the Spirits of Good and Evil.

The remarkable nature of the second (song) theme deserves comment, for it represents one of the most individual of Bruckner's symphonic devices. Over a *chorale* softly intoned by horns and trumpets is heard a graceful, lilting, polka-melody played by strings. When questioned by his biographer Goellerich, during an evening's stroll through

the streets of Vienna concerning the paradoxical nature of this "double-theme," Bruckner answered pointing to an open window of a house they were just passing, "From the mansion opposite comes the sound of dance-music and merrymaking, while here on this side lies a man on his deathbed. Such is life. That's what I had in mind when I wrote the theme you ask about."

While Bruckner's *First Symphony* retains, in all essential respects, classic lines and dimensions, examination of the score of the *Third* reveals a form broadened far beyond the utmost dimensions of the sonata structure employed by Beethoven. The soundness of the factor accounting for this magnification is attested by its integral origin, for it springs from the very nature of the themes themselves. In place of the classicist's brief contrasted themes, skilfully bridged by an episodic interlude, Bruckner sets forth in straightforward fashion three independent theme-groups, each consisting of well-contrasted motivated portions. It may be claimed that this practice is prophesied in Schubert's sonata-form, but it is really the manner in which Bruckner develops his themes in the *Third* that results in the unprecedented length of the opening and closing movements, for here, for the first time, he grants each motivated particle the full expression which its thoroughly individual nature justly demands. The resultant huge development section acquires convincing unity through the skill with which the separate paragraphs are reared aloft as on the rungs of a ladder towards a towering climax, doubly surprising and impressive because it proves to be the recapitulation itself!

There exist three versions of the *Third*. The score of the original version (1874) is more than forty pages longer than that of the final version (1889). When submitting the latter for performance Bruckner wrote, "This is incomparably better than the original version, with which I no longer want to have anything to do." Yet the original was the version which aroused Wagner's unbounded enthusiasm, causing him to say, "The three B's of music are Bach, Beethoven, and Bruckner."

IV. SYMPHONY

The fact that Bruckner regarded the word *Romantic* an apt description of his *Fourth Symphony* may mislead many to regard him as a romanticist of the stamp of Weber or Schumann. In reality, he was even less a romanticist than Beethoven who warned against a too literal story-background interpretation of the *Pastorale*, his lone symphonic venture beyond the strict borders of absolute music. Although a festive *Scherzo* and a "Storm" *Finale* are present in both the *Pastorale* and the *Romantic*, these are only marks of an external community not reflecting the fundamental dissimilarity of the underlying messages in these works. Beethoven's conception of nature and man views them as separate entities, the former a species of recreation, a source of spiritual refreshment for the latter. Bruckner's conception presupposes a mystic,

inseparable union of the two. In his *Romantic* there is heard not the echo of the joys of nature in the soul of man, but rather the voice of Nature itself, whose lips seem to open in hymnlike gratitude as the horn sounds the opening theme midst an ecstatic tremolo in the strings.

Perhaps no composer has given this message clearer verbal shape than Gustav Mahler whose innate mysticism stamped him as a fervent Catholic long before his formal conversion to that creed. The devout Bruckner might have shrunk in horror from the pantheism inherent in Mahler's pronouncement concerning the living soul of nature as merged with that of man, but essentially it was the same as his own. Mahler said: "That Nature embraces all that is at once awesome, magnificent, and lovable, nobody seems to grasp. It seems so strange to me that most people, when considering Nature in connection with Art, imply only flowers, birds, woods, etc. No one seems to think of the mighty underlying mystery, the god Dionysos, the great Pan."

In the opening movement of the *Romantic* the hymnlike aura spread by the initial theme-group persists midst the bird-calls characterizing the second theme. This perhaps most famous of Bruckner's numerous double-themes is an ideal mirroring of the fulfilled yearning of man's soul for union with nature.

So plastic is the formal structure of this movement, so natural and inevitable each passage from beginning to end, that one readily understands why the *Romantic* has been the most popular with music-lovers for over half a century. Bruckner himself came to regard it as the ideal introduction to his gigantic later symphonies. It seems almost superfluous to warn listeners not to give too serious credence to Bruckner's own explanation of the content of the *Romantic*. The tones in which the symphony is set are far too vast and deep for any such naive picturing as, "A city of the Middle Ages—Daybreak—Reveille is sounded from the tower—the gates open—knights on proud chargers leap forth—the magic of nature surrounds them." Clearly this is all childish afterthought on the part of a man whose creativeness was purely musical, whose acquaintance with literature was limited to Gospel and the prayer book.

Particularly in the *Finale* is revealed the superficial inadequacy of the descriptive term *Romantic* for this work. The ominous conflict with which it begins has an import far deeper than the too obvious explanation, "the woods in the grip of a storm." It suggests rather the final struggle by which the spirit, beset with earthly fears, overcomes all obstacles on the path to eternal contentment.

The *Andante*, as always with Bruckner, presents life with all its pain and suffering viewed by the soul with its unconquerable faith in ultimate good. Bruckner's genius for instrumentation unerringly selects the voices of the violas for a telling role in this section. The final promise of spiritual surcease is expressed in a lofty revelation midst nobly mounting utterances by the trombones.

The Impersonation of Hans Sachs

BY FRIEDRICH SCHORR

(A lecture with musical illustrations by Mr. Schorr, delivered at the University of California at Los Angeles, October 31, 1938.)

THIS privilege of a closer artistic acquaintance with my Los Angeles friends seems to me all the more delightful because it also provides me with an opportunity to present before you briefly my own purely personal view, drawn from long years of professional experience, concerning the most important of all problems that confront the artist of the singing stage: How should such an artist approach the task of portraying a character so convincingly that the figure he represents upon the stage prove not merely credible, but of such lively interest as to leave a lasting impression with his audience?

I should like to emphasize at the outset that I speak to you, not from the viewpoint of the musical historian, scientist, or critic; it is my intention only to introduce you to the workshop of a serious, conscientious singer intrusted with the embodiment of an important role.

I hope I have chosen an appropriate vehicle for my remarks, in view of the impending performances of the *Meistersinger*, by selecting the impersonation of Hans Sachs. Hans Sachs, that wonderful being, radiant with genuinely human greatness, concerning whom Wagner said in a letter to Mathilde Wesendonck: "Sachs will capture your heart; you will fall in love with him."

First of all, the artist must determine whether the character he is to portray is historical or imaginary. If the former, he must study the historical background, familiarize himself with the recorded events and customs of the period involved.

As to the *Meistersinger* he must know:

German Master-song sprang up directly in the wake of departing German *Minnesong* and attained its culmination in Hans Sachs.

The singing trials usually took place at the Church of St. Katherine and consisted mainly in the presentation of sacred songs sprung from the ritual. At a table hidden by a curtain sat so-called *Markers*, often four in number, whose duty it was to judge according to the *Tabulatur* (code) which embraced all the rules of the Master-song: whether the text of the poem deviated from scripture, whether both rhythm and rhyme were faultless; whether the melodies displayed any objectionable features, such as turns and flourishes drawn from other *Weisen* (Song-forms). If the man seated on the *Singestuhl* was found wanting, he was declared "outsung and undone." The singers consisted of masters and apprentices. Anyone who passed the test by singing creditably his own musical setting of a text he had himself composed was declared a *Master*. One who merely had a fine voice and skilful delivery was granted the title *Singer*. The melodies themselves frequently resembled

the psalmodic chanting prevalent in the churches and were for the most part dry and monotonous although the use of decorative flourishes was permitted.

To grasp the personal note of the composer and poet the serious artist must strive his utmost to heed the intentions of the authors, to follow as faithfully as possible the sequence of their thoughts.

The present instance involves a poet-composer who set forth in detail his profoundly individual conception of the art of singing and prescribed definite fundamental principles for the art of singing German opera.

Richard Wagner himself furnished the artists with the best possible directions for a successful character portrayal as he had intended it.

He demanded expressly: The singer must learn to speak beautifully and correctly.

The singer who is unable to recite the lines of his role with the proper expression, as indicated by the poet, will be equally unable to sing them as the composer intended them to sound.

He demanded unconditional clarity of articulation, failing which, drama as well as music, the word as well as the melody, remain unintelligible.

Wagner stated explicitly: "In my opera there exists no difference between so-called 'declaimed' and 'sung' phrases; on the contrary, my declamation is equivalent to song; my song to declamation; and the definite cessation of 'song,' followed by the customary entrance of 'recitative,' with the conventional differentiation of two varied styles of singing, has no place in my art."

On the very occasion of the rehearsals for the world premiere of the *Meistersinger* Wagner labored most strenuously with his artists in this direction.

To his supreme satisfaction, at the first performance, singers and chorus had become thoroughly conversant with the dialogue as such, through continuous practice, with the result that it came to them as easily and naturally as every-day language. The artists, who previously, at the thought, "Now I must sing," would fall into a veritable spasm of false pathos, here found themselves merely continuing with the dialogue in a lively, most natural manner.

To do full justice to the role of Hans Sachs, one must memorize the part without the music, not in the style of a mechanical repetition of the lines, but in the most expressive, histrionic manner possible.

These basic studies are necessary in order to grasp the dominant traits of the role, to raise them into clear relief, thus giving the portrayal solid, well-defined character.

The experience and knowledge gained from these purely histrionic efforts are the indispensable preliminary aids to the proper mastery of the musical role itself.

This latter study is a never-ending process, even for the singer who has sung and performed the role hundreds of times (or better still) has sung, performed, and lived it, particularly, for one who has striven to portray this role of Sachs so tellingly, that those about him virtually regard the world through the eyes of Sachs.

During the conception of the second act of his "poem" Wagner wrote Peter Cornelius: "I can make no further progress without a friendly soul close by, and such a soul my Hans Sachs represents for me. A merely reasoning, philosophizing, resigned Hans Sachs is not worth the effort, but only an intimate, friendly being, a universally accessible Sachs; and the singer who is to sing Hans Sachs, must be able to reveal most clearly to his public that the peace and power of Hans Sachs is the repose of a genius on the loftiest human plane. By no means is he ever to personify that every-day type of good-soul that is doomed to remain an every-day character; his must be a peace and power, completely separated from the individual *Ego*. Such is the soul the artist must lay bare in the *Fliedermonolog*."

Sachs must here afford an insight into his inmost heart and soul. And the words:

"I feel it, yet I cannot understand it;
Nor keep it in my mind, nor yet forget it.
And though I grasp it wholly, yet I cannot gauge it."

These words constitute the true keynote for the portrayal of Hans Sachs.

Within the soul of Sachs the entire drama of the *Meistersinger* unfolds itself, and Sachs, despite his kindness and sunny humor, remains in essence a tragic figure.

Yet whenever this humor breaks through, it does so in a clever, witty, but always dignified form. With pure merriment he treats Beckmesser ironically for his sarcastic, scornful criticism of Sachs as artisan and poet. The very epithets advanced against him by Beckmesser in violent temper are used by Sachs with such evident superiority of thought and wit that Beckmesser is rendered helpless with desperation and finally changes from aggressor to petitioner.

The Sachs of history married twice and was eighty-one years old when he died. Hans Sachs in the opera does not marry a second time; far more, mindful of King Mark's fate, he renounces worldly happiness with painful resignation, as he speaks these sage words of an aging man:

"My child, I know a sorry tale of Tristan
And Isolde. Hans Sachs was wise and would have
Naught of King Mark's happiness.
'Twas time, I found the right one,
Or in the end I too had met disaster."

Here the singer must have the gift of reenacting before your eyes how Hans Sachs, despite the pain of his renunciation, is swayed by greatness

of soul and unselfishness and reveals with open serenity that his inner spirit is a veritable shrine of peace.

The summit of his interpretation is attained by the singer in the *Wahnmonolog*. Here Sachs voices a revelation of peace and power, worldly wisdom, and love, and a humor that issues from the deepest experience of life. He muses over the world and its problems; over the self-delusion of mankind; over the illusion that seems to hover above all human endeavor. With sunny humor he reviews the *Pruegel* (flogging) scene which created such an uproar in normally peaceful Nuernberg and he voices his determination to supplant hatred and stupidity with all that is best for Nuernberg and for those who love it.

The purpose of my remarks to-day was to familiarize you with my conception of the unrivalled, unique, stage-figure of Hans Sachs as I have definitely established and shaped it for myself through long years of effort. Yet I should like once more to emphasize briefly, that the world of Hans Sachs is one turned completely towards within. It is a world purely of the spirit and all its conflict takes place within the soul. A blending of sunny cheerfulness, deep intuition, peaceful world-renunciation—a wondrous noble creation—such is for me Hans Sachs of the *Meistersinger*.

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#### PITTS SANBORN ON MAHLER

Under the title of "Neglected Composers Offered by Visitors" the eminent critic, Mr. Pitts Sanborn, wrote in the *World-Telegram* on March 12, 1938:

There is no denying that the name of Mahler remains a bugaboo in New York. How wrong such an attitude is can be easily seen. The concert repertory cannot consist of the C minor symphony of Beethoven and the C minor symphony of Brahms, repeated ad infinitum. Other works have to be performed whether they measure up to the stature of those two compositions or not. Mahler was incontestably one of the most important composers of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth. He left ten symphonies (the last unfinished), as well as the symphonic "Das Lied von der Erde."

As I have said once and again for years, we have an inalienable right to become acquainted with those symphonies before we reject them. Nevertheless, when Mahler himself conducted in New York he scarcely dared put a work of his own on any of his programs, and when much later that high priest of Mahler, Willem Mengelberg, conducted here, there was a chorus of objections whenever he had the temerity to list his divinity.

Doubtless, Mr. Bodanzky, Bruno Walter, and still others have met with the same discouraging response. Yet, at least enough has been done by conductorial champions of Mahler to diminish the taboo on the First Symphony and to obtain something like a following for "Das Lied von der Erde."

And now comes a confession, damaging or not, of my own. I am by no means a Mahlerite, as far as my personal taste goes, but I do like enough of his music, and still feel sufficient curiosity about music of his that I have not come to like, to continue to urge the frequent performance of his works. Not until we know them well, to repeat, shall we be in a position to reject. Consequently, all praise to Mr. Ormandy for recently giving us "Das Lied von der Erde" again and to Mr. Koussevitzky for bringing forward the neglected Fifth Symphony.

# Mahler's Use of the Orchestra

BY WILLIAM PARKS GRANT

## I

**W**HEN different instruments sound the same tone they produce different tone-colors, a phenomenon explained by the presence or absence or by the comparative intensity of the various overtones of the tone (fundamental) being sounded. This vital element of tone-coloring has a great effect on the character or expressive power of the actual tones themselves, just as the same man makes a far different impression on us when he is faultlessly attired in evening clothes than he does when carelessly dressed in mud-stained overalls.

Therefore, not only the actual tones themselves, but also the orchestration or dress in which these appear, must be inspired, if we are to have first-class orchestral music. One of the most admirable qualities of Gustav Mahler's music is the unfailing inspiration governing his choice of tone-color. It is only natural that Mahler should have thought directly in the medium of the orchestra, for his long years of experience as conductor gained him an acquaintance with the inmost character of the various instruments such as few composers have had before or since.

Mozart's orchestration impresses us by its crystal clearness, like a cool mountain lake; Wagner's and Tschaikowsky's impress us by their gorgeous glow; Rimsky-Korsakoff's by its brilliance; Richard Strauss's by its reckless, surging richness; Sibelius's by its stark bleakness and its rigid asceticism. More than one person's outstanding early impression of Mahler's music is the great originality and freshness of the actual sound of it. His orchestration is clear, keen, definite, and of razor-like sharpness. Sometimes it is thick and heavy in effect, but almost never is there an element of blur, muddiness, or stale shrillness to it. It can be rich and full at times; weird, goblin-like, and grotesque at other times; and magical, other-worldly, and gently unexpected at still other times. It sounds as though Mahler had never learned anything about orchestration from other composers, but had invented an entirely original and marvelously effective means of writing for orchestra which was peculiar to him only. One feels as if he had studied the instruments themselves rather than the orchestral scores of previous composers, and had then set out to write for orchestra as though it were being done for the first time in the history of the world.

Yet we know that he did study other people's scores. We know that he was considerably influenced by the orchestration of Wagner and Bruckner. "Berlioz is recalled by Mahler's daring to bring the bizarre and grotesque within the scope of music in order to attain the ultimate in keenness of expression. No one, perhaps, had taught him so much about instrumentation as the ingenious Frenchman."<sup>1</sup> The truth of the matter

<sup>1</sup> *Gustav Mahler*, by Bruno Walter, translated by James Galston, page 92. (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1937.)

seems to be that with a good and varied background of study of others' scores, Mahler was still enough of a genius to avoid imitating them and to blaze a few new trails of his own without forcing himself to be merely eccentric or semi-amateurishly "original."

But orchestration can be overdone: *tone-color* can become the chief source of interest, with the *tones* themselves (that is, the music itself) of secondary importance. Music of this type will become tiresome quickly. To illustrate: Let us assume that we have a melody which is very uninteresting when played by a piano, or by a Hammond organ with a purposely dull tone-color concoction. If we should have the same melody played by a clarinet in its low register, by a cello, or by an English horn, the melody would easily hold our attention better, but what would be the source of this increased interest? Not the melody itself, but the *tone-color*! If we would repeat this melody several times, the effect of the beautiful tone-color would soon wear off, and the melody would again quickly pall. But if we assume that we have a really interesting melody, performing it in a dull tone-color would not make it boring; performing it in a beautiful tone-color would make it extremely beautiful, but when, on frequent repetition, the loveliness of this tone-color would wear off, the melody would not bore us, because it would have real meat in it. A truly charming woman, though dressed in rags, will interest us, but an insipid woman gorgeously dressed will quickly become a bore after our attention has left her clothes and has centered on *her*. With Bach, the *music itself* is everything, the tone-color almost nothing. One can hardly mention "orchestration" in connection with his name. Schumann and Brahms are noted for a poor use of the orchestra, yet their music holds up because it is intrinsically interesting. Sir Charles V. Stanford, in his book on musical composition, says that just as the true test of a good picture is to photograph it and deprive it of its color to see if it is genuinely interesting, the true test of a piece of orchestral music is to reduce it to the plain black-and-white of the piano, and if it is really interesting then, it is of genuine merit. Stanford points out that when treated thus, Wagner's music loses very little of its interest, but Berlioz's loses almost everything. Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert also stress the *music* itself: orchestration with them is not the chief interest. But can we say the same of Rimsky-Korsakoff? of Ravel? of Respighi? of all of Debussy? Transcribing their orchestral music to the piano will not make it entirely vapid, but there may be some rather dubious stretches. But with all due respect to these great men, quite often we feel that it is the orchestra and not the actual *music itself* which occupied most of their attention.

With perhaps a few exceptions, we feel that Mahler's regard for orchestration was the proper, healthy one—as a means to an end, not as an end in itself. Showy display passages, brilliance for its own sake, attempts to be spectacular, eccentric, sensational, or to shock the conservative are not part of his equipment. They were foreign to his na-

ture. From what we can learn of him, he seems to have been the type who could easily detect superficiality. Although his orchestration is very unconventional, its peculiarities were born out of the necessity of what he was trying to say, and not for their own sake . . . G. W. Chadwick has said of Mahler:

For all his enormous orchestral technique, in which he was surpassed by no one, it seems to me that he never lowered himself to mere decorative effects. All his combinations, no matter how complicated, were the immediate outgrowth of his musical idea.<sup>2</sup>

To quote another opinion, Paul Draper has said:

There is no composer of our time who thought his music so clearly in the medium of the orchestra as did Mahler—the orchestra was his only form of musical expression.<sup>2</sup>

This is a most accurate statement, for Mahler's entire output (save fourteen early songs with piano) is for the orchestra, with or without solo voice or chorus. He really writes *music for the orchestra*, not merely music which can be played by an orchestra if convenient. Herein lies the difference between his work and that of the average composer. Analysis of the typical orchestral page of the average composer's score will usually show that the material consists of a melody, possibly a counter-melody, a bass, and filler harmony, entrusted perhaps to violins, woodwinds, cellos and double-basses, and four horns respectively. This layout is perfectly effective, but it is a stock device; anybody can orchestrate this way. The four horns will be seen to be merely harmonizing and uniting the work of the other sections, the parts being of no real interest in themselves, and, although it would bring disastrous results if they were omitted, they are not heard consciously by the auditors. These horns are only filler material—dead wood—intended merely to give thickness and fullness. Now a glance down almost any page of a Mahler score will reveal that each *voice is doing something vital and essential* to the total effect. True, he has big unisons of many instruments; it is not uncommon to find four flutes, three oboes, and three clarinets all playing the same notes, but that voice, in itself, is *essential*; it *does something*. This is due to the fact that Mahler's music is primarily *contrapuntal* in nature. But it must not be imagined that every note of Mahler's texture is part of a melody. He uses holding-notes very freely, but one always hears them consciously, and they are a *vital* part of the texture even though stationary. Sustained harmony is not uncommon in the middle of his ensemble, but it is not used because he can think of nothing else to do. Sustained harmony is commonest in his earlier compositions; it gradually tends to disappear in the later works. As for the large unisons, especially of woodwinds, they are necessary to maintain proper balance. Furthermore—and this is important—the

<sup>2</sup> *Gustav Mahler, the Composer, the Conductor, and the Man*. A symposium. (Published by the Society of the Friends of Music, New York.)

effect of several wood-winds (or brasses), even of the same type, playing in unison, is quite different from that of a solo instrument, just as a section of violins differs from a solo violin. All of this produces not only mere mathematical balance of instruments but also—when contrasted with single instruments on a part—greater *variety* in tone-color, a possibility which is of great importance and one which critics often overlook. . . . Purely decorative effects or fancy embroidery, whether prominent or subdued, are foreign to his music. His style of orchestration is nourishing meat, not whipped cream. It is really economical, rather than recklessly extravagant. . . .

A feature of Mahler's writing for orchestra which will be noticed after careful study is that he rarely if ever has long, prominent, formal solos for the various instruments—solos comparable to the clarinet solo in Rachmaninoff's *Second Symphony*, third movement, the viola solo in Sibelius's *En Saga*, or the horn solo in Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* nocturne. The contrapuntal nature of his music makes such solos well-nigh impossible. Solos of this type are most at home in strictly homophonic music.

## II

In his songs with orchestra, Mahler makes an even finer use of his orchestra than in his symphonies, though in a somewhat different way. Whereas in the symphonies the orchestra is frequently employed for mass usage, in his songs (except possibly *Das Lied von der Erde*) it is used in a manner suggestive of chamber-music more frequently than it is in the symphonies. In the orchestral songs we do not so often find many instruments massed together in unison—a device which has a tendency to cause thickness and the blotting-out of the individuality of each instrument—instead the instruments sing their own parts freely and unhampered. Each instrument stands out more individually and more colorfully. When a part is played by more than one instrument, this doubling seems to be done for real reasons (tone-color), rather than merely for the sake of maintaining the proper orchestral balance. After all, the best use of mixed tone-colors is that of contrast with pure (undoubled) tone-colors. Even the most critical cannot complain of Mahler's huge orchestra (of which more anon) in the songs, for its proportions are very reasonable. This is possibly but surely not entirely a necessity in order to preserve the proper balance between orchestra and voice. Except in *Das Lied von der Erde* the string sections could be a half or a third the number needed for the symphonies.

Every note seems to count for a definite purpose in Mahler's songs; everything seems alive. The sparseness often approaches that of chamber-music. Paul Rosenfeld's statement, "All the instruments of his orchestra sound"<sup>3</sup> applies most forcibly to the songs. Egon Wellesz said the following about Schönberg:

<sup>3</sup> *Modern Tendencies in Music*, by Paul Rosenfeld, page 20. (Caxton Institute, New York.)



Schönberg, however, always remained true to the chamber-music style, even in his big orchestral works. He seeks to give each voice its own melodic outline, and he is able to express himself best whenever he can build on the polyphony of the string quartet.<sup>4</sup>

The same is equally true of Mahler. Bruno Walter has said of Mahler's use of the orchestra in his songs:

The songs with orchestra accompaniment contain perhaps the most sublime achievements of his orchestral ability and are exemplary for the ideally-shaded sound-relations between singing voice and orchestra. . . . The master of instrumentation devoted especially loving care to his efforts to produce the most exquisite effects with the modest accompanying orchestra. . . . Altogether, the diversity and wealth of contrasts in the songs of Mahler give us an impressive idea of the riches of his nature, which, in his symphonies, reach imposing dimensions.<sup>5</sup>

One might justly attack the use of the word *accompanying* in the above statement. Mahler's songs are not for *voice with orchestra accompaniment*, but for *voice and orchestra*, or perhaps it would be better to say for *orchestra, one of the members of which is a voice*. Never does the voice completely dominate the entire song or indulge in pure display passages. The orchestra is really part of the picture, not merely the frame-work. Yet he does not go to the opposite extreme: writing for *orchestra with vocal accompaniment*. Also, the writing for the voice is always vocal in idiom; Mahler does not write instrumentally for the singer, nor does he make it necessary for the singer to have to shout to be heard above all the instruments. The voice is purely *one of the group*, often presenting one of several concurrent melodies of equal importance. Much more might be written on Mahler's use of voices if it were entirely in place here. But it is more a subject for another article.

### III

Probably everyone knows that Mahler often required a large number of instruments in his compositions. (Quite a few know nothing else about him.) Now to some people it seems a terrible sin for a composer to demand an augmented orchestra, particularly if the composition in question happened to be written during the nineteenth century or in the early 1900's. (When Stravinsky very justifiably requires a big orchestra for *Le Sacre du Printemps*, that is perfectly all right, of course; to such critics Stravinsky is probably above criticism of any kind.) Mahler's frequent demand for large orchestras is a serious indictment against him, if we are to listen to the sneers of certain people. They think that he was suffering from megalomania, a passion for being colossal for its own sake, and point to the length of his compositions as the clinching argument. The student of Mahler could easily show that the length of

<sup>4</sup> Arnold Schönberg, by Egon Wellesz, translated by W. H. Kerridge, page 11. (J. M. Dent & Sons, London.)

<sup>5</sup> Gustav Mahler, by Bruno Walter, pages 98-99.

the master's works is not for its own sake, but is organically essential to the very nature of his compositions. (This point also could be discussed at greater length elsewhere.) Composers do not arbitrarily determine the size of the orchestra they use; it is inseparably bound up with the nature of the very music itself. Various styles of music require different styles of orchestration. To re-score Mahler's *Eighth Symphony* for the average-sized orchestra would be impossible; those who criticize the size of Mahler's ensemble should try it and be convinced. Mozart wrote for comparatively few instruments because his musical ideas could not be properly expressed otherwise. Imagine how a Mozart symphony would sound if re-scored for the ensemble employed by Wagner in *The Ring*—or how *The Ring* would sound if re-scored for the orchestra used in the *G Minor Symphony*! . . . It is obvious that the larger a group of instruments one writes for, the greater will be the contrast between very soft and very loud, and the greater will be the variety of tone-colors one can achieve. The ethereal effect of four-part harmony played by nothing but flutes is of course impossible if one is scoring for fewer than four flutes—to cite but one example out of many that could be mentioned. If Mahler worshipped mere bigness for its own sake, why did he score the superbly beautiful *adagietto* of the *Fifth Symphony* for only the strings and harp? Why did he omit the violins and violas from *Der Tambour'sell*? Why did he omit all the strings from *Um Mitternacht*? Why did he score the *Fourth Symphony* for just the average orchestra minus trombones and tuba and why did he use such small orchestras in his songs, which in the case of *Ich atmet' einen Linden Duft* (which incidentally is only thirty-six measures in length) consists of only flute, oboe, clarinet, two bassoons, three horns, harp, celesta, a single section of violins, and violas, plus the voice? Just because a composition requires a large group of instruments does not automatically mean that it is overscored, nor that it will contain more frequent loud passages than the average orchestral composition.<sup>6</sup>

Let us now give a little attention to some of the typical land-marks by which we can distinguish a Mahler score. One of the most interesting devices Mahler uses (surely based on his experience) is rather difficult to describe. We might say it consists of adding extra instruments at certain high-lights in the course of a theme. And frequently when a theme begins with several "pick-up notes" (up-beat) there will be more instruments assigned to this anacrusis than to the rest of the theme. This device is much commoner in the symphonies than in the songs.

Frequently we find a single melodic line played by several instruments in unison, but in different idioms; for example, strings playing *tremolo* while the wood-winds trill on the same notes, or rapid wood-

<sup>6</sup> A few compositions by non-German composers requiring orchestras rivaling Mahler's in size are *Le Sacre du Printemps* by Stravinsky, *The Poem of Ecstasy* and *Prometheus* by Scriabine, Overture to *Dylan* by Joseph Holbrooke, *The Planets* by Gustav Holst, *Requiem Mass* and *Symphonie Funèbre et Triomphale* by Berlioz, and *The Pines of Rome* by Respighi.

wind *arpeggios* while the strings play the same notes in chords across the strings.

Mahler often requires a *crescendo* from some instruments while others are performing a *diminuendo*; sometimes both sets of instruments are playing in unison. Dynamic contrasts between several melodic lines are indeed a feature of his music. First one instrument and then another appears prominently and then recedes into the background, but without ceasing to play.<sup>7</sup>

He loves to have the brass attack a soft chord with a stinging *sforzando* and then cause this chord to *crescendo* powerfully in a manner that "lifts the listener out of his seat." . . . (The foregoing are some of the most characteristic of his traits. Others, of course, could be mentioned.)

#### IV

When one begins a study of Mahler's use of the individual instruments one approaches a truly fascinating subject. One meets old friends in unexpected but delightful new rôles. . . . In *Um Mitternacht*, a song of deep mysticism and introspection, the usually heavy-voiced tuba goes down several scales softly with a most unusual but excellent effect. . . . Listen to the striking use of the usually jolly glockenspiel in the anguished first number of the *Kindertotenlieder*. . . . In the middle of the fourth movement (*Urlicht*) of the *Second Symphony*, the customarily squealing piccolo plays a high, soft, ethereal melody, and is presently joined by another piccolo playing a third lower with even finer effect. . . . In the last movement of the same symphony there is a terrifying *crescendo* for nothing but percussion instruments. Truly the gates of Hell open here! . . . And again in the middle of the third movement of this symphony a trumpet, with the bell raised high and accompanied by three other trumpets, plays a sentimental and somewhat vulgar solo which is truly delightful. . . . One feels in each of these instances how inevitably *right* is the usage of the instruments and how refreshingly novel and spontaneous is the effect.

Mahler's restraint in using the harp is noteworthy, yet where he does use it, the effect is admirable. He shows much interest in its low notes. . . . Solo violins, violas, cellos, and even double-basses are common. In the second movement of the *Fourth Symphony* there is an important obligato part for a solo violin tuned a whole-step higher than usual. He loves the *spiccato* or *saltando* (springing bow) effect in the strings. *Portamentos* are frequently indicated; wisely so, for if left to individual discretion there may be no discretion. An extremely common device is the use of drawing the bows across all the strings, forming a chord. Here Mahler doesn't seem to want these chords to supply har-

<sup>7</sup>Winthrop Sargeant appropriately calls this device *contrapuntal dynamics* in his very interesting paper on Mahler's use of the orchestra which appeared in the March 25, 1934 issue of *Musical America*. It was one of a group of two articles on Mahler which Mr. Sargeant wrote for that magazine.

mony, but rather for the slash and force they give to the highest note of the chord. He uses the *col legno* (playing with the back of the bow) rather frequently and sometimes in the most unexpected places. Muted strings are extremely common; to Mahler it is just as natural for a string instrument to have the mute as to be without it. Muted brass and stopped horns are not uncommon. . . . Highly effective passages played off-stage by trumpets (also horns) are not hard to find. Flutter-tonguing is common with wood-winds and brasses. Trumpet, horn, oboe, English horn, and clarinet are often asked to play with the bell of the instrument raised high. His extreme fondness for the trumpet is said to date from his early boyhood spent in a neighborhood close to military barracks. . . . This is also said to cause his liking for the percussion instruments. Triangle, cymbals, and gong often enter with charming effect at unexpected places. Examples of muffled snare-drum and timpani can be found. He often requires the cymbals to be fastened to the top of the bass drum and both instruments to be then played by the same performer. This makes quite a difference in the tone of the cymbals, but he surely desires it.<sup>8</sup> . . . He uses the E-flat clarinet freely (sometimes two of them) usually for brilliance, strength on high notes, parody, or humor. He also uses the C clarinet often. One of the most surprising traits of his use of clarinets is that he apparently differentiates between the tone-color of the two standard clarinets—those in B-flat and A—for he sometimes uses the former in keys with many sharps and the latter in keys with many flats, instead of the reverse, as the instruments are adapted to be used, when difference in tone-color desire can be the only explanation possible (See *Fifth Symphony*, second movement, at 17).

There was some discussion in CHORD AND DISCORD for January, 1938 concerning Mahler's treatment of the horn. It must be noted that Dr. Ernst J. M. Lert, who thought Mahler indifferent to the horn and his treatment of it undistinguished, was primarily thinking of Mahler's conducting of the works of others, and only secondarily of his usage in his own works. The present writer feels that Mahler wrote very intelligently and idiomatically for the horn, even in difficult passages. He seems to have known all its resources, including the use of its low notes. There is a prominent horn obligato in the third movement of the *Fifth Symphony*.

There is one instrument, however, which he doesn't understand thoroughly, and that is the organ. He knows where to use it and he knows its character and effect, but he doesn't know how to notate it. (In this respect he is not alone among composers.) He writes passages which go below the range of manuals and pedals alike. He apparently did not understand what couplers are, or what 8 ft., 4 ft., and 16 ft. mean. He seems to have written the *sounds* he wants the organ to produce, rather than the *keys* to be pressed. Directions as to registration are very

<sup>8</sup> This therefore makes him not subject to Berlioz's biting criticism of this method in his *Treatise of Modern Instrumentation and Orchestration*.

meager. But a man who understood all other instruments so well can be forgiven this fault. After all, the organ is very complicated and not much like any other instrument.

Concerning the unusual instruments Mahler employed, one might best put them in a list.

| INSTRUMENT                                           | USED IN                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Mandolin</b> . . . . .                            | <i>7th Symph.</i> , 4th mov't.<br><i>8th Symph.</i> , 2nd mov't.<br><i>Das Lied v. d. Erde</i> , 4th & 6th mov'ts.                                                             |
| <b>Guitar</b> . . . . .                              | <i>7th Symph.</i> , 4th mov't.                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Piano</b> . . . . .                               | <i>8th Symph.</i><br><i>Um Mitternacht</i> .                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Harmonium</b> . . . . .                           | <i>8th Symph.</i> , 2nd mov't.                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Organ</b> . . . . .                               | <i>2nd Symph.</i> , finale.<br><i>8th Symph.</i>                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Harness-Bells</b> . . . . .                       | <i>4th Symph.</i>                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Cow-Bells</b> . . . . .                           | <i>6th Symph.</i><br><i>7th Symph.</i>                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Ruthe (or Rute)</b> . . . . .                     | <i>2nd Symph.</i> , 3rd mov't.<br><i>Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt</i> .<br><i>3rd Symph.</i> , 2nd mov't.<br><i>6th Symph.</i> , finale.<br><i>7th Symph.</i> , finale. |
| <b>Hammer</b> . . . . .                              | <i>6th Symph.</i> , finale.                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Tenor-Horn in B-flat</b> . . . . .                | <i>7th Symph.</i> , 1st mov't.                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Post-Horn in B-flat</b> . . . . .                 | <i>3rd Symph.</i> , 3rd mov't.                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Flügel-Horns</b> ( <i>ad lib.</i> ) off-stage     | <i>Das Klagende Lied</i> .                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Flutes in D-flat</b> ( <i>ad lib.</i> ) off-stage | <i>Das Klagende Lied</i> .                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Oboe d'Amore</b> . . . . .                        | <i>Um Mitternacht</i> .                                                                                                                                                        |

It might be explained that the *ruthe* (literally, "rod") is a bundle of rushes or ratan, fastened together so as to resemble a small broom or a large clothes-brush, which is used to play the bass drum. There seems to be some uncertainty about the *tenor-horn*. Paul Bekker, on page 225 of *The Story of the Orchestra*, refers to it as a keyed-bugle, but surely he is mistaken. Cecil Forsyth, in *Orchestration*, says *tenor-horn* is the German equivalent of our baritone-horn, surely a more likely explanation. . . . As to such semi-unusual instruments as the celesta, tubular bells, xylophone, glockenspiel, E-flat and D clarinets, castanets, tambourine, etc., it might suffice to say that Mahler used them rather often. Perhaps it would not be too far off the subject to mention that a boys' chorus appears in the *Third Symphony*, fifth movement (Bell chorus), and in the *Eighth Symphony*.

Mahler always tried to get the utmost in range out of his instruments. He writes low notes for the piccolo, flute, oboe, English horn, clarinet, bassoon, trombone, and celesta which are not found on the types of

these instruments common to this country, or at least not on all of them. Except for a piccolo solo in the third movement of *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* and flute solos in the last movement of the *Fourth Symphony* and second movement of the *Seventh Symphony*, none of these low notes occurs in solos without provision for its possible absence. Instances of the writing of low F and F-sharp below the low G (lowest note) of the violins can be found. Almost invariably these notes are written in parentheses and they are always doubled by some other instrument. Never are the violins asked to tune down their G-string. Richard Strauss has also used such notes without allowing provision for tuning down the string and has remarked that perhaps some day a way will be found to make them playable. Mahler probably thought the same.

Before closing, it might be worth while to cite a few of Mahler's favorite combinations of instruments. The bitter-sweet clash of oboe and horn (which do not blend) playing different parts is highly characteristic of him. The unison of flutes, oboes, and clarinets has already been mentioned. Unisons of harp and muted strings, celesta and muted strings, or harp and clarinets may be found in more than one happy example. An especially interesting combination is that of oboes and trumpets with the former playing the melody and the latter accompanying.

The above are just a few suggestions. Almost any page of this master's scores will reveal something original and worthy of attention in the way of orchestration. Mahler's scores are not for the beginner in orchestration, but they are admirable for the advanced student, while the young composer will find them a splendid guide for more things than just orchestration.



#### CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA UNDER RODZINSKI BROADCASTS BRUCKNER'S SEVENTH (NBC) MARCH 16, 1938

For the first time in two years a complete Bruckner symphony was put on the air over a major network. Bruckner's *Seventh*, performed by the Cleveland Orchestra, was broadcast over the network of the National Broadcasting Company on March 16th. For this performance admirers of Bruckner are grateful to the Cleveland Orchestra and its brilliant conductor and hope it will be less than two years before another complete Bruckner symphony is heard on the air.

The eminent critic, Mr. Pitts Sanborn, advocated a Bruckner cycle (one symphony to a program) several years ago. Mr. Lawrence Gilman wrote that the complete symphonic Bruckner has never received his due in this country. The late William J. Henderson thought that repetition of Bruckner's symphonies is the best test of their worth. Mr. Olin Downes expressed the opinion that it would be well if audiences could know more than they do of Bruckner's symphonies. Audiences of various cities—New York, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Denver, Minneapolis, San Francisco—expressed their approval of Bruckner performances during the past few years by means of enthusiastic applause—an attitude quite different from that of years ago when Bruckner's music virtually emptied the concert-hall. Reviewers have advocated repetition, the only means of familiarizing the music-loving public with unfamiliar works.

Would it not be a good idea for conductors to offer their concert and radio audiences Bruckner-Wagner and Bruckner-Beethoven programs, thus combining the familiar with the unfamiliar until audiences learn to know Bruckner's music sufficiently well to want to hear it for its own sake?



## Bruckner and Mahler

### *Their Spiritual Message*

BY MARY R. RYAN

POETRY, so replete with apt similes, does proffer, on occasions, comparisons of a fantastic nature. Likewise, in the prose of life, we find ourselves now and then placing in juxtaposition persons or events which, on the surface, appear to be wholly at variance. I admit in these opening lines, therefore, that my gesture in bringing into even slight relationship two of the world's greatest and most masculine of composers with X- and Y-, feminine both and musicians not at all, is somewhat gauche. The fact remains, however, that these women in certain respects remind me always of Bruckner and Mahler.

With X- I will deal first. She lives in the West. Mountains rise about her home; close by are valley gardens and rocky cups of shining water. It is an environment which weaves itself into her longest memories. Familiarity, however, has not blinded her to the grandeurs which she possesses, and her joy is apparent when she undertakes to share them with those many guests who pass her way. Yet that joy has nothing in it which is exclamatory. It wells up and overflows quietly—so quietly in truth that its force is not rightly measured at once; nor is, perhaps, the depth of that undramatic thankfulness with which she admits that when there was need to tread the cruel trails against two far hills, invariably “strength for climbing them” was granted her.

X- has an individual fashion of bidding her friends farewell with gifts. And that one most prized, is, I think, “peace of spirit.” Long after more tangible treasure has been destroyed, this lingers!

Now, when I leave the music of Anton Bruckner, I feel again an identical tranquillity. For the genius of St. Florian possessed, too, from his childhood, gardens and hills and stretches of flashing water. Very early, his inward gaze had rested upon a blossoming spot in Nazareth where an angel bent to the Virgin Mary and said: “Hail, the Lord is with thee”; he looked up to the hills of Bethlehem across which the glow of a Star had fallen. On one hand he could glimpse Mount Tabor of the Transfiguration; on the other the Lake of Genesareth; and there beyond was Golgatha, Cross-crowned, with a garden below where Christ walked on the morn of Resurrection. All these were Bruckner's Catholic heritage and he guarded them well.

Every mortal must stumble at times along the way of suffering. Bruckner's lot was the common one, of course. But in his major works, we hear constantly a pedal note of grateful confidence underlying pain; and where pain is not, dominating chords of lofty happiness are. In that countryside which his soul owned, he found the gift which he offers us without stint—peace of spirit.

Y- lives a thousand miles distant from X-. But she, too, has her cloud-kissing hills, a blue lake and gardens of wild flowers. She has acquired these, however, only in maturity. Her first steps echoed in the canyons of a city. Each day the stream she watched was that of dusty trucks and clanging street cars. And hour upon hour the roar and flame of giant industries were in her ears. Now, with four decades behind her, for portions of each year she roams her own acres of high land. Equally with X-, she loves the natural beauties about her; equally she rejoices in tendering them to her visitors. But her reaction to loveliness acquired so late reflects itself not in serenity, but in an enthusiasm characterized by sharp fluctuations and darkened by sudden moods of somberness. Cedars and white sails against the horizon, gulls and wood moths, wind in the birches and roses marching up a hillside make for alternating showers of lyric or ejaculatory comment. But from the beacon fires of a sunset she may turn to brood over the stock market report. The city has not released its grip upon her. One bids her adieu with emotions compounded of exaltation and unrest. X-'s gift of peace is not hers to bestow!

Gustav Mahler, like Y-, owned first but the tumult of the city—spiritually speaking. His parents, Jews by birth, were actually free thinkers by preference. Thus for their son they provided no definite religious anchorage during his formative years. We observe him, a highly sensitive soul, inclining soon towards an ideal of rare perfection. "I would like to be a martyr," he declared as a small lad. Others have expressed that wish before and since—and reached their goal. But the path was indicated to these. For Mahler there was no direction suggested.

Eventually he set out upon the highroad of music. But this was traversed unendingly by lanes resounding with the clamors of discouragement, misunderstandings, setbacks and biting criticism. He knew well that his soul must seek escape from the noise of the world. And many gates he passed through only to discover himself in a fog of philosophies. When he was thirty-five his searchings led him finally to the green valleys, the sunny waters and the high hills of Faith that his friend Bruckner had so long cherished. And when in 1895, in solemn ceremony, he uttered the Credo of a Roman Catholic, these became his own as well.

Yet, like Y-, the fever of all that had gone before was not swift to disappear. In the brief years remaining for him, he was unable to fashion an armor that was fully adequate to protect him against the lances of his generation. Commentators indicate also that he placed his holdings of Faith in jeopardy; and almost certainly, if he toyed with the doctrine of pantheism, he lost title to his Catholicism. A rather illuminating illustration of opposing sentiments in him is to be noted in his first outline for the *Eighth Symphony*. The initial movement is motivated apparently by one of the great hymns of the Church—the "Veni Creator"; the final and crowning movement revolves around the pagan deity, Eros and

**creation.** That the order of his conception—from God, the everlasting Light to a figure in the dusk of mythology—is out of line with the spirit of those who habitually utter a “Credo in unum Deum” goes without saying.

However, above the din of all his inward conflicts, he lifts his voice from time to time to reverently glorify that Light, which having sought in hope, he found in a garden where Bruckner walked. Therein lies the exaltation which listeners extract from his music. But his melancholy, his acute sensitiveness, his divergencies of thought press down upon us, too; and in the midst of an inspired moment, the shadow of these will induce, not an added peace, but rather a restlessness, a waiting for a cadence that is not sounded.

Maritain, the French philosopher, has written: “Music . . . has this peculiarity that symbolizing by sound the very movements of the soul—*cantare amantis est*—when it produces emotion it produces precisely what it symbolizes. But such production is not its object any more than a representation or description of the emotions. The emotions which it evokes in the soul by sound or rhythm are the matter by which it ought to give us the experienced joy of a spiritual form, of a transcendent order, of the brilliance of being.”<sup>1</sup>

Surely in the majestic strains of victory, in the grave moments of prayer which are to be discovered in the music of Bruckner and Mahler, the splendor of the indestructible and immortal soul shines in an unforgettable radiance!



#### HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON ON BRUCKNER, MAHLER, AND WOLF

During the latter years of Brahms' life there were three other great composers in Vienna whose works suffered a similar fate, who had to wait a long time for recognition. The first of them, Hugo Wolf, gave us a series of songs of rare beauty, for he knew how to identify the music with the words as no one else had been able to do since Schubert. The second of these was Anton Bruckner, who spent his many days on this planet fulfilling his task in a simple and sincere but somewhat ponderous way. The third was Gustav Mahler, whom we still remember over here from the days when he conducted the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and who was almost the complete opposite of the embittered Wolf (who realized his own genius as a composer but had to make a living as a musical critic) and the deeply religious Bruckner.

All three of them were finally able to get their works performed. The last two lived to see the day when their symphonies appeared regularly on the programs of all philharmonic societies. But as in the case of

<sup>1</sup> *Art and Scholasticism* . . . Jacques Maritain. (Charles Scribner's Sons.)

Brahms, they were obliged to exercise patience and to bide their time. If the public was slow in coming up to them, that was undoubtedly very unfortunate, but for the public, not for them. Even the humble Bruckner knew that what he had to offer was good. Let the audiences come and get it or do without.

Hendrik van Loon. *The Arts*, page 625, published by Simon & Shuster, New York.

#### PITTS SANBORN ADVOCATES BRUCKNER CYCLE

In the article bearing the title "Music of Bruckner Would Enrich Season" (*World Telegram* March 26, 1938) the eminent critic, Mr. Pitts Sanborn wrote in part as follows:

... In recent years it has seemed as though the local taboo on Bruckner's music had been removed at last. Conductors of the first rank have directed his works here and not seldom. Arturo Toscanini, Willem Mengelberg, Artur Bodanzky, Leopold Stokowski, Bruno Walter, and Otto Klemperer have all done their mighty bit for Bruckner. Even the summer festivities at the Lewishon Stadium have testified to his importance. On the part of the public growing appreciation and pleasure had been clearly manifest. And now comes this slump!

I might say at this point that the slump, like every misfortune, has a concomitant advantage. We are spared performances that might be misrepresentations. Bruckner has by no means become so secure in this country that a clumsy, bungling exposition would fail to militate against the growing favor and lead unbelievers to exclaim, "I told you so!"

There are admittedly structural weaknesses in his symphonic works that pose problems for even the most accomplished interpreters. Great masters of design like a Toscanini and a Mengelberg have actually discovered bone and sinew hidden from the ordinary observer, and the conductors schooled in the old Viennese tradition have known how to emphasize the authentic Viennese quality in these works and even to bring out the kinship of Bruckner to so great and typical a Viennese as Schubert—a relation that is usually overlooked in the traditional preoccupation with the kinship of Bruckner to Wagner.

Therefore, while deploring the current slump in Bruckner, let us beware lest his reputation fall into the wrong hands, for many a conductor of respectable ability in the domain of Beethoven and Brahms is without vocation, or at any rate training, when it comes to Bruckner.

Nevertheless, though we must be content to bide our time till Bruckner can be reintroduced here under proper auspices, it is not amiss to point out that when the moment arrives the concert repertory could be varied and enriched through a Bruckner cycle, as in the case of the season's Sibelius cycles.

It is really imperative that some competent and courageous conductor should display the nine Bruckner symphonies in their order. Only four of them are at all familiar here now, and there is grave doubt whether the first has ever been played in this country at all. . . .

#### ATTITUDE TOWARD COMPOSERS CHANGES

BY WARREN STOREY SMITH

Reprinted from an article in the *Boston Post*, January 23, 1938.

To this department has come a copy of the latest issue of CHORD AND DISCORD, the magazine published once a year, or oftener, by the Bruckner Society of America, Inc. The "discord," or critical disapproval of Bruckner and of Mahler, whom the society also champions, is largely confined to the title. Not that there is any present dearth of that commodity, although there is every sign of a more tolerant and understanding attitude on the part of the music reviewers, but the purpose of the magazine, or one of

its purposes, is to show as well as to encourage the trend toward these composers on the part of conductors, critics and audiences.

Long continued critical condemnation, turning gradually into enthusiastic approval, has been the fate of more than one composer. It is, in fact, the surest mark of value. The inconsequential composer does not have whole mountains of abuse heaped upon him — he doesn't get the chance.

On one page of CHORD AND DISCORD is to be found a list of performances of symphonies or of parts of symphonies and of smaller works by Mahler and Bruckner announced for the season of 1937-38 by seven American orchestras and one choral society. Included here are three full symphonies by each composer. The Boston Symphony Orchestra is down for Mahler's Fifth, already played, and for Bruckner's Seventh.

Considering how formidable, by comparison, a list of proposed performances of symphonies by Brahms and Tchaikovsky would seem, it may be wondered why conductors are still so leery of Bruckner and Mahler, particularly when the symphonic repertory is in such urgent need of replenishing. If the public were hostile, or even disinterested, this hesitancy would be easy enough to explain; but by many signs such is not the case. The critics still put up something of a fight; for years in New York the unanimous anti-Mahler sentiment suggested a cabal. But that is another story.

Take, for example, recent experience in Boston. Measured by the volume of applause and by the number of recalls for the conductor, Dr. Koussevitzky has scored some of his most conspicuous successes with Bruckner's Seventh and Eighth Symphonies and with Mahler's Fifth, while the visiting Mr. Mitropolous earned his greatest triumph with the latter's First two years ago. That Mahler's "Song of the Earth" and Ninth Symphony, actually finer works, have received less outward acclaim may easily be laid to their common possession of a long-drawn-out pianissimo conclusion, the antithesis of what is known as an applause trap. To go further back, Bruckner's Seventh and Eighth and Mahler's Fifth have all been repeated here in the same season by popular request.

That which happens in one city probably happens in another; by evidence of the testimony quoted in CHORD AND DISCORD it most decidedly does.



#### LIEDER EINES FAHRENDEN GESELLEN BY WPA

On the evening of December 4, 1937, Miss Eells sang *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* at a concert by the New York Civic Orchestra. The orchestra, under the direction of Edgar Schenkman acquitted itself creditably. The audience seemed to enjoy the songs. Miss Hariette Eells was recalled twice.

#### TUREMAN PERFORMS BRUCKNER'S *FOURTH* AT DENVER, COLORADO.

The Denver Civic Orchestra under the direction of Horace E. Tureman performed Bruckner's *Fourth Symphony* on January 23rd, 1938. The performance stirred the audience.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT

THE ASSOCIATED MUSIC PUBLISHERS, INC., 25 West 45th Street, New York City, announce that the conductor's scores and performing parts of the symphonies of Anton Bruckner, which were hitherto for rent only, are now for sale. The prices are:

Symphonies No. 1, 2, 4, 6: Score \$10.00; Parts \$25.00; Strings each \$1.20.

Symphony No. 7: Score \$9.00; Parts \$30.00; Strings each \$1.20.

Symphony No. 8: Score \$15.00; Parts \$35.00; Strings each \$1.60.

Symphonies No. 3, 5, 9: Score \$12.00; Parts \$35.00; Strings \$1.60.

Overture G minor: Score \$4.00; Parts \$6.00; Strings each \$ .40; Andante: Score \$4.00; Parts \$6.00; Strings each \$ .30.

STOCK BROADCASTS MOVEMENTS FROM MAHLER'S SYMPHONY  
NO. 1 OVER WGN JANUARY 29, 1938

On Saturday night, January 29th the Chicago Symphony under the direction of Frederick A. Stock performed the *Andante* and *Scherzo* from Mahler's *First Symphony* at a popular concert. Judging by the enthusiastic applause Mr. Stock need not hesitate to include additional movements, or perhaps even a whole symphony of Mahler on these programs.

BRUCKNER'S *FOURTH* UNDER BRICO

The Bay Region Symphony Orchestra performed Bruckner's *Fourth* in San Francisco on August 16th and in Oakland three days later. On both occasions there were sold out houses and attentive and appreciative audiences. This was the first performance of Bruckner's *Fourth* in San Francisco.

KINDERTOTENLIEDER BY FEDERAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Hertha Glatz sang *Kindertotenlieder* at a concert by the Federal Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Fritz Mahler in New York City on May 15th. Miss Glatz revealed a thorough understanding of the spirit of the text and succeeded in communicating its message to her audience. There was much applause for the soloist and for the orchestra.

HALASZ CONDUCTS *FINALE* OF MAHLER'S *FOURTH*

The Greenwich Orchestra under the direction of Laszlo Halasz, performed the *finale* of Mahler's *Fourth* at the Federal Music Theatre on September 7th before an enthusiastic audience. Kate Ettlinger was the soloist.

Wrote Mr. Francis D. Perkins of the *Herald Tribune*:

"... Mahler's fourth symphony was first played here in a New York Symphony concert under Walter Damrosch in March, 1904, but nearly fourteen years have elapsed since its last New York performance by the Society of the Friends of Music under Artur Bodanzky in November, 1924, although, in regard to its temporal dimensions and the requirements of the score, it is one of the least exacting of Mahler's works in this form. The finale, with a wealth of melody of an unsophisticated Austrian flavor, is well suited to a separate performance, although it might have been worth while to add a note pointing out that the text is that of an old German folksong describing a somewhat festive heaven. . ."

THE KILENYI MAHLER MEDAL AWARDED TO EUGENE ORMANDY

In appreciation of his efforts to create a greater interest in and appreciation of Mahler's music in this country, the Mahler Medal of Honor, designed by Julio Kilenyi for the exclusive use of the Society, was awarded to Eugene Ormandy after a performance of *Das Lied von der Erde* in Philadelphia, on January 29, 1938. Dr. Earl McDonald, Head of the Department of Music of the University of Pennsylvania and a member of the Board of Directors of the Philadelphia Orchestra Association, made the presentation on behalf of the Society.

BRUCKNER AND MAHLER ON WNYC AND WQXR

The local stations, WNYC and WQXR, thanks to the catholic taste of their musical directors (Messrs. Eddy Brown and Douglas MacKinnon—WQXR, and Dr. S. N. Siegel and Mr. H. Neumann—WNYC), have been broadcasting the available recordings of Bruckner's and Mahler's works throughout the year. A feature of especial interest and merit was the 15-minute able discussion of *Das Lied von der Erde* by Mr. Neumann over WNYC on February 13, 1938. Charles F. Adler gave an interesting talk on Bruckner over WQXR on July 8, 1938. This station broadcast recordings of Bruckner's *Ninth* in December, 1938.



## RECORDINGS

*Das Lied von der Erde*—Vienna Philharmonic Symphony, Bruno Walter, Conductor; Soloists, Charles Kullmann and Kerstin Thorborg.

It was a courageous undertaking of Columbia to present, for the first time on records, the complete symphony, which though a masterwork, is by a composer still far from popular or enjoying the wide appreciation he deserves. . . .

The playing, under Walter's ministrations, is beautiful at every stage. . . .

The soloists (Kullmann and Thorborg) were happily chosen. . . .

There remains Mahler's great score with a last movement that is the ultimate in resignation and pessimism as expressed in the language of tone. It is not a popular work: so much the worse for people who will not listen so that they may make "contact" with a noble poet. I have no inclination to discuss the so-called controversial question of Mahler, a subject for which I have no patience. I can but testify that for me "*Das Lied von der Erde*" is a musical monument that grows in size each time I hear it; and if other people cannot see it the loss is theirs.

MOSES SMITH, *Boston Evening Transcript*, December 14, 1937.

LIEDER EINES FAHRENDEN GESELLEN SUNG BY HARRIET EELLS  
AT TOWN HALL

. . . The "*Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*" are incompletely realized when heard with piano accompaniment, rather than with the orchestra, but yet, considering how seldom they are sung, were to be welcomed in this guise. If some of the subtle emotional hues here and in the Loeffler group were not fully set forth, Miss Eells was successful in setting much of their expressive significance, and especially in conveying the poignant contrasts of feeling in one of Mahler's most treasurable contributions. . . .

. . . There was a good-sized and applauding audience.

F. D. P., *Herald Tribune*

STOCK PERFORMS BRUCKNER'S *THIRD* FEBRUARY 24, 1938

Bruckner's *Third* was featured on last evening's program; and it was so well received—Dr. Stock had two enthusiastic recalls after its performance—that this commentator believes that it reflects the changing attitude of Chicago music-lovers toward the genius of St. Florian. Years ago Bruckner performances virtually emptied concert halls. And most certainly the cordial and sincere reception which the *Third Symphony* won yesterday should gratify its conductor whose faith in the greatness of the work has been evidenced on previous occasions.

The power and sweep of the first movement as the orchestra played it will not soon be forgotten. The solemn second movement with its exquisite counterpoint was done very much *con amore*; and the scherzo might well be programmed: "Life is good!" The finale, notable for its melodic and contrapuntal effects and for the sheer "lift" and grandeur of its progression exhibited the orchestra in its finest light. We will hope for a repetition of this symphony next season.

MARY R. RYAN

HARRY T. CARLSON CONDUCTS BRUCKNER'S *TE DEUM* PERFORMED  
BY SWEDISH CHORAL CLUB IN CHICAGO, APRIL 27th, 1938

"*Te Deum laudamus: te Dominum confitemur. Te aeternum Patrem omnis terra veneratur.*" As the majestic music which Bruckner set to this ancient hymn of the Church burst forth in Orchestra Hall last evening, one could sense the lifting of hearts of both singers and auditors alike in praise and thanksgiving to the Eternal Father. It was an experience this commentator will never forget.

Harry T. Carlson, the brilliant conductor of the Swedish Choral Society (the membership of which is two hundred and twenty) offered three religious works new to Chicago in his latest program. One of these was a unique oratorio by R. Nathaniel Dett—"The Ordering of Moses." The other two were the *Te Deums* of Bruckner and Kodaly. All three compositions demanded much in the way of technique from chorus and soloists, much of interpretive power on the part of the conductor. And thunder-

ous applause from the audience, as well as astonishingly unanimous commendation from critics testified to the quality of the entire performance.

The idea of offering the public two *Te Deums* was novel. Both works are rich in tonal color, with Kodaly highlighting his orchestration with some striking uses of dissonance. But there is a glory in the music of the older Bruckner that glows by the sheer force of the human voice alone.

A vivid contrast was provided in the two endings of the *Te Deums*. The Kodaly version might be designated as "feminine," for we hear the "In te Domine speravi: non confundar in aeternum" (with soprano soloist against a subdued chorus) as something ethereal. The "masculine" finale is Bruckner's; here, as the shadows are closing in he still prays with full and ringing strength: "In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted; let me never be confounded."

May these two colossal hymns find many conductors in the seasons to come!

MARY R. RYAN

#### STOCK PERFORMS EXCERPTS FROM MAHLER'S *FIRST* NOVEMBER 3, 1938

For a second time in twelve months, Dr. Stock offered to Chicago last evening the hunter's funeral procession and the scherzo from Mahler's first symphony. His devotion to the Mahler cause won in this instance a phenomenal reward: for at the conclusion of the *Frere Jacques* movement, an audience which has the habit of holding sternly to the convention of silence between the pauses of a symphonic work broke into spontaneous applause. And justly was the rule disregarded. For the great conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra presented this music in what might be termed etchings of incredible beauty. With subtle skill his needle traced the plate of sound. No single shadow was overlooked; and every infinitesimal line of light was captured. As a result, the finished products belong in the folio of treasured art. Following such a performance of the "youthful Mahler" Chicago concert-goers glance ahead with awakened interest to Stock's presentation in January of *Das Lied von der Erde*.

MARY R. RYAN

#### NEW HONORARY MEMBERS

Charles Kullmann, Dimitri Mitropoulos, and Enid Szanthy were elected Honorary Members of the Society at a meeting of the Executive Members held November 30, 1938.

Mr. Mitropoulos performed Mahler's *First* in Boston (broadcast) and Minneapolis, and Mahler's *Fourth* in Minneapolis.

Miss Szanthy and Mr. Kullmann were the soloists in New York and Philadelphia performances of *Das Lied von der Erde*.

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GUSTAV MAHLER: SONG-SYMPHONIST

BY GABRIEL ENGEL

It is perhaps the best life of Mahler extant. . . . The reading public owes a debt of gratitude to the Bruckner Society for issuing this comprehensive brochure; it tells all that is necessary and it is informative.

HARVEY GAUL, *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*

(Price \$1.00 plus 6 cents postage)

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Copies of CHORD AND DISCORD are available in the principle public and university libraries in the United States.

# Symphonic Chronicle

## *A Record of Critical and Popular Reaction*

### GUSTAV MAHLER: ANDANTE, SECOND SYMPHONY

*Stadium concerts, N. Y., Fritz Reiner, conductor; July 21, 1937.*

The easygoing, genial andante from Mahler's symphony in C minor is one of the more readily assimilable parts of the work and was cordially received by the evening's good-sized audience in a polished performance. There are probably other movements in Mahler's symphonies which are suitable for separate performance and could be considered for Stadium programs.

F. D. P., *N. Y. Herald Tribune*

The conductor deserves special commendation for giving the Mahler excerpt a hearing.

PITTS SANBORN,  
*New York World Telegram*

### GUSTAV MAHLER: FIFTH SYMPHONY

*Boston Symphony Orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky, conductor, Boston, October 22 and 23, 1937; N. Y., March 10, 1938.*

Revival of Gustav Mahler's Fifth Symphony yesterday afternoon was, from a purely musical point of view, the first "notable event" of the new Boston Symphony season. . . .

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"! . . .

In a sense the concert ascended Olympus with Mahler and dwelled on the summit with Wagner. There is perhaps no more disputable or fascinating creative personality in modern music than that of Gustav Mahler. He aspired to write gigantic masterpieces illumined by soaring visions. He rivaled Richard Strauss in his command of writing bril-

liant polyphony for large orchestra. Not only did he absorb the technic of the masters, whose music he conducted, but he possessed an original voice of his own, a voice particularly conspicuous when Mahler's mind was occupied with fantasy or with sorrow and thought of death. . . .

C. W. D., *Boston Globe*

The opening of the Funeral March, the first movement, might have been as innocuous as the Mendelssohn Song without Words which it resembles. Instead, it has enormous power and majesty before a dozen measures have elapsed. Through all the storm and stress of the movement that majesty somehow is never sacrificed. The second movement and the extraordinary scherzo both have a kind of excitement that no other composer has yet quite attained. Nothing in the Symphony better illustrates the artist than the Adagietto, fourth movement, wherein, with an enormous orchestra at his disposal, Mahler limits the instrumentation to strings and harp, because he is an economical craftsman and because, as it seems, any addition would have robbed the music of its characteristic beauty. The last movement is a miracle within a miracle. The musician may admire here, as in the case of the scherzo, the wonderful polyphonic web. The layman is bound to be moved by the music's elemental force.

Mahler was not mistaken in regarding this Symphony as a new departure in his art. Even today it sounds new. . . .

MOSES SMITH, *Boston Evening Transcript*

A momentous revival, that of the Fifth Symphony of Mahler, took place at Symphony Hall yesterday afternoon. Unheard at the Symphony Concerts since 1914, this well-named "Giant" Symphony deserves, both 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. . . .

The crux of the matter seems to be that Mahler's music cannot always be listened to just as music; and some will not, or cannot, hear music in any other

way. "It was humanity revealed," once wrote a former member of our orchestra, Allan Lincoln Langley, of his own gradual conversion to the Mahler cause, "with no lies, no extenuations, no hypocrisy, no omissions. Beauty shown out fully as often as it does in human affairs; banality was there to torture, and disappoint and to corrode. It was all in the music—one felt Mahler a kinship to the oracular confessor, Walt Whitman: 'I am the man—I suffered, I was there.'"

After so overpowering and exciting an experience as that offered by this Symphony and its almost unbelievably vivid and compelling projection at the hands of Dr. Koussevitzky and his men, any other music, even that of Wagner himself, might easily come as an anti-climax. And it was Wagner who yesterday occupied this unenviable place. . . .

WARREN STOREY SMITH, *Boston Post*

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. For still another reason was the sincere applause a good sign, in that it was recognition of the extraordinary and successful efforts of the orchestra and Dr. Koussevitzky to give the Symphony a faithful and inspired performance.

When this is said, we must return to our first point: an opinion of the merits of this symphony and of Mahler as a composer. No doubt the works of Mahler might have stood a better chance of success if it had not been for the persistent camp of devoted admirers, who could see nothing wrong with their idol. On the other hand the symphonies might have suffered complete neglect if it had not been for their propaganda. . . .

. . . Unpredictably enough, yesterday's hero was Mahler.

ALEXANDER WILLIAMS, *Boston Herald*

. . . It is tumult of sound, and lordly splendor. Its power lies in its tone-painting.

This is so, at least of the first movement, with the solemn preluding of trumpets which usher in the funeral march, with its heavy tread and wild lamentations. The scherzo is professedly

demonic, but more in the vein of piquant orchestral effects and moods of the dance. The most exalted pages are undoubtedly those rapt measures which precede the finale, when a vast tonal design draws all its parts together and welds them into a monumental conclusion.

The thunderous, clamoring symphony served that glowing, shimmering thing, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, to display anew its splendors. . . .

OLIN DOWNES, *N. Y. Times*

. . . That B-flat minor passage in the first movement where the music breaks in upon the measured, decorous tread of the Funeral March like a wild and shattering outburst of uncontrollable anguish is one of the most veracious things that Mahler ever wrote; and the Rondo Finale is a brilliant and exhilarating tour de force. . . .

. . . As for Mr. Koussevitzky, he has seldom put to his credit in New York a more eloquent and masterly performance of any work.

LAWRENCE GILMAN, *Herald Tribune*

In a way that seems both naive and out of date a New York audience still fights shy of Gustav Mahler. In Carnegie Hall last evening Serge Koussevitzky had the temerity to devote the first half of the Boston Symphony Orchestra's concert to Mahler's Fifth Symphony, in C-sharp minor, and in the intervals the usual questions were asked: "How do you like Mahler?"

Well, this symphony was completed in 1902 and introduced to New York (by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, as it happens, in Carnegie Hall, Wilhelm Gericke conducting) on February 15, 1906. By this time both it and its composer might be taken somewhat for granted, even as we take Beethoven and Brahms. . . .

What is more to the point from the popular angle, however, is the unmistakable tunefulness that prevails in much of this symphony. Such is the case in the opening funeral march and, differently, in the dance measures of the scherzo. The ensuing Adagietto, scored only for strings and harp, is a delicate, expressive lyric interlude of melodious tranquillity that nobody could fail to find beguiling, and the Rondo-Finale abounds in tune from the initiatory moment when horn and bassoon and oboe contend for primacy on to the end.

All told, Mahler-fear seems now a bit grotesque.

PITTS SANBORN, *World Telegram*

## HUGO WOLF:

PRELUDE AND ENTR'ACTE, FROM  
*DER CORREGIDOR*, ITALIAN SERE-  
 NADE, SONGS WITH ORCHESTRA,  
 SYMPHONIC POEM, *PENTHESILEA*.

## GUSTAV MAHLER:

ANDANTE AND SCHERZO FROM  
 SYMPHONY NO. I, D MAJOR, *LIEDER  
 EINES FAHRENDEN GESELLEN*,  
 RONDO FROM SYMPHONY NO. 7, E  
 MINOR.

*Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Fred-  
 erick Stock, Conductor; Soloist: Kerstin  
 Thorborg, November 11 and 12, 1937.*

Mr. Stock's program was confined to the two composers from whose work Mme. Thorborg sang. Both of them had a personal gift for song writing and Wolf had a predominant one, for his taste in poetry was that of a poet and the sensitiveness of his nature was alive to the slightest turning of a mood. But above all he could set a story within its proper frame, and the delightful picturesqueness of his writing, together with a command of the orchestra which has both elegance and power, was fully testified in Mr. Stock's performance of music from "The Corregidor," the Italian Serenade (in which Clarence Evans' viola figured delightfully) and "Penthesilea," but on one occasion played previously by the Symphony and that thirty-four years ago.

If Wolf's brilliant music sounded comfortably nonmodernistic, Mr. Stock took care that Mahler should sound neither too elaborate nor too morose. The interesting scheme of playing the third and the second movements from the sylvan first symphony as an introduction to the "Journeyman" cycle was most happy. We found Mahler's eccentricity in its most appealing aspect, the pedantry completely overborne by the naivete and the immense orchestral palette sparingly and episodically used for the delight of an ear not too ponderously admonished with a "message."

And even with the rondo from the seventh symphony, where the full orchestra artillery is continually in use, Mr. Stock's system of offering us details from Gargantuan panoramas rather than a single panorama in entirety, gave us a new and refreshing glimpse of a man laborious in his thinking but brilliant in his discourse. It was one of Mr. Stock's "big" programs, and Wolf's elasticity and

Mr. Stock's emphasis upon Mahler's vast but childishly eager imagination kept us at very high pitch of purest pleasure.

EUGENE STINSON, *Chicago Daily News*

## GUSTAV MAHLER:

## FIRST SYMPHONY

*Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Dimitri Mitropoulos, Conductor. Minneapolis, January 28, 1938.*

The naive, romantic harmonies from the highlands of the old Dual Empire are sounded forth again and again, while cuckoos, hunting-horns and other familiar features of a rococo countryside are offered in a rich variety of orchestral sonorities, only to be dramatically overwhelmed, now and again, by weird, almost sinister, cataclysmic bursts of sound.

Another set of associations is inevitably evoked: the racial and geographical heterogeneity of that same empire. For the Laendler, triple-time bucolic cousin of the waltz, which Mahler loves so to recall in much of his music, has to retire, now and then, in favor of the kolo-dance rhythms from the Balkan regions which, in Mahler's time, also bowed to the Hapsburgs. This juxtaposition of East and West is no small factor in contributing the powerfully exotic color of this particular symphony. . . .

FRANCES BOARDMAN, *Pioneer Press*

. . . He gave a first performance of the first Mahler symphony Friday night in Northrup auditorium that will be remembered a long time. . . .

In this symphony there is abundance of beauty spots; they are scattered through each movement with lavish disregard of anything but the composer's desire to pour out of his heart the things that were filling it and make them the possession of others. That is one reason why this reviewer found so great pleasure in listening to this music.

Structurally this is a symphony but it is not carried through on conventional lines. If Mahler felt a sudden impulse he would and did leave stranded high and dry a previous theme that had attracted his attention, to open his heart to a new emotion or impulse. This is clearly in evidence throughout the score, for parts in juxtaposition to one another have little or no relationship to one another thematically.

This might be proclaimed a weakness. It is in the truth the great glory of the work, for he gives us new revelations of

the workings of his mind and heart. There are currents and cross currents of emotion that intercept each other, mingle together and it is expected they will give birth to something at least remotely similar. It all depends on the wayward mood of the composer whether this happens or not. . . .

He was admittedly a great conductor, a better than passable song writer and we are constrained to believe that under the direction of a master conductor like Mitropoulos his symphonies could win their way into favor and he would be universally regarded as a great composer. . . . JAMES DAVIES, *Tribune*

Even Mahler himself, were he able to look down from some celestial sphere among the immortals, would undoubtedly have been amazed at the exuberance of the ovation given his long and taxing First Symphony last night in Northrop auditorium at its first performance in Minneapolis. . . . Still I believe I kept enough objectivity of judgment to observe that the symphony is a gigantic musical conception. It is a super-world, in which the mystical, the lyrical, and the dramatic cohabit with the naive, the obvious and the ponderous. And yet, strangely enough, each quality seems to gain vitality from the presence of the rest. For instance, the mystical, trance-like mood of the sustained opening was intensified by the naive cuckoo call which accentuated it, and the most romantic lyrical utterances were closely associated with the pondering realism of a sturdy, obvious peasant-dance. The truly dramatic and tragic implication in the heavy, sinister tread of the main theme of the Third movement was also actually heightened by being based on a homely folk-tune suggesting the familiar round "Frere Jacques." . . .

JOHAN STORJOHANN EGILSRUD, *Journal*

. . . The symphony was the Mahler No. I in D major, played here for the first time. I have always been allergic to Mahler, and my story always has been that Mahler simply wasn't my man, that his music never took me any place. But I believe that many of the anti-Mahler camp will agree with me that Mitropoulos brought us die-hards nearer to liking and enjoying Mahler than any other conductor has done before.

One thing must be said at the outset: Mitropoulos gave the work a lucidity, a sensitiveness and strength which brought out all that was in Mahler, and maybe a

little more. The performance was full of felicitous detail, wrought with the affectionate and scrupulous care of a zealot. It was obvious that Mitropoulos gave his heart and his mind to the work, and only a bullheaded listener could refuse to respond in kind. . . .

JOHN K. SHERMAN, *Minneapolis Star*

GUSTAV MAHLER:

*DAS LIED VON DER ERDE*

*Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, Conductor; Soloists, Enid Szanthy and Charles Kullmann. Philadelphia, January 28-29, 1938; New York, February 15, 1938.*

At tonight's Philadelphia Orchestra concert in the Academy of Music, Eugene Ormandy will be presented with the Gustav Mahler Medal, awarded annually to the conductor accomplishing most to further appreciation of that composer's music in this country.

The presentation will be made by Dr. Harl McDonald on behalf of the Bruckner Society of America preceding a performance of Mahler's "Das Lied von der Erde" (*The Song of the Earth*).

Yesterday's regular Friday afternoon audience heard a fine performance of "Das Lied" without benefit of ceremony, but with much enthusiasm.

The work, considered one of the composer's finest expressions, is described as "a symphony for tenor contralto and orchestra." It was written in 1908 and had its American premiere here under Leopold Stokowski in December, 1916.

The six songs in the score are based on old Chinese poems translated into German by Hans Bethge. The subjects are mostly cosmic and autumnal—"The Drinking Song of Earth's Sorrow," "The Lonely One in Autumn," "The Farewell"—with slighter and more vernal interludes such as "Of Youth" and "The Intoxicated One in Spring."

The score contains music of much sensitivity and melancholy grace expressed in the style of later German romanticism. "Das Lied," is the work of a composer whose lyric gift is, perhaps, greater than his dramatic powers, but none the less has many pages of nostalgic tenderness and searching introspective beauty.

Yesterday's tenor and contralto soloists, Charles Kullmann and Enid Szanthy, both brought fine gifts of artistic understanding and vocal excellence to their assignments. Miss Szanthy, especially, disclosed a voice of noble quality.

Ormandy's reading was eloquent, his support of the soloists noteworthy for its sympathy and control. . . .

. . . The audience was enthusiastic at all stages and Ormandy was recalled for repeated acknowledgments both after the symphony and the "Lied."

EDWIN H. SCHLOSS, *Philadelphia Record*

. . . Both works ("Das Lied von der Erde" and Mozart's "Haffner" Symphony), in ways admirably contrasted, made an exceptional impression upon the audience. . . .

The performance of "Lied von der Erde," with two excellent soloists, was exceptionally communicative of the moods of the music. And the music is very much mood—more mood than original sound. But it is simple, and it is very deeply felt. This was communicated last night in a way which caused one commentator to modify his earlier opinions of the composition. . . .

The dramatic arrangement of the work is striking and singularly effective; a bright-voiced tenor, who sings passionately, recklessly, sardonically of the illusions of life at its flood; and a dark-voiced contralto, the tone and mood autumnal, with murmuring, dun-colored instrumentation, until the moment of the last wild and sensuous outburst, the farewell to the dear earth and its blossoms. The instrumentation is wonderfully reflective of the verse; the voice parts are written with much felicity for the expressive purpose involved; above all, there is the essential and irresistible simplicity of expression which communicates so directly and probes to centers of experience and feeling.

Mr. Kullmann has a true understanding of this music, and treated his text significantly, singing it with a fine warmth and vividness of color, and a wealth of suggestive detail. Miss Szanthe performed with equal earnestness and conviction, and a voice suited by its very nature to the music. There is evidently good reason why "Lied von der Erde" remains on concert programs. The performance placed the listeners under an indebtedness to those who so conveyed the composer's meaning.

OLIN DOWNES, *N. Y. Times*

Mr. Ormandy's major offering at the sixth New York concert of the Philadelphia Orchestra was a great and remarkable work that has never, as it seems to some of us, been justly valued—possibly because it is music that is remote in

mood and impulse from that which is typical of our day. . . .

Yes, the "Lied von der Erde" is no novelty. It has often been set before us. But have we heard it? One may wonder. For its content is elusive and arcane; it has nothing in common with the tempo of today. It is music infinitely lonely, tragical, remote; and for some of us it is among the most affecting utterances in the tonal poetry of the last half century: at once a profoundly moving testament and a beautiful and poignant work of art. . . .

This music, with its profound and passionate introspection, its disclosure of a lofty and susceptible nature wrought upon by the inscrutable mystery and cruelty of existence, is the voice of an essentially solitary spirit, lonely and introverted and unabsolved. An ill man, Mahler became mindful of his end, as Bruno Walter tells us. Like the wounded Prince Andrei in Tolstoi's "War and Peace," he had begun to dissociate himself from life: and his "Lied von der Erde," in Spinoza's phrase, is a creation *sub specie mortis*. It is not so much a Song of the Earth as a Song of the Predestined. Mahler saw the things of earth falling behind him, losing their contour and their relevance. But though he still stretched forth his hands to hold them, nevertheless the Farewell of the closing movement, with the contralto voice murmuring its reiterated "Ewig . . . ewig," below the unresolved suspension of the flute and oboe, is music touched with a fathomless tranquillity, a mystical, assuaging peace; so that we remember the enigmatical saying of Thoreau: "Only the convalescent raises the veil of Nature . . . There is more day to dawn."

. . . I cannot recall a more deeply comprehending, more beautifully sensitive, or more affecting performance of this music than Miss Szanthe achieved last night. Her delivery of the repeated "Ewig" at the end—in the color of the long-held notes, in the dying close against the celesta's soft arpeggios—seemed to speak from that inaccessible sanctuary in which Mahler's lonely spirit dwelt, and gave us the quintessence of all that he had tried to tell us.

LAWRENCE GILMAN, *Herald Tribune*

. . . Mahler's great opus has earned a place in the sun for the appeal of its musical substance; the excellence of its orchestration, and the charm and engaging qualities that are contained in the parts for the singers.

Miss Szanthe's numbers were given with the opulence and artistry that have heretofore marked her offerings in concert and recital. Of particular merit was "Der Abschied," a profound and moving number admirably proclaimed and dictioned.

Mr. Kullmann sang his share with fine intonation and appropriate feeling for the music and the text. Both singers received enthusiastic applause. The orchestral background was performed with the musicianship and blending of the choirs; the firm, smooth attack and dramatic meaning that did ample credit to the composer's intent. . . .

GRENA BENNETT, *N. Y. American and Journal*

GUSTAV MAHLER:  
WUNDERHORN SONGS

*Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Frederick A. Stock, Conductor; Ria Ginster, Soloist; February 23, 1938.*

. . . Mme. Ginster knows her Mahler. She can project the sweet naivete of "Rhine Legend" in a dewy and enchanting manner and deal most competently, too, with such brimmingly passionate things as the same composer's "Liebst du um Schönheit." She knows how to follow each turn of the lyrics, and succeeds in giving a listener the impression of direct, fervent, sincere singing. . . .

EDWARD BARRY, *Chicago Tribune*

. . . Following the intermission, Mme. Ginster sang a group of too-seldom heard songs of Gustav Mahler's musical creation. With beautifully couched, gently commanding address, she revealed the sunlit, moody poetry and quaint imagery of the Mahler lieder. Dr. Stock and the orchestra fashioned the intricate, gay orchestral accompaniment with deft control, while Mme. Ginster floated unbelievably delicate and high-flown melody above the engaging instrumental conversation. . . .

. . . This reading, as well as the performance of the other listed numbers on the program, brought loud and appreciative applause from the crowded hall. . . .  
JANET GUNN, *Chicago Herald & Examiner*

ANTON BRUCKNER:  
THIRD SYMPHONY

*Chicago Symphony, Frederick A. Stock, Conductor; Chicago, February 24-25, 1938.*

. . . Mr. Stock and his men gave the

Bruckner Third Symphony a presentation full of lyrically lovely effects. The sweet, introspective passages, in which the work is so rich, found in these searching strings and phenomenally well blown horns the tone colorings which Anton Bruckner must have fondly imagined, yet never heard with fleshy ear. . . .

EDWARD BARRY, *Chicago Tribune*

. . . Mr. Stock had placed the concerto ideally, after a performance of the Bruckner D minor symphony; this was but its fourth performance here, the last preceding one having been five years ago. The third symphony, with all the proclamatory richness of its brass, with all of Bruckner's innocent liking for melodic beauty and with his invariable hint somewhere or other of the pastoral, is neither so simple nor so cheerful as it sounds. It is freighted with contrapuntal riches and behind its endearing frankness there is the watchful ear of learning. . . . All that is majestic in the symphony, all that is impressive or gay and all that is human Mr. Stock brought to a pellucid surface in a performance of towering energy and unerring insight. . . .

EUGENE STINSON, *Chicago Daily News*

GUSTAV MAHLER:  
FOURTH SYMPHONY

*Minneapolis Symphony, Dimitri Mitropoulos, Conductor; Irene Opava, Soloist, Minneapolis, March 11, 1938.*

It would be well if our audiences knew more about the Mahler symphonies. Mitropoulos has had the courage to play two of them this season, the fourth at the Friday night concert and we have wondered why the prejudices of our friends have prevented them from enjoying two of the most enjoyable musical treats of the present season.

The fourth, that we heard Friday night, may be classified as one pleases, the fact remains that it possesses qualities that would intrigue anybody with the scantiest love of melody in his soul. . . .

He was one of the most famous conductors that ever lived and knew as well as any man what was demanded for the building of a symphony. He had another point of view, however, instead of the usual Allegro, Andante, Scherzo and another Allegro he went his own way and produced the fourth symphony that we heard at the concert in Northrop auditorium Friday night. We are rather inclined to believe the natural expression



of his emotions might be followed profitably by other writers of symphonies.

It is quite evident that from the opening bars he felt he had something of importance to say and he proceeds on his way with an eloquence that should have convinced the doubting Thomases amongst us.

It is full of broad lines of melody and that in itself in these days of constructive guesswork condemns him; but they are melodies so beautifully linked together, so euphonic in their relationships, so full of the joy of life that one is compelled to a feeling that perhaps after all a symphony need not be a musical problem or a series of emotional experiences, it may be the simple expression of a heart that is overflowing with conceptions of beauty.

This at any rate is the feeling the fourth symphony engendered and it is one that most nearly represents the reactions of the audience that listened to it Friday night. How much Mitropoulos was responsible for this I am not prepared to say; that his leadership was in a great measure responsible for it we will admit; but it was because he had sounded the depths and emerged with the musical truth according to Mahler imbedded in his own consciousness.

The soprano solo in the last movement was sung by Irene Opava, wife of our first flutist, who, in her first appearance before a Minneapolis audience, showed not merely a voice of fine quality, she also made clear that she was a vocal artist of distinct ability. She sang simply, without exaggeration, yet giving with charming emphasis everything that the words and music suggested. . . .

JAMES DAVIES, *Morning Tribune*

. . . Mahler was infinitely beguiled by dance rhythms, and infinitely clever in displaying them in orchestral dress. Be his own, or any one's else explanation what it may, I can only feel that the first movement of this symphony is something that should be danced by the most beautiful and responsive ballet troupe obtainable—it simply cries for further materialization of color and graceful motion.

For sheer beauty, the third movement is perhaps the best. . . .

FRANCES BOARDMAN, *Pioneer Press*

There were many ovations at the symphony concert last night in Northrop auditorium. The orchestra and Mitropoulos received an ovation at the close of

the Fourth Mahler symphony; Irene Opava, the soprano who sang the solo part in the symphony, met with a storm of applause. . . .

Both soloists fully deserved the support and ovations given them. Using her limpid, expressive voice with unforced simplicity, Mrs. Opava fitted the melodic patterns of the solo parts carefully into the pattern of the Mahler symphony. The reed-like quality of her voice blended perfectly into the orchestral texture. Not a large voice, it had, nevertheless exceptional carrying quality, and it served as a highly expressive and flexible instrument for a born artist. . . .

If Mahler could be interpreted so well as he was last night by Mitropoulos, there would be no need of a Mahler society to create an interest in the composer. . . .

. . . The orchestration was usually rich and natural. Such efforts as the use of a violin tuned sharp for a humorous purpose, or strange timbres like a fat tuba tone in duet with a thin violin tone, or violent combinations of shrill picolos, oboes, and clarinet—these effects only added spice and variety to the orchestration. And a sense of abundance of ideas and of beauty overshadowed all shortcomings. . . .

JOHAN STORJOHANN EGILSRUD,  
*Minneapolis Journal*

. . . It was the third movement—long, lovely and long—that impressed upon me, last night, the need of a city charter amendment which would restrict the number of Mahler symphonies to one (1) per season. But when the fourth movement came, and Irene Opava's poised and clear-toned soprano solo wove itself into the fascinating instrumental texture, I began to think Mahler was right and I was wrong.

At any rate, the work was given last night an expansive, affectionate interpretation that virtually baffled criticism. It is a sweet-spirited symphony—benign, childishly joyful, droll, piquant. The orchestral colors are especially luscious, are combined into all sorts of curious blends. The second movement, which was like a musicalized episode from Grimm, was weird and had a kind of smirking good nature. The third, it must be admitted, was more like a filibuster than a mere symphony component, but the finale, I repeat, was something of which you could gladly say, "All is forgiven." . . .

JOHN K. SHERMAN, *Minneapolis Star*

ANTON BRUCKNER:  
TE DEUM

*Swedish Choral Club; Harry T. Carlson, Conductor. Stanley Martin, Organist. Soloists: Thelma von Eisenhauer, May Barron, Robert Long, Mark Love, Chicago, April 27, 1938.*

. . . Bruckner, the mighty, has written a Te Deum massive and alive with religious fervor, imposing strenuous demands upon the singers, both as to tonal sonority and requiring vocalists with unlimited range. This happy combination was found in the Swedish Choral Club, who lifted their voices heavenwards with inspired devotion and colossal magnitude. . . .

. . . To Thelma von Eisenhauer, soprano; May Barron, alto; Robert Long, tenor and Mark Love, basso, must go unstinted praise, likewise to the chorus and its extremely capable leader, are addressed commendation for their splendid contribution to a program unusually taxing and musically important.

HERMAN DEVRIES, *Chicago American*

The Swedish Choral Club's first Chicago performance of the Te Deums of Bruckner and of Kodaly, plus that of Dett's "The Ordering of Moses," given at Orchestra Hall Wednesday evening, in its substance greatly enriched our knowledge of recent choral literature and in its execution brought the season to one of its peaks, gave new hope of life to choral singing in Chicago and generally echoed back to Mr. Stock's performance of Mahler's "Symphony of a Thousand" in the Auditorium a score of years ago.

Bruckner's Te Deum, "angelically heroic," concentrated in texture, heartfelt in spirit and of a thrilling and dynamic intensity, is no doubt the most

reverent musical masterpiece (unless his masses be included) since the oratorios of Bach.

Its scope was sufficient for Bruckner to have wished it used as the finale to his uncompleted ninth symphony, and as such a finale it would be quite comparable in depth and significance and beauty to that of Beethoven's ninth symphony. . . .

Harry T. Carlson, conducting, must be congratulated upon his initiative and taste in combining three scores of such monumental import, and for having a chorus more than sufficient to their merciless demands. It was a more exhausting performance than would have been the mass or the Passion of Bach. The club gave the best choral performance I have ever heard, furthermore one that was unforgettably pure and brilliant in tone, just as it was inexhaustible in power and in freshness.

. . . There was an enormous house and enormous applause.

EUGENE STINSON, *Daily News*

IN MEMORIAM

|                      |      |
|----------------------|------|
| Harriet B. Lanier    | 1931 |
| Mrs. Joseph Leidy    | 1933 |
| Max Loewenthal       | 1933 |
| Egon Pollak          | 1933 |
| Jakob Wassermann     | 1933 |
| Otto H. Kahn         | 1934 |
| H. T. Parker         | 1934 |
| Ludwig Vogelstein    | 1934 |
| Emanuel de M. Baruch | 1935 |
| Max Smith            | 1935 |
| Josef Stransky       | 1935 |
| James P. Dunn        | 1936 |
| Ossip Gabrilowitsch  | 1936 |
| Henry Hadley         | 1937 |
| Mrs. A. S. Hubbard   | 1938 |
| Emma L. Roedter      | 1938 |

LIST OF PERFORMANCES 1938-1939

BRUCKNER

- First* — Brooklyn Civic Orchestra (Kosok).
- Fourth* — Cleveland Orchestra (Rodzinski).
- Seventh* — Los Angeles Philharmonic (Klempner).
- Seventh* — Philadelphia Orchestra (Ormandy).
- Seventh* — Chicago Symphony Orchestra (Stock).
- Eighth* — Boston Symphony (Koussevitzky).

MAHLER

- First (Excerpts)* — Chicago Symphony Orchestra (Stock).
- Fifth and Ninth* — Minneapolis Symphony (Mitropoulos).
- Das Lied von der Erde* — Chicago Symphony (Stock).
- Ninth* — Boston Symphony (Koussevitzky).
- First or Fifth* — Cleveland Symphony (Rodzinski).



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