

MAHLER

3rd SYMPHONY

Media	Title	Time	Comments
CD	Mahler 3: Olson and Boulder	104 minutes	Live recording from Mahlerfest: Lucille Beer, Colo Children's chorus,
CD	Mahler 3: Boulez and New York	97 minutes	Live recording from Avery Fisher Hall in 1976, Yvonne Minton Contralto
CD	Mahler 3: Salonen and Los Angeles	96 minutes	Anna Larsson Contralto, Paulist Boy's Choir, LA Master Chorale women
DVD	Mahler 3: Bernstein and Vienna	97 minutes	Christa Ludwig Contralto, Vienna Boy's Choir, Vienna State Opera Chorus
DVD	Mahler 3: Haitink and Berlin	104 minutes	Florence Quivar Contralto, Tolzer Boy's Choir, Ernst-Senff Chorus
DVD	Mahler3: Cortese and Manhattan School	106 minutes	Mignon Dunn Contralto, Actual Post horn solo, vivid performance
DVD	What the Universe Tells me	56 minutes	Introduction to the 3rd symphony
DVD	Special Features	57 minutes	More background and interviews about the 3rd symphony
	1st movement	35 minutes	
	2nd movement	11 minutes	
	3rd movement	19 minutes	
	4th movement	10 minutes	
	5th movement	5 minutes	
	6th movement	27 minutes	
DVD	Greenberg: Lecture four	L.T. 10 min	Brief description of opening movement near the end of lecture

Symphony No. 3 (Mahler)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The *Symphony No. 3 in D minor* by Gustav Mahler was written between 1893 and 1896. It is his longest piece, with a typical performance lasting around 95 minutes.

Contents

- 1 Orchestration
- 2 Structure
- 3 Text
 - 3.1 Fourth Movement
 - 3.2 Fifth Movement
- 4 Performance
- 5 Premieres

Orchestration

As usual of Mahler, the piece is written for a large orchestra, consisting of four flutes and piccolos, four oboes, a cor anglais, five clarinets (two in E-flat, and one B-flat alternating on a bass clarinet), four bassoons, contrabassoon, eight French horns, four trumpets, a post horn (which is usually substituted by a flugelhorn), four trombones, a tuba, two sets of timpani, a bass drum, cymbals, a tam-tam, a triangle, a snare drum, a rute, two glockenspiels, bells, a tambourine, two harps, an organ, violins, violas, cellos, and double basses.

As in his *Symphony No. 2*, Mahler adds vocal forces to the later movements of the piece. The fourth movement is a song for alto, and the fifth movement adds a women's chorus and a boys' chorus.

Structure

The symphony, though somewhat 'un'-symphonic in nature, due to the extensive number of movements and their marked differences in character and construction, is a unique and uplifting piece of work. The opening movement, grotesque in its conception (much like the symphony itself) is wonderfully evocative of the primordial sleep of nature, slowly gathering itself into one of the most rousing orchestral marches of the 19th Century. It is in the finale, however, that Mahler reveals his true genius for stirring the soul. The construction of it is masterful, and the interplay of a developing chromatic harmony and sonorous string melody, developed and re-orchestrated with perfect grace and poise builds to a conclusion that, though seemingly overblown when heard in isolation, is, in the wider context of the symphony, both musically justified and emotionally overwhelming.

In its final form, the work has six movements:

1. *Kräftig entschieden* (Strong and decisive)
2. *Tempo di Menuetto* (In the tempo of a minuet)
3. *Comodo (Scherzando)* (Comfortably, like a scherzo)
4. *Sehr langsam--Misterioso* (Very slowly, mysteriously)
5. *Lustig im Tempo und keck im Ausdruck* (Happy in tempo and bold in expression)
6. *Langsam--Ruhevoll--Empfunden* (Slowly, tranquil, deeply felt)

As with each of his first four symphonies, Mahler originally provided a programme of sorts to explain the narrative of the piece. In the third symphony this took the form of titles for each movement:

1. "Pan Awakes, Summer Marches In"
2. "What the Flowers of the Meadow Tell Me"
3. "What the Creatures of the Forest Tell Me"
4. "What Man Tells Me"
5. "What the Angels Tell Me"
6. "What Love Tells Me"

All these titles were dropped before publication in 1898.

There was originally a seventh movement, "What the Child Tells Me", but this was eventually dropped, becoming instead the last movement of the *Symphony No. 4*.

The third movement quotes extensively from Mahler's early song "Ablösung im Sommer". The fourth is a setting of Friedrich Nietzsche's "Midnight Song" from *Also sprach Zarathustra*, while the fifth, "Es sungen drei Engel", is one of Mahler's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* songs.

Text

Fourth Movement

Text from Friedrich Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra*: the "Midnight Song"

Original German

O Mensch! Gib Acht!
Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?

In English

O Man! Take heed!
What says the deep midnight?

"Ich schlief, ich schlief—,
 aus tiefem Traum bin ich erwacht:—
 Die Welt ist tief,
 und tiefer als der Tag gedacht.
 Tief ist ihr Weh—,
 Lust—tiefer noch als Herzelied.
 Weh spricht: Vergeh!
 Doch all' Lust will Ewigkeit—,
 —will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit!"

"I slept, I slept—,
 from a deep dream have I awoken:—
 the world is deep,
 and more deeply pondered than the day.
 Deep is its pain—,
 Joy—deeper still than heartache.
 Pain says: Pass away!
 But all joy seeks eternity—,
 —seeks deep, deep eternity!"

Fifth Movement

Text from Des Knaben Wunderhorn

Original German

Es sungen drei Engel einen süßen Gesang,
 mit Freuden es selig in dem Himmel klang.
 Sie jauchzten fröhlich auch dabei:
 daß Petrus sei von Sünden frei!

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

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

"Hast du denn übertreten die zehen Gebot,
 so fall auf die Knie und bete zu Gott!
 Liebe nur Gott in all Zeit!
 So wirst du erlangen die himmlische Freud'."

Die himmlische Freud' ist eine selige Stadt,
 die himmlische Freud', die kein Ende mehr hat!
 Die himmlische Freude war Petro bereit't,

In English

Three angels sang a sweet song,
 with blessed joy it rang in heaven.
 They shouted too for joy
 that Peter was free from sin!

And as Lord Jesus sat at the table
 with his twelve disciples and ate the evening meal,
 Lord Jesus said: "Why do you stand here?
 When I look at you, you weep for me!"

"And should I not weep, kind God?
 I have violated the ten commandments!
 I wander and weep bitterly!
 O come and take pity on me!"

"If you have violated the ten commandments,
 then fall on your knees and pray to God!
 Love only God for all time!
 So will you gain heavenly joy."

The heavenly joy is a blessed city,
 the heavenly joy that has no end!
 The heavenly joy was granted to Peter

durch Jesum und allen zur Seligkeit.

through Jesus, and to all mankind for eternal bliss.

Performance

The piece performed in concert less frequently than Mahler's other symphonies, due in part to its great length and the huge ensemble required. When it is performed, a short interval is sometimes taken between the first movement (which alone lasts around half an hour) and the rest of the piece. Despite this, it is a popular work and has been recorded by most major orchestras and conductors. One notable recording was made in quadraphonic stereo by the Utah Symphony under Maurice Abravanel in the acoustically-remarkable Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah. The final movement was used as background music in one episode of the 1984 television series, "Call to Glory" and on an episode of the BBC's 'Coast' programme, during a description of the history of HMS Tamerair.

It is rare to hear this remarkable piece of work in the concert hall, and rarer still to not be moved by it.

The second movement of this work was arranged by Benjamin Britten for a smaller orchestra, a version published by Boosey and Hawkes in 1950.

Premieres

- Premiere of second, third and sixth movements only: 1897, Berlin, conducted by Felix Weingartner.
- Premiere of the complete symphony: June 9, 1902, Krefeld, conducted by the composer.
- American premiere: February 8, 1922, New York City, conducted by Willem Mengelberg.
- English premiere (BBC broadcast): November 29, 1947, BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Adrian Boult.
- English concert premiere: February 28, 1961, St Pancras, conducted by Bryan Fairfax.

Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony_No._3_%28Mahler%29"

Categories: Symphonies by Gustav Mahler

-
- This page was last modified 09:51, 17 June 2006.
 - All text is available under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License. (See **Copyrights** for details.)
Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.

MAHLER

4th SYMPHONY

Media	Title	Time	Comments
CD	Mahler 4: Olson and Boulder	59 minutes	Live recording from Mahlerfest: Julie Simson mezzo
CD	Mahler 4: Solti and New York	56 minutes	Live recording from Carnegie Hall in 1962, Irmgard Seefried
CD	Mahler 4: Zander and Philharmonia	59 minutes	Camilla Tilling, Soprano
CD	Zander Discusses Mahler 4	78 Minutes	
DVD	Mahler 4: Bernstein and Vienna	58 Minutes	Edith Mathis, Soprano
DVD	Mahler 4: Haitink and Berlin	59 minutes	Sylvia McNair, Soprano
DVD	Berstein: Young People's Concert		4th symphony: 1st Movement
DVD	Berstein: Young People's Concert		Conductor and Composer: Mahler 4th
DVD	Berstein: Young People's Concert		So Happy, So Sad: Mahler 4th
DVD	Berstein: Young People's Concert		The Secret of Mahler
DVD	Berstein: Young People's Concert		4th symphony: 4th Movement in total with vocal
DVD	Berstein: Young People's Concert		The East and West: Mahler 4th Symphony
Ave	1st movement	18 Minutes	
Ave	2nd movement	10 minutes	
Ave	3rd movement	22 minutes	
Ave	4th movement	10 minutes	
Ave	5th movement	n/a	
Ave	6th movement	n/a	
DVD	Greenberg: Lecture four	L.T. 10 min	Brief description at the end of lecture

Symphony No. 4 (Mahler)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The *Symphony No. 4 in G major* by Gustav Mahler was written between 1899 and 1901.

The symphony is for a fairly small orchestra by Mahler's standards, interestingly lacking trombones and tuba(s). It is scored for four flutes, two piccolos, three oboes, a cor anglais, three clarinets, two clarinets in E-flat, a bass clarinet, three bassoons, a contrabassoon, four French horns, three trumpets, timpani, a bass drum, a triangle, sleigh bells, a glockenspiel, cymbals, a tam-tam, a harp and strings. The last movement features a soprano soloist.

A typical performance of the whole work lasts around fifty minutes, making it one of Mahler's shortest completed symphonies, if not the shortest.

Movements

The symphony is in four movements:

1. *Bedächtig, nicht eilen* (Moderately, not rushed)
2. *In gemächlicher Bewegung, ohne Hast* (Leisurely moving, without haste)
3. *Ruhvoll, poco adagio* (Peacefully, a little adagio)
4. *Sehr behaglich* (Very comfortably)

After what is for Mahler an unusually restrained first movement, often said to have almost classical poise, the second movement is a scherzo featuring a solo part for a violin tuned a tone higher than usual (see: scordatura). This tuning adds to the rather ghostly and other-worldly nature of the music. The third movement is slow, and essentially a set of variations.

The last movement is a song for soprano, and takes its text from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (The Youth's Magic Horn), a collection to which Mahler had turned on many previous occasions. This song was originally composed as a free-standing piece in 1892, but a year later was being considered as a possible seventh and final movement for the gestating third symphony. Mahler finally abandoned this plan, however, deciding instead that the song (in a revised form) should be the seed for his fourth. The poem, "Das himmlische Leben" ("The Heavenly Life"), describes a great feast in heaven.

Premieres

- World premiere: November 25, 1901, Munich, conducted by the composer.
- American premiere: November 6, 1904, New York City, conducted by Walter Damrosch.
- English premiere: October 25, 1905, London, in a Proms concert conducted by Henry Wood. Wood's wife sang the soprano part.
- Recording premiere: Hidemaro Konoye with the New Symphony Orchestra of Tokyo in 1930

External links

- full text of the song (http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=4501) (with English translation)

Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony_No._4_%28Mahler%29"

Categories: Symphonies by Gustav Mahler

-
- This page was last modified 19:04, 10 June 2006.
 - All text is available under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License. (See **Copyrights** for details.)
- Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.

MAHLER

5th SYMPHONY

Media	Title	Time	Comments
CD	Mahler 5: Olson and Boulder	72 minutes	Live recording from Mahlerfest
CD	Mahler 5: Tennstedt and New York	73 minutes	Live recording from Avery fisher Hall in 1980
CD	Mahler 5: Maazel and Vienna	73 minutes	
CD	Mahler 5: Barenboim and Chicago	70 minutes	
DVD	Mahler 5: Bernstein and Vienna	72 minutes	
DVD	Mahler 5: Barenboim and Chicago	70 minutes	
DVD			
DVD			
DVD			
DVD			
DVD			
DVD			
Ave	1st movement	13 minutes	
Ave	2nd movement	15 minutes	
Ave	3rd movement	17 minutes	
Ave	4th movement	10 minutes	
Ave	5th movement	16 minutes	
Ave	6th movement	n/a	
DVD	Greenberg: Lecture Six	44 minutes	most of lecture along with a description of family life patterns

Symphony No. 5 (Mahler)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The *Symphony No. 5* by Gustav Mahler was written in 1901 and 1902 mostly during the summer months at Mahler's cottage at Maiernigg. It is arguably the most well known Mahler symphony to the general public.

The musical canvas and emotional scope of the work is huge. Herbert von Karajan said once that when you hear Mahler's Fifth, "you forget that time has passed. A great performance of the Fifth is a transforming experience. The fantastic finale almost forces you to hold your breath." After its premiere, Mahler is reported to have said, "Nobody understood it. I wish I could conduct the first performance fifty years after my death."

Contents

- 1 Orchestration
- 2 Structure
- 3 Composition
- 4 Premieres
- 5 External links

Orchestration

The piece is scored for a large orchestra made up of four flutes (all four doubling piccolo), three oboes (one doubling cor anglais), three clarinets (one doubling bass clarinet), three bassoons (one doubling contrabassoon); six French horns, four trumpets, three trombones, tuba; timpani, bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, triangle, glockenspiel, tam-tam, whip, harp, and strings.

Structure

The work is in five movements:

1. *Trauermarsch (Death March)* (C-sharp minor)
2. *Stürmisch bewegt, mit größter Vehemenz (Moving stormily, with the greatest vehemence)* (A minor)
3. *Scherzo* (D major)
4. *Adagietto* (F major)
5. *Rondo-Finale* (D major)

The first two movements constitute Part I of the symphony (as designated by Mahler in the score), the long Scherzo constitutes Part II, and the last two movements constitute Part III.

The piece is generally regarded as Mahler's most conventional symphony up to that point, but from such an unconventional composer it still had many peculiarities. It almost has a four movement structure, as the first two can easily be viewed as essentially a whole. The symphony also ends with a *Rondo*, in the classical style. Some peculiarities are the funeral march that opens the piece, and the *Adagietto* for harp and strings that interrupts the booming score.

Composition

The symphony is sometimes reproduced with the key assignment *C-sharp minor*, but Mahler himself objected against this assignment: "*From the order of the movements (where the usual first movement now comes second) it is difficult to speak of a key for the 'whole Symphony'. and to avoid misunderstandings the key should best be omitted.*" (Letter to Peters Music Publishers dated July 23, 1904. Cited after: [1] (<http://www.gustav-mahler.org/english/gesamtausgabe/cr5-f.cfm>))

Performing the Fifth is one of the great challenges for even great conductors and orchestras. Most performances fail to deliver the full expression of the work - particularly the all-important, technically demanding finale - with irregular or slow tempos often being the culprit.

The *adagietto* is sometimes heard alone. It was used liberally in Luchino Visconti's film, *Death in Venice*, as well as at Robert Kennedy's funeral.

The *Trauermarsch* was used as the theme music for the BBC miniseries *A Fall of Eagles*, a dramatization of the fall of the European dynasties incident to the Great War of 1914-1918 (World War I).

Premieres

- World premiere: October 18, 1904, Cologne - conducted by the composer.
- United States premiere: March 24, 1905, Cincinnati - conducted by Frank van der Stucken.
- English premieres:
 - Of *Adagietto* only: August 31, 1909, London - conducted by Henry Wood during a Proms concert.
 - Of complete work: October 21, 1945, London - London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Heinz Unger.

External links

- Analysis from Andante.com (<http://www.andante.com/profiles/Mahler/symph5.cfm>)
- Analysis from Everything2.com (http://www.everything2.com/index.pl?node_id=1268020)
- Opening Trumpet solo from Mahler's Fifth Symphony

(http://www.philharmonia.co.uk/thesoundexchange/the_orchestra/instruments/trumpets/listen_to_some_trumpet_sounds.html?current_playing_movie_id=553)

- French Horn solo from Mahler's Fifth Symphony (http://www.philharmonia.co.uk/thesoundexchange/the_orchestra/instruments/horns/listen_to_some_horn_sounds.html?current_playing_movie_id=551)
- Free recording of *Adagietto* (<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cuo/audio.html>) by the Columbia University Orchestra.

Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony_No._5_%28Mahler%29"

Categories: Symphonies by Gustav Mahler

-
- This page was last modified 20:28, 10 June 2006.
 - All text is available under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License. (See **Copyrights** for details.)
- Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.

MAHLER

6th SYMPHONY

Media	Title	Time	Comments
CD	Mahler 6: Olson and Boulder	85 minutes	Live recording from Mahlerfest
CD	Mahler 6: Mitropoulos and New York	74 minutes	Live recording from Carnegie Hall in 1955
CD	Mahler 6: Abbado and Berlin	80 minutes	
CD	Mahler 6: Barbirolli		from 1966 with movements 2 and 3 reversed--From Bennie Bub
DVD	Mahler 6: Bernstein and Vienna	84 minutes	unique Hammer Blows in final movement
DVD			
DVD			
DVD			
DVD			
DVD			
DVD			
DVD			
Ave	1st movement	23 minutes	
Ave	2nd movement	14 minutes	
Ave	3rd movement	13 minutes	
Ave	4th movement	30 minutes	
Ave	5th movement	n/a	
Ave	6th movement	n/a	
DVD	Greenberg: Lecture Seven	30 minutes	First 2/3 of lecture. The rest is Das Lied von der Erde

Symphony No. 6 (Mahler)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The *Symphony No. 6 in A minor* by Gustav Mahler, sometimes referred to as the *Tragische* ('Tragic'), was composed between 1903 and 1904 (rev. 1906: scoring repeatedly revised). The work's first performance was in Essen, on May 27, 1906, conducted by the composer.

The work is unique among Mahler's symphonies in ending in an unambiguously tragic manner. Mahler is, of course, widely felt to be a 'tragic' composer – and yet the fact is that most of his symphonies end triumphantly (Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and 8), while others end in a mood of contentment (No. 4), or quiet resignation (No. 9), or radiant calm (No. 10). The tragic, even *nihilistic* ending of No. 6 has in fact been seen as particularly unexpected, given that the symphony was composed at what was apparently an exceptionally happy time in Mahler's life: he had married Alma Schindler in 1902, and during the course of the work's composition his second daughter was born.

Perhaps because of its grim overall mood and its shatteringly pessimistic outcome, the symphony is not the most popular Mahler symphony amongst 'general' listeners. However, the work is reckoned by many to be one of his finest, and is thought to be most highly regarded by musicians themselves. Both Alban Berg and Anton Webern praised it when they first heard it: for Berg it was "the *only* sixth, despite the 'Pastoral'"; while Webern actually conducted it on more than one occasion.

The status of the work's nickname is problematic. The programme for the work's first Vienna performance (January 4, 1907) shows the subtitle *Tragische*, but this word is not found – Mahler scholar Henri-Louis de la Grange to the contrary! – on the programme for the earlier performance in Munich on November 8, 1906. Nor does the word *Tragische* appear on any of the scores that C.F. Kahnt published (first edition, 1906; revised edition, 1906), or in Richard Specht's officially approved 'thematic analysis', or on Alexander Zemlinsky's piano duet transcription (1906). In his *Gustav Mahler* memoir, Bruno Walter claimed that "Mahler called [the work] his *Tragic Symphony*", and this is often cited in support of a nickname that many people clearly find congenial. The fact remains, however, that Mahler did not so title the symphony when he composed it; when he first performed it; when he published it; when he allowed Specht to analyse it; or when he allowed Zemlinsky to arrange it. He had, moreover, decisively rejected and disavowed the titles (and programmes) of his earlier symphonies by 1900; and neither the 'Lied der Nacht' subtitle of the Seventh Symphony, nor the 'Sinfonie der Tausend' of the Eighth, stem from Mahler. For all these reasons, the *Tragische* nickname is not used in serious works of reference.

Contents

- 1 Orchestration
- 2 Structure
- 3 History
- 4 Composition
- 5 Quotations
- 6 Premieres

Orchestration

The symphony is written for a large orchestra comprising four flutes (3rd and 4th doubling piccolo), piccolo, four oboes (3rd and 4th doubling cor anglais), cor anglais, clarinet in D and E-flat, 3 clarinets in A and B-flat, a bass clarinet, four bassoons, a contrabassoon, eight horns, six trumpets, three trombones, a bass trombone, a tuba, 2 pairs of timpani, glockenspiel, cowbells, bells, Rute, hammer (see below), cymbals (doubled), side drum, xylophone, triangle, two harps, celesta and strings (violins, violas, cellos and double basses).

Unlike several other Mahler symphonies, there are no vocal forces.

The sound of the hammer, which features in the last movement, was stipulated by Mahler to be "brief and mighty, but dull in resonance and with a non-metallic character". The sound achieved in the premiere did not quite carry far enough from the stage, and indeed the problem of achieving the proper volume while still remaining dull in resonance remains a challenge to the modern orchestra. Various methods of producing the sound have involved a wooden mallet striking a wooden surface, a sledgehammer striking a wooden box, or a particularly large bass drum, or sometimes simultaneous use of more than one of these methods.

Structure

The work is in four movements:

1. *Allegro energico, ma non troppo. Heftig, aber markig.*
2. *Andante moderato*
3. *Scherzo: Wuchtig*
4. *Finale: Sostenuto - Allegro moderato - Allegro energico*

History

There is some controversy over the order of the two middle movements, though recent research has clarified the issue considerably. Mahler is known to have conceived the work as having the scherzo second and the slow movement third, a somewhat unclassical arrangement adumbrated in such earlier gargantuan symphonies as Beethoven's Ninth and Bruckner's Eighth and (unfinished) Ninth, as well as in Mahler's own four-movement First and Fourth. It was in this arrangement that the symphony was completed (in 1904) and published (in March 1906); and it was with a conducting score in which the scherzo preceded the slow movement that Mahler began rehearsals for the work's first performance, in May 1906. During those rehearsals, however, Mahler decided that the slow movement should precede the scherzo, and he instructed his publishers C.F. Kahnt to prepare a 'second edition' of the work with the movements in that order, and meanwhile to insert 'errata' slips indicating the change of order into all unsold copies of the existing edition. The 'seriousness' of such a decision is not to be under-estimated: as Jeffrey Gantz has pointed out, "A composer who premières his symphony *Andante/Scherzo* immediately after publishing it *Scherzo/Andante* can expect a degree of public ridicule, and [the reviewer of the first Vienna performance] didn't spare the

sarcasm". Moreover, this revised, 'second thoughts' ordering was observed by Mahler in every single performance he gave; it is also how the symphony was performed by others during his lifetime.

The first occasion on which the abandoned, original movement order was reverted to seems to have been in 1919, after Alma had sent a telegram to Mengelberg which said "First Scherzo, then Andante". Mengelberg, who had been in close touch with Mahler until the latter's death, and had happily conducted the symphony in the 'Andante/Scherzo' arrangement right up to 1916, then switched to the 'Scherzo/Andante' order. In this he seems to have been alone: other conductors, such as Oskar Fried and Dimitri Mitropoulos, continued to perform (and eventually record) the work as 'Andante/Scherzo', as per Mahler's own second edition, right up to the early 1960s.

In 1963, however, Erwin Ratz's 'Critical Edition' of the Sixth appeared, and in this the Scherzo preceded the Andante. Ratz, however, never offered any support (he did not even cite Alma's telegram) for his assertion that Mahler 'changed his mind a second time' at some point before his death; but his editorial decision was questioned by few musicians – and even those who did not accept his 'third thoughts' ordering (such as Barbirolli in his acclaimed 1967 recording) could find that their 'Andante/Scherzo' performance would be changed by the record company to 'Scherzo/Andante' so as to make their recording agree with the 'Critical Edition'. The utter lack of documentary or other evidence in support of Ratz's (and Alma's) 'reverted' ordering has caused the most recent Critical Edition to restore the 'Andante/Scherzo' order; however, so many conductors and orchestras still possess materials (and prejudices) which place the Scherzo before the Andante that the work is regularly performed with the movements in that order.

Formally, the symphony is one of Mahler's most conventional, being one of only four to have the traditional number of four movements. The form and character of each individual movement is also quite traditional, with a fairly standard sonata form first movement (which even includes an exact repeat of the exposition, most unusual in Mahler), leading to the middle movements, one slow, the other a scherzo, and the finale, also in sonata form, quicker and recapping some previously heard material.

Composition

The first movement, which for the most part has the character of a march, features a motif consisting of an A major triad turning to A minor over a distinctive timpani rhythm (the chords are played by trumpets and oboes when first heard):

[Sound sample(MIDI)]

This motif, which some commentators have linked with fate, reappears in subsequent movements. The first movement also features a soaring melody

which the composer's wife, Alma Mahler, claimed was representative of her; this melody is now often known as the "Alma theme". The movement's end marks the happiest point of the symphony with a restatement of the Alma theme.

The andante is a respite from the brutal intensity of the rest of the work. Its main theme is an introspective ten-bar phrase that is technically in E-flat major, though the theme alone can seem major and minor at once. The orchestration is more delicate and reserved in this movement, making it all the more poignant when compared to the driving darkness of the other three.

The scherzo marks a return to the unrelenting march rhythms of the first movement, though in a 'triple-time' metrical context. Its trio (the middle section), marked *Altväterisch* (old-fashioned), is rhythmically irregular (4/8 switching to 3/8 and 3/4) and of a somewhat gentler character. Alma's report, often repeated, that in this movement Mahler "represented the unrhythmic games of the two little children, tottering in zigzags over the sand" is conclusively refuted by the chronology: the movement was composed in the Summer of 1903, when Maria Anna Mahler (born November 1902) was less than a year old, and when Anna Justine (born July 1904) had not even been conceived.

The last movement is an extended sonata form, characterized by drastic changes in mood and tempo, the sudden change of glorious soaring melody to deep pounded agony. Apparently in this movement Mahler was attempting to confront the fear of his own artistic downfall: as in the *Kindertotenlieder*, he chose to deal with his concern by addressing it directly. The movement is punctuated by three hammer blows. Alma quotes her husband as saying that these were three mighty blows of fate befallen by the hero, "the third of which fells him like a tree". When he revised the work, Mahler removed the last of these three blows for structural reasons, though some modern performances restore it. The piece ends with the same rhythmic motif that first appeared in the first movement, but the chord above it is a simple A minor triad, rather than A major turning into A minor.

Quotations

"My sixth will propound riddles the solution of which may be attempted only by a generation which has absorbed and truly digested my first five symphonies." (Mahler, in a letter to Richard Specht).

"The *only* Sixth, despite the 'Pastoral'." (Alban Berg, in a letter to Anton Webern).

Premieres

- World premiere: May 27, 1906, Essen, conducted by the composer.
- American premiere: December 11, 1947, New York City, conducted by Dimitris Mitropoulos.

Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony_No._6_%28Mahler%29"

Categories: Symphonies by Gustav Mahler

- This page was last modified 23:16, 14 June 2006.
 - All text is available under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License. (See **Copyrights** for details.)
- Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.