

Gustav Mahler

Romana 07-07-2021



Gustav Mahler was born on July 7, 1860. He was an Austro-Bohemian Romantic composer, and one of the leading conductors of his generation. As a composer he acted as a bridge between the 19th century Austro-German tradition and the modernism of the early 20th century. While in his lifetime his status as a conductor was established beyond question, his own music gained wide popularity only after periods of relative neglect, which included a ban on its performance in much of Europe during the Nazi era. After 1945 his compositions were rediscovered by a new generation of listeners; Mahler then became one of the most frequently performed and recorded of all composers, a position he has sustained into the 21st century.

Though Mahler had converted to Roman Catholicism, he was often discriminated against in his lifetime, especially by the pre-Nazi anti-Semitic Cosima Wagner.

Mahler symphonies are often of epic proportions. He was a master of orchestration, the techniques which have been used in film music even to day.

I have never seen his Symphony No. 2 performed live. It is notable as daring to be the first symphony to have a choral movement since Beethoven. Notice the young women way in the back playing double bass! This was only recently possible, since orchestras were sexist for years.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zHLu34BIAM>

Carolyn and I saw his sixth symphony performed by The Auburn Symphony twelve to thirteen years ago. It has been given the subtitle “The Tragic,” though not by Mahler himself. It is one of those few symphonies that is also a march.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25tSq_dYL3c