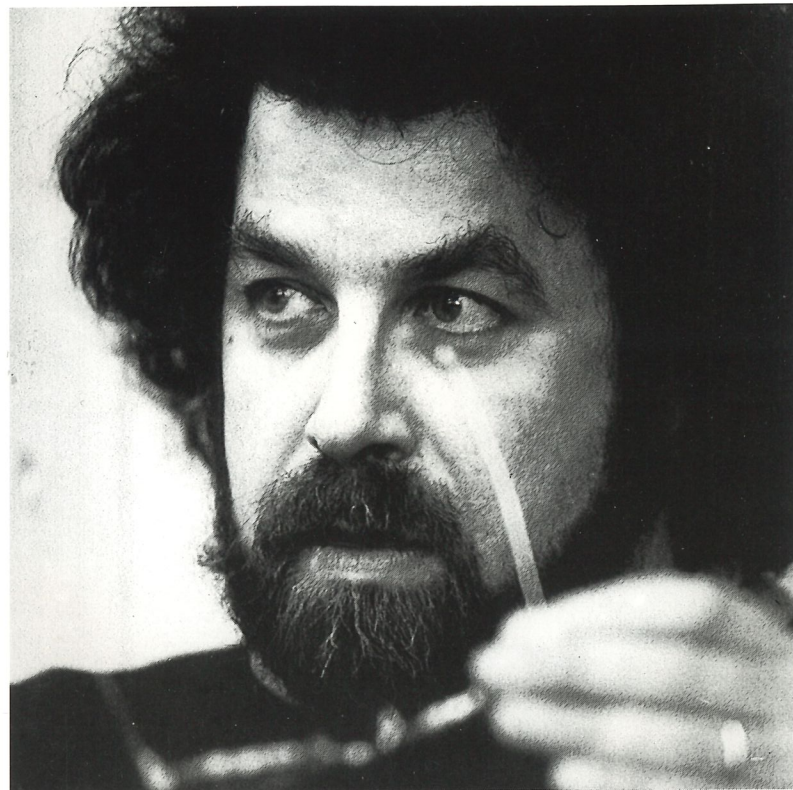


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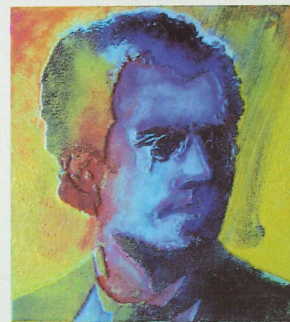


GIUSEPPE SINOPOLI

DIGITAL
RECORDING

MAHLER SINOPOLI

*CHERYL STUDER
ANGELA MARIA
BLASI
SUMI JO
WALTRAUD MEIER
KAZUKO NAGAI
KEITH LEWIS
THOMAS ALLEN
HANS SOTIN*



*PHILHARMONIA
CHORUS
THE SOUTHEND
BOYS' CHOIR
PHILHARMONIA
ORCHESTRA*

SYMPHONIE NO. 8



CD
track

Partiturseite page in score page de la partition pagina nella partitura	Takt bar mesure battuta	Spielzeit playing time durée durata
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Hymnenartig.

(Ungefähr im selben Zeitmaß weiter)

Doctor Marianus:

»Blicket auf zum Retterblick alle reuig Zarten«

(Tenor; Chor II/I, Knabenchor)

16 Sehr langsam beginnend 209 1449 [6'21]

Chorus mysticus:

»Alles Vergängliche ist nur ein Gleichnis«

(Chor I/II; Sopran I/II, Alt I/II, Tenor, Bariton, Bass;
Knabenchor)

CHERYL STUDER, Sopran/soprano I · Magna Peccatrix
ANGELA MARIA BLASI, Sopran II · Una poenitentium
SUMI JO, Sopran · Mater gloriosa
WALTRAUD MEIER, Alt/contralto I · Mulier Samaritana
KAZUKO NAGAI, Alt II · Maria Aegyptiaca
KEITH LEWIS, Tenor · Doctor Marianus
THOMAS ALLEN, Bariton · Pater ecstaticus
HANS SOTIN, Bass · Pater profundus

GUSTAV MAHLER Symphony No. 8

JAMES HEPOKOSKI

The premiere in Munich of Mahler's Eighth Symphony on 12 September 1910 was one of the most spectacular events of musical Europe in the decade preceding the First World War. This was a towering display of cultural prestige at its zenith — the unveiling of one of the most massive symphonies ever conceived. Merely to assemble and rehearse the required forces would have been astonishing (according to the program, Mahler performed it with 858 singers and 171 instrumentalists), but the whole production was also spatially coordinated to suit the newly constructed, huge Neue Musikfesthalle, located in the Exhibition grounds. In short, the premiere helped to celebrate and consecrate a new temple for colossal, Austro-Germanic art. Now in precarious health and with only eight months to live, Mahler surely regarded this occasion as the peak of his public career.

The symphony itself had been drafted four years earlier, in a mere ten weeks from June to August 1906, and the orchestration was completed in 1907. From the beginning Mahler considered it the product of a blaze of inspiration and sudden insight. "I have never written anything like it," he announced to Richard Specht in the summer of 1906. "It is certainly the largest thing that I have ever produced." He went on to catalog the work's projected innovations (including the uniting of two movements whose texts were drawn from different languages and different historical periods) and claimed to be

writing the first symphony that was sung throughout, "from beginning to end." In this respect it contrasted with some of his earlier symphonies, in which, as in Beethoven's Ninth, the appearance of the voice had been preceded by several purely instrumental movements.

The key to grasping the Eighth Symphony lies in confronting the daring of its central conception. The core idea from which it springs is the attempt to synthesize strong contrasts or even contradictory opposites — to suggest the presence of a larger unity that can integrate the stylistic and conceptual disunities that are swirled together at every level: voice vs. orchestra; "dramatic cantata" vs. "symphony"; densely textured, Bach-like counterpoint vs. "modern" sonata practice; sacred vs. secular; masculine vs. feminine; the contradictory musical styles from section to section; and so on. Within such a concept of total inclusion — a central postulate of Mahler's aesthetic — nothing may be regarded as alien. What from traditional perspectives might seem inconsistencies or discontinuities are claimed here to be transformed into virtues.

The central contrast concerns the texts of the symphony's two movements, which have sometimes been criticized as fundamentally irreconcilable. The first, sung in Latin, is drawn from the ninth-century hymn for Pentecost (often attributed to Hrabanus Maurus), "Veni, creator spiritus", a celebration of the descent of the Holy Spirit. The second, sung in

German, comprises most of the concluding scene from the second part of Goethe's *Faust* (published in 1832). This is the famous "mystical" passage recounting the denouement of Faust's sudden (and unearned) salvation. It features his purification and ascension heavenward by stages, at the end of which he is permitted to glimpse, in the presence of the Mater Gloriosa (Blessed Virgin Mary), the outlines of the truths for which he has striven throughout his life. In the concluding eight lines, uttered by the Chorus Mysticus — a central text for the Germanic 19th century — we, along with Faust, are presented with the concepts of the transience and illusion of the material world and with Goethe's conviction of the final attainability of "the indescribable" through the process of masculine striving toward the "eternal feminine".

The larger point, though, is that Mahler seems to have taken the two dissimilar texts as representatives of two contrasting ages of European thought. Broadly construed, we might consider them as symbolizing the contrasting paradigms of pre-Enlightenment and Enlightenment thought (or pre-modern and modern society). When Mahler elected to juxtapose these texts, he was doing nothing less than addressing the central rift in European culture of the preceding millennium, the much-discussed tearing away of the modern, "progressive" age from the unifying assurances of a world that was once perceived as whole. Moreover, by suggesting that these contradictory texts might be brought into some sort of unity — a unity to be represented by allowing the same thematic material to underpin both movements — Mahler was apparently claiming that this seemingly inescapable rift was capable of being healed in the here and now. From this perspective the work may be considered to harbor a strong utopian element.

The conceptual world of the Eighth Symphony presents us with four principal agents of healing. The first is that of an overarching love, conceived as broadly as possible (both Caritas and Eros, spiritual and physical love, as Mahler had suggested in a discarded, early plan for the Eighth) — an eternal love believed capable of resolving the world's antagonisms. The second, and related to it, is the concept of unearned grace and eventual forgiveness, whether symbolized by the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost or by the panoply of celestial forces encountered by the ever-ascending Faust. The third is the familiar Romantic claim of the redemptive power of music (according to which performing the symphony — or subsequently contemplating it — was capable of becoming a healing act). And the fourth is an unquestioning faith in the power of the individual genius, the composer-conductor-stage manager who was animating the whole display and commanding these diverse forces into action. In this sense the orchestral and choral masses marshalled onstage could be understood as a visual and sonorous symbol of a new, healed community of the whole, one that has finally transcended division at all levels, and one with which the audience was to identify. It should be added that this last feature was also the essential vision of the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, although Mahler extended it here to more "cosmic" levels and delivered it — in 1910 — at a more urgent, far higher pitch of musical and social tension.

Thus from an even broader vantage point the principal musical symbol for such an ambitious work as the Eighth Symphony might be "the event" itself, embodied in the mounting of an enormous apparatus for which no expenses were to be spared. Here we find a culture of music celebrating its own tradi-

tions and claiming, as an essential feature of that celebration, to be able to bring together the deepest irreconcilables of its social being. Above all, we should notice the similarity of the opening of the symphony to its close nearly an hour and a half later. Both passages, which share the same triumphant "Veni, creator spiritus" motive, embrace the wild heterogeneity within as if with a vast pair of arms — a grand, musical St. Peter's colonnade. Mahler described the first movement, the setting of the "Veni, creator spiritus" hymn, to Richard Specht as written "strictly in the symphonic form." By this he meant that the musical structure, for the most part, disregarded the hymn's poetic form — a succession of four-line stanzas — and used instead as a fundamental frame of reference the standard, three-part sonata form. In fact, however, as was his normal procedure, Mahler treated the normative structure in unusual ways, and each of the three broad sections (exposition, development and recapitulation) is best considered a separate, free region that may be altered or expanded as needed to accommodate the expressive demands of the text.

The exposition sets the first eight lines (two complete stanzas). Launched by a potent, tonic E flat chord in the full organ, the principal theme serves as a declamatory invocation, "Veni, creator spiritus", a musical idea that will return, refrain-like, at various points later in the movement. The fluid second theme, in an unorthodox D flat, then A flat major, appears with the third line's appeal for divine grace, "Imple superna gratia", which itself encloses a separate appeal, "Qui Paraclitus diceris," as a center section. After a sudden turn back to the invocation ("Veni, creator spiritus") and an immediate broad cadence in the E flat tonic, bell-chimes signal the onset of a new, contrasting section, "Infirma nostri

corporis" (D minor, E flat major) — this is perhaps best considered as the "transitional" opening of the developmental space.

This development, which includes a restatement of the text "Infirma nostri corporis", is marked by the sudden eruption of a new theme shortly into its course, one that will prove to be perhaps the central theme of the entire composition. This is the celebrated "Accende lumen sensibus," in E major, fortissimo, a plea for the divine light-spark to kindle our physical being toward life, understanding, and love. Its three-note upbeat followed by a strenuous leap upward will pervade most of the second movement and will ultimately find its resting-point in that movement's final Chorus Mysticus — the goal of the entire symphony. Following a hefty double-fugue ("Ductore sic te praevio") and a jubilant return of the "Accende" idea, the shortened recapitulation brings back the "Veni, creator spiritus" invocation and several (but not all) of the ideas of the exposition. The medieval hymn's conclusion, "Gloria sit Patri Domino", serves as the text for the coda. This both recalls the principal ideas of the movement and, at the end, forecasts in the off-stage brass a central motive of the movement to come (one that joins the "Accende" three-note upbeat with the music later associated with the appearance of the Mater Gloriosa, "Höchste Herrscherin der Welt!").

The vast second movement is radically unorthodox in structure. Something of a mixture between a "formal" choral cantata or oratorio and a free-flowing Wagnerian music drama, it seems closely to follow the sense of the text. Here the listener must imagine each new entering voice or section as coming from a higher level, as Faust's soul is first extracted away from the flawed earth and then borne buoyantly upward into ever-purer, more forgiving, and "truer"

regions. In the largest structural sense, the movement passes through three broad zones. Although Mahler commentators have disagreed about the precise boundaries, all agree that these correspond roughly to slow movement, scherzo, and apotheosis-finale. (One should add that the thematic interconnections between the zones and the many strong allusions to passages in the first movement further complicate the matter.) Throughout the second movement one may also trace a gradual transformation from dark orchestral colors to light ones and from sections that are controlled largely by masculine voices and principles to sections emphasizing the feminine, regarded — in characteristic “Romantic” fashion — as a complementary, redemptive space existing outside of the masculine proper. The movement opens at its lowest rung, Poco adagio (E flat minor), with an extended, somber orchestral prelude. This is the instrumental vision of a bleak landscape charged with mystical potential — all is eerily still, yet pervaded by inner, expectant motion and invisible tensions. Two important themes are stated at once: the solemn pizzicato theme in the cellos and basses, based on the preceding movement’s “Accende lumen sensibus”; and the closely related, swaying theme overlaid in the high woodwinds, a shaft of light from above that more clearly foreshadows the movement’s final chorus, “Alles Vergängliche.” Eventually a chorus of muttering Anchorites completes the rugged-landscape image, and with the subsequent entrances of the two Church Fathers — stressing “earthly”, physical experiences and continuing the thematic variants of the initial melodic ideas — Faust’s soul begins its journey upward toward the light. Here the music, by degrees, begins to accelerate in tempo, pushing toward the scherzo-zone to come.

The gateway into the scherzo is the Allegro deciso, B major women’s chorus, “Gerettet ist das edle Glied,” which clearly echoes the first movement’s “Accende lumen sensibus.” The scherzo proper, however, is probably best considered to begin with the Younger Angels’ E flat Rose Chorus, “Jene Rosen aus den Händen,” actually marked *scherzando* in the score. In the Angel-Scherzo Faust’s soul is proclaimed as saved, and he is borne further aloft: the orchestration, too, becomes markedly lighter. Particularly to be noted here is the pointed return of several additional ideas from the first movement. These returns occur throughout the scherzo, but they become particularly evident with the passage leading up to and including the entrance of the More Perfect Angels (“Uns bleibt ein Erdenrest”), which is taken directly from the “transitional” opening of the first movement’s development (“In-firma nostri corporis”) and leads to explicit statements of various forms of the “Veni, creator spiritus” motive. Here in the scherzo the grand task of the entire work, the harmonizing of the two “irreconcilable” texts, is first envisioned as a clear possibility. This concern will be pursued even more vigorously in the final section. The concluding zone, the apotheosis-finale that gathers up and binds together the symphony’s leading musical ideas, is often considered to have begun as the Greek-chorus-like Dr. Marianus directs our attention upward to the Blessed Virgin, or Mater Gloriosa, herself (“Höchste Herrscherin der Welt”, E major, another of the central themes toward which the entire work has been growing). At this point Goethe’s concept of the feminine-as-goal is crystallized into clear images: three women reverently celebrated by the Church — and finally Gretchen herself, the innocent victim of the first part of

Faust — begin to intercede on the protagonist’s behalf. (As if to underscore the unworldliness of the experience, the orchestration becomes progressively more transparent, exotic and extreme.) After having visited several contrasting tonal areas, the tonic E flat major returns to ground (or “resolve”) the entire symphony at the moment when the Mater Gloriosa grants Gretchen the task of tutoring Faust in the higher things (“Komm! hebe dich zu höhern Sphären”), and it continues this grounding function throughout the Marianus-led “Blicket auf” chorus.

Toward the end a reverent hush settles on the music to introduce what is proposed as the final revelation, available only at the end of life’s struggles — Goethe’s famous concluding lines, “Alles Vergängliche/Ist nur ein Gleichnis”, sung by the Chorus Mysticus and led further upward by, especially, a pair of solo sopranos. All of this builds to an ecstatic, affirmative peak and merges at the end with ringing orchestral statements of the symphony’s opening invocation, “Veni, creator spiritus.”

GUSTAV MAHLER Symphonie Nr. 8

SIEGMAR KEIL

Mit seiner im Sommer 1906 komponierten Achten Symphonie legte Gustav Mahler ein Werk vor, das sich in Form, Inhalt und Besetzung deutlich von seinen vorangegangenen Kompositionen abhob. Mahler selbst bezeichnete die Achte als sein »Hauptwerk«, zu dem alle seine »früheren Symphonien . . . nur die Präludien« seien. Die Uraufführung am 12. September 1910 in München bescherte dem fünfzigjährigen Komponisten den größten Triumph in seiner künstlerischen Laufbahn. Zu diesem Erfolg hatte neben dem neuartigen Formkonzept und dem einzigartigen Inhalt mit seiner Verknüpfung von mittelalterlichem Pfingst-Hymnus und der Schlußszene aus Goethes *Faust II* nicht zuletzt das

riesige Aufgebot an Mitwirkenden beigetragen: 858 Sänger und 171 Instrumentalisten unter Mahlers Leitung verfehlten ihren tiefen Eindruck auf das Auditorium — darunter die Komponisten Richard Strauss, Arnold Schönberg und Anton Webern — nicht. Die heute allgemein übliche Bezeichnung »Symphonie der Tausend«, mit der der Münchener Konzertagent Emil Gutmann das Werk (ohne Mahlers Wissen) damals ankündigte, erscheint darum durchaus gerechtfertigt. Das, was das Konzertpublikum zu Beginn unseres Jahrhunderts noch begeisterte — bedeutungsschwere Worte einer symbolhaften Dichtersprache im klanglichen Gewande eindrucksvoller Monu-