



Grant Park Music Festival

Seventy-sixth Season

Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus

Carlos Kalmar, *Principal Conductor*

Christopher Bell, *Chorus Director*

Twenty-first Program: Mahler: Symphony No. 2

Friday, August 20, 2010 at 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, August 21, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.

Jay Pritzker Pavilion

GRANT PARK ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS

Carlos Kalmar, *Conductor*

Kathy Saltzman Romey, *Guest Chorus Director*

Karina Gauvin, *Soprano*

Allyson McHardy, *Mezzo-Soprano*

MAHLER Symphony No. 2 for Soprano and Mezzo-Soprano Soloists
Chorus and Orchestra in C minor, "Resurrection"

Allegro maestoso. Mit durchaus ernstem
und feierlichem Ausdruck

Andante moderato: Sehr gemächlich

In ruhig fliessender Bewegung —

Urlicht: Sehr feierlich aber schlicht (Mezzo-Soprano) —

Finale, on Klopstock's ode, *Auferstehen* (Chorus, Soprano
and Mezzo-Soprano Soloists)

This concert is sponsored by ComEd.





SYMPHONY NO. 2 IN C MINOR, "RESURRECTION" (1888-1894) Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

Mahler's Symphony No. 2 is scored for four piccolos and flute, two oboes, two English horns, two E-flat clarinets, two B-flat clarinets, bass clarinet, three bassoons, contrabassoon, ten horns, eight trumpets, four trombones, tuba, two timpani, percussion, organ and strings. The performance time is approximately eighty minutes. The Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus first performed this Symphony on June 25, 1988, Zdenek Malcal conducting. Roberta Alexander and Catherin Robbin were the soloists.

In August 1886, the distinguished conductor Arthur Nikisch, later music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, appointed the 26-year-old Gustav Mahler as his assistant at the Leipzig Opera. At Leipzig, Mahler met Carl von Weber, grandson of the composer, and the two worked on a new performing edition of the virtually forgotten Weber opera *Die drei Pintos* ("The Three Pintos," two being impostors of the title character). Following the premiere of *Die Drei Pintos*, on January 20, 1888, Mahler attended a reception in a room filled with flowers. This seemingly beneficent image played on his mind, becoming transmogrified into nightmares and waking visions, almost hallucinations, of himself on a funeral bier surrounded by floral wreaths.

The First Symphony was completed in March 1888, and its successor was begun almost immediately. Mahler, spurred by the startling visions of his own death, conceived the new work as a tone poem entitled *Totenfeier* ("Funeral Rite"). The title was apparently taken from the translation by the composer's close friend Siegfried Lipiner, titled *Totenfeier*, of Adam Mickiewicz's Polish epic *Dziady*. Though he inscribed his manuscript, "Symphony in C minor/First Movement," Mahler had no idea at the time what sort of music would follow *Totenfeier*, and he considered allowing the movement to stand as an independent work.

The next five years were ones of intense professional and personal activity for Mahler. He resigned from the Leipzig Opera in May 1888 and applied for posts in Karlsruhe, Budapest, Hamburg and Meiningen. To support his petition for this last position, he wrote to Hans von Bülow, director at Meiningen until 1885, to ask for his recommendation, but the letter was ignored. Richard Strauss, however, the successor to Bülow at Meiningen, took up Mahler's cause on the evidence of his talent furnished by *Die Drei Pintos* and his growing reputation as a conductor of Mozart and Wagner. When Strauss showed Bülow the score for the Weber/Mahler opera, Bülow responded caustically, "Be it *Weberei* or *Mahlerei* [puns in German on 'weaving' and 'painting'], it makes no difference to me. The whole thing is a pastiche, an infamous, out-of-date bagatelle. I am simply nauseated." Mahler, needless to say, did not get the job at Meiningen, but he was awarded the position at Budapest, where his duties began in October 1888.

In 1891, Mahler switched jobs once again, this time leaving Budapest to join the prestigious Hamburg Opera as principal conductor. There he encountered Bülow, who was director of the Hamburg Philharmonic concerts. Bülow had certainly not forgotten his earlier low estimate of Mahler the composer, but after a performance of *Siegfried* he allowed that "Hamburg has now acquired a simply first-rate opera conductor in Mr. Gustav Mahler." Encouraged by Bülow's admiration of his conducting, Mahler asked for his comments on the still-unperformed *Totenfeier*. Mahler described their encounter:

"When I played my *Totenfeier* for Bülow, he fell into a state of extreme nervous tension, clapped his hands over his ears and exclaimed, 'Beside your music, *Tristan* sounds as simple as a Haydn symphony! If that is still music then I do not understand a single thing about music!' We parted from each other in complete friendship, I, however, with the conviction that Bülow considers me an able conductor but absolutely hopeless as a composer."

Mahler, who throughout his career considered his composition more important than his conducting, was deeply wounded by this behavior, but he controlled his anger out of respect for Bülow, who had extended him many kindnesses and become something of a mentor. Bülow did nothing to quell his doubts about the quality of his creative work, however, and Mahler, who had written nothing since *Totenfeier* three years before, was at a crisis in his career as a composer.

The year after Bülow's withering criticisms, Mahler found inspiration to compose again in a

collection of German folk poems by Ludwig Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano called *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (“*The Youth’s Magic Horn*”). He had known these texts since at least 1887, and in 1892 set four of them for voice and piano, thereby renewing some of his creative self-confidence. The following summer, when he was free from the pressures of conducting, he took rustic lodgings in the village of Steinbach on Lake Attersee in the lovely Austrian Salzkammergut, near Salzburg, and it was there that he resumed work on the Second Symphony, five years after the first movement had been completed. Without a clear plan as to how they would fit into the Symphony’s overall structure, he used two of the *Wunderhorn* songs from the preceding year as the bases for the internal movements of the piece. On July 16th, he completed the orchestral score of the Scherzo, derived from *Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt*, a cynical poem about St. Anthony preaching a sermon to the fishes, who, like some human congregations, return to their fleshly ways as soon as the holy man finishes his lesson. Only three days later, *Urlicht* (“*Primal Light*”) for mezzo-soprano solo, was completed; by the end of the month, the *Andante*, newly conceived, was finished.

By the end of summer 1893, the first four movements of the Symphony were finished, but Mahler was still unsure about the work’s ending. The finality implied by the opening movement’s “Funeral Rite” seemed to allow no logical progression to another point of climax. As a response to the questions posed by the first movement, he envisioned a grand choral close for the work, much in the manner of the triumphant ending of Beethoven’s last symphony. “My experience with the last movement of my Second Symphony was such that I literally ransacked world literature, even including the Bible, to find the redeeming word.” Still, no solution presented itself.

In December 1892, Bülow’s health gave out, and he designated Mahler to be his successor as conductor of the Hamburg Philharmonic concerts. A year later Bülow went to Egypt for treatment, but died suddenly at Cairo on February 12, 1894. Mahler was deeply saddened by the news. He met with Josef Förster the same day and played through the *Totenfeier* with such emotion that his friend was convinced it was offered “in memory of Bülow.” Förster described the memorial service at Hamburg’s St. Michael Church: “Mahler and I were present at the moving farewell.... The strongest impression to remain was that of the singing of the children’s voices. The effect was created not just by Klopstock’s profound poem [*Auferstehen — Resurrection*] but by the innocence of the pure sounds issuing from the children’s throats. The funeral procession started. At the Hamburg Opera, where Bülow had so often delighted the people, he was greeted by the funeral music from Wagner’s *Götterdämmerung* [conducted by Mahler].

“Outside the Opera, I could not find Mahler. But that afternoon I hurried to his apartment as if to obey a command. I opened the door and saw him sitting at his writing desk. He turned to me and said: ‘Dear friend, I have it!’ I understood: ‘*Auferstehen, ja auferstehen wirst du nach kurzen Schlaf*.’ I had guessed the secret: Klopstock’s poem, which that morning we had heard from the mouths of children, was to be the basis for the finale of the Second Symphony.” On June 29, 1894, three months later, Mahler completed his monumental “Resurrection” Symphony, six years after it was begun.

The composer himself wrote of the emotional engines driving this Symphony: “*1st movement*. We stand by the coffin of a well-loved person. His life, struggles, passions and aspirations once more, for the last time, pass before our mind’s eye. — And now in this moment of gravity and of emotion which convulses our deepest being, our heart is gripped by a dreadfully serious voice which always passes us by in the deafening bustle of daily life: What now? What is this life — and this death? Do we have an existence beyond it? Is all this only a confused dream, or do life and this death have a meaning? — And we must answer this question if we are to live on.

“*2nd movement — Andante* (in the style of a *Ländler*). You must have attended the funeral of a person dear to you and then, perhaps, the picture of a happy hour long past arises in your mind like a ray of sun undimmed — and you can almost forget what has happened.

“*3rd movement — Scherzo*, based on *Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt*. When you awaken from the nostalgic daydream [of the preceding movement] and you return to the confusion of real life, it can happen that the ceaseless motion, the senseless bustle of daily activity may strike you with horror. Then life can seem meaningless, a gruesome, ghostly spectacle, from which you may recoil with a cry of disgust!

“*4th movement — Urlicht* (mezzo-soprano solo). The moving voice of naïve faith sounds in our ear: *I am of God, and desire to return to God! God will give me a lamp, will light me to eternal bliss!*

“5th movement. We again confront all the dreadful questions and the mood of the end of the first movement. The end of all living things has come. The Last Judgment is announced and the ultimate terror of this Day of Days has arrived. The earth quakes, the graves burst open, the dead rise and stride hither in endless procession. Our senses fail us and all consciousness fades away at the approach of the eternal Spirit. The ‘Great Summons’ resounds: the trumpets of the apocalypse call. Softly there sounds a choir of saints and heavenly creatures: ‘Rise again, yes, thou shalt rise again.’ And the glory of God appears. All is still and blissful. And behold: there is no judgment; there are no sinners, no righteous ones, no great and no humble — there is no punishment and no reward! An almighty love shines through us with blessed knowing and being.”

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Urlicht (“Primal Light”)

O Röschen rot!	Oh red rose!
Der Mensch liegt in grösster Not!	Man lies in deepest need,
Der Mensch liegt in grösster Pein!	Man lies in deepest pain.
Je lieber möcht’ ich im Himmel sein!	Much would I rather be in heaven!

Da kam ich auf einen breiten Weg:	Then I came onto a broad path:
Da kam ein Engelein und wollt’ mich abweisen!	An angel came and wanted to send me away.
Ach nein! Ich liess mich nicht abweisen!	Ah, no! I would not be sent away.
Ich bin von Gott und will wieder zu Gott!	I am from God and will return to God!
Der liebe Gott wird mir ein Lichtchen geben,	Dear God will give me a light,
Wird leuchten mir in das ewig selig Leben!	Will illumine me to eternal, blessed life!

* * *

Chorus and Soprano

Aufersteh’n, ja aufersteh’n wirst du, mein Staub, nach kurzer Ruh: Unsterblich Leben wird der dich rief dir geben.	Rise again, yes you will rise again, my dust, after a short rest: Immortal life will He who called you grant to you.
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Wieder aufzublüh’n wirst du gesät! Der Herr der Ernte geht und sammelt Garben uns ein, die starben!	To bloom again you are sown! The Lord of the harvest goes and gathers sheaves, even us, who died!
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Mezzo-Soprano

O glaube, mein Herz, o glaube, es geht dir nichts verloren! Dein ist, was du geseht, dein, was du geliebt, was du gestritten!	O believe, my heart, o believe, Nothing will be lost to you! What you longed for is yours, Yours, what you have loved, what you have struggled for!
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O glaube, du wardst nicht umsonst geboren! Hast nicht umsonst gelebt, gelitten!	O believe, You were not born in vain! You have not lived in vain, Suffered in vain!
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Chorus

Was entstanden ist,
das muss vergehen!
Was vergangen, auferstehen!
Hör auf zu beben!
Bereite dich zu leben!

What was created
must pass away!
What has passed away must rise!
Cease trembling!
Prepare yourself to live!

Soprano and Mezzo-Soprano

O Schmerz! Du Alldurchdringer,
dir bin ich entrungen!
O Tod! Du Allbezwinger,
nun bist du bezwungen!
Mit Flügeln, die ich mir errungen,
in heissem Liebesstreben,
werd' ich entschweben
zum Licht, zu dem kein Aug' gedrungen!

O suffering! You that pierce all things,
From you have I been wrested!
O death! You that overcome all things,
now you are overcome!
With wings that I have won for myself
in the fervent struggle of love,
I shall fly away
to the light which no eye has pierced.

Chorus

Sterben werd' ich, um zu leben!

I shall die in order to live!

Soloists and Chorus

Aufersteh'n, ja aufersteh'n wirst du,
mein Herz, in einem Nu!
Was du geschlagen,
zu Gott wird es dich tragen!

Rise again, yes you will rise again,
my heart, in the twinkling of an eye!
What you have conquered
will carry you to God!



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