

Deryck Cooke succinctly clarifies the complex construction of the finale which is one of the composer's most remarkable achievements.

The slow introduction presents the main material: a questing violin theme, soaring out of a dark impressionist texture only to be beaten down by the motto theme; a lugubrious phrase for solo tuba; a searching march tune for solo horn; a sombre brass chorale, which, on its second appearance has a fate motive in the bass, rising and falling in octaves, ninths, and tenths. The main allegro opens with a battling march, based on the tuba phrase; twice, over long periods, it wins through to a superhuman all-or-nothing exultation; and twice the hammer-blow falls, the trombones blasting out the fate theme, with trumpets blazing above it in stark two-part counter-point. Once more the march sets off and rises to exultation; but this time it ends by going over into the opening music of the movement, for the questing violin theme to be beaten down by the motto as before. This is the moment for the third hammer-blow. The symphony ends with a doom-like coda—a slow, subdued, grindingly dissonant fugato on the fate theme by trombones and tuba, and a final statement of the motto's timpani rhythm with only the minor triad above it, fading into silence.

This final act of extinction with its agonised A minor chords *fortissimo*, is one of the most desolatory endings in all music.

A P

MAHLER Sixth Symphony

BRUCKNER Te Deum

Monday 5 March 1979 at 8.00 pm

at

The University of Aston in Birmingham
Great Hall

Monday 11 March 1979 at 8.00 pm

at

The De Montfort Hall, Leicester

ROSEMARY PHILLIPS soprano
BARBARA MCGUIRE alto
GARETH ROBERTS tenor
JONATHAN GIBBS bass

LEICESTER UNIVERSITY CHORAL SOCIETY

CITY OF LEICESTER SINGERS (conductor D G DAVIES)

BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
leader **ROSALIND PAGE**
conductors **ROBERT MEIKLE**
and **KENNETH PAGE**

BRÜCKNER
(1824-1896)

TE DEUM
(conducted by Robert Meikle)

Bruckner composed his Te Deum between 1881 and 1884; it was first performed, with two-piano accompaniment, in 1885, and with orchestra in 1886. The fusion, common in his choral music, and indeed in much sacred music by 19th-century composers, of plain-song and modal elements with the extreme chromatic effects of late romantic harmony, produces a work as powerful, succinct and fervent as Bruckner ever wrote. It was one of his most popular works during the final ten years of his life, most notably with Mahler: Hans Redlich relates how Mahler, in his

personal copy, erased the words *for Chorus, Solo Voices, Orchestra and Organ ad lib* on the title page, and inserted *For Angelic Tongues, for God-seekers, tormented hearts and for souls purified in flames*. The *non confunda* theme was used by Bruckner in the slow movement of his Seventh Symphony, and it may not be too fanciful to suggest that one of the most striking chords at the words *in aeternum* finds an echo in the setting of *Alles Vergangliche* at the huge choral climax of Mahler's Eighth.

There are five short, closely-integrated movements, of which the second and fourth are dominated by the soloists: *Te Deum*; *Te ergo quaesumus*; *Aeterna fac*; *Salvum fac*, and *In te, Domine, speravi*.

TE DEUM

Te Deum laudamus; te Dominum confitemur;
Te aeternum Patrem, omnis terra veneratur.
Tibi omnes Angeli, tibi coeli et universae potestates,
Tibi Cherubim et Seraphim incessabili voce proclamant:
Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra majestatis gloriae tuae.
Te gloriosus Apostolorum chorus;
Te Prophetarum laudabilis numerus;
Te Martyrum candidatus laudat exercitus.
Per orbem terrarum Sancta confitetur Ecclesia
Patrem immensae majestatis,
Venerandum tuum verum et unicum Filium,
Sanctum quoque Paraclitum Spiritum.
Tu Rex gloriae, Christe.
Tu Patris sempiternus es Filius.
Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem,
Non horruisti Virginis uterum.
Tu, devicto mortis aculeo, aperuisti credentibus regna coelorum.
Tu ad dexteram Dei sedes in gloria Patris.

Judex crederis esse venturus.
Te ergo quaesumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso
sanguine redimisti.
Aeterna fac cum sanctis tuis in gloria numerari.

Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine, et benedic haereditati
tuae.
Et rege eos, et extolle illos in aeternum.
Per singulos dies benedicimus te,
Et laudamus nomen tuum in saeculum et in saeculum
saeculi.
Dignare, Domine, die isto sine peccato nos custodire.
Miserere nostri, Domine.
Fiat misericordia tua, Domine, super nos, quemadmodum
speravimus in te.
In te, Domine, speravi; Non confundar in aeternum.

We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord;
All the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting.
To thee all Angels, the heavens and all the powers therein,
To thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry:
Holy, Holy, Holy,
Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy Glory.
The Glorious company of the Apostles praise thee;
The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise thee;
The noble army of Martyrs praise thee.
The holy church throughout the world doth acknowledge thee
The Father of infinite majesty,
Thy honourable, true and only Son,
Also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.
Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ.
Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.
When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man,
Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.
When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst
open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers;
Thou sittest at the right hand of God in the glory of
the Father.
We believe that thou shalt come to be our Judge.
We therefore pray thee, help thy servants, whom thou hast
redeemed with thy precious blood.
Make them to be numbered with thy saints in glory
everlasting.
O Lord, save thy people, and bless thine heritage.

And govern them, and lift them up for ever.
Day by day we magnify thee,
And we worship thy name for ever, world without end.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin.
O Lord, have mercy upon us,
Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us, as our trust is in thee.

O Lord, in thee have I trusted; let me never be confounded.

INTERVAL

Coffee and biscuits are available in G63
(Use ground floor front right exit)

MAHLER
(1860 - 1911)

SYMPHONY NO 6 IN A MINOR
(conducted by Kenneth Page)

Allegro energico ma non troppo (Heftig aber markig: violent but pithy)
Scherzo (wuchtig: heavily)
Andante moderato
Finale: (Introduction, leading to allegro energico)

Bruno Walter, in his book on the composer, recalls many conversations he had with Mahler which began in the coffee house in the afternoon, continued throughout a long walk and ran through their evening meal with *undiminished vivacity*. It was his habit on these occasions to assure me on parting that we had now definitely solved the seven riddles of the Universe and that everything was perfectly all right.

So it is in his symphonies. Their long arguments set the direction. All but the Sixth overcome the problems that beset man, although their paths are quite different. No 1 which is particularly autobiographical the youthful Romantic asserts his healthy confidence in life; No 2 *The Resurrection* solves the riddle of death - one of Mahler's most stubborn pre-occupations - through emotional excitement that finds faith in God, albeit insecurely. No 3 seeks fulfillment through flowers, birds, beasts, men, angels and concluding in the sixth movement with a burning hymn to God. The 18th Century style for the first movement of No 4 reaches a naive world in the song that forms the finale, in which *St John has lost his Lamb, the angels bake our bread and all things awake to joy*.

In the purely orchestral world of No's 5, 6 and 7 the programmatic aspect recedes. In contrast with No 6 the goals of No's 5 and 7 are triumphant. In the mighty *Symphony of a Thousand* (No 8), Mahler's fervent affirmation is re-expressed in a setting of *Veni Creator Spiritus* and Goethe's own interpretation of immortality in the closing scene of *Faust*.

No 9 is the most far reaching in modernity and in its pre-occupation with death. As Berg has said: *Death itself is announced in the first movement mit Lochster Gewalt* (with the utmost force), and the central movements are disturbed and horrific. Mahler's masterstroke is to reach above the anguish in the finale's hymn-like theme. The work draws to a close with a profound peace that like the end of *Das Lied von der Erde* refuses to fade. Death and its resolution through love is again the emotional plan of the Tenth Symphony which remained unfinished in its orchestration in 1911. Deryck Cooke produced his second and final performing edition shortly before his own death; and Alma Mahler's long sought approval for the venture came with much praise on hearing a tape of the completed work just before her death in 1963.

Mahler's phenomenal rise in popularity over the last twenty-five years is significant. His music provides an intellectual and emotional journey that ends in triumph or despair. The long struggle fascinates the listener and allows him to rise above life's parochial problems and view man in his relationship with the world. The struggle is more intense than in a Wagner Opera, and for some more satisfactory - unless you take in the complete Ring Cycle. Mahler also manages to integrate the commonplace with the sublime, and this wide spectrum demands an expansion of symphonic forms. Then there are the orchestras who play his music: a distinct

increase in technical mastery since the 1950's has brought a greater understanding of the music on the page. What Mahler brought to the Symphony was his experience as conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra between the years 1898 and 1901 and intermittently until 1907. As well as raising the performance of operas by Mozart and Wagner to entirely new levels of excellence he was able to bring to his compositions, during the summer months, a new aural precision.

Each work became a landmark in the history of the symphony; and in its fatalistic attitude No 6 the most unusual and persuasive of them all. It was written during the summers of 1904 and 5 and first performed in the festival at Essen in 1906 with Mahler conducting. Berg called it the only sixth, despite Beethoven's Pastoral.

The work conforms to a normal four movement plan based on one key (A minor sonata-allegro and scherzo, E flat andante and A minor finale) but it uses an augmented orchestra (8 horns, 6 trumpets, 4 trombones) and is in a revolutionary style. It embraces the new expressionism of Berg and Schoenberg with its angular themes, intense chromaticism and dissonance, violently fluctuating tonality and wild orchestral colours. While there is no explicit programme there are elements that had a profound effect on Mahler. The passionate second theme of the opening allegro is a portrayal of the composer's wife, Alma, and expresses the joy of love. By contrast there are the notorious sledge-hammer-blows of fate in the finale. It was these forebodings that became fact the year after: his resignation from the Vienna Opera was demanded that Spring; in July his daughter Anna died at the age of four; and a few days after that a doctor diagnosed Mahler's own fatal heart disease.

The great work opens with a heroic-tragic march that both dominates and is undermined. In the development section the march is more ominous until it is interrupted by a distant shimmering including cowbells which Mahler once said were *the last terrestrial sounds penetrating into the remote solitude of mountain peaks*.

The Scherzo maintains the relentless mood of the first movement. The devilish dance (of death) alternates with a childlike trio section in a five-part plan. Death submerges the child-like voices which in Alma Mahler's words *become more and more tragic, and die out in a whimper*. Mahler felt the dreadful fear of fate threatening himself, his wife and his children as he worked on the symphony in their summer retreat.

The Andante remains aloof and the three musical strands appear to represent contentment, yearning and pain.

The order of the inner movements caused Mahler some indecision: the Symphony was first published with the scherzo second and the slow movement third; for the second publication the order was reversed, and this remained the norm for the rare performances that occurred since his death; but shortly before his death, it transpires, he reverted to the original order, revised the orchestration and in particular removed the third hammer-blow that symbolised his own death. Tonight's performance places the scherzo second but retains the third hammer-blow.