



LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC: Dudamel Conducts Mahler's *Song of the Earth*

Thursday, April 5, 2018
Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles

KNOW BEFORE THE SHOW

- Gustav Mahler (1860–1911) was a pivotal figure in classical music: he was among the last in a great tradition of Austro-German Romantic composers that included Beethoven and Brahms, and he foreshadowed the modernist revolutions of twentieth-century music.
- This performance features staging by Yuval Sharon, an innovative opera director who rose to fame with experimental operas like *Hopscotch* (which was performed in cars driving around L.A.) and who is currently a resident artist-collaborator with the LA Phil.
- Sharon collaborated with the Chilean theatre company Teatrocinema for this unprecedented multimedia performance of *Song of the Earth*.
- The venue, Walt Disney Concert Hall, is the work of celebrity architect Frank Gehry. The interior was specially designed to create an exceptional acoustic experience.

“The symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything.”—Gustav Mahler

GUSTAV MAHLER

Gustav Mahler was born in 1860 to Austrian parents in a Bohemian village in what is now the Czech Republic (but was part of the Austrian empire at the time of Mahler's birth). He was part of a German-speaking Austrian minority among the Czech population, and as a Jew, he was a minority within that minority. Mahler began composing as a very young child, taking inspiration from both military music and Czech folk music that he heard in his daily life. As a teenager, he studied classical music at the esteemed Vienna Conservatory.

After school, Mahler embarked on a career as a conductor, becoming one of the leading conductors of his time. He was artistic director of the Vienna Court Opera and also conducted the Vienna Philharmonic and New York's Metropolitan Opera, among others.

As a composer, Mahler was influenced by Richard Wagner and Franz Liszt, and worked in a tradition that sought to express a worldview through music. Mahler's worldview—influenced by German philosophers such as Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche, as well as personal experiences of poverty, anti-Semitism, and poor health—tended toward tormented.

His music was banned by the Nazis, and it was only after World War II that Mahler became widely embraced, and renowned, as a composer. Today, Mahler is recognized as a major influence in a pivotal time in music. His late-Romantic compositions influenced twentieth-century composers from Arnold Schoenberg to Dmitri Shostakovich, and indeed foreshadowed the radical breaks they would make with classical-music tradition. Musicologist Deryck V. Cooke writes, "It can be said of Mahler, more than of any other composer, that he lived out the spiritual torment of disinherited modern man in his art, and that the man is the music."

DAS LIED VON DER ERDE

Das Lied von der Erde (*Song of the Earth*), from 1908, was Mahler's second-to-last completed work. It is the first part of a trilogy of symphonies through which Mahler attempted to come to terms with death. Mahler died before the third piece in the trilogy was completed. *Song of the Earth* sets several ancient Chinese poems to music, exploring the cycle of life, and the individual experience of it. It was written after a year in which Mahler was forced to resign from the Vienna Court Opera due to anti-Semitism, lost his eldest daughter to scarlet fever and diphtheria, and was diagnosed with a congenital heart defect. In *Song of the Earth*, Mahler, facing mortality, looks to nature for consolation.

GUSTAVO DUDAMEL

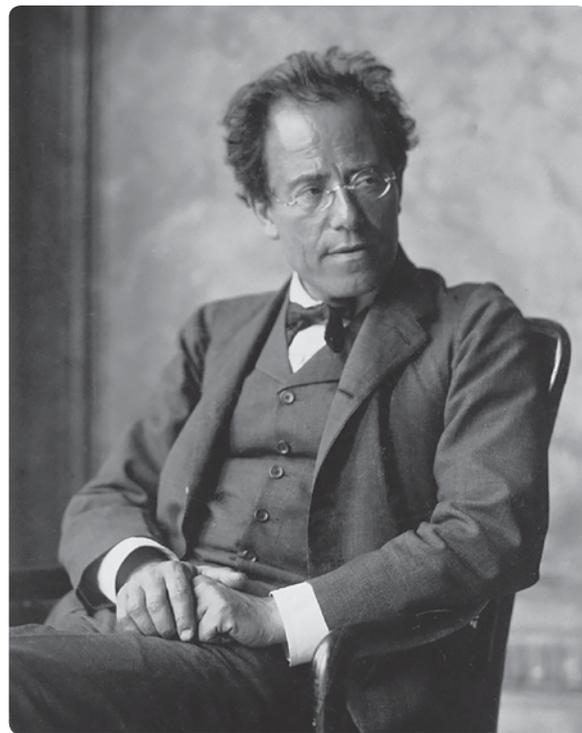
Gustavo Dudamel, born in Venezuela in 1981, is the music and artistic director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and music director of the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela. A dynamic violinist and conductor, he has worked with major orchestras around the world and is acclaimed not only for his extraordinary musical talent, but also for his explosive energy.

YUVAL SHARON

Described by *The Hollywood Reporter* as "L.A.'s avant-garde opera darling," Yuval Sharon is pushing the boundaries of opera. He founded and is the artistic director of the innovative opera company The Industry, and in 2017 received the MacArthur "Genius" Award.

LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC

Critics have described the Los Angeles Philharmonic as "forward-thinking," "contemporary-minded," and "the most creative, and, therefore, the best orchestra in America." Founded in 1919, the LA Phil moved into Walt Disney Concert Hall in 2003. Under the 17-year tenure of music director Esa-Pekka Salonen (which ended in 2009), the LA Phil joined the ranks of the world's elite orchestras. Salonen worked as a champion of new music, challenging Los Angeles audiences to listen to the unexpected. The orchestra has continued to innovate under the leadership of Gustavo Dudamel. The LA Phil performs a regular season of concerts at Disney Hall, as well as a summer season at the Hollywood Bowl.



Gustav Mahler (Photo by Moritz Nähr)



Gustavo Dudamel

WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL

Walt Disney Concert Hall was designed by architect Frank Gehry to be one of the top acoustically conscious concert halls in the world. Construction began in 1999 and took four years to complete. It was funded by a major contribution from Walt Disney's widow, Lillian Disney, and various other donors, totaling \$240 million. The building's bold stainless-steel exterior makes it instantly recognizable as a Gehry building. Inside, the hardwood construction aims to perfectly funnel the sounds of music. Esa-Pekka Salonen said of the hall: "Everyone can now hear what the LA Phil is supposed to sound like."

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- Mahler's music is known for incorporating influences from many different sources, from nature and animals to military bugles and folk music. What influences did you hear in *Song of the Earth*?
- What emotional or psychological journey did you hear—or experience—in listening to *Song of the Earth*?
- Did you notice anything about the music that seemed to anticipate or foreshadow modernist music of the later twentieth century?

IF YOU LIKED TONIGHT'S PERFORMANCE, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT

- The Industry
theindustryla.org
- Teatrocinema
teatrocinema.cl
- Performances by the USC Thornton Symphony, USC Thornton Chamber Orchestra, or USC Thornton Opera
music.usc.edu/usc-thornton-symphony-orchestra
music.usc.edu/thornton-chamber-orchestra
music.usc.edu/opera
- Some of L.A.'s other classical-music ensembles, such as the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra or the conductorless community orchestra Kaleidoscope
www.laco.org
www.kco.la

DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

ANDREW JUSTICE of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about tonight's performance of Mahler's *Song of the Earth*. Those with a call number (e.g., books and DVDs) are physical items which you can find in our campus libraries. Those without a call number (e.g., dissertations and databases) are electronic resources, which you can access through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu.

BOOKS

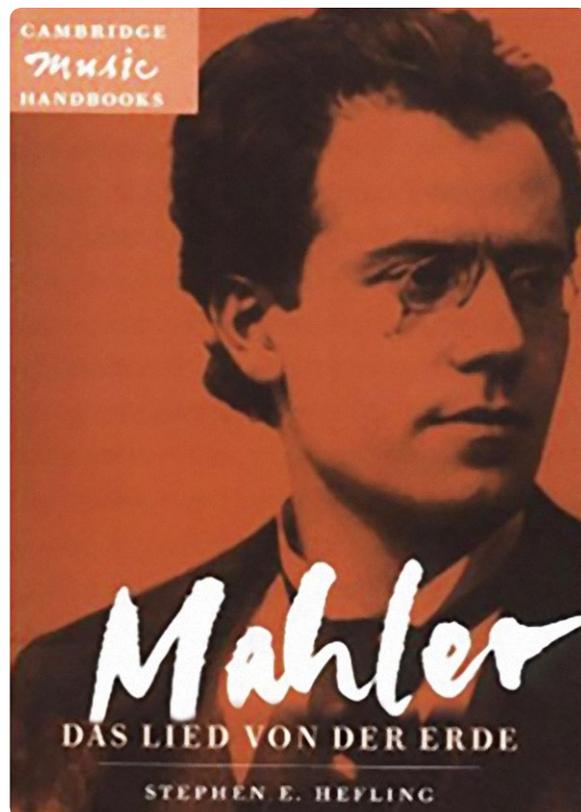
- Devaré, Ulric. *Gustav Mahler's Song of the Earth: An Appreciation in Commemoration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Composer's Birth*. Ernst Toch, intro. Villiers Publications, 1960.
MUSIC LIBRARY & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS: MT115.M33 D5
- Hefling, Stephen. *Mahler, Das Lied von der Erde*. Cambridge University Press, 2000.
MUSIC LIBRARY: MT121.M34 H44 2000



Walt Disney Concert Hall



The USC Thornton Symphony



- Kim, Hyun-Ah. "A Dream of Immortality: Mahler's Das Lied Von Der Erde (the Song of the Earth)." In *Emotion, Identity and Death: Mortality Across Disciplines*. Ashgate, 2012.
DOHENY MEMORIAL LIBRARY: GT3150.E496 2012
- Mitchell, Donald, et al. *Discovering Mahler: Writings on Mahler, 1955-2005*. Boydell Press, 2007.
MUSIC LIBRARY: ML410.M23 M54 2007

ARTICLES

- "Get to Know Yuval Sharon." *Los Angeles Magazine* 62/11 (2017): 70.
DATABASE: EBSCOHOST OMNIFILE & DOHENY JOURNALS
- Deutsch, Dan. "Gustav Mahler's Das Lied Von Der Erde: The Non-Symphonic Symphony as Critique." *Yearbook for European Jewish Literature Studies* 4/1 (2017): 187-98.
DATABASE: GALE CENGAGE ACADEMIC ONEFILE
- Hamao, Fusako. "The Sources of the Texts in Mahler's Lied Von Der Erde." *19th Century Music* 19/1 (1995): 83-95.
DATABASES: JSTOR & UC PRESS JOURNALS
DOHENY JOURNAL STACKS: ML1.N5
- Riefe, Jordan. "Hopscotch: Opera Hits the Road in Los Angeles; Yuval Sharon, the Man Who Staged an Opera in a Railway Station, Is Back with an Even More Ambitious Project Which Sees Audience Members Driven around in Cars Containing Musicians and Actors." *The Guardian*, October 29, 2015.
DATABASES: PROQUEST, GALE CENGAGE, LEXISNEXIS ACADEMIC

AUDIO-VISUAL

- Bass Normandy Orchestral Ensemble, Dominique Debart. G.B. Productions, 1999.
MUSIC LIBRARY: MUSDVD 85
- Caine, Uri. *Urlich*. [Jazz arrangements of works by Mahler, originally adapted as silent film accompaniment.] Winter & Winter, 1997.
MUSIC LIBRARY: CD 11145MUS
- Domingo, Plácido, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Sony Classical, 2000.
DATABASE: NAXOS MUSIC LIBRARY
- Fischer-Dieskau, Dietrich, Vienna Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein. Decca, 1966.
DATABASE: NAXOS MUSIC LIBRARY
- Everywhere and Forever: Mahler's Song of the Earth*. Jason Starr, dir. Cultural Media Collaborative, 2016.
MUSIC LIBRARY: MUSDVD 812
- Leaving Home: Orchestral Music in the 20th Century: A Conducted Tour by Simon Rattle*. Arthaus Musik, 2016.
MUSIC LIBRARY: MUSDVD 297 & 816 (VOL. 2: RHYTHM)

SCORE

- Der Abschied* (manuscript facsimile piano score) Editor Stichtung "Rondom Mahler", 2002.
MUSIC LIBRARY REFERENCE: ML96.5.M2 A27 2002

