

MAHLER Symphony No.2



**QSO
LEARNING**
/2016

Education Open Rehearsal 1

The Composer – Gustav Mahler

Gustav Mahler was born in Austria in 1860 and died in 1911. He studied at the Vienna Conservatory and then worked as a conductor throughout Europe. While conducting, Mahler composed part-time and developed a great interest in literature and philosophy.

Mahler composed Symphony No.1 in 1888 and created the work as a five movement tone-poem with descriptive text to accompany the music. He composed nine other symphonies on a grand scale.

He conducted the Vienna Philharmonic and in 1908 he conducted the Metropolitan Opera in New York where he proved to be a very popular conductor. He subsequently moved to America to conduct the New York Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

Mahler was diagnosed with a heart condition which finally took his life in Paris in 1911. Mahler's wife Alma, lived for another 50 years and became an honorary member of the International Gustav Mahler Society which was founded in Vienna in 1955.



<http://gustavmahler.com>

The Era – Historical Context

The **Romantic era** (1780 – 1910) was a time of interest in nature, history, legends, literature and even the super-natural. There was attention to nationalism and patriotism and a revolt against the structures and rules of the Classical era. Composers explored tonality and styles to tell their stories.

The **Industrial Revolution** had occurred in the late 1700s and early 1800s and this saw new inventions and mass production strategies happening all round the world. Musical instruments also benefited from the mechanical innovations of the era with improvements in keys and valves offering players more flexibility, virtuosity and range in their performance.

Before this time, music was generally commissioned and composed for the rich, the upper classes and those knowledgeable about music. Many composers were employed by the aristocracy (royalty). It was these people who had the time to enjoy music during the Baroque and Classical eras.

With the rise of the people who became rich through building and running factories (middle class), music became a pastime enjoyed by all. People who worked in these factories were often looked after by their employers. Celebratory occasions, festivals and concerts were organised for the enjoyment of the workers. Romantic composers became more free to compose for events attended by the general public and to celebrate special events or explore historical events, folk legends, feelings, nature, patriotism and national pride etc. through music.

Romantic era composers and their music (Click for YouTube links)

Hector Berlioz (1803 – 1869) French	<u><i>Symphonie Fantastique</i></u>	Program symphony
Johann Strauss 1 (1804 – 1849) Austrian	<u><i>Radetzky March</i></u>	
Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847) German	<u><i>Wedding March</i></u> from <i>A Midsummer Nights Dream</i>	
Franz Liszt (1811 – 1886) Hungarian	<u><i>Hungarian Rhapsody No.2</i></u>	Nationalism, folk songs
Alexander Borodin (1833 – 1887) Russian	<u><i>Polovtsian Dances</i></u>	Fairy tale set to music
Modest Mussorgsky (1839 – 1881) Russian	<u><i>Pictures at an Exhibition</i></u>	Program music
Pytor Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893) Russian	<u><i>1812 Overture</i></u>	Patriotism
Anton Dvorak (1841 – 1904) Czech	Symphony No. 9 <u><i>From the New World</i></u>	Theme
Edvard Grieg (1843 – 1907) Norwegian	Peer Gynt <u><i>In the Hall of the Mountain King</i></u>	Legend
Edward Elgar (1857 – 1944) English	<u><i>Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1</i></u>	
Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918) French	<u><i>Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune</i></u>	Descriptive

Symphony No.2 *Resurrection*

Symphony No.2 was composed between 1888 and 1894.

In 1888 Mahler composed a tone poem which he called *Totenfeier* (Funeral Rites). This became the first movement of Symphony No.2. The second and third movements were composed in 1893. The symphony was completed and performed for the first time in 1895 in Berlin, conducted by Mahler himself.

Like Beethoven in his Symphony No.9, Mahler composed the final movement with vocal parts and choir. He selected the text from Klopstock's *Die Auferstehung* (The Resurrection) and added more verses which he wrote himself.

Mahler added text to the audience program in a performance in 1901, to describe the music which begins with a funeral and then asked the question;

Is there life after death?

Symphony No.2 *Resurrection*

Symphony No.2 has five movements and lasts for 83 minutes. It is usually performed without an interval. The movements describe the following feelings.

Click on each movement to link to a YouTube video.

[1st movement](#)

Allegro Maestoso - Mit durchaus ernstem und feierlichem Ausdruck
With complete gravity and solemnity of expression
The Funeral 22 minutes

[2nd movement](#)

Andante Moderato - Sehr gemächlich. Nie eilen.
Very leisurely, never rush
Memories of happy times 11 minutes

[3rd movement](#)

Scherzo - In ruhig fliessender Bewegung
With quietly flowing movement
Description of a life without meaning 11 minutes

[4th movement](#)

Urlicht (Primeval Light) - Very solemn, but simple
Wish to not be in a life without meaning 4 minutes

[5th movement](#) (part 1)

Im Tempo des Scherzo - In the tempo of the scherzo

[5th movement](#) (part 2)

Hope for everlasting renewal 32 minutes

(You Tube video recorded in two parts. The choir enters in part 2)

Text used in Symphony No.2 *Resurrection*

4th Movement: Mahler used the German text from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*

The English Translation:

Primeval Light

O little red rose!
Man lies in greatest need!
Man lies in greatest pain!
How I would rather be in heaven.
There came I upon a broad path
When came a little angel and wanted to turn me away.
Ah no! I would not let myself be turned away!
I am from God and shall return to God!
The loving God will grant me a little light,
Which will light me into that eternal blissful life!

Instrumentation for Symphony No.2 *Resurrection*

The symphony is composed for a **large orchestra**, a **choir**, **two soloists** (soprano and alto), **organ** and an **offstage ensemble** of brass and percussion.

Woodwind

4 Flutes all of which double on Piccolo
4 Oboes, 2 also play Cor Anglais
3 Clarinets
1 Bass Clarinet and 2 E flat Clarinets
3 Bassoons 1 also plays Contra Bassoon

Brass

10 French Horns
10 Trumpets
4 Trombones
1 Tuba

Percussion

8 Timpani (2 players)	Snare drums
Triangle	Glockenspiel
2 Tam-tams (gong)	Bass drum

Strings

"The largest possible contingent of strings"

Violins
Violas
Cellos
Double Basses

2 Harps
Organ
Choir
Soprano soloist
Alto soloist

Offstage Ensemble

4 French Horns
4 trumpets
1 Timpani
2 Percussion

Alondra de la Parra

Alondra de la Parra, QSO Music Director designate, is Guest Conductor for QSO Plays Mahler 2.

The QSO Music Director is proudly supported by Timothy Fairfax AC.

[QSO PLAYS MAHLER 2](#)

LISTEN AND WATCH

[Alondra de la Parra](#) discusses why she is excited to open QSO's 2016 Season conducting Mahler's Symphony No.2 *Resurrection*.

Excerpts with Alondra de la Parra conducting:

[Mahler Symphony No.2 - 1st Movement](#)

[Mahler Symphony No.2 - 2nd Movement](#)

[Mahler Symphony No.2 - 3rd Movement](#)



Australian Curriculum – Music

Elements of Music	Foundation to Year 2	Years 3 and 4	Years 5 and 6	Years 7 and 8	Years 9 and 10
Rhythm	Beat and rhythm Fast/slow Long/short	Tempo changes ostinato	Compound metre	Time signature Rhythmic devices - anacrusis, syncopation, ties and pause	Regular and irregular time subdivision Triplet, duplet Motif, Augmentation/ diminution
Pitch	High/low Pitch direction Pitch matching Unison	Pentatonic patterns Melodic shape Intervals Treble clef and staff	Major scales Pitch sequences, arpeggio, riff, Bass clef	Minor scales Key and key signatures Major/minor chords Ledger lines	Tonal centres, Modulation Consonance/dissonance Chromaticism
Dynamics & Expression	Forte, piano	Dynamic gradations <i>pp to ff</i> Legato & staccato	Staccato, legato accent	Dynamic gradations Articulations relevant to style	Rubato, vibrato, ornamentation
Form and Structure	Introduction Same/different, echo patterns, repetition Verse, chorus, round	Question & answer Repeat signs Binary (AB) form Ternary (ABA) form	Theme, motif Phrase Rondo (ABACA) form ostinato	Repetition and contrast Theme and Variation Verse chorus, bridge	Motivic development Sonata form, Interlude, Symphony , Improvisation
Timbre	How sound is produced Every voice and instrument has its own sound	Recognise orchestral instruments by sound In isolations and in combination	Acoustic and electronic sounds Voice and instrument types	Recognise instrumental groups	Identify instruments by name and sound production.
Texture	Melody Accompaniment Drone	Patterns occurring simultaneously	Contrast within layers of sound	Layers of sound and their role. Unison, homo/ polyphonic	Horizontal/vertical layers countermelody
Creating	Creating sounds using voice and instruments				
Performing	Playing instruments in groups.	Rhythms	Playing and reading melodic and rhythmic excerpts		Sing and play in two or more parts
Responding	Moving to beat and rhythms	Respond to the stories.	Historical context		Awareness of ensemble

Lifelong learning through music

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Prepared by Pam Lowry, Education Officer
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Queensland Symphony
Orchestra

