

# THE WAYFARER

A Dedicated and Accomplished Secretary

GMSUK CHAIR ANTHONY RAUMANN

and colleagues pay tribute to The Society's Founder Secretary, SUE JOHNSON

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It is with great sadness, that I must inform you that our dear friend and the long-standing Secretary of the Gustav Mahler Society UK, Sue Johnson, passed away on Monday 19th September at 5 pm, after a short illness. This news has come to all of us as a great shock, and my thoughts are with Sue's brother David and sister Bridget and their families, with whom Sue was very close.

Sue was fully dedicated to the Gustav Mahler Society UK. She was highly accomplished, and had exceptional professional and organisational skills, with a keen eye for detail and sound advice, which were greatly valued by all Members of the Committee. It would be no exaggeration to say, in Jim Pritchard's words, "that without Sue there would not have been a GMS UK that has lasted from 2001 until now; she worked tirelessly and expertly for 21 years and did so much more than any one person really should have for such an organisation."

Sue had those rare gifts of selflessness, generosity, loyalty, dependability, charm and sincerity, the hallmarks of her personality, for which she was much admired by all of our Members and friends alike. Penny Young, a Committee Member of the GMS in the North and Midlands recalled, in particular, "the warm welcome" Sue gave her when she attended her first GMS UK event at the Austrian Cultural Forum in 2014, "when I didn't know anyone". Penny also appreciated Sue's "help and advice when setting up and getting to grips with the running of the Northern and Midlands Group".

Catherine Dobson, a former member of the Committee, and a close friend, recalls that she met Sue when the GMS UK was founded and her admiration for her grew over the years as she became more and more involved with the growing Society.

"Not only did Sue undertake secretarial and Committee duties but recruited members and tirelessly arranged events, not least the annual Dinner on Gustav Mahler's birthday: locating a restaurant, arranging the menu, the speaker, the raffle and the all-important cake!"

Many of us will have similar recollections and Sue was a pillar of support to me on various occasions, for which I am very thankful.

Cath Alderson, another long-standing Committee Member, has mentioned that Sue, the eldest of her siblings, loved her childhood home in the Isle of Man and often travelled there by car and ferry to stay for a few weeks.

Sue was a pupil at the Harrogate Ladies' College and Bridget recollects that she loved classical music from an early age and was a keen pianist as a child. She also developed a very eclectic taste in music.

Liz Queenan was another of Sue's close friends and a former work colleague, who has shed light on Sue's professional life which "involved her in several spheres" of the media. Sue's debut as a secretary at the BBC's legendary Alexandra Palace - "Ally Pally" as she called it - brought her into contact with the BBC's leading reporters and presenters. Sue moved with them to the new Wood Lane centre, where she worked in the news department and for *Woman's Hour* before rising to the position of Secretary to the Editor of *Panorama*, Jeremy Isaacs. In 1967 Sue moved into commercial television; she joined the newly-enfranchised London Weekend Television as secretary to Doreen Stephens, Head of Children's, Adult Education and Religious programming. It was there that Liz met Sue in the "halcyon days" of broadcasting so that, in Liz's words, they "felt privileged to share".

Sue moved on to radio and thoroughly enjoyed her years at Capital where she was able to administer a wide range of events in both classical and popular music. Liz recollects that "typically", Sue discovered Capital owned a box at the Royal Albert Hall that was mostly left empty so she "put it to good use, generously hosting many an evening with friends". Her affection for "Albert" as she called it, was life-long and Liz remembers that, as soon as Sue entered into semi-retirement, she was able to fulfil her ambition to become a Red Coat, something which she did for many years with her usual enthusiasm. The last big role Sue undertook was with Sir Claus Moser's fundraising team to create the Great Court at the British Museum. This was a four-year commitment and marked another major achievement of which she was tremendously proud - Sue learned to operate the Sage accounting package! .

She was also involved in the London Symphony's Donatella Flick Conducting Competition. Sue met many personalities from the music world, whether popular or classical; she was equally at home with people from all walks of life and she gathered friends from every area of her life and work.



Sue had many active interests and commitments outside the GMS UK during her retirement. She was a keen member of the Twentieth Century Society (campaigning for the preservation of post 1914 architectural heritage in Britain), through which she recently enjoyed a memorable architectural tour of Japan. Sue attended several courses at Birkbeck College and the Jewish Cultural Centre in London. She also had a great interest in European history.

Catherine Dobson recollects that the last time she met Sue was at an event this summer at St James's Church, Piccadilly, which she had encouraged her friends to attend in support of Ukraine. Pasha, a talented pianist whom Sue admired and promoted, choreographed splendid performances by young Ukrainian musicians for this moving occasion. "It is this memory of Sue's active dedication to music and good causes that I will especially treasure." Cath (and many of us) recollect that Sue frequently attended live performances of Mahler's works and, in pre-pandemic years, she could be seen inside and outside London's Royal Albert Hall, Royal Festival Hall or the Barbican offering GMS UK leaflets to those interested. Her efforts were rewarded, as many of our prospective members were drawn into the Society through Sue's powers of persuasion, her winning smile and effortless charm.

Jim Pritchard has mentioned, with reference to Her Majesty, the late Queen Elizabeth II, "much has been made lately of one particular smile but there is Sue's that comes to mind at the moment as I write this and another special light in the world has been extinguished." The timing of Sue's death at 5 pm coincided with the lowering of Queen Elizabeth II's coffin into the vaults below the Chapel Royal in Windsor Castle, and although one cannot make comparisons, I turn to another close friend, Caroline Tate, who has made a very touching tribute. Caroline describes Sue as "a radiantly enthusiastic person, with passion for music, and many, many activities concerned with this: Her presence always was dynamic and her smile radiant. Being in her company was unique. A glorious woman and I will always think of her when I listen to Mahler and also when walking in Nature. She is everywhere. How much she will be missed."

We all share a deep sense of loss but also feel an equal measure of appreciation for Sue's life through our own happy and positive recollections of her uplifting presence. Her legacy will live on through her shining example.

It was Liz Queenan who informed me about Sue's death and put me in touch with her family. Bridget was very generous and invited all Sue's friends to attend her funeral service which was held on Wednesday 19th October at St Marylebone Crematorium, East Finchley, London followed by an invitation to all of Sue's friends to meet at the Old White Lion Public House.

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My wife Margaret and I met Sue for the last time quite by accident outside the Royal Albert Hall before a Prom when we shared a bottle of wine. There could not have been a nicer last memory - Editor.

## Mahler's Conductors: 7. Leonard Bernstein

Mahler Recordings 1924-70: Where Does Bernstein Fit?

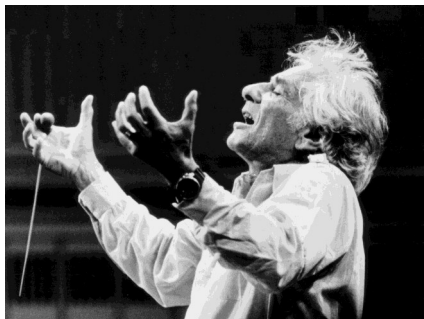
KEVIN CAREY asks whether Bernstein deserves his reputation as the man who made Mahler

Given its scale and the limitations of acoustic, pre-electronic recording, the 2nd is an unlikely choice for the first recording of a Mahler symphony but Oscar Fried (1871-1941), who had conducted the work in 1905 in front of Mahler with Klemperer (1885-1973) leading the off-stage band, achieved this in 1924.

Table 1 shows the first known commercial recordings of Mahler Symphonies and *Das Lied*; I have excluded more recently unearthed recordings from radio archives..

Four points to notice: Walter (1876-1962) accounts for four premier recordings; Vienna is further represented by Adler (1889-1959) and Scherchen (1891-1966); Ormandy (1899-1985) was the great pioneer for four decades without a premier, making the second recording of the 2nd in 1935 and what turned out to be the second recording of Cooke's completion of the 10th a year after the Prom performance; Walter's disadvantage in modern terms is that he never completed a cycle, although his position would have been stronger if either of his recordings of the 2nd from 1942 and 1948, had been taken up by his later record company, CBS, now Sony. As it is, he never recorded 3, 6, 7 or 8; or the Adagio from 10.

But of all the premier recordings the one which will surely keep its place as the best of all time is Walter's 1938 9th for not only is this a fabulous recording for its day made by Fred Gaisberg (1873-1951), and wonderfully interpreted, it has a special place because it was the recording of the last concert of the Vienna Philharmonic before the Anschluss on March 12th 1938, with Mahler's brother-in-law, Arnold Rose (1863-1946) as Leader. Rose had been with the VPO for more than fifty years and had married Mahler's sister Justine. Although not so distinguished per se, the other recording that recommends itself because of its historical context is the 4th with the Concertgebouw conducted by Willem Mengelberg (1871-1951) in 1939, just before the German invasion of The Netherlands. Mengelberg had befriended Mahler in 1902, arranged for a performance of the 3rd



with the Concertgebouw in 1903 and two performances of the 4th in 1904. But this was not the premier recording. That honour goes to the most curious of the whole set, the brother of the Japanese Prime Minister, Viscount Hidemaro Konoye's (1898-1973) recording with the Tokyo New Symphony Orchestra from 1930, the first electrical recording of a complete Mahler Symphony, (apart from a cut in the Third Movement). Other than the 10th, which is a special case, the last three to be recorded were the 6th, 7th and 8th which had their recording premiers in the same year, 1950.

As I said, Vienna played a vital part in Mahler recording in the 1950s, not only on home soil with its orchestras but through its diaspora, including Adler, Scherchen, Horenstein (1898-1973) who recorded the first studio version of the 9th in 1952, Kletsky (1900-1973), Kubelik (1914-1996), Klemperer, who recorded the 2nd eight times and, of course, Walter.

It can already be seen clearly that there was a good deal of recorded Mahler before the arrival of Bernstein (1918-1990) but it might reasonably be argued that it was confined to relatively obscure record labels like Vox and largely to European specialist collectors. It might then be argued that Bernstein's achievement was to record a complete symphonic cycle for a major label.

Table 2 shows the outline of Bernstein's CBS cycle and the number of precursor commercial recordings. Points to note: for the purist, this is not a perfect cycle because it involves two orchestras (the NYPO for all but the 8th with the LSO) but most critics

regard this as a quibble; The *Adagio* from the 10th (1975) was an after-thought for a re-packaging so I have omitted it; only three symphonies had received fewer than 10 recordings before Bernstein.

Having come this far, Table 3 compares the Bernstein claim for a commercial breakthrough on a major label with the cycles conducted by Bernard Haitink (1929-2021) with the Concertgebouw on Philips and the cycle with Kubelik and the Bavarian Radio SO on DG for comparison; and, to add further perspective, I have added the dates for Barbirolli's (1899-1970) and Horenstein's almost complete cycles.

It can be seen from the table that Bernstein was ahead of Haitink in recordings of all but two symphonies; Kubelik was further behind; but look at the Barbirolli contribution and then the Horenstein. The only factor which disqualifies these two earlier cycles is that they are incomplete. It was extremely unfortunate that EMI did not recognise the importance of a Barbirolli cycle in the same way as CBS, Philips and DG. As for Horenstein, he was, in my view, the greatest Mahler conductor after Walter, but he had a ramshackle recording career and many of his performances were live, with a good deal of extraneous noise and some poor engineering and editing; but his 8th from a Prom with the LSO in 1959 and his 7th from a Prom in 1969 are indispensable.

The claim that Bernstein recorded the first complete, commercially successful, Mahler Symphony cycle stands; but how this stands up to his contemporaries is quite another issue.

Kubelik's cycle is better in the relatively smaller works and in rustic inner movements. Haitink's greatest strength is his adherence to the score and his mastery of tempo and structure.

Over 50 years I think the symphony he has most successfully recorded numerous times is the 3rd. I should simply note at this point that I do not rate von Karajan (1908-89) as a significant conductor of anything, and certainly not of Mahler.

As for Bernstein, from the time he went to Harvard (1935-39) he was most greatly influenced by his American teachers, Copland (1900-1990) and Piston (1894-1976), particularly in respect of his compositions. However, he soon came into contact with what we might call second-generation Mahler conductors, notably Mitropoulos (1896-1960) who perhaps introduced him to Mahler and who was influential in smoothing his path to conducting the New York Philharmonic, and Koussevitzky (1874-1051) who influenced him in his emotional way of interpreting music. In 1943 he made his New York Philharmonic debut standing in at short notice when Walter was indisposed, meeting him briefly before the concert, and conducted at the Mahler Centenary Festival in New York in 1960 alongside him and Mitropoulos. An example of his style is afforded by timings for recordings of the 9th where Bernstein comes in at 78.48 against Walter's 70.43.

To put Bernstein in perspective, Table 4 shows my preferred list of Mahler recordings from 1924-70 :

Points to note: Walter's premier 9th remains alongside his premier 5th and his iconic 1952 recording of *Das Lied* with Ferrier (1912-53); The premier Goldschmidt also survives against, it must be said, not very fierce competition either in reconstruction or interpretation; Bernstein's 6th makes it precisely because it is the Symphony which most matches his temperament but which does not suffer from excessive slowness. Bernstein made a later cycle for DG in the late 1980s by which time he had become, if anything, even more mannered, almost a self-parody and by now he was up against such Mahler giants, in alphabetical order, as Abbado, Rattle and Solti which puts his recording career into an even wider perspective.

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An edited version of a paper given to the Society in 2015.

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Leonard Bernstein biographical summary on Page 7.

**Table 1:** Premier Commercial Recordings of Mahler Symphonies & Das Lied.

Symphony	Fulop Ref	Conductor/Orch	Date	Place	Label
1	1.0005	Walter/NBCSO	08/04/39	New York	Music&Arts
2	2.0010	Fried/BerStOO	1924	Berlin	Naxos
3	3.0005	Boul/BBCSO	29/11/47	London	Testament
4	4.0010	Konoye/NewSO	28-29/05/30	Kawasaki	Denon or Urlicht
5	5.0010	Walter/NYPO	10/02/47	New York	Sony
6	6.0010	Adler/VSO	22/06/50	Vienna	Conifer
7	7.0005	Scherchen/VSO	22/06/50	Vienna	Orfeo d'Or
8	8.0010	Stokowski/PSO	09/04/50	PhilSO	Music&Arts
9	9.0010	Walter/VPO	16/01/38	Vienna	Naxos
Lied	L.0010	Walter/VPO	24/05/36	Vienna	Naxos
10	-	Goldschmidt/LSO	13/07/64	London	Testament
10adagio	0.2038	Adler/VSO	1953	Vienna	Conifer

**Table 2:** Bernstein's CBS Mahler Cycle and number of precursor recordings

Symphony	Date	Number of earlier recordings
1	1966	39
2	1958	13
3	1961	11
4	1960	39
5	1963	6
6	1967	14
7	1965	7
8	1966	7
9	1965	13
Lied	1966	27

**Table 3:** Bernstein on CBS, Haitink on Philips, Kubelik on DG and Barbirolli and Horenstein on various labels.

Conductor	Sym1 Year	Sym2 Year	Sym3 Year	Sym4 Year	Sym5 Year	Sym6 Year	Sym7 Year	Sym8 Year	Sym9 Year
Horenstein	1953	-	1960	1970	1953	1966	1969	1959	1952
Barbirolli	1957	1959	1969	1967	1969	1966	-	-	1960
Bernstein	1966	1973	1961	1960	1964	1966	1966	1967	1967
Haitink	1962	1968	1966	1967	1970	1969	1969	1971	1969
Kubelik	1967	1969	1967	1971	1968	1971	1970	1970	1967

**Table 4:** The Author's Favourite Mahler Symphonies and Das Lied 1924-70.

Symphony	Fulop	Conductor/Orch	Date	Place	Label
1	1.0300	Kubelik/BayRSO	20-23/10/67	Munich	DG
2	2.0050	Klemperer/Cgb	1951	Amsterdam	Guild
3	3.0135	Barbirolli/Halle	03/05/69	Manchester	BBC
4	4.0230	Szell/Cleveland	1-2/10/65	Cleveland	MYK
5	5.0010	Walter/NYPO	10/02/47	New York	Sony
6	6.0100	Bernstein/NYPO	2-6/05/67	New York	Sony
7	7.0010	Rosbaud/BerRSO	1952	Berlin	Vox
8	8.0040	Horenstein/LSO	20/03/59	London	BBC Legends
9	9.0010	Walter/VPO	16/01/38	Vienna	Naxos
Lied	L.0040	Walter/VPO	14-19/05/52	Vienna	Naxos
10	-	Goldschmidt/LSO	13/08/64	London	Testament

## To Live for You! To Die for You!

*In the third part of his account of the marriage of the Mahlers*  
**ANTHONY CANTLE** *focuses on the early life of Gustav.*

Born on 7th July 1860 in the village of Kalisch in Bohemia, then a part of the Austrian Empire, Gustav Mahler was one of fourteen children born to Bernhard Mahler and his wife Marie Herrmann. Soon after Gustav's birth his father relocated the family to the town of Iglau where Bernhard ran a distillery and inn. Prior to Gustav's birth there had been a brother, Isidor, who lived for only a year having died from an unspecified accident. Of this family of fourteen only six children were to survive infancy. A much loved and one-year younger brother, Ernst, later died from pericarditis when Mahler was fourteen. Another, Otto, shot himself at age twenty-one. Mahler's sister, Leopoldine, died age twenty-six of a brain tumour.

There is a story that when the five-year-old Gustav was asked what he wanted to be when he grew up he replied, "A martyr." It is hardly surprising, given his experience of loss and death amongst his siblings, together with his own ontological fears of succumbing to the lottery of death, that Mahler's first major composition, *Das Klagende Lied* involves a story of fratricide and later, much to Alma's distress, he wrote *Kindertotenlieder*.

Mahler was especially close to his younger sister Justine with whom he shared an apartment in Vienna. Significantly, and in Alma's opinion too significantly indeed, Justine and Gustav, brother and sister, each married their respective spouses on consecutive days in 1902. There is a belief that up to the time of Mahler meeting Alma in 1901 Justine's extreme jealousy and possessiveness had long served to undermine her brother's capacity to forge and sustain relationships with women. That ill-feeling persisted towards her new sister-in-law for incentivising and enabling Mahler to break free from his sister's controlling reliance on him. Living as they did as a very close couple, almost marital in its breadth and mutuality barring sex, this description is plausible, yet I find the explanation rather over valued and unconvincing. Instead, I believe Mahler's own emerging attitudes towards women are far more likely to have contributed to undermining his relationships and thereby assuring them of a short stay in his life.



As I will develop later in relation to his marriage to Alma, there were early signs of the conditions he insisted his women accept. In 1894, age thirty-four and years before his marriage, Mahler wrote to his close friend, Joseph Forster: "I could not bear the sight of an untidy woman with messy hair and neglected appearance; she would have to consent to sharing my company only at certain times ... she should not take offence or interpret as disinterest, coldness, or disdain if, at times, I had no wish to see her. In a word, she would need qualities that even the best and most devoted women do not possess."

While enormously attracted to each other, Gustav and Alma were, I believe, each searching through marriage for the recovery of an unattainable and idealised object. In summary, Alma could be said to have spent much of her adolescent and adult life looking for a lost and idealised father. For Mahler it was searching for and, importantly, requiring the world to deliver, a very particular phantasised maternal object, one who would reflect a rather unreal, unworldly and wholly subordinate attitude towards the primacy of his needs and wishes, without safeguarding their own. Abject compliance and devotion were seemingly the twin conditions for knowing and being loved by Mahler.

Although the adoration of the universal feminine is strongly referenced in his later 8th, Mahler had already signalled to his close friend, Joseph Steiner, something of his mental state when, just nineteen, he

sent him a letter where Mahler's depression isn't disguised nor his search for the safety of a psychic retreat. In the letter Mahler makes unequivocally clear that he is really struggling, and thoughts of death dominate. Nowadays clinicians remain alert to the period of adolescence as the time for seeing the template of adult psychological illness.

We might wonder, too, what it meant for Mahler later on to meet the very keen on life 22-year-old Alma.

"Everything around is so bleak, and behind me the twigs of a dry and brittle existence snap. A great deal has been going on since I last wrote. But I can't tell you about it. Only this: I have become a different person; whether a better one, I don't know, anyway not a happier one. The greatest intensity of the most joyful vitality and the most consuming yearning for death dominate my heart in turn, very often alternate hour by hour - one thing I know, I can't go on like this much longer! When the abominable tyranny of our modern hypocrisy and mendacity has driven me to the point of dishonouring myself, when the inextricable web of conditions in art and life has filled my heart with disgust for all that is sacred to me - art, love, religion - what way out is there but self-annihilation? O earth, my beloved earth, when, ah, when will you give refuge to him who is forsaken, receiving him back into your womb? Behold! Mankind has cast him out, and he flees to you, to you alone! O, take him in, eternal and universal all-embracing mother, give a resting place to him who is without friend and without rest!"

In any discussion about Alma and Gustav it is not unusual for Alma to be written about in terms of "Her progress from teenage flirt to goddess" and to be portrayed pretty much as her third husband, Franz Werfel, had once described her: "One of the very few great sorceresses of our time".

In contrast and using the term coined by Allan Kozinn, Gustav has been remembered as the "Chaste Ascetic."

The discovery by Mahler scholars in 2011 of a 59-page letter, handwritten in German and called *Brief über Mahlers Lieben* by Mahler's one time very close friend Natalie Bauer-Lechner, challenges this long-held belief. According to Kozinn it: "Should bring a new dimension to a composer whose titanic symphonies and bittersweet songs have become an increasingly central part of the classical repertory over the last fifty years, but who is so often seen as an intensely brooding, introspective figure. Now he may be seen as less severe, and at times fairly randy."

Space does not permit more detail about the other women in Mahler's life before Alma but we do now know they included Marion von Weber who was married to Carl Maria von Weber's grandson, the well-known sopranos of the time Rita Michalek, Selma Kurz and Anna von Mildenburg and of course Bauer-Lechner herself who, for about ten years before his marriage to Alma, had been both friend and, some speculate, possibly one of his lovers.

Mahler's later response to the experience of losing Alma to another man is foreshadowed in Bauer-Lechner's own recollection of Mahler's reaction to the ending of his affair with Marion von Weber. Bauer-Lechner reports Mahler having lost his creativity and becoming very depressed.

Unlike Alma, Gustav's relationship with his own father is thought to have been very poor, allegedly characterised by episodes of drunken scolding and abusive behaviour while contrasting with Bernhard Mahler's palpable determination to advance his son's musical abilities. Some Mahlerian scholars believe, as did the late film-maker, Ken Russell as portrayed in his 1972 film about the composer, that Mahler's father was harsh and unfaithful in his marriage to Gustav's mother, Marie. After meeting and listening to Mahler, Freud himself arrived at the same understanding. Interestingly, Russell's film begins with Alma as a chrysalis struggling to break free from being totally encased in sticky gossamer. Russell powerfully captures her resentment towards Mahler for his self-absorption.

He has Alma, played by the actress Georgina Hale, exclaim "One day you'll stop loving your music and start loving me." Similarly, the marriage of Harriet Smithson and Hector Berlioz ended when Smithson became resentful of Berlioz' investment of time and energy in his composing and how his growing reputation distanced him from her.

As a child and adolescent, Gustav is believed to have had a compassionate and protective disposition towards his mother. Mahler himself reportedly said his parents: "belonged together like fire and water. He was all stubbornness, she gentleness herself."

When we meet with troubled couples in our consulting rooms, it is not long before we come to acquire, sometimes very vividly so, the models of marital behaviour to which as children they have been exposed. As in the transference to the therapist, we can infer concomitant identifications and behavioural templates that will have become forged and potentially repeated and enacted in their adult lives and intimate relationships.

Freud was later to discuss with Mahler his experience of being a surviving male child in a family decimated by the prevailing childhood illnesses such as diphtheria and scarlet fever. Freud seemed particularly interested in Mahler's mother and the careworn legacy that her hard and sorrowful life had bestowed on Mahler. Despite giving birth to fourteen children over a period of about twenty years and the loss of eight of her young children, all of them boys, albeit at a time when infant mortality was very common, it must have taken its toll. Nevertheless she appears to have been an extraordinarily resilient woman. Having to function within an unsupportive and seemingly loveless marriage, she somehow found the internal resources to strive to be a kind and attentive mother to her surviving children.

It is my belief that it was from his mother that Mahler will have internalised a capacity to access a particular kind of resilience in relation to loss and suffering. Despite a relatively short life suffused with multiple losses and obstacles, he was nevertheless able to embrace the language of achievement rather than dwelling in the language of blame.

In this regard his striving could be said to mirror the trajectory of psychoanalytic treatment.

In addition to the experience of death the theme of exile for Mahler was also central to much of his life. He once famously remarked: "I am three times without a country: a Bohemian among Austrians, an Austrian among Germans, and a Jew among all the peoples of the world."

Marie Mahler had a lame leg and I have heard it said that in unconscious identification with his mother's condition Mahler developed a very observable jerky gait for which he was sometimes mocked. Alma herself has been criticised since her death for multiple crimes against accuracy and in certain respects justifiably so, but narrators of the Mahler story have sometimes played their own part in exchanging the truth for spurious explanations. Nowadays it is thought that Mahler's funny walk and facial dyskinesia was more likely to be a symptom of Sydenham's chorea or what was once called St Vitus Dance. Constant bouts of childhood tonsillitis is thought to have predisposed him to rheumatic heart disease and may well have left him with a discernible but poorly understood movement disorder. His physical health and the quality of his life were undermined by various conditions including migraines, vertigo and quinsy. He was also plagued by what he preferred to call his 'subterranean troubles', the chronicity of very severe haemorrhoids for which he had previously undergone surgery. This was around the time of having to manage both the death of his father followed soon after by the decline in his mother's health and her eventual death in 1889. This saw him become depleted and in considerable pain which he attempted to manage with morphine. Some time later during another flare-up he nearly died from a hemorrhoidal haemorrhage.

A surprising feature of Mahler's life at this time was his decision (because, it was claimed, of conducting commitments in Budapest) not to attend the dying mother to whom he was devoted; and a fortnight later not to join his sister by his mother's deathbed. Marie Mahler died aged 52. Even more puzzlingly he later chose not to attend his mother's funeral; something Alma herself was to repeat by staying away from Mahler's funeral because of a migraine.

I emphasise this not so much because of the denial of a heart-breaking loss but because these states of mind of Mahler give us an early clue about his abject devotion to his conducting and composing that rendered him so rigidly uncompromising. As psychological red lines they were to become such a deleterious feature of his marriage to Alma where her needs, those of his children and his own health and wellbeing, became arrogantly subordinate to his work and high principles.

The focus of this paper excludes further elaboration of Mahler's considerable reputation as conductor and composer and the trajectory of his formidable musical gifts throughout childhood and adolescence, through to his student days at the Vienna Conservatory and later his time as Director of the Vienna Court Opera, a post achieved by the age of thirty-seven during a period overshadowed by the prevailing anti-Semitism which saw Mahler decide, quite strategically but no less significantly, to convert to Roman Catholicism.

The last years of Mahler's life were spent working in America where he conducted the New York Philharmonic. Deterioration in his health saw him return via Paris to Vienna where, following further medical investigations, arrangements were immediately made for him to be admitted to a private sanatorium. There, at midnight on 18th May 1911 (coincidentally the 28th birthday of his nemesis Walter Gropius), whilst allegedly uttering Mozart's name, Mahler died aged 51 from bacterial endocarditis.

My emphasis in this account of his and Alma's lives has been on considering the psychological legacy of the early years of two creative and very talented people for whom sadness, loss and grieving had played a significant role in their development and how it was to foreshadow their choice and experience of each other through their marriage. For the avoidance of doubt there were happy times and phases of contentment, contrasting as they did with some very bleak periods. As Belloc reminds us: "Loss and possession, death and life are one. There falls no shadow where there shines no sun".



Bernstein with Koussevitzky

### Leonard Bernstein a brief biography

Leonard Bernstein (1918-90) was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts, studied piano as a child and went on to study with Walter Piston, among others, at Harvard, graduating in 1939. At the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia he continued with the piano, and conducting under Fritz Reiner.

In 1940 at the Boston SO Summer School (now Tanglewood) he met and then became Assistant to Koussevitzky at the New York PO, where he was confirmed in that post in 1943, near the end of which he stood in at the last minute for Bruno Walter for a nationally broadcast concert which established his credentials.

For more than a decade he held a variety of posts - marrying the actress and pianist Felicia Montealegre in 1951 - culminating in his appointment as Music Director of the NYPO in 1958, a post he held until 1961 when he became its Conductor Laureate, making more than half of his 800 recordings with it.

Throughout his life Bernstein was a world figure: he established a lifelong relationship with Israel in 1947; was the first American to conduct at Teatro alla Scala (Cherubini's *Medea* with Callas); developed a lifelong friendship with Copland (recording most of his work); and he championed American music.

Although he performed and recorded most of the standard repertoire he will be best remembered for his recordings of Haydn, Beethoven, Schumann, Brahms, Sibelius and Mahler.

He recorded two complete Mahler cycles, the first largely with the NYPO in the 1960s for CBS (now Sony) and the second with the VPO for DG in the 1980s.

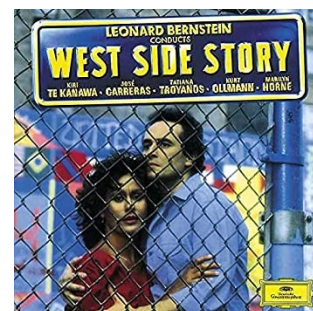
His first major composition, inspired by his Jewish roots, was his *Jeremiah* Symphony (1943); then came his *Age of Anxiety* Symphony (1949); followed much later by the *Kaddish* (1963) dedicated to JFK.

Of his many other works, he will best be remembered for: *Trouble in Tahiti* (1952); *On The Waterfront* (1954); *Candide* (with Wilbur, Hellman et al 1956); *West Side Story* (1960); *Chichester Psalms* (1965); *A Quiet Place* (1980); and *Missa Brevis* (1988).

He won 11 'Emmies', a Lifetime Achievement 'Grammy', he gave the now legendary Charles Eliot Norton Lectures in 1972-3 (including his striking characterisation of Mahler's 9th as a representation of the death of tonality) and he conducted concerts on both sides of the Berlin Wall as it was being dismantled at the end of 1989.

Often a controversial figure, both for his radical political views and his lifestyle (he was a chain-smoking bisexual), he was a universally recognisable figure who widened the appeal of 'classical' music, particularly among the young.

While much of his conducting of 20th-century music was vigorous, he often stretched his interpretations, notably of Mahler slow movements, to the limit to such an extent that he almost became a self-parody in his later recordings.



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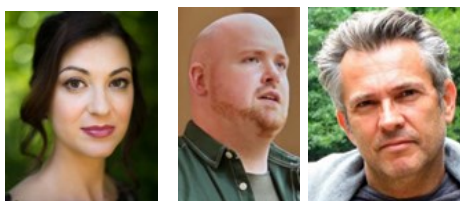
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\*Photographs by Gerard Collett, Matthew Bennett, Elaine Bryce

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