

**GUSTAV MAHLER: A STUDY
OF HIS PERSONALITY AND
WORK. TRANSLATED FROM
THE GERMAN**

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Gustav Mahler: A Study of His Personality and Work. Translated from the German by Paul Stefan & T. E. Clark

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PAUL STEFAN & T. E. CLARK

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A Study of His Personality and Work

BY

PAUL STEFAN

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY

T. E. CLARK

NEW YORK : G. SCHIRMER

To
OSKAR FRIED

WHOSE GREAT PERFORMANCES OF MAHLER'S WORKS
ARE SHINING POINTS IN BERLIN'S MUSICAL
LIFE, AND ITS MUSICIANS' MOST SPLENDID
REMEMBRANCES, THIS TRANSLATION
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BERLIN, *Summer of 1912.*

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The present translation was undertaken by the writer some two years ago, on the appearance of the first German edition. Oskar Fried had made known to us in Berlin the overwhelming beauty of Mahler's music, and it was intended that the book should pave the way for Mahler in England. From his appearance there, we hoped that his genius as man and musician would be recognised, and also that his example would put an end to the intolerable existing chaos in reproductive music-making, wherein every quack may succeed who is unscrupulous enough and wealthy enough to hold out until he becomes "popular." The English musician's prayer was: "God preserve Mozart and Beethoven until the right man comes," and this man would have been Mahler.

Then came Mahler's death with such appalling suddenness for our youthful enthusiasm. Since that tragedy, "young" musicians suddenly find themselves a generation older, if only for the reason that the responsibility of continuing Mahler's ideals now rests upon their shoulders in dead earnest. The work, in England and elsewhere, will now fall to others. Progress will be slow at first, but the way is clear and there are those who are strong enough to walk in Mahler's footsteps.

The future of Mahler's compositions is as certain as that his ideals will live; and it is perhaps they that concern the musical public most. In Germany their greatness is scarcely disputed to-day amongst musicians. Goethe distinguishes two kinds of music, that which aims at external perfection of texture, and that which strives to satisfy intelligence, sensibility and perception; and he adds that "without question, the

union of these two characters does and must take place in the greatest works of the greatest masters." The opinion is irresistibly gaining ground that in modern music the two composers who have attained this limit of perfection are Beethoven and Mahler.

It is therefore in the highest degree agreeable to the writer that this translation, in its present extended form, appear with a purpose worthy of it; not merely as a work of propaganda for a musician, however great, but as an extremely valuable psychological essay on Mahler's music as a whole, and as a history (in the best sense of the word) of some of the most heroic deeds that have been performed during the development of modern art. It tells, in short, "what manner of man" Mahler was.

The book has been specially revised for the present issue and many additions have been made since the appearance of the fourth German edition—the most important being concerning the Ninth Symphony, which was first heard in Vienna in June last, *i. e.*, since the latest German edition was published.

Notes have been added in a few cases where certain names might be unfamiliar to those not versed in the more "tendential" aspects of German artistic life.

Lastly, may I be allowed here to thank my friend Dr. Paul Stefan for permission to translate his admirable work, and for the valuable intercourse with him the translating of it has procured me.

FOREWORD TO THE THIRD GERMAN EDITION

In September, 1911, this book went its way for the second time—the first time since Mahler's death.

I wrote, "he is dead." But my book referred to the living man, and I never thought it would so soon be otherwise. It has done its work for the living Mahler. Must it hardly a year later "appraise" his now completed work?

It is called "appraisal," and this is demanding something I cannot do—measuring and weighing up. For I know I should say little that would be different. The past time is too near and sticks too fast in our remembrance. And for the moment I do not wish merely to patch up. . . . So I have only added an account of the last year of his life. Faults and omissions remain.

This third time I was clearer and more composed. I renewed, improved and completed as well as I could. But the nature of the book remains unchanged. The many things that still are to be said, and that perhaps will soon be to say, about Mahler as man and artist, demand a new and larger work. The limits of this study are clear. It is still not critical, but the loud call of an enthusiast to enthusiasts. Many have followed it. So I call once again. In the name of one who will for all time awaken enthusiasm.

February the 12th, 1912.

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MAHLER'S SIGNIFICANCE

THE MAN, THE ARTIST, AND HIS ART

From Meister Raro's, Florestan's and Eusebius's Notebook of Things and Thoughts:

"Intelligence errs, but not sensibility."

Let no one expect to find in this book a "Biography," as was prophesied during Mahler's lifetime—by some in a friendly spirit, by many in mockery. As the work took form, Mahler stood in the zenith of his power, but also in the zenith of his right: the right neither to limit nor to divide himself in his intentions, his right not to be trammelled by "consistencies." His life was not one that obtruded itself on others, rather one that strove towards a given goal; a modest and hidden life, like that of the old masters of our art, a matter-of-fact life, as has been well said, a life in the world *versus* the world. And even to-day, now that it has ended, we still think of it as his contemporaries. We have not yet outgrown this feeling, and the figure of the man Mahler still vibrates in our memory, so that no calm for viewing and reviewing has come to us. What if it never should come? To survey calmly a volcano! Or, at any rate, not at once. One thing is certain, calmness is for the present not our affair. Our aim is simply to retain for a moment the last flaming reflection of this life, and my book may be called a biography only inasmuch as in describing that of Gustav Mahler it strikes sparks of life itself. It will often speak in images, for this is the only way we have of speaking about music, itself an image of presentiments and secrets