

1 Script for NYP 18-08: Maazel farewell

2 By MT

3 (INSERT NATIONAL UNDERWRITING CREDIT #1)

4 (AMBIENCE UP AND UNDER)

5 (THEME MUSIC UP AND UNDER TO "X")

6 AB: *...and this week:*

7 (MUSIC)

8 AB: *...we hear the Symphony No. 8 by Gustav Mahler.*

9 *This is Alec Baldwin. Please stay tuned, now,*
10 *as our Mahler cycle continues. This time,*
11 *we'll revisit Lorin Maazel's final concert as*
12 *Music Director of the New York Philharmonic*
13 *from June, 2009. It's music of Olympian*
14 *proportions...on the New York Philharmonic This*
15 *Week.*

16 (PAUSE)

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20 VO: *"I have just finished my Eighth [Symphony]! It*
21 *is the greatest thing I have as yet done. And*
22 *it is so individual in content and form that I*
23 *cannot describe it in words. Imagine that the*
24 *whole universe begins to sound in tone. The*
25 *result is not merely human voices singing, but*
26 *a vision of planets and suns coursing about."*

27 AB: So wrote Gustav Mahler to his friend and
28 colleague, conductor Willem Mengelberg in 1906,
29 concerning the composer's 8th symphony. The
30 late Lorin Maazel also weighed in with a few
31 thoughts of his own concerning this piece:

32 (ACTUALITY 01: maazel re 8th)

33 VO: **Mr. Maazel also spoke about his relationship to**
34 **Mahler's music during the course of his long**
35 **career:**

36 (ACTUALITY 02)

37 VO: **Lorin Maazel indeed had a long association with**
38 **the music of Mahler—one that began while he was**
39 **still in his teens:**

40 (ACTUALITY 03)

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42 VO: Mr. Maazel's view of Mahler as an individual
43 was also somewhat unusual. To those who prefer
44 to think of the composer as some dour,
45 emotionally unstable, and fragile figure, Mr.
46 Maazel offered these words to the contrary:

47 (ACTUALITY 05: maazel re mahler being stable)

48 VO: ...and this "Olympian view of Man," as Mr.
49 Maazel called it, is perhaps nowhere more
50 clearly expressed than Mahler's 8th Symphony.

51 VO: Though completed in the summer of 1907, Mahler
52 actually withheld his 8th symphony from
53 publication and public performance for three
54 years. It was not until 1910 that he finally
55 yielded to an increasingly curious world of
56 musicians and, as biographer Gabriel Engel
57 stated, "*the unceasing prayers of his concert*
58 *representative Emil Guttman*," thus allowing
59 the 8th Symphony to receive its premiere.

60 It was decided that Munich would be the staging
61 ground for the premiere and choral rehearsals
62 were begun in earnest. With Mahler still in
63 America, Guttman was charged with getting
64 everything in order. Mahler wrote to Guttman
65 that he felt the project had zero chance of
66 success and pleaded with him to abandon it.

67 But Guttmann persevered and, at length, Mahler
68 was informed that rehearsals were ready for his
69 final, formative touches. Mahler traveled to
70 Munich, expecting the worst...but discovering,
71 almost to his chagrin, that everything was
72 indeed in order.

73 So...on September 12, 1910, Mahler conducted an
74 orchestra comprising 171 members and a chorus
75 of 858 in the world premiere of this Symphony
76 No. 8 in E-flat major. Now often called, "The
77 Symphony of a Thousand," the piece was the
78 greatest and perhaps only unqualified success
79 of Mahler's life.

80 (MUSIC SWELLS)

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88 VO: Because the human voice plays such an important
89 role in the structure of the 8th symphony, it's
90 vital to have good singers and Mr. Maazel and
91 the New York Philharmonic did not disappoint in
92 the cast they assembled. We'll hear sopranos
93 Christine Brewer, Nancy Gustafson, and Jeanine
94 de Bique; mezzo-sopranos Mary Philips and Nancy
95 Maultsby, tenor Anthony Dean Griffey, bass
96 Wolfgang Schöne and bass-baritone Jason Grant.
97 Also featured are the New York Choral Artists;
98 the Desoff Symphonic Choir; and the Brooklyn
99 Youth Chorus.

100 One can hardly call the Mahler 8th a symphony
101 in the classic sense of the word...yet Part I can
102 be analyzed according to the classic sonata
103 form. In Part II, there's a discernable
104 Adagio, Scherzo, and Finale too, albeit in a
105 modernized sense. To present a detailed
106 analysis of this work would be impossible in
107 the time we have together; this is the kind of
108 thing on which musicology doctoral students
109 base their dissertations. However, we can
110 present some general highlights:

111 (MUSIC)

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113 VO: As you might have inferred by now, Mahler's 8th
114 Symphony is divided into two parts. Part I is
115 a musical setting of the ancient Latin hymn,
116 *Veni, Creator spiritus*. In English, the first
117 stanza reads:

118 *Come, Creator Spirit,*
119 *visit the minds of your people,*
120 *fill with grace from on high*
121 *the hearts which Thou didst create.*

122 VO: The first section opens with a choral statement
123 of the main theme. Here's the original hymn as
124 sung by the Benedictine Monks of Santo Domingo
125 de Silos:

126 (Veni chant)

127 VO: And here's how Mahler treats it in the opening
128 measures of the 8th Symphony:

129 (VIII: i)

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133 VO: Part II of the 8th Symphony is based on
134 Gretchen's transfiguration scene from the
135 second part of Goethe's Faust. One need not
136 have an advanced degree in philosophy to be
137 able to trace a connection between the pleading
138 of the *Veni, Creator spriritus* and the "eternal
139 feminine" of Goethe. Following the various
140 sections of the 2nd part, we have the mighty
141 Finale. This section is dominated by the
142 sentiment, "*the Woman Soul leadeth us upward*
143 *and on.*" Most critics and musicologists agree
144 that to Mahler--this represents the fulfillment
145 of the Creator Spiritus or "Spiritual Creator."

146 (MUSIC)

147 VO: While the 8th Symphony was billed--against the
148 composer's wishes--as the *Symphony of a Thousand*
149 in reference to the forces it employs...it has
150 also been called "the true ode to joy" in
151 reference to the Choral movement of Beethoven's
152 9th symphony. By uniting Christian mysticism
153 with pagan pantheism, the 8th Symphony seems to
154 proclaim a message of universal love and faith.
155 Soprano Nancy Gustafson, who portrayed Gretchen
156 in this concert, shared these thoughts:

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158 (ACTUALITY: Gustafson)

159 (MUSIC)

160 VO: Let's pause here for station ID. When we
161 return, we'll hear Mahler's Eighth Symphony
162 without interruption. I'm Alec Baldwin and
163 you're listening to The New York Philharmonic
164 This Week.

165 (ID)

166 VO: And now we hear the Symphony No. 8 by Mahler.
167 Lorin Maazel conducts...The New York
168 Philharmonic.

169 (MUSIC)

170 VO: The final notes that Lorin Maazel conducted as
171 Music Director of the New York Philharmonic.
172 We just heard his Grand Finale concert from
173 June, 2009, featuring the Symphony No. 8 by
174 Gustav Mahler. Joining the orchestra for the
175 broadcast were sopranos Christine Brewer, Nancy
176 Gustafson, and Jeanine de Bique; mezzo-sopranos
177 Mary Philips and Nancy Maultsby, tenor Anthony
178 Dean Griffey, bass Wolfgang Schöne and bass-
179 baritone Jason Grant. Also featured were the
180 New York Choral Artists; the Dessoff Symphony
181 Choir; and the Brooklyn Youth Chorus.

182 VO: That concert, as well as the entirety of Lorin
183 Maazel's Mahler Cycle with the New York
184 Philharmonic is still commercially available
185 wherever you purchase digital music. You, of
186 course, can learn more when you visit the
187 orchestra's website, nyphil.org

188 VO: Lorin Maazel passed away in July 2014, but we
189 are thankful to have recordings such as this
190 one to remind us just how powerful and
191 imaginative he was on the podium. He often
192 said that it was ALWAYS an honor and privilege
193 to conduct the New York Philharmonic. I think
194 we can say, in turn, that it will always be an
195 honor and privilege to hear him do so.

196 END