

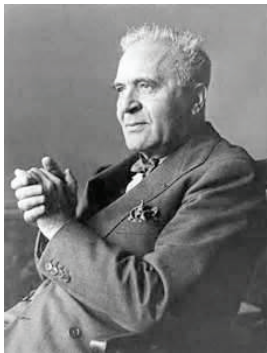
Bruno Walter (born Bruno Schlessinger, September 15, 1876 – February 17, 1962) was a German-born conductor, pianist, and composer. Born in Berlin, he left Germany in 1933 to escape the Third Reich, settling finally in the United States in 1939. He worked closely with Gustav Mahler, whose music he helped establish in the repertory, held major positions with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Salzburg Festival, Vienna State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Staatsoper Unter den Linden and Deutsche Oper Berlin, among others, made recordings of historical and artistic significance, and is widely considered one of the great conductors of the 20th century.

Born near Alexanderplatz in Berlin to a middle-class Jewish family, he began his musical education at the Stern Conservatory at the age of eight, making his first public appearance as a pianist when he was nine; he performed a concerto movement with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1889 and a full concerto with them in February, 1890. He studied composition at Stern with Robert Radeke de:Robert Radecke, and remained active as a composer until about 1910 (see list of compositions below). But it was seeing an 1889 concert by the Berlin Philharmonic led by Hans von Bülow, he wrote, that "decided my future. Now I knew what I was meant for. No musical activity but that of an orchestral conductor could any longer be considered by me. He made his conducting début at the Cologne Opera with Albert Lortzing's *Der Waffenschmied* in 1894. Later that year he left for the Hamburg Opera to work as a chorus director.

There he first met and worked with Gustav Mahler, whom he revered and with whose music he later became strongly identified. Conducting in 1896, he was appointed Kapellmeister of the Stadttheater (municipal opera) in Breslau, on the strength of a recommendation from Mahler to the theater's director, Theodor Löwe. However, Löwe required that before taking up this position the young conductor change his last name from Schlessinger, which literally means Silesian, "because of its frequent occurrence in the capital of Silesia". In a letter to his brother paraphrased by Erik Ryding and Rebecca Pechefsky, Walter said he had "suggested several names, which Mahler wrote down and gave to Löwe, who returned the contract with the name Bruno Walter. These biographers add that Walter wrote to his parents that he found that "having to change his name was 'terrible,'" ; they report that Mahler and his sisters "pressed" Walter to make the change of name, and add that, contrary to occasional unsubstantiated reports, it "is unknown" whether Löwe's stipulation had anything to do with a desire to conceal Walter's Jewish origins.

In 1897, Walter became Chief Conductor at the municipal opera in Pressburg. He found the town provincial and depressing, and in 1898 took the position of Chief Conductor of the Riga Opera, Latvia. While there, he converted to Christianity, probably Roman Catholicism. In 1899 Walter was appointed music director of the Temeswar, Austria-Hungary (now Timisoara, Romania) Opera. Walter then returned in 1900 to Berlin, where he assumed the post of Royal Prussian Conductor at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden, succeeding Franz Schalk; his colleagues there included Richard Strauss and Karl Muck. While in Berlin he also conducted the premiere of *Der arme Heinrich* by Hans Pfitzner, who became a lifelong friend.

In 1901, Walter accepted Mahler's invitation to be his assistant at the Court Opera in Vienna. Walter led Verdi's *Aida* at his debut. In 1907 he was elected by the Vienna Philharmonic to conduct its Nicolai Concert. In 1910, he helped Mahler select and coach solo singers for the premiere of Mahler's *Symphony No. 8*. In the following years Walter's conducting reputation soared as he was invited to conduct across Europe – in Prague, in London where in 1910 he conducted *Tristan und Isolde* and Ethel Smyth's *The Wreckers* at Covent Garden, and in Rome. When Mahler died on May 18, 1911, Walter was at his deathbed. On June 6, he wrote to his sister that he was to conduct the premiere of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, he did so in Munich on November 20, 1911, in the first half of an all-Mahler concert (the second half contained Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* (Mahler) On June 26, 1912 he led the Vienna Philharmonic in the world premiere of Mahler's *Symphony No. 9*.



Dvorak Symphony No. 8

Bruno Walter

Columbia Symphony Orchestra



HIGH DEFINITION TAPE TRANSFERS



The Symphony No. 8 in G major, Op. 88, B. 163, is a symphony by Antonín Dvořák, composed in 1889 at Vysoká u Příbramě, Bohemia, on the occasion of his election to the Bohemian Academy of Science, Literature and Arts. Dvořák conducted the premiere in Prague on 2 February 1890. In contrast to other symphonies of both the composer and the period, the music is cheerful and optimistic.

Dvořák composed and orchestrated the symphony within the two-and-a-half-month period from 26 August to 8 November 1889 at his summer resort in Vysoká u Příbramě, Bohemia. The score was composed on the occasion of his admission to Prague Academy and dedicated "To the Bohemian Academy of Emperor Franz Joseph for the Encouragement of Arts and Literature, in thanks for my election." Dvořák conducted the premiere in Prague on 2 February 1890. Dvořák tried to achieve a marked difference to his Symphony No. 7, a stormy romantic work: "different from the other symphonies, with individual thoughts worked out in a new way". The Eighth is cheery and lyrical and draws its inspiration more from the Bohemian folk music that Dvořák loved.

The Eighth Symphony is performed fairly frequently, but not nearly as often as the more famous Ninth Symphony ("From the New World"). In this regard it enjoys a similar status to the Seventh Symphony.

Structure and scoring

The work is scored for 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (1st doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings.

The orchestration of piccolo and English Horn is unusual in this symphony. The piccolo only sustains a long note in unison with the flute at the exposition of the 1st movement and the English Horn only plays a short, but exposed phrase during the second recapitulation of the main "bird call" theme, also in the 1st movement. In some editions the 2nd oboe doubles on English horn rather than the 1st oboe as indicated in most scores.

Dvořák's summer residence, where he composed the symphony. Dvořák kept the typical format of a symphony in four movements, but structured them in an unusual way. All movements show a remarkable variety of themes, many of them based on Bohemian material. Occasionally the development of the themes seems like improvisation.

The first movement is a powerful and glowing exposition characterized by liberal use of timpani. It opens with a lyrical G minor theme in the cellos, horns, clarinets and bassoon with trombones, violas and double basses pizzicato. This gives way

to a "bird call" flute melody, reaching the symphony's key G major. Writing about a performance by the National Symphony Orchestra, Peter Laki notes that the development section "works up quite a storm." In the recapitulation, the second main theme is played by the English horn, two octaves lower than in the exposition. The movement ends with a "short but very energetic coda". Despite being marked Adagio, the second movement moves along at quite a reasonable speed. It begins with a typically beautiful clarinet duet and ends quietly, but contentedly. Similar to Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, the music is inspired by the tranquil landscapes, depicting a summer's day, interrupted by a thunderstorm.

Most of the third movement is a melancholy waltz in 3/8 time. Near the end, the meter changes to 2/4, and the music ends in a manner not unlike that of the second movement. It is interesting to notice that the first notes of the Trio section (G major) are used in the Coda in 2/4. The movement is not the typical minuet or scherzo, but compares as an "intermezzo" to the third movements of the First and Second Symphony by Brahms. In contrast to the "sweet and languid waltz" of the first theme, the second, "functioning as a "trio," sounds more like a Bohemian folk dance".

The finale, formally a "complex theme-and-variations", is the most turbulent movement. It begins with a fanfare of trumpets. Conductor Rafael Kubelik said in a rehearsal: "Gentlemen, in Bohemia the trumpets never call to battle – they always call to the dance!" The music progresses to a beautiful melody which is first played by the cellos. The tension is masterfully built and finally released at approximately two minutes into the piece, with a cascade of instruments triumphantly playing the initial theme at a somewhat faster pace. A central contrasting episode is derived from the main theme. From there the movement compellingly progresses through a tempestuous middle section, modulating from major to minor several times throughout. After a return to the slow, lyrical section, the piece ends on a chromatic coda, in which brass and timpani are greatly prominent. Laki summarises: "Dvořák's handling of form is indebted to Beethoven and Brahms, but he filled out the form with melodies of an unmistakably Czech flavor and a joviality few composers at the time possessed. The variations vary widely in character: some are slower and some are faster in tempo, some are soft (such as the virtuosic one for solo flute), and some are noisy; most are in the major mode, though the central one, reminiscent of a village band, is in the minor. The music is always cheerful and optimistic."

Dvorak

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- 1. Allegro con brio 9:57**
- 2. Adagio 9:13**
- 3. Allegretto grazioso – Molto vivace 5:56**
- 4. Allegro ma non troppo 10:17**

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