

Maurice Abravanel The state of Utah became a flourishing classical music scene thanks to the efforts of Maurice Abravanel, who served as music director of the Utah Symphony for 32 years starting in 1947. Although his peers might have looked at a posting in Utah as death in the boondocks, to Abravanel it was an opportunity to accomplish his dream of building up a permanent symphony orchestra of his own in a part of the world that was sorely lacking such a resource. Doing this meant turning down a lucrative contract with Radio City Music Hall, and even working without pay during the orchestra's most extreme periods of financial struggle.

Other Abravanel activities outside of Mormon territory included directing the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, CA, from 1956 through 1979. In 1981 he was appointed an artist-in-residence for life at Tanglewood. He served on the National Council of the Arts from 1970 through 1976, and received the American Symphony Orchestra League's Golden Baton Award in 1981. In 1970, he became a member of the first music panel of the National Endowment for the Arts. He received a Tony Award for Regina and Grammy nominations for some of the more than 100 recordings with the Utah Symphony, many of which are considered classics.

Jerome Lowenthal (born February 11, 1932 in Philadelphia) is an American classical pianist. He is chair of the piano department at the Juilliard School in New York. Additionally, Lowenthal is on the faculty at Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, California.

He made his debut at 13 with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Returning to the United States from Jerusalem in 1963, he made his debut with the New York Philharmonic, playing Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 2. Since then, he has performed with famous conductors such as Daniel Barenboim, Seiji Ozawa, Michael Tilson Thomas, Yuri Temirkanov, Leonard Slatkin, Leonard Bernstein, Eugene Ormandy, Pierre Monteux, and Leopold Stokowski. He has played sonatas with Itzhak Perlman, piano duos with Ronit Amir, his late wife and Ursula Oppens, as well as quintets with the Lark Quartet, Avalon Quartet, and Shanghai Quartet.

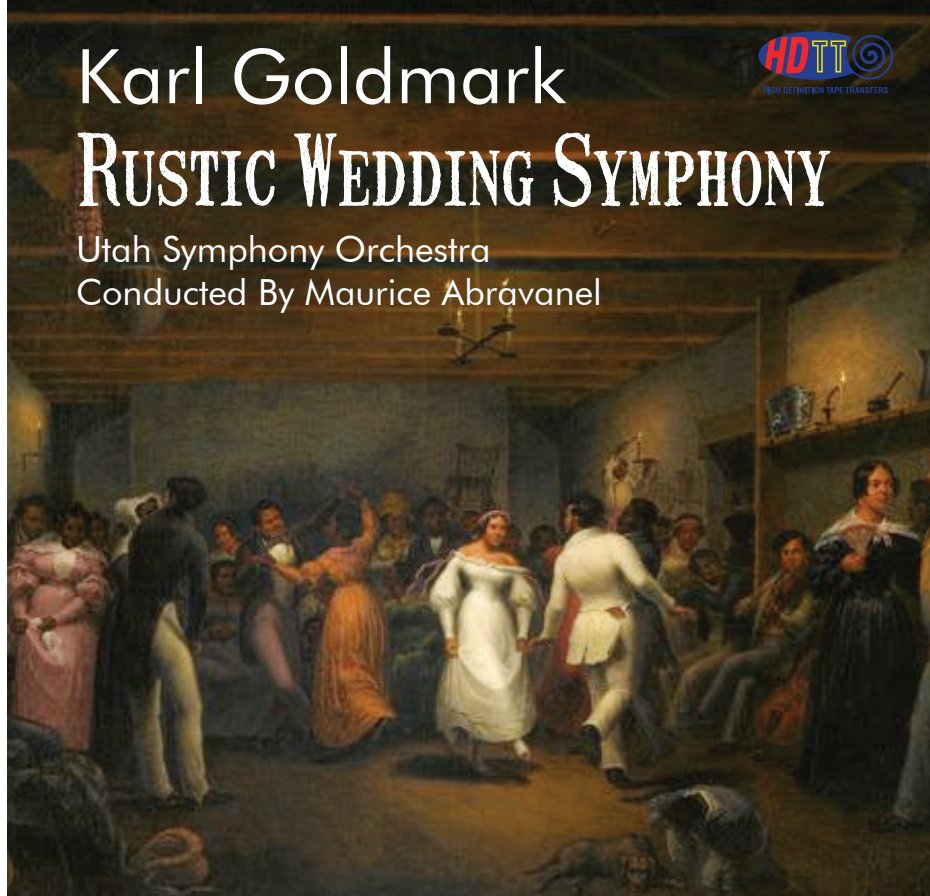
His studies included lessons with Olga Samaroff in Philadelphia, William Kapell and Eduard Steuermann at the Juilliard School in New York, and Alfred Cortot at the École Normale de Musique de Paris in Paris, France. A prizewinner at Queen Elisabeth Music Competition in Brussels (1960) and Busoni Competition, he is a frequent judge in international piano competitions.

He is recognized as a specialist of Franz Liszt, Pyotr Tchaikovsky, Béla Bartók, and more generally of virtuoso and late romantic music. His recordings include piano concertos by Liszt with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and the complete Tchaikovsky concerto cycle with the London Symphony Orchestra. He has an extensive repertoire, including 59 performed piano concerti. He is the dedicatee of many new works, such as Ned Rorem's Piano Concerto (No. 3) in Six Movements, and has unearthed some rare romantic piano works, such as the Liszt Third Piano Concerto edited by his former student Jay Rosenblatt.

Karl Goldmark

RUSTIC WEDDING SYMPHONY

Utah Symphony Orchestra
Conducted By Maurice Abravanel



Karl Goldmark's Rustic Wedding Symphony, as it's usually called (even though it's cast in five movements rather than four, none of them even hinting at sonata form), hovers just at the edge of the standard repertory. It has been performed by the likes of Arturo Toscanini and Leonard Bernstein and is full of sensitively orchestrated, audience-pleasing tunes. Perhaps it could find a secure place in the concert hall if it were considered a Viennese counterpart to Smetana's *Má Vlast* -- except that instead of roaring through epic, nationalist tales, Goldmark focuses on a simple country wedding to illustrate the cheerful and warm aspects of the complex Austrian character. The first movement, "Wedding March," is a series of variations on a bumptious, folk-like (but original) tune first heard in the low strings and soon embroidered with perky woodwind birdcalls. Each variation emphasizes a different group of instruments and brings a different but almost always festive character to the theme, except for a long, heartfelt, ultimately surging, and passionate section featuring the strings and minor key variations that foreshadow the more serious episodes in Elgar's *Enigma Variations*. The variations triumphantly end and the movement's overall effect and atmosphere are similar to Brahms' *Variations on a Theme by Haydn*; not coincidentally, Brahms admired

this symphony. Next comes an intermezzo titled "Bridal Song." It begins with a gently playful, hesitant yet graceful melody; a short, brassy outburst ushers in a sweet, understated second subject. After the opening material repeats, a third, more serious theme arrives with the initial melody returning for a shy conclusion. The third movement, though marked Scherzo, is not the beefy sort of scherzo common since Beethoven, and although its alternate title is "Serenade," it's not very song-like. Again, the mood is playful and perky, and the trio section is happily bucolic. Goldmark sometimes puts a drone under the woodwind writing to emphasize the music's "rustic" character. "In the Garden" is a delicate andante, suggesting a loving, private *al fresco* conversation -- and perhaps more -- between the bride and groom. The long, ardent principal melody quietly begins, but very slowly builds to an ardent climax and recedes. The rest of the movement develops from fragments of this melody, handed gently from one group of instruments to another, with some episodes turning especially passionate. The finale is simply called "Dance." Fast and sometimes percussive, the movement vacillates between fugue and polka; the latter takes over, but not without a remembrance of "In the Garden" halfway through.

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- 1 Hochzeitsmarch (Wedding March, Variationen 15:27
- 2 Brautlied (Bridal Song) Intermezzo 4:08
- 3 Serenade, Scherzo 4:58
- 4 Im Garten (In the Garden), Andante 8:25
- 5 Tanz (Dance), Finale 8:17
- Total Time: 41:15

Transferred from a 15ips 2-track tape Recorded by Vanguard Records 1962



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