

Bruno Walter (born Bruno Schlesinger, 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.

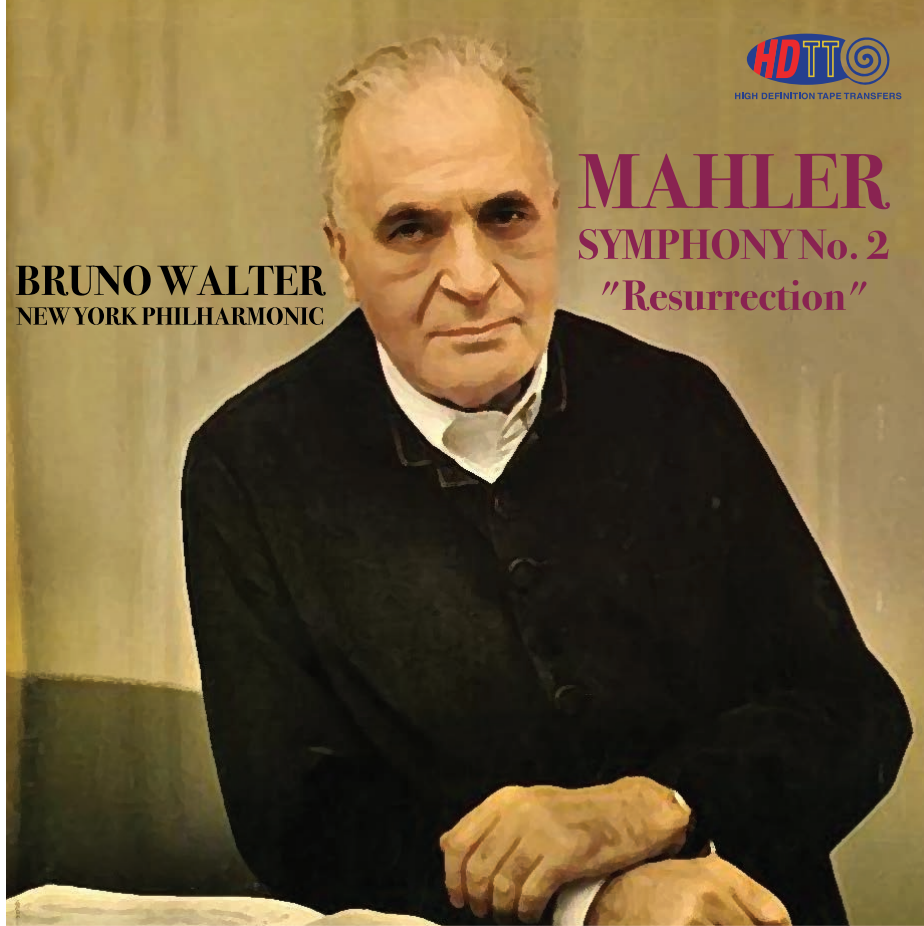
Born near Alexanderplatz in Berlin to a middle-class Jewish family, he began his musical education at the Stern Conservatory at the age of eight, making his first public appearance as a pianist when he was nine; he performed a concerto movement with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1889 and a full concerto 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 debut 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 Schlesinger, 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*.



BRUNO WALTER NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC



MAHLER SYMPHONY No. 2 "Resurrection"

Mahler's Second Symphony represents a step in the direction of expansion from the First. Its enormous resources -- huge orchestra, soprano and alto soloists, chorus, and organ, as well as its epic theme of death and resurrection -- represent Mahler at the pinnacle of his earlier heaven-storming style and aesthetic. The transformative theme employed here will eventually become the common thread of every subsequent symphony. It is quintessential Mahler and covers a vast panorama of style and emotion, culminating in one of the most breathtaking and moving conclusions in the symphonic repertory.

Just like the First Symphony, Mahler's Second began life as a single-movement tone poem, *Todtenfeier* (Funeral Rites). At one time Mahler commented that this tone poem represented the funeral of the hero from his First Symphony. Sometime in 1893 Mahler decided to expand *Todtenfeier* into a symphony. He began by composing an *Andante* and expanding his recently composed Wunderhorn song *Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt* (Antony of Padua's Sermon to the Fish) into an orchestral scherzo. At this point Mahler struggled to find a sufficiently powerful ending to balance the already massive symphonic torso. He solved the problem when he discovered Klopstock's chorale *Resurrection*. Having created the progression from the death of *Todtenfeier*, now the first movement, to the resurrection theme of the *Finale*, Mahler bridged the gap with another Wunderhorn song, "*Urlicht*" (Primeval Light). He used this song entire, with voice, and excluded it from the published collection of Wunderhorn Songs. The structure was now complete. It is the crowning glory of Mahler's earlier works and his most popular

composition.

Allegro maestoso. This massive and unusual movement is in a hugely expanded sonata form. The sharp contrast between the funeral march material and the hymn-like lyrical second subject set the theme for the entire symphony.

Andante moderato. The dance structure alternates a folk-like and melodic *Ländler* with two more agitated Trios. The *Ländler*, according to Mahler's original program, represents the "image of a long-dead hour of Happiness," while the Trios recall death. In *ruhig fließender Bewegung* (Quietly Flowing). This movement carries the same theme as the song from which it is derived -- the futility and pointlessness of life. The St. Antony song pervades the main sections, while the Trios represent, respectively false joy and sentiment.

"*Urlicht*." In a subtle breakthrough, Mahler does a complete spiritual reversal on the preceding sardonic Scherzo. "*Urlicht*" is a rapt hymn of deep beauty, powerful enough in its brevity to change the bitter mood of what has come so far to the latent hope of what will follow.

Im Tempo des Scherzos. Wild herausfahrend. (In Scherzo tempo, Wildly driven). The opening is a "cry of disgust" for the plight of humankind, but shortly gives way to a spacious and haunting evocation of nature and the last trumpet awakening the dead. This is expanded into a typical march that culminates in a return to the "cry of disgust," before finally giving way permanently to the "*Resurrection*" chorale and the triumphant conclusion.

MAHLER SYMPHONY No. 2

"Resurrection"

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- I - Allegro Maestoso 21:36
- II - Andante Moderato 10:36
- III - In Ruhig Fliessender Bewegung 10:48
- IV - "Urlicht" Sehr Feierlich, Aber Schlicht 4:10
- V - Im Tempo Des Scherzos
Kräftig - Langsam. Misterioso (Beginning) 13:28
- V - Im Tempo Des Scherzos
Kräftig - Langsam. Misterioso (Conclusion) 18:40
- Total Time: 1:19:18

Recorded by Columbia Records at the Carnegie Music Hall
February 18, 1957, February 17 & 21, 1958