

George Szell (born June 7, 1897, Budapest, Hung., Austria-Hungary died July 30, 1970, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.) Hungarian-born U.S. conductor. He made his debut as a pianist at age 11, and before his 20th birthday he had appeared with the Berlin Philharmonic as pianist, conductor, and composer. He established himself as an opera conductor in various German cities, including Berlin and Prague. When World War II broke out, he settled in the U.S., conducting at the Metropolitan Opera and then serving as musical director of the Cleveland Orchestra. There he imposed stern discipline but won his players' devotion by his own fierce dedication. Under his direction the orchestra became known for its precision in playing and was considered one of the world's finest.



MAHLER

Symphony No. 10 In F-Sharp Minor
1910 - Posthumous

WALTON

Partita For Orchestra

GEORGE SZELL / THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA



Mahler started work on his tenth symphony in July 1910 in Toblach, and ended his efforts in September. He did not complete the orchestral draft before his death at the age of 50 from a streptococcal infection of the blood.

Mahler's drafts and sketches for the Tenth Symphony comprise 72 pages of full score, 50 pages of continuous short score draft (two of which are missing), and a further 44 pages of preliminary drafts, sketches, and inserts. In the form in which Mahler left it, the symphony has five movements.

The parts in short score were usually in four staves. The designations of some movements were altered as work progressed: for example, the second movement was initially envisaged as a finale. The fourth movement was also relocated many times. Mahler then started on an orchestral draft of the symphony, which begins to bear some signs of haste after the halfway point of the first movement. He had got as far as orchestrating the first two movements and the opening 30 bars of the third movement when he had to put the work aside to make final revisions to the Ninth Symphony.

The circumstances surrounding the composition of the Tenth were highly unusual. Mahler was at the height of his compositional powers, but his personal life was in complete disarray, most recently compounded by the revelation that his young wife, Alma, had had an affair with the architect Walter Gropius. Mahler sought counseling from Sigmund Freud, and dedicated the Eighth Symphony to Alma on the verge of its successful première in Munich in a desperate attempt to repair the breach. The unsettled frame of Mahler's mind found expression in the despairing comments (many addressed to Alma) on the manuscript of the Tenth, and must have influenced its composition: on the final page of the final movement, Mahler wrote, "für dich leben! für dich sterben!" (To live for you! To die for you!) and the exclamation "Almschi!" underneath the last soaring phrase.

The instrumentation of the symphony cannot be defined precisely, owing to the

incompleteness of the orchestral draft. But the short score has occasional indications of instrumentation, and some of the orchestration may be surmised from the three movements of the orchestral draft. The probable forces include: four flutes, piccolo, four oboes, four clarinets in B and A with one doubling E, three bassoons, two contrabassoons, four horns, four trumpets, four trombones, tuba, two sets of timpani, tam-tam, large muffled military drum, harp and strings (first and second violins, violas, cellos and double basses). The surviving orchestration does not specify cor anglais (English horn) or bass clarinet, bass drum, cymbals, or triangle, although Mahler regularly used these instruments in his other symphonies.

Before the premiere performance of William Walton's Partita for Orchestra by the Cleveland Orchestra in January 1958, conductor George Szell wrote the composer requesting that he supply some explanatory program notes for the piece. Walton politely declined to write about the piece. "It is surely easier to write about a piece of creative work if there is something problematical about it," wrote Walton. "Indeed -- it seems to me -- the more problematical, the greater the flow of words. Unfortunately from this point of view, my Partita poses no problems, has no ulterior motive or meaning behind it, and makes no attempt to ponder the imponderables." Just as Walton describes, there is nothing in this work that draws particular attention to itself: it calls for standard orchestral forces, runs about 17 minutes, and the contrasts and moods employed articulate familiar expressive designs. Walton's typical nonchalance should not be taken as indifference, however; in this work, as in others, his goal is communicative expression rather than compositional innovation, and though the Partita breaks little new ground, it traverses familiar terrain gracefully and enjoyably.

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WALTON

Partita For Orchestra

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Mahler: Symphony No. 10

I. Andante 22:09

II. Purgatorio (Allegretto Moderato) 3:58

Walton: Partita For Orchestra

I. Toccata 4:39

II. Pastorale Siciliana 5:43

III. Giga Burlesca 4:48

Total Time: 41:17

Recorded by CBS Records • Released April 27, 1959



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