

Otto Klemperer, (born May 14, 1885, Breslau, Ger. [now Wrocław, Pol.]—died July 6, 1973, Zürich, Switz.), one of the outstanding German conductors of his time.

Klemperer studied in Frankfurt and Berlin and on the recommendation of Gustav Mahler was made conductor of the German National Theatre at Prague in 1907. Between 1910 and 1927 he conducted opera at Hamburg, Barmen, Strassburg, Cologne, and Wiesbaden. In 1927 he became director of the Kroll Opera in Berlin, where he expanded the repertory to include works by Paul Hindemith, Ernst Krenek, and Igor Stravinsky. He was conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra (1933–39) and of the Budapest Opera (1947–50). In his later years he was especially known for his interpretations of the symphonies of Ludwig van Beethoven, Anton Bruckner, and Mahler, as well as for his updated versions of core repertory, such as Beethoven's opera *Fidelio* (1805; revised versions 1806, 1814). At age 70 Klemperer began one of the most acclaimed periods of his career, as music director (1955–71) of the Philharmonia/New Philharmonia Orchestra in London, with which he made many recordings. His own compositions include an opera (*Das Ziel* [1915; revised 1970]), 9 string quartets, 6 symphonies, 17 pieces for voice and orchestra, and songs.

# MAHLER SYMPHONY No. 4

**Elisabeth Schwarzkopf**  
**Philharmonia Orchestra**  
**Otto Klemperer**



This symphony represents a culmination and distillation of the previous three. It is the shortest of Mahler's symphonies, with a reduced orchestra, and a style consciously archaic in its evocation of classical models. Yet it is redolent of the Wunderhorn aesthetic that imbues this entire period of Mahler's career. The entire symphony, in fact, grew out of the final movement, which Mahler originally composed for his orchestral song collection on poems from Das Knaben Wunderhorn (The Young Boys' Magic Horn). Mahler originally planned to use this song, "Das himmlische Leben" (Heavenly Life), as the Finale for his Third Symphony, but withdrew it, probably because its theme was so similar to that of the fifth movement. At any rate, the other three movements were extrapolated from this long and joyful folk song and were calculated to culminate in its childlike vision of heaven. This in part explains the relatively lighter mood of the symphony as a whole as well as its tendency toward a more classical balance in its style, proportions, and scoring. In spite of the greater popularity of the Second Symphony, which in some ways is more typically Mahlerian, the Fourth Symphony, although lacking the barn-storming climaxes and extremes of emotion, was his best composition to date and entirely more refined and subtle in expression and technique.

Bedächtig. Nicht eilen. (Moderately, not rushed). From the very outset we have Mahler's evocation of nature, with sleigh bells and bird calls leading into a flirtatious melody, so unlike the pretentious horns of the Third. There are dark moments later in the movement, but they

appear as if through the veil of childhood's vision, unreal and imagined. The movement is in a clear sonata form.

In gemächlicher Bewegung. (Leisurely moving). This was originally called "Freund Hein spielt auf" (Friend Hein strikes up), representing a sinister character out of German folklore roughly analogous to the "Pied Piper." His fiddle (as opposed to a pipe) is brilliantly depicted by Mahler with the use of a violin purposely tuned a full step up to give it a fiddle sound. The movement itself is a wryly grotesque Scherzo alternating with more earthy Ländler-like Trios.

Ruhevoll. (Peacefully). Beginning as a gentle lullaby, the principal form of the movement is an alternation of this peaceful opening with a more searching and anguished theme. An impassioned variant of this theme leads to a series of brief variations in quickening tempos followed by a reprise of the opening. A sudden and ecstatic climax ensues and leads directly to the quiet coda.

Sehr behaglich. (Comfortably). The song for soprano is "Das himmlische Leben," and depicts a child's view of heaven in this folk-like setting. Ingenuous melodies alternate with a hymnlike stanza representing the child's occasional awe. An animated interlude that recurs between many of the stanzas is the source for the opening of the first movement, but in the symphonic context it functions as a cyclic reference backward to that movement.

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- 1 Heiter, Bedächtig. Nicht Eilen. 17:56
  - 2 In Gemächlicher Bewegung. Ohne Hast. 9:58
  - 3 Ruhevoll 18:09
  - 4 Sehr Behaglich
- ("Wir Genießen Die Himmlischen Freuden" From Des Knaben Wunderhorn) 8:50

Recording Info: Recorded 1961, Kingsway Hall, London by EMI

Engineer - Douglas Larter, Neville Boyling    Producer - Walter Jellinek, Walter Legge



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