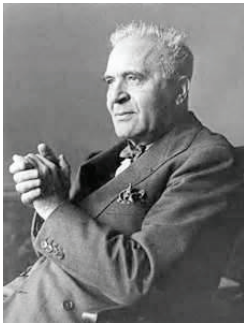


Bruno Walter (born Bruno Schlesinger, September 15, 1876 – February 17, 1962) was a German-born conductor, pianist, and composer. Born in Berlin, he left Germany in 1933 to escape the Third Reich, settling finally in the United States in 1939. He worked closely with Gustav Mahler, whose music he helped 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 Radecke 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 Waffenschmidt* 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.



MOZART

Symphony No.40 in G minor

Symphony No.41 in C major

Bruno Walter

Columbia Symphony Orchestra



Mastered in DSD256



Mozart composed his final three symphonies during the summer of 1788. His entries in the thematic catalog he maintained suggest that all were written during the space of about two months. Much critical discussion has been devoted to the reasons for their composition, for it appeared that Mozart had no specific occasion in mind for their performance. The romantic notion that he composed them without practical purpose is now widely disregarded as being out of character with Mozart's known compositional procedures, and the scholar H. C. Robbins Landon has recently advanced convincing arguments to suggest that they were in fact written for a series of concerts he gave in the fall or Advent season of 1788. Robbins Landon's argument is largely based on an undated letter written by Mozart to his principal benefactor, his fellow Freemason Michael Puchberg. In this letter he refers to his concerts which will begin "next week," concerts which scholars formerly believed never to have taken place. Evidence also supports the idea (advanced by Neal Zaslaw) that Mozart took the three symphonies on the tour he made to Germany the following year, which would further undermine the long-held notion that the composer never heard three of the greatest works in the symphonic literature performed.

One aspect of the symphonies upon which commentators reach universal agreement is their extraordinary diversity of character; each has unique qualities which together utterly explode the myth that the extreme agitation and pathos of the G minor Symphony reflected the abject circumstances in which Mozart found himself at this period. The begging letters addressed to Puchberg during these months are indeed pitiful documents that might be cited as evidence of Mozart's state of mind at the time he was composing the G minor symphony. But they will hardly do for the mellow warmth, strength and humor of E flat symphony or the elevated grandeur of the "Jupiter" Symphony. Neither should it be forgotten that the tragic qualities so often associated with the symphony today have not always been apparent to all. To Robert Schumann the symphony was a work of "Grecian lightness and grace," while for a later writer, Alfred Einstein, there are passages that "plunge to the abyss of the soul."

Such ambiguity is perhaps apt for one of the greatest works of a composer whose music so frequently defies adequate description. The symphony is cast in the usual four movements; the opening *Molto allegro* immediately announces something unusual by starting not with characteristic loud "call to attention," but with quietly spoken agitation. The uneasy passion of the main theme leads to conclusions that seem to protest rather than find any consolation. The movement's dominant feeling is urgency: upbeat after upbeat occurs. Amid great instability and a questioning aura, we experience a peek into Don Giovanni's abyss. In the finale, the horns intrude with wild swatches of color. There is even an eerie twelve-note insertion after the double bar in the *Allegro assai* section.

There are two versions of the G minor symphony. The first is modestly scored for flute and pairs of oboes, horns, and strings, but at some point shortly after composition Mozart added parts for two clarinets, slightly altering the oboe parts to accommodate them. Such second

thoughts surely also add credibility to the idea that Mozart led performances of the work -- he would hardly have bothered with such refinements if the symphony was not being used for practical purposes.

The near-quarter century that separates Mozart's first symphony and his last -- the Symphony No. 41 in C major (1788) -- was marked by the composer's recurrent, if not ongoing, interest in the possibilities inherent in this form. Upon examination of the chronology of Mozart's works, one finds that the composition of his symphonies tends to occur in irregularly spaced groups, of as many as nine or ten examples in a row, rather than regularly or singly. What this might suggest, aside from any financially based motivation, is that he employed these various periods specifically for the working out of the problems and challenges of the symphonic form. In surveying these works, one finds that the prominent benchmarks increase almost geometrically as time progresses, so that by the production of the "Jupiter" Symphony two years before his death -- as part of a group of three composed within the space of less than three months -- the full extent of the evolution which has taken place is striking indeed.

The Symphony No. 41 aptly embodies what is now identified as a paradigm of Classical symphonic form: four movements, the first and last in a quick tempo, the second slower, the third a minuet with trio. Unencumbered by norms suggested by any model, however, Mozart's deft imagination distinguishes this work from others in a similar cast. The first movement is characterized in part by the dramatic and effective employment of unexpected pauses in the rhythmic flow through the use of rests, a trait shared with and perhaps influenced by the symphonies of Haydn. After an initial regularity, irregular and changing phrase lengths contribute as well to the dramatic impetus. The serene F major quietude of the second movement's opening is soon disrupted, posed against more restless, rhythmically insistent minor-key episodes. This calm/dark conflict continues throughout, the initial spirit eventually prevailing. The falling chromatic theme and flowing, even accompaniment of the Minuet set a graceful tone for the third movement. The companion Trio provides an earthier, more overtly dancelike mood, which is, however, interrupted by a suddenly more serious tutti outburst. The final movement is exceptional for the richness of its contrapuntal language, a somewhat unexpected -- and, some of Mozart's contemporaries would venture, unfashionable -- attribute in a symphonic work of the time. The four-note motive that begins the movement is put through its paces in a number of guises, most prominently as the beginning of a recurrent canon and fugue subject which occurs both as originally presented and in inversion. The effect is one not of academicism but of great tension and dramatic impulse which, borne bristling and in search of resolution, finds its resting place only in the final bars.

MOZART

Symphony No.40 in G minor & Symphony No.41 in C major
Bruno Walter Columbia Symphony Orchestra

Symphony No. 40 In G Minor, K.550
1 Allegro Molto 6:35
2 Andante 8:45
3 Menuetto: Allegretto 5:05
4 Finale: Allegro Assal 4:55
Total Time 25:35

Symphony No. 41, In C Major, K. 551 ("Jupiter")
5 Allegro Vivace 8:45
6 Andante Cantabile 9:05
7 Menuetto 5:05
8 Finale 7:10
Total Time 30:15

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