

Bruno Walter (born Bruno Schlessinger, 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 Schlessinger, 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 Pechesky, 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.



HIGH DEFINITION TAPE TRANSFERS

SCHUBERT

SYMPHONY NO. 5 & No. 8



BRUNO WALTER

COLUMBIA SYMPHONY & NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

Franz Schubert's Symphony No. 8 in B minor, D 759 (sometimes renumbered as Symphony No. 7, in accordance with the revised Deutsch catalogue and the Neue Schubert-Ausgabe), commonly known as the Unfinished Symphony (German: *Unvollendete*), is a musical composition that Schubert started in 1822 but left with only two movements—though he lived for another six years. A scherzo, nearly completed in piano score but with only two pages orchestrated, also survives.

Schubert's Eighth Symphony is sometimes called the first Romantic symphony due to its emphasis on the lyrical impulse within the dramatic structure of Classical sonata form. Furthermore, its orchestration is not solely tailored for functionality, but specific combinations of instrumental timbre that are prophetic of the later Romantic movement, with astonishing vertical spacing occurring for example at the beginning of the development.

To this day, musicologists still disagree as to why Schubert failed to complete the symphony. Some have speculated that he stopped work in the middle of the scherzo in the fall of 1822 because he associated it with his initial outbreak of syphilis—or that he was distracted by the inspiration for his *Wanderer Fantasy* for solo piano, which occupied his time and energy immediately afterward. It could have been a combination of both factors.

In the Fifth Symphony, Schubert takes a step back from the dramatic affect of his "Tragic" Symphony of a few months earlier, instead producing a work that sparkles with the clarity and ease of its obvious models, the symphonies of Haydn and especially Mozart. The distance between Schubert's early instrumental music and later works like the "Great" Symphony in C major

(1825–1828) or the String Quintet in C major (1828), finished just a few weeks before he died, is great; in most ways, the non-vocal works composed before 1820 are the products of an imagination still searching for the answers to questions it has posed to itself. Perhaps because it addresses a different set of challenges, the Fifth Symphony represents the composer's closest approach to complete mastery in the works of this period.

The usual four movements are all in place in the Fifth Symphony, played by an orchestra that, in keeping with the work's Classical tendencies, is rather smaller than the one called for in Schubert's previous symphony. There are no clarinets in the Fifth, no trumpets or timpani, and Schubert writes for just one flute rather than the then-customary pair. The symphony opens with an Allegro that is as lovely and streamlined a sonata-allegro as one might hope for. The first theme is preceded by a quaint, graceful four-measure introduction that reappears prominently in the development. The theme itself is a delightful notion affectionately tossed back and forth between the first violins and cellos and basses. Schubert indulges in one of his favorite sonata-form modifications in the movement: bringing the first theme back in the subdominant in the recapitulation, rather than in the expected tonic. The Andante con moto, in E flat major, grows from two contrasting (though not sharply contrasting) ideas whose back-and-forth results in a kind of rondo. The third movement is a Minuetto in G minor; its major-mode trio section is marked by an attractive lilt. The scampering main theme of the brilliant finale needs a true *leggiero* touch from the violins. The second theme is pure string quartet writing, a characteristic no amount of commentary from the winds can obscure.

SCHUBERT

BRUNO WALTER

SYMPHONY NO. 5

COLUMBIA SYMPHONY

Symphony No. 8

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

Symphony No. 5

1 Allegro 5:53

2 Andante Con Moto 10:39

3 Menuetto: Allegro Molto 5:00

4 Allegro Vivace 6:24

Symphony No. 8

5 Allegro Moderato 11:00

6 Andate Con Moto 13:56

Total Time: 52:52

Recorded 1960 by Columbia Records



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