

'For all times, for all countries' Gustav Mahler and Universal Edition

On 21 February 1911, the day on which Gustav Mahler conducted his final concert in New York, he wrote to Universal Edition and 'dear Herr Direktor' Emil Hertzka: 'Dear friend, please take the greatest care that my symphonies are only published with my revisions and corrections. The revisions in the IVth have worked out magnificently here. [...]'

During his lifetime, Gustav Mahler was both respected and feared as an inexorable perfectionist. He performed his works throughout his life and carried out revisions concurrently. His revisory activity – making the notation more precise and the instrumentation more refined – constantly accompanied Mahler's compositional activity. This tendency is occasionally apparent even in his sketches; it is evident as well at the short-score and orchestral draft stage of composition, then proliferates vastly in the copyist's manuscript for the engraver and extends through publication and performances up to the end of the composer's life.

The fact that Universal Edition ultimately gained Mahler's absolute confidence, and that he entrusted us with his works 'for all times, for all countries', still fills us with pride today – because Universal Edition has always believed in Mahler and has risen to the enormous challenge of keeping his works up to date with the latest research findings and making them available for performance.

The extensive correspondence between Mahler and Universal Edition provides insight into the closeness of this relationship. It is due to these circumstances that Universal Edition has exclusive access to many sources that contain revisions and corrections by Mahler. Universal Edition is thus one of the most important sources of reference for all that have a genuine interest in Mahler.

In the Complete Critical Edition of Gustav Mahler's works, which was initiated in Vienna by the International Gustav Mahler Society (IGMS) in the 1960s and thereafter maintained by its scholars, philological and editorial standards were implemented for the first time.

The endeavours of IGMS and Universal Edition to produce the best-possible performance materials did not end at this point, however: Advances in the research about Mahler's work necessitated the launch of a New Complete Critical Edition (Neue Kritische Gesamtausgabe – NKG). NKG takes into consideration the latest musicological findings and evaluates important sources that were unknown or still unavailable when the previous Complete Edition was published. For this purpose, all musical texts have been completely reset.

In the Mahler magazine, which will be published periodically and whose first issue you are now reading, we will report on these new editions and new research findings. We are beginning with *Titan* and *Symphony No. 4*.

This will allow you to obtain an idea of how Universal Edition unites the expertise of scholars and practical specialists. In accordance with Gustav Mahler's wishes: 'For all times, for all countries.'

Universal Edition Promotion Team



Symphony No. 4, Last galley proofs of the newly corrected engraving plates, which were sent to Mahler following the New York concerts of January 1911 and into which he subsequently transferred his final revisions.

With numerous new corrections, not all of which are perfectly decipherable, especially in the measures preceding number 10 (including a paste-over in the viola).

Heinz Stolba, editor at Universal Edition, about Symphony No. 4

How does the new edition differ from the old one?

The new edition was necessary because more than half a century has now passed since the publication of Symphony No. 4 as a volume of the Gustav Mahler Complete Edition. Since then, new sources have emerged and, in addition, current Mahler research has gained new insights and can evaluate certain sources differently than it did at the time. The new edition by the Mahler expert Renate Stark-Voit is on the very highest current scientific level and combines all the knowledge that is necessary to be able to perform or study this great work in a serious manner today. The scientific side was given a lot of importance however, the practical aspects, which were so important to Gustav Mahler, were also taken into consideration. For example, the new score, in contrast to the old edition, has a less crowded stitch pattern, which guarantees better readability. Not only has the score been brought up to date, but the new matching performance material has also been produced to the high standards of today's professional orchestra. In the orchestral parts, readability has been optimized and adapted to today's needs. In those parts where passages occur where the original tunings may be a bit uncommon in today's orchestral practice, there are alternative transpositions for today's common tunings. Perfect guotes and page turns are self-evident anyway. While the new edition is at the very highest scholarly level, if one is only interested in practical implementation, one is also perfectly served by the new performance material in an exemplary and unrivalled manner. In all these aspects, the new edition is clearly different from all other editions, some of which have even been recently published by other publishers.

Are there other sources that have been consulted? If so, which ones? Why were they not available before?

Yes, there are some important new sources that were either not known or not accessible before. But beyond that, there are also certain insights in current Mahler research that have made it possible to reclassify and re-evaluate sources that were already known. There is, of course, a precise listing and commentary on this in the new complete edition volume of the *Symphony No. 4.* One small detail, for example, has touched me very much. With the help of the Universal Edition publishing books, it was finally possible to clear up the misconception, which had been circulating for decades and was also widespread in the literature, that the publisher had printed the performance material on its own authority in 1910 without waiting for the composer's final corrections from New York. However, the fact is, that the corrections arrived with enormous delay, after the urgently needed performance material of this work newly taken over by the publisher had already been in circulation for some time.

Are the differences in the new edition serious or are there only very minor changes compared to the previous edition?

There are hundreds and hundreds of details that – taken as a whole – make a thoroughly astonishing difference. The immediately audible differences are the tempo indications, some of which were originally inaccurately reproduced, which could now finally be corrected, or the specification of phrasing and articulations. Mahler was sometimes inconsistent in his notation, or there were errors by copyists and engravers that had gone unnoticed, so the careful sifting and evaluation of the sources could eliminate many inconsistencies. And, of course, the new edition provides an appropriate explanation in the Critical Report for every detail, no matter how small.

Why is this edition the most significant in terms of scholarship and performance practice?

The new edition undoubtedly represents a new standard in Mahler scholarship. And if one takes seriously the perfection and seriousness that Mahler himself pursued – and not only for the realisation of his own compositions – then one cannot avoid using only this new score and the new performance material from now on.

Symphony No. 4 • New Sources

Gustav Mahler's *Symphony No. 4* remains his most frequently performed symphony, nowadays narrowly flanked by his *First* and the song-symphony *Das Lied von der Erde*. In the short Mahler monograph written by Guido Adler (published by Universal Edition), the author had already counted more than 60 performances of the *Fourth* by 1915, followed at the time by the *Second* and *First* which had each been performed 44 times. What is the justification for a new critical edition of such a popular, well-known, and thoroughly proven work?

Mahler himself was initially not at all satisfied with his symphony, which he had finished in 1901, and described it as late as 1903 as a 'stepchild who had not yet experienced much joy in the world'. He continually reworked and refined the instrumentation in order to find suitable expression for his intentions. And this is precisely the challenge faced by a contemporary edition that examines the sources critically: The score containing what Mahler considered his last revisions and corrections as he entered them in early 1911 in New York did not reach Universal Edition before his death in May 1911, and decades passed before it was rediscovered. It was not until the 1960s that Erwin Ratz was able to examine the score for his KGA edition of the Fourth Symphony. But a considerable number of preliminary and intermediate stages remained unknown or could not be viewed at that time. One example is the song Das himmlische Leben, which was not published for the first time until the 1990s. It was not only reworked by Mahler to become the final movement of the symphony,

but also served as the compositional basis for the first three movements. The song was composed in Hamburg in 1892, and the copies of the song that were made for its publication, an endeavour that ultimately failed, only recently became available for examination. Similarly, Mahler's first conductor's score of the symphony, galley proofs fashioned for a first run-through with the Vienna Philharmonic, was also not available for evaluation and could only now be properly examined. Along these early meandering paths, the search ultimately leads us very close to the conductor's score used by Mahler in later years, which unfortunately remains lost. It is fortunate that he painstakingly transferred all his changes in 1905 for a colleague in Graz; this source of inestimable value was now available for consultation for the first time.

All in all, this new edition takes us to a point where the numerous stages of reworking and countless reading errors, misunderstandings, further printing errors and contradictions missed by Mahler himself, in addition to the final version of the score, have been considered and evaluated. The new, computer-based generation of the score required several rounds of precise proofreading; all editorial decisions are outlined transparently in an extensive critical commentary. A preface on its genesis, performance history and printing, and notes on performance practice, facsimile reproductions and an English glossary complete this entirely bilingual edition.

Renate Stark-Voit

Complete Critical Edition

Preface and critical report, size: 208x275mm

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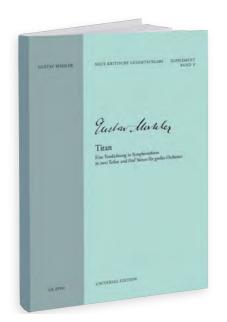
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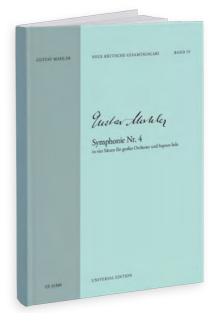
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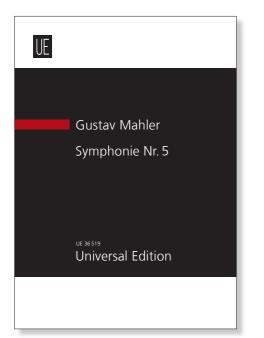


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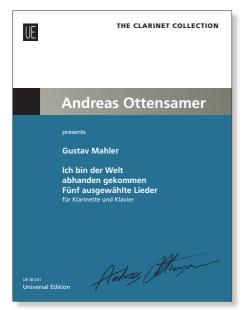
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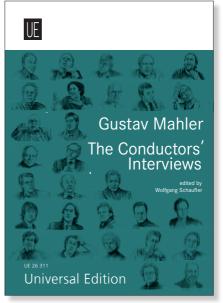
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Symphony No. 4, beginning of the 4th movement: A page of the galley proofs of the engraving plates that Universal Edition had corrected at the end of 1910. The proofs were sent to Mahler in New York and he transferred his final revisions to them from his own material following the performances on 17 and 20 January 1911 of the symphony. In the introductory bars to the final movement there are new changes in balance and timbre.

These include the reduction of the dynamics at the beginning (pp to ppp) followed by the intensification of the dynamics in bass clarinet, bassoon and horn (p to f in bar 5), the deletion of the violin and viola parts in bars 5 and 6, the transfer of the notes from the cor anglais to the 1st horn, and from the double basses to the newly added stave of the timpani.

Universal Edition

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'The International Gustav Mahler Society is the academic authority on my grandfather's works, and Universal Edition is his trusted publisher.'

Marina Mahler

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