

Thursday, March 14, 2019, Feast

Teachers - **Lunch is at 1130.** Please make sure that your class has eaten lunch, packed up, and done chores before noon. Make sure that the students know their groups (A, B, C, or D) so everyone can use the restrooms in plenty of time. We will do composer study and citizenship first.

### **Composer Study — Gustav Mahler**

Harvest Playlist -

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2RIujh_zAEN72xbdu_UOPXGGaOn4viPN&disable_polymer=true)

[list=PL2RIujh\\_zAEN72xbdu\\_UOPXGGaOn4viPN&disable\\_polymer=true](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2RIujh_zAEN72xbdu_UOPXGGaOn4viPN&disable_polymer=true)

Who can recall something about our new composer. [Our new composer Gustav Mahler lived at the same time as Claude Debussy (born in the mid 1800s and died in the early 1900s) but they did not know each other. He grew up in Bohemia where he heard a lot of building blocks of music while he ran errands for his father who owned a tavern. Even though he grew up in what we would call the Czech Republic today, Gustav Mahler spoke German because the Austrians ruled over his land. Like Debussy, he got an early start in music. When he was a little lad of only four years old, he was visiting his grandparents like many of you like to do. They had a piano and he ran his little fingers across the keyboard. By the time he was ten years old, he started playing for the public at the town theater. His mind and heart belonged to music and his grades suffered because he stared off into space instead of paying attention to his lessons. He was fifteen years old when something terrible happened. His beloved younger brother Ernst died after a long illness. Poor Gustav was heart-broken and he poured his feelings into his music. He and a friend began to work on an opera as a memorial to Ernst but it came to nothing.

When Gustav Mahler was 28 years old, he wrote his first symphony while rehearsing for the premiere of another composer's opera. He was nervous about opening the opera because it might lead to money and fame since famous composers and directors of opera houses were in the audience. The glowing comments of listeners encouraged Mahler to write his first symphony. He worked feverishly for six weeks in between opera rehearsals and conducting. He stayed up until ten o'clock, night after night, to put all his favorite building blocks together.]

Not long after writing his first symphony, Mahler started writing his second symphony. Instead of working feverishly for six weeks to crank out another symphony, his second took six years! What took him so long? Mahler wanted the

final movement to have a chorus. He searched and searched for the right text but could not find what he wanted. He had made friends with a fellow conductor who was very old and growing quiet sickly. Mahler filled in for his friend when he was unable to conduct. His friend's death affected him greatly. At the funeral, he heard a setting of a German hymn called "The Resurrection" and the lyrics were exactly what he needed. The following year, Mahler conducted his second symphony.

Last week we listened to the third movement of his first symphony. Does anyone remember the story behind it? (A funeral march is interrupted by Bohemian musicians.) Mahler must enjoy funeral marches because his second symphony which is known as the resurrection symphony begins with a funeral. In one of his programs he explained the first movement of his second symphony and perhaps he was thinking of the friend who had died the year before:

"We are standing near the grave of a well loved man. His whole life, his struggles, his sufferings and his accomplishments on earth pass before us. And now, in this solemn and deeply stirring moment, when the confusion and distractions of everyday life are lifted like a hood from our eyes, a voice of awe-inspiring solemnity chills our heart, a voice that, blinded by the mirage of everyday life, we usually ignore: "What next?" it says. "What is life and what is death? Will we live on eternally? Is it all an empty dream or do our life and death have a meaning?"

With that in mind, how do you think the first movement will begin? What do you expect of the mood, tempo, and dynamics?

After the movement ends, listen to what comments the students make. They will probably be shocked for the symphony starts with a loud crash. After the music softens, the tone sounds bell-like. The horns sound and we look to the heavens and the notes seem to drift down from heaven. The tempo begins to pulse with strings plucked in the background. Suddenly there is a crescendo and the music changes dramatically with timpani (drums) banging. The music suddenly drops but the volume picks up again as if we are rising up with the notes into the heavens but then the notes seem to swirl, falling back to earth. The music changes so often that it seems to mirror the deep questions the music asks about life and death and what happens after death.

### **A Glossary of Musical Terms**

mood: feeling of music (happy or sad or ...)

dynamics: change

**crescendo (getting louder)** or *decrescendo (getting softer)*

articulation: how a note is played or sung

sibilance (hissssing sssssoundssssss)

staccato (ve-ry-cho-ppy)

legato (*smoothly connected together*)

arpeggio (a broken chord in which each note is played separately)

chord (a group of harmonic notes that are played at the same time)

triplet (3 notes played in the place of 1 note)

glissando (when the notes slide up or down the scale)

tempo: the timing of a piece

fast (**allegro**) or slow (**andante**)

ritardando (a dramatic sloooooowdoooooown at the end of a piece)

rubato (sometimes slightly **allegro** and sometimes slightly **andante**)

form: the structure of a musical composition

**fantasia** (an instrumental that has a free form with no strict rules)

libretto (a script of words sung/spoken by actors and song lyrics)

lieder (a German art song for piano and voice that features a poem)

nocturne (a piece of music that is dreamy suggesting the night)

opera (theater in which everything is sung)

prelude (usually an introductory piece to a longer composition)

programme music (music that communicates a story)

rondo (an instrumental that has a strict pattern and usually has a fast tempo)

round (a song in which two or three parts sing the same melody and words, starting at different times)

sacred music (music to encourage a prayerful spirit and thoughts about God)

voice: the pitch and range of particular voice

soprano (highest voice, usually women or young boys)

alto (high voice, usually women or young boys)

tenor (low voice, usually men and occasionally women)

bass (lowest voice, usually just men)

## **Citizenship** —

Primary - Primary classes will be reading from *Parables from Nature* by Margaret Gatty <http://amblesideonline.org/ParablesParaphrase.shtml#training>. Primary A and B are reading “Training and Restraining” this week. They will read at their own pace and how much is read per week depends upon two things: how much

time is left before everyone leaves and the length of the class's attention span. Ten minutes is plenty.

Elementary - This week they are continuing Chapter XIV, which tells the beginning of the Trojan War. <http://www.gatewaytotheclassics.com/browse/display.php?author=guerber&book=greeks&story=muster>

Middle/High School - Cicero!