

Thursday, April 4, 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.

Mahler wrote a total of nine symphonies as did Beethoven. Of the nine, three stand out as Mahler's best: No. 2, No. 6, and No. 9. 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, which took six years! Mahler started in 1888 and he quickly wrote the first movement which we heard last week. All his creative juices for this work dried up and he put it on the shelf. It took four years to find the right building blocks for the next two movements: the music for an Austrian folk dance and Mahler's own from the *Wunderhorn* songs about St. Anthony preaching to the fish. He had just moved to Budapest, Hungary, where there was a clash between the government which pushed for the German culture to smother the local culture of the Hungarian people. Mahler tried to balance between the two wishes and played a little of both. All in the same year (1889), his father, sister, and mother died and he had to take charge of four siblings. He placed them in the care of someone in Vienna, Austria so he could continue his work. No wonder he had major health problems! He spent only two years in Hungary before being called to work in Hamburg, Germany. Mahler wanted the final movement to have a chorus. He heard a hymn called "The Resurrection" at a friend's funeral and the lyrics were exactly what he needed. He finished it within a year.]

Mahler faced a lot of tragedy in his childhood. His mother gave birth to fourteen children. Only six survived their infancy. Today we live in a time when this sad situation is rare, thanks to medicine and a better understanding of health. The fear of loss must have haunted Mahler because he wrote five lieder about the death of a child during the time when his two children were born. A German wrote a series of poems on this topic. Mahler chose five and set them to music. His wife Alma was not at all happy about writing such songs because she feared her husband was tempting fate. She was right, the second child, little Maria came down with scarlet fever four years later and she died. Mahler wrote to a friend.

Here are the lyrics to the first lieder (a German art song for piano and voice that features a poem):

Nun will die Sonn' so hell aufgeh'n
als sei kein Unglück die Nacht gescheh'n.
Das Unglück geschah nur mir allein.
Die Sonne, sie scheint allgemein.

Now the sun wants to rise as brightly
as if nothing terrible had happened during the night.
The misfortune had happened only to me,
but the sun shines equally on everyone.

Du mußt nicht die Nacht in dir verschränken
mußt sie ins ew'ge Licht versenken.
Ein Lämplein verlosch in meinem Zelt,
Heil sei dem Freudenlicht der Welt.

You must not enfold the night in you.
You must sink it in eternal light.
A little star went out in my tent!
Greetings to the joyful light of the world.

As you recall about Schubert and his lieder, the singer, the lyrics, and the music work together to express the meaning of the song. We will listen to the pieces twice since it is short. After listening to it the first time, let the children share what they noticed. Ms. Tammy has her ideas below and feel free to share the ideas you think the class will understand. Then listen to the song again, paying attention to the details that the class noticed.

Here is what Ms. Tammy noticed. The tempo is slow and the bassoon and oboe softly play a mournful tune. As the vocal soloist quietly sings about the sun shining brightly, the notes are falling, getting lower and lower — a sign that something is not right. The bassoon and oboes repeat their sad melody and the soloist sings about nothing terrible happening in the night, a line that he repeats as if he wishes that were true. He stops as if he is trying to gather his emotions while the full orchestra comes in. A glockenspiel (which looks like a metal xylophone) chimes four times as if signaling the hour in which heaven received the little star. The singer mourns that this tragedy has happened only to him and the sun shines on everyone else equally. The interlude between the two verses is the orchestra playing the same theme, but, at 2:48, begins a crescendo and then the music sounds a bit frantic and then glockenspiel chimes again as a reminder of the tragedy. The soloist softly sings about the night unfolding inside the family and a crescendo begins with the lines about sinking the night into eternal light. The loudest moment is at the word *eternal* and the word *sinking* is then accented. The orchestra loudly echoes his angst, as if waves of grief are pouring over him. Everything softens and he gently sings about a little star leaving his tent (a hidden way of saying what happened). Then he sends greetings to the joyful Light of the world and we know who that is, which ends the song with a sign of hope and the chime of the glockenspiel as a reminder of 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 sloooooowdooooooown at the end of a piece)

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

form: the structure of a musical composition

fandasia (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)

symphony (a long composition in four movements written for full orchestra)

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 26, which continues the story of Sparta. <http://www.gatewaytotheclassics.com/browse/display.php?author=guerber&book=greeks&story=war>

Middle/High School - Cicero!