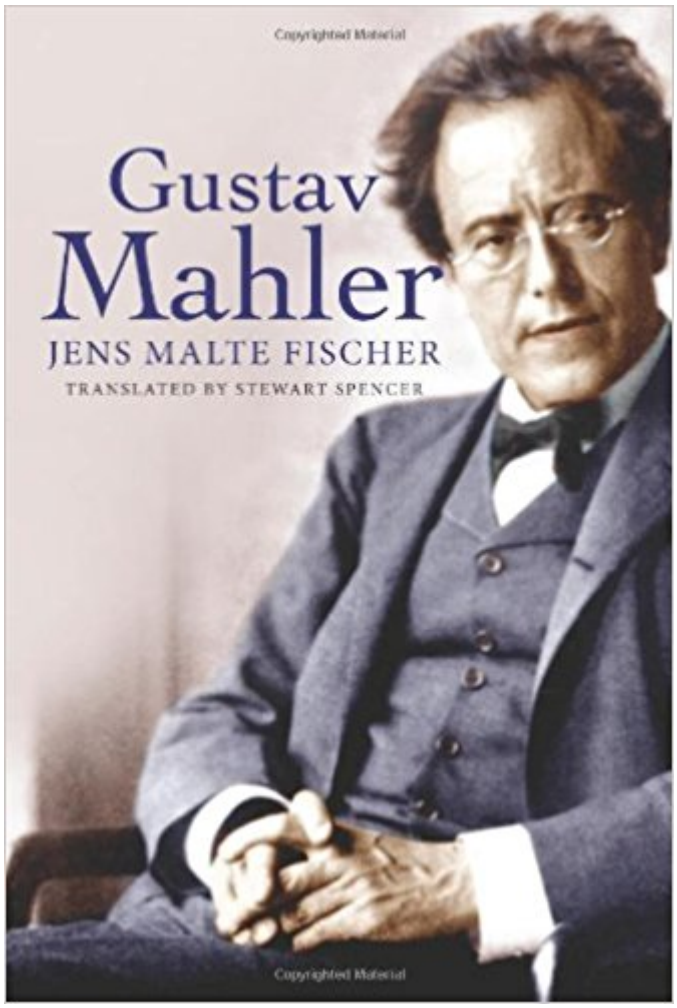
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# Gustav Mahler




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## Synopsis

A best seller when first published in Germany in 2003, Jens Malte Fischer’s Gustav Mahler has been lauded by scholars as a landmark work. He draws on important primary resourcesÃ¢â ¬â •some unavailable to previous biographersÃ¢â ¬â •and sets in narrative context the extensive correspondence between Mahler and his wife, Alma; Alma Mahler’s diaries; and the memoirs of Natalie Bauer-Lechner, a viola player and close friend of Mahler, whose private journals provide insight into the composer’s personal and professional lives and his creative process.Fischer explores Mahler’s early life, his relationship to literature, his achievements as a conductor in Vienna and New York, his unhappy marriage, and his work with the Metropolitan Opera and the New York Philharmonic in his later years. He also illustrates why Mahler is a prime example of artistic idealism worn down by Austrian anti-Semitism and American commercialism. Gustav Mahler is the best-sourced and most balanced biography available about the composer, a nuanced and intriguing portrait of his dramatic life set against the backdrop of early 20th century America and fin de siÃƒÂ¨cle Europe.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“Sympathetic . . . evocative . . . original and refreshingly opinionated.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •John Adams, New York Times Book Review (John Adams New York Times Book Review)Ã¢â ¬Å“Superb...A passionate book in which Gustav Mahler emerges as a true genius.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Ralph Collier, Quarter Notes (Ralph Collier Quarter Notes)"Much has been written in recent years about this supremely gifted, high-strung composer/conductor, but nothing

better than Fischer’s intelligent and sympathetic biography."Ã¢â ¬â •Reporter-Times (Reporter-Times)"Mahlerians will welcome this important work for its synthesis of new and old data within a bold, passionately argued study . . . [Fischer’s] biography may be the most rewarding way to appreciate Mahler and his resonant art."Ã¢â ¬â •Jeffery S. McMillan, Opera News (Jeffery S. McMillan Opera News)

Lauded by scholars as a landmark work and published for the first time in English to coincide with the centenary of Mahler’s death, this is the best-sourced and most balanced biography available about the celebrated composer. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Not Just another Mahler BiographyByPaul Fishbein Not long ago, I thoroughly disagreed with Paul Gelman about his review of Norman Lebrecht’s recent book on Gustav Mahler. I found humor, entertainment, and profound understanding in this subjective study of Mahler’s pertinence for us a century after his untimely death. However, I can only agree completely with Mr. Gelman’s eloquent review of Jens Malte Fischer’s one volume massive biography of Mahler. I had planned to write a detailed essay about this marvelous book, but after reading Gelman, I have little to add--other than to add my voice in agreement that this is a work well worth reading and that there is much to be gleaned from devoting precious time in closely studying what he has created. This is a biography that stands above almost all of the many that have been published on Mahler, as it not only provides a broad perspective about his life, but with great intelligence and sensitivity, paints a picture of turn of the century Vienna and its culture. I finished this book feeling that I finally had gotten to "know" Mahler the man and his works. After the 4 volume biography of Mahler by Henry Louis de La Grange, I felt that any one volume effort would pale in contrast. But such is not the case with Fischer’s tome. He does not give a day by day account of his subject’s life, with each and every concert or performance review, but he does provide us with the pertinent articles; and one comes away feeling that we have lived through his experiences, his crises and triumphs. What de La Grange is to Mahler, Ernest Newman, with his 4 volume biography, was to Richard Wagner. There was a time when I felt that no single volume could match that wonderful study on the controversial composer’s life. But when Joachim Kohler’s one volume biography was published, it was clear that more had been gained from less detail. The forest could finally be seen in contrast to the individual trees. Now we have Mr. Fischer’s biography of Mahler, and it is a similar contribution. Newman is to Kohler as de La Grange is to Fischer. I would not wish to be without any of them. Finally a word on the translation: It should be noted that both Kohler’s and Fischer’s studies have been brilliantly

translated from the German by Stewart Spencer, a respected musical scholar whose abilities are well evinced in these efforts. Thanks are due to him for expanding the audience for these valuable books.

This is the most comprehensive Mahler biography that I've been able to find. It is a true BIOGRAPHY, not a mere chronicle. Each of his major works is discussed in some detail in layman's language and a well-documented discussion of the composer's inner life and philosophy is given. My only quibble is that the author's prose is a bit wordy and he sometimes uses recondite words where more familiar words would have severed as well.

Having tried to get through the massiveness of La Grange's overly comprehensive biography, I longed for something with more brevity. Fischer does that with alacrity here. I've been a devotee of Mahler for a long time now, and reading this account of his life during college only made my appreciation grow. Fishcer's style is clear, intelligent, and engaging. There are no longueurs here, and for the meat of the text only being around 600 or so pages, he does an able job of capturing the fullness of Mahler's life. Oxford's publishing is very handsome, the typeface beautiful in its legibility. Get this one if you want to know about the man, and skip La Grange.

With numerous Mahler biographies already published, one might assume that all that was relevant about the man had previously been noted. In this well constructed and well written 700 page bio one discovers new insights, even in the shadow of de La Grange's painstakingly detailed multi-volume work. We are presented with Mahler's view of the life of the soul after death, as greatly influenced by Goethe, among others, which sheds light on his spiritual values that adhered to no religion but was marked by a fierce and unwavering belief in the principle of the Aristotelean "prime-mover", promising a reincarnated next-life for the tireless spirit that labors a selfless and painful lifetime for the enrichment of the human condition. There is an entire chapter dedicated to the fragile physiological state of Mahler's health from childhood on and how his physical infirmities plagued and motivated his artistic output. Some new insights, based on impressions found in contemporary correspondence regarding the enigmatic and complex makeup of Alma, helped me to better understand the seemingly contrasting elements of her character and Mahler's ambivalent regard for her, which fluctuated from impatient tolerance of a self-possessed social coquette to deep affection and committed dedication to a treasured, albeit frustratingly irritating and capricious spouse. The elusive nature of Mahler as the "monster" perfectionist is given examination and explanation of the

ubiquitous loathing displayed by colleagues and employees is described in terms of the unrelenting demands that the composer/conductor's demanding personalilty made upon himself and those who had both voluntary and compulsive professional contact with him. We are left with a clear depiction of the nature of the man's genius and his complexly mercurial personality, enhanced by a further understanding of his many and serious flaws which make this portrait compelling and unable to resist. I began, what I had planned as a casual and relax-paced reading of this biography, only to devour the first 400 pages in 3 days. This is a read that is highly literate in its translation and packed with information that will be found to be fascinating and worth retaining by any serious Mahlerite.

I do not think of this product as an accessory, but as a necessity. I dropped my phone several times on a concrete floor throughout the course of a month. After the first crack, I thought for sure the protector would not work as well with subsequent drops. I was wrong and my phone suffered not one scratch. I will no longer purchase a phone without purchasing a screen protector!

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