

# Resurrection

Saturday, July 25, 2026 · 20:30 · Großes Festspielhaus

Gustavo Dudamel, conductor · Ying Fang, soprano · Nadezhda Karyazina, mezzo-soprano · Singverein der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien, chorus

*approximately 85 minutes*

## Gustav Mahler

1860–1911

85 minutes

### *Symphony No. 2 in C minor ('Resurrection')*

#### WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

**First movement: Allegro maestoso ('Totenfeier').** The symphony opens in the grave. Low strings attack a tremolando, and out of it rises a grim, march-like funeral music in C minor, jagged and severe: the rites over Mahler's fallen hero. Listen for the contrast between this stern march and the consoling second theme, a warm, song-like melody that keeps trying to offer comfort and keeps being driven back. The movement is built as a struggle between these worlds, rising to shattering climaxes, and it ends not in resolution but with a bleak downward rush into silence. Mahler then asks for a long pause before the music can go on.

**Second movement: Andante moderato.** A complete change of air: a gentle, swaying ländler, a remembered dance from happier days. This is the symphony looking back tenderly at a life now ended. Listen for the music's grace and lilt, ruffled twice by darker, more agitated episodes with rustling string figures, before it settles back into its untroubled glow. It is the one moment of unguarded sweetness in the work.

**Third movement: In ruhig fließender Bewegung (Scherzo).** Without warning the mood curdles. Built from Mahler's own song of St Anthony preaching to the fishes (who listen, admire the sermon, and swim off unchanged), this scherzo is a perpetual-motion swirl that turns the world's bustle into something hollow and faintly nightmarish. Listen for the mocking woodwind cries and the way the music spins faster and faster, until it erupts in a sudden, terrifying shriek of despair before subsiding. This is doubt at its most corrosive.

**Fourth movement: 'Urlicht' (Sehr feierlich, aber schlicht).**

Out of that despair comes the alto's voice, alone at first: 'O Röschen rot!' ('O little red rose!'). This brief Wunderhorn song, 'Primal Light', is a moment of pure, childlike faith, the soul declaring that it comes from God and will return to God. Listen for the solemn brass chorale that answers the voice and for the music's utter simplicity; after the scherzo's vertigo, it is like a candle lit in the dark.

**Fifth movement: Im Tempo des Scherzos (Finale).** The longest movement crashes in with a cry of horror, then opens onto a vast landscape. Listen for the offstage brass sounding from a distance, the solo flute and piccolo singing like a bird over silence, and the marching of the dead toward judgement. The 'Great Summons' rings out, and then, at the moment of apocalypse, the chorus enters not in thunder but in the barest whisper, 'Aufersteh'n, ja aufersteh'n wirst du' ('Rise again, yes, you shall rise again'). From that hush the music builds, gathering soprano, alto, chorus, organ, and bells, to a final blaze of resurrection. Wait for the quiet entry; everything depends on it.



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