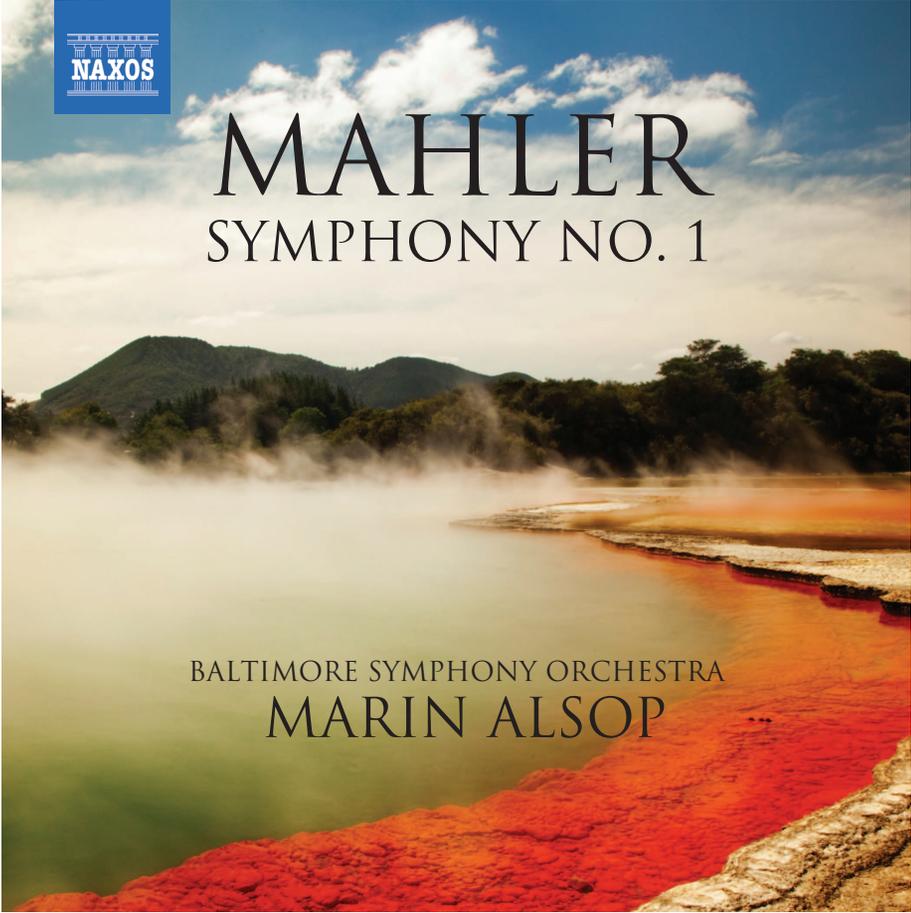


The NAXOS logo is a blue square with the word "NAXOS" in white, serif, all-caps font. Above the text are five white vertical lines of varying heights, resembling a stylized musical staff or a bridge structure.The cover art features a landscape photograph of a river or lake with a vibrant red shoreline in the foreground. The water is calm and reflects the sky. In the background, there are green hills and a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall mood is serene and natural.

MAHLER

SYMPHONY NO. 1

BALTIMORE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
MARIN ALSOP

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

Symphony No. 1 in D major

The great Viennese symphonic tradition found worthy successors in two composers of very different temperament and background, Anton Bruckner and Gustav Mahler. The latter, indeed, extended the form in an extraordinary way that has had a far-reaching effect on the course of Western music.

Mahler was to express succinctly enough his position in the world. He saw himself as three times homeless, a native of Bohemia in Austria, an Austrian among Germans and a Jew throughout the whole world. The second child, and the first of fourteen to survive, he was born in Kalište in Bohemia. Soon after his birth his family moved to Jihlava, where his father, by his own very considerable efforts, had raised himself from being little more than a pedlar, with a desire for intellectual self-improvement, to the running of a tavern and distillery. Mahler's musical abilities were developed first in Jihlava, before a brief period of schooling in Prague, which ended unhappily, and a later course of study at the Conservatory in Vienna, where he turned from the piano to composition and, as a necessary corollary, conducting.

It was as a conductor that Mahler made his career, at first at a series of provincial opera-houses, and later in the position of the highest distinction of all, when, in 1897, he became Kapellmeister of the Vienna Hofoper, two months after his baptism as a Catholic, a necessary preliminary. In Vienna he made significant reforms in the Court Opera, but made enough enemies, particularly represented in the anti-semitic press, to lead to his resignation in 1907, followed by a final period conducting in America and elsewhere, in a vain attempt to secure his family's future before his own imminent death, which took place on 18th May 1911.

Although his career as a conductor involved him most closely with opera, Mahler attempted little composition in this field. His work as a composer consists chiefly of his songs and of his ten symphonies, the last left unfinished at his death, and his monumental

setting of poems from the Chinese in *Das Lied von der Erde*.

Mahler's *Symphony No. 1 in D major* was completed, in its first version, in 1888, incredibly enough five years before Dvořák's *Symphony 'From the New World'* and only five years after the last symphony of Brahms. It was first performed the following year in Budapest, where Mahler had been appointed director of the Hungarian opera, before an audience that became increasingly restive as the work proceeded.

For the symphony Mahler had drawn up a programme, although he strongly believed that, whatever literary programme might lie behind a composition, the music should be able to stand on its own, without verbal explanation. No narrative element was given to the first audience in Budapest, but later performances were at first helped by a sketched description of the work:

Part I: From the days of youth – Flower, Fruit and Thorn-pieces (Blumen, Früchte und Dornenstücke)

1. Spring and no end to it. The introduction describes the awakening of nature and earliest dawn.
2. Blumenkapitel (*Andante*) (later omitted)
3. In full sail (*Scherzo*)

Part II Commedia umana

4. Shipwrecked. A dead march in the manner of Callot.
5. Dall' inferno al Paradiso (*Allegro furioso*), the sudden expression of the feelings of a deeply wounded heart.

The symphony, originally a symphonic poem, although without title, has a more explicit literary source in the work of Jean Paul, an early Romantic writer whose *Fliegeljahre* had had a strong influence on the young Schumann. The programmatic titles of the first two movements are taken from Jean Paul, whose connection with the seventeenth century French artist Jacques Callot is seen in his preface to E.T.A. Hoffmann's

Phantasiestücke in Callots Manier. In short the symphony, in common with Mahler's early songs, has its literary inspiration in writing of the earliest romantics, in the curiously grotesque ironical world of Jean Paul and in the evocative *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* of Brentano and von Arnim. The later title of the work, *Titan*, refers not to the struggle between the ancient gods of Greece so much as to the novel of that name by Jean Paul, in which two "Titans" or *Himmelsstürmer*, struggle for their aims of intellectual freedom or pleasure.

In its final form the Symphony has four movements, Mahler having discarded the original second movement *Blumenkapitel* after the first three performances. The first movement opens with a slow section in which fanfares pierce the summer morning mists, suggesting pictorially the ideas of Mahler's earlier song *Ging heut' Morgen übers Feld* (I went this morning through the field) from *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Songs of a Wayfarer), the melody of which provides the first subject. The slower music returns, but nothing is done to dispel the mood of happy serenity, although, as the movement hurries forward again, we may be aware of more tragic implications, *Dornenstücke*. For the first three performances of his *First Symphony* Mahler included a second movement *Blumenkapitel (Andante)* (Flower Piece), later to be discarded. A scherzo follows, with a Schubertian trio.

After a pause the symphony continues with a solemn funeral march, making satirical use of a minor version of the children's song *Frère Jacques*, and easily intelligible in terms of the composer's explanation. He found the external inspiration for this movement in a satirical picture well known to all children in South Germany, *The Huntsman's Funeral*, from an old book of children's stories. The animals of the forest escort the body of the dead forester to the grave. Hares carry a little flag, with a band of Bohemian village musicians in front, accompanied by cats, toads, crows, and so on, playing, and by stags, does, foxes and other four-footed and feathered denizens of the forest, in comic guise. Use is also made of Mahler's song *Die zwei blaue Augen* (My Love's two Blue Eyes) from *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* in music of bitter contrast and heartfelt anguish.

The last movement is one of great dramatic intensity. Audiences unfamiliar with the work might well be warned by the example of the first performance in Budapest, when a woman jumped out of her seat in alarm as the movement began, an incident that caused the composer some amusement. A march leads to a more lyrical melody, before a renewed storm of sound, in music that is, as Mahler was to claim, a world in itself.

Keith Anderson

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra



The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra is internationally recognized as having achieved a preeminent place among the world's most important orchestras. Acclaimed for its pursuit of artistic excellence, the BSO has attracted a devoted national and international following while maintaining deep bonds throughout Maryland with innovative education and community outreach initiatives. The BSO made musical history in September 2007, when Maestra Marin Alsop led her inaugural concerts as the Orchestra's 12th music director, making her the first woman to head a major American orchestra. The BSO has achieved critical acclaim for its recording albums. In August 2009, the BSO and Marin Alsop released Bernstein's *Mass* (Naxos 8.559622-23), which rose to number six on the Classical Billboard Charts and

received a 2009 GRAMMY® nomination for Best Classical Album. For more than 80 years, the BSO has maintained a vibrant educational presence throughout Maryland. The 2012-2013 season marks the fifth year of OrchKids™, a year-round program that provides music education to Baltimore's neediest youngsters at no cost. In addition to the Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall, where the orchestra has performed for 29 years, the BSO is a founding partner and the resident orchestra at the Music Center at Strathmore, just outside Washington, D.C. With its opening in February 2005, the BSO became the nation's only major orchestra with year-round venues in two metropolitan areas.

Marin Alsop



Hailed as one of the world's leading conductors for her artistic vision and commitment to accessibility in classical music, Marin Alsop made history with her appointment as the 12th music director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. With her inaugural concerts in September 2007, she became the first woman to head a major American orchestra. She also holds the title of conductor emeritus at the Bournemouth Symphony in the United Kingdom, where she served as the principal conductor from 2002-2008, and is music director of the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in California. In 2005, Ms. Alsop was named a MacArthur Fellow, the first conductor ever to receive this prestigious award. In 2007, she was honored with a European Women of Achievement Award, in 2008 she was inducted as a fellow into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and in 2009 *Musical America* named her "Conductor of the Year."

In November 2010, she was inducted into the Classical Music Hall of Fame. In February 2011, Marin Alsop was named the music director of the Orquestra Sinfônica do estado de São Paulo (OSESF), or the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra, effective for the 2012-13 season. Ms. Alsop was named to the *Guardian's* Top 100 Women list in March 2011. In the spring of 2011, Marin Alsop was named an Artist-in-Residence at the Southbank Centre in London, England. Marin Alsop attended Yale University and received her master's degree from The Juilliard School. In 1989, her conducting career was launched when she won the Koussevitzky Conducting Prize at Tanglewood where she studied with Leonard Bernstein.

This remarkably original work, with its recurring quotations from the composer's own songs, notably *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Songs of a Wayfarer) and *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (The Boy's Magic Horn), is the perfect expression of one of Mahler's most quoted sayings, "The symphony is a world; it must contain everything". The opening movement, filled with sounds that Mahler remembered from his childhood, depicts "Nature's awakening from the long sleep of winter", and is followed by an exuberant scherzo and trio based on a *Ländler*. The disturbing slow movement funeral march, based on the children's song *Frère Jacques*, is unlike anything that had been heard before, and the symphony concludes with music of thrilling dramatic intensity.

Gustav
MAHLER
(1860-1911)

Symphony No. 1 **54:55**

1 I. Langsam, schleppend **16:21**

**2 II. Kräftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell –
Sehr einfach und schlicht wie eine Volksweise** **8:41**

3 III. Feierlich und gemessen, ohne zu schleppen **11:10**

4 IV. Stürmisch bewegt **18:42**

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra • Marin Alsop

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Produced and engineered by Tim Handley • Booklet notes: Keith Anderson

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