Text from last movement
Heaven's Life
(From Des Knaben Wunderhorn)

We enjoy heavenly pleasures
and therefore avoid earthy ones.
No worldly tumult
is to be heard in heaven.
All live in greatest peace.
We lead angelic lives,
yet have a merry time of it besides.
We dance and we spring,
We skip and we sing.
Saint Peter in heaven looks on.
John lets the lambkin out,
and Herod the Butcher lies in wait for it.
We lead a patient,
an innocent, patient,
dear little lamb to its death.
Saint Luke slaughters the ox
without any thought or concern.
Wine doesn't cost a penny
in the heavenly cellars;
The angels bake the bread.
Good greens of every sort
grow in the heavenly vegetable patch,
good asparagus, string beans,
and whatever we want.

Whole dishfuls are set for us!
Good apples, good pears and good grapes,
and gardeners who allow everything!
If you want roebuck or hare,
on the public streets
they come running right up.
Should a fastday come along,
all the fishes at once come swimming with joy.
There goes Saint Peter running
with his net and his bait
to the heavenly pond.
Saint Martha must be the cook.
There is just no music on earth
that can compare to ours.
Even the eleven thousand virgins
venture to dance,
and Saint Ursula herself has to laugh.
There is just no music on earth
that can compare to ours.
Cecelia and all her relations
make excellent court musicians.
The angelic voices
gladden our senses,
so that all awaken for joy.

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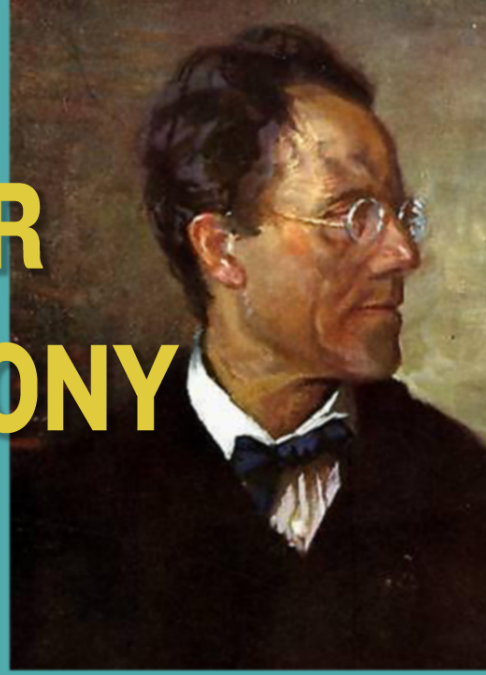
MAHLER SYMPHONY No. 4



GEORGE SZELL
THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA
JUDITH RASKIN SOPRANO

George Szell

Part of the wave of great Hungarian conductors who took over American musical life just before and after World War II -- the others included Fritz Reiner, Antal Dorati, and Eugene Ormandy -- George Szell quickly transformed a middling Midwestern orchestra into one of the nation's Big Five. His cultivation of the Cleveland Orchestra set an example of discipline and hard work that gradually helped raise the standards of orchestras across America.

Although born in Hungary, Szell was raised in Vienna where he studied composition with Eusebius Mandyczewski, and piano with Richard Robert; he also studied composition in Prague with J.B. Foerster. Szell was a wunderkind, playing a Mozart piano concerto with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra when he was ten, and composing a number of solid chamber and orchestral works in a lush, late Romantic style as a child and teenager. He was 17 when he conducted the Berlin Philharmonic in a program that included one of his own compositions.

Despite these early successes, Szell rose through the conducting ranks in the traditional way of the period, with a series of opera positions: Royal Opera of Berlin (1915-1917), Strasbourg (1917-1918), Prague (1919-1921), Darmstadt (1921-1922), and Düsseldorf (1922-1924). Szell's first prestigious post came to him in 1924, when he was named first conductor of the Berlin State Opera; he simultaneously served as a professor at Berlin's Hochschule für Musik. In 1929, he moved on to become general music director of the German Opera and Philharmonic in Prague, where he remained until 1937.

Szell began focusing more on orchestral repertory in the 1930s; he made his U.S. debut as guest conductor of the St. Louis Symphony in 1930, and in 1937 he was appointed conductor of the Scottish Orchestra in Glasgow, while maintaining a steady relationship with the Residentie Orkest in The Hague. Szell was in America in 1939 when war broke out in Europe; he remained in the U.S. through the war, first depending on guest engagements and then, in 1942, becoming a regular conductor at the Metropolitan Opera, where he was especially praised for his Wagner performances. In 1946 Szell took American citizenship and became music director of the Cleveland Orchestra, a post he held for 24 years. He was also the New York Philharmonic's music advisor and senior guest conductor during the last two years of his life.

Although Szell made a recordings in Europe in the 1950s and 1960s for Decca, and in Cleveland at the end of his life for EMI, the bulk of his substantial discography was the result of his long collaboration with Columbia Records in Cleveland. There, Szell had inherited an able but ordinary orchestra and, through sheer determination, molded it into one of America's finest. A Szell performance was remarkable for its textural clarity, chamber-like balances, and precision of attack and release. He drilled his orchestra mercilessly, even in works it had performed with him not long before. Szell was particularly admired for his performances of Austro-Germanic classics from Haydn to Richard Strauss, his sharp renderings of works by a select group of twentieth century composers including Bartók, Prokofiev, Janácek, and Walton), and his idiomatic way with Dvorák. Indeed, some collectors maintain that Szell's monaural, early 1950s recording of Dvorák's Eighth Symphony with the Concertgebouw Orchestra has never been equaled. His treatment of French composers, on the other hand, was criticized for its lack of atmosphere, and detractors maintained that he achieved precision at the expense of emotional expression. To those who demanded a warmer approach to his beloved Mozart, however, Szell is said to have retorted, "One does not pour chocolate sauce over asparagus."

Mahler Symphony No. 4

George Szell conducting

The Cleveland Orchestra

Judith Raskin Soprano

1) Bedächtig, nicht eilen (Moderately, not rushed) 17:20

2) In gemächlicher Bewegung, ohne Hast (Leisurely moving, without haste) 9:12

3) Ruhevoll, poco adagio (Peacefully, somewhat slowly) 20:40

4) Sehr behaglich (Very comfortably) 10:10

Transferred from a Columbia 4-track Tape Circa 1963

Please Note: In the interest of preserving the superb sound quality of these historic recordings, they have been preserved in their original, pristine state for maximum fidelity. Transferred from commercially released, analog reel-to-reel tapes (some of which are more than 50 years old), the recordings themselves can be subject to certain "artifacts" which are an inseparable part of the original analog recording process, such as tape "hiss" or other defects, and these may be audible on certain music tracks. Because your CD or DVD-A was individually "burned" in order to realize superior sound quality to stamped, mass-produced versions, microscopic cosmetic blemishes may be visible. Please regard these tiny marks as evidence of the "human touch" in the care and individual attention that each and every HDTT disc receives during its very demanding manufacturing process.

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