

Press Release



Gustav Mahler

8 March 2011 – 29 May 2011
Median Level, room 67



Emil Orlik
Portrait of Gustav Mahler, 1902
Etching
Paris, Médiathèque Musicale Mahler (fonds La Grange)
© Médiathèque Musicale Mahler

This exhibition, presented in the centenary year of Mahler's death, has been organised with the help of special loans from the archives of the Musikverein in Vienna, the Theatermuseum in Vienna and the Médiathèque Musicale Mahler in Paris.

"Only when I experience something do I compose, and only when composing do I experience anything."

Gustav Mahler

One hundred years after his death, Gustav Mahler is remembered purely as a symphonic composer. This is because the two key roles of orchestra conductor and opera house director that led him to become the musical genius that we think we know have disappeared from the collective memory. His exceptional talent as a conductor and interpreter of a very varied repertoire propelled him to the top of the most prestigious orchestras of his time. Alongside this, for most of his life he was a director of an opera house. In this role too, he would become totally involved as manager, conductor and sometimes even stage director, thus revealing his overriding desire for control – an element he considered essential to achieve his artistic goals in music. His genius for musical interpretation and his revolutionary approach as an opera director have been almost forgotten, but it was these aspects of his musical life that brought him to "experience" music, an essential precondition for "composing" it. For Mahler, the act of producing music, of "making music", was linked intrinsically to the act of creating music. On many occasions he emphasised that his huge workload as performer and opera director fuelled his creative process.

Rather than an exhibition constructed around the classical trinity of man, work and era, this exhibition offers the public an opportunity to discover Mahler's creative process. His genius is founded on a quest for perfection in performance, direction and composition. His excessive number of rehearsals, his directorial changes right up until the last minute, his corrections to the scores, were the result of an exuberant creativity. The image of a neurotic musician is a distortion of the reality behind this artistic genius.

The exhibition, in three sections, offers perspectives on Mahler's life and work. It adopts a new and original approach to presenting the music and understanding the sources of his inspiration. It has not been designed purely as a display of musical scores and manuscripts. It aims to show exhibits from all disciplines: paintings, drawings, pastels, sculptures, photographs, sound recordings, literary and musical manuscripts, and objects. This exhibition also offers an opportunity to discover Mahler as opera director. By juxtaposing the work of the stage designers of the Vienna Opera, Heinrich Leffler and Alfred Roller, we are able to appreciate the sudden aesthetic change that the Vienna Opera was subjected to under his direction. A look at women and his links with the painters of the Vienna Secession is also presented through a series of previously unseen photographs, one of which is devoted to Anna Von Mildenburg. Finally, manuscripts of various symphonies, extremely rare sketches and designs for programmes are on show for the first time in France. These objects evoking the cult of Mahler, harrowing caricatures and various aspects of the composer's final days provide a moving testimony.

Curator:

Pierre Korzilius, Director of the Institut Français, Düsseldorf

Media partners : L'Express – France Musique – Classica – Paris Première – RATP

Around the exhibition

Publication

-*Gustav Mahler*, Christian Wasselin, Pierre Korzilius, Découvertes Gallimard, Série Arts no. 570, Joint publication with Musée d'Orsay, 128 pages, €13.20

Music Cycle

- Friday 14 January 2011 at 8pm / **Chœur de Radio France / Nathalie Steinberg**, piano – **Mathieu Pordoy**, piano – **Matthias Brauer**, conductor
- Tuesday 22 March 2011 at 12.30pm / **The Philharmonics – Soloists of the Vienna Philharmonic**
- Thursday 24 March 2011 at 8pm / Special concert **Bernarda Fink**, mezzo-soprano / **The Philharmonics – Soloists of the Vienna Philharmonic**
- Wednesday 29 March 2011 at 12.30pm by / **Soloists of the Ensemble Intercontemporain**
- Thursday 31 March 2011 at 8pm by / Special concert / **Angelika Kirschlager**, mezzo-soprano - **Helmut Deutsch**, piano
- Tuesday 14 June 2011 at 12.30pm / **Ensemble Musique Oblique**

Lecture

- Wednesday 31 March 2011 at 12.30pm / **Mahler and Vienna** / Henri-Louis de la Grange, musicologist

Guided tour and lecture - Duration 60 mins

- Tuesdays at 2pm from 15 March 2011
- Thursdays at 2pm in April 2011

Tour of *Gustav Mahler* exhibition + ticket for special performance – 'Couplet' ticket (€26)

- Thursday 24 March 2011: guided tour 5.45pm and 6.15pm + Special concert at 8pm, museum auditorium
- Thursday 31 March 2011: guided tour 5.45pm and 6.15pm + Special concert at 8pm, museum auditorium

Practical information

Opening times: daily except Monday, 9.30am to 6pm, Thursdays until 9.45pm
Admission: museum entrance ticket: full rate €8; concessions: €5.50
Access: through the main entrance, 1, rue de la Légion d'Honneur, 75007 Paris

Communication Department : Amélie Hardivillier

+33 (0)1 40 49 48 56 – amelie.hardivillier@musee-orsay.fr

Press contacts: Laure Papon: +33 (0)1 40 49 49 66 – laure.papon@musee-orsay.fr

Pauline Boyer : +33 (0)1 40 49 49 20 – pauline.boyer@musee-orsay.fr