The Timpani Parts to Mahler's Symphony No. 2, "Resurrection"

BY ANDREW P.SIMCO

Mahler's Second Symphony is a very different work from its predecessor. For one thing, it is almost a half-hour longer. For another, it requires the participation of an even larger orchestra than the First Symphony. In addition, it also requires the participation of a small off-stage orchestra, soprano and contralto soloists, large chorus, and organ.

Like the First Symphony, the Second calls for more than one timpanist. However, whereas the earlier work calls for a second timpanist only in the last movement, the Second Symphony makes extensive use of the second timpanist in the first, third, and fifth movements. Indeed, in this last movement, Mahler even requires the service of a third timpanist for several bars. It is quite safe to say that the role of the second timpanist assumes even greater importance than in the earlier work.

BACKGROUND

Mahler began composing the symphony in 1888. During this period he was a staff conductor at the Leipzig Opera. (Incidentally, this was the same year in which the First Symphony was completed.) The Second Symphony was composed over a period of six years. According to noted American businessman-musicologist Gilbert Kaplan, this was done in a piecemeal fashion.

The first movement, called "Todtenfeier," exists in two versions. The first version, completed a scant six months after the First Symphony, is significantly different in orchestration from the version we know as part of the symphony. The music itself is much the same but the final version is more concise, robust, and dramatic, due to refinements in the orchestration and form of the movement. From the viewpoint of the timpanist, it is interesting to note that Mahler used the timpani far more extensively in the final version of the movement.

(For those interested in hearing the original version of the first movement, I know of two such recordings. One is on Virgin Records, performed by the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Karl Anton Rickenbacher. The other is on Chandos Records, performed by the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Leif Segerstam.)

The second and third movements were not completed until 1893, a full five years after the completion of "Todtenfeier." Why the delay? In his excellent monogram "The Birth of a Symphony," which accompanies his recording of the symphony, Gilbert Kaplan states that, "Perhaps the answer lies in the encounter between Mahler and Hans von Bülow, who at the time was director of the Hamburg Philharmonic." By this time, Mahler was employed as principal conductor at the Hamburg State Opera. He had idolized von Bülow for many years. At this time, von Bülow was at the height of his reputation as a master conductor and champion of new music. Von Bülow had come to admire and esteem Mahler highly as a performing musician, particularly as an opera conductor. As we shall see, that esteem did not extend to Mahler's music.

It seems that sometime after the composition of "Todtenfeier," Mahler took the opportunity to play it to von Bülow on the piano. The result was not what Mahler expected, as the older man reacted in a decidedly negative manner. According to Mahler, von Bülow's most positive comment was, "If this is music, then I do not understand a single thing about music." They parted on friendly enough terms, although Mahler was perceptive enough to realize that he was not going to get much help from von Bülow.

Being an absolute realist when it came to his own music, Mahler sensed that it would be extremely difficult to follow that powerful movement with material of a similar nature. Again, according to Kaplan, Mahler hit on the notion of a series of intermezzi, in order to more sharply set apart the finale from the opening movement. Suffice it to say that Mahler experienced great difficulty in composing these inner movements, and that this also contributed to the long delay. As a matter of fact, at this point Mahler had already officially named the first movement "Todtenfeier" in the hopes of having it performed separately during this "dry period." However, he was eventually able to solve the problem of the inner movements, and these were completed by the year 1893.

For a fourth movement, Mahler decided to use "Urlicht" ("Primal Light"), one of the songs written for his song cycle "Das Knaben Wunderhorn" ("The Youth's Magic Horn"). This he scored for mezzo-soprano and reduced orchestra. The finale caused him as many, if not more, problems than the intermezzi, and this led to yet another delay. It was while he was attempting to resolve the difficulties surrounding this last movement that he sanctioned a performance of the first three movements at a concert of the Berlin Philharmonic, which was to be conducted by his distinguished colleague and fellow composer Richard Strauss. The concert did take place on March 4, 1895. However, in the end, Mahler conducted his own work while Strauss conducted the rest of the concert.

The symphony, such as it was then, was relatively well received by the public. The critics, on the other hand, totally rejected Mahler's music (as was to be the case throughout most of his career as a composer). By this time, Mahler was nearly finished with the finale. Preparations were made for a performance of the complete work, which took place in Berlin on December 13, 1895. It was a complete triumph for Mahler. According to Bruno Walter, who was present, that night "marked the true beginning of Mahler's career as a composer."

Like much of Mahler's music, it was not until many years after the composer's death that the symphony gained in popularity. It enjoyed several distinguished performances during the period 1900 to

1960, most notably during several Mahler cycles given by Willem Mengleberg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra. In addition, there were notable performances under such famous conductors as Bruno Walter, Artur Rodzinski, and Dmitri Mitropolous. The first recording of the work took place in the mid-1930s, with the Minneapolis Symphony under Eugene Ormandy. However, with the advocacy of Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic in the 1960s, the work became more than just an "occasional" piece to be played on special occasions. It is now performed quite frequently, despite its vast musical and logistical demands.

The work, as I noted earlier, is in five movements. The first movement, "Todtenfeier," lasts twenty-two minutes and forms the whole of Part One. It is significant that Mahler asks that there be a five-minute pause before beginning the second movement. The composer felt that this pause would sharply delineate Parts One and Two. The second and third movements are approximately ten minutes in length respectively, followed by the fourth movement "Urlicht." This movement lasts approximately five-and-a-half minutes , and leads without pause into the huge final movement, which lasts approximately thirty minutes. It is this last movement that utilizes, in addition to the large orchestra already employed, both vocal soloists, chorus, organ, and off-stage orchestra.

While it would be most interesting to go even deeper into the background of the symphony, time and space do not permit it. The scope of the article centers on the timpani parts. This was one of the problems I faced in writing this article, and it demonstrates very clearly what one faces in contemplating such a remarkable work.

As in my previous article concerning Mahler's First Symphony *[Percussive Notes*: Vol. 32, No. 3, June 1994], I will analyze the parts movement by movement and make performance suggestions as appropriate. (Editor's note: In order to get the most out of the following discussion of Mahler's Second Symphony, I suggest that readers follow the Universal Edition, which has the same rehearsal numbers and indications referred to in the text.—Michael Rosen)

WHAT SIZE DRUMS, AND HOW MANY?

Since the work calls for the extensive use of two players (with the use of a third in the finale), I feel it appropriate to share some thoughts on this subject. In the "orchesterbesetzung" (list of orchestral instruments) at the beginning of the score, Mahler indicates "2 Pauker, mit 3 pauken spüter tritt ein dritte Pauker hinzu." This translates (rather loosely) as "Two timpanists with three timpani; later a third timpanist steps in." While the work can be easily done with both players using three timpani as recommended by the composer, the quality and size of today's instruments gives us the luxury of using four drums per player, enabling the parts to be played on instruments that are even more capable of proper in-

tonation, tone color, and projection than were the instruments of Mahler's time.

Player One should be equipped with the standard set of four drums, with the sizes 31-inch, 28-inch, 25-inch, and 23-inch (depending on manufacturer). This set will cover the range from low E-flat to high G easily. It will also afford the player the option of playing the part in the proper range, while at the same time making allowance for the optimum in tone color and projection.

Player Two should use the same setup, although I recommend that Player Two make use of an extra 31-inch drum if possible. The two 31-inch drums would be ideal in covering the extreme low part of the register, giving those notes added body, while the upper register can easily be handled on the upper three drums. The range of the second timpani part extends from low D-flat to a high G. We used this setup in our concerts and in recording the symphony for Chandos Records, and my assistant timpanist and I found it quite satisfactory. I sat center stage to the rear of the orchestra with four Hinger timpani, and my colleague sat to my immediate left with a set of Light timpani (including an extra 31-inch timpano). I was placed right next to the percussion section, which was an advantage, as it made it easier for the third player to function as timpanist. (More on this point later).

MALLET SELECTION

As in most cases, mallet selection is a matter of personal taste. However, I feel it appropriate to comment on this before we get into the analysis. Like its predecessor, the Second Symphony requires a great deal of sensitivity to tone color on the part of both players, and it is advisable that both timpanists consult each other before the first rehearsal as to drum size and placement (mentioned earlier), and mallet selection. While a great deal of the sensitivity to tone color comes from the player's natural ability and instincts (as it should), the proper mallet selection is essential in assisting the players in obtaining the necessary tone color and sound projection. It goes without saying that both players should avail themselves of a set of mallets that offers a wide range of tone color.

In my opinion, the set should include at least six pairs of timpani mallets. The following list of mallets is similar to what I would use in these circumstances:

Pair One: Soft: Duff-American #7 mallets would be perfect.

Pair Two: Medium Soft: Hinger Yellow, Ron Carlisle Red, or something similar.

Pair Three: General Purpose: Hinger, Carlisle, or Clevelander.

Pair Four: Medium-Hard: Feldman Blue, Carlisle Yellow, or Hinger Red.

Pair Five: Hard: Feldman Red, Carlisle Green Felt, or Hinger Blue.

Pair Six: Wood mallets: Hinger, Feldman, or Sal Rabbio models. (One might opt for a pair of double-ended mallets—felt on one end and wood on the other for this pair. See below for specific places in the work to use these mallets.)

These are my personal recommendations, based on experience and stick preference. Whatever brand of stick one uses, as long as both players equip themselves with the types of mallets discussed above (soft, medium, general, etc.), they are more than adequately prepared to perform the symphony.

Both players must be willing to play as a team and work together during the performance of this symphony. The normal tendency is for the principal timpanist to set the pace and dictate what mallets and drums are to be used, etc. The second player usually follows the advice of the principal timpanist in this matter. If both players agree to this sort of situation, all well and good. However, since a great deal of this symphony requires interac-

tion between both players (and there are moments when the second player actually does lead), it is advisable for both to be in agreement on musical and technical matters. The subject of principal-assistant relations offers enough scope for an article of its own, so I won't go into more detail here except to say that both players should prepare to be as flexible as the musical situation requires.

FIRST MOVEMENT: ALLEGRO MAESTOSO

As mentioned before, this movement lasts twenty-two minutes and forms the whole of the symphony's first part. The music is powerful, dramatic, and robust. It combines moments of almost primeval peace with outbursts of considerable force and violence. Unlike the First Symphony, which begins with harmonics and an almost primeval calm, the Second begins with a crashing tremulando on the violins and violas, with an immediate diminuendo from *fortissimo* to *piano*. After a few eruptions on contrabasses and celli, the symphony gets off to its grim start. (Mahler described this movement as the burial rites for the hero of his First Symphony).

The timpani make their first entry four bars before Rehearsal 2. Player Two starts off with a solid *fortissimo* stroke on low G four bars before Rehearsal 2. Player One begins a two-bar crescendo (also on low G) at the same point. He should take care to let the crescendo grow out of Player Two's initial stroke, and reach its climax on the note C two bars before Rehearsal 2.

At this spot Player Two weighs in with a rather Wagnerian rhythmic figure (played together with brass, horns, and bassoons). I recommend that medium-hard sticks be used, as both articulation and tonal weight are important here. Player One would do well to use general-purpose mallets here. (The rhythmic figure two bars before Rehearsal 2 is very reminiscent of Hunding's motif from Act One of Wagner's "Die Walküre." Having been an ardent admirer of Wagner's music since his conservatory days, and an opera conductor for some time prior to the composition of the symphony, it is only natural that Mahler would unconsciously use material similar to what he was exposed to on an almost daily basis).

After that initial outburst, the movement proceeds in relative peace until Rehearsal 4. At Rehearsal 3, Player One provides a soft background on a B-natural (*pianissimo*) to one of the almost primevally peaceful moments I mentioned earlier. Medium-soft mallets would be advisable here. Be careful to play softly, but at the same time project your sound enough so that your presence is felt.

After these peaceful moments at Rehearsal 3, the music becomes restless, until five bars before Rehearsal 4, when it bursts out almost angrily in preparation for the events of Rehearsal 4.

Like the first entrances before Rehearsal 2, Player Two places an authoritative stroke on B-flat on the fifth bar before Rehearsal 4 (with a *forte* dynamic this time), and like the previously mentioned instance, Player One commences a roll (also on B-flat), starting with a *piano* dynamic, and gradually making a crescendo to *fortissimo* on the eighth note E-flat two bars before Rehearsal 4. As with the first entrance before Rehearsal 2, Player One's roll should grow out of Player Two's initial stroke. At Rehearsal 4, there is another outburst on celli, contrabassi, and bassoons, after which the music continues on in grim, determined fashion.

The next entry of the timpani occur seven bars after Rehearsal 5, which is a chorale-like statement from the brass. Here, Player Two is in support of Player One, providing a strong *forte-piano* on the low G, and keeping a low profile for the next several bars. A pair of general-purpose mallets would be appropriate here. Player One starts out with a strong quarter-note *fortissimo* (also on low G), then has a *fortissimo* diminuendo roll on the next bar. In the following measure Player One is silent and then in the next measure repeats this interjection, with an empty bar following.

In the following measure, Player One takes over from Player Two on the low G, with a *piano* dynamic. Over the course of the next two bars, Player One makes a crescendo to *forte* on bar 87 (marked Pesante), where the second player weighs in with a roll (still on low G), with a quick decrescendo to *piano* and crescendo back to *forte* and a resolution on the note C in bar 88. In bar 89, Player Two comes in with a strong *fortissimo* quarter-note stroke on the note D (from which Player One's roll grows out of). Player One should be careful to use good judgement in the execution of these rolls.

My suggestion would be to always let

Player Two come in strong, and let the crescendo grow out of this first stroke. The same thing occurs in bar 91, and from that point until Rehearsal 6, it is Player One's show.

The passage between Rehearsal 6 and 7 is rather straightforward. The principal tone color here is dark, as it is a funeral march. However, great care should be exercised with regard to mallet selection. Despite the strong temptation, I would refrain from using my softest mallets at this point. Past experience has shown me that the softest mallets, while sounding beautiful up close, do not always project as well as medium-soft mallets, or a good pair of soft-generals. By all means be sure to observe the dynamics, but also make certain that your part is heard, or at lest felt!

The passage between Rehearsal 7 and two bars after Rehearsal 8 is for the first timpanist alone. It is yet another case of providing the right tone color. The dynamic at Rehearsal 7 is triple *piano*, and the timpani part (like the bass part it supports) is a nice, soft cushion for the strings to sit on. Again, it is up to the player to determine the mallet choice. In concert, it would seem quite correct to use your softest mallets here. However, if one takes note of the quarter-note low F five bars before Rehearsal 8, and the quarter-note low E two bars after Rehearsal 8, one might very well opt for a slightly "edgy" medium-soft pair of mallets, or at the least mallets that combine the necessary warmth of tone with the "point" necessary for these single strokes. This is particularly important when recording the symphony.

Soft mallets tend to get lost, or sound like so much background "fuzz," whereas medium-soft or good general-purpose mallets have the necessary warmth of sound as well as the articulation needed to get the most out of these single strokes. Make sure that your intonation is impeccable here, as there is nothing so disturbing as to have the timpani a hair out of tune at these points. Why? For one thing, the low F forms the basis of the F-major chord sounded by the harps six bars before Rehearsal 8, and secondly the low E is almost solo two bars after Rehearsal 8.

The next passage of interest occurs at Rehearsal 11, where both players support the rhythmic motif as played by the horns. Both players share the same note, C-sharp, but with a critical difference. Player One has a roll on C-sharp in a *piano* dynamic throughout the five bars, whereas Player Two (also on C-sharp) is the more rhythmic and aggressive here, with a *fortissimo* quarter note directly at Rehearsal 11; a whole-note roll with decrescendo from *fortissimo* the following bar; an empty bar on the third; and a repetition of the second bar after Rehearsal 11 on the fourth bar. Player One will do well to use medium generals, whereas Player Two would be better off using generals, and particularly general-purpose mallets with a slight edge to them to aid in the attack.

The timpani make their next appearance on the eleventh bar after Rehearsal 11, in a similar vein. Here, Player One has changed the pitch to D, whereas Player Two is now on low F-sharp. Both players should have availed themselves of general-purpose or medium-hard mallets here, as the parts become increasingly rhythmical from this point on, and articulation is extremely important. Observance of dynamics is essential here, as the texture of the music gets very thick. If one is not careful, details get lost in the shuffle, and quite easily, too!

Two bars before Rehearsal 12, Player One has a crescendo that goes right up until Rehearsal 12, whereupon (after a quarter-note rest), together with the rest of the orchestra, he explodes into four bars of musical mayhem. These bars should be played with the utmost care and precision. The second player is in a supporting role here, playing at Rehearsal 12, and again two bars later, on the note D. The rhythmic "mayhem" at Rehearsal 12 lasts for four bars, and the first player's triplets on the last half of bar four explode right into the second timpanist's entry on the fifth bar (on C-sharp, with a decrescendo roll spread out over the ensuing six bars).

Here is yet another case of interaction between the players. As in all such cases, a sense of teamwork and musical flexibility is essential. At Rehearsal 12, Player One should come in like a ton of bricks, and play with the utmost weight and articulation. Player Two should come in strong as well, but make an immediate diminuendo, as these bars are more in the nature of a dynamic interjection, rather than anything more substantial. On the fifth bar after Rehearsal 12, it is a different story, and here Player Two should come in strong, and make a gradual diminuendo as indicated in the score.

The next entry occurs six bars before Rehearsal 15, when Player Two sets the stage for the musical outburst at 15 with a six-bar roll on the note B (*pianissimo*). Here, medium-soft mallets would be perfect, as there are no rhythmic articulations, and the B roll should be as smooth and *pianissimo* as possible, while still being heard. In the four bars before rehearsal 15, Player Two is accompanied only by the bass drum, second bassoon, and tremulando celli, and by two bars before 15, it is only the bass drum and second timpanist who play. The dynamic here is *pianissimo*.

Then comes the explosion at Rehearsal 15. The tempo here is marked "schnell," and there is an angry rhythmic turn on the strings, followed by crashing brass and timpani (Player One on low E-flat). Player Two makes a very rapid change to B-flat during the third bar after 15, and then comes crashing in on the B-flat almost immediately after the second string

outburst occurs. The very end of the third string outburst gives the first timpanist the pattern for a three-drum solo, which follows during the latter half of the next bar (bar 249 in the score).

General-purpose mallets are more than adequate for this passage. The thing to keep in mind here is the last rhythmic figure played by the strings in Bar 248. This rhythm should be played exactly the same way, as this is an echo of that figure, particularly in its repetition in the dynamic *piano* at bar 251.

While most conductors usually play the part as written, some allow the player great license to be a little "free" with this solo passage. I have heard the first entrance played in tempo, and the repetition, two measures later, played with a great deal of ritardando. In my more passionate, youthful days, I thought this was great! I looked forward to the chance to play the part and was determined to out-solo the best of them. However, a quick glance at the score and parts convinced me that I was in error, and after experience (not to mention a little embarrassment), I now feel that it is best to play it just as Mahler wrote it, without any unnecessary "ornamentation."

At Rehearsal 16, the funereal character of the music reasserts itself, starting with the rhythmic figures on the celli and contrabassi, and with the low, mournful wail of the English horn five bars after Rehearsal 16. The music gradually builds up, both in tempo and tension, until the next explosion at Rehearsal 18. This passage is tricky, as Mahler has clearly marked a "caesura" at the end of the second bar after 18, and again at the end of the fourth bar after 18. The caesura does not appear at all in the timpani parts, but is indicated in all the other instruments. What does Mahler mean?

When we performed and recorded the symphony for the Chandos record label, under the baton of Mariss Jansons, we all observed the caesura, although I must confess that it felt very uncomfortable at the time. Mahler, in his instructions to the conductor at the top of the score (Rehearsal 18), makes mention of the caesura, and notes "hereafter suddenly forward." This is certainly in keeping with the tempo marking "a tempo subito Molto piu mosso." So, fellow timpanists, be aware of what happens here. It is very easy to find oneself "out of sync," especially if the rest of the orchestra observes the caesuras and you do not. It can get quite lonely at these moments.

Player One is carrying the responsibility here, and is instructed to use wood sticks. Mahler is looking for articulation at this point, and if one uses anything softer than wood-headed mallets, the articulation will go for naught. Player Two is acting in a secondary role here, interjecting a half-note roll (with decrescendo on B-flat) every two bars.

At Rehearsal 19, the tempo steadies somewhat, after all that forward motion, although it is gearing up for the big climax at Rehearsal 20. Player One has a bit of a dilemma here: At Rehearsal 18, wood sticks are being used, as directed in the score. On the seventh bar after 18, Player One is directed to use normal mal-

lets. The change must be made within two bars, and the music is moving rather fast at this point. I feel that Player One should have a pair of "double-ended" mallets available here with wooden balls (or "eggs") on one end and the normal felt on the other. This would make it much easier to effect the stick change by just turning the mallets around, instead of taking the time to put the wood sticks down on the stick tray and reach for the felt pair. I know from experience that one must really be alert and on top of things at this point, and a moment's hesitation can cause problems here.

Another solution to the dilemma is to play the whole passage with wood, which I have done on a few occasions. However, I was never fully satisfied with that solution, feeling that it was a bit of a "cop-out." Double-ended mallets are the best solution. The music here is very tumultuous, almost fevered, and should be played in that manner.

At Rehearsal 19, Player One has the triplets on E-flat with a fast diminuendo from triple *forte* to *piano*; Player Two has the triplet on *fortissimo* only on the first beat of the measure. This is repeated two bars later, and then both players shift back to wooden sticks five bars after Rehearsal 19. Each player has the mirror image of what the other has. For example, Player One has the triplets going from E-flat to B-flat, whereas Player Two has them going the opposite direction, i.e. from B-flat to E-flat. The greatest care must be taken with this passage. Mahler is looking for a grim, intense, almost savage feeling here, but at the same time he demands that we keep this feeling under control and play with the utmost precision. The dynamic for both players is *piano* here, with the triplets at five after 19 being accented. Do not crescendo too early, as that will ruin the emotional intensity of the moment. Mahler was very precise in his directions, and was a past master at knowing when to hold back and when to get carried away.

From this point, the music increases in intensity in time for the climax at Rehearsal 20. The timpani prepare the ground for this climax at five before 20 when the second player comes in like a ton of bricks on the note G. The dynamic is *fortissimo*, and as marked in the score, Player Two should maintain that dynamic throughout this passage. Player One is serving an important, though subsidiary, role here, with rhythmic interjections on the high G.

At Rehearsal 20, Mahler literally "puts on the brakes." The forward motion of the orchestra has now ceased, and we are at the moment of truth. The tempo marking is "Molto pesante," and the lead has passed to Player One, who plays the same rhythm as the entire brass section, and at the same time acts as a brake four measures after 20, really making a ritardando here in preparation for the crunch at one before Tempo I—not to mention the sudden return to Tempo I. Player Two enters on the low G on the very last half of the bar, and both come down hard on C at Tempo I. Make sure that you are together at this point, because if one is slightly out of step with the other, the whole climax looses its weight, not to mention that it sounds very untidy. (Make sure you consult your bass drum player at this point, too!) Wood sticks are again the order of the day.

From this point until four bars after Rehearsal 22, the music is basically a restatement of the material from the beginning of the movement (albeit greatly shortened). The next point of interest for us occurs from Rehearsal 24 to the end. Here the character of the music is that of a funeral march, grim in its intensity. From three bars before Rehearsal 25, the timpani begin to take an active role in the scheme of things. Throughout this passage, both players should be aware of what is happening musically. The rhythmic lead passes back and forth between them. This is particularly the case from three bars before Rehearsal 25 until two bars before Rehearsal 26.

The mallets used here should have both weight and point, as articulation is very important. The triplets eight bars after Rehearsal 26 should be articulated as cleanly as possible.

The first player has the burden of leadership here, while the second player is purely in an accompanying role. Light dampeners (possibly a pair of discs made of chamois cloth) could conceivably be used to assist in obtaining the articulation, but there is a possibility that it would dampen the sound a trifle too much. I personally would not use any sort of dampener here. I would stick the triplet figure RLRRLRL , counting on the rebound of the repeated sticking to aid in articulation. I would use medium-hard mallets right up until the very end of this movement.

SECOND MOVEMENT: ANDANTE MODERATO.

This is the first of the two intermezzi, which Mahler uses to delineate the various parts of the symphony. From the viewpoint of the timpani player, it is relatively straightforward in comparison to the first movement, and requires the services of the first timpanist only. That being said, I must caution players not to take this movement for granted. This movement is an exercise in articulation.

Let's look at the first entry of the timpani four bars after Rehearsal 4. Here the timpani are tuned to a low F-sharp, and must execute a rhythmic articulation that needs finessing in order to bring it out properly. Medium-hard mallets would serve best, in my opinion, although one could articulate that fairly well with general-purpose mallets, provided that calfskin heads and a very light chamois damper were being used.

The next entry occurs one bar before Rehearsal 7. Here, the instrument is tuned to D-sharp, and the timpanist comes in with a *forte-piano* roll, making a fast crescendo to *fortissimo* at Rehearsal 7. At Rehearsal 7 great care must be taken to make the most of the articulation.

The rest of the movement is straightforward, with articulation and intonation being the watchwords here.

THIRD MOVEMENT: IN RUHIG FLIESENDER BEWEGUNG

This movement is based on material used in "Das Knaben Wunderhorn," specifically the song titled "St. Anthony preaching to the Fishes." It has been reworked to form the second of the intermezzi in Mahler's grand scheme for the second symphony, and this is a fun movement for the timpanists. Player Two is called back into service, and as we shall see, the whole movement is yet another instance of musical co-operation between the two players.

Player One starts things off with two loud dominant-to-tonic statements. Here, the practice is to play those statements loud and then immediately dampen them so that they will not ruin the grand pause in the bar following each statement. **"**Kurz Jeden Ton abdämfen" is indicated, which means "short and then

dampen the sound." Mahler specifies that each of the grand-pause bars is to be a short pause (Kurze halte!). Note the accent on the first eighth note of the second statement, as well as the rhythm, and the dynamic. Mahler makes an explosive first statement here, followed by one a shade less in strength, and then by the time Player Two comes in on Bar 5, he is down to *mezzo-forte* and making a diminuendo to *piano*.

It is essential that both players pay attention to the dynamics and the character of the music in this movement. In the original version used in "Das Knaben Wunderhorn," the music and text is full of irony, and some of that same feeling must be preserved here. Very often, this passage has been played by Player One alone. I saw a performance with the Concertgebouw Orchestra under the direction of Bernard Haitink in which Jan Labordus, then the orchestra's principal timpanist, played the whole passage himself. I did the same in subsequent performances and in our recording, and still feel that it is quite acceptable practice to play it that way. To play it as Mahler has written is asking a lot of both players, especially with regard to intonation. I have heard it done several times this way, and always heard a slight difference in intonation between players, which I found disturbing—not to mention the difference in sound and timbre between the players, no matter how similar their technique.

Technically, the rest of the movement is fairly straightforward. Several places require some care on the part of both players. One place occurs three bars after Rehearsal 44. Both players have sixteenth-note figures here, and Mahler has taken pains to make clear that they should be played quite short, almost like a pizzicato effect from the lower strings. I recommend placing one mallet lightly on the center of the drum while playing the figure with the other hand. This will aid in articulation.

The next passage occurs five bars before Rehearsal 46. The important thing here is the trade-off between Player One and Two. Player One makes a strong statement, the dynamic being *forte*, and Player Two continues the statement two bars before 46, albeit with a *mezzo-forte* dynamic. However, Mahler accents each of the notes, so I take it to mean that the passage in question is not to be played in a laid-back manner. I would tend to think the dynamic should really be *poco-forte* there. Let your ear be the judge.

From four bars after Rehearsal 46 until the tenth bar, the two players are engaged in a little duet. Play this passage with the utmost delicacy, and listen to each other. At Rehearsal 47, Player Two has a descending figure on three drums. Again, one must think of a pizzicato effect. I would put very light mufflers on the drums, just enough to slightly dampen the drums in order to give the pizzicato effect. I would also recommend using hard mallets with a light, lifting motion. The same holds true for Rehearsal 48, when the figure is repeated in reverse order.

Yet another important place occurs nine bars after Rehearsal 50.

Here, both players play *fortissimo* for four bars, with a gradual diminuendo to *forte* on the third bar. Both players play exactly the same rhythm over the four bars, and it is imperative that one count precisely and not rush the figure, as it can easily get out of hand! Medium-hard to hard mallets are the order of the day here.

On the fifth bar, Player One continues with accented rhythmic figures and a diminuendo on the note C, until eight measures before 51, when Player Two takes over, also on the note C, with a *piano* roll, gradually dying down over several bars to *pianissimo*. At Rehearsal 51, the first player takes over the roll, setting up Player Two for the solo interjections from the second bar after Rehearsal 51 until and including the seventh bar.

At six measures after 55, shortly before the end of the movement, both players have a unison C on the second beat of each measure for five bars. This same figure is repeated six bars later. Try your best to be absolutely precise, as this should sound like one player. The movement ends quietly, with a pizzicato C in the basses, harp, and a soft stroke on the tam-tam.

FIFTH MOVEMENT: IM TEMPO DES SCHERZO WILD HERAUSFAHREND

As the fourth movement is tacet for timpani, we go directly to the fifth movement, which begins wildly, with an enormous outburst of sound from the entire orchestra. This opening section, particularly from bar 3 until four bars after Rehearsal 1, is extremely difficult to bring off, especially in terms of articulation. Again, Mahler calls for wood sticks here, and it is obvious why. Be as articulate as possible, but do not get so caught up in articulation as to get behind the beat. This is a wild wave of sound and it moves! Forward motion is as important as articulation here, so be on your guard. Note the trade-off in rhythm between the players (Player One: bars 6 through 9; Player Two: bars 10 through 13).

When we recorded this symphony, our conductor, Mariss Jansons, was not satisfied with the articulation. He felt that only one player should attempt the opening, with the second player entering on bar 6. In order to make the opening even more articulate, I attached very small pieces of felt to the timpani heads in the center, and used extremely hard felt mallets. Jansons was satisfied with this, and it came off very well in the recording. However, in concert, we played it as written, using both players.

The music then gradually calms down until at Rehearsal 2 it assumes an entirely new character: one of almost sol-

emn mysticism. Here Player Two takes a bit of the lead, with interjections from Player One from time to time. The dynamics here are all quiet, and it gets quieter until the music dies out in time for the first appearance of the "Grosse Apell" (offstage horns). Every time we played the piece, I felt uncomfortable with making the change from wood to felt mallets at Rehearsal 2. As a general rule, I feel uncomfortable playing with wood sticks except when called for. Just before Rehearsal 2, Player One is required to make a diminuendo to *piano*, still using wood sticks. When I use calf heads it isn't so bad, as the slappy sound of the wood sticks gets lost somewhat in the sound of the orchestra. With plastic heads, one is more aware of it, and playing softly with wood sticks, particularly in a roll, sounds like a ship's engine in need of repair! However, Mahler leaves the player with no choice, so I advise players to be aware and compensate as best they can. Player Two is silent here, and can make the change of mallets without a problem.

The section from four bars before Rehearsal 4 until three bars after Number 4 is very interesting as it is a chordal use of both sets of timpani. Player One is on C and E-flat, while Player Two has the lower end with low E-flat, G, and B-flat. Here is where that extra 31-inch timpano for Player Two comes in handy. It allows the player to have a big, round E-flat as well as a G, and a good B-flat as well. One can easily play the notes on the 31-inch, 28-inch and 25-inch, but the B-flat is thin and "soupy-sounding."

Both players should take care to make sure that intonation is impeccable, as both are together with the strings and harps at this point. The passage fades out into a solo passage on the note C by Player One, two bars after Rehearsal 4. I would use general-purpose mallets here, but also be careful to make each note of the solo speak clearly and distinctly.

The remainder of the movement is chock-full of places that require the utmost care on the part of both players. If I discussed all of them, this article would go on for another twenty pages! I will cite just three important places:

Between Rehearsal 11 and Rehearsal 14: Here is a case of ensemble playing on the part of both players. Player Two is very much concerned with the tonic (C), whereas Player One makes interjections on C and high G (double stops). Player Two should be equipped with general-purpose mallets, and Player One would do well to be using medium-hard mallets. This will give the C and G double stops the added "zip" that they need.

This passage dwindles into nothingness prior to Rehearsal 14, and the great percussion crescendo. The bass drum actually begins to roll five bars before the molto ritenuto, in *pianissimo* dynamic, to set the stage for the orchestral "descent into the abyss" before the molto ritenuto two bars before 14. The tam-tams start two bars before the molto ritenuto, and Player One starts a roll the bar before and begins to crescendo. Player Two enters in the second bar of the molto ritenuto, and makes a quick crescendo. This first crescendo should be drawn out a bit, but not too much. I have seen performances where it was really exaggerated, and other performances where it was almost perfunctory. When we recorded the symphony, our conductor chose a good middle course: not too long so that it was exaggerated, and not too short. Immediately at Rehearsal 14, after a short orchestral interjection, there is yet another crescendo, and this one is definitely shorter than the first.

Earlier in this article I mentioned that in the course of the fifth movement a third player steps in. This occurs at Rehearsal 20, in one of the most violent orchestral outbursts in the orchestral repertoire. Player One has B-flat and high F; Player Two has the low F, and the third player has A and D-flat.

In actual practice, I reassign the parts here. Since the third player came over from the percussion section, I assigned Player Three the low F, or the Player Two part for this section. My assistant (Player Two) took over the A and D-flat, or the Player Three part. The reason for this was to avoid either having to bring extra drums on stage for these few bars, or having to disturb either Player One or Two unduly by taking up too many instruments. This was an ideal solution to the problem. Since the percussion section was on the right of the timpanists, all the third player had to do was to walk over to my set of drums and make use of my low drum. I pre-tuned it so that all he had to do was play. We kept an extra stand with the appropriate page of the timpani part, plus a pair of mallets to make it as simple as possible.

The player on the low F needs to be aware of the dynamic contrasts in the section and play accordingly. A pair of good general mallets will suffice. Players One and Three (in our case, Player Two) have the responsibility for the explosive interjections with rapid diminuendos. Medium-hard or general mallets will suffice. Again, pay attention to the dynamics.

The offstage C-sharp after Rehearsal 30 can be played by either Player One (who would need to walk off-stage if the instrument were placed behind a screen just off the stage), or an extra player hired for the purpose. In our case, because of the way the Oslo Concert Hall stage is set up, the distance to the offstage position is great, so we always use an extra player (who also plays offstage percussion earlier in the movement). I have seen it done both ways. However, I favor hiring an extra as it avoids having the principal player leave the stage during the performance.

Last of all, the final section. Most of the rest of the symphony is fairly straightforward. The players need to watch out for what occurs at Rehearsal 50. Here, the timpani function like great deep bells, and play this passage in unison with the tuba, organ, and celli and basses. Watch your intonation and rhythm. Either general-purpose or medium-hard mallets will do nicely.

When you get to the end of the symphony, you should have a feeling of accomplishment and great satisfaction. It is my hope that you will enjoy the Mahler's Second Symphony as much as I do, and that this article will add to your understanding and enjoyment of one of the greatest of all symphonies!

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