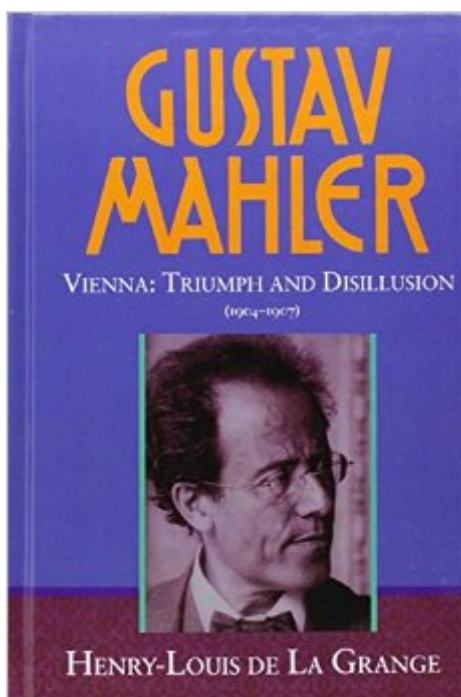


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Gustav Mahler, Vol. 3: Vienna: Triumph And Disillusion, 1904-1907



Synopsis

When the second volume of de La Grange's monumental study of Mahler appeared, it was hailed in *The New Yorker*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and many other publications as an indispensable portrait of the great composer. Here at last is the third volume of this magisterial work.

Ranging from 1904 to 1907, it explores Mahler's final years as administrator, producer, and conductor of the Vienna Opera. It was a time of intense inner struggle, with Mahler's energy and creative powers drained by the competing demands of running the Hofoper and struggling for recognition as a composer. And they were tragic years as well, especially 1907, Mahler's last year in Vienna, when the death of his daughter and the diagnosis of heart disease forced him to leave the Opera. Throughout the book, de La Grange offers true-to-life portraits of Mahler the human being, the family man, and the composer, and he weaves in innumerable testimonies and anecdotes that throw new light on the great composer's complex personality. The product of forty years of research, here is the definitive study of a musical giant. It is, as *The Wall Street Journal* said of volume two, "a work of the first importance, one that nobody seriously interested in Mahler can possibly afford to skip."

Book Information

Hardcover: 1054 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; Revised and Revised ed. edition (May 25, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 019315160X

ISBN-13: 978-0193151604

Product Dimensions: 9.3 x 2.3 x 6.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (6 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,118,472 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #446 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Biographies > Classical](#) #2338 in [Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Performing Arts > Music](#) #3070 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Television Performers](#)

Customer Reviews

The monumental biography of Mahler by Henri de la Grange has been available in French for some years, and the latest volume to appear in English is part of an ongoing project to make the work available to a wider audience. It is unique in the sheer mass of factual detail it presents, especially

as regards contemporary critical reaction to Mahler's works and conducting. There is new material on William Ritter, an early admirer who left some colorful accounts of Herr Mahler in person; a detailed physical description of Mahler by Alfred Roller, a Hofoper associate; and much other information that will be new and interesting even to long-standing Mahlerites who thought they knew it all. However, de la Grange's almost exclusive focus on the externals of Mahler's life works to the detriment of the inner life, and this is the major shortcoming of his biography. There is little probing of the wellsprings of the mighty Mahlerian will that powered a colossal productivity, nor of the fierce vitality coexisting with neuroses. Nor, surprisingly, is much explanation offered as to why a tyrannical ascetic like Mahler would suddenly decide to marry someone half his age, a decision that took even his closest friends completely by surprise. Why didn't he stay single, or marry someone his own age, such as the devoted and musical Natalie Bauer-Lechner?

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