

Fuchsentritt, was a drinking song associated with the hazing of freshmen. The other melodies are, *Wir hatten gebauet ein staatliches Haus* (which was considered so inflammatory that it was banned by the German governments of the Metternich era), *Hochfeierlicher Landesvater*, and *Gaudeamus igitur*, which brings the overture to an exhilarating close.

Mahler's songs on texts by Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866) were composed during one of his happiest periods. He had met and married Alma Schindler, daughter of the Austrian landscape painter Emil Jakob Schindler (1842–1892), who presented him with two daughters. Bruno Walter (1876–1962), the celebrated German-born American conductor who was Mahler's colleague and follower, found that the style of his songs developed into "a refreshingly varied and significant part of his work. Each has the mark of creativity [and] musical invention; none is a mere piece of emotional declamation." Writer John Ardoin further states: "The [qualities] of [these songs], these remembrances trapped in sound, are the mortar of [his] symphonies." For example, the delicacy of a gentle breeze is captured in the sparse orchestral textures of *Ich atmet' einen linden Duft*. *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen* is rich with the serenity that orchestral strings are uniquely able to express, while *Um Mitternacht* is set in a minor mode, from which it repeatedly tries to escape. At the end, the music finally breaks into the major mode, reflecting the consolation that appears in the final verse of the poem, after four verses of protest and despair.

Bruckner's *Symphony No. 4 in E-flat Major*, which he subtitled *The Romantic*, had its first performance in 1881 in Vienna under the baton of the eminent German conductor Hans Richter (1843–1916). *Symphony No. 4*, like its contemporary, Brahms' *Symphony No. 2*, retains a classical structure. There are unifying elements throughout the symphony: the interval of a perfect fifth, which is the "motto," and a Brucknerian rhythm. The first element is heard in the second movement (*Andante*) and the second in the third movement (*Scherzo*). The cellos play the perfect fifth interval first in a lengthy eloquent melody that is heard three times. Similar but shorter segments starring the violas follow. In the third movement (*Scherzo*), the Brucknerian rhythm appears: two quarter notes followed by a triplet of three quarter notes, together filling one 4/4 measure. With the deployment of distinctive horn figures that are reminiscent of a hunting chase, the *Scherzo* is "a mealtime on the hunt," a humorous reference attributed to Bruckner himself.

Program notes by Elmer Booze

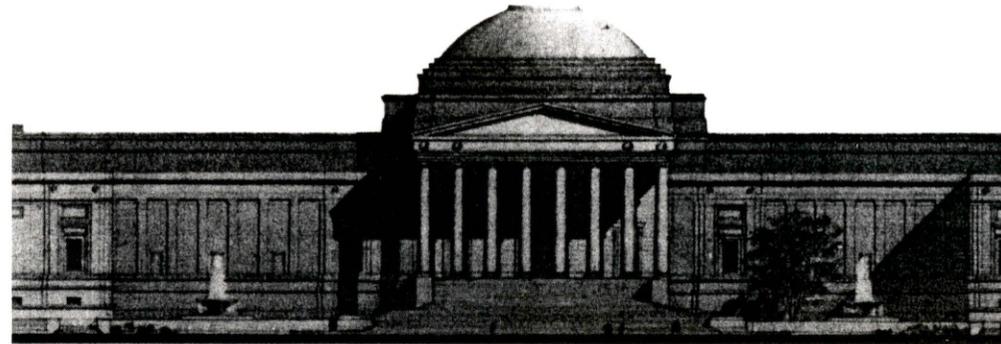
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Sunday Evening, 6 February 2000

Seven O'clock

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