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Press info:

Gustav Mahler: Symphony No. 8 (Symphony of a Thousand)



RAFAEL KUBELIK

Symphonie-Orchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks

Martina Arroyo • Erna Spoorenberg • Edith Mathis, soprano

Julia Hamari • Norma Procter, alto

Donald Grobe, tenor

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone

Franz Crass, bass

Eberhard Kraus, organ

Chor des Bayerischen Rundfunks • Chor des Norddeutschen Rundfunks

Chor des Westdeutschen Rundfunks • Regensburger Domspatzen

Frauenchor des Münchner Motettenchores

Symphony No. 8 is Mahler's most monumental symphony, for it is itself a combination of two enormous choral cantatas; in it, Mahler brings together "Veni, creator spiritus," the old Pentecostal hymn of Hrabanus Maurus, with Goethe's Faust II. The two texts could hardly be more dissimilar, which is why the music also makes very different demands on the listener in the two respective parts. The first part of the Symphony is complete in itself; the ecstatic enthusiasm of the hymn alternates with intimate passages, then leading back to the opening hymn-like character at the end. The second part, a setting of the Faust text, is not only two-and-a-half times as long as the first but also far more complex. Goethe's esoteric poetry allows Mahler to ascend into ever higher spheres. However, his music almost always does justice to Goethe's words and the scenic description; Mahler's celestial visions are manifested in this tremendous work. The ensemble, consisting of an eight-part double choir, a boys' choir, 8 soloists and a huge orchestra including organ earned the Symphony its nickname "Symphony of a Thousand" before its premiere. Even if Mahler insisted on crossing out this subtitle on the announcement poster, it does indeed express the work's monumental quality very well.

This live recording of 24 June 1970 in the *Kongreßsaal des Deutschen Museums* in Munich with **Rafael Kubelik** and the **Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra** is issued in SACD format. It is the continuation of our series "**LISTEN & COMPARE**," which offers the SACD listener the possibility of directly comparing the revised, updated version to the completely unadulterated original archive recording.



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