

# Gustav Mahler

“If a composer could say what he had to say in words he would not bother trying to say it in music.”

Gustav Mahler was an Austrian composer born 1860 in the Bohemian village of Kaliště, Czech Republic. As a child Mahler was so influenced by military and folk music that by the age of 8 he had already started writing his very own musical compositions.

Mahler pursued his passion for music at the Vienna Conservatory where he began composing his famous cantata, *Das Klagende Lied* ‘Song of Lamentation’ (1878-1880). Later, Mahler joined the University of Vienna where he studied literature and philosophy, which had a significant impact on his musical creations.

In 1883, after Mahler had worked as a part-time chorus-master and conductor, he was appointed the Musical and Choral Director of Theatre in the town of Kassel, a position he held for 10 years, and where he first performed some of his most famous works, such as, *Der Freischütz* ‘The Marksman’.

In 1888, Mahler was able to complete an opera *Die drei Pintos* ‘The Three Pintos’, which had been left unfinished for 65 years after the death of its composer Carl Maria von Weber. Mahler’s completion of Weber’s opera became critically and financially acclaimed after its premier in Leipzig. Soon after, Mahler began traveling to perform the opera that had been left forgotten and incomplete for many decades.

In 1907, Mahler conducted a farewell concert in Hamburg before his move to New York. There he completed his *Tenth Symphony, the Adagio*, and four other pieces. In 1911, he performed his final concert at Carnegie Hall. Mahler passed away in Austria just 3 months later.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Gustav Mahler’s *Symphony No. 3* is one of the longest symphonies ever created at around 95 minutes!

## FUN FACT

Gustav Mahler composed his music in the morning, preferably during activities such as swimming, running, or cycling.

## MUSICAL TERM

**Cantata:** A vocal composition often sung with a choir in several movements.

