



Gustav Mahler and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra Tour America

Mary H. Wagner

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In 1909, when the troubled New York Philharmonic Orchestra needed a leader to rejuvenate and reshape it, composer and conductor Gustav Mahler accepted the challenge. By instituting regular rehearsals, developing a season with forty-six concerts—tripling the previous number, and taking the orchestra on tour, Mahler spent the final two years of his life striving to make the New York Philharmonic the best orchestra in the country, and equal of any in the world. *Gustav Mahler and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra Tour America* documents Mahler's tours with the orchestra during the 1909 and 1910 seasons, detailing the conditions and preparations for each tour, the outcome of each concert, and the perceptions of audiences beyond New York City. Author Mary H. Wagner amassed data from more than 1,000 articles to present a thorough description of the planning and reception of the Philharmonic on its first tour outside New York. Starting with Mahler's decision to join the Philharmonic, the book describes the ways Mahler designed programs to appeal to American audiences, employing one hundred musicians on the tours and presenting works by Wagner, Strauss, Berlioz, and Bach to audiences, many of whom had never heard them played by a full romantic orchestra. The book also describes the touring conditions throughout America, providing a history of touring and orchestral development at the turn of the twentieth century.

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