

"MAHLER"

An Original Film Script
by
Maurice Rowdon

CHARACTERS

GUSTAV MAHLER

ALMA MAHLER

1. EXT. VIENNESE STREETS. DAY

GUSTAV MAHLER in casual modern clothes, without the 'Mahler spectacles', is hastening through the streets of Vienna in a montage of SHOTS. He is in his early forties. A rather small man, pale and slim, with an unusually sloping steep forehead. His hair is intensely black, his eyes strikingly aware and penetrating. He has an irregular way of walking, he tends to stamp his feet, to stop suddenly and then rush forward headlong again. Some force always seems to be pushing him forward or pulling him back. A man who burns the candle at both ends. Amid the harsh traffic noises he seems to be searching for something. He constantly stops at doorways, looks up at houses, as if trying to recognise some feature from long ago. He screws up his eyes, peering, then is disappointed and hurries on. The sound of his steps is sharp, denoting purpose, even panic.

CUT:

2. EXT. VIENNESE SUBURB. DAY

The street sounds are suddenly cut off. GUSTAV is now on the outskirts of the city, in the neighbourhood of Grinzing. Here he seems to believe that he will find his destination. The same searching goes on, the same disappointment. He stops, turns and looks back. Everything is quiet, unnaturally so. The streets are quite deserted. He walks on. He disappears round a corner.

CUT:

3. EXT. VIENNESE SUBURB. DAY

GUSTAV suddenly seems to recognise a house on the other side of the road. He runs across. He stops before a fine detached house with steps leading up to the entrance.

CUT:

4. EXT. VIENNESE STREETS. DAY

The harsh traffic noises again. ALMA MAHLER a handsome blond young woman of twenty-two, taller than GUSTAV, her hair loose, is picked up among the PEDESTRIANS, strolling along. Her step is slower and more self-assured than GUSTAV's. But she too seems to be on a search. She too peers round about her, though less obviously than GUSTAV. She too is dressed in casual modern clothes.

CUT:

5. EXT. VIENNESE SUBURB. DAY

GUSTAV stands gazing at the house. He walks forward. He walks up the steps to the entrance. He searches for a bell but does not find one. To his surprise he finds the door open. He pushes at it gingerly. Then he is bold and walks in. We stay on the door.

CUT:

6. EXT. VIENNESE SUBURBS. DAY

In the same area ALMA MAHLER strolls along as if remembering something, piecing it all together, sometimes stopping to look round her in a musing way which contrasts with GUSTAV's nervous hurry.

CUT:

7. EXT. VIENNESE SUBURBS. DAY

ALMA turns into the road where GUSTAV found his house. She looks from side to side. She too seems to recognise the house and stands gazing at it from outside. She walks towards it slowly. She cherishes it all - the windows, the steps up to the entrance, the trees, the gravel path. She walks to the steps. She touches the geranium urns on either side, remembering them with pleasure. She gazes up for a moment, just before she mounts the steps. As she walks up, the introduction passage of the 'Alma theme', the second subject of the first movement of the 6th Symphony, comes over. It suits her mood, reminiscing, tender, expectant. She too finds the door open. She hesitates. Then she too walks into the house.

CUT:

8. INT. THE HOUSE, UPSTAIRS LANDING. DAY

The music is still over, GUSTAV is gazing round him with a certain awe. This is a modest yet comfortable house with the furnishing of 1901. He starts as he hears a sound on the stairs. He too hears the music. He watches ALMA come up the stairs. She stops with astonishment when she sees him. He gazes down at her.

GUSTAV

Alma!

ALMA

Gustav! It is! Oh, Gustl!

8. Contd.

They remain staring at each other. She then rushes up the remaining stairs. They are about to embrace but something stops them. They stand quite still.

GUSTAV

Oh, Almschili ...

She puts out a hand very slowly to touch his modern clothes. We watch her hand tremble, almost withdrawing again. She touches him. The hand comes away again quickly. They go near to each other. They seem to be about to kiss when polite laughter makes them turn with astonishment. We follow their P.V. to find L.S. a room where a late afternoon reception is going on. The GUESTS are clothed in the style of the early 1900's, though not too formally, these men and women are the artistic, the liberated of Vienna.

CUT:

9. CLOSE SHOT OF GUSTAV AND ALMA

They gaze at each other in wonder. They look down at their own clothes. They seem to become alarmed, in case they will be seen. They want to get away. He sees a door and takes her hand, leads her towards it. It is a bedroom. They go quickly inside.

CUT:

10. INT. THE MASTER BEDROOM. DAY

They come in, still holding hands. It is a large bedroom with an ornate dressing table and wardrobe of the period. They look round. The bed is properly laid, indeed turned back as if a couple were expected. Laid on the bed are the costumes which GUSTAV and ALMA are to wear. For him there are tails, as for the concert platform. They turn towards each other again. They inspect each other's hair and clothes in a strange detached way. He puts his hand through her hair. She slightly tugs at his unfamiliar clothes. They smile. It seems a lifetime since they saw each other. He takes her hair and draws it up at the back, in the style that was characteristically ALMA's. She smiles and looks sideways towards the dressing table mirror. She is reflected there, with her hair up.

Her hair falls again as we move in to the mirror and her reflection. They go closer together. He sits on the bed and draws her towards him, still in the reflection of the mirror, growing vaguer. Her hair falls over his head as he lies down and they kiss. On the dressing table MAHLER's spectacles are taken in for a moment.

10. Contd.

Then it seems that their bare flesh is shining in the mirror, with her hair still enveloping his head. The music has ceased. We hear their slight crooning together. She is on top. The mirror becomes brilliant with light as we draw closer to it. Like the mirrored foyer of a concert hall. The tuning of an orchestra bursts over. There is the sound of talk and laughter among the concert-goers. The foyer-picture almost becomes defined for a moment.

CUT:

11. INT. CONCERT HALL. EVENING

A dressed ORCHESTRA. It is the moment before the concert. This is the Grosser Musikvereins-Saal, Vienna. GUSTAV MAHLER briskly mounts the rostrum in tails. He taps with his baton three times and raises his arms.

12. REVERSE ANGLE

CLOSE SHOT of GUSTAV. His arms raised, his expression warm, stern and workaday. He now has the 'Mahler spectacles' on. He brings his arms down for the opening bars of his First Symphony.

13. ANOTHER ANGLE

The audience. We pick out the twenty-two year old ALMA SCHINDLER, not yet married to GUSTAV. She now has her hair up, and is wearing a lovely décollecté dress. From her P.V. we see GUSTAV's energetic cutting motions. She is absorbed in the music as if it were speaking thoughts to her: clearly a musician herself. This particular new music seems to call for careful attention.

CUT:

14. INT. CONDUCTOR'S DRESSING ROOM. EVENING

Loud talk bursts over. GUSTAV's dressing room is crowded after the concert. Among his guests are GUSTAV KLIMT the Painter, SIEGFRIED LIPINER and HIS WIFE, together with his MISTRESS and the Singer ANNA VON MILDENBURG.

GUSTAV is laughing with LIPINER and ANNA VON MILDENBURG, a robust woman in her thirties. He constantly kisses ANNA's hand with delight at what she is saying.

14. Contd.

ALMA SCHINDLER is standing with her mother FRAU MOLL and her stepfather KARL MOLL, in a separate group. ALMA glances across the room at GUSTAV and ANNA. GUSTAV looks back at her.

ANNA picks these glances up and moves towards ALMA. We move in to a CLOSE SHOT of ALMA and ANNA.

ANNA

(patron-
isingly)

Well, how did you enjoy Gustav's
First Symphony?

KARL MOLL joins the conversation to save ALMA embarrassment.

KARL MOLL

I love the linden tree theme don't you
- in the third movement - ? 'By the road
stood a linden tree where I could lay my
head and for the first time sleep' ...

CLOSE SHOT of ALMA gazing across at GUSTAV as the 'linden theme' takes over and rides the talk.

CUT:

15. INT. CONCERT HALL CORRIDOR. EVENING

GUSTAV and ALMA, both dressed for the street, hurry along among parting MUSICIANS with violin-cases, etc. She finds difficulty in keeping pace with him. He constantly turns round to talk to her, only to find that he is addressing one of his own ORCHESTRA. The 'linden theme' is still over.

GUSTAV

(suddenly
turning)

You don't mind if I don't give you a
wedding ring do you?

ALMA

(catching him up,
and speaking with
great disappoint-
ment)

No!

15. Contd.

GUSTAV

I think it's bad taste. I mean we're
already married - always have
been -

ALMA

(breathless)

Spiritually you mean?

GUSTAV

(impatiently)

With the whole of ourselves - not
just spiritually - with the whole of
our destinies - before and after life
- everything - !

ALMA

Yes!

GUSTAV

And you can't seal that with a ring.
I hate the idea!

He walks on.

GUSTAV (contd)

(suddenly turn-
ing again)

You don't care for rings do you?

ALMA shakes her head.

ALMA (V.O.)

I adore rings!

GUSTAV

(to himself,
hurrying on)

After all, it's only a stone.

From her P.V. behind, GUSTAV hurrying along.

ALMA (V.O.)

And look at his trousers ...

CUT:

16. INT. THE MASTER BEDROOM. DAY

GUSTAV's untidy trousers are no longer walking. He is standing in the dressing room adjoining the master bedroom. He is making notes on a score while trying to dress. His tails are half on his shoulders, half off, and his attempts to complete the operation are unsuccessful. His concentration on the music is absolute. He pencils in his remarks. The First Symphony is still over.

We PULL BACK and find we are seeing him from ALMA's P.V. She is sitting at the dressing table in the master bedroom, her hair up, the décolleté dress on, watching him. She fingers her beautiful wedding ring with a smile, looking down at it.

ALMA (V.O.)

(with repeated
glances between the
ring and GUSTAV)

He's the director of the Vienna State
Opera and I'm his wife! I touch him!
I kiss him! Feel his breath on my
hair!

From her P.V. again we see GUSTAV searching for a phrase in his mind, still struggling with coat.

GUSTAV

(subsiding into
a chair)

Yes!

CUT:

17. WE TAKE A MONTAGE

a) GUSTAV sitting in a horsedrawn carriage still making notes, his hat at the back of his head, jogging along towards the Opera in Vienna.

ALMA (V.O.)
Cabbies recognise him in
the street!

b) GUSTAV getting out of the cab and paying. The CABBY touches his hat.

CABBY

Thank you, Mr. Mahler!

GUSTAV strides off, watched by the CABBY.

17. Contd.

PASSERS-BY stop and bow to him as he goes towards the Opera House, but he is unaware of them.

c) GUSTAV striding through the empty corridors of the Opera House, his overcoat-tails trailing, holding his hat now, in busy conversation with three or four other MUSICIANS.

ALMA (V.O.) (contd)
And he's old enough to be my father, which I don't care about because no man in my age could be that successful! It takes a lifetime to build an empire!

d) GUSTAV entering a conference room at the Opera House, still in their company. Takes off his overcoat, throws it down. The sound of practising singers and instrumentalists drifts over from outside.

18. EXT. GRINZING WOODS. VIENNA. DAY

GUSTAV and ALMA are strolling in the woods together, arm in arm. She is in coquettish mood.

ALMA

What I love is a man's achievement!

GUSTAV

(stopping)

But that's a terrible thing to say!
You should love a man for himself!

ALMA

And the more achievement there is,
the more I love him!

GUSTAV

What if somebody came along with more
up his sleeve than me?

ALMA

I'd love him more! I'd have to!

GUSTAV

Well, I've got nothing to worry about
for the time being. I'm only in my
forties, and there's nobody in the world
with more to offer than me!

18. Contd.

They walk on. She skips, picks off leaves.

GUSTAV (V.O.)

What a cheap mind she has. But that's what I love. She's like an animal. Thank God Mozart isn't alive. She'd marry him like a shot. But perhaps she wouldn't. He wasn't successful enough.

(his face darkening)

His bitch of a wife married somebody else a few weeks after he died.

He gazes before him.

CUT:

19. INT. VIENNA STATE OPERA HOUSE. DAY

Onstage during practice a TENOR is singing the Papagheno piece from The Magic Flute, with ORCHESTRA. He is interrupted by a tap on the desk, and the ORCHESTRA finishes untidily.

20. ANOTHER ANGLE

On GUSTAV at his desk.

GUSTAV

You're trying to drag it. This isn't Wagner, old chap.

(looking down
at the
ORCHESTRA)

I don't like the sound from the cellos.

(rather fiercely)

You play like stones! All right -

(raising his arms)

pum-pum-ti-ti-bar 68...

But instead of The Magic Flute -

CUT:

21. EXT. MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK. DAY

Swing music from the fifties. ALMA MAHLER, now in her seventies, is getting into a taxi with a TEENAGER grandchild. The TEENAGER carries a violin and some sheet music.

21. Contd.

ALMA wears purple, her favourite colour, with a collar of pearls. She is still a great and even beautiful lady, not at all shrivelled by age.

CUT:

22. INT. THE TAXI. DAY

ALMA sits down and makes herself comfortable in a most leisurely way. The DRIVER glances round at her. She takes a tiny Whisky flask from her bag and swigs it with a contented, healthy gasp. The TEENAGER watches her with some awe.

ALMA

I remember in this very street, the Gibson girl she was called, sat next to me in a car like you're sitting next to me now, she stank of money, no brains at all but very beautiful, if that's possible - she asked me, "What made you marry that hideous old man?" I admit he wasn't looking very good at that time. It was a year before he died. I sat in her gold-plated car and talked and talked - I tried to say all of Gustav's music, as my reason for marrying him.

The 'Linden Tree' subject steals over again.

She gazes before her, remembering. The DRIVER turns round slowly.

DRIVER

That was very interesting, ma'am.
Now where do you wanna go?

ALMA

But of course it didn't mean a thing to her. After all, he was only fifty when she said that.

TEENAGER

(to the DRIVER)

20 East 88th Street.

The taxi jerks away.

22. Contd.

ALMA

He looked so beautiful when he died.
Pale, so pale! Like a god! Burning
black eyes - so huge! I married
twice after that; apart from a near-
marriage with a painter. That would
have made four.

TEENAGER

It was rather a lot of husbands wasn't
it?

ALMA

(like telling a
fairy story)

A composer, an architect, a novelist,
and as I say a painter. And every
one of them world-famous. Somebody
once said that every artist needs a
woman behind him. Well, four of them
needed me! Do you know I was hardly
turned twenty-one when I met the great
Mahler for the first time?

CUT:

23. EXT. VIENNA ON THE RING IN 1901. DAY

A clatter of horses' hoofs as
carriages pass along the Ring.
Background of trees and the Hofburg.
People are strolling along, dressed
in the styles of 1901. We pick up
the young unmarried ALMA
SCHINDLER with her mother. They
meet another couple, the
ZUCKERKANDLS. HERR
ZUCKERKANDL kisses their
hands in a sumptuous Viennese way.
They talk, and he chucks ALMA under
the chin. They all laugh.

ALMA (V.O.)

(still in her 70's)

One day on the Ring, who
should bump into me and
my mother but the
Zuckerkancls! They
asked me to come and
meet the great Mahler!
And I didn't want to!

(laughing)

I hated the way he conduc-
ted his First Symphony.
And I hated his First
Symphony! But Mahler
cancelled the date anyway.
When they asked me a second
time, for another Sunday, I
said yes! I accepted! I
accepted! Oh Gustav I
accepted!

24. INT. A VIENNESE HOUSE. EVENING

A hurdy-gurdy playing Ach Du Lieber Augustin! bursts over with the clatter of dishes and much loud talk and robust Viennese laughter among twenty-odd GUESTS seated round a long dining table in candlelight. GUSTAV MAHLER is seated towards one end of the table, ALMA SCHINDLER at the other. He is utterly mute, paying no attention to his neighbours. ALMA glances at him, laughing with the other GUESTS. It is the beginning of the love between them.

On either side of ALMA sit GUSTAV KLIMT and MAX BURKHART the theatrical director. They are enjoying a joke, though her enjoyment does not interfere with the attention she is giving GUSTAV.

GUSTAV throws gingerly glances in their direction. He takes an apple from the centre of the table, turns it round, polishes it on his sleeve, smells it, while his neighbour tries to talk to him. As we come further into GUSTAV, concentrating on his apple, the hurdy gurdy comes up as if drowning his thoughts and in some way identifying with the harsh laughter. He casts more penetrating glances in ALMA's direction.

ALMA (V.O.)

(as the young
girl)

I wish he'd take his eyes off me! No I don't!

(she laughs with
her neighbour)

GUSTAV

(suddenly)

Can't we share the joke down at the end there?

(but no one
seems to hear.
He cranes
forward to hear a
GUEST on the
other side of the
table)

You've just been to a violin recital?
Jan Kubelik? I think he plays like an
angel, yes.

24. Contd.

ALMA
(suddenly address-
ing GUSTAV)
I don't like soloists' recitals!

GUSTAV
(after some
surprise)
Nor do I! Nor do I!

They are gripped by each other's eyes for a moment. Then GUSTAV is dragged unwillingly into conversation by another GUEST though he is still gazing at ALMA.

GUSTAV (contd)
Beauty? I think Socrates was probably beautiful.

(rising and wand-
ering down to the
other end of the
table with his apple,
to the surprise of the
other GUESTS)
And I suppose you'd call him old and
ugly. Well, he was - !

ALMA
(to GUSTAV)
I think the composer Alexander von
Zemlinsky beautiful for instance.

GUSTAV
No! That's going too far. He's the most
atrociously ugly man I've ever set eyes
on, even for a musician.
(the GUESTS
round ALMA
laugh)

ALMA
Why haven't you ever done his ballet
'The Golden Heart', Mr. Mahler?
I happen to know you promised him you
would!

MAHLER
(startled)
Because I can't understand it!

24. Contd.

ALMA

Would you like me to explain the
whole thing to you?

He gazes at her. She becomes increasingly confused.

GUSTAV

(with a chuckle)

Very well.

ALMA (V.O.)

What lovely white teeth he has ...

GUSTAV

I believe you study music?

ALMA

Yes, under the ugliest man you've
ever set eyes on!

GUSTAV

Alexander von Zemlinsky? That's
why you love him! Would you like
to bring some of your work along to
the Opera one day and show me?

ALMA

When I have something.

GUSTAV

Come to my dress rehearsal tomorrow
morning - The Tales of Hoffman!

KLIMT

(playfully)

Be careful, he's a much older man!

ALMA

(to GUSTAV)

If I can get my work done first!

GUSTAV

(ironically, as
he walks away)

Under Zemlinsky?

CUT:

25. INT. VIENNA STATE OPERA HOUSE. MORNING

The ORCHESTRA is assembling, tuning, for dress rehearsal. The scene is set for The Tales of Hoffman. The tabs are up. A drop is flown, and redropped. The waiting PRINCIPALS try their voices.

26. ANOTHER ANGLE

In the auditorium. GUSTAV is talking to ALMA, who is seated in her outdoor clothes. He is sitting on the back of a seat with his knees clasped up to him, in a precarious position which he doesn't seem to notice. She tries to pay him less attention than she really wants to. There are other GUESTS dotted about the auditorium, including SIEGFRIED LIPINER, his current wife, his EX-WIFE and the singer ANNA VON MILDENBERG. They are talking animatedly.

GUSTAV

This soprano of mine's quite good.
You know, the Schoder girl. But she
makes Antonia die of consumption!
That bloody cough of hers!

(imitating her cough
loudly, to the alarm
of ALMA who fears he
will be heard onstage)

Antonia does NOT die of consumption!
She gives up her personality, her body,
which we are all trying to do - it may
take a lifetime, and it may take
millions of lifetimes. Antonia's an
artist, you see.

(bending forward so
that he almost topples
into her lap)

She melts away!

(as he gets down and
walks away towards the
Orchestra pit)

I'm glad you came!

(shouting it)

You can really learn something about
music today!

ALMA

(to herself)

Oh! Generous of you!

26. Contd.

GUSTAV

(returning)

Do you know how I'm going to celebrate
our engagement?

ALMA

(almost jumping
out of her seat)

What engagement?

GUSTAV

I'm going to give you a dress rehearsal
of The Magic Flute. There's a man
I've put on the map - Mozart! Nobody could
stage him before! What about that? Just
you - the only audience!

ALMA

But, Mr. Director!

Taking no notice, he walks towards the orchestra pit again.

GUSTAV

(turning suddenly)

Will you be there?

ALMA

Oh, yes, yes!

He keeps turning round to look at her. She looks away. A CLOSE
SHOT of GUSTAV as he climbs to his desk.

GUSTAV (V.O.)

Mr. Director, she calls me. Chills
me to the bone! How could she do it?

(opening the music
before him and
taking up his baton)

A girl of twenty!

(turning to look at
her again, over his
spectacles)

Her stepfather, Karl Moll, the old
bastard, told her not to marry me.
He said I was ugly and poor in health
and unpopular at the Opera and
Jewish and badly in debt and anyway
my music stank.

26. Contd.

GUSTAV (V.O.) (contd)

(triumphantly)

And still she wants to marry me! Can you beat that?

(peering at her again)

Or does she want to marry me? Am I too old then? Am I too short? I don't know what to do with someone so young - look at her - ! If only she'd had an affair or lost a husband or something!

STAGE MANAGER

Ready to go, Mr. Mahler?

GUSTAV

Yes, yes.

The front tabs are rung down.

GUSTAV raises to his arms to begin conducting. The orchestra ceases to tune. Everything is ready, the house lights dim but GUSTAV suddenly turns round and hisses:

GUSTAV (contd)

Miss Schindler!

In great alarm that he has other secrets to blare out she leaves her seat and runs towards him.

GUSTAV (contd)

(bending towards her and whispering)

Why the devil do you want to marry me?

ALMA

Marr - ?

GUSTAV

You don't want to marry me! Do you remember Faust when he sings about God's creation being beyond our understanding

(singing)

'and lovely as at the birth of light'? It's my music! That's what you want to marry!

26. Contd.

ALMA

(angry now)

But I still don't like your Fourth.
I like it as little as your First.

(walking back to
her seat)

GUSTAV

(calling after her)

Liking has nothing to do with it! All
that 'good' and 'bad' nonsense! That
only applies to inferior art! You make
the real art like you make babies -
with love, not the will! You don't
will a baby! You just make love and
that's it!

(raising his arms
again for the open-
ing bars)

You don't say the baby's good or bad!
It's alive! And that's all there is to it!

His hands fall with tremendous energy for the first beat and the
opening bars of the overture.

27. ANOTHER ANGLE

C.U. of ALMA in her seat again with the Overture over. She is
furious.

ALMA (V.O.)

Marrying him because of something
in Faust? What do these men think?
And he's got the most horrible friends!
There's that Pole Siegfried Lipiner

(she turns round to
look at him, and he
is registering rapt
attention to the music)

with his beastly bald skull.

(stay on a CLOSE
SHOT of LIPINER)

His eyes are so close together they're
like cufflinks threaded through his nose
sideways! Nietzsche thought him very
fine, so did Wagner, so does Gustav
Mahler. Well, he doesn't interest me!

27. Contd.

ALMA (V.O.) (contd)

I can see right through him to the seat of his dirty pants! And it isn't as if there's just one of him! There's his first wife,

(on the LIPINER group)

his second wife, his mistress who Gustav Mahler is supposed to share! Yes, they mount the same whore and think I don't know! The cat!

(on ANNA VON MILDENBURG)

The cow! The look she gave me - and Mahler nibbling at her hand every time she said something stupid, the poor trussed-up overdressed sallow-faced bitch!

CUT:

28. INT. THE SCHINDLER APARTMENT. MORNING

ALMA SCHINDLER's bedroom. She is standing in front of a full length mirror naked, trying on a string of pearls and admiring her body.

ALMA

Well, I know one thing, there won't be any of that crew near him in a month from now!

(as she slips on a petticoat)

I know how to deal with great artists, young as I am - I've got the hang of it already! All you do is see they have a room ready for them, and peace and quiet, and meals on time, and the rest you organise yourself! His life's going to have a huge DON'T DISTURB notice written right across it from now on! We'll see who's the better bitch of the two, that tired instrument on which so many Viennese musicians have played or me, a virgin! I've never been played on, and she's already out of tune!

28. Contd.

ALMA (contd)
 (posing in front of
 the mirror, chin up)
 My little jewel's intacta, and so it
 remains until the greatest man in
 Vienna seizes hold of it.

The door bursts open. It is her mother.

FRAU MOLL
 Quick! He asked you to rehearsal!

ALMA
 (grabbing her
 clothes)
 I know! But it's only his First
 Symphony again!

CUT:

29. INT. CONCERT HALL. MORNING

The rehearsing orchestra is in shirt sleeves. GUSTAV is at his desk, seated. We see them from the gallery. Silence. The gallery door opens and ALMA, dishevelled, her hair not quite in place, steals in like a naughty girl. She stands gazing down at him, the door still half open.

ALMA (V.O.)
 Oh look! He's like a king! So small
 and still, and everybody silent round
 him. They're supposed to hate him
 - they call him a tyrant! And he
 dares to ask me why I'm marrying
 him!

(aloud)
 I'm marrying you for love, you
 absent-minded fool! I love you, oh
 how I love you, my little prince of
 music!

CLOSE SHOT of ALMA as the orchestra begins the Second Movement of the First Symphony. Her body swings to the happy dancing rhythm. She is delightfully happy.

CUT:

30. INT. RAILWAY COMPARTMENT. DAY

The clatter and bustle of Vienna's main railway station at the beginning of this century. The compartment is in the plush upholstered style of the period, with curtains. GUSTAV clambers in from the platform in a fur overcoat and hat, carrying a small book. He sighs and settles down in his seat, takes his hat off and at once begins reading with concentration.

The compartment door bursts open and a harrassed ALMA, now Mrs. Mahler and pregnant, begins lugging up suitcases and hat-boxes and a travelling hamper, with vicious glances at the unperturbed GUSTAV. She stumbles and the hat-boxes fall in a heap before her on the compartment floor. With an imperceptible kick she makes sure that they reach GUSTAV's feet. He looks up pleasantly.

GUSTAV

Ah, there you are.
(returning at once
to his book)

ALMA

(as she settles
the boxes, etc.,
on the racks)

No porters! Everybody's travelling to
Russia, it seems!

He is deep in his book. She pauses from her work and gives him a long studying look. There is something to admire in his self-absorption! She returns to her work more easily. At least she throws herself down at his side. She undoes her travelling coat.

GUSTAV

(looking at her
over his glasses)
Can I help?

ALMA

(nestling towards
him)

Darling, why are you always too late
to help - and never too late for a
concert - or a rehearsal - not a second
too late!

They catch each other's eyes and laugh. They suddenly hug each other and kiss. They can't stop laughing. With great relief ALMA unclips her skirt, and the corset underneath.

30. Contd.

ALMA

There! I needn't play the virgin any more!

GUSTAV

You played it well.

ALMA

Do you think mummy suspected anything?

GUSTAV

Of course. Mummies always do.

ALMA

(touching her
tummy)

He feels happy to be leaving!

GUSTAV

(also touching
her tummy)

And his mamma - what about her?

ALMA

Oh! You tell me! Look in my eyes!

GUSTAV

I read a certain - well I suppose it
could be happiness.

They hug and kiss again.

ALMA

People outside are looking.

GUSTAV

And you love it. You're cheeky, you're impossible! I saw you laughing when I fell up the altar steps this morning.

ALMA

It was funny! Even the priest laughed!

GUSTAV

(gazing out of
the window)

Do you think all these people are going to St. Petersburg?

30. Contd.

ALMA
 (busy with
 the hamper)
 I don't know. All I know is, we three
 are!

GUSTAV
 (half jokingly,
 to himself)
 Perhaps they're all going to my concert.

ALMA takes out bread and sausage, a flask full of coffee, lace
 napkins, etc.

GUSTAV (contd)
 (watching her)
 I didn't know you brought all that
 stuff.

ALMA
 You talked to me while I was packing
 it. You poured the coffee yourself.

GUSTAV
 Good God.
 (ALMA offers
 him some food)
 I'll just have coffee. You haven't
 got an apple have you?

ALMA
 (pouring his
 coffee)
 No.
 (to herself)
 Always apples!

GUSTAV
 (again looking out
 of the window)
 We're off!

The train lurches forward with massive puffs.

ALMA
 (handing him
 his coffee)
 Here. Your coffee.

30: Contd.

GUSTAV

Ah!

ALMA

'Ah'! Well I'm going to eat.

GUSTAV

(taking his over-
coat and balancing
the coffee at the
same time)

It's so hot in here!

ALMA eats ravenously.

ALMA

Mm!

GUSTAV

They overheat these compartments.

(loosening his
jacket as he
sits down again)

ALMA

Oh, Gustav! I do hope you don't start
a sore throat!

(glancing out
of the window)

Wouldn't it have been nice if somebody
had waved us goodbye? Mummy for
instance? Or Karl Moll?

GUSTAV

To hell with Karl Moll. I see him
every day.

ALMA

But not to hell with mummy?

GUSTAV

I'm sick to death of them all! I get
masses of people every day - orchestras
of them, chorusses! And I'll have them
as soon as I step off this train at St.
Petersburg!

30. Contd.

ALMA
(her mouth full)
Yes I suppose so!

GUSTAV begins reading again, but then raises his eyes and stares before him, concentrating on some thought. An ominous phrase from the Ninth Symphony comes over. His mouth is open. He is conducting slightly with his right hand.

ALMA gazes at him, a piece of bread poised.

ALMA
Are you composing?

GUSTAV comes to suddenly and the music fades away.

GUSTAV
It'll be years before I write anything
like that.

ALMA
Anything like what?

GUSTAV
It's in the tragic mood - it's for later
- later in life -

ALMA
Tragic? Is the future going to be
tragic?

GUSTAV simply gazes before him again. ALMA finishes eating and settles deeper into her seat. She leans her head on his shoulder and closes her eyes.

Again the phrase from the Ninth Symphony steals over, like an unwanted thought. Softer now. His right hand comes up slightly, twitching. He shakes his head to the music, beguiled, drugged with it.

It fades again, leaving the clatter of the train. He gazes at her.

GUSTAV
You like a bit of glitter don't you?

ALMA
(blinking
awake)
What?

30. Contd.

GUSTAV

I mean, you like dinner parties a bit,
don't you - and little men like the
President of the Society of the
Friends of Music?

Silence between them. Battle is brewing. She slowly levers her-
self away from him.

ALMA

Isn't that Siegfried Lipiner's story,
that I flirted with the President?

GUSTAV

Why do you hate Lipiner?

ALMA

Hate him?

(with an expression
of hatred)

I adore him as a matter of fact!

GUSTAV

He doesn't think so!

ALMA

He never think! Nietzsche and all
sorts of other writers think for
him - he gets all his talk out of
their books.

GUSTAV

It's marvellous talk, though.

ALMA

I agree. That's why I adore him. So
why does he spread a lot of horrible
stories about me?

GUSTAV

He doesn't!

ALMA

He told you I flirted with the President
of the Society of the Friends of Music
all through your Fourth Symphony
the other day.

30. Contd.

GUSTAV

But that has nothing to do with what I said - I said you liked the big world - I didn't say you shouldn't - I meant that the President represents that world perfectly -

ALMA

In other words the President's an idiot - and I'm an idiot - and all your friends are geniuses!

(bursting into
tears)

He's been a friend of my family for years! Years!

GUSTAV

Oh for God's sake don't cry! I can't stand the sound of a woman crying!

ALMA

Oh yes! It's always what you can't bear isn't it? I mustn't cry because you can't bear it! It's always you!

GUSTAV

Alma, I meant I couldn't bear the suffering behind it - !

ALMA

Oh, suffering! It's natural! You've got to face up to it - you talk just like Dostoevsky! - and you're both egoists! Egoists can never bear the thought of suffering!

She sobs herself to dry eyes.

GUSTAV

Well, instruct me then. Help me make sense of it all. We murder millions of animals for our food, mothers go through agonies in child-birth, the animals kill each other with frightful cruelty, there are hordes of poor people who can't even clothe their children, and there are the rich who are much less happy than anybody. What do you make of it all? Nothing's

30. Contd.

GUSTAV (contd)

settled for a moment. There are quarrels
all the time, assassinations, bankruptcies,
suicides. We're making love one minute
and quarrelling the next.

ALMA

(as they
embrace again)

We wouldn't have quarrelled if you hadn't
started it.

GUSTAV

(with a laugh)

So you won't tell me what the answer is!

(settling back
again and gazing
before him, then,
with extreme
sadness)

Perhaps He will one day.

ALMA

Who?

MAHLER gazes out of the window.

CUT:

31. INT. RAILWAY COMPARTMENT. NIGHT

ALMA is fast asleep, leaning against GUSTAV as the train
roars on. They are passing through a snowy landscape now.

GUSTAV too is nodding, with sweat on his brow and upper lip.
A frightening passage from the Seventh Symphony comes over.
He starts awake. He stares before him tensely, as it were
aghast at these tremendous sounds.

The music melts into the screech of the train as it slows down.
He seems terrified, and looks out of the window. The music
ceases. He subsides: it is just a railway station.

ALMA still sleeps. He unleans her from him gently. He mops
his brow. She goes on sleeping. He rises and leaves the
compartment in panic haste, without his overcoat.

CUT:

32. EXT. RUSSIAN COUNTRY STATION. NIGHT

The platform is deep in snow. GUSTAV paces up and down taking deep draughts of the icy air, clapping himself round the shoulders against the cold and making a strange swaying motion. Suddenly ALMA's yell comes over:

ALMA (V.O.)

Gustav! Gustav!

33. INT. RAILWAY COMPARTMENT. NIGHT

ALMA is all but pulling GUSTAV back into the compartment. A little furred crowd of Russians has gathered outside, murmuring. GUSTAV is nearly a frozen carcass. She throws a coat round him, rubs his hands in hers. Noticing the crowd, she pulls the door to again.

ALMA

Gustav! How could you? It's 30 below outside! Gustav! Do you want to die?

He is shivering now - on the way to recovery. The little Russian crowd has gathered at the windows now, noses pressed against the glass.

ALMA (contd)

(to the ONLOOKERS)

Oh go away and stop giggling you silly people!

(attending to
GUSTAV again)

My darling!

(to the
ONLOOKERS
again)

If all Russia's like you it's a zoo!

He gradually recovers himself. The signal is given for the train to start again, and it lumbers out of the station, the ONLOOKERS dropping off one by one.

GUSTAV

Such a painful throat. These trains are overheated, terribly overheated.

33. Contd.

ALMA

You've got a fever. And you go out in the freezing cold! Gustav, look at me. You're always talking about nature, then why aren't you closer to your own body? You don't seem to know what to do with it!

GUSTAV

I do what I feel I ought to do. I needed the air. And I do feel better. No, I don't understand my body.

She dabs the sweat off his upper lip and brow.

CUT:

34. INT. ST. PETERSBURG HOTEL. BEDROOM. DAY

A snowy courtyard seen from an upper window. Three or four CHILDREN are playing there, capped and furred. They have balloons on strings. They chase each other, trying to burst the balloons or cut the strings. One of the strings gets cut and the balloon goes floating up into the sky. We PULL BACK to find ALMA standing at the window watching its upward flight. She is in a loose dressing gown. The cries of the CHILDREN come over, muffled.

GUSTAV

(hoarse)

Alma!

35. ANOTHER ANGLE

GUSTAV is in bed, leaning up against his pillows. He is gazing towards her sleepily, having just woken. He smiles at her. The room is furnished in a warm, rather heavy pre-Revolution style, with a samovar on the table and a vast tiled stove.

She comes and sits quietly on his bed.

ALMA

However are you going to get through three concerts with a throat like that?

35. Contd.

GUSTAV

Oh, a sore throat's real. And there's no such thing as reality! - it's a magic formula - He gets it up to make us think it's real - it's a joke on us! - The soul - that's the only real thing! -

(kissing her)

So if I've got to do three concerts, the sore throat disappears! It has to! And it always will - until I get to the last sore throat of all -

(she looks at him with controlled alarm)

- and then it's time to go, and the soul takes over. You see? No more body. When the soul's used it up, we go - and become somebody else ...

A thunderous banging on the door. ALMA jumps up. Before she reaches the door THREE RUSSIANS burst in. They are from the Imperial Conservatoire. They go to MAHLER and shake his hand. He is swung this way and that. They are talking all the time. One of them turns and bows to ALMA. All GUSTAV can do is enjoy himself and keep saying 'Da, da!' The RUSSIANS buzz round the room, seeing that everything is all right. They lift the samovar lid, they touch the tiled stove to see that it is hot. They clasp ALMA's hand and kiss it. They do the same to GUSTAV. Then they leave. Deep silence.

ALMA

What was all that?

GUSTAV

They said I was the only man in Europe who could manage an orchestra. They said they knew my Second Symphony. They said you were beautiful. And they said they'd be waiting downstairs to take us to the first rehearsal. So I'd better get up!

ALMA

What you said about becoming somebody else -

GUSTAV

Yes?

35. Contd.

ALMA

Let's just be you and me - !

GUSTAV

Oh!

(getting up to
dress)

I meant when we were dead!

ALMA

Dead!

On ALMA, as the sung Finale of the Second Symphony comes up full: 'Rise, dust of my body, after a brief rest!' ...

36. ANOTHER ANGLE

From the window, another balloon drifts up into the sky, with the music still over. 'Thou shalt arise, yea, rise, my heart, instantly, whatever strength was thine shall carry thee to God!'

CUT:

37. INT. THE HOTEL FOYER. DAY

The THREE RUSSIANS, with GUSTAV and ALMA, are in a furred group going towards the exit, watched by peasant-like hotel staff. We CLOSE IN on GUSTAV, pale and unsteady. He leans on ALMA.

ALMA

Gustav, you aren't well!

The RUSSIANS gather round, and ALMA points at her throat.

The RUSSIANS shout at the hotel staff with orders, and they bustle off.

GUSTAV

What's happening?

Amid a great deal of loving excitement a tray with a bottle, a small glass and half a lemon are brought, then seized by one of the RUSSIANS. He pours out a glass, squeezes in the lemon, then holds it out to GUSTAV with a neat movement and a slight bow.

37. Contd.

GUSTAV (contd)
What the devil's that?

ALMA
(taking it and
smelling)
It doesn't smell.

GUSTAV
(swigging it in
one gulp, with a
gasp)
Nor does vodka!

The RUSSIANS are delighted. They all move out into the courtyard, where the CHILDREN are still playing.

CUT:

38. EXT. THE HOTEL COURTYARD. DAY

The group emerging from the hotel exit. A CHILD darts in front of GUSTAV and almost makes him stumble. They are yelling. The RUSSIANS take no notice. GUSTAV smiles at ALMA, as the CHILDREN play round him.

A sled-carriage with two horses is led into the courtyard by a STABLE BOY. The sleigh-bells on the harnesses ring out.

GUSTAV is about to step into the carriage when, immediately behind his head, a balloon is burst. C.U. of him shows a stricken and terrified face, eyes staring. The violent 4th Subject in the 3rd Movement of the First Symphony bursts over.

CUT:

39. INT. VIENNESE APARTMENT. DAY

GUSTAV's staring eyes become those of his brother OTTO, lying dead on the floor of his bedroom (1895). We PULL BACK to show a revolver at his side, and GUSTAV, aged thirty-five whimpers over him.

GUSTAV
Otto! Otto!

CUT:

40. RESUME 38.

ALMA

It was only a balloon!

She helps him into the carriage. The music continues over.

CUT:

41. INT. THE SLED CARRIAGE. DAY

They all settle into their seats. The music dies away. The carriage sweeps smoothly away, the bells sounding gaily. GUSTAV stares before him, frightened. The RUSSIANS try to draw his attention to passing sights, but he takes no notice. The last portion of the Tristan overture comes over. He seems to be listening to it, calmed by it.

CUT:

42. INT. THE HERMITAGE THEATRE. EVENING

From a dark and crowded auditorium, a concert performance at the Hermitage theatre in St. Petersburg, with GUSTAV conducting. The Tristan has continued over from the previous scene. We MOVE IN towards the orchestra and pick out the various sections. We begin to feel GUSTAV's presence in the way the orchestra plays, and the attention each section-leader gives him.

43. REVERSE ANGLE

GUSTAV conducting the Tristan overture, pale and sweating but completely absorbed in his work, watching the orchestra not as his instrument of self-expression but solely for the music. While his arm-movements are vigorous there is no showmanship in his conducting.

44. RESUME 42.

The last bars of the Tristan overture. Warm but aristocratic applause (mostly gloved hands) GUSTAV turns to take his bow, quickly and jerkily. He then presents the chef d'orchestra.

CUT:

45. INT. THE ROCOCO ROOM. EVENING

The Chinese rococo room connecting the Hermitage theatre with the royal palace. A reception is in progress after the concert. Mostly French being spoken. There are a number of grand uniforms. Outside the windows on either side of the gallery the canal connecting the Neva and the Moika rivers glitters. Liveried ATTENDANTS go among the GUESTS with refreshments. GUSTAV and ALMA are the centre of polite attention.

GUSTAV is being introduced to a small RUSSIAN LADY of great charm, in her sixties, as we ZOOM in to him.

RUSSIAN LADY

(with a smile)

Malheureusement je suis vieille
Monsieur Mahler! Je pense toujours
à la mort! Et votre musique me
semble avoir le gout de la mort.
Vous pouyez m'expliquer tant de
choses! Tant de choses!

As GUSTAV bends to answer her ACH DU LIEBER AUGUSTIN!
on the hurdy-gurdy drifts over.

GUSTAV

Je n'ai rien à dire madame! Tout
est dans ma musique! Comme homme,
je n'existe pas! Alors je suis déjà
mort!

They laugh together. The hurdy-gurdy stays over.

CUT:

46. INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR. EVENING

GUSTAV and ALMA returning to their room. They stop to kiss. His hat is on the back of his head. There is snow on their clothes. The hurdy-gurdy is still over. They beat the snow off on each other, running. He seizes her. They kiss. She squeals with laughter. They reach their door.

CUT:

47. INT. THE HOTEL BEDROOM. EVENING

They enter breathless. They throw off their hats and overcoats, straight on to a couch. Only one oil-lamp is burning in the centre of the table. It is snowing thickly outside. The hurdy-gurdy has

47. Contd.

ceased. The only sound in the muffled night is that of ALMA's dress as he draws her towards him on the bed, half sitting. She throws off her shoes.

GUSTAV

You were the guest of honour, not me!

(with mock hostility,
through clenched teeth)

You're stealing my thunder! 'The loveliest woman outside Russia!' I heard someone say!

She lies back, gazing at him. He loosens her skirt for her.

ALMA

It's difficult for me to say 'Gustav' ...

GUSTAV

(with a laugh)

Did you hear that funny old cow from Moscow, the archduchess? She asked me what death was like!

ALMA

Did she find such a lot of it in your music then?

GUSTAV

I imagine she did. I felt rather complimented.

ALMA

To have death in your music?

GUSTAV

What's death to you then? Rotting bones? It isn't to me!

ALMA

If it's so glorious, death, why are we alive? What was the point?

GUSTAV

Death's a human invention! It's a human sin! Life never stops! It's all in Dostoevsky! But they don't read him - their greatest

47. Contd.

GUSTAV (contd)

man! They look down their noses at him, like the Austrians look down their noses at me!

ALMA

(militant)

They don't do any such thing!

GUSTAV

Of course they do! They say I use my position at the Opera to perform my own music, otherwise it would never get done! Well, they're right about that! If I didn't do it, nobody would!

ALMA

Your Wagner was lovely tonight ...

GUSTAV

He fits everywhere doesn't he - the Russian spaces - everywhere!

ALMA

You don't look tired any more.

GUSTAV

He pulled me through - Richard Wagner.

ALMA

Not me?

GUSTAV

(playfully)

But you're alive! He's dead!

They laugh and kiss.

ALMA

When that balloon went bang, what were you thinking of?

GUSTAV

My brother Otto. He was a marvellous composer, you know. I found a couple of symphonies in his drawer! I felt a terrible

47. Contd.

GUSTAV (contd)

remorse, as if my music had stolen
his life and there couldn't be two
of us. Then why was he born at all?
And Ernst, my other brother -

(in a kind of chant)

- I loved him so much - he died of
heart trouble - and five of the others
died - all children - and now, the
rest of the family - so many debts.

ALMA

I'll settle them all. I'm going to put
everything in order.

GUSTAV

How much do I owe by the way?

ALMA

Fifty thousand crowns.

GUSTAV

That's a heavy debt to marry.

ALMA

You're the biggest capital I could
think of.

The Funeral March in the Manner of Caillot (the third movement
of the First Symphony) steals over.

GUSTAV

Do you hear that?

ALMA

What?

GUSTAV

The Funeral March - I wrote it when
I was thirty-three -

ALMA

Sometimes you frighten me!

GUSTAV

Do you hear?

(catching her)

Listen to that! And the critics call
my music sterile, trivial, extravag-
ant, an unholy bloody, noise! They

47. Contd.

GUSTAV (contd)

say it belongs to the circus! They
say it isn't even music!

(as the bright
clarinet inter-
polation in the
Funeral March
comes over)

You know, I thought I'd never be able
to love properly - give everything -
I often tried but something always
went wrong - you lifted me out of
that!

ALMA

Why funeral marches then?

(suddenly
angered)

It's true what Max Burkhart said -
you're going to put out my flame
with yours! You wrote me that
terrible letter, forbidding me ever
to compose a song again!

GUSTAV

(jumping up in
fury, pacing
the room)

Nobody can forbid you to compose!
Composing pours out of the skin!
It can't be stopped! Do you think
my composing could be stopped?
It goes on all the time!

(consoling her
suddenly, as she
all but cringes
before him)

I was harsh like that with my mother.
I used to play the piano and if I saw
her stealing into the room to listen
I used to stop and sit stock-still
until she'd gone again. In case
I gave her any pleasure . . . And
your little face reminds me of her.
Only it's healthier.

ALMA

Is that wrong?

47. Contd.

GUSTAV

I suppose I like to see the mark
of sorrow -

ALMA

It's there - on your face. I saw it
tonight - during the Wagner. - !

GUSTAV

I did exactly the same as my father
did - I loved her but I didn't show
her any feeling!

CUT:

48. INT. THE IGLAU HOUSE. DAY

The house of GUSTAV's youth in Iglau, Moravia, a small country town. We are upstairs in the music room, and GUSTAV, aged about twelve, is practising at the piano a rather difficult baggatelle by Beethoven. The playing is superb for a child (MAHLER was a child prodigy) We open behind his head, facing the door on to the landing. He is interrupted by the raging voice of his FATHER below. He stops playing. He sits listening, fascinated, immobile. He rises slowly and tiptoes to the door, which is open. He goes out on to the landing. We follow him and see from his P.V. the parlour below where his MOTHER and FATHER are standing, dim, silhouetted figures, dressed in the style of the 1870's. His FATHER is shouting in Austrian German, with violent movements of the hands. His voice is plaintive, not entirely aggressive. It echoes in an uncanny way. Suddenly the FATHER strides towards the MOTHER, making terrible booming steps that seem to sound from under the earth. He is about to strike her. The CHILD GUSTAV panics and runs - all but slides - down the stairs, past the parlour and out into the street.

CUT:

49. EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE. DAY

A hurdy-gurdy is playing ACH DU LIEBER AUGUSTIN immediately outside the house. The CHILD GUSTAV almost tumbles into the withered hand of the OLD MAN playing it. The OLD MAN smiles at him benignly. The CHILD GUSTAV pants, wide-eyed, pale. He stares at the withered hand, then smiles back at the MAN. The music is loud and gay, and begins to influence him. He walks away. We stay on him.

50. ANOTHER ANGLE

The CHILD GUSTAV walking. He begins to forget. Silence. He glances back. The hurdy-gurdy is being wheeled away, in the opposite direction.

He walks on. He walks towards the barracks. There are TWO SENTINELS. His attention is caught by a distant military trumpet. He stops. It is vaguely like the trumpet opening of the Fifth Symphony. He looks back towards the house. He seems to want to return. He seems torn between the barracks and the house. He decides to walk back to the house. He begins walking back, with a secretive expression. A distant echo of the opening bars of the Fifth Symphony accompanies him back.

CUT:

51. INT. THE IGLAU HOUSE. DAY

The CHILD GUSTAV steals back into the house. Silence. He peeps into the parlour. No one there. He tiptoes upstairs, listening all the time. He goes to one of the doors on the landing. He stands there listening. He is fascinated. From inside the room there is the sound of kissing and sighing. We hear the FATHER gasp, and the MOTHER's 'Nein! Nein!', which is compounded of complaint and deep physical enjoyment. The music is still over.

The CHILD GUSTAV raises his eyes. From his P.V., gazing at him from the nursery door, are his sister JUSTINE (aged 4) his brother ALOIS (4), his brother ERNST (10), his sister LEOPOLDINE (8). They seem to understand his fascination.

The shuddering post-coitum conclusion of the trumpet theme.

CUT:

52. RESUME 47.

GUSTAV

I always had them on my shoulders -
brothers, my mother, my sisters!
Especially my sister Justine - Oh, my
God! Marrying you was like divorcing
her! She used to put candles round her
bed when we were children and lie
down and play dead!

52. Contd.

ALMA

Always dying.

GUSTAV

Being Jewish means something rather dark for me . . . Alma, if you see me gesticulate too much, always correct me, won't you? Thank God I became a Christian! They say I did it so as to get the job at the Opera but it isn't true! If only they knew! It's the light I was after - the Christian light! All that hell of belonging! If I love you, my child, it's because of the Christian light in you - which

(with a
chuckle)

you know nothing about.

(kissing her)

Do you remember that morning you came to the Tales of Hoffman dress rehearsal? - The second time we saw each other? - And you wouldn't look at me?

ALMA

I was feeling malicious.

GUSTAV

You little cat!

(as they
embrace)

And I called out to you from the desk, 'Miss Schindler, how did you sleep last night?'

ALMA

And I said, 'Perfectly - why shouldn't I?'

GUSTAV

And I said, 'I didn't sleep a wink all night'. I need you - I ache for you all day - when I'm away from you I feel sick! I hear your name all the time - Do you feel the same.

52. Contd.

ALMA

Oh, Gustl!

They begin making love. She kisses him urgently, very much the young girl. C.U. of GUSTAV gazing before him, still with thoughts in his head. He puts his hand over her hair protectively. From his P.V. the swirling snow outside the windows.

CUT:

53. EXT. RESTAURANT BALCONY, CREFELD. DAY

The 2nd subject from the 3rd movement of the First Symphony bursts over, a jolly 'military band' theme, as brisk GERMAN WAITERS bustle to and fro with spotless napkins over their arms. The restaurant balcony is under brilliant spring sunshine. At one of the tables are GUSTAV and ALMA. (She is dressed in the Reform style of the period, as well to conceal her pregnancy) with a local IMPRESSARIO and a CRITIC. They are on the fruit course, and in earnest conversation as we ZOOM in. The IMPRESSARIO is dressed in a flamboyant way, contrasting with the seedy CRITIC with his village-genius look. They both feel, without saying so, that GUSTAV cannot hold a candle to Brahms, Wagner or Strauss as a composer. Only GUSTAV is clear about this feeling that they have.

GUSTAV is eating an orange. He has peeled it and is tearing off pieces, concentrating more on this operation than on the talk.

CRITIC

Do you realise you've written the longest symphony in history?

GUSTAV

I never measured it.

IMPRESSARIO

(to ALMA)

The audience wasn't a bit bored, was it?

CRITIC

I think their interest might have been because your Third is such a departure from your First and Second -

GUSTAV

Oh?

53. Contd.

CRITIC

Well I mean, without those changes of tempo, solo violins - those familiar sounding themes -

GUSTAV

You mean it isn't in my usual strudl-pastry line! Isn't that why they call my symphonies, apfel-strudls?

GUSTAV holds up his sticky hands helplessly, tries wiping them on his napkin but this doesn't work, so he seizes the water-carafe and walks to the edge of the balcony with it, watched by the others. The IMPRESSARIO leans forward in conversation with ALMA while GUSTAV pours the carafe over his hands, leaning over the balcony. Under the balcony there are other tables. Alarmed cries from below!

54. ANOTHER ANGLE

The tables below: fashionable LADIES and TWO GENTLEMEN. They look up, shielding themselves from the water. GUSTAV makes deprecating and apologising smiles down at them.

LADY

Oh, it's only Mahler!

They are all on their feet now. As GUSTAV disappears above they call the WAITER and move to another table at the other end of the balcony. The WAITER looks up at the balcony in some puzzlement. He is trying to reconcile rain with bright sunshine.

55. RESUME 53.

GUSTAV returns to the table with the empty carafe.

ALMA

What happened?

GUSTAV

(with a shrug)

Some people down there. Curious!

CRITIC

I've heard the word 'pot-pourri' used about your symphonies but not strudl-pastry I must say.

55. Contd.

CRITIC (contd)
 (the idea obviously
 appeals to him)

But the Third - this surely a Nietzsche -
 I mean shot through with his universal
 spirit - much more of a whole - !

GUSTAV
 Shot through with his spirit?
 (taking up
 his orange
 again)
 It's shot through with mine!

CRITIC
 But Nietzsche's words - !

GUSTAV
 It isn't his spirit or even mine! -
 it's something in us all - that's
 what the Symphony's all about -
 that's what the last movement's
 all about - peace and being - the
 power in stillness
 (again in diff-
 iculties with
 his hands)
 that's the greatest power of all -
 what doesn't move but is - !

He jumps up again and seizes a carafe of water from another
 table. He walks to the balcony with it.

ALMA
 Oh, Gustav, do be careful!

The CRITIC and the IMPRESSARIO exchange glances. GUSTAV
 registers ALMA's cry and decides to do his washing at the other
 end of the balcony this time.

56. ANOTHER ANGLE

The fashionable LADIES and the TWO GENTLEMEN are peacefully
 conversing when there is another avalanche of water from above
 that makes them scatter a second time. Great shouts. The
 GENTLEMEN all clenched fists and duel-faces.

56. Contd.

We find GUSTAV peeping over the balcony again, this time with rapt astonishment all over his face, at discovering a second table with precisely the same people round it as one 20 yards away. He makes an enormous pleading shrug, as if to say that fate has been against him.

57. RESUME 55.

ALMA is running towards him. She seizes the now empty carafe and marches him away like a child.

ALMA
Really, Gustav!

The IMPRESSARIO and the CRITIC watch his return as if they find his behaviour and his music all of a piece.

CUT:

58. EXT. A CREFELD STREET. DAY

GUSTAV and ALMA are walking along in outdoor clothes. He has a stick. He walks ahead of ALMA, gazing on the ground. She tries to keep pace. Some SMALL BOYS sight them and think they are a funny sight. They run after ALMA and pluck her Reform clothes. She turns and shoos them away. GUSTAV doesn't even see. The BOYS return to the attack again, and this time ALMA gets really angry.

ALMA
Gustav!

He turns, alarmed. He sees the BOYS and runs after them, his stick raised. But when he stops, they are back again. He renews the attack but they have his measure and almost surround him and ALMA in a kind of Maypole dance. GUSTAV decides to plunge ahead, and seizing ALMA by the arm strides off down the road with the BOYS cheering.

CUT:

59. INT. CREFELD HOTEL FOYER. DAY

GUSTAV and ALMA enter the chase out of breath, coats hanging open. In the sedate and solid atmosphere of the foyer they make a distinctly unusual impression. The PORTER looks at them as they cross before him, pulling his glasses down over his nose to get the focus.

59. Contd.

PORTER

(to himself)

Oh! It's only Mr. Mahler!

He returns to his ledgers.

GUSTAV and ALMA throw themselves down in armchairs with fearful glances at the door. All however is quiet here.

GUSTAV

Why does everybody stare at us so,
for God's sake?

ALMA

(with pregnant
irritation)

Because we look funny, that's why!

GUSTAV

But even in St. Petersburg, driving
in an open troika?

ALMA

It was 30 degrees below zero and open
troikas aren't for that sort of weather!
It nearly killed me!

(with a vast
sigh)

What a lot of travelling we seem to do!
St. Petersburg, Crefeld! - where's it
going to be next?

GUSTAV

Are you tired, my treasure?

ALMA

Tired? I feel twice as old as you!
I seem to have been through so many
experiences! And those walks you go
in for!

GUSTAV

It does you good, my darling. Shall
we go upstairs!

ALMA rises. They walk towards the staircase. She is behind
GUSTAV. We follow them. Suddenly ALMA stops.

59. Contd.

ALMA

Gustav!

GUSTAV

(turning)

Yes, darling?

ALMA

Why do you look shabby in the most expensive clothes?

He gazes at her for some time.

GUSTAV

I'm always in love, my darling - with you - with Mozart - with the Rhine Maidens - Yes, that's how I am!

CUT:

60. INT. APARTMENT HOUSE STAIRCASE. VIENNA. DAY

We are looking down the well of the stairs in a Viennese apartment house. Footsteps sound out on the wooden steps. GUSTAV comes into view, in hat and overcoat, humming to himself. We hear him marking musical passages to himself, 'pum-pum-PUM-di-di-da', as he rises. He makes snapping movements of the fingers and a sudden prolonged growling noise to denote a passage with percussion. All of a sudden the performance is over. He coughs, and continues to the top landing in perfect silence.

He reaches his door and puts in the key. As he does so he leans forward to listen. Behind the door a cracked record is playing an old waltz on the piano. He pushes the door open in alarm.

CUT:

61. INT. THE MAHLER APARTMENT. DAY

The full blare of a cracked record, deafening.

We are on the entrance hall as GUSTAV rushes in, panic-stricken. He throws off his hat and coat, dives through the apartment.

CUT:

62. INT. THE MAHLER LOUNGE. DAY

This is GUSTAV's neat bachelor lounge.. It is simply furnished, with the bare necessities.

GUSTAV rushes into the room.

GUSTAV
No, no! Take it off! Take that
record off! No, no!

He plunged towards the other corridor, but stops short of entering it and instead flings himself up and down the room, gesticulating.

GUSTAV (contd)
Stop that noise! Stop that - !

ALMA, even more pregnant than before, rushes in from the hallway.

ALMA
What is it?

GUSTAV
It's that blasted captain - the one
who share the apartment!

ALMA
(shrieking)
Captain?

GUSTAV
He's got a room at the end of the
corridor!

ALMA
A what?

GUSTAV
A room!

ALMA
A woman?

GUSTAV
No, a room, a room!

ALMA
And what's that got to do with this?

62. Contd.

GUSTAV
(still girating
wildly)

What?

ALMA
Why-this-noise?

GUSTAV
Because he hates me! He knows I'm a
composer and I can't stand noise! He
thinks my music stinks! So he puts
this on when I come in!

ALMA
Oh he does does he?

He stands watching as she storms across the room and into the
other corridor, to the CAPTAIN's quarters.

He waits for the outcome.

The music ceases abruptly.

GUSTAV
Good lord. She's killed him.

He goes to his table and tranquilly takes up the score he is working
on, absorbed instantly as if nothing in the world has happened.
CLOSE SHOT of his pencilling in notes rapidly, humming.

ALMA's shadow falls on the table. He takes no notice.

ALMA
He's out.

GUSTAV
(still at work)
Out? Who?

ALMA
The Captain. It's his batman puts
the record on. He has orders to
start it up whenever the concierge
sees you downstairs. She phones up
to him. She thinks it's for him to
open the door for you.

62. Contd.

GUSTAV

(impatiently,
still at work)

I know. I told you that myself.

ALMA

No you didn't. You said the Captain
put it on. Anyway I guaranteed the
batman a little income for not doing
it. He'll just put the record on when
the captain happens to be in.

GUSTAV

Well, you seem to have established
yourself already.

He works on. She sits in one of the armchairs. Her silence is
clearly one he ought to take notice of.

He looks across at her, over his glasses.

GUSTAV (contd)

Tired?

(no response)

I had a fair rehearsal. Lohengrin.

He shrugs slightly to himself, returns to work, glances quickly
at her again.

GUSTAV (contd)

At least we're not travelling. We're
home!

ALMA

I know.

(looking round
the room)

And I think it's lovely.

GUSTAV

What?

ALMA

Your apartment.

GUSTAV

Ah.

62. Contd.

ALMA

I don't know why you needed me.

She turns her head away. He gets up and walks round her, to look in her face. She promptly turns it the other way.

GUSTAV

You've got tears in your eyes! Why?

(taking her)

Tell me why.

ALMA

(leash gates
open)

I thought it wouldn't be nice. You're famous for your absent-mindedness and I thought it would be a dirty bachelor's den sort of thing. Then I could have done lots of things to it. You have to be on top all the time! You and your sister Justine! I suppose she was here all the time, cooking and cleaning!

GUSTAV

But don't you see you're the only thing the apartment lacked? And therefore it had no light until you came in? So of course you call it lovely because you've brought your own light in, your light and your truth! You've brought the spring in! It was always winter before! And the captain's hoping to eat out of your hand, like his batman did!

ALMA

And then you'll accuse me of flirting.

GUSTAV

Only if you do flirt.

ALMA

When our house on the lake's ready we'll go there, won't we, all the summer, and be alone, and you'll compose, and I'll orchestrate your scores, and we'll work and work, and forget everything else except our baby - !

62. Contd.

GUSTAV is about to reply when the awful cracked waltz blares out again.

GUSTAV
I though you'd - !

ALMA
What?

GUSTAV
I thought you'd stopped him!

ALMA
(at the top of
her voice as,
she strides
towards the
captain's quarters)
The captain's come back!

GUSTAV
What?

ALMA
(stamping her
foot with rage)
The captain! The captain's come
back!

She disappears down the corridor toward the CAPTAIN's quarters leaving GUSTAV going through the same frantic motions as earlier, almost running up and down, hugging himself, pleading.

Suddenly the racket cuts off.

GUSTAV
Ah.

He strolls quietly to his table as if noise had never been invented. He takes up his score page.

GUSTAV (contd)
(as he begins
to write)
And now she'll find out how charming
the captain is.

62. Contd.

We see him composing, transferring the sounds to the page, as the Adagietto from the Fifth Symphony comes over.

63. EXT. CARINTHIA, AUSTRIA. DAY (HELIVISION)

With the Adagietto still over, a Helivision SHOT of the distant Alps seen from above the Carinthian lakes. The CAMERA gradually PANS down to take in the lakes, and then, ZOOMING in, the MAHLER summer house at Maiernigg, on the Worthersee lake. Take in GUSTAV's little hut close to the water where he composes. Pick up ALMA walking down from the house towards GUSTAV's hut. She is no longer pregnant. She has a towel over her arm. She walks past the hut to the landing stage. The CAMERA PANS down over the water and picks up GUSTAV swimming. He waves to ALMA.

CUT:

64. EXT. THE MAIERNIGG PROPERTY. DAY

ALMA in CLOSE SHOT waiting at the edge of the lake, towel in hand. The music is still over but mixed now with the sound of CHILDREN and birds in the distance. ALMA is considerably more mature. Ten years or so have passed.

65. REVERSE ANGLE

GUSTAV swimming towards the shore.

66. RESUME 64.

ALMA

Gustl! That's enough!

GUSTAV (V.O.)

(breathless)

It's so good!

Another CLOSE SHOT of ALMA showing her concern. A village bell strikes noon.

GUSTAV clambers on to the landing stage.

66. Contd.

ALMA

Why do you go out so far?
 (as he gasps
 with pleasure
 and takes the
 towel)

Gustl!

GUSTAV

How's my little Putzi?

ALMA

Asking for you.

He glances towards the house with pleasure, drying himself vigorously.

ALMA (contd)

You always have to sacrifice yourself
 ...

GUSTAV

(still out of
 breath)

A sacrifice? Swimming?

ALMA

You had a haemorrhage a year before
 we married!

He shrugs and they stroll off towards his hut.

CUT:

67. EXT. GUSTAV'S HUT. DAY

They stroll towards his hut. He enters and begins changing back into his clothes. ALMA gazes at him from outside. As he changes he glances at the score he has been working on.

ALMA

Let me have the towel.

He hands it to her. She takes it and pegs it on to a line rigged from his hut to a tree.

67. Contd.

ALMA

(quietly)

You give your attention to everything except me. You hardly look at me.

GUSTAV

(quiet like her)

But it's different now. We're together - we're side by side - not looking at each other - we're working side by side.

ALMA

It's different because I'm working in the house all day! And there are two children to look after! And everything has to be on time! If your breakfast isn't here at seven sharp -

GUSTAV

Oh for God's sake don't cry over trivialities!

ALMA

They're NOT trivialities for me, because I DO them! Don't you understand that? I change the nappies - I order the food - and stand over the maid - and arrange the house - and keep people away from you!

GUSTAV

Don't you remember how I am in the winter, at that blasted 'Ministry of Music' night and day, and aren't I supposed to be here for a rest? And you know I never take a rest, aren't I working at my music here - ? Alma! Isn't my music the best devotion you could wish for? I though we were closer than that!

ALMA

Yes, yes! I know.

GUSTAV

If I didn't plunge ahead with the work - would there be money?

67. Contd.

ALMA

I know!

They sit in silence.

GUSTAV

Explain to me more - what you mean.

ALMA

You give your singers more attention
that you do me!

GUSTAV

(laughing)

Well - what sort of opera would we
get if I didn't?

ALMA

I'm afraid of losing you every time you
go to rehearsal.

GUSTAV

And when I'm working here, with the
Opera miles away, what are you
afraid of then?

She shrugs.

ALMA

Gustl, I looked at the Adagietto.
(nodding towards
his score)

GUSTAV

Did you like it?

ALMA

Oh, Gustl!

GUSTAV

Would you like to copy it for me?

ALMA

Yes!

GUSTAV

It's only a sketch - you can fill
in the gaps - only you can do that -

67. Contd.

He is dressed. He emerges.

ALMA
Go to your Putzi.

GUSTAV
Do you mean that nicely?

ALMA
Oh yes!

He leaves for the house.

CUT:

68. INT. GUSTAV'S HUT. DAY

GUSTAV strolling towards the house from ALMA'S P.V.

GUSTAV
(calling back
to the hut)
Will you come soon? Is lunch on
the table?

ALMA
Yes! Yes!
(half to
herself)
Lunch is on the table. Everything's
ready! It always is! On the dot!
Oh, Gustl, you've eaten me up! I
don't exist! But you don't either!

From her P.V. GUSTAV and the two children seen vaguely and in
SLOW MOTION in the distance, near the house. In fact all three
seem to be floating.

ALMA (contd)
Your music exists, not you! So I'm a
slave to that too now! I have to shush
the children quiet all the time. No
noise! Not even a dog!

GUSTAV and one of the children move close together, still floating,
leaving the other child apart, watching them.

68. Contd.

ALMA
 You love little Putzi but not me! There's
 something between you - a sort of
 silent message - closing me and you out!

We stay on those almost dancing figures, shimmering in the
 distance.

CUT:

69. INT. THE MAHLER HOUSE, MAIERNIGG. DAY

ALMA enters the hall of this pleasant converted farmhouse, a
 batch of sheet music under her arm. She looks round. Silence.

ALMA
 Gustav!

The maid GRETEL appears.

GRETEL
 He's with the children, M'm.

ALMA
 Would you call him for lunch, Gretel?
 (as GRETEL
 leaves)
 Have the children eaten?

GRETEL
 Oh yes.

ALMA walks on into the dining room where places for two are laid.
 She gazes out into the garden. She sits in one of the places and
 begins reading the music she has brought from the hut. There is
 the sound of children's laughter outside, muffled, vague against
 the other country sounds.

GUSTAV
 You've been stealing from my hut.

She looks round startled. GUSTAV is there, smiling at her. He
 looks over her shoulder at the score.

ALMA
 (tapping the
 page)
 This is a terrible noise. You've
 gone mad with the percussion.

69. Contd.

GUSTAV

(a beat)

You're angry? Can music make you angry? I can cut the damned thing. Here

(taking the script)

- the side drums out, half the percussion instruments - it's easy!

(kissing her)

Now let's have lunch. Oh what a lioness you are, Alma!

ALMA

(gazing at him)

And sometimes a bitch?

GUSTAV

I didn't say so.

ALMA

You don't call me nice things in the old way. You called me the spring once -

GUSTAV

But it isn't spring all the year round, darling.

(as he goes to his place at the table and begins eating the first course of melon)

You've got to move with life - with the seasons - marriage has its seasons like everything else in nature!

ALMA continues gazing at him, her melon untouched.

ALMA

And then you make such a fool of me at dinner parties. You always have to come in half way through and take an apple out of the bowl and start smelling it!

GUSTAV

I love apples!

69. Contd.

ALMA

And then they stop and stare at us in the street, everywhere we go - 'Look, there's Mahler and his wife! But he's not with anybody! His wife's just trailing along!

GUSTAV

So what do I do? Come to heel like a good male dog just because of what they feel! To hell with them! Don't try and tell me you give a damn what people think! Now eat your melon.

He continues eating. But the fact that she does not eat makes him stop again.

GUSTAV (contd)

Remember the first movement of my Sixth? That's for you! That's my Almschili music!

The 'Alma theme' (second subject of the 1st movement) steals over.

ALMA

I'm not good enough for it. After I've been working in the house all day I feel just a body - I don't want to, Gust!

GUSTAV

Does it help you to work on my scores - as if we were one spirit - not one body - one spirit - doing the same thing?

ALMA

(after a sad
pause)

Yes.

She looks at another of his scores while he goes on eating (ravenous after a stout morning's work).

GUSTAV

(ready for the
next course)

Gretel!

69. Contd.

GRETEL comes in with a large tray of covered dishes as if she had been waiting for the signal.

ALMA

Gustav! What's this? 'Songs on the
Death of Children'? What children?
What death? Oh, Gustl!

The heart-rending Songs burst over. GUSTAV jumps up from his seat. GRETEL, setting out the dishes looks aghast.

GUSTAV

(going round
to ALMA)

It's a setting on Rückert.

ALMA

He lost his child! It was the most
horrible loss of his life! Gustl!

(with the harr-
owing Kindertot-
enlieder still over)

How could you do it! How could you
tempt fate like that?

GUSTAV

But listen to it! Listen!

(showing her
the place on
the score)

Listen to that!

ALMA

Oh, Gustl!

She throws the score down. And he throws himself down on an armchair.

GUSTAV

They don't understand my music, the
Viennese, the Germans, nobody!
Their cheering doesn't fool me!

(implying with
contempt that
ALMA is among
those who don't
understand)

And when you come to think of it
what could they make of all these

69. Contd.

GUSTAV (contd)
 primeval sounds? These worlds that
 surge and crash down again one after
 another -
 (as the music too
 surges up)
 And there are thousands of faces
 going by -

CUT:

70. WE TAKE A MONTAGE.

The 'Judgement Day' movement (5th) of the Second Symphony
 surges up over the Kindertotenlieder.

a) Undefined impression of
 faces pleading for pity,
 crying, radiant, etc.

b) WOMEN and CHILDREN,
 and MEN of all conditions,
 walking, plodding.

c) The sky seeming to break
 open above them.

d) Light flooding them.

The music reaches the chorus 'Thou shalt arise, yea, arise':
 'judgement' cancelled out, the music says.

GUSTAV (V.O.)

- An endless procession - it's
 like a judgement day - but there's
 no judgement - no punishment -
 no heaven or hell - nothing but
 light - a vast still light - that's
 what you have at the end of life -
 just an ocean of light.

CUT:

71. INT. THE MASTER BEDROOM (see 10) DAY

ALMA and GUSTAV in casual modern clothes again. Her hair is
 down. She is sitting by the dressing table, leaning against it,
 smoking. His spectacles are on the dressing table at her elbow.
 GUSTAV is gazing out of the window.

GUSTAV

So we did die then.

(with a chuckle)

It happened even to Alma, mm?

(turning to look
 at her)

Fifty years after me, imagine that!
 1964, wasn't it? Considering all
 the Benedictine you drank it should
 have been earlier.

71. Contd.

ALMA

(amused)

Your apples and your wholemeal bread didn't seem to save you.

GUSTAV

And, like I always told you, we became somebody else ...

(chuckling to himself)

All that sorrow and pain, and jumping about on a bed, it was like a symphony, wasn't it? That's why I tried to build a whole world in each of my symphonies - cow-bells, military bands, ecstasies, confessions! Because nothing in life is ever wasted! Nothing lost!

CUT:

72. ANOTHER ANGLE

From GUSTAV's P.V. a view through the window of the road outside. A sportscar has driven up. It skids to a halt. The DRIVER, a man curiously like KARL MOLL, except that he is now dressed in a polo neck sweater with flashy trousers, jumps out and pulls up the bonnet. A glossy version of THE MERRY WIDOW waltz for full orchestra comes over from the car radio. KARL MOLL II inspects the engine.

GUSTAV

Look, it's your stepfather.

ALMA joins him at the window. He puts his arm round her, and they kiss modern-style, French and fruity but without the carnal attention previous generations gave it.

ALMA

(gazing down at MOLL)

Mad about sportscars now!

They laugh together. GUSTAV hums the MERRY WIDOW waltz. They begin swinging from side to side with it. They begin to dance. The music comes up louder. She still has her cigarette. They begin to whirl round.

DISSOLVE:

73. INT. FABULOUS STAIRCASE. DAY

ALMA and GUSTAV are still dancing but the scene has changed round them to a vague and brilliant staircase of a great house, perhaps an Opera House foyer. She still has her cigarette alight. Its smoke grows and grows until it envelopes their bodies. The smoke-cloud unravels slowly as they come waltzing down the stairs, and it unravels on their naked bodies. They whirl and whirl down the stairs in a fantastic dance where their feet seem hardly to touch the steps and they really are flying. The gay waltz takes us all with it. Down and down the stairs they come, whirling fantastically, a miraculous tour de force of dancing that seems impossible to our eyes. They are faster than humans can be, they float as humans cannot, their steps are integral with the music in a way we cannot believe.

CUT:

74. EXT. THE ROAD OUTSIDE. DAY

BANG! KARL MOLL II lets the bonnet down. He strolls round to the driver's seat. He glances up at the house.

CUT:

75. INT. THE HOUSE. DAY

GUSTAV and ALMA, still in modern clothes, are at the foot of the staircase now, in the hall. They are out of breath from the dance. KARL MOLL II's sportscar revs up outside. They kiss each other quickly and leave the house.

CUT:

76. EXT. THE ROAD OUTSIDE. DAY

KARL MOLL II is waiting for them as they come out. The waltz is still blaring from the car-radio.

KARL MOLL

I thought the piston rings were
playing up.

GUSTAV and ALMA treat this as a joke, getting into the car at the back.

KARL MOLL (contd)

(as he jumps into
the driver's seat)

No, it could have been serious.

76. Contd.

He speeds off, almost shooting them out of their seats.

ALMA

Not so fast!

MOLL slows down with a childish look of disappointment.

ALMA (contd)

with a sigh,
to GUSTAV)

If only we'd danced like that when we
were alive!

GUSTAV

You don't think we could have danced
like that, do you? I never tried to
express myself in the body. I
wanted that eternal - what was
Goethe's phrase in Faust - eternal
bliss or something?

ALMA

Did you find it?

(as he shrugs)

I just went from day to day. I had
no time to live!

GUSTAV

Except in the body, and that's no
life at all! You needed many more
journeys after me, didn't you -
many more men? You had to go
through all that!

ALMA

Yes!

GUSTAV

But did you get a hint of the bliss in
the end - the light that seems to lift
you up - ?

ALMA

Not like you. The way you used to
come out of your room with joy all over
your face!

76. Contd.

The car approaches a Viennese theatre. The Merry Widow waltz comes over again and GUSTAV and ALMA laugh together.

KARL MOLL

What the hell's the matter with you
two this morning?

CUT:

77. EXT. VIENNESE THEATRE. DAY

The sportscar draws up at the theatre. The foyer and the entrance doors are crowded. GUSTAV and ALMA jump out and join the crowd. Posters announce THE MERRY WIDOW. KARL MOLL II drives off, looking for a parking space.

The car-radio Merry Widow becomes -

CUT:

78. INT. THE THEATRE. EVENING

The last moments of the Merry Widow onstage. The curtain rolls down. Applause.

79. REVERSE ANGLE

On the audience. We pick out GUSTAV and ALMA, back in period costume, her hair up, he with spectacles. She has clearly been having the time of her life. He looks at her with pleasure.

CUT:

80. EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE MAHLER HOUSE. NIGHT

A horsedrawn cab brings GUSTAV and ALMA home. She jumps down, laughing. GUSTAV pays off the cabby. The house is well lighted. The front door opens before GUSTAV and ALMA reach it. GRETEL is there, waiting for them.

CUT:

81. INT. MAHLER HOUSE. NIGHT

GUSTAV and ALMA come in and give their coats to GRETEL.

81. Contd.

ALMA
(calling up
the stairs)

Mummy!

GUSTAV hums a theme from the Merry Widow. ALMA walks up the stairs.

CUT:

82. INT. MAHLER HOUSE. NIGHT

On the landing above. FRAU MOLL comes from the reception room where we saw the GUESTS at the beginning of the film. (see 8).

ALMA is walking up the stairs.

ALMA
Are they asleep?

FRAU MOLL
Yes but the little one -

ALMA
(with a caution-
ary glance back
at GUSTAV)
Sssh!

FRAU MOLL understands and smiles good evening to GUSTAV as he too comes up the stairs.

GUSTAV
Well, your daughter had the time of
her life!

CUT:

83. INT. RECEPTION ROOM. NIGHT

Cups have been set out for an after-theatre tisane, with cakes and canapes. They all come in.

GUSTAV
That looks cheerful!

83. Contd.

He takes FRAU MOLL round the waist and kisses her on the cheek. They are clearly on affectionate terms with each other.

ALMA throws herself into a chair with a sigh. GUSTAV begins pouring the tisane.

ALMA

I'd love to see the score! You've got it somewhere haven't you - the Merry Widow score?

GUSTAV

What? You don't imagine I've got any Franz Lehar in the house do you?

FRAU MOLL

But you enjoyed it too, Gustl, I can see that!

GUSTAV

Every minute. I don't care how it was done, I loved every awful singer, every cardboard tree -

ALMA

Our one night out in five years! It ought to be written down somewhere for the historians. And the Merry Widow, not Lohengrin or Parsifal!

GUSTAV

I tell you what, we can go to Doblinger's tomorrow and I'll ask about the sales of my music and buy you a copy of the Merry Widow

(with a wink)

- if my sales run to it -

ALMA

I had the impression we floated - and you were holding me - dancing - !

GUSTAV

(with a smile)

Dancing?

83. Contd.

They are all seated, sipping their tea. Silence.

A child's cry - disturbed sleep - in the distance. GUSTAV starts.

GUSTAV

Almschili - what's that?

ALMA

Gustav! Don't look like that! Gustav!

GUSTAV

Who is it for God's sake, who is it?

ALMA

It's the little one. The English nurse scalded her fingers this morning.

GUSTAV

It's more than fingers! Go and see!

She gets up, under the influence of his wild eyes. A CLOSE SHOT of GUSTAV staring before him as if very cold all of a sudden, rigid, as he waits for ALMA's return. A savage phrase from the Songs of the Death of Children comes bursting over.

84. ANOTHER ANGLE

Across GUSTAV we watch the landing as ALMA emerges from the nursery. He does not turn as she comes back into the reception room, though he is aware of her.

GUSTAV

It's a fever.

ALMA

Yes.

GUSTAV

The doctor's coming.

FRAU MOLL

(leaving)

I'll call him.

84. Contd.

GUSTAV
And Putzerl?

ALMA
She's asleep.

GUSTAV
Calm?

ALMA
Yes.

GUSTAV
Not flushed?

ALMA
No.

GUSTAV
(still without
looking at her)
Come and sit down.

She returns to her chair, frightened to make the slightest sound.
He seems to relax suddenly.

GUSTAV (contd)
The Lord Chamberlain called me
into his office today.

ALMA
Yes?

GUSTAV
Somebody stole my appointments book
and took it to him. It said, 'After
Easter, three concerts in Rome.'
He said I wasn't allowed to do concerts
in the Opera House's time. He told me
box office receipts always fell off when
I'm away. I told him this wasn't true.
They want me out. It has nothing to
do with Rome. They've finished with
me! The Germans are finished with
me too! They've had enough of my
standards! When you're as demand-
ing as I am you tread on too many toes
and in the end they surround you - they
need a lower level, you see, it makes

84. Contd.

GUSTAV (contd)

them feel more at home. I've been there ten years near enough. It's time to go.

ALMA

It's because you stood by Alfred Roller. You stand by him whatever he does.

GUSTAV

Because he's the finest designer in Europe.

ALMA

Yes, but making the Rhine Maidens sing from hanging baskets - !

GUSTAV

(with a shrug)

It's only because they's so fat - they're afraid the rope'll break -

They are about to laugh when the child's cry interrupts again.

GUSTAV (contd)

(to himself)

There! The second blow! I said there were three blows of fate! The first my dismissal - no money - nowhere to go - And then

(staring towards the landing)

- the second. -

ALMA

Don't make it happen! You should never have written those songs on the death of children!

GUSTAV

(to himself again)

The three blows of fate that lay the hero lay!

The 'three blows' from the Sixth Symphony crash over, like an explanation of his words.

84. Contd.

Silence.

A bell rings.

GUSTAV
What's that for God's sake?

ALMA
Gustav!
(getting up)
It's only the doctor.

She hurries out.

85. ANOTHER ANGLE

Again across GUSTAV's profile we see on to the landing where FRAU MOLL is just coming up the stairs with the DOCTOR, as ALMA waits for them. They hurry together into the nursery.

GUSTAV
(calling out in
a strange way)
I've never heard that bell before!

86. CLOSE SHOT OF GUSTAV

ALMA (V.O.)
Gustav! You're making it happen!
Gustav!

He talks to himself.

GUSTAV
I've never been able to talk to you.
Is this your only way?

87. RESUME 84.

ALMA reappears suddenly in the room.

87. Contd.

ALMA

He says Putzerl has a fever.

GUSTAV

It's diptheria.

ALMA

Yes.

GUSTAV

And there must be a tracheotomy! No!
NO!

(she stares at him
as he begins talk-
ing to himself
again)

Why do you want her so soon? I
could have stood dismissal from the
Opera House - that was right - you
must take me away from the centres
of power, yes! I agree with that!
But my child! You aren't just!

The bell sounds again.

FRAU MOLL (V.O.)

Alma!

Her cry freezes them.

ALMA

(hurrying out)

It's my child!

GUSTAV strides about the room agitatedly, still unable to go along
to the nursery himself, but continually approaching the door.

GUSTAV

(in a strange
crooning way)

I willed it, yes. I suppose I must
have done. I must need her to die.
Little Putzerl must need it too. She
never belonged here. It was only a
visit. The earth wasn't for her, you
see. I'm only on a visit too! And she
decides to go before me. She doesn't
need to stay, to go through all this.
She needs the light sooner!

87. Contd.

ALMA screams at the end of the corridor.

CUT:

88. INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT. DAY

A gay Italian barrel organ bursts over, strong at first and then distant. This is the eleventh floor of the Majestic Hotel in Manhattan in 1907.

We track through the empty apartment.

We establish New York and the ample room slowly. The sound of the barrel organ is mixed with that of gay street noises.

ALMA is leaning out of the window, listening to these noises with pleasure. She is a changed woman. There is little trace now of the young Viennese girl. She is dressed smartly in black, in the American style of the period.

FRAU MOLL (V.O.)

Alma.

ALMA doesn't move. She closes her eyes with pleasure.

FRAU MOLL comes in, dressed for the street.

FRAU MOLL

Alma.

ALMA turns and looks at her.

FRAU MOLL (contd)

Shouldn't I get that barrel organ stopped? Isn't he composing?

ALMA

I suppose so! Ask the man at the desk.

FRAU MOLL leaves.

CUT:

89. INT. HOTEL FOYER. DAY

Take in the foyer to help establish New York, with a glimpse of the barrel organ outside on the sidewalk beyond the glass doors.

89. Contd.

FRAU MOLL comes down the stairs and goes to the HALL PORTER. They talk together. He glances in the direction of the barrel organ.

CUT:

90. RESUME 88.

ALMA is still by the window, drinking in the sounds. The barrel organ ceases, and her face undergoes a tightening of disappointment. There are tears in her eyes. She listens to the other sounds that drift up now - horses, the 'Woa!' of the CABBIES, snatches of 'classical' jazz - Buddy Holden or Jelly-Roll Morton or Bunk Johnson.

91. ANOTHER ANGLE

One of the doors leading into the lounge opens slowly. It is GUSTAV. He is in a dressing gown. He looks round the room for ALMA. He comes into the room with deliberately slow steps.

GUSTAV

What a lovely sound ...

ALMA

(starting)

What?

GUSTAV

That barrel organ. It reminded me of my childhood.

(and then he suddenly stops.

Sitting down on the sofa carefully)

The moment I lean back to remember - which means to forget -

(he stops. Looking at her)

Why are you at the window all day?

ALMA

To hear New York down below.

GUSTAV

You could take a lift downstairs, sit in the foyer.

91. Contd.

ALMA

My duty's with you.

GUSTAV

(musing)

And mine's with the Metropolitan Opera House! These Met designers are bloody awful. We need an Alfred Roller here.

ALMA

He's having trouble, you said - he wrote from Vienna - the savages are collecting round him - ?

GUSTAV

Yes. They'll send him packing soon. But the whole menagerie won't last long - the royal opera house, royalty itself - none of it.

(the traffic sounds -
1907 klaxons - drift
up again)

You like those noises?

ALMA

Yes.

GUSTAV

You like this city, don't you?

ALMA

It's divine.

GUSTAV

(chuckling)

They built it against the divine. That was the whole idea. They ran away from divine right - of kings, aristocracies. So how is New York divine?

ALMA

The bigness. The free way they have of talking. Nothing scratching and nibbling at me like in Vienna. I feel unknown - everything feels positive -

91. Contd.

GUSTAV

With everybody knowing that the Mahlers
live on the eleventh floor of the Majestic
- you feel unknown?

ALMA

We're respected.

GUSTAV

More than in Vienna?

ALMA

We were worshipped there. And it
doesn't make you feel good. The slave
can turn. The Viennese didn't come
to your last concert.

GUSTAV

You look a woman.

ALMA

What?

GUSTAV

A woman. Dazzling attractive - the kind
of woman awful men get excited over -

ALMA

Life's simpler. No Ministry of Music
at the back of everything.

GUSTAV

You're even happy.

ALMA

You must change for the Met.

GUSTAV

(sitting up
carefully)

What made me ask that damned doctor
in Maiernigg to examine me? Do you
remember I laughed when I asked him?
And he gives me a sentence of death!

The steps of a slow procession from the street below.

ALMA

Look!

91. Contd.

GUSTAV
(joining her at
the window)

A procession. Nothing supernatural happens here. It's a rally or something.

He leaves the window.

ALMA
It's a funeral. There's a huge crowd.

The tap of a drum hushes the crowd. We hear a MAN addressing them. We cannot make his words out. They echo in a strange way.

CLOSE SHOT of GUSTAV shows him listening intently, almost beating time to the drum. Gradually the terrible opening bars of the Finale of his Tenth Symphony take over, as if he were thinking them out then and there.

ALMA
I think it's that fireman who died heroically. It was in the papers.

GUSTAV
(about to leave)
I shall use that drum-tap one day
...
(stopping)
A great change came over you in Paris. When Ossip Gabrilovitch fell in love with you. The dear man. It brought you back to life.

She does not move. For the first time we are conscious of a woman choosing her own life, and capable of choosing other men, not just flirting with them. He leaves.

CUT:

92. INT. GUSTAV'S HOTEL BEDROOM. DAY

There are photographs of the two children on his table. GUSTAV comes in slowly and thoughtfully, takes off his dressing gown, begins dressing for the Metropolitan. We follow his movements, as the street noises continue to drift up. He prepares himself for the evening performance, in tails, dressing carefully; there

92. Contd.

is less absentmindedness about him these days. He looks at the photograph of his dead child. He sits on the bed. The Songs of the Death of Children come over. He stares before him, remembering her.

CUT:

93. EXT. MAIERNIGG GARDEN. DAY

A vague and slow-motion impression of GUSTAV with the two children as ALMA saw them from his hut (see 68). The music is still over.

For a moment GUSTAV floats alone with the dead children.

CUT:

94. RESUME 92.

GUSTAV recollects himself and finishes dressing. He puts on his elegant overcoat and white silk scarf, then claps a top hat on his head. For the first time we see an elegant man. He leaves.

CUT:

95. INT. THE LOUNGE. DAY

He returns to the lounge. ALMA is still at the window. He stands gazing at her. Then he walks softly across the room and out into the lobby. He leaves the apartment. She is unaware of him.

ALMA does not move. The Songs of the Death of Children is still over.

ALMA turns. She looks round the room. She seems to see someone. She smiles. She wants to tell GUSTAV.

ALMA
(running towards
GUSTAV's door)

Gustav!

She turns quickly, stops. From her P.V. the empty room. But she is convinced of seeing someone.

95. Contd.

ALMA (contd)
 Gustav, I can see Putzi! It is!
 (runs towards
 her imagined
 daughter)
 Putzi, Putzi! Your father's in
 his room- darling - quickly - !

She stops again. She wants to get Gustav. She rushes to his room. She throws the door open. No one is there.

Recovering, standing quite still in the doorway of GUSTAV's room, she looks across the empty lounge with enormous sadness, and bursts into tears, moaning.

CUT:

96. INT. METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE. EVENING

GUSTAV, a gesticulating silhouette against the lowered curtain, conducts the Tristan overture for his premiere.

CUT:

97. ANOTHER ANGLE

CLOSE SHOT of ALMA, dressed in a beautiful black dress with pearls, in the audience. She is gazing before her, head slightly lowered, tears in her eyes, far away from the music.

CUT:

98. EXT. NEW YORK STREET. NIGHT

A horsedrawn cab in a tremendous blizzard rendering the surrounding street invisible. The CABBY is a huge red-faced man. He is bawling at the top of his voice, half-singing, half-shouting at the horses. The storm induces a kind of horrible ecstasy in him, and he is drunk anyway.

CUT:

99. INT. HORSEDRAWN CAB. NIGHT

GUSTAV, on his way home, being rocked and thrown in the cab by its progress through the blizzard. He does not seem to be afraid. His thoughts too are far away.

CUT:

100. RESUME 98.

The blizzard makes the progress of the horse almost impossible. Suddenly the cab rolls over on its side, and the CABBY falls with it, yelling with something like joy. The snow continues to play round the cab as the CABBY sits up and looks round him, still singing. The horse remains upright and unperturbed, the shafts of the carriage twisted up. The free door of the cab opens slowly and GUSTAV's astonished face peers over, taking in the scene. He and the CABBY look at each other. The CABBY begins to roar with laughter. GUSTAV crawls out of the cab, losing his glasses in the snow. He staggers round to the CABBY, blind, pointing to his eyes. The CABBY continues roaring with laughter. He sings happily, rising on his knees to clasp GUSTAV round the middle, swinging him to and fro. To the CABBY's surprise GUSTAV takes command of the situation. (he is used, after all, to singers)

GUSTAV

(at the top
of his voice)

Find my glasses!

CABBY

(silenced)

You lost ya glasses?

He pulls himself to his feet, using GUSTAV to steady himself, and together they begin fishing round in the snow. They are close together on all fours, fishing together.

CABBY

(suddenly, with
triumph)

I got 'em! I got 'em! I got the
fuckers!

He roars with laughter again.

CUT:

101. EXT. GRAND CENTRAL PARK. NIGHT

The blizzard continues to rage, obsuring all but the railings and a few trees. GUSTAV comes staggering through the snow, clutching the railings, his hat gone, one hand steadying his glasses.

CUT:

102. INT. THE HOTEL APARTMENT. NIGHT

The sound of the blizzard outside. GUSTAV staggers into the room covered with snow, his overcoat trailing open. He throws it off, gasping, still reeling from the storm. He stumbles through the room to the bathroom.

CUT:

103. INT. THE BATHROOM. NIGHT

He grabs a towel and begins rubbing his hair dry, gasping. He takes off his glasses and dries them on a hand towel carefully. He puts them on and inspects himself in the mirror.

ALMA is suddenly at the door, in her nightdress, like a ghost.

ALMA

Gust! It's past two o'clock.

GUSTAV

Mm.

ALMA

Were you that man stumbling about - clutching the railings - falling in a heap -?

GUSTAV

(aware of a certain revulsion in her voice)

Yes. I was that man.

ALMA

You see, dangers everywhere! On us all the time!

GUSTAV

(coming towards her)

I was warned about these New York blizzards. Go to bed, darling. The doctor said you mustn't leave your bed.

She stops him at the door.

ALMA

I saw her again. In this room.

103. Contd.

GUSTAV

I hear her voice.

ALMA

(touching him)

Your poor hands!

He walks her into the lounge, his arm round her waist.

CUT:

104. INT. THE LOUNGE. NIGHT

GUSTAV

(as they walk in)

I left Karl Bitter's just after midnight. They all got drunk. I was disgusted. Why do people have to do that? I got a cab. Alma - it blew over! Can you imagine it?

(as they sit
together on
the sofa)

And I crawled from underneath.
And the Cabby was drunk too -

ALMA

(beginning to
laugh)

No!

GUSTAV

I lost my glasses. We were fishing around in the snow for them. The snow stings you like wasps here. I had to cling to the railings.

They laugh together. Silence.

ALMA

Conried died then.

GUSTAV

Yes. They offered me the Metropolitan. I turned it down. They're giving it to Toscanini - he's a good man but do you know what - he wants to conduct Tristan.

104. Contd.

GUSTAV (contd)

After a production like mine! It was the finest I've ever done - ever heard about! All those cuts I made. And ghastly sets. But still it was the best ever - miles ahead of any Tristan I did in Vienna.

ALMA

You take things so much easier now. You'd never have agreed to cuts in Vienna. And I remember how you were if anybody came in late.

GUSTAV

Our little girl taught me such a lot - by dying. Nothing's so important any more, on this side of death.

ALMA

We should sell Maiernigg. Too heavy with memories. Mummy and I found a lovely old farmhouse at Toblach when we were last in Europe.

GUSTAV

I liked what Max Burkhart said the other day - 'Death exists if you believe in it, and I don't.

ALMA

He's dying.

GUSTAV

(suddenly his
old self again)

That old trout - what was her name? - the wife of a shipping magnate from Maine - she said is it true that Wagner treated Listz with appalling ingratitude? 'What's that?' I said 'So Wagner has a bad reputation? And what does Tristan mean to you?'

ALMA

Yes, we all heard you. A woman asked me, 'Does he always make a scene at dinner?'

104. Contd.

GUSTAV

You see, I made the scene. Not her, with her lies about how Tristan moved her so much she couldn't sleep at nights! Not the lie but the truth makes a scene. That's how their minds work - from the Balkans to Philadelphia.

They quieten, after this flare-up of the old way of talking and arguing.

ALMA

People are so light here. They take you to their hearts. I see you never miss a dinner party nowadays. And you dress so beautifully.

GUSTAV

We must give up the flat in Vienna too.

ALMA

Yes.

GUSTAV

And live in Toblach you said? A nice farmhouse?

ALMA

Yes.

GUSTAV

Does Anna miss her sister?

ALMA

It must be dawn, look.

GUSTAV

I feel I'm sinking further and further. And you look fresh for the voyage - back to Europe! - Bursting - young!

ALMA

Bodansky came to me with tears in his eyes. He said 'I shall never love a woman like I love Mahler'.

104. Contd.

GUSTAV

(laughing
suddenly again)

That night I arrived for my First Symphony I found that the good ladies of the orchestral committee, honest Daughters of the Revolution, had massed the brass all round my feet and the strings in a circle round the back, to get a pretty effect! Still, it didn't matter, they didn't get a thing anyway!

ALMA

You took the orchestra to a night club afterwards, and came back at three in the morning, radiant.

GUSTAV

They felt like my children. And their critics are so nice. Unlike the Viennese. And the French. Remember the time Debussy walked out of my Second Symphony with his friends? Said it was all too Schubertian for them, too Viennese, too foreign, too Slav! What nonsense people do talk! Trying to make it seem there's a right way of doing things - one way! - on this side!

ALMA

Still, they enjoyed your conducting of Fidelio.

GUSTAV

Oh, conducting; that's nothing. Music's little enough. Music fades. What doesn't fade is what you are inside. Almschili, you must always try to exert that inner force of yours - spread yourself - never stint your beauty - always try and bring out the light inside -

He yawns. They seem to sleep. The blizzard continues to rage outside.

CUT:

105. INT. THE TOBLACH HOUSE. AUSTRIA. DAY

The garden room of their new house in the Salzkammergut. From outside, the sound of hammering, dogs barking, voices across the lake, summer noises.

GUSTAV is lying on the divan, a blanket over his feet. He has been dozing. He opens his eyes, blinking against the dazzling light from the lake. He looks round the room. He begins to be alarmed. He sits up. He listens.

GUSTAV

Alma! Alma!
(with increasing
alarm)

Alma!

ALMA comes in from the garden, dressed in a bright dierndl.

GUSTAV (contd)

I - I thought you had gone.

ALMA

Gone?

GUSTAV

(slumping back
again)

I need you here. In case I want
the boat.

ALMA

(quietly)

Yes.

GUSTAV

You were in the garden?

ALMA

With the child, yes.

GUSTAV

Help me please!

(she comes to
him slowly, and
he puts his arms
round her)

My Almschiltzili! I've got this
terrific yearning for you - it's
when I'm travelling, even when

105. Contd.

GUSTAV (contd)

I'm working in the hut a few yards away. It's in my head all the time, 'Alma', 'my Alma'!

ALMA

Gustl, I can't bear this tense life any more.

GUSTAV

There, it won't last much longer -

ALMA

(in alarm)

What won't last?

GUSTAV

(after gazing
at her)

I mean the Symphony, it'll be finished soon.

ALMA

You work too hard! Always work, work!

GUSTAV

And then we'll be free, take a holiday -
(getting up)
I'll go for a dip.

ALMA

Don't swim out too far!

GUSTAV walks off out into the garden, seeing not to have heard what she said. She looks after him.

CUT:

106. EXT. THE TOBLACH GARDEN. DAY

GUSTAV is strolling down towards his new hut at the edge of the lake.

Suddenly the front door bell sounds from the house. He turns round, staring, panic-stricken. He dashes back towards the house.

CUT:

107. INT. THE GARDEN ROOM. DAY

The garden room is now empty. GUSTAV rushes back in, looks round with wild alarm. He hears something in the garden. He swings round as if shot.

From his P.V. we see the ARCHITECT standing in the garden, staring at him. The ARCHITECT is bullet-headed with fierce unflinching eyes. Seeing GUSTAV, he disappears at once again. GUSTAV is panting with alarm.

GRETEL comes into the room behind him. He swings round again, almost falling with panic. She hands him a letter.

GRETEL

A gentleman called with this, sir.

GUSTAV

(taking it with
trembling hands)

Thank you.

She leaves, gazing at him with curiosity.

He tears the envelope open with frenzied hands. He reads it, horrified.

ALMA walks into the room with a bath towel, on her way down to the hut to find him.

GUSTAV

Look!

(holding out
the letter)

It's from the architect who fell in love with you at the Tobelbad sanatorium. When you were ill. I said at the time you were hiding something - look, he's addressed it to me! He's come here himself!

He's -

(swivelling round
towards the garden
but the ARCHITECT
has gone)

He wants my wife! What can I say? He wants to come in here and talk it over! Is that the kind of impression he gets of your closeness to me, your need for me, your loyalty, kindness, the poor dead child - !

107. Contd.

ALMA

I was tired and broken down and he sympathised! He sympathised!
Yes!

GUSTAV

Sympathised with the fact that you're married to me, instead of to a popinjay who designs brick walls! I told you didn't I, it won't last much longer, it's almost finished, and then you'll be free!

ALMA

Why only me?

GUSTAV

Both of us, yes - both of us free!

He stalks off, through one of the inner doors.

ALMA

And don't walk so fast! The doctor said not to!

GUSTAV

(returning)

To hell with doctors, and architects too, and all the dead professions!

ALMA

(with a fury
she has never
shown before)

Do you remember how you said spring couldn't last for ever? So you pushed me into winter! You didn't even look at me! It was the Fifth and the Sixth and the Seventh and the Eighth - the Song of the Earth - the Song of Children - dead children - before it happened - never a song about me! Always music - not me! Not even your own life! Do you wonder I needed a bit of warming sunlight? And he was there! He looked at me! He showed me who I was, with his eyes!

107. Contd.

GUSTAV stands staring at her. He lowers his eyes, still horrified but at the same time compassionately alive to what ALMA is saying.

CUT:

108. EXT. TOBLACH HOUSE. DAY.

On the front door as GUSTAV opens it. He looks out. From his P.V. the front side of the garden. The ARCHITECT is standing behind a bush. GUSTAV walks forward. The ARCHITECT comes forward too. The ARCHITECT seems less fierce than GUSTAV's first impression of him. A M.S. shows them shaking hands. They begin walking up and down, talking together. The ARCHITECT keeps glancing towards the house, and GUSTAV seems to restrain him.

CUT:

109. INT. ENTRANCE HALL. DAY

ALMA is gazing out of the window. From her P.V. we see GUSTAV and the ARCHITECT. They walk towards the lakeside road, still talking, and disappear.

CUT:

110. EXT. TOBLACH. DAY (HELIVISION)

After this group of dramatic scenes without music, the 1st movement of the Sixth Symphony, the so-called 'protest march' with its promise of conflict, breaks over a Helivision L.S. of the lake and then the MAHLER house. We ZOOM in to GUSTAV and the ARCHITECT strolling along the road towards the railway station, still talking. Musically we reach the end of the first subject when -

CUT:

111. INT. THE GARDEN ROOM. DAY

- the 'Alma there' (second subject) opens: ALMA is sitting by the table gazing at a pile of telegrams. From her P.V. the telegrams read 'I ADORE YOU - WALTER', 'AM THINKING ONLY OF MY ALMA - YOUR OWN WALTER', 'WILL LIVE ONLY FOR YOU - WALTER', 'YOU GOVERN ALL MY THOUGHTS ALL MY DAYS ALL MY ASPIRATIONS - WALTER', 'I KNOW YOU ARE MINE - WALTER'.

111. Contd.

She gazes into the garden.

GUSTAV
Are you in love with him?

The CAMERA PANS to find GUSTAV in an armchair. She shakes her head mutely.

GUSTAV (contd)
He seems harmless enough. You won't come to Munich?

She again shakes her head.

GUSTAV (contd)
(getting up)
I'll be conducting for you. I feel the same as your architect, except in one thing. I don't know you're mine.

CUT:

112. INT. MUNICH CONCERT HALL. EVENING

A Mahler concert. We OPEN ON the trumpeter for the first bars of the Fifth Symphony which we remember from the episode in GUSTAV's childhood near the barracks of Iglau. (see 49) We TAKE IN the subsequent percussion, before PULLING BACK behind GUSTAV who is conducting.

113. REVERSE ANGLE

GUSTAV in CLOSE SHOT conducting with a kind of defiance. He is pale, clearly weak. He seems all but crushed by the dramatic weight of his own music.

CUT:

114. INT. TOBLACH GARDEN ROOM. EVENING

The curtains are drawn and ALMA has settled herself comfortably in a corner chair close to the bookshelf, with a small round table before her. She is reading. The Fifth Symphony is still over. She lifts her eyes slightly from the page, seeming to hear it.

114. Contd.

The front door bell rings. She takes no notice. She attends to her book again.

GRETEL comes into the room with a telegram. She puts it down silently on the little table before ALMA. She leaves.

ALMA opens the telegram. From her P.V. we see 'I SHALL ALWAYS BE YOURS - WALTER'. She lets it fall from her hand. She does not take up her book again.

CUT:

115. EXT. BAVARIAN WOODS. DAY

GUSTAV strolling alone, sometimes leaning on his stick. He gazes round him. He finds a bench and approaches it with something like joy, remembering.

GUSTAV (V.O.)

Alma, does it hurt you greatly if you don't compose any more songs?

ALMA (V.O.)

(after a
pause)

No.

GUSTAV (V.O.)

I can't quite explain it. Composing eats you up. You can't do it by halves! It's too great a flame!

he gazes before him with regret in his eyes.

CUT:

116. INT. CONDUCTOR'S DRESSING ROOM. EVENING

The music has ceased. A buzz of talk has taken its place. GUSTAV, hat and coat on, is trying to get to the door through a mass of people trying to shake him by the hand, etc. He shows no impatience, but keeps on moving absently forward.

CUT:

117. INT. HOTEL FOYER. MUNICH. EVENING

GUSTAV comes in from his concert and goes straight to the HALL PORTER.

GUSTAV

A telegraph form please.

The HALL PORTER takes a telegraph form and a pen, dips it into the ink, hands it to GUSTAV.

HALL PORTER

A pleasure, Mr. Mahler.

GUSTAV begins writing with sudden passionate concentration.

The HALL PORTER looks on with curiosity as GUSTAV begins filling the whole form with words.

CUT:

118. EXT. TOBLACH. DAY (HELIVISION)

The opening bars of the Sixth Symphony again opens this L.S. (HELIVISION) of the Toblach lake and house (see 110)

We ZOOM IN to ALMA and GRETEL (suitcase in hand) walking towards the railway station.

CUT:

119. INT. MUNICH HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT

In the dimness of his bedroom GUSTAV is crumpled on the floor, still in his concert clothes. The music of the Sixth is still over.

CUT:

120. INT. HOTEL FOYER MUNICH. NIGHT

ALMA enters the deserted foyer with GRETEL. ALMA hurries on up the stairs while GRETEL goes to the sleepy HALL PORTER and books them in.

CUT:

121. RESUME 119.

GUSTAV is still lying there when ALMA rushes in.

121. Contd.

ALMA

Gustav!

He awakens slowly, groaning, as she kneels down by him.

ALMA (contd)

Gustav, not like this - you're so hot!

GUSTAV

It's this damned fever - my throat burns!

ALMA

Why do you always let yourself fall?

GUSTAV

It's better nearer the earth.

(as she undoes his
waistcoat, loosens
his tie)

You decided to come.

ALMA

Yes.

GUSTAV

If you'd left me I should have died. I'm dead if you don't love me! It took you a long time deciding. I went everywhere we used to go - I remembered every spot - we were so happy - it was like being with you again -

ALMA

Shall I wake the doctor?

GUSTAV

He's on the other side of Munich. You're the only one - the only doctor - you see, the sweating's stopped. Those damned cars outside - they keep me awake -

ALMA

I don't hear anything. You alarm yourself so much -

121. Contd.

GUSTAV

Only because I believe in it - I'm not going to control it, I want the fever to rise - I believe in it - loving you - I want to give way to it - until it takes me to God!

ALMA

But why? I'm here!

GUSTAV

It's because you're never really with me any more. If you're not there in the front row I ache all over. And I get a fever, and my throat gets coated. And I adore the pain! I know what Tristan means - how can Tristan die while he loves Isolde?

ALMA

Why do much darkness always, and dying - ?

GUSTAV

Not always. Only now, because you no longer respond. What a terrible pain that is. Will you do something for me?

ALMA

Yes?

GUSTAV

Will you lie there, and sleep? You caught a late train.

ALMA

Yes.

The music has ceased after the 'Alma theme'. ALMA goes and lies down on the chaise longue, the rustle of her dress the only sound. He puts her travelling coat over her.

ALMA (contd)

(as she closes
her eyes)

It worries me so much.

121. Contd.

GUSTAV stands looking down at her. She seems to sleep. The first bars of the Finale of the Tenth Symphony come over softly - the drum tap of the New York funeral procession.

She starts awake. She stares up at him.

ALMA

Gustl! You're so white! Don't stand there!

GUSTAV

I don't want to miss you breathing!
I just want to drink you in!

ALMA

(with a sigh)

It tires me so much!

She falls asleep again. GUSTAV continues to watch over her. Once more she wakes up.

ALMA

I could never leave you. I couldn't imagine living with anybody else!

GUSTAV

Ah, you've raised me up again!

He sits down with relief. She sleeps.

GUSTAV (contd)

(to himself)

How desperately she loves him. A damned architect ...

CUT:

122. INT. THE TOBLACH HOUSE. DAY

GUSTAV is on the divan, in his summer clothes, being examined by the DOCTOR. His mouth is open and the DOCTOR is examining his throat.

DOCTOR

Your throat's full of streptococci.
It's like a marsh full of frogs!

122. Contd.

GUSTAV
(smiling at him)
Is that how love expresses itself, in
streptococci?

DOCTOR
You'll have to cut out work for the
coming season, that's all I know!

GUSTAV
In order not to die? But not working
means death for me!

DOCTOR
(getting up)
Well, you'll have to choose between
the two kinds of death won't you?

CUT:

123. EXT. THE TOBLACH GARDEN. DAY

GUSTAV is strolling down towards the lake with ALMA. He is frail, slightly leaning on her. She has thrown a light spring coat over his shoulders. They stop to look at the view across the lake, then walk on, arm in arm.

GUSTAV
I said is that how love expresses
itself - in streptococci?
(stopping to look
at her)
He gave me such a funny look!

ALMA
It's that English nurse! She had a
throat infection and didn't say any-
thing about it! I knew you'd catch
it some time.

They are both silent after this attempt to make the matter seem trivial.

GUSTAV
(showing her his
hand)
You see, I still have your ring - I
kiss it every day - in the middle
of the night -

123. Contd.

ALMA
You stole it from me.

GUSTAV
I looked at your songs.

ALMA
(stopping)
What?

GUSTAV
They're marvellous.

ALMA
I've carried them about with me for
ten years, my little coffin of unwanted
songs!

GUSTAV
We'll have them performed.

ALMA
(gazing at
him)
You seem to mean it!

GUSTAV
I used to be too single-minded, Alma -
(he is about to
say more but
stops)
Take me to the hut. Your songs are
there!

They stroll towards the hut by the lake. When he reaches the hut
he collapses.

ALMA
(screaming)
Gustav!

She rushes to him.

CUT:

124. EXT. THE TOBLACH GARDEN. DAY (HELIVISION)

Still on GUSTAV and ALMA. The CAMERA PANS upwards
and then rises bodily. It is soon high above the lake, with the
music still over. We gaze across the Salzkammergut, far into

124. Contd.

the mountains towards Berchtesgaden. The CAMERA PANS down again towards the house and ZOOMS IN to find a black automobile, a 1911 model, leaving the house towards the road, very slowly.

CUT:

125. INT. THE CAR. DAY

GUSTAV, pale and covered with blankets, is half lying in the back of the car with ALMA at his side. The DOCTOR is in front with the DRIVER. They are on their way to the station.

ALMA

(whispering)

You look so beautiful - like
Alexander the Great - your lips are
so red -

They smile at each other. She kisses him lightly on the cheek.

GUSTAV

(also whispering)

When I get better you can go on
looking after me, I enjoy it so
much.

He looks out of the window.

CUT:

126. INT. TRAIN COMPARTMENT. DAY

GUSTAV has a blanket over his knee. He and ALMA are alone. The train draws in at a station. She jumps up and goes to the window.

ALMA

(looking out)

There are crowds of them!

The train comes to a halt. REPORTERS run along the platform. They cluster round the door of the compartment. They try to take photographs of GUSTAV. They shower questions at her; 'How is Mr. Mahler?' 'Is he planning for next season?' 'Is Mr. Mahler composing a new work?'

126. Contd.

ALMA

He hopes to be back at work soon ...
He's composing his Tenth Symphony
... He's just finished A Song of the
Earth for tenor and contralto ...
I'm sorry, he can't speak to you
himself ...

A STATION GUARD helps her close the window. Their door is locked against the REPORTERS, who still clamour with their questions. She draws the curtains, waving goodbye to them.

GUSTAV

It makes me tremendously happy to
have got ill for you.

ALMA

I'd rather have you well!

GUSTAV

And love you less?

ALMA

No!

GUSTAV

Who are you going to marry if I die?
Hans Pfitzner, Ossip, Charpentier -
they've all been in love with you at
some time or other! But what an
intolerable lot to live with. There's
not one of them wouldn't drive you
mad in a day! Aren't I the safest bet
in the end?

ALMA

Yes!

GUSTAV

(as the train
draws out again)

I'd better stay with you, then, and not
die.

CUT:

127. EXT. THE MAHLER HOUSE. VIENNA. DAY

A car of the 1911 period drives up the house. GUSTAV and ALMA are in the back, FRAU MOLL in the front with the DRIVER. They all get out.

GUSTAV draws himself erect, takes a deep breath of pleasure, gazing up at the sky. He is elegantly dressed.

GUSTAV

Back with the god of the south!
That's what I used to call Veinna in
my Hamburg days! The god of the
south! I used to yearn for him!

CUT:

128. INT. THE MASTER BEDROOM. DAY

The room is a mass of flowers. GUSTAV comes in, stands looking at them.

ALMA

They're from your Philharmonic.

GUSTAV

That's something, eh? And royal-
ities are beginning to trickle in from
my music. America was a great
help there. So there'll be money
... When I'm better we won't live
the old life again. All that work -
sacrifice! I'll build a villa like you
said - on Capri.

ALMA

(gazing at him)

You look so elegant always.

GUSTAV

All my life has been paper, Almschili.

ALMA

Only because you see it like that
just at this moment.

He strolls rolls round the room humming The Merry Widow waltz.

128. Contd.

GUSTAV
(turning to her)
Remember?

He begins dancing with her, still humming the waltz. There is no music over.

ALMA
Gustav - Gustav - you've got a fever!

GUSTAV
I'm all right! It comes and goes!
Just look at me!

They whirl round and round.

ALMA
(giving him
wild kisses)
You're astonishing - an astonishing,
astonishing husband!

They laugh, their dancing takes on a touch of the extravagant, grotesque. There is no sign of the sick man in him.

Suddenly he stumbles.

ALMA
Gustl!

She manages to get him to the bed.

ALMA
Mummy!

CUT:

129. INT. THE MASTER BEDROOM. NIGHT

The voice of the HIGH PRIEST in The Magic Flute comes over. GUSTAV is in bed, apparently asleep, propped up against his pillows. ALMA is in an armchair by the bed. She is nodding asleep.

He smiles to himself, seeming to hear the music, and his right hand conducts slightly, with little twitches.

129. Contd.

GUSTAV
(to himself)
Mozart, Mozart ...

She awakes, smiles towards him. The music dies away.

He has ceased to breathe. ALMA does not realise this. She leans forward to hold his hand. She realises he is dead.

She screams, rushes to the door.

ALMA
Mummy! Mummy!

The 3rd movement of the Sixth Symphony, tender, reminiscent, comes over.

CUT:

130. INT. THE LANDING. NIGHT

On the landing outside, FRAU MOLL clasping ALMA to her as the DOCTOR strides into the bedroom.

CUT:

131. RESUME 22 (TAXI IN NEW YORK)

The TEENAGER now has a full shopping bag. The taxi comes to a halt. They get out, ALMA slowly and carefully, to the irritation of the DRIVER.

CUT:

132. INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT. DAY

We are in ALMA's kitchen. The TEENAGER is taking the goodies out of the shopping bag. The street noises ALMA loves drift up. ALMA takes down a bottle of Benedictine and pours herself a glass.

ALMA
(drinking it off)
Ah! You're too young to know about death. It hits you. Then all of a sudden you're grown up. Three of them died in my arms. I remember people coming to the house for the Werfel funeral, that was my third

132. Contd.

ALMA (contd)
 husband, and I told them, 'I never
 go to their funerals'. No, I never
 went!

ALMA drifts off into the lounge, watched by the TEENAGER who
 with her hair loose like the YOUNG ALMA is not unlike her at
 this moment.

CUT:

133. INT. THE LOUNGE. DAY

ALMA walks through her lounge, past a table full of photographs
 of her three husbands. She lies down on the divan with relief.

CUT:

134. ANOTHER ANGLE

The TEENAGER peeps into the lounge from the kitchen. From
 her P.V. ALMA asleep.

The TEENAGER tiptoes out of the apartment.

135. ANOTHER ANGLE

We ZOOM IN to a C.U. of ALMA asleep. The light grows dim.
 Slowly she opens her eyes. From her P.V. we see an empty
 lounge. It is night now. She gets up slowly and walks to the
 kitchen.

CUT:

136. INT. THE KITCHEN. NIGHT

She looks round the kitchen: the shopping things as they were
 taken out of the bag by the TEENAGER, and the bottle of
 Benedictine with an empty glass.

ALMA walks back into the lounge, sighing, her shoulders
 rather slumped. We TRACK after her. She walks towards her
 bedroom door. Instead of finding her New York bedroom she
 sees before her the master bedroom of the Mahler house in
 Vienna. It is like a discovery. The heaviness seems to leave
 her. She walks forward.

CUT:

137. INT. THE MASTER BEDROOM. NIGHT

In the dimness we see that the room is tidy, the bed with its sheets folded back as if expecting a couple. She gazes round the room.

ALMA
Where are my children?

She walks out on to the landing.

CUT:

138. INT. THE LANDING. NIGHT

She comes out on to the landing and goes to the edge of the stairs.

ALMA
(walking down
the stairs)
Putzi!

CUT:

139. INT. DOWNSTAIRS. NIGHT

She comes down the stairs, peering everywhere.

ALMA
Where are the children?

She listens for an answer. The house is deserted. There is silence.

She stares before her, at something in the dimness.

ALMA (contd)
It's the English nurse! No!
(screams)

She runs up the stairs, panic-stricken.

We hear her voice echoing upstairs. The opening of the Finale of the Tenth Symphony comes over, hushed.

ALMA (contd)
I don't want to die! Don't let me
die!

139. Contd.

She screams long again.

CUT:

140. INT. THE MASTER BEDROOM. DAY

ALMA is laid out on the bed.

GUSTAV appears at the door of the dressing room, in modern clothes again.

GUSTAV

(softly)

Alma.

(no reply)

Alma.

She opens her eyes slowly. She peers round the room. She sees GUSTAV dimly.

ALMA

Who the devil's that? Franz! Franz!

Walter! It's Walter - it's ...

Gustav! Oh, Gustav!

GUSTAV

Come.

She rises from the bed slowly. Again the 3rd movement of the Sixth Symphony.

She stands before him. He takes her hand.

GUSTAV (contd)

It's over now.

She smiles as if she had woken from a year-long sleep. She blinks at him.

She unpins her hair, shakes her head vigorously to get her hair down.

She goes to the dressing table and sits down. She begins taking off the old woman's make-up. She becomes a young woman again.

As we go into a C.U. of her the 4th section of The Song of the Earth (contralto), 'Of Beauty', bursts over. 'A young woman ...'

140. Contd.

GUSTAV stands watching her.

CUT:

141. WE TAKE A MONTAGE

The modern GUSTAV and ALMA walking happily through the streets of Vienna today in a series of SHOTS as the CREDITS come up, with the Song of the Earth still over.
