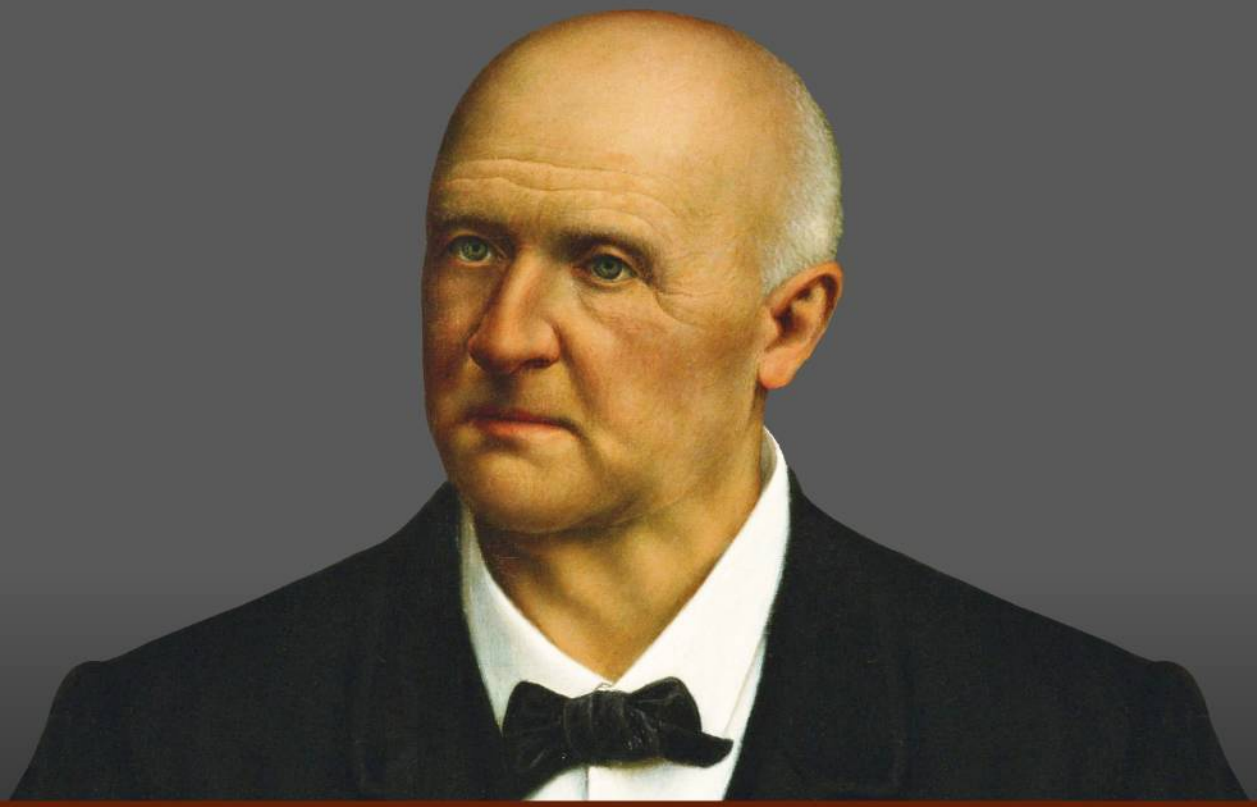
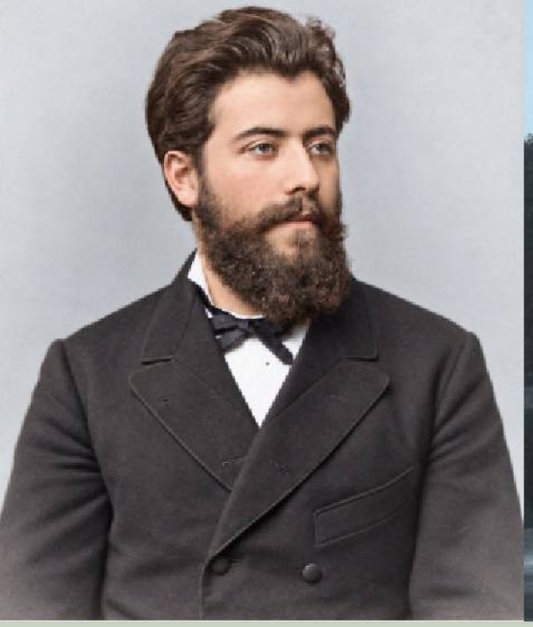


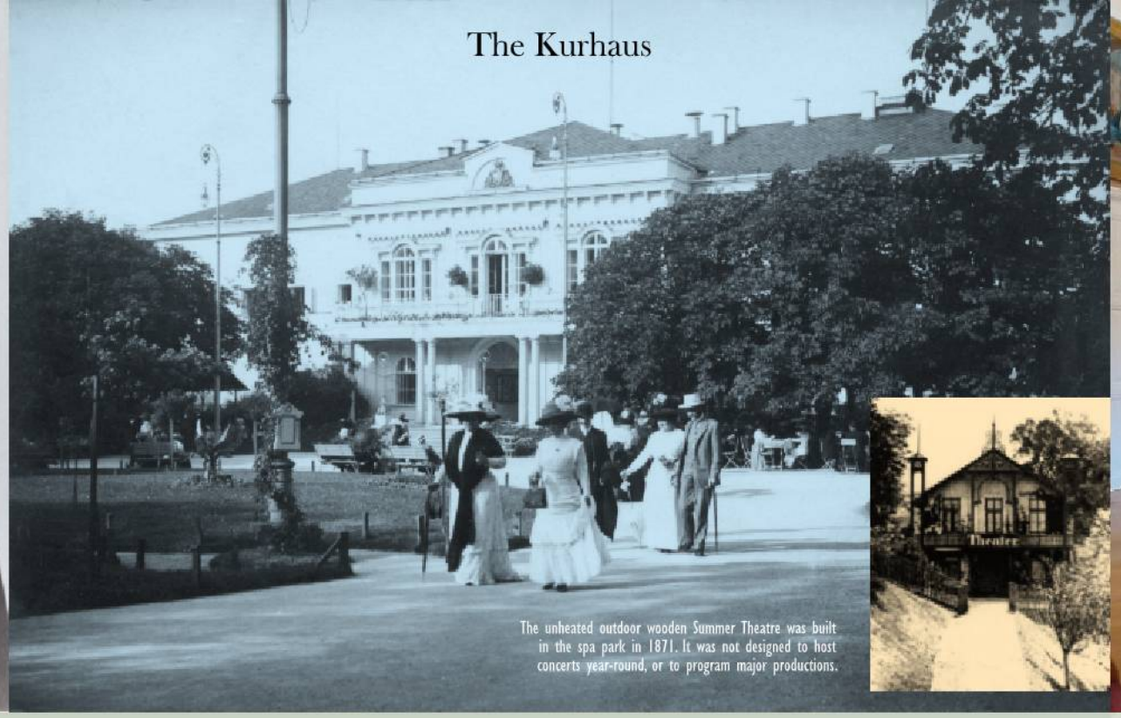
12

Gustav Mahler

Mahler in Bad Hall



The Kurhaus



The unheated outdoor wooden Summer Theatre was built in the spa park in 1871. It was not designed to host concerts year-round, or to program major productions.

Kursaal



after January 16, 1880 : Anton Bruckner's pocket calendar entry

« Gustav Mahler, fourth district, Floragasse n° 7, Florabad, staircase IV, third floor. »



April 1880 : Mahler registers once again at the University of Vienna - this time in Art and History ... but it did not last long.

Tuesday, 27 April 1880 : Letter from Anton Bruckner to Gustav Mahler :

Bruckner asks Mahler and his friend Rudolf Krzyżanowski to come at the conservatory between 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm, or later in the evening at " The Red Hedgehog " (" Gasthof Zum Roten Igel ") for an important meeting.

Tuesday, 25 May 1880 : Unsigned postcard by professor Anton Bruckner (Vienna) addressed to " Highly Esteemed Kapellmeister " Gustav Mahler (Theatre Building, Bad Hall, Upper-Austria)

« " Through the Night " (quote from Franz von Suppé's operetta " Fatinitza ") - " Forward " (excerpt from the Valhalla motif in " Rheingold ") - " Toward the Light " (...) »

Bad Hall is a fashionable health resort, renowned for its iodine and mineral springs. It attracts not only patients seeking medical treatments but also members of the Austrian bourgeoisie and artistic " élite ", who would visit during the summer months for rest and inspiration. As music director of the Theatre Orchestra, Mahler is required to conduct operettas, comedies, and musical plays (" Singspiele ") . Viktor Berthal is the theatre director, while Carl Ludwig Zwerenz is in charge of the actors and the singers. But Mahler also sets out the music stands and dusts the piano ; he even pushes Zwerenz's baby daughter " Mizzi " in her pram around the unheated outdoor wooden summer theatre during the intermissions ! The theatre season starts at the beginning of June. Mahler will conduct around 48 performances during the months of June, July and August. While working at the " Kurhaus ", Mahler stays in the " Blauensteiner " house at " Pfarrkirchen " n° 19 in a little town south-west of Bad Hall - more precisely in one of the seventeen rooms of a pension called " Baderhaus "(or " Unteres Gasthaus ") . The restaurant there is owned by Theresia Schmid.

Thursday, 19 August 1880 : Gustav Mahler left Bad Hall and returned to Vienna. His agent, Gustav Lewy, had nothing lined up for the coming season. It is clear from his few surviving letters from this period that Mahler (already suffering from melancholia, not to say depression) was plunged into the depths of despair.

Blauensteiner house
Pfarrkirchen n° 19



(before 1867)

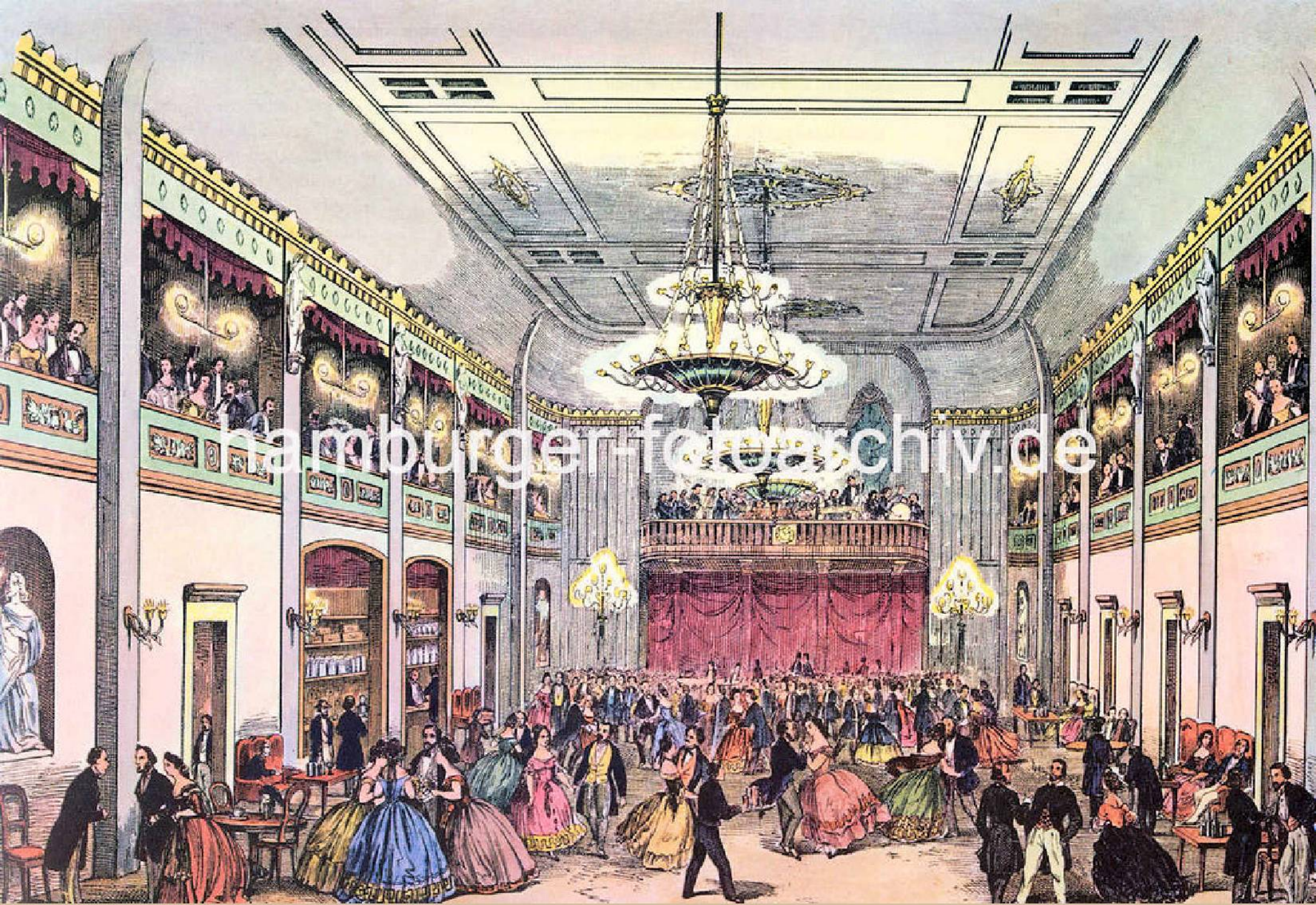
Hans von Bülow conducting Beethoven's Ninth

Philharmonische Staatsorchester Hamburg



Conventgarten ballroom

©


hamburger-fotoarchiv.de

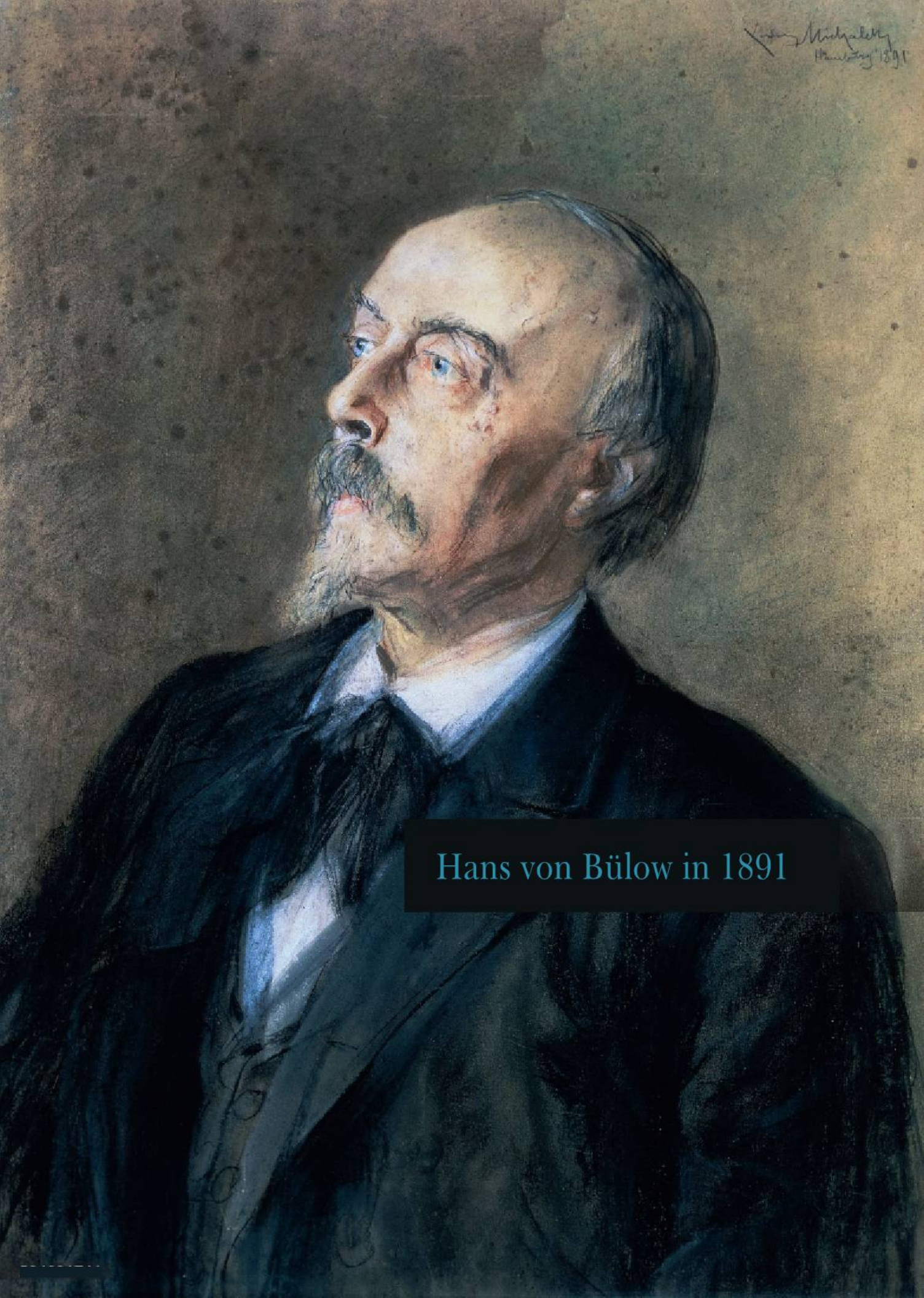
Hamburg Conventgarten ballroom (around 1855)



Conventgarten Hall
in Hamburg

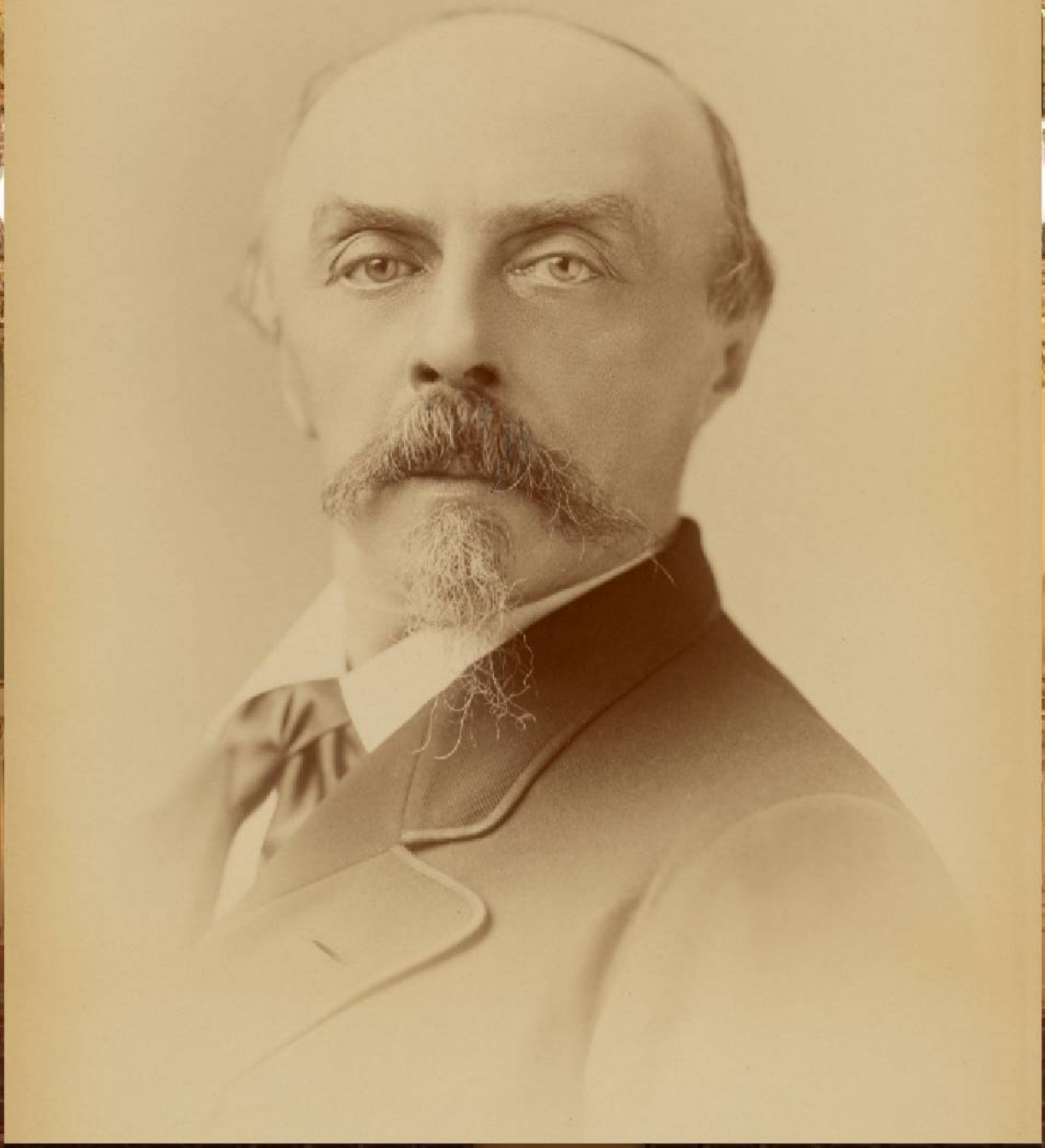
after the major
renovations of 1867

hamburger-tonearchive.de



Hans von Bülow in 1891

Hans von Bülow



Sunday, 31 May 1891 (8:00 pm) : « Alte Philharmonie » Berlin
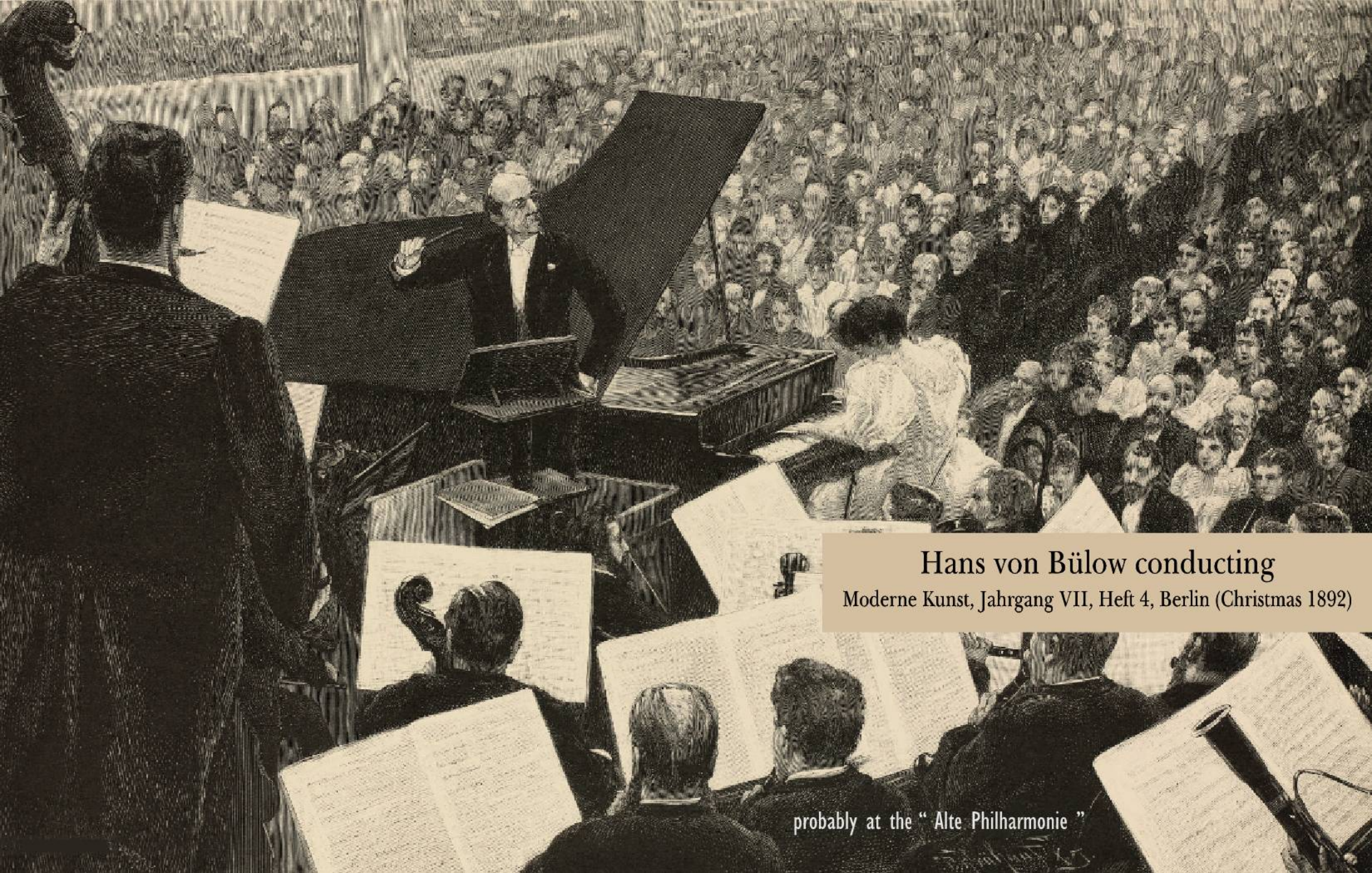
Gala concert marking the « 28th Annual General Assembly of Musicians »

featuring the Philharmonic Choir and the « Berliner Philharmoniker »

In the second half, « Kapellmeister » Siegfried Ochs conducts a powerful performance of the « Te Deum »

Anton Bruckner receives a laurel wreath

Hans von Bülow (not known for his love of the composer) is extremely complimentary



Hans von Bülow conducting

Moderne Kunst, Jahrgang VII, Heft 4, Berlin (Christmas 1892)

probably at the " Alte Philharmonie "

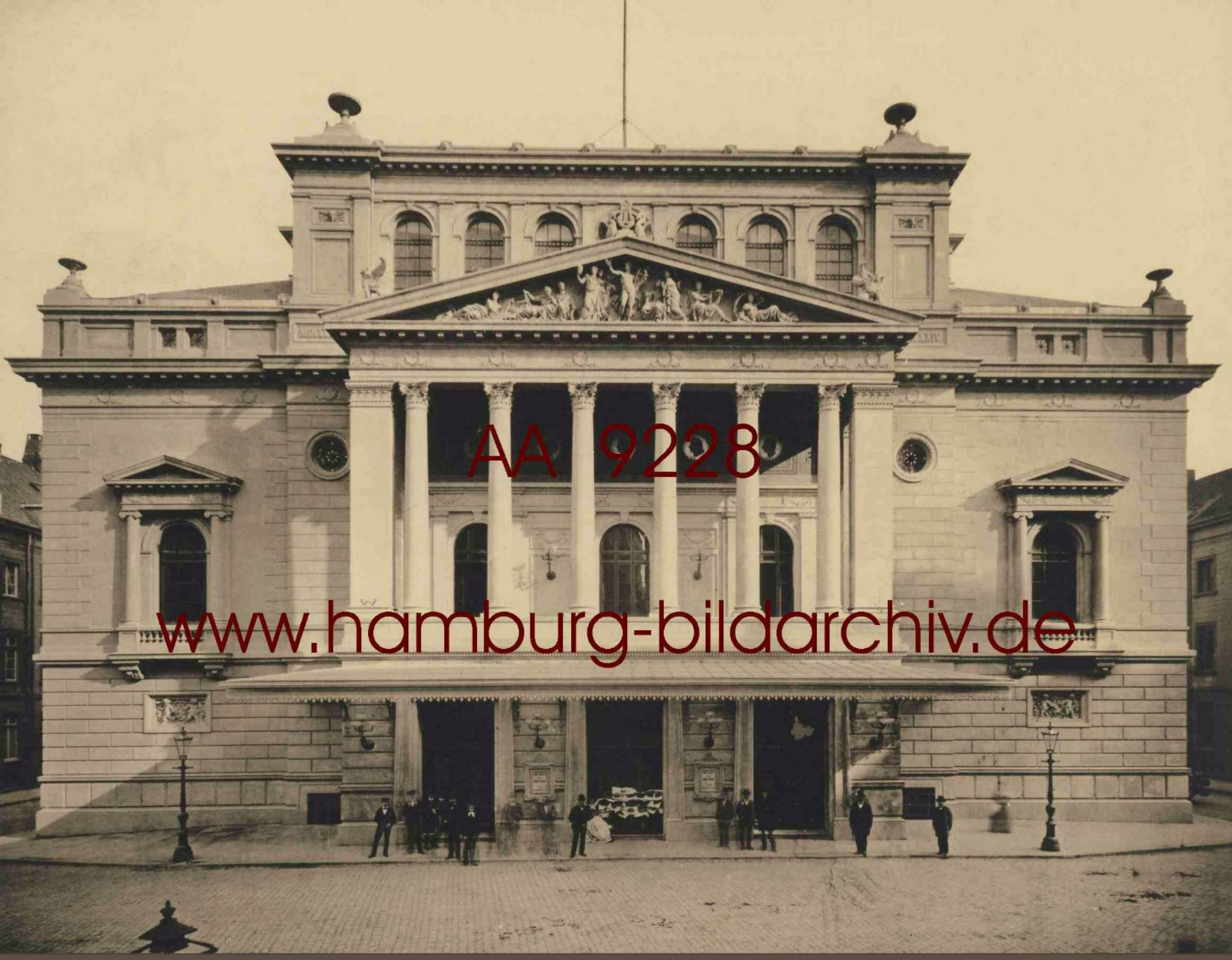
Bernhard Pollini



Hamburg Stadttheater Direktor



Hamburg Stadttheater (1887)



Hamburg Stadttheater (1892)







Letter from Gustav Mahler (Hamburg) to Anton Bruckner (Vienna) :

“ Annastraße 10/III, Hamburg ”

Most honoured Master and Friend,

I am very pleased finally to be able to write to you : I have performed one of your works. Yesterday (Good Friday) , I conducted your magnificent and powerful “ Te Deum ”. Both the “ performers ”, as well as the “ whole public ”, were profoundly moved by the powerful structure and truly sublime ideas, and, at the end of the performance, I experienced what I regard as the greatest triumph of a work : the audience sat there in silence, without moving, breaking into tumultuous applause only when the conductor and performing artists had got up and left. You would have been pleased by the performance. I have rarely seen a company as enthusiastic as yesterday.

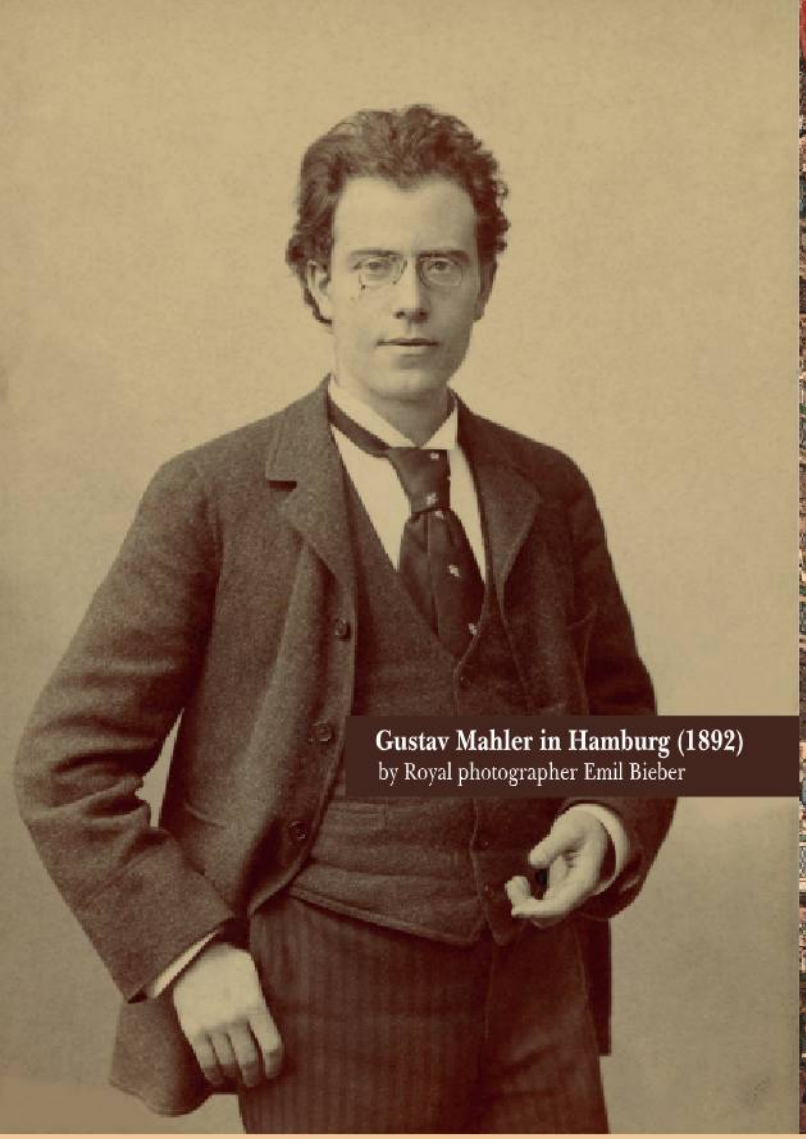
Because of the holidays, the reviews will not appear for another few days, but I shan’t fail to send them on to you. “ Bruckner ” has now entered Hamburg in triumph. I shake your hand most sincerely, my most revered friend, and, in the true sense of word,

I am

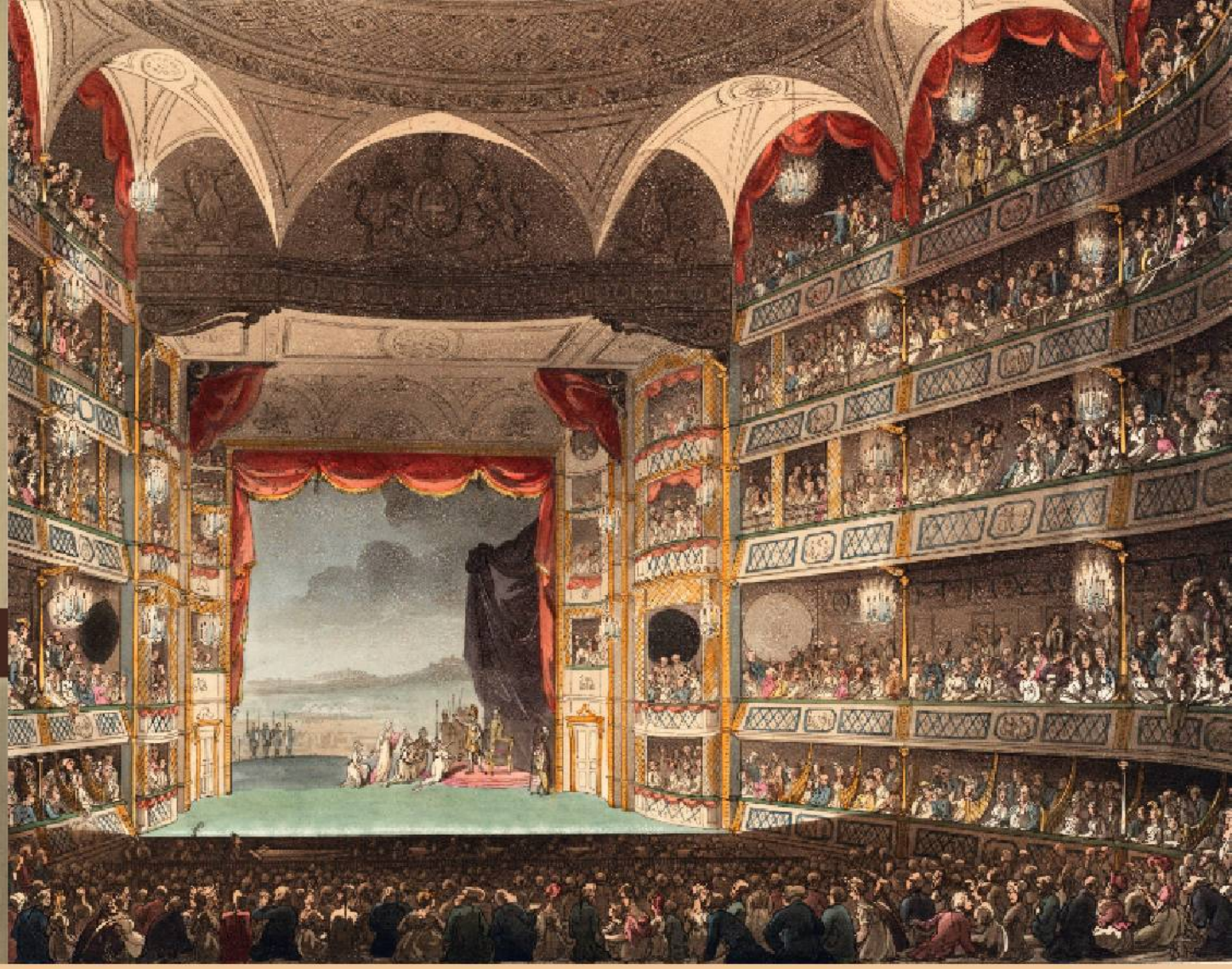
Your Gustav Mahler »



Hamburg, Holy Saturday
16 April 1892



Gustav Mahler in Hamburg (1892)
by Royal photographer Emil Bieber



28 May to 23 July 1892 ***Gustav Mahler will conduct Siegfried, Tristan und Isolde, Das Rheingold, Die Walküre, Fidelio, Götterdämmerung and Tannhäuser at Covent Garden and Drury Lane theatres in London.***



Théâtre Royal Druly Lane, London

Hamburg 1892



last week of August 1892


Gustav & Justine


Natalie Bauer-Lechner


Villa Hechler



Due to the cholera pandemic in Hamburg, the « Stadttheater » company under the artistic direction of Bernhard Pollini is going to perform at the « International Exhibition for Music and Theatre » in Vienna. Many foreign dancers are part of their « corps de ballet » . After he learns that director Pollini is going to reopen the « Stadttheater » on September 15, Gustav Mahler makes the wise decision to join in the foothills of the Alps during the last week of August his sister Justine and his close companion, the viola player Natalie Bauer-Lechner, at the « Villa Hechler » (run by Anton and Franziska Hechler) in Schießberg, Berchtesgaden, near the border with Austria. They will remain there until mid-September. [It is now called « Landhaus Kranzbichl » located at « Kranzbichlweg » Number 5 (83471 Berchtesgaden) - not very far from Adolf Hitler's « Eagle's Nest » (« Kehlsteinhaus ») , which was commisionned in 1937 by his private secretary Martin Bormann.] The son of Mahler's new house-keeper dies and, almost simultaneously, the boy's grand-mother becomes seriously ill. That same night, even as the boy's corpse is being removed from the house, Mahler experiences stomach pains and violent diarrhea. The next day, the physician falsely diagnozes cholera. But Justine is able to persuade him not to send Gustav to a hospital for isolation, where he might well die. She takes good care of her brother, heals his gastro-intestinal irritation ... and saves his life !



Bernhard Pollini

Hamburg, 21, 22 September 1892

Wednesday, 21 September 1892 Gustav Mahler finally arrives in Hamburg. He will argument with Pollini, who fines him for his lateness. Mahler is outraged and determined to escape Hamburg forever. Meanwhile, he must continue on in this uncomfortable job, as he has no other recourse.

Thursday, 22 September 1892, Letter from Gustav Mahler (Hamburg) to his sister Justine (Vienna) :

(written across the top of the letter ...) *« I eat at home ! »*

« So, dear children, arrived happily [" glücklich "] in Hamburg, happily disinfected, very happily [" überglücklich "] dined, and am just sitting and deliriously happily [" sauglücklich "] smoking a cigar in my beautiful three rooms - i.e. of course, only in one at a time.

Anyway, if somebody had been afraid, the fear would have disappeared at the moment he entered Hamburg's precincts. - It's already as if nothing had happened - everything goes on as usual, and one is downright ashamed of oneself to have hesitated so long. The pestilence appears to have come to an end, which naturally won't prevent me, by any means, from continuing to live with pedantic caution.

For tomorrow, a whole bunch of rehearsals are already announced for me. - I have not yet met Pollini face to face, but will call on him later (5:00 pm) . [Otto] Feld met me at the train station. He will come tomorrow.

I am quite happy to be back to routine. - My quarters have become something beautiful, [and] cosier than I've ever had.

Pollini made no compromises in the pursuit of his goals as opera director, and pushed Mahler to the limits of his capabilities. In the 1894-1895 season, Mahler conducted 126 evenings at the « Stadttheater » and a further 23 at the « Altonaer Theater » . He also took over the direction of the subscription concerts replacing the late Hans von Bülow. This merciless war will only end a few months before Pollini's death of heart paralysis on 26 (or 27) November 1897.

Good Friday 31 March 1893

Hamburg « Stadttheater, Dammtor-Straße »

Annual Sacred Concert

« Kapellmeister » Gustav Mahler conducts the « Stadtorchester »

Wilhelm Sichel, choir-director (former pupil of Anton Bruckner)

Programme

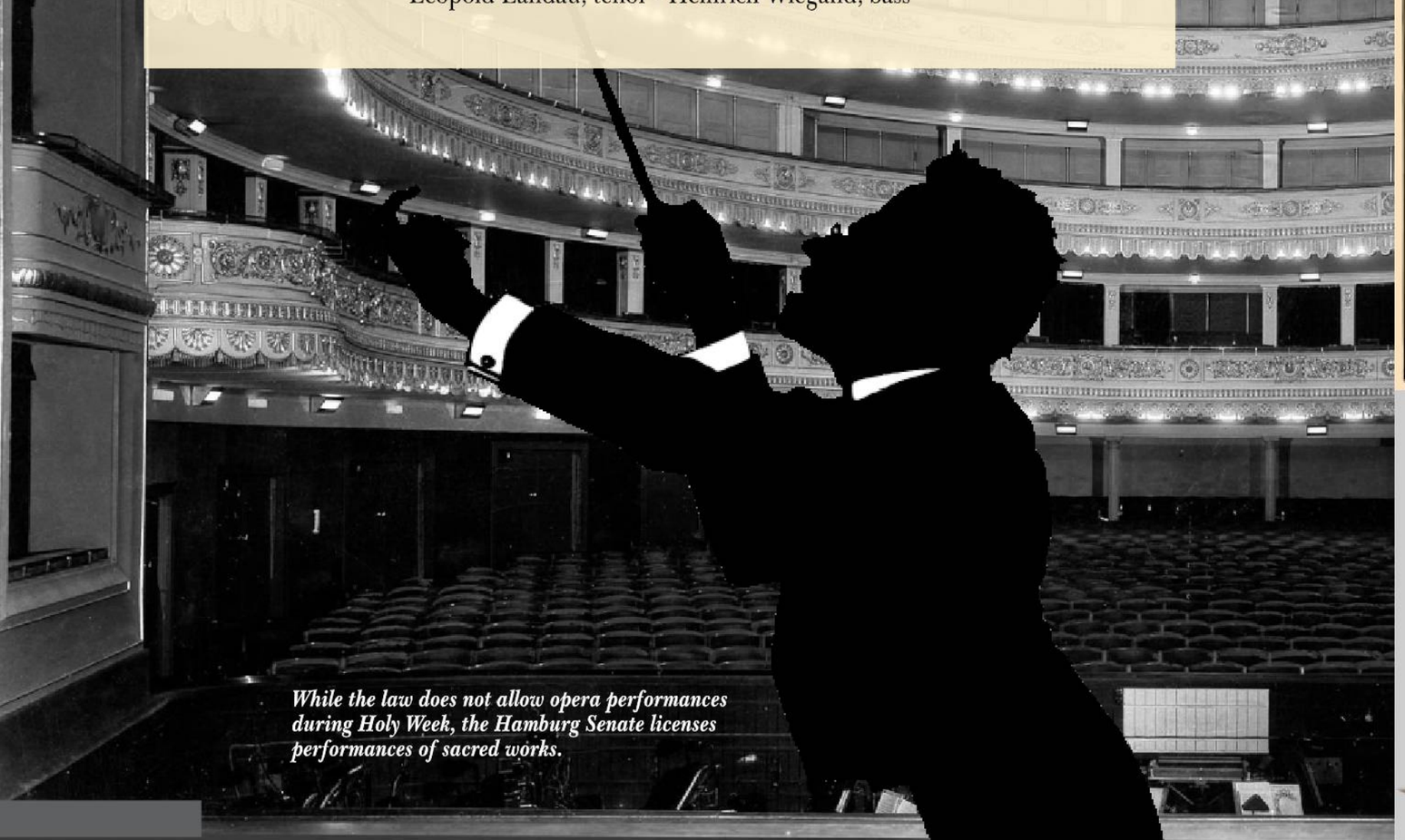
Anton Bruckner : Mass in D minor for soloists, mixed-choir, orchestra and organ « ad libitum »
(first performance outside Austria)

Anna Maria Lißmann, soprano - Ernestine Schumann-Heink, contralto
Wilhelm Cronberger, tenor - Friedrich Heinrich Lißmann, bass-baritone

Intermission

Anton Bruckner : « Te Deum » for soloists, mixed-choir, orchestra and organ « ad libitum »

Katharina Bettaque, soprano - Ernestine Schumann-Heink, contralto
Leopold Landau, tenor - Heinrich Wiegand, bass



While the law does not allow opera performances during Holy Week, the Hamburg Senate licenses performances of sacred works.

Hamburger
Stadt-Theater.

(Direction: B. Pollini.)

Freitag, den 31. März 1893.

191. Abonnem.-Vorstellung. 26. Freitags-Vorstellung.

Mit Bewilligung des Hohen Senats.

Zum ersten Male:

Messe in D

von

Anton Bruckner

für Soli, Chor, Orchester und Orgel.

Die Soli gesungen von Frau Lißmann, Frau Heink
und den Herren Seidel und Lißmann.
Dirigent: Herr Kapellmeister Gustav Mahler.

Kyrie eleison!
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Credo in unum Deum.
Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Agnus Dei.

Hierauf:

TE DEUM

von

Anton Bruckner

für Soli, Chor, Orchester und Orgel.

Die Soli gesungen von Fräul. Bettaque, Frau Heink
und den Herren Landau und Wiegand.
Dirigent: Herr Kapellmeister Gustav Mahler.

Nach der Messe findet eine Pause von 10 Minuten statt.



1899 edition

Gustav Mahler, Court Opera conductor and director

WIENER PHILHARMONIKER

1842

Philharmonisches Orchester.

(K. k. Hof-Opernorchester.)

Dirigent: **Gustav Mahler**

k. und k. Hofopern-Director.

I. Violine.

Rosé Arnold
Prill Carl
Siebert August
Stelzig Florian
Grohmann Max
Auspitzer Siegfried
Stecher Anton
Kreuzinger Hans
Salamon Johann
Egghardt Julius
Wahl Stefan
Rosenthal Heinr.
Schwendt Theodor
Klein Josef
Mairecker Franz
Fischer Paul
Weiss Anton

II. Violine.

Lichtenstern Alex.
Lichtenstern Max
Arrocker Franz
Werner Julius
Czapauschek Joh.
Kallmus Ignaz
Heinrich Franz
Schwegler Johann
Klein Johann
Palm Josef
Bachrich Albert
Zert Otto
Kraft Ignaz
Semrad Hans
Dengler Erwin
Engelbrech Friedrich
Paudler Carl

Viola.

Michna Adalbert
Winter Hans
Steiner Hugo von
Desing Julius
Strebinger Rudolf
Jelinek Franz
Kohut Ladislaus
Bayerl Franz
Ruzitska Anton
Heldenberger Cajetan
Mayer Dionys

Cello.

Hummer Reinhold
Sulzer Josef
Weippert M. F.
Fischhof Josef
Popper Wilhelm
Kretschmann Th.
Hellmesberger F.
Schmidt Franz
Klein Franz
Rehn Hans

Contra-Bass.

Simandl Franz
Hraba Johann
Braun Franz
Unger Carl
Siebert Rudolf
Benesch Georg
Dauthage Max
Hrabal Franz Rud.
Stix Otto
Mišek Adolf

Harfe.

Moser Franz
Mosshammer Roman

Flöte.

Kukula Roman
Markl Alois
Ibener Gustav
Ghisas Eurysthenes

Oboe.

Baumgärtel Rich.
Cink Johann
Strasky Johann
Swoboda Leopold

Clarinette.

Schmidl Alois
Bartolomej Franz
Syrinek Adalbert
Schöffmann Carl

Fagott.

Böhm Johann
Thaten Herrmann
Wittmann Carl
Wesser Bruno

Horn.

Wipperich Emil
Nowak Christian
Moissl Franz
Vargics Rudolf
Reiss Rudolf
Moissl Hermann
Romagnoli Carl
Stiegler Carl

Trompete.

Stiegler Adolf
Christ Victor
Rossbach Franz
Handke Paul

Posaune.

Berthold Otto
Schwaneberg W.
Walde Theodor
Wesecky Carl
Heinemann Emil

Tuba.

Huber Rudolf

Pauke.

Weber Franz
Schnellar Hans

Grosse Trommel.

Schubert Ferdinand

Kleine Trommel.

Schwetz Leopold.

Becken.

Richter Josef



General Director Gustav Mahler and assistant Bruno Schlesinger strolling in the Vienna City Park (autumn 1901)

« Shave off your beard before you arrive in Vienna. »

Mahler to the twenty-four year old Schlesinger



Bruno Walter
1901

Although Gustav Mahler was more a creature of intense interiority and long Alpine walks, during his years as director of the “ Wiener Hofoper ” (1897-1907) , he lived near the “ Karlsplatz ”. On certain spring mornings or late evenings after rehearsals, Mahler would take a brief walk through the “ Stadtpark ” on his way home, trying to release the pressure of creation and administration.

His friend Bruno Walter noted that Mahler had a curious relationship with city parks :

« They soothed him momentarily, then made him restless again. He was too aware of the human pulse behind the trees. »

In September 1901, Bruno Schlesinger accepted Gustav Mahler’s invitation to be his assistant at the Imperial Court Opera House. Shortly before Schlesinger arrived in the fall, Richard Strauß had given the Viennese premiere of “ Ein Heldenleben ”, while Mahler had the belated world premiere of his cantata “ Das klagende Lied ”. That same year saw the young tenor Leo Slezak join the opera company at the “ Hofoper ”. The racy plays of Arthur Schnitzler and the writings of Oscar Wilde appealed to many Austrians. In 1898, Schlesinger took the position of chief conductor of the Riga Opera House in Latvia. Before he could work in Riga, however, he had to agree to another major change in his life : he converted to Christianity - probably Catholicism. A few months before arriving in Vienna, Walter and the lyric dramatic soprano at the Riga Opera House, Elisabeth (Johanna Clara) Wirthschaft - who adopted the stage name Elsa Korneck - were married on 2 May 1901 in Berlin. The Registry Office Number 3 recorded “ evangelical ” as the religion for both spouses. (Born on 19 January 1871 in Danzig, Wirthschaft remained a shadowy figure. In a permanent state of depression at the end of her life, she died on 26 March 1945 at home in New York - 965 Fifth Avenue - after a long illness.) Schlesinger had to wait for Emperor Franz-Josef permission before he could work at the “ Hofoper ”, and soon, he was conducting countless operas for the company. Walter’s often had an uneasy relationship with Strauß, more so with Arnold Schœnberg. In May 1911, Schlesinger took the name “ Walter ” as his legal name, then also received the Austrian citizenship.