



Guido López Gavilán conducts the National Symphony Orchestra in the Amadeo Roldan Theater.



German Thomas Gabrisch has conducted some 200 operas, 40 different concert programs and his own compositions in the theaters across his country, including the Deutsche Opera am Rhein, in Freiburg, Nuremberg, Colonia, and Essen.

Mahler's monumental Symphony No.2

German conductor Thomas Gabrisch leads Cuba's National Symphonic Orchestra and a choir of more than 100 voices

Mireya Castañeda

• THERE are more than 120 recorded versions of the immortal **Symphony No.2 in D minor** by Gustav Mahler, under the baton of renowned conductors including Leonard Bernstein, Leopold Stokowski, Zubin Mehta, Claudio Abbado, and Pierre Boulez. One thing is for sure, hearing the symphony in the privacy of one's home is nothing like a live performance. Seeing the conductor, musicians, the singers, is an unforgettable experience.

Music lovers in Havana had the good fortune to hear the marvelous **Symphony No.2**, also known as the Resurrection, one of the most acclaimed worldwide, during one of the National Symphony Orchestra's customary Sunday performances (October 29).

The orchestra, lead by Maestro Enrique Pérez Mesa, performed on this occasion under the direction of distinguished German conductor Thomas Gabrisch, professor at the Robert Schumann School of Music and Media in Düsseldorf, who has been invited over the last five years to not only conduct the Symphony Orchestra, but the Havana Chamber Orchestra, as well. In 2013, he conducted the Symphony's performance of Mahler's **Symphony No.3**.

For the Havana performance of the enormous work, Gabrisch invited German soprano Sabine Schneider who, along with Cuban contralto María Felicia Pérez, assumed the solo vocal roles.

The work requires a large orchestra and a mixed choir - more than 100 voices for this performance, from the German choir Ratingen; and several Cuban groups including the Schola Cantorum Coralina (directed by Alina Orraca); the Exaudi Chamber Choir (director María Felicia Pérez); the Camerata Vocal Sine Nomine (director Leonor Suárez); and the ICRT choir (director Liagne Reyna).

Within the world of classical music, **Symphony No.2** by Mahler (Austria 1860-1911) is considered one of the most elaborate ever written for a symphonic orchestra and choir. Its dimensions are impressive, born of the composer's reflections on life, death, and resurrection.

Cuban composer and conductor Guido López-Gavilán was, on this occasion, a spectator in the National Theater's

Avellaneda Hall, and commented for our readers, "It took Mahler years to write this work (1888-1894) and he did so in intervals. It is evidence of his talent for working the orchestra, the great sonorities, the impressive durations, and it is one of the pieces most performed on the world's great stages. It is a great stroke of luck to have the opportunity to hear it. Tomas Gabrisch has done an admirable job. This is the first time it has been performed in Cuba, at least that I know of."

Mahler, considered one of the greatest and most original symphonic composers, produced nine works in this genre, and sketched out a tenth before his death. No.2 was well received when it was premiered in Berlin under his direction, on December 13, 1895.

One of his most popular, the work is composed of five movements, during which the listener is presented with multiple atmospheres, ideas, and moods, thanks to the wonderful orchestration.

The spectacular finale, the canto to resurrection, ascends little by little from *pianissimo* to the grandiose climax, an ode to faith. This last movement is the longest, lasting more than half an hour.

María Felicia Pérez, who in addition to providing the contralto voice was responsible for preparation and rehearsals with the five choirs, commented for **Granma International** on the great significance of the performance in Havana.


"This is something we have not had the opportunity to do; it is a gigantic work, as you heard, an extraordinary work with orchestration of profound harmonic, tonal, and rhythmic richness. It is one of the great works from the turn of the century, between the 19th and 20th, and re-creating a piece in German with such a philosophical text, was not easy."

The director of Exaudi added, "I had never sung it in all the my years of my musical career, so I am very happy, and also because young singers have been able to sing it and show that we are developing. Playing this extraordinary work helps develop the National Symphony Orchestra, too, in which there are also many young players, and they've had this opportunity. And I'll add something else. It's magnificent for the orchestra, the choirs, the public to have contact with this

score, that is not performed every day, because its huge and requires a great deal of time to stage. Having the opportunity to hear it in the theater is something marvelous."

Austrian composer Gustav Mahler's immortal **Symphony No.2, Resurrection**,

was experienced in Havana's National Theater and participants came to understand what the composer was thinking about symphonies when he said, "They must be like the world, they must encompass it all." •



AMISTUR CUBA S.A.
 specialized tourism

A bridge between peoples

<p>Who are we?</p> <p>Amistur Cuba S.A. travel agency of the Cuban Friendship with Peoples Institute (ICAP), organizes specialized tourism, promoting and vending products and services which guarantee visitors' enjoyment and provide the opportunity to learn about Cuba's reality through direct contact with the country's people.</p> <p>What do we do?</p> <p>Amistur Cuba S.A. offers a broad range of products and services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solidarity Brigades, volunteer work, and opportunities to interact with Solidarity with Cuba movements • Specialized tours of unique sites which combine Cuban history, culture, and identity, to provide an abundance of new experiences <p>We can organize and promote:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events & Conferences • Specialized complementary excursions • Cruises and sailboat outings • Individual tourism • Professional guide and interpretation services 	<p>Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist cards • Accommodations and activities • Air and maritime transfers and ticket reservations • Transfers and reservations for terrestrial transport <p>Contact us:</p> <p>Address: calle 19 No. 306 e/ H e l, Vedado, Plaza de la Revolución, La Habana, Cuba Telephone: (53 7) 834 4544 / 833 2374 830 1220 Fax: (53 7) 838 3753 Email: amistur@amistur.cu Web: www.amistur.cu FB: Amisturcuba TW: @Amisturcuba</p> <p>• Our services will guarantee a pleasant, educational, personalized visit and ensure that you feel among friends.</p>
--	---

Amistur Cuba S.A. promotes the uniqueness, beauty and humanism of Cuba, giving visitors a positively different view of the country's life and future, acting as a bridge between peoples.