

Gustav Mahler Letters to his Wife. Edited by Henry-Louis De La Grange and Günther Weiss in Collaboration with Knud Martner. First complete edition revised and translated by Antony Beaumont. Faber and Faber 2004.

The relationship between the composer and conductor Gustav Mahler and his wife Alma, immortalised cinematographically by Ken Russell and in song by the late Tom Lehrer, comes truly alive in sharing the joy and pain of the letters that Mahler sent to his wife.

This collection of correspondence, the fullest yet published, and accompanied by a helpful commentary and footnotes, paints a picture that seems much more true than that presented by Alma herself in her self-serving selection of Memories and Letters.

These letters show Mahler as a much more rounded person, and demonstrate his passion for his wife as well as the joys and frustrations of his working life, which often involved significant separations from her.

This collection will interest musicologists, students of the period, and anyone whose spirit has been lifted to unimaginable heights by the beauty of Mahler's music.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh