Daniel Katz Gallery

ANTIQUITY TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Auguste Rodin (Paris 1840 - Meudon 1917)

Gustav Mahler, head type B or second version

Signed, Alexis Rudier founder and stamped in relief "A. Rodin" on the inside

34 x 24 x 23.5 cm

This model was created in 1909 and cast between 1911 and 1914

This portrait bust represents the encounter between the greatest Romantic musician of the period, and the greatest sculptor of modern times. Mahler sat for Rodin in 1909, over a total of 10 days, at the behest of several of his admirers who had expressed a wish to own a bust of Mahler after his retirement from the Vienna opera in 1907. It was the founding member of the Vienna Succession, painter Carl Julius Rudolf Moll, Alma Malher's father-in-law, who first expressed a wish for Rodin to do a bust of Mahler. Yet the encounter between the two artists, both at the height of their glory at that time, was arranged only after great consideration by several parties. Namely by Paul Clemenceau (the brother of the statesman George Clemenceau), with his wife Sophie, and her sister Bertha Szeps, who both knew Rodin and Mahler, and may have hosted them both in Vienna, and also with the help of the composers wife, the previous owner of the present bust Alma Mahler.

Rodin made two preliminary studies over the 10 sittings. A rough and expressionistic version now known as 'Model A', and the present version known as Model B which is a more natural, veristic and smooth version, acknowledged as being closer to photographic portraits of the composer. Alma Mahler refused the 6 first busts of the 'Model A' type sent by Rodin and sent them back to Rodin who produced 6 bronzes of the 'Model B' type with a red marble cube.

Today there are at least 11 known bronze casts of Model B of which all, except the present cast, are in museums. The present bust is one of the finest examples of the Type B cast and on a par with the 5 earliest casts (now in the Belvedere Vienna, Munich Pinakothek, the Dresden Albertinum, NGA, Washington and the one in Mahler-Alfre Rosé Collection Ontario). Its quality is testified to by the fact that of these 11, the present cast was the one retained by the family, remaining with Alma Mahler herself, and descending to her daughter Anna Mahler. The bust subsequently entered the collection of the esteemed French politician, and President of France from 1974 to 1981, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (1926-2020) before being acquired by the Daniel Katz Gallery. According to the foundry archives kept at the Rodin museum, 23 lifetime casts were made by Rudier of both Type A and Type B, and including the present cast. This corresponds with the known numbers of which there are 11 Type B casts and 12 Type A casts extant.

The documented lifetime casts of type B are as follows. The first 6 are thought to be the most original:

London – Daniel Katz Gallery (the present bronze), retained and owned by Alma Mahler and by descent to Anna Mahler and the only Type B version not in a museum

Vienna – Hohe Belvedere. 1911 Purchase of Galerie Miethke, Vienna.

Munich – Neue Pinakothek (Tschudi donation). It is not known how this bust ended up in Munich.

Dresden – Albertinum (Klemperer). The one Alma gave to Otto Klemperer (1885-1973).

Washington DC – National Gallery (Lotte Walter). The one Alma gave to Bruno Walter (1876-1962).

Canada – University of Western Ontario (Alfred Rosé) The one Alma gave to Justine (Ernestine) Rose-Mahler (1868-1938). Now in the Music Library of the University of Western Ontario, London, Canada. Gustav Mahler-Alfred Rosé Collection – University of Western Ontario.

Vienna – Staatsoper. The one Alma gave to Vienna State Opera in 1931 for the 20th anniversary of Mahler's death which was destroyed by the Nazi's.

Vienna – Staatsoper. A replacement for no 6, given by Alma Mahler in 1948.

New York – Brooklyn Museum

New York –Metropolitan Museum (Gelman)

Moscow – Musée Pouchkine (Sergei Kusevitsky) Pushkin Museum.

Provenance

Acquired from the artist by Alma Mahler (1879-1964), the wife of the composer

By descent to her daughter Anna Mahler (1904-1988)

Art market, London

Acquired by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (1926-2020) from the previous owner around 1973-1974

and by descent until 2022