



魯賓基斯
Ainārs Rubiķis

下一站：音樂

如 果要用一個比喻來形容指揮和樂團的關係，你會選用什麼呢？喜歡上餐館的朋友，可能會說，指揮像是一個米芝蓮星級餐廳的總廚，一頓盛宴的背後，包含了廚師的餐飲藝術修養、創意和領導才能，並且是廚房上下精湛廚藝和團隊精神的表現。鍾情中國歷史小說的朋友，可能會說，指揮像是一位刀客，古代關雲長有青龍偃月刀，傳說中的名器總是有自己的靈魂，武者終生追求的境界，就是人刀合一。

馬勒指揮大賽由班貝格交響樂團和馬勒的孫女兒瑪蓮娜創立，2004年首屆比賽便出了一個杜達梅，這位魅力非凡的年青指揮，迅速在國際樂壇走紅，現已是洛杉磯愛樂的首席指揮。2007的第二屆比賽，沒有人獲得首名。讓國際樂壇期待六年的馬勒指揮大賽，終於在2010年第三屆比賽選出另一位冠軍人馬——魯賓斯基。樂壇對這位來自拉脫維亞的年輕指揮自然是充滿期待，他更被譽為「歐洲最紅的年輕指揮」。

1983年的一天，在拉脫維亞首都里加——一個歷史悠久的海岸城市，一位媽媽帶著五歲的小兒子，到知名的達金斯音樂學校試音。媽媽從小就留意到，這個小兒子擁有過人的音樂細胞，於是她帶著小兒子見音樂專家，讓他在兒童合唱團裡唱歌。他後來憶述「歌唱中渡過的童年」，就從那次試音正式展開。

由合唱團團員開始，男孩進而修習合唱指揮，其後再改為學習樂團指揮。他是家族裡第一個讀音樂的成員，按拉脫維亞的說法，就是一只「白色小麻雀」。

「從首次學音樂開始，媽媽都和我一起經歷學習過程。她和我可以說是——起學音樂的，而音樂永遠是第一位，其他的事情都屬次要。」他回憶道，「多年來，媽媽都會盡可能出席我的音樂會和歌劇。」

他早年亦曾獲得指揮獎項，並且經常和拉脫維亞的樂團和合唱團合作。2008年，他獲委任為拉脫

維亞國家歌劇院的助理指揮。

2010年2月，這位來自拉脫維亞的年青人，來到班貝格古城參加馬勒指揮大賽。其他的參賽者，包括有17歲的音樂神童、比賽時已擔任西雅圖交響樂團助理指揮的普萊爾等，國際間最具才華的多位年輕指揮雲集一堂。《金融時報》對他有這樣的描述：「瘦弱、優雅，說話時聽得出很緊張，謙遜而誠懇得令人心疼。」

「我參賽的時候沒有想勝負的問題，只是抱著嘗試的心態，和爭取指揮這個頂尖歐洲樂團的機會。其他的，都是上天的安排。」他後來憶述。

對於評審團選擇讓魯賓斯基勝出，《金融時報》的評論是：「評審團把首名頒給魯賓斯基，分明是要給樂界一個強烈訊息，要在內涵、真誠與浮誇、媚眾之間，給前者投下堅定的一票。」

《衛報》報導作曲家和評審員布隆斯泰德「明顯受感動」，並表示「魯賓斯基的演出是所有參賽者當中最詩意、最具靈性的，充滿能量而又不造作。」

當樂界熱切期待另一位馬勒指揮大賽得主即將迅速走紅之際，魯賓斯基早已決定把音樂放在首位，花時間磨練造詣。《金融時報》評論：「如果其他樂團對魯賓斯基也像班貝格對他那樣有著同樣的熱情感應，那魯賓斯基就有可能成為阿巴度那種具有溫和感染力的名家。」

雖然在贏得大賽後，魯賓斯基與世界知名樂團合作日多，他始終沒有讓表演事業蓋過音樂精神。

「樂團的聲音上乘，明顯是排練有素，演奏得既生動，又不落俗套。」奧地利《媒體報》對魯賓斯基上月在薩爾斯堡音樂節首演有此評價。這次首演，是魯賓斯基奪得第二屆雀巢與薩爾斯堡藝術節青年指揮獎的得獎安排之一。

他和樂團建立深厚關係的能力，並非出於偶然。根據《衛報》的描述，「魯賓斯基把指揮棒輕握在拇指和食指之中，動作間彷彿把樂團緊緊抱



A VOTE FOR

住，優雅而又不作保留，果然，樂團的音色溫柔敦厚，就跟樂界普遍評論的一樣。樂團對魯賓斯基的指揮可說是全力配合。」低音大提琴手哥華特表示，「他對音樂的熱愛可是溢於言表，令我更全心投入演奏。」

「明顯地，魯賓斯基得到樂手的尊重和全力支持。」《法蘭哥尼亞日報》對魯賓斯基2011年1月再度指揮班貝格樂團，有以上的評價。也許，這種默契來自魯賓斯基堅持指揮家和樂手必須融而為一的信念。

「每次開始排練，我的首要任務都是和樂手們建立互信，因為我堅信兩者必須合一，」他說，「對每位樂手的精神，我都得心領神會。」

許多藝術家都有一些小習慣，在他們迅速變化的藝術生涯中找到偶爾的安定。開車，是魯賓斯基的尋找安定的小秘訣。不論是在陌生城市的街頭上穿梭，還是在高速公路上馳騁，都能讓他在忙碌一天後安靜下來。筆者寫這篇文章的時候，魯賓斯基正在愛丁堡音樂節演出，也許在演出前後，也會抽空在這個古城的小路上、愛丁堡城牆下開開車。

這次九月是魯賓斯基首次到訪香港，未知他會不會也在南區的海邊兜兜風，想像香港和同是海邊城市的家鄉里加風光的異同，或者在閃閃生光的太平洋上，橫越青馬大橋呢？

Many artists and creative individuals have described their need for regular routines and rituals that instill a sense of calmness amidst their unpredictable lifestyles. For Ainārs, that need is expressed in the form of driving. Between his concerts and performances, he will take any opportunity to "hit the road". Whether he is motoring through unfamiliar streets of a new city, or cruising the motorways at speed, he finds a sense of peace and harmony. As this article is being written, Rubikis is conducting in the Edinburgh festival and perhaps driving through the thoroughfares of the historical city set against the backdrop of the majestic castle of Edinburgh.

This September will be his first visit to Hong Kong. Between his rehearsals and concerts, you may catch a glimpse of the "lean and graceful" young Latvian as he drives through the scenic coastal route of Pokfulam, intrigued by the parallels between his home town of Riga, another seaport, or cruising along the Tsing Ma bridge over the sparkling Pacific Ocean.

If you were to use an analogy to describe the role of a conductor, what would it be?

For someone who appreciates fine dining, a conductor is like the head chef of a Michelin-rated restaurant. The perfect dining experience is the result of artistry, creativity and leadership all coming together, supported by the refined skills and expertise of an entire team of culinary professionals. For others, a conductor might be like the pilot of a fighter jet – the aircraft is a product of state-of-the-art technology, requiring the utmost skill and concentration to operate. The pilot needs to demonstrate a complete understanding of his aircraft, or indeed as some would say, become one with it.

The International Gustav Mahler Conducting Competition was launched by the composer's granddaughter Marina Mahler and the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra. Its inaugural competition in 2004 drew the spotlight to Gustavo Dudamel, the charismatic star conductor who took first prize, currently Chief Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. In 2007, the judges did not award a first prize. It was to be six years of anticipation before another winner of the triennial competition was selected – Ainārs Rubikis. The musical world now watches the career of this talented young Latvian conductor with great expectation, hailing him as "Europe's hottest young conductor".

In 1983, in Latvia's capital city of Riga, a five-year old boy was taken by his mother to audition for the Emil Darzins musical high school. After observing his early potential as a small child, she took him to a music specialist so that he would have the opportunity to sing in a children's ensemble. This was the beginning of what Ainārs later fondly remembered as his "singing childhood".

"From the beginning, my mother knew as much as I did about music. She studied with me and music training always came first – everything else was secondary," he recalled, "in my years of study, my mother often attended my symphonic concerts and operas."

SUBSTANCE

From being a choir member, he continued his music education into choral, and later orchestral conducting. He was the first in his family to study music – a “white sparrow” to use a Latvian saying, reflecting his out of the ordinary choice.

He was subsequently awarded conducting prizes and regularly appeared with orchestras and choirs in Latvia. In 2008, he was appointed Assistant Conductor at the Latvian National Opera.

In February 2010, he travelled to Bamberg in Bavaria to compete in the Gustav Mahler Conducting Competition. Described by the *Financial Times* as “lean and graceful, audibly nervous when he spoke, self-effacing and touchingly sincere”, Rubiķis was competing with some of the world’s most talented conductors, including 17-year-old British wunderkind Alexander Prior, already appointed Assistant Conductor for the Seattle Symphony Orchestra at the time he entered the competition.

According to Rubiķis, “the reason why I went for the competition was not to win, but to try my hand at it, and to conduct one of Europe’s best orchestras. Everything else was in God’s hands.”

When the judges announced Ainārs Rubiķis as the winner, the *Financial Times* observed, “by awarding Rubiķis first prize, the Bamberg jury is sending a strong message to the music world. It was a vote for substance and truth above sensationalism.”

The “visibly moved” composer and juror Herbert Blomstedt told *The Guardian*, “he was the most poetical of them all, the most soulful, who created an atmosphere that was very charged without being histrionic.”

The music world was waiting for their next “discovery” to blaze a trail after emerging triumphantly from the Mahler competition. But instead of throwing himself into the stardom, he is taking the time to grow his musicianship. Indeed, “if other orchestras respond with the passionate empathy that Bamberg extended to Rubiķis, he might become a gentle sensation in the Claudio Abbado mould,” the *Financial Time* wrote.

Despite appearing with prestigious orchestras around the world since winning the competition, Ainārs Rubiķis has not compromised the qualities that landed him the accolade in the first place.

“An excellent sound was heard from the orchestra – clearly beautifully rehearsed – in the animated and spirited way they played the music, without being tempted to overt showmanship,” was *Die Presse*’s review of his début at the Salzburg Festival with the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester last month. The performance opportunity came as part of winning the Nestlé and Salzburg Festival Young Conductors Award.

His rapport with orchestras has been noted time and again. *The Guardian* observed, “Holding the baton delicately between his thumb and forefinger, it is as if Rubiķis is wrapping his arms around the orchestra in a generous, graceful hug, a firm embrace that, sure enough, produces the warm and cultivated sound for which he is well known...The orchestra takes Rubiķis to their hearts.” Double-bass player Luuk Godwaldt told *The Guardian*, “The joy of music is written on his face. He convinces me and makes me want to play.”

“[Rubiķis] certainly has the respect and devotion of these musicians” was *Frankischer Tag*’s observation of Rubiķis’ return to conduct the Bamberg Symphony in January 2011. Perhaps, the rapport has to do with Rubiķis’ expressed belief in the connection between the conductor and the orchestral musician, that he should be part of the same organism.

“A key path I try to find in the rehearsal process as soon as possible is to attempt to establish mutual trust between the orchestra and conductor, because I believe that these two must form a single entity”, he said, “You must become the heart of every musician’s energy.” ∞

美樂自悠行：隆重登場
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HONEGGER *Pacific 231*

HAYDN Symphony No.103 in E flat *Drumroll*

DVOŘÁK Symphony No.7 in D minor