

“SYDNEY”
“SYMPHONY”
“ORCHESTRA”

SIMONE YOUNG
CONDUCTS
**MAHLER'S FIRST
SYMPHONY**

2023 Season Opening Gala
Sydney Opera House

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PATRON **Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley** AC KC

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities. Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the Orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

The Orchestra's first chief conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013, followed by David Robertson as Chief Conductor from 2014 to 2019. Australia-born Simone Young commenced her role as Chief Conductor in 2022, a year in which the Orchestra made its return to a renewed Sydney Opera House Concert Hall.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra's concerts encompass masterpieces from the classical repertoire, music by some of the finest living composers, and collaborations with guest artists from all genres, reflecting the Orchestra's versatility and diverse appeal. Its award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, and the Orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program.

Simone Young

Chief Conductor

Donald Runnicles

Principal Guest
Conductor

Vladimir Ashkenazy

Conductor Laureate

Andrew Haveron

Concertmaster
Chair supported by
Vicki Olsson

FIRST VIOLINS

Andrew Haveron

Concertmaster

Harry Bennetts

Associate
Concertmaster

Sun Yi

Associate Concertmaster
Emeritus

Lerida Delbridge

Assistant
Concertmaster

Brielle Clapson

Sophie Cole

Claire Herrick

Georges Lentz

Emily Long

Alexandra Mitchell

Alexander Norton

Anna Skálová

Sercan Danis*

Alexandra Osborne#

Ben Tjoa*

Marous Michelsen*

Fiona Ziegler

Assistant
Concertmaster

Jennifer Booth

Nicola Lewis

Léone Ziegler

SECOND VIOLINS

Kirsty Hilton

Principal

Marianne Edwards

Principal

Marina Marsden

Principal

Alice Bartsch

Victoria Bihun

Rebecca Gill

Emma Hayes

Shuti Huang

Monique Irik

Wendy Kong

Benjamin Li

Nicole Masters

Maja Verunica

Tobias Aan*

Emma Jezek

Assistant Principal

VIOLAS

Guiseppe Russo

Rossi*

Guest Principal

Tobias Breider

Principal

Justin Williams

Acting Associate Principal

Sandra Costantino

Rosemary Curtin

Jane Hazelwood

Graham Hennings

Justine Marsden

Felicity Tsai

Amanda Verner

Leonid Volovelsky

Anne-Louise

Comerford

Associate Principal

Stuart Johnson

CELLOS

Benjamin Hughes*

Guest Principal

Catherine Hewgill

Principal

Leah Lynn

Acting Associate Principal

Alice Conrau

Fenella Gill

Timothy Nankervis

Christopher Pidcock

Adrian Wallis

Paul Stender

Elizabeth Neville

DOUBLE BASSES

Kees Boersma

Principal

Alex Henery

Principal

David Campbell

Steven Larson

Richard Lynn

Jaan Pallandi

Benjamin Ward

Kirsty McCahan*

FLUTES

Joshua Batty

Principal

Emma Sholl

Associate Principal

Carolyn Harris

Katie Zagorski#

OBOES

Diana Doherty

Principal

Callum Hogan

Noah Rudd*

Alexandre Oguey

Principal Cor Anglais

Shefali Pryor

Associate Principal

CLARINETS

Francesco Celata

Acting Principal

Alexander Morris

Principal Bass Clarinet

Christopher Tingay

Romola Smith#

BASSOONS

Todd Gibson-Cornish

Principal

Fiona McNamara

Jamie Dodd*

Noriko Shimada

Principal Contrabassoon

Matthew Wilkie

Principal Emeritus

HORNS

Gillian Williams*

Guest Principal

Euan Harvey

Acting Principal 3rd Horn

Marnie Sebire

Rachel Silver

Jenny McLeod-Sneyd#

Emily Newham#

Joshua Davies*

Ian Wildsmith*

Geoffrey O'Reilly

Principal

TRUMPETS

David Elton

Principal

Brent Grapes

Associate Principal

Cécile Glémat

Anthony Heinrichs

Sophie Spencer*

TROMBONES

Ronald Prussing

Principal

Scott Kinmont

Associate Principal

Nick Byrne

Christopher Harris

Principal Bass Trombone

TUBA

Steve Rossé

Principal

TIMPANI

Antoine Siguré*

Guest Principal

Joshua Hill*

Mark Robinson

Acting Principal

PERCUSSION

Rebecca Lagos

Principal

Timothy Constable

Ian Cleworth*

HARP

Natalie Wong#

Guest Principal

Kate Moloney*

* = Guest Musician

= Contract Musician

† = Sydney Symphony

Fellow

Grey = Permanent

Member of the Sydney

Symphony Orchestra

not appearing in

this concert

CONCERT CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2023



RIMSKY-KORSAKOV'S SCHEHERAZADE
DAZZLING STORIES IN FULL COLOUR
UNSUK CHIN Frontispiece*
RAVEL Concerto for the Left Hand
RIMSKY-KORSAKOV Scheherazade
**Great Classics performance only*
SIMONE YOUNG conductor
CÉDRIC TIBERGHEN instrument

Symphony Hour
Tea & Symphony
Great Classics
Thursday 16 February, 7pm
Friday 17 February, 11am
Saturday 18 February, 2pm
Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House



JANÁČEK'S STRING QUARTET NO.2
INTIMATE LETTERS
JOAN TOWER Rising
JANÁČEK String Quartet No.2,
Intimate Letters
SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
MUSICIANS

Cocktail Hour
Friday 17 February, 6pm
Saturday 18 February, 6pm
Utzon Room,
Sydney Opera House

MARCH 2023



DVOŘÁK'S STRING QUINTET NO.3
BRIGHT & SPIRITED STRINGS
BARTÓK Sonata for Solo Violin
DVOŘÁK String Quintet No.3
SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
MUSICIANS

Cocktail Hour
Friday 3 March, 6pm
Saturday 4 March, 6pm
Utzon Room,
Sydney Opera House



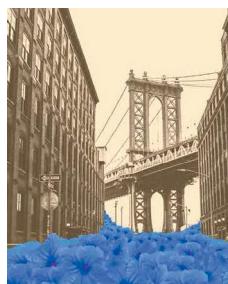
MARIE-ANGE NGUCI IN RECITAL
A RISING STAR
Works by **RACHMANINOV, PROKOFIEV,**
SCRIABIN and **KAPUSTIN**

International Pianists in Recital
Monday 6 March, 7pm
City Recital Hall



PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION
DRAMATIC & EVOCATIVE
MIRIAMA YOUNG
Reflections on the Harbour Light
50 Fanfares Commission
SAINT-SAËNS Piano Concerto No.2
MUSSORGSKY arr. **RAVEL**
Pictures at an Exhibition
MIHHAIL GERTS conductor
MARIE-ANGE NGUCI piano

Emirates Masters Series
Emirates Thursday Afternoon
Symphony
Wednesday 8 March, 8pm
Thursday 9 March, 1.30pm
Friday 10 March, 8pm
Saturday 11 March, 8pm
Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House



RHAPSODY IN BLUE
NEW YORK STORIES
PAUL BONETTI The Bright Day Clarion
Calls the Quaking Earth
50 Fanfares Commission
BERNSTEIN
Symphonic Dances from West Side Story
IVES Central Park in the Dark
GERSHWIN Rhapsody in Blue
ANDREA MOLINO conductor
SIMON TEDESCHI piano

Classics Under the Sails
Sunday Afternoon Symphony
Friday 17 March, 7pm
Saturday 18 March, 7pm
Sunday 19 March, 2pm
Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

WELCOME

FROM THE NSW MINISTER FOR THE ARTS

The 2023 Season Opening Gala heralds the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's first full season back in the Sydney Opera House following the landmark renewal of the Concert Hall over the past three years. The Orchestra's triumphant return to the House was greeted with five-star reviews for both the Orchestra and the hall itself, and I am thrilled that the interior of the Sydney Opera House now complements the world-famous exterior, reaffirming its status as one of the architectural wonders of the world and an international icon of our city.

Mahler's symphonies are grand works of singular vision, and in his epic first symphony — appropriately nicknamed 'Titan' — Mahler uses every colour that an orchestra can produce to evoke the spectacular Austrian countryside that inspired him. Simone Young, Chief Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, is celebrated worldwide as a leading interpreter of Mahler, and it is a great privilege to witness this inspiring artist unfurl this kaleidoscopic work in the grandeur of the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall.

It is also important to note that this concert features two great Australian artists alongside Simone Young: soprano Siobhan Stagg is one of the most outstanding singers to emerge from Australia in recent years, and it has been a great joy to watch her career blossom on so many of the great stages of Europe. She will be performing Claude Debussy's *Ariettes oubliées* (Forgotten Songs) beautifully arranged for orchestra by acclaimed Australian composer Brett Dean. The exceptional trio of singer, composer and conductor demonstrates the incredible depth of talent in Australia.

On behalf of the NSW Government, welcome, and enjoy the concert.

The Hon. Ben Franklin MLC
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Minister for the Arts
Minister for Regional Youth
Minister for Tourism



Ben Franklin

WELCOME

Emirates and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra have enjoyed one of the longest standing partnerships in Australia's performing arts. This year marks over 20 years of partnership, and we are pleased to continue our support of this world class Orchestra.

Emirates and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra share a common goal of creating journeys of excitement and discovery for people around the globe. Emirates is passionate about supporting incredible local and international talent, in particular the Sydney Symphony's Chief Conductor Simone Young AM.

Emirates is proud to be investing to bring Sydney audiences world-class experiences, whether through its support of the Sydney Symphony or through its customer service, and in December 2022, Sydney was the first city on Emirates' network to offer the new Premium Economy cabin on all flights between its Dubai hub; putting Australia at the forefront of Emirates' 2-year retrofit programme, consisting of a multi-billion-dollar investment to ensure customers continue to fly better in the coming years.

We are delighted by this continuing partnership, and we wish the Sydney Symphony all the best in this exciting new year. It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this performance, and we hope today's music points the way to an increasingly brighter future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barry Brown', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Barry Brown

Divisional Vice President for Australasia
Emirates

WELCOME

Welcome to the 2023 Season.

It is wonderful to reflect on the 2023 season now that we have returned to the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall and discovered through recent performances how the renewed space has created a new and wonderful experience for all of us.

2023 will be an extraordinary season of concerts featuring profound and beautiful music that inspires wonder, excitement and a sense of adventure.

The season represents a new chapter and a new energy for music in our city as we once again welcome artists from around the world to share their extraordinary musical gifts. I'm especially proud that we will invite Australian artists to return and participate in many of the year's landmark events so that the Sydney Symphony's performances are a place to which people return while reaffirming the ideals of music and its importance in the contemporary world.

We're delighted to welcome world-renowned artists including Anne-Sophie Mutter, Nicola Benedetti, Ray Chen, Stephen Hough, Khatia Buniatishvili and Siobhan Stagg. Among our guests are also some of my many wonderful conducting colleagues including Donald Runnicles, John Wilson, Masaaki Suzuki and Stephen Layton.

As promised, Spanish pianist Javier Perianes returns to continue our exploration of Beethoven's piano concertos, bringing his extraordinary playing to these rich and evocative works.

I am particularly excited that our opera in concert will be *Das Rheingold*, which marks the beginning of our multi-year *Ring Cycle* project. It will now be possible to hear Wagner's epic creation as it should be heard — as an immense musical experience performed with some of the world's finest singers with an orchestra of the highest calibre.

I hope you will join us for a season of the most exciting and rewarding performances.

Simone Young AM
Chief Conductor



Simone Young
Photo by Sandra Steh

EMIRATES MASTERS SERIES
EMIRATES THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

Wednesday 8 February, 8pm
Friday 10 February, 8pm
Saturday 11 February, 8pm
Thursday 9 February, 1.30pm
Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

SIMONE YOUNG CONDUCTS MAHLER'S FIRST SYMPHONY

2023 SEASON OPENING

SIMONE YOUNG conductor
SIOBHÁN STAGG soprano

GUSTAV MAHLER (1860–1911)

Blumine

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

arr **BRETT DEAN**

Ariettes oubliées L.60

i. *C'est l'extase langoureuse*

ii. *Il pleure dans mon cœur*

iii. *L'ombre des arbres*

iv. *Chevaux de bois*

v. *Green*

vi. *Spleen*

Pre-concert talk by
Alastair McKean in the
Northern Foyer 45 minutes
before the performance.

ESTIMATED DURATIONS

8 minutes, 19 minutes,
interval 20 minutes,
53 minutes

The concert will conclude
at approximately 10pm
(Wednesday, Friday and
Saturday) and 3.30pm
(Thursday)

COVER IMAGE

Quang Nguyen Vinh

GUSTAV MAHLER

Symphony No.1 in D, *Titan*

i. *Langsam. Schleppend - Im Anfang sehr gemächlich*

ii. *Kräftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell*

iii. *Feierlich und gemassen, ohne zu schleppen*

iv. *Stürmisch bewegt*

PRINCIPAL PARTNER





Simone Young AM
Photo by Sandra Steh

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

SIMONE YOUNG AM conductor

Sydney Symphony Orchestra's Chief Conductor, Simone Young, was General Manager and Music Director of the Hamburg State Opera and Music Director of the Philharmonic State Orchestra Hamburg from 2005-2015. Her Hamburg recordings include the *Ring Cycle*, *Mathis der Maler* (Hindemith), and symphonies of Bruckner, Brahms and Mahler. An acknowledged interpreter of the operas of Wagner and Strauss, she has conducted complete cycles of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the Vienna Staatsoper, Berlin Staatsoper and in Hamburg.

This season she returns to the Berlin Philharmonic, Orchestres National de France and Lyon, Zürich Tonhalle Orchestra, Madrid Symphony, Orchestre Suisse Romande and to La Scala Milan (*Peter Grimes*), The Metropolitan Opera New York (*Der Rosenkavalier*) and Vienna State Opera (*Die Fledermaus* and *La Fanciulla del West*). She will also lead the ANAM orchestra in their co-production with Victorian Opera of *Capriccio*.

Simone Young is regularly invited by the world's great orchestras and has led the New York, Los Angeles, Berlin, Vienna, Munich, Stockholm, New Japan, Helsinki, and Dresden Philharmonic Orchestras; the Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte Carlo; Orchestre de Paris; Staatskapelle Dresden; the BBC, San Francisco, Cincinnati, Detroit, Chicago, Dallas, and National Symphony Orchestra. In Australia she has conducted the West Australian, Adelaide, Melbourne and Queensland Symphony Orchestras and the Australian World Orchestra.

Highly sought-after by the world's leading opera houses, most recently Simone Young has appeared at the Vienna State Opera (*Peter Grimes*); Opera Nationale de Paris (*Parsifal* and *Salome*); Bavarian State Opera, Munich (*Tannhäuser*), Berlin State Opera (*Der Rosenkavalier*) and Zurich Opera (*Salome*).

Simone Young has been Music Director of Opera Australia, Chief Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of the Gulbenkian Orchestra, Lisbon and the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra. Her many accolades include Honorary Member (Ehrenmitglied) of the Vienna State Opera, the 2019 European Cultural Prize Vienna, a Professorship at the Musikhochschule in Hamburg, honorary Doctorates from the Universities of Western Australia and New South Wales, Griffith University and Monash University, the Sir Bernard Heinze Award, the Goethe Institute Medal, Helpmann Award and the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, France.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

SIOBHAN STAGG

Australian soprano Siobhan Stagg was a member of the Deutsche Oper Berlin from 2013-19 where her roles ranged from Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*) to Waldvogel and Woglinde (the *Ring Cycle*).

Elsewhere she has sung the title role in *Cendrillon* for Lyric Opera of Chicago; Pamina for Royal Opera House Covent Garden; Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*) for Opernhaus Zürich; Mélisande for Opera de Dijon, Gilda for Hamburgische Staatsoper; Najade (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) for Bayerische Staatsoper; staged performances of Mozart's Requiem at Festival d'Aix-en-Provence and Morgana (*Alcina*) for Grand Théâtre de Genève.

Siobhan begins the 2022/23 season with concerts of *Shéhérazade* with the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks and Tugan Sokhiev; Mahler's Symphony No.2 with London Symphony Orchestra and Simon Rattle; *Buch mit sieben Siegeln* with Wiener Symphoniker and Andrés Orozco-Estrada, and Berg's *Sieben frühe Lieder* with Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin and Vasily Petrenko. She makes her debut solo recital at the Pierre Boulez Saal before returning to Opernhaus Zürich as Eritrea in a new production of *Eliogabalo*. Further operatic engagements include returns to the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin; the Royal Opera House Covent Garden and to the Deutsche Oper Berlin.

Other notable appearances this season include concerts of *Das Paradies und die Peri* with Gürzenich Orchester Köln and François-Xavier Roth and Netherlands Radio Philharmonic with Karina Canellakis; Mozart's *Requiem* with Cleveland Orchestra; Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem* with Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra and a performance of Brett Dean's *In This Brief Moment* with NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester and Alan Gilbert.

In recent seasons, Siobhan has performed Brahms' *German Requiem* with Berliner Philharmoniker and Christian Thielemann; Beethoven's *Symphony No.9* with Chamber Orchestra of Europe and Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Zemlinsky's *Lyric Symphony* at the BBC Proms with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Other recent engagements include Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* for Teatro Comunale di Bologna; concerts of Mozart arias with Rolando Villazon at the Salzburger Mozartwoche and Festspiele, and with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at Glyndebourne Festival.



Siobhan Stagg
Photo by Simon Pauly

ABOUT THE MUSIC

GUSTAV MAHLER (1860–1911)

Blumine

The first performance of Mahler's First Symphony, conducted by the composer in Budapest in 1889, was a mixed success.

Of the work's original five movements, the Andante second movement was entitled *Blumine* ('flowering') for the second performance in Hamburg. That piece, which we hear today, was discarded by Mahler after the symphony's third outing, at which point he made a number of substantial revisions to the other movements.

Blumine appears to have been lifted from some incidental music that Mahler had written in 1884 for Joseph von Scheffel's play *The Trumpeter of Säkkingen*, a tale of love, loss and reunion set during the Thirty Years War. The original score has been lost, so it is impossible to know how much of it was recomposed, but it seems clear that the trumpet melody represents the play's hero, Werner, serenading his beloved Margareta (whose parents have betrothed her to Damian) from across the Rhine. One Budapest critic instinctively noted that in the alternation of trumpet and oboe 'it is not hard to recognise the lovers exchanging their tender feelings in the silence of night'.

Conductor Bruno Walter recounts how the composer gave him a score when Mahler was destroying a lot of old manuscripts. It remained unperformed until Benjamin Britten conducted it in 1967 with the New Philharmonia Orchestra, from a recently rediscovered copy of the version used at the symphony's second performance, in Hamburg some 70 years earlier. Why Mahler chose to discard it is a mystery — Walter's memory was that it was 'insufficiently symphonic' — though it may be that in the context of the symphony's overall mood *Blumine* is simply too beautiful.



Mahler in 1888

ABOUT THE MUSIC

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

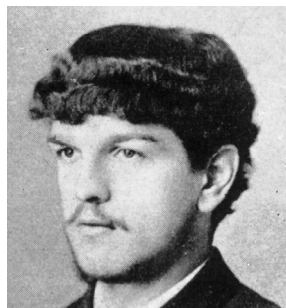
arr **BRETT DEAN**

Ariettes oubliées

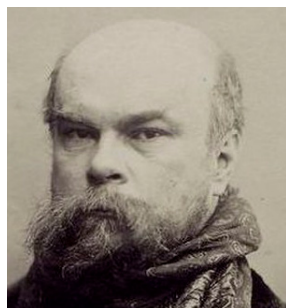
Roughly contemporary with Mahler's First Symphony, Debussy's song-cycle *Ariettes* was first performed, to no great acclaim, in 1887 and revised for publication as *Ariettes oubliées* (Forgotten Songs) in 1903. The six songs set poetry by Paul Verlaine from his collection *Romances sans paroles* (Songs without Words) written in 1872 and 1873 when Verlaine had abandoned his wife and embarked on an affair with the young poet Arthur Rimbaud.

The songs, then, largely treat the notion of love. *C'est l'extase* deals with post-coital languor and sadness; *Il pleure dans mon coeur* famously likens the falling rain to falling tears despite no cause for grief; in *L'ombre des arbres*, shadows, water and mourning doves reflect the poet's drowned hopes; the *Chevaux des bois* are the horses on a merry-go-round in a slightly hellish carnival; *Green* is another post-coital lyric, while *Spleen* expresses the poet's weariness with everything but the beloved, whom he fears will leave him.

Debussy's piano accompaniments are extremely economical, and in his 2015 arrangement for the soprano Magdalena Kožená, Simon Rattle and the Australian World Orchestra, Brett Dean is careful to adhere to Debussy's spirit. Naturally the trumpets, drums and bells, not to mention the sounds of the natural world that pervade the poetry, are irresistible to a composer, but Dean has changed none of the pitch material, has cultivated the orchestral palette of early Debussy works like the *Nocturnes* and *Prélude à 'l'après-midi d'un faune'* — mainly eschewing doubling, frequently dividing the strings and creating diaphanous wind textures. His only changes are in the interests, as he says, of giving the orchestration more time to unfold, judiciously adding the occasionally beat, bar or pause for that effect.



Debussy in 1886



Poet Paul Verlaine.



Brett Dean
Photo by Bettina Stoess

ABOUT THE MUSIC

C'EST L'EXTASE

C'est l'extase langoureuse,
C'est la fatigue amoureuse,
C'est tous les frissons des bois
Parmi l'étreinte des brises,
C'est, vers les ramures grises,
Le chœur des petites voix.

Ô le frêle et frais murmure!
Cela gazouille et susurre,
Cela ressemble au cri doux
Que l'herbe agitée expire ...
Tu dirais, sous l'eau qui vire,
Le roulis sourd des cailloux.

Cette âme qui se lamente
En cette plainte dormante
C'est la nôtre, n'est-ce pas?
La mienne, dis, et la tienne,
Dont s'exhale l'humble antienne
Par ce tiède soir, tout bas?

IL PLEURE DANS MON CŒUR

Il pleure dans mon cœur
Comme il pleut sur la ville;
Quelle est cette langueur
Qui pénètre mon cœur?

Ô bruit doux de la pluie
Par terre et sur les toits!
Pour un cœur qui s'ennuie
Ô le bruit de la pluie!

Il pleure sans raison
Dans ce cœur qui s'écoëure.
Quoi! nulle trahison? ...
Ce deuil est sans raison.

C'est bien la pire peine
De ne savoir pourquoi
Sans amour et sans haine,
Mon cœur a tant de peine.

IT IS THE ECSTASY

It is the languid ecstasy,
It is the fatigue after love,
It is the rustling in the woods
When embraced by the breezes,
It is the chorus of little voices
Among the grey branches.

O such a delicate, fresh murmuring
Babbling and whispering
Like the sound of the grasses
Waving in the breeze...
You might even take it for the sound
Of pebbles rolling in the stream's current.

The soul that grieves
In this sleepy sorrow
Is ours, is it not?
Both mine and yours
Breathing out our humble antiphon
So quiet, on this mild evening.

TEARS ARE FALLING IN MY HEART

Tears are falling in my heart
As the rain falls on the town;
What languor is this
That fills my heart?

Ah the soft sound of rain
On the earth and roofs!
Ah the sound of the rain
For a heart growing weary.

Tears fall without cause
In this ailing heart.
What? There's no betrayal?
This grief has no cause.

It is the worst pain
Not to know why,
Without love, without hate,
My heart is full of pain.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

L'OMBRE DES ARBRES

L'ombre des arbres dans la
rivière embrumée
Meurt comme de la fumée,
Tandis qu'en l'air, parmi les
ramures réelles,
Se plaignent les tourterelles.

Combien, ô voyageur,
ce paysage blême
Te mira blême toi-même,
Et que tristes pleuraient dans
les hautes feuillées
Tes espérances noyées!

CHEVAUX DES BOIS

Tournez, tournez, bons chevaux de bois,
Tournez cent tours, tournez mille tours,
Tournez souvent et tournez toujours,
Tournez, tournez au son des hautbois.

L'enfant tout rouge et la mère blanche,
Le gars en noir et la fille en rose,
L'une à la chose et l'autre à la pose,
Chacun se paie un sou de dimanche.

Tournez, tournez, chevaux de leur cœur,
Tandis qu'autour de tous vos tournois
Clignote l'œil du filou sournois,
Tournez au son du piston vainqueur!

C'est étonnant comme ça vous soûle
D'aller ainsi dans ce cirque bête:
Rien dans le ventre et mal dans la tête,
Du mal en masse et du bien en foule.

Tournez, dadas, sans qu'il soit besoin
D'user jamais de nuls éperons
Pour commander à vos galops ronds:
Tournez, tournez, sans espoir de foin.

Et dépêchez, chevaux de leur âme,
Déjà voici que sonne à la soupe
La nuit qui tombe et chasse la troupe
De gais buveurs que leur soif affame.

Tournez, tournez! Le ciel en velours
D'astres en or se vêt lentement.
L'église tinte un glas tristement.
Tournez au son joyeux des tambours!

THE SHADE OF THE TREES

The shade of the trees on the
misted river
fades away like smoke;
while above, in the real branches,
the doves lament.

How well, O traveller, does this
pale scene
Mirror you own pale self.
And how sadly, up in the high leaves,
Your drowned hopes wept.

WOODEN HORSES

Turn, turn, good wooden horses,
Turn a hundred, a thousand times
Turn often and turn always
Turn to the sound of the oboes.

The ruddy faced child and pale mother
The boy in black and the girl in pink.
One self-contained, the other posing,
Each clutching their Sunday coin.

Turn, turn, horses of their hearts,
While around all your turning
Glitters the sneaky pickpocket's eye
Turn to the sound of the victor's cornet.

It's astonishing how drunk you get
Spinning in this silly circle
With an empty stomach and aching head,
Lots of discomfort and lots of fun!

Turn, horsies [sic], no-one will need
To ever use spurs
To force you to gallop around,
Turn, turn with no hope of hay.

Now hurry on, horses of their souls
Already they hear the summons to supper,
Night falls, chases the crowds away,
Merry drinkers dying of thirst!

Turn, turn! The velvet sky
Is slowly covered in stars
The church bell mournfully tolls —
Turn to the joyful beat of the drums!

ABOUT THE MUSIC

GREEN

Voici des fruits, des fleurs, des feuilles
et des branches
Et puis voici mon cœur qui ne bat que
pour vous.
Ne le déchirez pas avec vos deux
mains blanches
Et qu'à vos yeux si beaux l'humble
présent soit doux.

J'arrive tout couvert encore de rosée
Que le vent du matin vient glacer à
mon front.
Souffrez que ma fatigue à vos pieds
reposée
Rêve des chers instants qui la
délasseront.

Sur votre jeune sein laissez rouler
ma tête
Toute sonore encore de vos
derniers baisers;
Laissez-la s'apaiser de la bonne
tempête,
Et que je dorme un peu puisque
vous reposez.

SPLEEN

Les roses étaient toutes rouges
Et les lierres étaient tout noirs.

Chère, pour peu que tu te bouges,
Renaissent tous mes désespoirs.

Le ciel était trop bleu, trop tendre,
La mer trop verte et l'air trop doux.

Je crains toujours,—ce qu'est
d'attendre!—
Quelque fuite atroce de vous.

Du houx à la feuille vernie
Et du luisant buis je suis las,

Et de la campagne infinie
Et de tout, fors de vous, hélas!

GREEN

Here are fruits and flowers, leaves
and branches
And here is my heart which beats only
for you
Do not tear it in two with your
white hands
And may your beautiful eyes see this
humble present as sweet.

I arrive, still covered in dew
That the morning breeze comes to
freeze on my brow
Allow my fatigue, as I lie at your feet,
Dreaming of dear moments that will
revive me.

Allow my head to rest on your
young breast
Still ringing with your latest kisses;
Let it calm itself after the storm of love
And let me sleep a little while you
too rest.

SPLEEN

All the roses were red
And all the ivy was black.

My dear, your slightest move
Revives all my despair.

The sky was too blue, too tender,
The sea too green and the air too sweet.

I always fear — oh, what to expect? —
Some agonising departure by you.

I am tired of green holly branches
And of the bright box-tree,

Of the limitless countryside
And of everything, alas, but you!

ABOUT THE MUSIC

GUSTAV MAHLER (1860–1911)

Symphony No.1 in D, *Titan*

The 28-year old Mahler had been appointed music director of the Budapest Opera in 1888, and in his brief tenure there worked heroically to raise the musical standards of the company. He built a resident ensemble of singers, rather than relying on the 'imported star' model that had prevailed there, and contrary to a fairly common practice at the time, insisted that the entire cast sing the libretto in the same language. Among his many successes were productions of the first two operas of Wagner's 'Ring' Cycle, *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* — sung in Hungarian. Sadly, politics, unusually for the arts, raised its ugly head, and having negotiated a generous severance package Mahler left for Hamburg in 1891.

In Leipzig and then Budapest he had worked on two large-scale pieces which would in due course become known as his first and second symphonies. As we have noted, what we now know as the First was premiered in the Hungarian capital in 1889, but the reception was not as Mahler might have wished it.

This was partly the result of the broader — fraught — political situation, where the performing arts provided an arena for the conflict between Hungarian nationalists and those more oriented towards the German-speaking parts of the Empire and its imperial capital, Vienna. Partisans of the concert's two conductors, Mahler and Erkel, volubly expressed their differences, and reviews ranged from damning to perplexed. Mahler had partly himself to blame. Calling the work, as he did, a 'Symphonic Poem in Two Parts' immediately signalled that this was not 'absolute music' but had some literary pretensions, and peppering it with quotations from his earlier songs, bird calls and rustic dances attracted accusations of 'colour without design'. One critic at least recognised that it was Mahler's 'technical superiority' that led him to 'choose rough sonorities to exaggerate expressions and sound effects'.

ABOUT THE MUSIC



Jean Paul Richter, author of the novel *Titan*.

Friends persuaded Mahler to give the work a program, or explicit narrative, 'to make it easier to understand', so for its second and third outings he nicknamed the whole piece the *Titan* Symphony. This refers, not so much to the relatively gargantuan scale of the piece, as to the novel of the same title in which the philosopher Jean Paul Richter subjects various philosophical and spiritual obsessions of early Romanticism to ironic scrutiny. The program divides the work into two unequal parts: the first three movements (that is with *Blumine* as the second) offer a narrative of 'Endless Spring', 'Flowering' and for the scherzo 'In Full Sail', and, in the second part (subtitled *Commedia humana*), 'Funeral March' and 'Dall'inferno'. It thus conforms to a prevailing notion of the work as the story of a Romantic hero. The tone and shape of the work, though, suggest that this hero, like Jean Paul, views things with a raised eyebrow, and indeed once the piece reached its final four-movement form, Mahler walked back any suggestions of a program.

By then Mahler had also refined, for want of a better word, the scoring. Today the kinds of sounds, ranging from barely audible delicacy to overwhelming torrents of noise, from visceral immediacy to evocations of distant space, are the stuff of film music so we can forget how radical some of Mahler's timbres must have seemed.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Take the opening, with its quiet humming of multi-octave 'A's. We can find similar gestures in earlier works, such as Beethoven's Fourth Symphony, but here after an early revision, Mahler uses the sound of string harmonics as 'normal' string tone was 'too substantial for the shimmering and glimmering of the air that I had in mind'. As Mahler notes in the score, it should be 'like a natural sound'. In the 1930s, Scottish musicologist Donald Tovey wrote that 'no other composer has had the effrontery to proceed further with the ideas that give Mahler his simple pleasures...I do not suppose I was the only eleven-year-old child to whom it occurred to strike, with the aid of two other children, all the eight As on the pianoforte'. Which manages to both miss and at the same time supremely 'get' Mahler's point: this is a musical blank canvas, childishly innocent noise-making, or as Mahler notes in the score, 'like a natural sound'. One of Mahler's greatest mid-century champions, philosopher Theodor W Adorno, describes the moment as 'an unpleasant whistling sound like that emitted by old-fashioned steam engines. A thick curtain, threadbare but densely woven, it hangs from the sky like a pale grey cloud layer, similarly painful to sensitive eyes.'

This too 'gets' and doesn't 'get' it. Elsewhere Mahler made the broader point that 'My need to express my feelings in music for a symphony begins only where the mysterious feelings take over at the gate which leads into the "other world", world which does not separate happenings through time and space...' Regarding his tonal palette in such contexts, Mahler explained to his friend Natalie Bauer-Lechner that 'if I want to produce a soft subdued sound, I don't give it to an instrument that produces it easily, but rather to one that can get it only with effort and under pressure — often only by forcing itself and exceeding its natural range...' The precarious harmonics that create the aural curtain at the start imbue sound with its sense of potential energy waiting to be unleashed — at first by the fragments that turn into cuckoo calls and distant alarms, and then by the rushing to the first of the work's climactic moments.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

By a happy accident the cuckoo's distinctive falling perfect fourth (which occurs almost obsessively through the movement) is also the interval with which Mahler's song 'Ging heut' Morgen übers Feld' (I went this morning across the field). This, the second in his cycle *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Songs of a Wayfarer) was composed to his own text in the early 1880s. It paints a fairly standard picture of a glimmering spring morning, with dew on the grass and friendly birds (a finch rather than a cuckoo) and flowers (bluebells, that ring!), but as befits a true Romantic, such natural beauty will never quite compensate for the hero's deep unhappiness.

The Scherzo that follows refers to an even earlier song of Mahler's, 'Hans und Grethe' (also known as 'Maitanz in Grünen' — May-dance on the Green), which bears no resemblance to the Grimm tale of breadcrumbs, witches and gingerbread houses, and the protagonists don't seem to be siblings. The song treats the traditional round-dances of May as an occasion for finding love, and its spirit suffuses Mahler's scherzo.



Moritz von Schwind, *The Huntsman's Funeral*.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

But death comes to Arcadia, and the slow movement is the first of Mahler's numerous symphonic funeral marches. Mahler's parents and a sister died in 1889, but this movement, planned before those losses, stems from an engraving well-known to Austrian children at the time: *The Huntsman's Funeral*, which – puzzlingly – shows a procession of forest animals mourning as they walk beside the coffin of the deceased hunter. Mahler's tone here is sardonic, an effect achieved in part by the 'inappropriate' use of instrumental timbre that he mentioned to Bauer-Lechner, and by the fact that the main material of the piece is a minor key version of the nursery rhyme *Bruder Martin* (better known to us as *Frère Jacques*) that works its way upwards from depths of the double bass section. Adorno refers to the music's 'ambivalence between mourning and mockery'. A central trio section prefigures the urban, often Jewish folk music that appears again and again in Mahler, and there is a brief quotation the closing bars of the 'Wayfarer' cycle's final song: 'Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz' (My beloved's two blue eyes). This song describes the hero setting off, like that of Schubert's *Winterreise*, rejected by the beloved, and finding rest as he is gently buried beneath the falling petals of the linden tree.

The ultimately deleted title of the finale, 'Dall'inferno' marks it as the first of several pictures of hell that Mahler would essay during his career, notably in the unfinished Tenth Symphony. Adorno's view was that here 'laceration is intensified beyond all mediating measure into a totality of despair. behind which to be sure, the nonchalant triumphal close pales to an affair of mere management'. This perhaps overstates it, though it may be that after all the *Sturm und Drang* and moments of deep pathos, Mahler resorts to pure theatre, having the horn section all stand to blast out their finale 'chorale' and bring the work to its expectedly triumphant close.

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