

A stylized illustration of Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Music and Artistic Director of the Philadelphia Orchestra, standing in a vast, green field. He is wearing a dark blue tuxedo jacket over a tan vest and a white shirt with a black bow tie. The field is covered with numerous sheets of paper, some of which are open, suggesting a scene of creative chaos or a vast archive. In the background, there are rolling green hills, a small wooden barn, and a blue sky with white clouds. A single, long, thin, wavy line floats in the sky above him.

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin
Music and Artistic Director

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January 2025

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January 2025



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Specially designed art for the Mahler's
Symphony No. 9 concerts, January 9 and 11, 2025,
by Haeg Design

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From the Interim President and CEO



Dear Friends:

Happy New Year! I hope your holidays were filled with joy, good company, and great music.

This month features an array of spectacular concerts to broaden our audiences. We start with a pair of concerts featuring the incredible music of Joe Hisaishi, who also conducts the performances. Known for his enchanting scores to Hayao Miyazaki's films, he brings two classical works along with his suite from *Spirited Away*. We once again

mark Lunar New Year with a concert led by Assistant Conductor Naomi Woo. And we present the second concert in our award-winning happy hour series, Orchestra After 5, an earlier one-hour performance with pre-concert activities, specialty cocktails, and a post-concert talkback. Winner of "Best Classical Outing" in *Philadelphia* magazine's 2024 Best of Philly, the series has been praised as "the freshest happy hour in town" by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

Of course, we also give a number of subscription concerts this month, performing an extremely diverse mix of repertoire, from well-known staples by composers such as Tchaikovsky, Mahler, and Ravel, to newer pieces by Kaija Saariaho and Jake Heggie. We also continue our exploration of lesser-known works, including those by 20th-century composers Alfredo Casella, Margaret Bonds, and William Grant Still, all while welcoming old friends and new: Yuja Wang, Paul Jacobs, Rafael Payare, Joshua Hopkins, and Carolin Widmann.

The Orchestra performs outside of the Kimmel Center in our efforts to share the transformative power of music with the widest possible audience: at Girard College Chapel for our 35th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute Concert and at Carnegie Hall for the second of three performances this season in that storied space, where the Orchestra first performed back in November 1902, only two years after the ensemble's founding.

To spark interest in classical music, our youngest listeners can enjoy one of our signature education and community programs, Sound All Around, the second of five performances this season where children learn about the instrument families in an informal introduction to music through storytelling. In addition, one of our most popular member benefits returns: Open Rehearsals. These invitation-only events offer a fascinating glimpse into the rehearsal process.

With such a breadth of experiences this month, we showcase how The Philadelphia Orchestra continues to innovate and find new ways of connecting with audiences. We hope you will join us!

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ryan Fleur".

Ryan Fleur
Interim President and CEO

A night-time photograph of the Philadelphia skyline, featuring prominent skyscrapers like the Comcast Center and the Liberty Bell Center, illuminated against a dark blue sky. The city lights reflect on the water in the foreground.

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The Philadelphia Orchestra

2024–2025 Season

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Music and Artistic
Director

*Walter and Leonore
Annenberg Chair*

Marin Alsop

Principal Guest Conductor

*Ralph and Beth Johnston
Muller Chair*

Naomi Woo

Assistant Conductor

Joseph Conyers

Education and
Community Ambassador

*Mark and Tobey Dichter
Chair*

Charlotte Blake Alston

Storyteller, Narrator,
and Host

*Osagie and Losenge
Imasogie Chair*

First Violins

David Kim, Concertmaster

Dr. Benjamin Rush Chair

Juliette Kang, First

Associate Concertmaster
*Joseph and Marie Field
Chair*

Christine Lim, Associate
Concertmaster

Marc Rovetti, Assistant
Concertmaster

*Dr. James F. Dougherty
Chair*

Barbara Govatos

Robert E. Mortensen Chair

Jonathan Beiler

Hirono Oka

Richard Amoroso

*Robert and Lynne Pollack
Chair*

Yayoi Numazawa

Jason DePue*

Larry A. Grika Chair

Jennifer Haas

Miyo Curnow

Elina Kalendarova

Daniel Han

Julia Li

William Polk

Mei Ching Huang

Second Violins

Kimberly Fisher, Principal

Peter A. Benoliel Chair

Paul Roby, Associate

Principal

Sandra and David

Marshall Chair

Dara Morales, Assistant

Principal

Anne M. Buxton Chair

Philip Kates

Peter A. Benoliel Chair

Davyd Booth

Paul Arnold

*Joseph Brodo Chair, given
by Peter A. Benoliel*

Boris Balter

Amy Oshiro-Morales

*Volunteer Committees
Chair*

Yu-Ting Chen

Jeoung-Yin Kim

Willa Finck

John Bian

MuChen Hsieh

Eliot Heaton

Violas

Choong-Jin Chang,
Principal

*Ruth and A. Morris
Williams, Jr., Chair*

Kirsten Johnson,

Associate Principal

Kerri Ryan, Assistant

Principal

Burchard Tang

Renard Edwards

Anna Marie Ahn

Petersen

Piasecki Family Chair

David Nicastro

Che-Hung Chen

Rachel Ku

Marvin Moon

Meng Wang

Cellos

Hai-Ye Ni, Principal

Priscilla Lee, Associate

Principal

Yumi Kendall, Assistant

Principal

*Elaine Woo Camarda and
A. Morris Williams, Jr.,
Chair*

Richard Harlow

Kathryn Picht Read

John Koen

Derek Barnes

Alex Veltman

Basses

Joseph Conyers,
Principal

Carole and Emilio

Grauvagno Chair

Gabriel Polinsky,

Associate Principal

Tobias Vigneau, Assistant
Principal

David Fay*

Duane Rosengard

Nathaniel West

Michael Franz

Christian Gray

*Some members of the string
sections voluntarily rotate
seating on a periodic basis.*

Flutes

Jeffrey Khaner, Principal

*Paul and Barbara Henkels
Chair*

Patrick Williams,

Associate Principal

Rachelle and Ronald

Kaiserman Chair

Olivia Staton

Erica Peel, Piccolo

Oboes

Philippe Tondre, Principal
Samuel S. Fels Chair
Peter Smith, Associate
Principal
Jonathan Blumenfeld
Edwin Tuttle Chair
Elizabeth Starr
Masoudnia,
English Horn
Joanne T. Greenspun
Chair

Clarinets

Ricardo Morales,
Principal
*Leslie Miller and Richard
Worley Chair*
Samuel Caviezel,
Associate Principal
*Sarah and Frank Coulson
Chair*
Socrates Villegas
Paul R. Demers, Bass
Clarinet
*Peter M. Joseph and Susan
Rittenhouse Joseph Chair*

Bassoons

Daniel Matsukawa,
Principal
Richard M. Klein Chair
Mark Gigliotti,
Co-Principal
Angela Anderson Smith
Holly Blake*,
Contrabassoon

Horns

Jennifer Montone,
Principal
*Gray Charitable Trust
Chair*
Jeffrey Lang, Associate
Principal
*Hannah L. and J. Welles
Henderson Chair*
Christopher Dwyer

Chelsea McFarland
Ernesto Tovar Torres

Trumpets

Esteban Batallán,
Principal
*Marguerite and Gerry
Lenfest Chair*
Jeffrey Curnow,
Associate Principal
Anthony Prisk

Trombones

Nitzan Haroz, Principal
*Neubauer Family
Foundation Chair*
Matthew Vaughn,
Co-Principal
Jack Grimm
Blair Bollinger, Bass
Trombone
*Drs. Bong and Mi Wha
Lee Chair*

Tuba

Carol Jantsch, Principal
*Lyn and George M. Ross
Chair*

Timpani

Don S. Liuzzi, Principal
Dwight V. Dowley Chair
Angela Zator Nelson,
Associate Principal

Percussion

Christopher Deviney,
Principal
Charlie Rosmarin,
Associate Principal
Angela Zator Nelson

Piano and Celesta

Kiyoko Takeuti

Keyboards

Davyd Booth

Harp

Elizabeth Hainen,
Principal

Librarians

Nicole Jordan, Principal
Holly Matthews

Stage Personnel

Dennis Moore, Jr.,
Manager
Francis "Chip" O'Shea III
Aaron Wilson

*On leave

Music and Artistic Director



Yannick Nézet-Séguin is currently in his 13th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. An inspired leader, Yannick, who holds the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Chair, is both an evolutionary and a revolutionary, developing the mighty "Philadelphia Sound" in new ways. His collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm have been heralded by critics and audiences alike. The *New York Times* has called him "phenomenal," adding that "the ensemble, famous for its glowing strings and homogenous richness, has never sounded better."

Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most thrilling and sought-after talents of his generation. He became the third music director of New York's Metropolitan Opera in 2018. In addition, he has been artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal's Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000. In 2017 he became the third-ever honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. He served as music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic from 2008 to 2018 (he is now honorary conductor) and was principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic from 2008 to 2014. He has made wildly successful appearances with the world's most revered ensembles and at many of the leading opera houses.

Yannick has shown a deep commitment to expanding the repertoire by embracing an ever-growing and diverse group of today's composers and by performing the music of under-appreciated composers of the past. In 2018 he signed an exclusive recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with 14 releases on that label, including *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*, which won a GRAMMY® Award for Best Orchestral Performance in 2022.

A native of Montreal, Yannick studied piano, conducting, composition, and chamber music at Montreal's Conservatory of Music and continued his studies with renowned conductors, most notably Carlo Maria Giulini; he also studied choral conducting with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. Among Yannick's honors are an appointment as Companion of the Order of Canada; Companion to the Order of Arts and Letters of Quebec; an Officer of the Order of Quebec; an Officer of the Order of Montreal; an Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres; *Musical America's* 2016 Artist of the Year; ECHO KLASSIK's 2014 Conductor of the Year; a Royal Philharmonic Society Award; Canada's National Arts Centre Award; the Prix Denise-Pelletier; the Oskar Morawetz Award; and honorary doctorates from the University of Quebec, the Curtis Institute of Music, Westminster Choir College of Rider University, McGill University, the University of Montreal, the University of Pennsylvania, Laval University, and Drexel University.

To read Yannick's full bio, please visit philorch.org/conductor.

Beauty and the Beast, For 200

At this Philadelphia school, the annual production involves everybody.

By Dylan Parent

Welcome to PLAYBILLDER Spotlight, where Playbill highlights shows from educational institutions or regional theatres and special events around the country (who have used Playbill's program-building service). By welcoming these PLAYBILLDERs center stage, we hope to give our readers a more in-depth look at theatre programs that are fostering the love of the performing arts in the next generation and the way theatre lovers are bringing Playbill along for life's big moments.

Below, we spotlight Julia R. Masterman Laboratory and Demonstration School of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and their production of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*. Instrumental Music teacher Kim Kelter Neu shared with Playbill just how many children came together to put up the show.

Tell us a little about yourself.

How many years have you been teaching?

Kim Kelter Neu: I've been teaching for 25 years and our musical is certainly the highlight each year.

How does your school's performing arts program impact your community?

Our school musical brings together our community, involving over 200 students from both middle and high school. Students make the sets and the props as well as run the sound control, the lights, play in the orchestra, and, of course, star in the show! Families leave our show amazed at what the students have achieved.

How do you choose shows for your students?

When we choose our show, we always pick something that involves all the students. It must have a chorus and a full orchestra. This limits our choices but allows us to include the most students. We also must keep in mind that our school is grades five through 12, so



PHOTO COURTESY OF MASTERMAN HIGH SCHOOL

whatever show we pick must work for fifth and 12th graders alike. *Beauty and the Beast* was an easy and perfect choice this year!

What reactions do you expect to see in students when they see their name printed in this Playbill for the first time?

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Marian Anderson Hall

Adrian Siegel Collection/Philadelphia Orchestra Archives



Marian Anderson with Music Director Eugene Ormandy during a Philadelphia Orchestra rehearsal at the Academy of Music in December 1938

On June 8, 2024, Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts was officially rededicated as Marian Anderson Hall in honor of the legendary Black contralto, civil rights icon, and Philadelphian. The first major concert venue in the world to honor Marian Anderson—85 years after she was barred from performing at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C., because of her race—the hall is a permanent monument to its namesake's artistry and achievements, a reflection of the inclusive future she helped to engender, and an active testament to the intersection of music, art, and positive social impact. We look forward to honoring Marian Anderson in perpetuity with a venue that reflects the ideals by which she lived her life: equity, justice, freedom, and the belief that the arts are for everyone.

Marian Anderson Hall was named in her honor by a visionary \$25-million philanthropic gift from Richard Worley and Leslie Miller. Worley has been a member of The Philadelphia Orchestra's Board of Trustees since 1997 and served as board chair from 2009 to 2019. Miller is a former Kimmel Center trustee and previous acting president of the Kimmel Center. They are among the largest donors in Philadelphia Orchestra history. Additional generous support for Marian Anderson Hall was given by Sidney and Caroline Kimmel.

Musicians Behind the Scenes

John Bian Violin



Where were you born?

I was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

What piece of music could you play over and over again?

Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony. There's so much fun stuff to do in that piece.

What is your most treasured possession?

My violin and my bow of course!

What's your favorite food?

Peking Duck. I had it three times when we were on the China Tour [last October/November]!

Tell us about your instrument.

My violin is from the mid-19th century and was made by an Englishman named John Frederick Lott II. In the middle of his life, he stopped making instruments and went on to train elephants for the circus for a time. His elephant "Mademoiselle D'Jeck" ended up assaulting a priest in Geneva and breaking his ribs. The animal was sentenced to death by canon fire then butchered and eaten by the townspeople. Afterwards Lott went back to making violins. Crazy story!

What's in your instrument case? Rosin, pencil sharpener, extra strings and mutes, and a couple of omamori [good luck charms from Japan] from my wife.

If you could ask one composer one question, what would it be?

I would ask Leonard Bernstein "Do you think you could have become an even greater composer if you weren't also a conductor?"

What piece of music never fails to move you? Richard Strauss's *Four Last Songs*.

What is the most challenging piece you have ever played?

I played the Corigliano Violin Sonata for my master's degree recital and it kicked my butt.

What do you love most about performing?

How alive and connected I feel to the people on stage. In this orchestra especially, I feel an incredible energy from my colleagues and it invigorates me during every concert.

When did you join the Orchestra? In July 2024.

Do you play any other instruments?

I played hammered dulcimer for a couple years in high school.

What's your favorite Philadelphia restaurant?

My wife and I went to Zahav shortly after we moved here and it was tremendous.

What are you reading right now? *The Name of the Wind* by Patrick Rothfuss. It was recommended to me by fellow new hire Eliot Heaton.

Do you speak any other languages? Chinese.

What do you like to do in your spare time? I love going out to the movies. The Philadelphia Film Society has great theaters that curate an awesome selection of movies both old and new.

What's your favorite movie?

Spirited Away, *There Will Be Blood*, *Persona*, and *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*.

What do you love most about Philadelphia?

There is so much good food. It's hard to find a bad bite around town.

To read the full set of questions, please visit www.philorch.org/Bian.

The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts's All-City Fellowship Program Helps Cultivate the Next Generation

By Steve Holt

The Philadelphia Orchestra has been dedicated to presenting the best classical music in the world for over a century. But how to develop future generations of audiences and performers, to ensure that this jewel in Philadelphia's crown continues to glitter?

The All-City Orchestra and Jazz Fellowships address that challenge on several fronts, by offering in-depth support to promising high school students across the city. How did this vital partnership between The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts and the School District of Philadelphia get started?

For one thing, Orchestra Vice President of Education and Community Danielle Allen explains, the community was speaking out. "We were constantly hearing from parents and students: 'Can I get lessons from an Orchestra member?' Or: 'My kid plays well, but we can't afford lessons, or an instrument.' Because we believe very strongly that it's our duty to cultivate the next generation of artists and audiences, we decided to create the Fellowship Program. We were already partnering closely with the School District of Philadelphia on the All-City Music Program, which features the best and brightest musicians throughout the school district. So it was a natural step to audition those participants for the Fellowship."

Director of Instrumental Music Education Maya Jacobs says the auditions can be daunting. "We have a nice pool of candidates, but we always try to reach out to more.





Music and Artistic Director
Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducts
the All-City Orchestra and Chorus
at the All-City Festival in 2016.

Jessica Griffin

We have to realize that kids are really busy, and a lot of them don't know about the program. Some of them are intimidated by the competition. We're trying to make the process accessible to more and more students."

Once chosen, the fellows have access to a treasure trove of support, starting with weekly private lessons from the best of the best. "The orchestra fellows get to study with members of The Philadelphia Orchestra," Jacobs says. "The jazz fellows get lessons with some of the most famous jazz players in Philadelphia. The fellows also get financial support: to purchase instruments and for repairs, for sheet music, or to cover the costs of an audition. We can also help with applying to college or music school, or dealing with performance anxiety. We're paving the way for them to be well-rounded musicians." ➤



Other benefits range from access to select master classes, meet-and-greets with guest artists, educational workshops, and free and discounted tickets to Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts concerts. An extra bonus for the fellows: professional headshots.

The jazz fellows are a recent addition to the program. As Allen explains, "Both classical music and jazz have really deep roots here in Philadelphia. When The Philadelphia Orchestra merged with the Kimmel Cultural Campus to form Ensemble Arts, Kimmel had its Jazz Collective, which was a similar program, but it wasn't a formalized fellowship. We wanted to provide those students who want to seriously study jazz with the same opportunities as our orchestra fellows. We're trying to be responsive and meet the needs of the community."

Allen admits, the price tag for all these benefits is substantial. "That's why we're beyond grateful for our donors. They're

people who really care, or they might have a really compelling personal story about their connection to the arts. And we also have corporate donors and foundations that believe so much in the work that we're doing."

One grateful current fellow is Sonya Dobi. She began playing violin when she was eight years old, thanks to the music instruction program at Robert B. Pollock Elementary School. She's now a senior at the Philadelphia High School for the Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA).

"I had some older friends who were fellows and they kept telling me to audition. And then some of my teachers did, too, especially my orchestra director, Nanette Foley, who's very supportive in finding opportunities for students. But I missed the deadline! [Kids are really busy!] I kept asking for more information, and finally at the end of my sophomore year I was able to audition and got in."

As a fellow, Dobi has lessons every Saturday with Assistant Principal Second Violin Dara Morales. "And along with that, last year I got to perform on the Plaza Stage at the Kimmel Center. That was a lot of fun!" She says that's just one example of the unique opportunities the Fellowship offers. And they're not all strictly musical.

"This program has really taught me how to manage spending," she says. "They offer us money to spend on music and music supplies, so I've had to learn a lot about budgeting. I've also learned to advocate for myself, because I have to reach out when I need something; for example, when I had to set up lessons with my teacher. I wasn't very comfortable with that in the beginning, but it's really helped me grow in that aspect."

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The 2024–25 orchestra and jazz fellows: Jacob Dennis, tenor saxophone (jazz); Demi Gao, cello (orchestra); Sonya Dobi, violin (orchestra); Simon Church, piano (jazz); Anna Dubiuk, violin (orchestra); Lily Toner, bass (jazz); and Elijah Booker, drum set (jazz). Missing are Keith Holmes, tuba (orchestra), and Emma Jimenez, voice (jazz).

The fellows also get help with what people of a certain age refer to as “sheet music.” Isn’t everything digital now? “Oh yeah, we’re definitely in a digital age,” Dobi says, “but I still get sheet music on paper. I like to be able to write notes on it. I also feel way cooler carrying around music paper than a tablet!”

Now, Dobi is one of those dedicated fellows who tries to convince friends to sign up. The free music lessons are a huge selling point. But she does meet some resistance. “I think the biggest objection is from people who don’t want to do music seriously in the future. And I think that’s a little sad, because music doesn’t have to be just a profession. It can be a teaching tool, and it also gives you so many important life lessons.”

Recently, Dobi has been very busy preparing for college. But perhaps surprisingly, she doesn’t plan on majoring in music. “I thought about it very seriously. I was concerned that maybe the pressure of it, and the competitiveness, would have made me start to dislike playing, in a way that having it as a hobby or as a minor wouldn’t. I want to keep music as a part of my life.”

Allen supports Dobi’s plans. “This is about so much more than just performance, music, theater. None of these things exists in a vacuum. They are also means of expression, where students can work through life issues. There’s data over many decades that proves the benefits of arts education in other subject areas. We’re just doing our part to try to help supplement some of the arts education that might be missing in some learning environments.”

Of course, Allen will be equally happy with fellows who go on to careers as professional musicians. “We’re always dreaming of the day when our students come back to perform on our main stages, or maybe even win a seat in the Orchestra. I hope I’m alive to see that!”

Steve Holt, managing partner at re:Write, is a veteran journalist and musician.

The Philadelphia Orchestra Continues its Orchestra After 5 Series



The inaugural season of Orchestra After 5 earned a Best of Philly award from *Philadelphia* magazine for "Best Classical Outing," and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* called it "the freshest happy hour in town."

Orchestra After 5 offers hour-long classical concerts at 6:30 PM in a casual atmosphere and puts a modern twist on the traditional Orchestra experience. Audiences gain a new perspective through live video close-ups of the conductor projected on a large screen behind the Orchestra. Engaging informational content about the music will also be highlighted on a second screen, providing context to the works as they are performed. In addition, beginning at 5 PM, right after the workday ends, audiences will enjoy curated pre-concert activities, themed cocktails, and post-concert conversations with musicians of the Orchestra and guest artists.

The series opened in November and continues on January 30 with Holst's *The Planets* led by Daniele Rustioni and featuring the sopranos and altos of the Philadelphia Symphonic Choir and on March 27 with Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony led by former Principal Guest Conductor Nathalie Stutzmann. Learn more about Orchestra After 5 at www.philorch.org.

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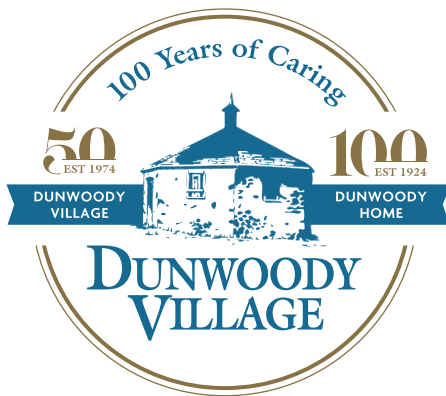


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Anthony Roth Costanzo, Philip Glass's *Akhnaton*. The Metropolitan Opera. Photo: Karen Almond/Met Opera

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The Philadelphia Orchestra

Thursday, January 9, at 7:30

Saturday, January 11, at 8:00

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Conductor

Charlotte Blake Alston Speaker

Joshua Hopkins Baritone

Heggie *Songs for Murdered Sisters*

I. Empty Chair—

II. Enchantment

III. Anger

IV. Dream

V. Bird Soul

VI. Lost

VII. Rage

VIII. Coda: Song

United States premiere of orchestral version

Intermission

Mahler Symphony No. 9 in D major

I. Andante comodo

II. Im Tempo eines gemächlichen Ländlers. Etwas täppisch und sehr derb

III. Rondo—Burleske: Allegro assai. Sehr trotzig

IV. Adagio: Sehr langsam und noch zurückhaltend

This program runs approximately two hours, 30 minutes.

Philadelphia Orchestra concerts are broadcast on WRTI 90.1 FM on Sunday afternoons at 1 PM and are repeated on Monday evenings at 7 PM on WRTI HD 2. Visit www.wrti.org to listen live or for more details.



Jeff Flacco

The Philadelphia Orchestra

The world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra strives to share the transformative power of music with the widest possible audience, and to create joy, connection, and excitement through music in the Philadelphia region, across the country, and around the world. Through innovative programming, robust education initiatives, a commitment to its diverse communities, and the embrace of digital outreach, the ensemble is creating an expansive and inclusive future for classical music and furthering the place of the arts in an open and democratic society. In June 2021 the Orchestra and its home, the Kimmel Center, united. Today, The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts brings the greatest performances and most impactful education and community programs to audiences in Philadelphia and beyond.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his 13th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. His connection to the ensemble's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics, and he is embraced by the musicians of the Orchestra, audiences, and the community. In addition to expanding the repertoire by embracing an ever-growing and diverse group of today's composers, Yannick and the Orchestra are committed to performing and recording the works of previously overlooked composers.

Your Philadelphia Orchestra takes great pride in its hometown, performing for the people of Philadelphia year-round, at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts and around the community, in classrooms and hospitals, and over the airwaves and online. The Kimmel Center has been the ensemble's

home since 2001, and in 2024 Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center was officially rededicated as Marian Anderson Hall in honor of the legendary contralto, civil rights icon, and Philadelphian. The Orchestra's award-winning education and community initiatives engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members of all ages through programs such as PlayINs; side-by-sides; PopUP concerts; Our City, Your Orchestra Live; the free annual Martin Luther King, Jr., Tribute Concert; School Concerts; sensory-friendly concerts; open rehearsals; the School Partnership Program and School Ensemble Program; All-City Orchestra Fellowships; and residency work in Philadelphia and abroad.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador and one of our nation's greatest exports. It performs annually at Carnegie Hall, the Mann Center, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and the Bravo! Vail Music Festival. The Orchestra also has a rich touring history, having first performed outside Philadelphia in its earliest days. In 1973 it was the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China, launching a now-five-decade commitment of people-to-people exchange.

Under Yannick's leadership, the Orchestra returned to recording with 14 celebrated releases on the Deutsche Grammophon label, including the GRAMMY® Award-winning *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of radio listeners with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM and SiriusXM. For more information, please visit www.philorch.org.

Speaker



Charlotte Blake Alston is an internationally acclaimed storyteller, narrator, and librettist. In July 2021 she was named The Philadelphia Orchestra's Imasogie Storyteller, Narrator, and Host. She has appeared as host and narrator on the Orchestra's School and Family concerts since 1991 and was the host of Sound All Around, the Orchestra's preschool concert series, from 1994 to 2024. She has also appeared on each of the Orchestra's Martin Luther King, Jr., Tribute Concerts since 2003.

Committed to keeping alive African and African-American oral traditions, Ms. Alston has performed on national and regional stages including the Smithsonian Institution, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. She has been a featured artist at the National Storytelling Festival; the National Festival of Black Storytelling; and festivals in Ireland, Switzerland, South Africa, and Brazil. She has performed at Presidential inaugural festivities in Washington, D.C., and the Pennsylvania Gubernatorial Children's Inaugural Celebrations in Harrisburg. She was also one of two storytellers selected to present at the opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. She has been guest narrator for several orchestras including the Cleveland Orchestra, the Boston Symphony, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. During a 20-year association with Carnegie Hall, she was the featured preconcert artist, host, and narrator on the Family, School, and Global Encounters concert series and represented the Hall in Miyazaki, Japan. She has also performed as a touring artist for Lincoln Center Institute.

Ms. Alston has produced several commissioned texts for orchestras and choirs including original narration for Saint-Saëns's *The Carnival of the Animals* and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sheherazade*. Her honors include two honorary Ph.Ds, a Pew Fellowship in the Arts, and the Circle of Excellence Award from the National Storytelling Association. She is the recipient of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Artist of the Year Award and the Zora Neale Hurston Award, the highest award bestowed by the National Association of Black Storytellers. In 2023 she received the Distinguished Artist Award at the New Jersey Governor's Awards for Excellence in the Arts in Education. In May 2024 she was inducted into her alma mater South Philadelphia High School's Cultural Hall of Fame, joining the ranks of such artists as Marian Anderson.

Soloist

Simon Pauly



JUNO Award-winning and GRAMMY-nominated Canadian baritone **Joshua Hopkins** began his 2024–25 season with a debut at the Semperoper Dresden performing one of his signature roles, Figaro in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, and returns later in the season to sing Papageno in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and Maximilian in a new production of Bernstein's *Candide*. For his debut at the Berlin State Opera, he reprises the roles of Apollo and Angry Audience Member in Bernard

Foccroulle's *Cassandra*. He also returns to the Metropolitan Opera to portray another signature role, Count Almaviva in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, which will be featured on a worldwide simulcast on April 26, 2025, as part of the Met's *Live in HD* series.

Mr. Hopkins makes his Philadelphia Orchestra subscription debut with these performances of his most personal project, *Songs for Murdered Sisters*, which he also performs with the Naples Philharmonic under Alexander Shelley. Written by composer Jake Heggie and author Margaret Atwood, *Songs for Murdered Sisters* was conceived by Mr. Hopkins in remembrance of his sister, Nathalie Warmerdam, to bring awareness to ending intimate partner violence. A critically acclaimed film of the piece, directed by James Niebuhr, is available to watch on YouTube and the JUNO-nominated digital album, released on the Pentatone label, is available on all streaming platforms. Elsewhere on the concert stage, Mr. Hopkins performs Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with Montreal's Orchestre Métropolitain under Yannick Nézet-Séguin. He also joins Manfred Honeck for performances with the Chicago Symphony of Haydn's *Mass in Time of War* and with the Pittsburgh Symphony for Fauré's Requiem and Handel's *Messiah*.

Mr. Hopkins appears regularly at the Metropolitan Opera, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, the Canadian Opera Company, and the Santa Fe Opera, among many others. His latest role debuts include Zurga in Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris with Les Grandes Voix; Cavaliere di Belfiore in a new Christopher Alden production of Verdi's *Un giorno di regno* at Garsington Opera; and Athanaël in a concert version of Massenet's *Thaïs* with the Toronto Symphony, conducted by Andrew Davis and recorded for Chandos Records, for which he won a JUNO Award. He created the role of Orpheus in the world premiere of Matthew Aucoin's *Eurydice* for his company debut at LA Opera and reprised the role at the Met; he received his first GRAMMY nomination in 2023 when the Met's live recording of *Eurydice* was nominated for Best Opera Recording.

Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1909

Mahler

Symphony

No. 9

Music

Vaughan

Williams

Fantasia on
a Theme of
Thomas Tallis

Literature

Maeterlinck

L'Oiseau bleu

Art

Picasso

Harlequin

History

Perry reaches

the North Pole

Jake Heggie's *Songs for Murdered Sisters* was born of tragedy: the deaths within hours one morning in 2015 of three women at the hands of a former partner. One of the victims was the sister of our soloist tonight, baritone Joshua Hopkins. Heggie, in partnership with the celebrated Canadian writer Margaret Atwood, composed eight songs addressing the pain of loss for Hopkins to perform.

Gustav Mahler, during the final three summers of his life, composed *Das Lied von der Erde* (The Song of the Earth), his Ninth Symphony, and the beginning of a Tenth Symphony. These works have long been considered a kind of valedictory trilogy. Death haunted Mahler's life, beginning with those of many of his siblings and later of his beloved elder daughter.

Death also haunted Mahler's music. It did so in extraordinary ways during his final years as he coped with a serious heart condition. In the Ninth Symphony, one colleague noted, he bid "Farewell to all whom he loved": to the world, art, and his life. The Ninth Symphony resonated only within the inner ears of Mahler's imagination—he did not live to rehearse or premiere his last completed work and died in Vienna at age 50.

The Philadelphia Orchestra is the only orchestra in the world with three weekly broadcasts on SiriusXM's *Symphony Hall*, Channel 76, on Mondays at 7 PM, Thursdays at 12 AM, and Saturdays at 4 PM.

The Music

Songs for Murdered Sisters

Jake Heggie

Born in West Palm Beach, Florida, March 31, 1961

Now living in San Francisco

James Niebuhr



History is filled with music of protest, defiance, confrontation, even calls for revolution: from Jean Sibelius's *Finlandia* with its stance against Russian control of Finland to Fred Rzewski's *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!* with its anti-fascist sentiment. These works often grow from personal loss: John Corigliano's Symphony No. 1 ("Of Rage and Remembrance") is both a lament for lost friends and a condemnation of the Reagan administration's

disastrous response to the AIDS crisis.

A Cry of Sorrow and Call to Action Jake Heggie's *Songs for Murdered Sisters*, likewise, is at once a cry of sorrow and a call for social and political action. It grew from a real-life tragedy that took place in 2015 at the hands of a Canadian assassin who, in a single morning, took the lives of three of his ex-partners: Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk, and Nathalie Warmerdam.

This brutal act shocked the world and focused attention on the global femicide epidemic. It became known that Warmerdam was the sister of world-renowned Canadian baritone Joshua Hopkins, who resolved to use his grief to challenge men worldwide to take the White Ribbon Pledge—promising "never to commit, condone, or remain silent about all forms of gender-based violence." (The White Ribbon Campaign was founded in Canada in 1991 as a response to the massacre of female students at Montreal's École Polytechnique.)

Hopkins's plight came to the attention of Jake Heggie, who proposed a musical response. Marshaling the talents of the Canadian author and poet Margaret Atwood (*The Handmaid's Tale*), Heggie composed eight exquisite songs that addressed, in strikingly intimate terms, the pain of loss. The protagonist here often sings to the lost loved one directly, evoking a poignancy reminiscent of Schubert's *Winterreise*. ("I was too late, too late to save you / I feel the rage and pain in my own fingers / Why should he be here still and not you?")

A Door Opens "I felt so numb after Nathalie's murder," said Hopkins, a veteran of stages worldwide and a favorite at the Metropolitan Opera. "It was ... almost impossible to comprehend. But Margaret's words and Jake's music have opened

a door, and stepping through it has allowed me to access all my complicated feelings surrounding Nathalie's death."

Atwood, too, felt the impact. "I have known two women who were murdered, both by jealous former romantic partners, so the killing of Joshua's sister resonated with me." Still, she added, "I could not promise anything. With songs and poems, they either arrive or they don't. ... Then I wrote the sequence in one session. I made the 'sisters' plural because they are indeed—unhappily—very plural. Sisters, daughters, mothers. So many."

The eight poems Atwood crafted were included in a volume of verse published in November 2020 as *Dearly: New Poems*. "Margaret sent a perfect, complete set of eight texts and asked, 'How about something like this?'" Heggie said. "Josh and I were stunned and deeply moved. ... It was a great honor and privilege to explore every corner of her poems to shape this musical, emotional journey for Josh." The songs follow a path from dazed disbelief and denial ("If this were a story") to nightmares, rage, and frantic reflection.

A Composer for the Voice Heggie has become one of the most significant composers of vocal music today. Among his works are no fewer than 18 operas (including *Dead Man Walking*, *The End of the Affair*, *Moby-Dick*, *It's a Wonderful Life*); some 30 cycles comprising more than 300 songs; large-scale vocal-orchestral compositions; and chamber and orchestral music.

Raised in Florida and in Columbus, Ohio, Heggie studied privately with Ernst Bacon during high school and, after two years of study in Paris, continued as an undergraduate at the University of California-Los Angeles. Among his teachers were Roger Bourland, Paul Des Maris, David Raksin, and Johana Harris. Carlisle Floyd, the late American opera composer, was a mentor.

After an early career in public relations, Heggie explored opportunities in song composition and opera. During the late 1990s, San Francisco Opera General Director Lofti Mansouri approached him about composing an opera with playwright Terrence McNally. The result was *Dead Man Walking*, which since its premiere in October 2000 has received more than 70 productions worldwide.

Written on commission from Houston Grand Opera and Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra, the *Songs for Murdered Sisters* was given its first live performance by Joshua Hopkins in March 2022 at Houston's Rothko Chapel, with the composer at the piano. In its orchestrated form it received its premiere in February 2023 at Ottawa's National Arts Centre with conductor Alexander Shelley and Hopkins, again, as soloist. These current performances mark the United States premiere of the orchestral version.

"You don't process grief in a linear fashion," Hopkins has said. "Any emotion can come up any time you're experiencing an emotional influx. But *meaning* transforms grief in a more peaceful and hopeful experience. These songs have

provided that meaning for me."

—Paul J. Horsley

Paul J. Horsley is performing arts editor for the Independent in Kansas City. Previously he was program annotator and musicologist for The Philadelphia Orchestra and music and dance critic for the Kansas City Star.

Songs for Murdered Sisters was composed in 2020.

These are the United States premiere performances of the orchestral version.

The score calls for baritone vocalist, two flutes (II doubling piccolo), oboe, English horn, two clarinets (II doubling bass clarinet), bassoon, two horns, trumpet, trombone, bass trombone, percussion (bass drum, castanets, chimes, crotales, glockenspiel, hi-hat, small wood block, suspended cymbal, tam-tams, tom-toms, triangle, vibraphone [with bow]), harp, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 30 minutes.

Songs for Murdered Sisters

(Margaret Atwood, from *Dearly, New Poems*)

I. Empty Chair

Who was my sister
Is now an empty chair

Is no longer,
Is no longer there

She is now emptiness
She is now air

II. Enchantment

If this were a story
I was telling my sister

A troll from the mountain
Would have stolen her

Or else a twisted magician
Turned her to stone

Or locked her in a tower
Or hidden her deep inside a golden
flower

I would have to travel
West of the moon, east of the sun

To find the answer;
I'd speak the charm

And she'd be standing there
Alive and happy, come to no harm

But this is not a story.
Not that kind of story ...

III. Anger

Anger is red
The colour of spilled blood

He was all anger,
The man you tried to love

You opened the door
And death was standing there

Red death, red anger
Anger at you

For being so alive
And not destroyed by fear

What do you want? you said.
Red was the answer.

IV. Dream

When I sleep you appear
I am a child then
And you are young and still my sister

And it is summer;
I don't know the future,
Not in my dream

I'm going away, you tell me
On a long journey.
I have to go away.

No, stay, I call to you
As you grow smaller:
Stay here with me and play!

But suddenly I'm older
And it's cold and moonless
And it is winter ...

V. Bird Soul

If birds are human souls
What bird are you?
A spring bird with a joyful song?
A high flyer?

Are you an evening bird
Watching the moon
Singing Alone, Alone,
Singing Dead Too Soon?

Are you an owl,
Soft-feathered predator?
Are you hunting, restlessly hunting
The soul of your murderer?

I know you are not a bird,
Though I know you've flown
So far, so far away ...
I need you to be somewhere ...

VI. Lost

So many sisters lost
So many lost sisters

Over the years, thousands of years
So many sent away

Too soon into the night
By men who thought they had the
right

Rage and hatred
Jealousy and fear

So many sisters killed
Over the years, thousands of years

Killed by fearful men
Who wanted to be taller

Over the years, thousands of years
So many sisters lost

So many tears

VII. Rage

I was too late,
Too late to save you.

I feel the rage and pain
In my own fingers,

In my own hands
I feel the red command

To kill the man who killed you:
That would be only fair:

Him stopped, him nevermore,
In fragments on the floor,

Him shattered.
Why should he be here still

And not you?
Is that what you wish me to do,

Ghost of my sister?
Or would you let him live?

Would you instead forgive?

VIII. Coda: Song

If you were a song
What song would you be?

Would you be the voice that sings,
Would you be the music?

When I am singing this song for you
You are not empty air

You are here,
One breath and then another:

You are here with me.

The Music

Symphony No. 9

Gustav Mahler

Born in Kalischt (Kaliště), Bohemia, July 7, 1860

Died in Vienna, May 18, 1911



"Gustav Mahler was a Saint." With these words Arnold Schoenberg began his 1912 memorial address honoring the composer, who had died the previous year at age 50. A younger generation of Viennese composers, including Anton von Webern and Alban Berg, shared his passion for Mahler's music. Admirers sent a funeral wreath reading, "Bereft of the saintly human being Gustav Mahler, we are left forever with a never-to-be-lost example of his life and impact." Berg

spoke repeatedly of the "Holy Mahler," and Schoenberg dedicated his important treatise on harmony "to the memory of Gustav Mahler ... this martyr, this saint." One might add yet another characterization: prophet. For many, Mahler's music prophesized not only his own life, but also foretold the future of music and even of the 20th century.

Saint, Martyr, Prophet—such images have vast implications for an understanding of Mahler's life and his music, especially his three final compositions: *Das Lied von der Erde* (The Song of the Earth) and the Ninth and Tenth symphonies. These works explore shared musical and philosophical issues, and they are all, in a certain sense, unfinished. Mahler did not live to perform them, and he invariably continued to revise a piece through the stages of bringing it to the public as well as afterward. While the Tenth Symphony is clearly unfinished (even its first movement, which reached the most advanced stage and is frequently performed separately), both *Das Lied* and the Ninth would surely have undergone further refinements had Mahler lived to conduct them. His friend and protégé, Bruno Walter, led the first performances in 1911 and 1912 respectively.

Numbering the Ninth "It seems that the Ninth is the limit. He who wants to go beyond it must pass away. It seems as if something might be imparted to us in the Tenth for which we are not yet ready. Those who have written a Ninth have stood too near to the hereafter." Mahler supposedly shared these superstitions of Schoenberg's about composing a ninth symphony, as had concluded the careers of Beethoven and Bruckner. (Schubert and Dvořák might now appear to be candidates for this list as well, although their symphonies were not so numbered in Mahler's time.)

Alma Schindler Mahler, the composer's widow and an often-unreliable source, reported that her husband tried to cheat fate after the uplifting Eighth Symphony by initially calling *Das Lied* the Ninth, but that he later "crossed the number out." *Das Lied*, left unnumbered, was titled a "Symphony for Tenor and Alto Voice and Orchestra," and sets Hans Bethge's German adaptations of Chinese poetry. After completing the Symphony we hear tonight, the official Ninth, Mahler allegedly told her, "Actually, of course, it's the Tenth, because *Das Lied von der Erde* was really the Ninth." When he began what he evidently intended to be a five-movement Tenth Symphony in F-sharp, he remarked: "Now the danger is past." The Ninth is a work that begins where the haunting final song of *Das Lied*, "Der Abschied" (The Farewell), ended. Mahler composed most of the Ninth Symphony during the summer of 1909. The following one, his last, he sketched the Tenth.

A Farewell Trilogy? The connections between and among these pieces, as well as their ultimate place in the composer's output, have made it all too tempting to view them as pointing toward death, a "farewell" trilogy, the artistic testament of a dying man. Mahler had, after all, received serious personal blows in 1907: His beloved elder daughter, Maria Anna, died at the age of four; he resigned an untenable position, aggravated by anti-Semitism, at the Vienna Court Opera; and he was diagnosed with a serious heart condition. Mahler accepted a lucrative offer from the Metropolitan Opera in New York, but returned to Europe each summer, when he always did most of his composing. By 1909, the year of the Ninth Symphony, his professional situation in New York had become more complicated, as had his marriage to the nearly 20-year-younger Alma, who was soon to begin an affair with the young architect Walter Gropius (later her second husband). Mahler eventually learned of this liaison and sought relief from Sigmund Freud in the summer of 1910. There was to be no next summer. The fatally ill Mahler left New York for Vienna, where he died on May 18.

The blows of 1907 left their mark on his last four years. Mahler commented in some of his most personal letters that he had to "start a new life." In 1908, while composing *Das Lied*, he remarked on trying to settle into a different location (he refused to return to the site of his daughter's death the previous summer): "This time it is not only a change of place but also a change in a whole way of life. You can imagine how hard the latter comes to me. For many years I have been used to constant and vigorous exercise—roaming about in the mountains and woods, and then, like a kind of jaunty bandit, bearing home my drafts." The doctors advised that he curtail not only the long walks that he so treasured, but also some of his taxing conducting activities. "I stand *vis-a-vis de rien*" (face to face with nothing), he wrote to Bruno Walter, "and now, at the end of my life, I have to begin to learn to walk and stand."

Mahler and Death And yet we might want to resist what may be too simple a connection between Mahler's late works and death. He had, after all, dealt with the subject extensively in his earlier music. His first known composition,

supposedly written at around the age of six (and now lost), was a "Polka with Introductory Funeral March." Funeral marches abound in his symphonies, beginning with the third movement of his First. He wrote his haunting *Kindertotenlieder* (Songs on the Death of Children) before the death of his own child. Moreover, whatever his frustrations, Mahler enjoyed considerable success in New York. (The final devastating blow of his life was personal, not professional: learning of Alma's infidelity.) And, despite the initial warnings from his doctors, he gradually became more active, conducting the New York Philharmonic, of which he was music director from 1909 to 1911, in a large number of concerts. The year of the Ninth he wrote to Walter: "I am experiencing so much more now (in the last eighteen months [since Maria's death]), I can hardly talk about it. How should I attempt to describe such a tremendous crisis! I see everything in such a new light—am in such a state of flux, sometimes I should hardly be surprised suddenly to find myself in a new body. (Like Faust in the last scene.) I am thirstier for life than ever before."

Mahler provided few comments about the intent or meaning of his last compositions. Concerning the Ninth, he informed Walter that "the work itself (insofar as I know it, for I have been writing away at it blindly, and now that I have begun to orchestrate the last movement I have forgotten the first) is a very satisfactory addition to my little family." This is an interesting metaphor, given the recent loss of his daughter, and may indicate how successfully Mahler sublimated a wide range of feelings into his music. "In it something is said that I have had on the tip of my tongue for some time." His nearly daily letters to Alma, who was at a spa, speak little about the composition and dwell on more mundane matters.

Mahler's Private Messages Also revealing are some indications that he scribbled in the sketches and manuscript. In the first movement of the Ninth he wrote: "O Youth! Lost! O Love! Vanished!" and in the finale: "O Beauty, Love! Farewell! Farewell!" (He made similar annotations in the Tenth: "Farewell, my music! Farewell. Farewell. Farewell" and at the end of the finale: "To live for you! To die for you, Almschi!") These were personal notes, not meant for public consumption. Although they do not appear in the published score, colleagues such as Berg (to whom Alma gave the draft manuscript of the first three movements in 1923) and the conductor Willem Mengelberg learned of them and it no doubt influenced their interpretations. The latter noted in his score: "The Ninth Symphony is: Farewell from all whom he loved—and from the world!—and from his art, his life, his music."

Mahler's view about divulging "extra-musical" information concerning his works changed over the course of his career. His early symphonies initially carried intricate programs and descriptive titles, some of which he later withdrew. His middle trilogy of purely instrumental ones (Nos. 5–7) furthered the retreat. With regard to his last works, it has primarily been musicians, critics, and listeners who have invented their own "programs," especially ones that make connections with

farewell and death. A similar situation applies to Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony, premiered just nine days before the Russian composer's death in 1893, and a piece, like Mahler's Ninth, that ends with an emotional slow movement. (Mahler allegedly did not much care for Tchaikovsky's final symphony, although he conducted it six times in 1910–11.)

More recent biographers and commentators have continued to make the connections. The British musicologist Deryck Cooke, who constructed the most frequently performed edition of the Tenth Symphony, remarked that Mahler's earlier works project "images" of mortality, while the late ones have the "taste" of death. Since the Mahler revival of the 1960s, in which he played a commanding role, Leonard Bernstein's views of the Ninth Symphony have been particularly influential. "The Ninth is the ultimate farewell," the conductor noted. The end of the Ninth is "the closest we have ever come, in any work of art, to experiencing the very act of dying, of giving it all up." The Ninth was Mahler's "last will and testament," a sonic presentation of death itself. But Bernstein saw more than prophesies of Mahler's "own imminent death," extending to "the death of tonality" and, finally, "the death of society." After recounting a list of 20th-century horrors, he remarked that "only after all this can we finally listen to Mahler's music and understand that it foretold all."

A Closer Look The opening of the first movement (**Andante comodo**) picks up harmonically and thematically from the end of *Das Lied*, with its nine-fold repetition of the word *ewig* (forever). The rhythm, presented by cellos and a horn repeated on the pitch A, returns at crucial structural moments in the movement, including at the climax "with utmost force." As early as 1912 (and taken up by Cooke and Bernstein later), the rhythm was likened to "a very slow heartbeat, irregular, fractured." A nostalgic D-major theme gradually emerges in the second violins, accumulating force through a series of fragments played by strings, harp, clarinets, and muted horns. The organic growth of the themes marks one of Mahler's greatest compositional achievements. Over the past century commentators have discerned various allusions in this movement, not just to Mahler's own music, but also to other compositions, including Johann Strauss, Jr.'s waltz "Freuet euch des Lebens" (Enjoy Life) and, more tellingly, Beethoven's "Les Adieux" (Farewell) Piano Sonata in E-flat, Op. 81a. (This allusion comes at the point where Mahler wrote "Leb' wol" [Farewell] in the draft score.) Berg believed that "The whole movement is permeated with the premonition of death. ... Again and again it occurs, all the elements of worldly dreaming culminate in it ... which is why the tenderest passages are followed by tremendous climaxes like new eruptions of a volcano."

The slow first and last movements frame two fast, more ironic central ones. The marking for the second is **Im Tempo eines gemächlichen Ländlers** (in the tempo of a relaxed *Ländler*). Although it starts innocently, it takes on the flavor of a "Dance of Death," as T.W. Adorno observed. The following **Rondo-Burleske**

likewise offers a wide range of moods, including the gestures of popular music of the sort that brought charges of banality against Mahler. The movement shows Mahler's increasing interest in counterpoint, taking his studies of Bach to new extremes. Fugato mixes with marches, grotesque and angry passages with more tender moments. A quieter, phantasmagorical middle section looks forward to the final movement. Adorno called this movement the first major work of new music.

The concluding **Adagio** opens with a forceful unison violin theme reminiscent of two other final works: the slow movement of Bruckner's Ninth Symphony and Wagner's *Parsifal*, both of which also project lush, hymn-like meditations. The music plunges into the key of D-flat major. Whereas in some of his earlier symphonies the tonality progressed upward, for example, in the Fifth Symphony from C-sharp minor in the first movement to D major in the finale, here the tonality is regressive, from D major to D-flat. All the Ninth's movements, except for the furious coda of the third, end in disintegration, approaching the state of chamber music. The incredible final page of the Ninth offers the least rousing finale in the history of music, but undoubtedly one of the most moving. Mahler provides one further self-allusion, played by the first violins, to the fourth of his *Kindertotenlieder*. The unsung song, heard in the first violins, originally accompanied the words "Der Tag ist schön auf jenen Höh'n" (The day is beautiful on those heights), telling of the parents' vision of their dead children at play on a distant mountain. The music becomes ever softer and stiller, almost more silence than sound, until we may be reminded of the heartbeat that opened the Symphony, but now realize it is the consciousness of our own heartbeat. In this extraordinary way Mahler implicates his listeners in the work, which ends *ersterbend*—dying away.

Psychologists, notably the Swiss-American psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, have explored the various stages of dealing with death, including denial, anger, and acceptance, and one might argue that all these and more are conveyed in Mahler's final three works. One finds denial in *Das Lied* through the ecstatic celebration of nature and life, but also rage, and ultimately peace. The Rondo-Burleske in the Ninth Symphony is an even more terrifying expression of rage, while the last moments of the work transcend acceptance so as to suggest some sort of visionary state. The sketches for the Tenth Symphony indicate similar moments of extreme, dissonant anger, although they suggest that Mahler aimed for acceptance at the end. These works not only ponder death, but also bid farewell to the passing of a musical and artistic world, the end of Romanticism, tonality, and perhaps even the genre of the symphony. At the same time Mahler looks forward, offering a prophetic vision of music that we are still trying to understand.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

Christopher H. Gibbs is James H. Ottaway Jr. Professor of Music at Bard College and has been the program annotator for The Philadelphia Orchestra since 2000. He is the author of several books on Schubert and Liszt, and the co-author, with Richard Taruskin, of The Oxford History of Western Music, College Edition.

Mahler composed his Symphony No. 9 in 1909.

William Smith conducted The Philadelphia Orchestra's first performances of Mahler's Ninth, in December 1969. The most recent subscription performances were in May 2019, with Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

The Orchestra recorded the Symphony in 1979 with James Levine for RCA.

Mahler scored the work for piccolo, four flutes, four oboes (IV doubling English horn), three clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, four bassoons (IV doubling contrabassoon), four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, chimes, cymbals, glockenspiel, large bells [in A, B, and F-sharp], snare drum, tam-tam, triangle), two harps, and strings.

The Ninth Symphony runs approximately one hour and 30 minutes in performance.

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Individuals who have included The Philadelphia Orchestra in their estate plans are recognized through membership in the Frances Anne Wister Society. Miss Wister made a long-lasting mark on the Orchestra through decades of volunteerism and by leaving a major portion of her estate in support of its continued excellence. We gratefully acknowledge the generosity and foresight of those who have joined the Wister Society, and we welcome others to follow their example and make the Orchestra the beneficiary of a bequest or other form of planned gift.

If you would like more information about how to make a planned gift to the Orchestra, please contact Mitch Bassion, chief philanthropy officer, at 215.893.1811 or mbassion@philorch.org.

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