

ALBERTA IN HARMONY: MOVING MAHLER

November 11, 2023 • 7:30 PM

Sponsored by the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies at the University of Alberta

Featuring:

Rune Bergmann, Conductor – *see bio on page 5.*

Susan Platts, Mezzo-soprano – *see bio on page 5.*

Calgary Girls Choir – *see bio on page 6.*

Calgary Philharmonic Chorus – *see bio on page 6.*

Edmonton Symphony Orchestra – *see roster on page 8.*

Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra – *see bio on page 7.*

This performance does not include an intermission.

MAHLER

Symphony No. 3 in D minor

(99')*

Part 1:

I - Kräftig. Entschieden.

Part 2:

II - Tempo di menuetto. Sehr mässig.

III - Comodo. Scherzando. Ohne Hast.

IV - Sehr langsam. Misterioso. (text on page 4)

V - Lustig im Tempo und keck im Ausdruck (text on page 4)

VI - Langsam. Ruhevoll. Empfundener.

Program subject to change.

*indicates approximate performance duration

Symphony No. 3 in D minor

Gustav Mahler

(b. Kalište, Bohemia, 1860 / d. Vienna, 1911)

First performed : June 9, 1902 in Krefeld

This is the ESO premiere of the piece. With the title *What the Wild Flowers Tell Me*, the second movement of the symphony, orchestrated by Benjamin Britten, was performed by the ESO in November 2007.

“My work is a gigantic musical poem: it includes all the phases of evolution and depicts its gradual ascent. It begins at the core of inanimate nature and progresses through to the love of God.” — Mahler

Gustav Mahler often had very precise “programs” in mind when sketching out his symphonies. He also just as often would dispense with those programs when the scores were completed, insisting that his works should be heard without extra-musical associations. He wrote a very detailed road map for his *Third Symphony* – but it was not included in the published score. The quote above is a short, but helpful guide in Mahler’s own words to understanding this titanically ambitious work.

The work can be understood, at a basic level, to consist of two parts, with the 30-plus-minute first movement making up part one, and the other five movements part two. At one point, Mahler had very programmatic and descriptive titles for each movement:

- I. Pan Awakes. Summer Marches In
- II. What the Flowers in the Meadow Tell Me
- III. What the Forest Animals Tell Me
- IV. What Man Tells Me
- V. What the Angels Tell Me
- VI. What Love Tells Me

It is important to remember that Mahler dispensed with these descriptions when the entire work was presented. However, there is little doubting the descriptions that pertain to the two movements which have texts set to music (movements four and five), as those descriptors arise from the texts themselves. The symphony would not receive its first complete performance until Mahler had the opportunity to conduct it, some half-dozen years after parts of it had already been presented. The second movement, under the title *Blumenstück* (“Flower Piece”) was performed in Berlin in November 1896. The second, third, and sixth movements were performed in Berlin in March 1897. There was even a seventh movement originally conceived as part of the design, to be titled *Das himmlische Levenstein* (“Life in Heaven”), but Mahler held it back, making it instead the basis for the final movement of his next symphony.

Mahler wrote most of the symphony in 1895-96, though elements and influences date back some five years before that. The first movement, on its own longer than most classical symphonies in their entirety, was composed after the other sections. He was in his 30s by this time, so this monumental composition was not the work of an overly ambitious youth. Mahler knew precisely what he wanted to do – and that, quite simply, was everything. “The symphony,” Mahler famously said (of the symphonic form, not this particular work), “must be like the world. It must embrace everything.”

There is little doubt that, with or without a detailed program supplied by the composer, Mahler is saying *something* extra-musical with this work. With typical performances lasting 110 minutes or more, this monumental piece is packed with obvious illustrative elements, and because it was composed in separate sections, and takes up six movements, thematic unity is rare. The first movement (Mahler's original intention to label this movement "Pan Awakes" takes in the double meaning of both the Greek demi-god and the fact that "pan" is the Greek word for "everything") begins with a fanfare for eight horns, which evolves into a grand march. While adhering to sonata form, in which two main thematic ideas form the basis for nearly all the music, there is little of the form's adherence to key relationships, and developments are long and often travel side roads. The outdoor allusions of this movement carry over into the second, a menuet-dominated movement intruded upon with stormy trio sections.

The third movement is a Scherzo, and while it has no vocal component, Mahler does quote from the melody of his song "Ablösung im Sommer" ("Relief in summer"), the text for which derives from *Das Knaben Wunderhorn* ("The Youth's Magic Horn"), the collection of folk poetry to which Mahler turned throughout his career – and would again in this symphony's penultimate movement. The main melody is alternated with Trio sections, one of which includes the addition of a posthorn, or flugelhorn, solo which Mahler indicates should be played "from a distance," which typically has it performed offstage.

We hear vocal music for the first time in the fourth movement. The text is from Mahler's contemporary, the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche – specifically his influential work *Also sprach Zarathustra*, which was published the decade before Mahler began writing his symphony. Zarathustra's Roundelay, also known as the Midnight Song, appears twice in the book. Mahler has its hopeful words set for alto solo.

The contrast between the cheerful fifth movement and the instrument-only final movement could not be more stark. "Three Angels Sang," another poem from *Das Knaben Wunderhorn*, is presented by women's and children's voices, along with the alto soloist, and joyfully describes the promise of the forgiveness of sins in Christian belief.

The finale is a long, slow, powerful expression of passionate emotion. It begins with a hymn-like melody in the strings which builds slowly to a thundering D Major conclusion. Conductor Bruno Walter said the movement, "... with its broad, solemn melodic line is, as a whole – and despite passages of burning pain – eloquent of comfort and grace." It is justly thought of as one of Mahler's most beautiful and emotional symphonic movements, its breadth and scope an almost necessary way to end one of the most titanic symphonic conceptions ever written. With typical Mahlerian contradiction, the composer insisted that this longest of symphonies was not long at all, insisting, "The work is short – in fact, of the greatest concision."

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Fourth Movement – Zarathustra’s Midnight Song (Contralto solo)

(text from Friedrich Nietzsche – *Also sprach Zarathustra*)

O Mensch! Gib acht!
Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?
»Ich schlief, ich schlief!
Aus tiefem Traum bin ich erwacht!
Die Welt ist tief
Und tiefer, als der Tag gedacht.
remembers.
Tie fist ihr Weh!
Lust – tiefer noch als Herzeleid!
Weh spricht: Vergeh!
Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit –
Willteife, tiefe Ewigkeit!«

O man! Take heed!
What does the deep midnight say?
“I slept, I slept!
I have awakened from a deep dream
The world is deep,
And deeper than the day

Deep it is suffering.
Joy is deeper yet than heartache!
Suffering speaks: Begone!
All joys want eternity -
Want deep, deep eternity.”

Fifth Movement – Three Angels Sang (Women’s Chorus, Boys’ Chorus, Contralto Solo)

(text from *Das Knaben Wunderhorn*)

(Bimm bamm!)

(Bimm bamm!)

Es sungen drei Engel einen süßen Gesang,
Mit Freuden es selig in dem Himmel klang:
Sie jauchzten fröhlich auch dabei,
Daß Petrus sei von Sünden frei.

Three angels sang a sweet song
that set Heaven ringing with joy;
they rejoiced, in their song,
that Peter was freed of sin.

Und als der Herr Jesus zu Tische saß,
Mit seinen zwölf Jüngern das Abendmahl aß,
twelve discipl
Da sprach der Herr Jesus: »Was stehst du den hier!
you here?
Wenn ich dich anseh, so weinest du mir.«

And while Lord Jesus sat at table
eating the evening meal with his
thus spake Lord Jesus: “Why are
When I look at you, you weep.”

»Und sollt ich nicht weinen, du gütiger Gott:
Ich hab übertreten die zehn Gebot;
Ich gehe und weine ja bitterlich,
Ach komm und erbarme dich über mich!«

“Should I not weep, my merciful Lord?
I have broken the Ten Commandments;
I go my way weeping bitterly.
Ah, come and have mercy upon me!”

»Hast du den übertreten die zehen Gebot,
Commandments?
So fall auf die Knie und bete zu Gott,
Leibe nur Gott in all Zeit,
So wirst du Erlangen die himmlische Freud!«

“So you have broken the Ten
Then fall on your knees and pray to God;
love God alone all your life
and you shall attain heavenly joy.”

Die himmlische Freud ist eine selige Stadt;
Die himmlische Freud, die kein Ende mehr hat.
Die himmlische Freud was Petro bereit’t
Durch Jesum und allen zur Seligkeit.

Heavenly joy is a happy city,
Heavenly joy knows no end.
Heavenly joy was granted by Jesus
to Peter and us for our eternal felicity.

Biographies

Rune Bergman, Conductor

Norwegian conductor Rune Bergmann is Music Director of the Calgary Philharmonic, Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Szczecin Philharmonic in Poland, and Music Director of Switzerland's Argovia Philharmonic. Guest engagements in the 2022/2023 Season brought Rune once again to the podiums of the Baltimore, North Carolina, and Malaga symphony orchestras. He also made his debut with the ADDA Simfonica in Spain.

Rune's recent guest engagements include concerts with the Baltimore, Colorado Detroit, Edmonton, Houston, New Jersey, and Pacific symphony orchestras in North America, and the Bergen Philharmonic, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, Orquesta Sinfonica Portuguesa, Norwegian National Opera Orchestra, Orquesta de Valencia, Staatskapelle Halle, Wrocław Philharmonic, and the Risør Festival in Europe, to name a few.

Rune has also led performances of *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *La Traviata* at the Norwegian National Opera and he made his US operatic debut in Yale Opera's production of Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as staged by Claudia Solti, while previous guest engagements have led him to such auspices as the Oslo Philharmonic, New Mexico Philharmonic, Münchner Symphoniker, Mainfranken Theater Würzburg, Philharmonie Südwestfalen, as well as the symphony orchestras of Malmö, Helsingborg, Kristiansand, Stavanger, Trondheim, Karlskrona, and Odense.

2018 saw the release of Rune's first recording with the Szczecin Philharmonic, which featured Mieczysław Karłowicz's *Symphony in E Minor*, a piece which has since become a major focus of Rune's repertoire. He has also released recordings with the Argovia Philharmonic, including Maurice Ravel's *Piano Concerto in G Major* and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Bassoon Concerto in B Major*.

Earlier in his career, Rune Bergmann served as First Kapellmeister and stellvertretender-GMD of the Theater Augsburg, where he led performances of numerous operas, including such titles as *La Traviata*, *Der fliegende Holländer*, and *Die Fledermaus*. He has also served as Principal Guest Conductor of the Kaunas City Symphony and has been Artistic Director of Norway's innovative Fjord Cadenza Festival since its inception in 2010.

Susan Platts, Mezzo-soprano

British-born Canadian mezzo-soprano Susan Platts brings a uniquely rich and wide-ranging voice to concert and recital repertoire for alto and mezzo-soprano, particularly esteemed for her performances of Gustav Mahler's works. She is a Fellow of the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, which gave her the opportunity to work closely with Jessye Norman.

Ms. Platts has performed at Covent Garden, Royal Albert Hall, Royal Festival Hall, Teatro alla Scala, Teatro di San Carlo, Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center as well as with the Philadelphia, Cleveland and Minnesota Orchestras, Orchestre de Paris, London Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra, Montreal, Toronto, American, Detroit, Milwaukee, Baltimore and Houston Symphonies, Les Violons du Roy, Boston's Handel and Haydn Society, as well as the Los Angeles and St. Paul Chamber Orchestras.

She has collaborated with many of today's leading conductors including John Adams, Marin Alsop, Roberto Abbado, Sir Andrew Davis, Ludovic Morlot, Leon Botstein, Josep Caballé-Domenech, Christoph Eschenbach, JoAnn Falletta, Jane Glover, Vladimir Jurowski, Jeffrey Kahane, Carlos Kalmar, Keith Lockhart, Kent Nagano, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Sir Roger Norrington, Peter Oundjian, Itzhak Perlman, Carlos Miguel Prieto, Bramwell Tovey, Osmo Vänska and Pinchas Zuckerman. Ms. Platts has appeared on many distinguished art song series including Vocal Arts Society at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Ladies Morning Musical Club in Montreal, Aldeburgh Connection in Toronto, and both the Frick Collection and Lincoln Center "Art of the Song" series in New York City.

Ms. Platts' recent opera highlights include *Die Walküre* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* at the Royal Opera House, John Adams' *Nixon in China* with the BBC Symphony, as well as Britten's *Albert Herring* (Pacific Opera, Vancouver Opera), Erda in Wagner's *Das Rheingold* (Pacific Opera), and Bernstein's *A Quiet Place* (Montreal Symphony Orchestra).

Ms. Platts discography includes a recent release on the Naxos label *La Tragédie de Salomé* (Florent Schmitt), Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* (chamber version), also on Naxos, *Das Lied von der Erde* (full version) for Fontec Records with the Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra, Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* with the Smithsonian Chamber Players and Santa Fe Pro Musica for Dorian Records, Brahms *Zwei Gesänge* with Steven Dann and Lambert Orkis, and a solo disc of *Lieder* by Robert Schumann, Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms on the ATMA label.

Calgary Girls Choir

The Calgary Girls Choir has been providing exceptional choral training along with performance and touring opportunities since 1995. They are an award-winning and internationally renowned choir that inspires and empowers young women through music.

For over two decades, hundreds of girls have achieved a high level of artistry and confidence. Today, singers continue to thrive under the leadership of experienced and nationally renowned Artistic Director, Elaine Quilichini, professional accompanists, and are supported by a dedicated administration team and passionate Board of Directors. Quality repertoire and a child-centered approach are the foundations of our program. Through the cultivation of strong vocal technique, beautiful tone, and musical literacy, our choirs consistently deliver performances that are both inspiring and moving. Confidence, poise, passion for music and friendships are nurtured through a shared love of singing. Rehearsals take place once a week for each level.

Calgary Philharmonic Chorus

Celebrating 60 years in 2023, the Calgary Philharmonic Chorus is a group of more than 120 volunteer singers from all walks of life who deliver excellence in the performance of choral music and promote the enjoyment and development of choral singing in Calgary communities. Established in 1963, the Chorus is a professional-level performing partner to the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, and one of only two choruses in Canada that is part of a major professional symphony orchestra. The Chorus, led by Chorus Director Mark Bartel, performs a wide variety of repertoire, including oratorio, opera, classical standards, pop favourites, and commissioned new works. In a typical season, the acclaimed ensemble is featured in four to eight concerts with the Orchestra.

Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra

The Calgary Philharmonic celebrated 65 years as a pillar of Calgary's vibrant arts community in 2020 and has grown to be one of Canada's most celebrated live music ensembles. Led by Music Director Rune Bergmann, the Orchestra presents classical standards, pop favourites, bold collaborations, and cutting-edge new works, and attracts world-renowned guest artists and dynamic conductors each season. In addition to 66 orchestra musicians, the Calgary Phil is one of two major symphony orchestras in Canada that has its own chorus of over 120 volunteer singers, which celebrates 60 years in 2023. The Chorus, led by Chorus Director Mark Bartel, performs a wide variety of repertoire, including oratorio, opera, light classics, contemporary music, pops, and commissioned new works.

The Calgary Phil is proud to be foundational to the arts in their city and plays a crucial role in strengthening the cultural experience of our communities. In a typical season, the Calgary Phil welcomes over 100,000 visitors to the concert hall, connects with thousands of students through its educational programs, and reaches audiences worldwide through free and accessible digital programming.

At the start of the 2017/2018 Season, the Orchestra welcomed Norwegian conductor Rune Bergmann as Music Director. His elegant interpretations and reputation as an inspiring and profound musician continue to attract the attention of orchestras worldwide. He is also Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Szczecin Philharmonic in Poland and Music Director of Switzerland's Argovia Philharmonic. Maestro Bergmann entered this role with a vision to showcase the Calgary Phil on the world stage.

The Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra was created in the 1955 merger of the Alberta Philharmonic and the Calgary Symphony. Performing in Calgary's Grand Theatre to a small but enthusiastic audience at first, the Calgary Philharmonic gained broader attention in 1957 with the completion of its first home, the Jubilee Auditorium. As the audience grew and public acclaim heightened, in 1985, the Calgary Phil moved to its permanent home in Arts Commons' Jack Singer Concert Hall, one of North America's most acoustically acclaimed venues.

Past Music Directors of the Calgary Phil include Grammy and Emmy Award-winning conductor Roberto Minczuk from 2006 to 2016 and the late Mario Bernardi, who guided the Orchestra from 1984 to 1992 and led them through a period of tremendous artistic growth. Bernardi also led the Calgary Phil's first North American tour, which brought the ensemble to new creative heights. The tour garnered rave reviews after performing in some of the world's best-known concert venues, including Carnegie Hall. From 1995 to 2003, the legendary Hans Graf was Music Director, leading its award-winning European tour in the fall of 2000, making the Calgary Phil the first Western Canadian orchestra to tour Europe. In June 2006, the Orchestra gave Hans Graf the honorary lifetime title of Music Director Laureate in recognition of his immense contributions. Other past Music Directors and Principal Conductors include Henry Plukker (1955 to 1962), Haymo Taeuber (1963 to 1968), José Iturbi (1968 to 1969), Maurice Handford (1970 to 1975), Franz-Paul Decker (1975 to 1977 – interim), and Arpad Joo (1977 to 1984).

Meet the Musicians

Michael Stern, Artistic Advisor

Cosette Justo Valdés, Resident Conductor and Community Ambassador

William Eddins, Music Director Emeritus, Conductor

Violin I

Robert Uchida, Concertmaster

The John & Barbara Poole Family Concertmaster Chair

Eric Buchmann, Associate Concertmaster

Broderick Olson

Ewald Cheung

Joanna Ciapka-Sangster

Laura Veeze

Anna Kozak

Aiyana Anderson-Howatt

Anita Walsh

Violin II

Dianne New – Principal

Susan Flook – Assistant Principal

Heather Bergen

Yue Deng

Danielle Greene

Buon Park

Yeeun Ha

Zoë Sellers (on leave)

Viola

Keith Hamm – Principal

Ethan Filner – Assistant Principal

Clayton Leung

Rhonda Henshaw

Stefan Jungkind

Cello

Rafael Hoekman – Principal

The Stuart & Winona Davis Principal Cello Chair

Julie Hereish – Assistant Principal

Ronda Metzies

Meran Currie-Roberts

Victor Pipkin

Bass

Hilda Cowie – Principal

Chris Jones – Acting Assistant Principal

Janice Quinn

Rob Aldridge

Chantel Leung

Douglas Ohashi (on leave)

The ESO works in proud partnership with the AF of M (American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada) Local 390.

Flute

Elizabeth Koch – Principal

Sarah Pollard – Assistant Principal

Oboe

June Kim – Principal

Paul Schieman – Assistant Principal

The Steven & Day LePoole Assistant Principal Oboe Chair

Clarinet

Julianne Scott – Principal

David Quinn – Assistant Principal

Bassoon

Bianca Chambul – Principal

Edith Stacey – Assistant Principal

Horn

Allene Hackleman – Principal

Megan Evans – Assistant Principal

Ryan Garbett – Assistant Principal

Donald Plumb – Assistant Principal

Trumpet

Robin Doyon – Principal

Frédéric Payant – Assistant Principal

Trombone

John McPherson – Principal

Kathryn Macintosh – Assistant Principal

Bass Trombone

Tyler Cairns – Principal

Tuba

Scott Whetham – Principal

Timpani

Barry Nemish – Principal

Percussion

Martin Bui – Principal

Harp

Nora Bumanis – Principal