

2022–2023 | 123rd Season

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Thursday, December 8, at 7:30

Friday, December 9, at 2:00

Saturday, December 10, at 8:00

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Conductor

Sheku Kanneh-Mason Cello

Pretty Yende Soprano

Xi *Ensō*

World premiere—Philadelphia Orchestra commission

Haydn Cello Concerto No. 2 in D major, H. Vllb:2

I. Allegro moderato

II. Adagio

III. Allegro

Intermission

Mahler Symphony No. 4 in G major

I. Bedächtig. Nicht eilen

II. In gemächlicher Bewegung

III. Ruhevoll. Poco adagio

IV. Sehr behaglich

This program runs approximately 2 hours.

These concerts are sponsored by **Mari and Peter Shaw**.

The December 8 concert is also sponsored by **Lyn Ross**.

The December 10 concert is also sponsored by **Eileen Kennedy and Robert Heim**.

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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 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 to form The Philadelphia Orchestra and Kimmel Center, Inc., reimagining the power of the arts to bring joy, create community, and effect change.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his 11th season as the eighth music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. 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.

Your Philadelphia Orchestra takes great pride in its hometown, performing for the people of Philadelphia year-round, in Verizon Hall and community centers, in classrooms and hospitals, and over the airwaves and online. In response to the cancellation of concerts due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Orchestra launched the Digital Stage, providing access to high-quality online performances, keeping music alive at a time when it was needed most. It also inaugurated free offerings: HearTOGETHER, a podcast

on racial and social justice, and creative equity and inclusion, through the lens of the world of orchestral music, and Our City, Your Orchestra, a series of digital performances that connects the Orchestra with communities through music and dialog while celebrating the diversity and vibrancy of the Philadelphia region.

The Philadelphia Orchestra's award-winning education and community initiatives engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members of all ages through programs such as Play!Ns; side-by-sides; PopUP concerts; Our City, Your Orchestra Live; School Concerts; the School Partnership Program and School Ensemble Program; and All City Orchestra Fellowships.

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 five-decade commitment of people-to-people exchange.

Under Yannick's leadership, the Orchestra returned to recording with 12 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.

Music Director



George Etheredge

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is currently in his 11th season as music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. Additionally, he became the third music director of New York's Metropolitan Opera in 2018. Yannick, who holds the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Chair, is an inspired leader of The Philadelphia Orchestra. His intensely 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 talents of his generation. He has been artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal's Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000, and in 2017 he became an honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. He was 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 signed an exclusive recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon (DG) in 2018. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with 12 releases on that label, including *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*, which won a GRAMMY Award for Best Orchestral Performance. His upcoming recordings will include projects with The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Metropolitan Opera, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, and the Orchestre Métropolitain, with which he will also continue to record for ATMA Classique. Additionally, he has recorded with the Rotterdam Philharmonic on DG, EMI Classics, and BIS Records, and the London Philharmonic for the LPO label.

A native of Montreal, Yannick studied piano, conducting, composition, and chamber music at Montreal's Conservatory of Music and continued his studies with renowned conductor 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, and Laval University.

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

Soloist



Ollie Ali

Cellist **Sheku Kanneh-Mason** is making his Philadelphia Orchestra debut. Already in demand from major orchestras and concert halls worldwide, he became a household name in 2018 after performing at the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex at Windsor Castle, a performance seen by nearly two billion people globally. He initially garnered renown as the winner of the 2016 BBC Young Musician competition and subsequently became a Decca Classics recording

artist. His latest album, *Song*, showcases his lyrical playing with a wide selection of arrangements and collaborations. His 2020 album *Elgar* reached No. 8 in the main UK Official Album Chart, making him the first-ever cellist to make the UK Top 10. Sheet music collections of his performance repertoire, along with his own arrangements and compositions, are published by Faber.

In the 2022–23 season, Mr. Kanneh-Mason appears as artist in residence with the Philharmonia Orchestra, performing three concertos across the year in addition to chamber music appearances and educational workshops. He also performs with orchestras including the London Mozart Players, the Paris Chamber Orchestra, the Royal Northern Sinfonia, the Camerata Salzburg, the Hallé Orchestra, and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. In addition to these current performances, appearances in the Americas include the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra; the Toronto, Boston, and São Paulo symphonies; and a tour with the City of Birmingham Symphony. He performs his first solo cello recital program in venues such as London's Wigmore Hall, the National Concert Hall in Dublin, the Palau de la Música Catalana Barcelona, the Auditorio Nacional de Música Madrid, the Louvre in Paris, and De Doelen in Rotterdam. He also returns to the Dortmund Konzerthaus as one of its Junge Wilde artists.

Since his debut in 2017 Mr. Kanneh-Mason has performed every summer at the BBC Proms, including in 2020 when he gave a recital performance with his sister, pianist Isata Kanneh-Mason, to an empty auditorium due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022 he was selected to appear as guest soloist at the Last Night of the Proms with the BBC Symphony. A graduate of London's Royal Academy of Music where he studied with Hannah Roberts, Mr. Kanneh-Mason was appointed in May 2022 as the Academy's first Menuhin Visiting Professor of Performance Mentoring. He is an ambassador for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Future Talent, and Music Masters. He was appointed a member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in 2020. He plays a Matteo Goffriller cello from 1700, which is on indefinite loan.

Soloist

Dario Acosta



With her magnetic charm, acclaimed operatic and solo performances worldwide, and a critically lauded discography, South-African soprano **Pretty Yende** has quickly become one of the brightest stars of the classical music world. Since making her professional operatic debut at the Latvian National Theatre in Riga as Micaëla in Bizet's *Carmen*, she has been seen at nearly all of the major theaters of the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, the Opéra National de Paris,

La Scala in Milan, the Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Berlin State Opera, the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, the Opernhaus Zürich, the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, the Vienna State Opera, and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. This season she returns to Paris Opera to star in Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet* and Mozart's *The Magic Flute*; makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Violetta in Verdi's *La traviata* in a new production by Shawna Lucey; returns to the Vienna State Opera in the title role in Massenet's *Manon* and as Marie in Donizetti's *The Daughter of the Regiment*; and reprises the role of Micaëla at the Berlin State Opera. At the Hamburg State Opera she makes her role debut as Gilda in Verdi's *Rigoletto* and returns to all four heroines, Olympia/Antonia/Giulietta/Stella, in Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

Ms. Yende made her Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2021. This season she makes multiple recital appearances, including in Kansas, Princeton, Geneva, Naples, Gstaad, Vienna, and at the Auvers-sur-Oise Festival. She also joins soprano Nadine Sierra in a series of concerts in Europe. Last season on the concert stage she joined a star-studded roster for Washington National Opera's "Come Home: A Celebration of Return"; appeared in two concerts with the Parisian Frivolities; performed operatic arias with the Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic in the Czech Republic; and joined Ms. Sierra for a concert with the Slovak Philharmonic at the Vienna Concert Hall.

In 2016 Ms. Yende released her debut album, *A Journey*, for Sony Classical. The recording won several awards, including the 2017 International Opera Award for Best Recording (Solo Recital) and a 2017 ECHO Klassik award for best newcomer. Her second solo album, *Dreams*, won the Readers' Choice Award at the 2018 International Opera Awards. She has appeared as a musical guest on several television shows, including *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, *The Wendy Williams Show*, and *Good Morning America*. Her other prestigious honors include the Order of Ikhamanga in Silver, awarded by the South-African government for her excellent achievement in the world of opera and serving as a role model to aspiring young musicians.

Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1783

Haydn

Cello

Concerto

No. 2

Music

Mozart

Symphony No.

36 ("Linz")

Literature

Schiller

Fiesco

Art

David

Grief of

Andromache

History

End of

American

Revolution

1899

Mahler

Symphony

No. 4

Music

Sibelius

Finlandia

Literature

Wilde

The Importance

of Being Earnest

Art

Cézanne

Turning Road at

Montgeroult

History

Boer War

The concert today opens with the world premiere of a Philadelphia Orchestra commission: *Ensō* by the Chinese-born composer Xi Wang. As in many of her works, she blends conceptual and musical elements as well as instruments from Chinese and Western art music traditions. The title refers to a sacred Buddhist symbol meaning the Circle of Enlightenment, which considers the flow and togetherness of nature and people.

Cellists are particularly grateful to Joseph Haydn for composing two wonderful concertos for the instrument nearly a century before the famous ones by Schumann, Dvorak, and Elgar. The first of Haydn's concertos was lost until the 1960s and some doubts about the authenticity of the second that we hear today were resolved in 1951 when the original manuscript was discovered.

Although the size and length of most of Mahler's symphonies are very different from the Classical era of Haydn, his Symphony No. 4 is his most modest and intimate. The work opens evocatively with the sound of sleigh bells and progresses through the four movements to a vocal finale that offers a child's vision of paradise with a setting of the folk poem "The Heavenly Life" for soprano and orchestra.

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

Ensō

Xi Wang

Born in NanChang, China, June 7, 1978

Now living in Dallas



Beginning her musical education in her native China at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and finishing it in the United States at Cornell University, Xi Wang (who retains the Chinese custom of listing her family name first) has built an international reputation as a composer pursuing and combining both East Asian and Western musical styles. Her many honors and awards include the Charles Ives Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and seven prizes from the

American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP).

Xi's piece *River Snow* from 2002 exemplifies one of her compositional approaches that foregrounds Chinese instruments and culture: It was inspired by a poem of the same name by Liu Zong-Yuan (733–819) from the Tang Dynasty and is scored for a range of Chinese instruments, including *xun* (a globe-shaped instrument akin to a flute) and *yunluo* (pitched gongs). Her 2011 work for clarinet, violin, cello, and piano titled *Encounter Beethoven's Grosse Fugue* represents another of her approaches that foregrounds more traditionally Western musical palettes and references. In many respects, *Ensō*, heard on this concert, can be seen as a synthesis of these two techniques, blending both conceptual and musical material from Chinese and Western art music traditions.

A "Healing" Piece Xi describes *Ensō* as a "sister piece" to her 2021 double concerto for violin, trumpet, and orchestra titled *Year 2020*. Written as something of a musical and emotional journal of her observations of the global tumult during 2020, she describes *Year 2020* as "full of struggle, pain, crying, memory, and, eventually, hope." She explains that she "felt emotionally and physically exhausted after writing [*Year 2020*] and decided that [her] next piece had to be a 'healing' piece." *Ensō* is the result of this compositional process of self-healing and is in many ways more introspective than its outwardly oriented predecessor.

The title *Ensō* refers to a sacred symbol in Zen Buddhism that takes the form of a hand-painted circle. The circle is traditionally drawn in a single, unbroken gesture that is understood to both represent and enact the experience of total spiritual enlightenment. Painting an *ensō* is therefore both a creative and meditative practice, as is the process of assembling the ink, brushes, and paper. In addition

to the form and symbolism of the *ensō*, Xi drew inspiration from the life of the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama. Having grown up as a wealthy prince whose family attempted to isolate him from deprivation and pain, Siddhartha's spiritual journey began with his first encounter with the suffering of others outside of the royal palace. Xi describes *Ensō* as a piece that tells the story of the spiritual seeker; she explains that the music "can be considered as representing the journey of looking for answers or enlightenment, the journey of freeing and understanding oneself, the journey of looking for the Buddha within oneself."

A Closer Look If the explicitly spiritual focus of *Ensō* represents a departure from Xi's earlier, more secular approaches, the musical language she uses in this piece can be heard as a continuation of her attempts to foster dialog between Western and Chinese idioms. In addition to the instruments of a traditional symphony orchestra, the work calls for the inclusion of Tibetan singing bowls, small metal instruments traditionally used to aid meditative practices. The opening of the piece begins with instructions to "circle the edge of the singing bowls with a wooden stick," which produces a sustained, ethereal tone, establishing a contemplative atmosphere from the outset. The piano then introduces one of the central musical themes, the "light" motif that makes repeated appearances throughout the composition. This theme uses all 12 tones in the chromatic scale and articulates them in a single, flowing phrase that is evocative of the circular form of the *ensō* itself.

Several other musical themes are then introduced, each of which is intended to represent what Xi describes as "different aspects of the human world" including "joy, wonder, suffering, heaviness, lightness, humor, drama, [and] void." By the middle of the work, a tumultuous rhythmic theme in the percussion, low brass, and strings begins to dominate over the other musical material, although its rampage is repeatedly interrupted by the piano's "light" theme. The chaos eventually gives way to the final section, which Xi describes as a musicalized "Zen garden" replete with flowers, butterflies, waterfalls, and monks. The final bars repeat the opening "light" motif, thereby closing the compositional circle and bringing *Ensō* to a meditative conclusion.

—Sean Colonna

Ensō was composed in 2022.

These are the world premiere performances of the work.

The score calls for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, brake drum, cowbell, glockenspiel, large gong, marimba, singing bowls, suspended cymbal, tam-tam, tom-toms, vibraphone, wind chime), harp, piano, and strings.

Performance time is approximately fifteen minutes.

The Music

Cello Concerto No. 2

Joseph Haydn

Born in Rohrau, Lower Austria, March 31, 1732

Died in Vienna, May 31, 1809



Given the glorious Romantic cello concertos written by composers such as Schumann, Dvořák, and Elgar, it is difficult to muster much sympathy for cellists who despair for the lack of great works to perform with orchestra. Yet a certain amount of piano (or violin) envy is perhaps understandable. Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms did not compose cello concertos, as they did for piano and for violin, and the cello repertoire is indeed quite limited until the later 19th century. All of which

makes cellists especially grateful to Joseph Haydn for contributing two wonderful pieces to the repertoire.

Both of Haydn's concertos have intriguing backstories that complicate their performance history. The relatively young composer wrote his Cello Concerto No. 1 in C major in the early 1760s as he was beginning many years of court service to the Esterházy family. Although the C-major Concerto was long known to have existed because Haydn entered it in a catalog of his compositions, it disappeared without a trace until a set of parts was discovered in Prague in 1961. Cellists rejoiced.

Rediscoveries and Reassessments Twenty years after his first essay, Haydn composed the Cello Concerto No. 2 in D major that we hear today. It was published near the end of his life and became increasingly well-known over the course of the second half of the 19th century, albeit in corrupt editions that took considerable liberties with the score. That may have been in part because Haydn's original manuscript was thought lost and there were nagging questions concerning the work's authorship going back as far as the 1830s.

The standard story goes that Haydn wrote it for Anton Kraft, the excellent cellist for the Esterházy court in the 1780s, who had studied on occasion with him. Some commentators went further, asserting that Kraft actually wrote the Concerto himself. (This tale seems to have been promoted by Kraft's son, Nikolaus.) Archival discoveries once again came to the rescue when Haydn's original manuscript, dated 1783, was discovered in 1951 and proved that he was the composer.

But in yet another turn of the screw, scholars Thomas Tolley and Simon McVeigh

recently discovered that Haydn did not compose this Concerto for Kraft, but rather for James Cervetto. In March 1784, newspapers in London announced that a "new" cello concerto by Haydn would be performed by Cervetto at the concert venue on Hanover Square. Cervetto was one of the city's foremost cellists and the principal of the Italian Opera. He seems to have triumphed in the performance, with reviews praising how the work suited his particular talents.

There are no documented performances of the Concerto between that premiere in London and the 1850s, despite its publication during Haydn's life, followed by various reissues. In the 20th century famous cellists began to champion the work, including Pablo Casals and Emanuel Feuermann, and there are now well more than 100 recordings. Its sparkling final movement was used in the 1946 Hollywood film *Deception*, starring Bette Davis, Claude Rains, and Paul Henreid.

A Closer Look The genre of the cello concerto was relatively new in Haydn's time and the D-major Concerto provides an unusually early showcase for the cello as a virtuoso instrument. The soloist is called upon to employ a variety of extended techniques such as harmonics, double stops, a wide range, and fearsome leaps. While some of Haydn's music can be quite intense, notably during his so-called *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and Stress) period, this work is sunny, pursuing the pleasure principle of the Classical era.

The extended first movement (**Allegro moderato**) opens with the orchestra stating an elegant and leisurely theme that is taken up more ornamentally when the cello enters. This theme generates others in the movement leading to a cadenza near the end. As Haydn did not provide cadenzas the one heard here is by Maurice Gendron and the one in the second movement by our soloist today, Sheku Kanneh-Mason.

The second movement is marked **Adagio**, slower than Haydn's more usual Andante, and provides a calm interlude before a brief finale (**Allegro**). This movement unfolds as a rondo, with the recurring theme framing sections of virtuoso display and even a short detour to a darker passage in a minor key. The cheerful mood of the work is restored by the end.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

Haydn composed his D-major Cello Concerto in 1783.

Principal Cello Michel Penha was the soloist in the first Philadelphia Orchestra performance of Haydn's Second Concerto, on October 26, 1921, with Leopold Stokowski at the University of Pennsylvania. Most recently on subscription concerts, Wendy Warner played it in January 1995 with André Previn conducting.

The piece is scored for solo cello, two oboes, two horns, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 25 minutes.

The Music

Symphony No. 4

Gustav Mahler

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

Died in Vienna, May 18, 1911



By 19th-century standards Mahler's Fourth Symphony is imposing in its length and instrumentation, and unusual in ending with a movement that calls for a soprano soloist. But for later audiences, ones familiar with all of the composer's symphonies, the Fourth may seem rather modest, intimate, and Classical. It is Mahler's shortest symphony, calls for the smallest orchestra, and employs some conventional forms. This is one of Mahler's most "normal" symphonies and perhaps his "happiest." At

least that is what many commentators have said about it for more than a century, despite the fact that with a composer so prone to irony things may never quite be as straightforward as they initially appear.

By 1901, when Mahler conducted the premiere of the Fourth in Munich, he was one of the leading musical figures in Europe. His ascension to the directorship of the Vienna Court Opera in 1897 had placed him in a position of extraordinary power and prestige, earning him adoring fans and implacable foes. The consuming demands of his job meant that time to compose came mainly during the summers, with revisions and orchestrations squeezed in when possible during the regular season.

The "World of My Fourth" After writing his first three symphonies, each longer and more complex than the preceding one, Mahler had reached something of a limit and in 1899 struck out in new directions. His earlier symphonies all had programs of some sort—stories, titles, and poems—extra-musical baggage that he increasingly sought to suppress: "Death to programs," he proclaimed at the time.

Mahler addressed the issue of the differences among his early symphonies while composing the Fourth. As he resumed work on the piece in 1900 he confided to a friend his fears of not being able to pick up where he had left off the summer before: "I must say I now find it rather hard to come to grips with things here again; I still live half in, half out of the world of my Fourth. It is so utterly different from my other symphonies. But that *must be*; I could never repeat a state of mind, and as life progresses I follow new paths in each new work."

From Song to Symphony The Fourth Symphony has a rather complicated genesis that is important for understanding its special character. For more than a decade,

beginning in the late 1880s, Mahler was obsessed with *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (The Youth's Magic Horn), a collection of folk poetry compiled in the early 19th century. One of the poems, "Das himmlische Leben" (The Heavenly Life), relates a child's innocent idea of blissful existence in heaven. Mahler first set the poem for voice and piano in February 1892 and orchestrated it soon thereafter. A few years later he decided to end his Third Symphony—destined to be the longest symphony ever written by a major composer—with that song as its seventh movement. He eventually changed his mind and chose to divert it to conclude his next symphony instead.

Mahler originally planned for the Fourth Symphony to have six movements, three of them songs, leading to "Das himmlische Leben." Although he eliminated the other vocal movements, and suppressed as well most of the programmatic elements he had initially envisioned, the heavenly *Wunderhorn* song remained and in fact helped to generate the entire Symphony. Mahler called attention to this on a number of occasions, such as when he chided a critic that his analysis was missing one thing: "Did you overlook the thematic connections that figure so prominently in the work's design? Or did you want to spare the audience some technical explanations? In any case, I ask that that aspect of my work be specially observed. Each of the three movements is connected thematically with the last one in the most intimate and meaningful way."

Melodic, rhythmic, and instrumental ideas, drawn from both the vocal and orchestral parts of "Das himmlische Leben," can be discovered in each of the three preceding movements. Mahler retained the rather modest orchestration of the original song, which omitted trombones and tuba, even though he regretted not having recourse to lower brass for the climax of the slow movement. The unusual instrumental sound of sleigh bells, which opens the first movement, is derived from the refrain that separates the stanzas of the song. Even the large-scale key scheme of the Symphony, the progressive tonality so rare before Mahler, comes from the song, in which G major leads to an ethereal E major.

From melody, to rhythm, to orchestration and tonal planning, "Das himmlische Leben" was the source of the Fourth Symphony, and ultimately provided the spiritual vision as well. In the end, Mahler decided not to divulge its program. He told his friend Natalie Bauer-Lechner: "I know the most wonderful names for the movements, but I will not betray them to the rabble of critics and listeners so they can subject them to banal misunderstandings and distortions." She also reports Mahler remarking: "At first glance one does not even notice all that is hidden in this inconspicuous little song, and yet one can recognize the value of such a seed by testing whether it contains the promise of a manifold life." The rich image of the "seed" from which an enormous work grows is useful in understanding the importance of this song and its hold on Mahler.

A Closer Look The sounds of the sleigh bells that open the first movement (**Bedächtigt. Nicht eilen**) set a pastoral tone that pervades the work. This sunny

landscape, however, darkens in the middle of the movement. Mahler remarked on the mood of the Fourth being like "the uniform blue of the sky. ... Sometimes it becomes overcast and uncanny, horrific: but it is not heaven itself that darkens, for it goes on shining with its everlasting blue. It is only that to us it seems suddenly sinister." Other clouds will pass in the following movements, but the blue sky always returns.

The scherzo (**In gemächlicher Bewegung**) unleashes demonic powers. The concertmaster at points plays an instrument tuned up one tone. Mahler originally subtitled the movement "Friend Death Strikes Up the Dance." According to Mahler's widow, Alma, her husband was "under the spell of the self-portrait by Arnold Böcklin, in which Death fiddles unto the painter's ear." The profound slow movement (**Ruhevoll**) has the character of a lullaby elaborated in a set of variations.

Despite all that proceeds, the final vocal movement (**Sehr behaglich**) is not so much a culmination, as is the finale of Mahler's earlier Second Symphony, but rather an arrival. The music is charming, wise, and difficult to pin down. Mahler provides an intriguing performance instruction: "To be sung with childlike, cheerful expression; entirely without parody." Reacting to the last time Mahler conducted the work, with the Philharmonic Society of New York at Carnegie Hall in January 1911, a critic commented: "Mahler's Symphony is more or less a puzzle. The composer did not provide titles for the individual movements for the Symphony as a whole. Through the artistic device of connecting the movements thematically and through the employment of a solo voice in the last movement Mr. Mahler admits, voluntarily or involuntarily, that his work is to be counted as program music." Nearly a century later musicians and audiences are still discovering its richness and meanings.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

Mahler's Symphony No. 4 was composed from 1899 to 1900 and was revised several times between 1901 and 1910.

Bruno Walter led the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the Symphony, in January 1946, with soprano Desi Halban as soloist. The most recent subscription performances took place in February 2018; Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla conducted and Janai Brugger was the soprano. The Orchestra also performed the work on the Digital Stage in December 2020, in the Erwin Stein arrangement for chamber orchestra, with Brugger and Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

The score calls for soprano soloist, four flutes (III and IV doubling piccolo), three oboes (III doubling English horn), three clarinets (II doubling E-flat clarinet and III doubling bass clarinet), three bassoons (III doubling contrabassoon), four horns, three trumpets, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, orchestra bells, sleigh bells, suspended cymbal, triangle), harp, and strings.

Mahler's Fourth runs approximately 60 minutes in performance.

"Das himmlische Leben"

(Achim von Arnim and
Clemens Brentano)

*Wir geniessen die himmlischen Freuden,
d'rum thun wir das Irdische meiden.
Kein weltlich' Getümmel
hört man nicht im Himmel!
Lebt Alles in sanfterster Ruh'.
Wir führen ein englisches Leben!
Sind dennoch ganz lustig daneben!
Wir tanzen und springen,
wir hüpfen und singen!
Sankt Peter im Himmel sieht zu!*

*Johannes das Lämmlein auslasset,
der Metzger Herodes drauf passet!
Wir führen ein geduldig's,
unschuldig's, geduldig's,
ein liebliches Lämmlein zu Tod!
Sankt Lucas den Ochsen thät schachten
ohn' einig's Bedenken und Achten,
der Wein kost kein Heller
im himmlischen Keller,
die Englein, die backen das Brot.*

*Gut' Kräuter von allerhand Arten,
die wachsen im himmlischen Garten!
Gut' Spargel, Fisolen
und was wir nur wollen!
Ganze Schüsseln voll sind uns bereit!
Gut' Äpfel, gut' Birn' und gut' Trauben!
Die Gärtner, die Alles erlauben!
Willst Rehbock, willst Hasen,
auf offener Strassen
sie laufen herbei!*

"Heavenly Life"

We savor the joys of heaven,
thus we avoid earthly things.
No worldly tumult
is heard in heaven!
All things live in gentlest peace.
We lead an angelic life!
Yet we're quite merry anyway!
We dance and jump,
we hop and sing!
St. Peter in heaven looks on!

St. John lets the lamb out,
and Herod the butcher looks after it!
We lead a long-suffering,
blameless, long-suffering,
dear lamb to its death!
St. Luke slaughters the ox
without giving it a thought;
the wine doesn't cost a cent
in heaven's cellar,
and the little angels bake bread.

Good vegetables of all sorts,
grow in the heavenly garden!
Good asparagus, snap beans,
and anything we like!
Whole platefuls are at our disposal!
Good apples, pears, and grapes!
The gardeners permit everything!
If you want deer, if you want rabbit,
they run right by
on the open road!

Please turn the page quietly.

*Sollt' ein Fasttag etwa kommen
alle Fische gleich mit Freuden
angeschwommen!
Dort läuft schon Sankt Peter
mit Netz und mit Köder
zum himmlischen Weiher hinein.
Sankt Martha die Köchin muss sein!*

*Kein' Musik ist ja nicht auf Erden,
die uns'rer verglichen kann werden.
Elftausend Jungfrauen
zu tanzen sich trauen!
Sankt Ursula selbst dazu lacht!
Cäcilia mit ihren Verwandten
sind treffliche Hofmusikanten!
Die englischen Stimmen ermuntern die Sinnen!
Dass Alles für Freuden erwacht.*

Should perhaps a holiday come,
all the fish swim up
with joy!
Look! St. Peter is already running
with net and bait
to the heavenly fish pond.
St. Martha has to be the cook!

There is no music on earth
that can be compared to ours.
Eleven thousand virgins
dare to dance!
Even St. Ursula laughs at the sight!
St. Cecilia and her relatives
are superb court musicians!
Angelic voices invigorate the senses!
So that all things awaken to joy!

English translation by Paul J. Horsley

Musical Terms

GENERAL TERMS

Cadenza: A passage or section in a style of brilliant improvisation, usually inserted near the end of a movement or composition

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

Chromatic: Relating to tones foreign to a given key (scale) or chord

Coda: A concluding section or passage added in order to confirm the impression of finality

Counterpoint: The combination of simultaneously sounding musical lines

Double-stop: In string playing, to stop two strings together, thus obtaining two-part harmony

Fugue: A piece of music in which a short melody is stated by one voice and then imitated by the other voices in succession, reappearing throughout the entire piece in all the voices at different places

H.: Abbreviation for Hoboken, the chronological list of all the works of Haydn made by Anthony van Hoboken

Harmonics: High notes that are achieved on instruments of the string family when the performer lightly places his finger exactly in the middle of the vibrating string

Harmony: The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions

Intonation: The treatment of musical pitch in performance

Rondo: A form frequently used in symphonies and concertos for the final movement. It consists of a main section that alternates with a variety of contrasting sections (A-B-A-C-A etc.).

Scale: The series of tones which form any major or minor key

Scherzo: Literally "a joke." Usually the third movement of symphonies and quartets that was introduced by Beethoven to replace the minuet. The scherzo is followed by a gentler section called a trio, after which the scherzo is repeated. Its characteristics are a rapid

tempo, vigorous rhythm, and humorous contrasts. Also an instrumental piece of a light, piquant, humorous character.

Sonata form: The form in which the first movements (and sometimes others) of symphonies are usually cast. The sections are exposition, development, and recapitulation, the last sometimes followed by a coda. The exposition is the introduction of the musical ideas, which are then "developed." In the recapitulation, the exposition is repeated with modifications.

Sturm und Drang: Literally, storm and stress. A movement throughout the arts that reached its highpoint in the 1770s, whose aims were to frighten, stun, or overcome with emotion.

Tonality: The orientation of melodies and harmonies toward a specific pitch or pitches

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Adagio: Leisurely, slow

Allegro: Bright, fast

Andante: Walking speed

Bedächtig: Unhurried, deliberate

Behaglich: Agreeably

In gemächlicher Bewegung: In a comfortable tempo

Moderato: A moderate tempo

Nicht eilen: Not rushed

Ruhevoll: Restful, calm

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Poco: Little, a bit

Sehr: Very

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