

Thursday, April 17, 8pm  
Friday, April 18, 8pm

JAMES LEVINE CONDUCTING

HARBISON SYMPHONY NO. 5 FOR BARITONE, MEZZO-SOPRANO, AND ORCHESTRA (2008), ON TEXTS OF CZESLAW MILOSZ, LOUISE GLÜCK, AND RAINER MARIA RILKE  
(BSO 125TH ANNIVERSARY COMMISSION/WORLD PREMIERE; COMMISSIONED BY THE BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, JAMES LEVINE, MUSIC DIRECTOR, THROUGH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF CATHERINE AND PAUL BUTTENWIESER)  
I. Con fuoco (Milosz, “Orpheus and Eurydice”)—  
II. Andante cantabile (Milosz)—  
III. Grave (Louise Glück, “Relic”)—  
IV. Lento (Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus* II, 13)  
KATE LINDSEY, MEZZO-SOPRANO  
NATHAN GUNN, BARITONE  
{intermission}

THE APPEARANCES OF THE GUEST VOCALISTS THIS WEEK ARE SUPPORTED BY THE ALAN J. AND SUZANNE W. DWORSKY FUND FOR VOICE AND CHORUS.

MAHLER *DAS LIED VON DER ERDE (THE SONG OF THE EARTH)*, A SYMPHONY FOR TENOR, ALTO, AND ORCHESTRA (AFTER HANS BETHGE’S “THE CHINESE FLUTE”)  
The Drinking Song of the Earth’s Despair  
The Lonely One in Autumn  
Of Youth  
Of Beauty  
The Drunkard in Springtime  
The Parting  
ANNE SOFIE VON OTTER, MEZZO-SOPRANO  
JOHAN BOTHA, TENOR

These concerts will end about 10:10.

### John Harbison

#### *Symphony No. 5 for Baritone, Mezzo-soprano, and Orchestra (2008)*

JOHN HARBISON WAS BORN IN ORANGE, NEW JERSEY, ON DECEMBER 20, 1938; HE LIVES IN CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, AND TOKEN CREEK, WISCONSIN. HE WROTE HIS SYMPHONY NO. 5 ON COMMISSION FROM THE BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, JAMES LEVINE, MUSIC DIRECTOR, THROUGH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF CATHERINE AND PAUL BUTTENWIESER. HARBISON BEGAN WORK IN EARNEST IN DECEMBER 2006 (AMONG OTHER PROJECTS) AND COMPLETED THE FULL SCORE EARLY IN 2008. THESE ARE THE FIRST PERFORMANCES.

THE SCORE OF HARBISON’S SYMPHONY NO. 5 CALLS FOR BARITONE AND MEZZO-SOPRANO SOLOISTS, THREE FLUTES (THIRD DOUBLING PICCOLO), THREE OBOES (THIRD DOUBLING ENGLISH HORN), THREE CLARINETS (SECOND DOUBLING E-FLAT CLARINET, THIRD DOUBLING BASS CLARINET), TWO BASSOONS, CONTRABASSOON, FOUR HORNS, TWO TRUMPETS, TWO TROMBONES, TUBA, PERCUSSION (THREE PLAYERS—I: GLOCKENSPIEL, VIBRAPHONE, CYMBALS, METAL BLOCKS, GUIRO, SLAPSTICK; II: CONCERT

MARIMBA, HIGH BELL, TRIANGLE, TENOR DRUM, MARACAS, HIGH AND HIGHEST CLAVES, SANDPAPER BLOCKS; III: LARGE BELL [E], TUNED GONGS [E, G], COWBELLS, SNARE DRUM, BASS DRUM, SANDPAPER BLOCKS), TIMPANI, PIANO, HARP, ELECTRIC GUITAR, AND STRINGS. THE PIECE IS ABOUT THIRTY-FIVE MINUTES LONG. THE GUITARIST IN THESE PERFORMANCES IS MICHAEL GANDOLFI.

The story of Orpheus and Eurydice is the most musical of classical myths: Orpheus's songs with his lyre could charm the very stones and trees, although it wasn't enough to keep the nymph Eurydice from a deadly serpent's bite on their wedding day. Nor was it enough, in the end, to keep the singer himself from being torn limb from limb by frenzied Bacchantes. But what concerns us, mostly, is what happens in between: Orpheus's descent into the underworld, heartbroken, to try to reclaim his lover, his song charming his way past Cerberus and Charon and convincing Hades and Persephone to allow Eurydice to return to the world of the living. The conditions were that Orpheus make no attempt to speak to Eurydice on their way out of the underworld, nor to glance behind him to make sure she was still there. Impatience, or distrust, turned Orpheus's head just as the sun became visible again, and he lost Eurydice for good.

This is the part of the story that we know best, and naturally many composers have taken on the myth, most notably Monteverdi, Gluck, and Stravinsky, and more recently Birtwistle and Philip Glass. It's this story that is the narrative spine of Czeslaw Milosz's "Orpheus and Eurydice," the poem that John Harbison sets for baritone and orchestra as the first two movements of his Symphony No. 5. Milosz wrote the poem, in Polish, in 2003 in reaction to the death of his wife; Harbison employs its English translation, which is by Milosz and Robert Haas. Eurydice's voice, one rarely heard in literature, is present in Louis Glück's "Relic," set for mezzo-soprano in the third movement. Baritone and mezzo-soprano come together for the fourth movement, a setting of one of Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* in English translation by Stephen Mitchell.

Although these poems are the textual medium of Harbison's piece, his symphony lacks any but anecdotal connection to the Orpheuses of music history. It began as a purely orchestral symphony, like his previous four in the genre. His Symphony No. 1 was a BSO centennial commission; this was premiered by Seiji Ozawa and the orchestra in March 1984 and led to the composer's first opportunity to conduct the BSO that summer at Tanglewood, when Edo de Waart canceled a scheduled appearance. He wrote his Symphony No. 2 (1987) for the San Francisco Symphony, his No. 3 (1991) for the Baltimore Symphony, and his No. 4 (2004) for the Seattle Symphony. He has had the Boston Symphony sound in his ear since first attending concerts during Charles Munch's era, when he was a student at Harvard; and it was the BSO that performed his first big orchestral work, *Di-otima*, in 1977 (written on a Koussevitzky Foundation commission). In addition to the Symphony No. 1, the BSO has commissioned or co-commissioned several of the composer's big works of recent years. His Cello Concerto, written for Yo-Yo Ma and co-commissioned by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, was premiered by Ma and the BSO under Seiji Ozawa in April 1994. Bernard Haitink conducted the premiere of his BSO-commissioned Requiem for soloists, chorus, and orchestra in 2003. His *Darkbloom: Overture for an imagined opera* was commissioned for James Levine's first season as music director; Levine led the premiere in March 2005. In July 2007 at Tanglewood, with BSO principal bass Edwin Barker as soloist, Levine conducted the BSO's first performance of the composer's Bass Viol Concerto, a BSO 125th Anniversary Commission and a co-commission with several other orchestras.

Harbison and Levine began discussing the possibility of a new symphony around the time of the *Darkbloom* premiere three years ago. It was only after the composer had conceived and made sketches for orchestral material that Levine suggested (even at this relatively late stage) that voice might be added. At the time, Levine was rehearsing the chamber-orchestra version of Harbison's big song cycle *Mottetti di Montale* with the Met Chamber Ensemble. He had previously led the premiere of the composer's opera *The Great Gatsby* at the Metropolitan Opera in 1999 and clearly felt particular sympathy with Harbison's writing for voice. Harbison warmed to the conductor's suggestion, and, having already established the work's central idea, cast around for a poem that would help embody its theme of loss and the aftermath of loss—a subject that has accompanied Harbison through the composition of many of his recent works.

Harbison has spoken of this symphony as having an identity that precedes the text; text, in the work of any composer, is a medium that allows the composition of music they had in mind to begin with. The Orpheus connection here was an appropriate accident. The text might well not have been about Orpheus at all, but when Harbison came across Czeslaw Milosz's poem in a magazine, it read as a clear complement to his symphonic ideas. Milosz, a Nobel Prize-winning poet and statesman, already figured large in Harbison's artistic world. His poem "A Task" acted as an unheard "theme song" of Harbison's Symphony No. 2 (1987), and the composer's *Milosz Songs*, a large-scale orchestral song cycle, was premiered by Dawn Upshaw and the New York Philharmonic in February 2006.

Milosz's "Orpheus and Eurydice," the text of the first two movements, is the main part of the piece, big enough to stand alone; but it was only during his work on that setting that Harbison began to feel it fell short of what he had intended for his symphony. His choice of Pulitzer Prize-winning American poet Louise Glück's "Relic," from a larger Orpheus cycle called *Vita Nova*, for the third movement offered a counter to Milosz's poem, but also required a different physical voice, a mezzo-soprano. Finally he decided on an English translation of Rainer Maria Rilke's "Sonnet to Orpheus" II, 13 for the fourth movement, which enabled him to reconcile the two earlier perspectives both musically and thematically. The third and fourth movements feel like realigning epilogues, simultaneously clarifying and broadening the matter of the first two movements.

In this symphony with voices, Harbison takes a somewhat different tack from other song-symphonists, in part necessitated by the requirements of Milosz's poetic stance—neither ballade nor lyric, its surreal details unequivocally concrete, the voice of the poet (who is, and isn't, Orpheus) emotionally affected but consistently controlled to the point of being almost sardonic. Following an orchestral introduction (material remaining from the symphony's pre-vocal stages), Harbison's two-movement through-composed setting follows the contour of the Milosz poem's narrative and descriptive episodes, with frequently changing local moods—pitch, texture, tempo, meter, orchestration. These correspond to sections indicated in the score. In the first movement the sections are "The death of Orpheus"; "At the entrance to Hades"; "He remembered her words"; "In a labyrinth." In the second: "He sang the brightness..."; "But there were conditions"; "It happened as he expected."

The prosody of the vocal line is almost conversational, with stylizations such as the baritone's glissandos expanding the drama of the setting, along with "environmental" indicators in the orchestra like the flurries at the line "...hunched in a gust of wind/That tore his coat." These touches mirror some of the radically off-kilter details of the poem, for example Hades' "glass-paneled door" and the suggestion of the underworld as the many sub-basements of an enormous office building, and "Electronic dogs passed noiselessly." The poem begins incongruously commercially in this way, but at the end reverts to the pastoral "Sun. And sky. And in the sky white clouds" that we expect of the myth.

The movement break is within the flow of the music but corresponds to a sudden change in sonority. Near the end of the first movement, when Orpheus encounters Persephone, Hades' queen, we hear a new sonority arriving to enchant the listener. Electric guitar is Orpheus's "nine-stringed lyre," chosen by Harbison to match Milosz's strange little modern details. The poem's description of Orpheus's song, "He sang the brightness," is accompanied by a sheen of overlapping triadic arpeggios in guitar, harp, piano, and mallet percussion. Other details include the ethereal music that accompanies Persephone's response to Orpheus's pleas, and the dry percussion that echoes his footsteps as he strains to hear Eurydice behind him as he leaves the underworld.

In the third movement, "Where would I be without my sorrow," we hear a new voice, that of the mezzo-soprano/Eurydice in the words of Louise Glück's "Relic." In contrast to the Milosz setting, this suggested a much more autonomous approach, and a character that remains mostly consistent throughout. The electric guitar returns here as Eurydice sings of hearing Orpheus, singing as she descended in death. Her immediate reaction to the moment of her death, in the penultimate line of the poem, is reinforced in an orchestral moment that echoes from the start of the piece.

The finale, “Be ahead of all parting,” is similarly a self-contained song, but now a duet, intertwining the voices as Orpheus and Eurydice are inextricable in our consciousness. The voice, though, is the poet’s, one of Rilke’s sonnets of ecstatic meditation on the myth, insisting upon an embrace of life that reconciles the necessity of death. The voices are in close canon at the octave or unison throughout, finally coming together rhythmically for the final three lines. In its ebb and surge and changing colors, the accompaniment is almost processional and ritualistic. It continues in a new direction long after the voices stop.

Robert Kirzinger

JOHN HARBISON’S NOTE FROM THE SCORE OF HIS SYMPHONY NO. 5 IS REPRINTED HERE:

As an audience member I’ve noticed that listeners for a piece with words fall into three groups: (1) those who follow the text as the music is being performed; (2) those who read the text over, before or after the performance, with varying degrees of attention, and (3) those who pay no close attention to the text at any point, but listen only “symphonically,” that is, to the pattern of sound.

Those in the last group, though the ones for whom I have the least understanding, are probably the ones best qualified to decide whether this piece is, indeed, a Symphony. Every piece with singers and instruments should be coherent as a lucid sequence of sounds. These sounds, without reference to their verbal origins, aspired to a significant musical shape, something *symphonic*.

This piece existed, in imagination, as an orchestral meditation on loss, before the welcome suggestion from James Levine that it might contain music for voice. Three poems make more explicit the musical “theme.”

Tellers of mythic stories are especially free to tell, on the frame of a known “plot,” their own stories. What I loved about Milosz’s narrative was how truly *Milosz* it is—the habitual glosses and asides, his tough sensuous survival instinct, his sudden bolts of lyricism.

Milosz’s ending winningly evades the sober consequences suggested in my orchestral introduction. I felt his ending required an answer, a strong rejoinder. Louise Glück’s “Relic” is the counterforce. Song.

Then perhaps a Summation is possible. Rilke’s poem can be read and translated many ways. That quality allows the composer to set the tone. Stephen Mitchell’s graceful rendering gives the singers clear phrases to sing. On certain days I “thought” the poem this way:

Be in front of every Farewell as if  
it was already past, like the winter just passing now.  
Because among winters comes one so finally Winter  
that only by out-wintering it can your heart endure.  
Be forever dead in Euridice—rise singing,  
praising, rise back into your pure enterprise.  
Here amid that which disappears, be, in the realm of negation,  
be a sounding glass that shattered as it sounded.

Be—and still know at the same time the source of non-being—  
the endless basis of your inner “swing”  
so that this one time you can completely seize it.

To all that is worn out, to the mute and muted  
creatures of nature’s totality, the unexpressible sum,  
add yourself, rejoicing, and call it complete.

John Harbison

(Rilke translation by John Harbison)

JOHN HARBISON

Symphony No. 5 for Baritone, Mezzo-soprano, and Orchestra (2008),  
on texts of Czeslaw Milosz, Louise Glück, and Rainer Maria Rilke  
ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

Standing on flagstones of the sidewalk at the entrance to Hades  
Orpheus hunched in a gust of wind  
That tore at his coat, rolled past in waves of fog,  
Tossed the leaves of trees. The headlights of cars  
Flared and dimmed in each succeeding wave.

He stopped at the glass-panelled door, uncertain  
Whether he was strong enough for that ultimate trial.

He remembered her words: "You are a good man."  
He did not quite believe it. Lyric poets  
Usually have—as he knew—cold hearts.  
It is like a medical condition. Perfection in art  
Is given in exchange for such an affliction.

Only her love warmed him, humanized him.  
When he was with her, he thought differently about himself.  
He could not fail her now, when she was dead.

He pushed open the door and found himself walking in a labyrinth,  
Corridors, elevators. The livid light was not light but the dark of the earth.  
Electronic dogs passed him noiselessly.  
He descended many floors, a hundred, three hundred, down.

He was cold, aware that he was Nowhere.  
Under thousands of frozen centuries,  
On an ashy trace where generations had moldered,  
In a kingdom that seemed to have no bottom and no end.

Thronging shadows surrounded him.  
He recognized some of the faces.  
He felt the rhythm of his blood.  
He felt strongly his life with its guilt  
And he was afraid to meet those to whom he had done harm.  
But they had lost the ability to remember  
And gave him only a glance, indifferent to all that.

For his defense he had a nine-stringed lyre.  
He carried in it the music of the earth, against the abyss  
That buries all of sound in silence.  
He submitted to the music, yielded  
To the dictation of a song, listening with rapt attention,  
Became, like his lyre, its instrument.

Thus he arrived at the palace of the rulers of that land.  
Persephone, in her garden of withered pear and apple trees,  
Black, with naked branches and verrucose twigs,

Listened from the funereal amethyst of her throne.

He sang the brightness of mornings and green rivers,  
He sang of smoking water in the rose-colored daybreaks,  
Of colors: cinnabar, carmine, burnt sienna, blue,  
Of the delight of swimming in the sea under marble cliffs,  
Of feasting on a terrace above the tumult of a fishing port,  
Of the tastes of wine, olive oil, almonds, mustard, salt,  
Of the flight of the swallow, the falcon,  
Of a dignified flock of pelicans above a bay,  
Of the scent of an armful of lilacs in summer rain,  
Of his having composed his words always against death  
And of having made no rhyme in praise of nothingness.

I don't know—said the goddess—whether you loved her or not.  
Yet you have come here to rescue her.  
She will be returned to you. But there are conditions:  
You are not permitted to speak to her, or on the journey back  
To turn your head, even once, to assure yourself that she is behind you.

And so Hermes brought forth Eurydice.  
Her face no longer hers, utterly gray,  
Her eyelids lowered, beneath the shade of her lashes.  
She stepped rigidly, directed by the hand  
Of her guide. Orpheus wanted so much  
To call her name, to wake her from that sleep.  
But he refrained, for he had accepted the conditions.

And so they set out. He first, and then, not right away,  
The slap of the god's sandals and the light patter  
Of her feet fettered by her robe, as if by a shroud.  
A steep climbing path phosphorized  
Out of darkness like the walls of a tunnel.  
He would stop and listen. But then  
They stopped, too, and the echo faded.  
And when he began to walk the double tapping commenced again.  
Sometimes it seemed closer, sometimes more distant.  
Under his faith a doubt sprang up  
And entwined him like cold bindweed.  
Unable to weep, he wept at the loss  
Of the human hope for the resurrection of the dead,  
Because he was, now, like every other mortal.  
His lyre was silent, yet he dreamed, defenseless.  
He knew he must have faith and he could not have faith.  
And so he would persist for a very long time,  
Counting his steps in a half-wakeful torpor.

Day was breaking. Shapes of rock loomed up  
Under the luminous eye of the exit from the underground.  
It happened as he expected. He turned his head

And behind him on the path was no one.

Sun. And sky. And in the sky white clouds.

Only now everything cried to him: Eurydice!

How will I live without you, my consoling one!

But there was a fragrant scent of herbs, the low humming of bees,

And he fell asleep with his cheek on the sun-warmed earth.

*Czeslaw Milosz*

*Translated, from the Polish, by the author and Robert Haas*

*Based on the poem "Orpheus and Eurydice" © 2004 by Czeslaw Milosz, performed with the permission of The Wylie Agency, Inc. All rights reserved.*

### RELIC

Where would I be without my sorrow,  
sorrow of my beloved's making,  
without some sign of him, this song  
of all gifts the most lasting?

How would you like to die  
while Orpheus was singing?  
A long death: all the way to Dis  
I heard him

Torment of earth  
Torment of mortal passion—

I think sometimes  
too much is asked of us;  
I think sometimes  
our consolations are the costliest thing.

All the way to Dis  
I heard my husband singing,  
much as you now hear me.  
Perhaps it was better that way,  
my love fresh in my head  
even at the moment of death.

Not the first response—  
that was terror—

but the last.

*Louise Glück*

*Based on the poem "Relic" © 1999 by Louise Glück, performed with the permission of The Wylie Agency, Inc. All rights reserved.*

### SONNETS TO ORPHEUS II, 13

Sei allem Abschied voran, als wäre er hinter  
dir, wie der Winter, der eben geht.

Denn unter Wintern ist einer so endlos Winter,  
daß, überwinternd, dein Herz überhaupt übersteht.

Sei immer tot in Eurydike—, singender steige,  
preisender steige zurück in den reinen Bezug.  
Hier, unter Schwindenden, sei, im Reiche der Neige,  
sei ein klingendes Glas, das sich im Klang schon zerschlug.

Sei—und wisse zugleich des Nicht-Seins Bedingung,  
den unendlichen Grund deiner innigen Schwingung,  
daß du sie völlig vollziehst dieses einzige Mal.

Zu dem gebrauchten sowohl, wie zum dumpfen und stummen  
Vorat der vollen Natur, den unsäglichen Summen,  
zähle dich jubelnd hinzu und vernichte die Zahl.

– Rainer Maria Rilke

Be ahead of all parting, as though it already were  
behind you, like the winter that has just gone by.  
For among these winters there is one so endlessly winter  
that only by wintering through it will your heart survive.

Be forever dead in Eurydice— more gladly arise  
into the seamless life proclaimed in your song.  
Here, in the realm of decline, among momentary days,  
be the crystal cup that shattered even as it rang.

Be—and yet know the great void where all things begin,  
the infinite source of our inmost vibration,  
so that, this once, you may give it your perfect assent.

To all that is used-up, and to all the muffled and dumb  
creatures in the world's full reserve, the unsayable sums,  
joyfully add *yourself*, and cancel the count.

– Translated by Stephen Mitchell

*The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke* (Vintage/Random House: 1982). Used with permission.

### Gustav Mahler

#### “Das Lied von der Erde” (“The Song of the Earth”)

GUSTAV MAHLER WAS BORN IN KALISCHE (KALIŠTĚ) NEAR THE MORAVIAN BORDER OF BOHEMIA ON JULY 7, 1860, AND DIED IN VIENNA ON MAY 18, 1911. HE COMPOSED “DAS LIED VON DER ERDE” IN THE SUMMER OF 1908, GIVING IT THE SUBTITLE “A SYMPHONY FOR TENOR AND CONTRALTO (OR BARITONE) AND ORCHESTRA, AFTER HANS BETHGE’S “THE CHINESE FLUTE.” THE PREMIERE DID NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL SIX MONTHS AFTER HIS DEATH, WHEN BRUNO WALTER LED IT IN MUNICH ON NOVEMBER 20, 1911, WITH WILLIAM MILLER AND MME. CHARLES CAHIER AS SOLOISTS.

IN ADDITION TO THE TWO VOCAL SOLOISTS, THE SCORE OF “DAS LIED VON DER ERDE” CALLS FOR AN ORCHESTRA OF THREE FLUTES AND TWO PICCOLOS, TWO OBOES AND ENGLISH HORN, THREE CLARINETS, E-FLAT CLARINET, AND BASS CLARINET, THREE BASSOONS AND CONTRABASSOON, FOUR

HORNS, THREE TRUMPETS, THREE TROMBONES AND TUBA, TWO HARPS, TIMPANI, GLOCKENSPIEL, TRIANGLE, CYMBALS, TAM-TAM, TAMBOURINE, BASS DRUM, CELESTA, MANDOLIN, AND STRINGS.

*Das Lied von der Erde* is one of the most poignantly expressive compositions in the entire literature of music—it is music of farewell from a man who knows that he has but a short time to live. Yet there is nothing dismal or dreary about the work. Mahler was a man who loved life, who had reveled in it actively, and his leave-taking is that of one who still recalls the pleasures and the beauties that he is soon no more to enjoy. Moreover, it is among his most beautifully crafted scores, delicate and rich in color, evocative in every detail. Like all of the greatest masterpieces, it seems to be inventing itself afresh at every performance, to be unfolding for the very first time. And, like most of the greatest musical settings of a text, its rhythms and contours, once heard, never leave the memory, but return to it whenever the words come to mind.

In 1906 Mahler had completed his largest work, the Symphony No. 8, during his summer vacation at Maiernigg, on the Wörthersee in Styria. When he returned to the same place the following summer, tragedy struck. The composer's two daughters contracted scarlet fever, and the elder one died. Mahler and his wife Alma were shattered. Soon afterward, Alma's mother, who came to help during this sad period, suffered a heart attack. The doctor who examined her also found that the strain had affected Alma's heart. The composer, an athletic swimmer and ardent mountain climber, joked, "You might as well examine me, too." Having done so, the doctor told him, "I would not be proud of a heart like that." And thus he found himself suddenly under medical sentence of death, under which he lived for nearly four years.

Already in the summer of 1907 Mahler began to sketch some settings of eighty-three Chinese poems in a German rendering by Hans Bethge. Bethge's book *The Chinese Flute*, a collection of translations of poems already a thousand years old, had been a gift from Theobald Pollak. This was a fateful gift, as it happened, because Mahler turned to it at a moment when he was particularly aware of his own mortality, and found poems that spoke directly to his condition. (In fact, Bethge did not himself directly translate the Chinese texts, but rather drew upon existing translations into various European languages.)

Mahler chose seven texts from Bethge's collection, making a number of changes for the text of his own work, changes that emphasize the nostalgia of the whole, and setting them as six movements (the last movement is a setting of two poems separated by an orchestral interlude). The texts for movements 1, 3, 4, and 5 are from poems by Li-Tai-Po (702-763); movement 2 sets a text by Tschang-Tsi (c.800). The sixth poem combines 8th-century texts from Mong-Kao-Jen and Wang-Sei. The composition that resulted from Mahler's discovery of these poems is symphonic in scope, though filled throughout with the character of song, for which reason it is sometimes referred to as a "song-symphony." Alma Mahler recounted that her husband, superstitiously aware that no composer from Beethoven onward had completed more than nine symphonies, chose to give no number at all to this work, which could have been regarded as his ninth. Then, feeling that he had outsmarted the Grim Reaper, he gave the number 9 to his next symphony, which he jokingly referred to as his tenth. In the end, though, he did not live to hear either of his "Ninths"—the official or the unofficial one—and he never completed his Tenth.

There is a certain element of good storytelling about this legend (Alma was not above emphasizing Mahler's psychological torments, and quite possibly overdoing them). Michael Kennedy is reluctant to accept the story, if only because Mahler would certainly have recognized that *Das Lied von der Erde* is really not a symphony, or is, in any case, hardly comparable to the numbered symphonies.

Perhaps it should be noted that the title is slightly misleading: there is no intimation that the earth itself is singing here; a fuller and more accurate title might have been "The Song of Life on This Earth," for the six movements deal with human beings and their actions and perceptions in a world in which all is transient. The individual may deal with the inevitable passing of all things by choosing to drink and forget, by swathing oneself in sadness, by recalling (or envying) the joys of youth, by concentrating on the doleful fact that even beauty passes away, by developing a particularly acute sensitivity to natural beauty (which seems eternal, though it changes from day to day), or by means of

a poignant and nostalgic leave-taking. All of these responses are to be found in the individual songs of the work, sometimes intertwined in the same text.

As in the Ninth Symphony, which is the companion piece to *Das Lied von der Erde*, Mahler's textures are clear and transparently scored, but essentially polyphonic, with intertwining melodic lines that carry the progress of the music forward. These no doubt reflect his continuing absorption in the music of J.S. Bach. The sound of the score—varied throughout in shades of light and dark, though it is the light that lingers in the ear—often suggests a chamber ensemble, but one of enormous size. Often only a handful of instruments are playing, but many are at hand to lend a special tint to a given passage. The thematic kernels are, for the most part, the same that Mahler has used before for his expressive purposes—the assertive fourth, rising or falling (as at the opening in the horns—a summons challenging the singer's mortality), the rising minor third, and—most eloquent of all—the descending second, a single downward step, which becomes utterly unforgettable in its yearning at the very end of the score. In addition, Mahler has sprinkled his score tastefully with the most delicate chinoiserie, pentatonic figures that provide color without ever seeming mere stage-painting.

Mahler arranges the numbers so that the tenor and his vocal partner—typically a contralto—alternate throughout, the former generally having the more “assertive” music and moods, the latter having the more “internalized” expression. On the title page of his score, Mahler actually specified the alternative of baritone in place of the female soloist; but with very rare exceptions, the low-voice role has almost always been taken by a woman.

1. *Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde* (The Drinking Song of the Earth's Despair). (A minor) A horn fanfare and an outburst of orchestral laughter set the scene in some drinking resort, where the wine flows freely to drive off nagging thoughts of impending death. The solo line, with this powerful orchestration, requires a Heldentenor of Wagnerian stamina. The singer furiously defies his grief and mortality with more wine, and still more wine. Only when the text turns briefly to the blue firmament and spring's eternal renewal does Mahler allow him a moment of yearning peace—but to no avail: “You, o Man—how long will you live?” Each stage of the opening song ends with the refrain “*Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod*” (“Dark is life, dark is death”), each time appearing a semitone higher (G minor, A-flat minor, A minor) until achieving the home key.

2. *Der Einsame im Herbst* (The Lonely One in Autumn). (D minor) Autumn, of course, has always suggested not only the closing of the year but also the autumn of life. Over a gentle, muted scale figure in the violins, the oboe sings its yearning melody and the contralto, in weary, sustained lines, sings of the mists and the frosts. All is world-weariness, yearning for repose, though with enough energy left for a single outburst: “O Sun of love, will you never shine again to dry my bitter tears?”

3. *Von der Jugend* (Of Youth). (B-flat major) The poem depicts a scene of carefree young people enjoying their youth in a porcelain pavilion in the middle of a carp pond, a scene familiar from much Chinese art (and imitations thereof). It is a simple miniature, with the music of the opening stanza returning for the close.

4. *Von der Schönheit* (Of Beauty). (G major) This, too, is a delicate translation into music of a scene familiar from Chinese painting: as young women pick flowers on the riverbank, a group of horsemen gallops past, inspiring longing glances from the maidens.

5. *Der Trunkene im Frühling* (The Drunkard in Springtime). (A major) The poem praises drinking for its own sake, to excess, and Mahler's music suggests that the tenor has been taking his own advice: it begins in the home key of A, but the tenor's entrance, just three short measures later, lurches into B-flat. The inspired orchestration is filled with special effects suggesting the consequences of this over-indulgence, while the tenor is by turns assertive and sentimental, finally declaring his full intention of staying drunk.

6. *Der Abschied* (The Parting). (C minor/major) The sixth and most profound of the songs in *Das Lied von der Erde* lasts nearly half an hour, as much as the previous five put together. Here, with the most delicate and restrained of orchestral treatments, Mahler intertwines thematic ideas that have

been heard throughout the work. The text is filled with images of departure—the setting sun, the moon’s light, the sound of the brook at night, birds huddling for sleep, and the poet/singer longing to take a last farewell. Mahler treats all of this with the most exquisite delicacy—totally without sentimentality or dramatic posturing. An extended orchestral interlude functions as a quiet funeral march. As this builds to its climax and suddenly dies away, the final poem begins: a friend is saying farewell forever. It is not clear where he is going or why he has to go, but he must. In a hushed recitative over a sustained low C in the double basses, the singer sets the scene. The friend’s reply becomes warmer, more sustained, more richly accompanied by the orchestra until it blossoms into a softly shimmering C major with harps and violins as the singer evokes the endless rebirth of spring. Perhaps Mahler’s single most expressive stroke in the whole work is the final page for the contralto, who four times repeats “*ewig...ewig...*” (“forever...and forever...”) with a two-note melodic figure that moves from E to D but never completes the final step to the closing C; only the instruments of the orchestra, representing the endless blossoming of nature, are able to bring that final repose.

For many years, listeners and scholars accepted at face value the depiction of Mahler in Alma’s memoirs as a man who was obsessed with death, an emotional cripple. Yet any open-minded and openhearted listening to *Das Lied von der Erde* forces us to challenge this view. The music is, without question, valedictory. But it is, in John Donne’s phrase, a “valediction forbidding mourning,” a farewell from one who loved life and celebrated it in music that reminds us all how very precious it is.

Steven Ledbetter

STEVEN LEDBETTER was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1979 to 1998. In 1991 his BSO program notes received an ASCAP/Deems Taylor Award. He now writes program notes for orchestras and other ensembles from Boston to California and for such concert venues as Carnegie Hall.

Gustav Mahler

*Das Lied von der Erde*

Texts from Hans Bethge’s “The Chinese Flute”

Translations by Jerome Rosen (Nos. 1, 2, 5, 6) and Marc Mandel (Nos. 3, 4)

#### I. *Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde*

Schon winkt der Wein im gold’nen Pokale,  
Doch trinkt noch nicht, erst sing’ ich euch ein Lied!  
Das Lied vom Kummer soll auflachend  
in die Seele euch klingen.  
Wenn der Kummer naht,  
Liegen wüst die Gärten der Seele.  
Welkt hin und stirbt die Freude, der Gesang.  
Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod.  
Herr dieses Hauses! Dein Keller birgt  
die Fülle des goldenen Weins!  
Hier diese Laute nenn’ ich mein!  
Die Laute schlagen und die Gläser leeren,  
Das sind die Dinge, die zusammen passen.  
Ein voller Becher Weins zur rechten Zeit  
ist mehr wert als alle Reiche dieser Erde!  
Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod!  
Das Firmament blaut ewig, und die Erde  
Wird lange fest steh’n und aufblüh’n im Lenz.  
Du, aber, Mensch, wie lang lebst denn du?  
Nicht hundert jahre darfst du dich ergötzen  
An all dem morschen Tande dieser Erde!  
Seht dort hinab! Im Mondschein auf den Gräbern

Hockt eine wild-gespenstische Gestalt.  
Ein Aff' ist's! Hört ihr, wie sein Heulen  
Hinausgellt in den süßen Duft des Lebens!  
Jetzt nehmt den Wein! Jetzt ist es Zeit, Genossen!  
Leert eure gold'nen Becher zu Grund!  
Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod!

## II. Der Einsame im Herbst

Herbstnebel wallen bläulich überm See,  
Vom Reif bezogen stehen alle Gräser;  
Man meint, ein Künstler habe Staub von Jade  
über die feinen Blüten ausgestreut.  
Der süsse Duft der Blumen ist verflogen;  
Ein kalter Wind beugt ihre Stengel nieder.  
Bald werden die verwelkten gold'nen Blätter  
Der Lotosblüten auf dem Wasser zieh'n.  
Mein Herz ist müde. Meine kleine Lampe  
Erlosch mit Knistern, es gemahnt mich an den Schlaf.  
Ich komm' zu dir, traute Ruhestätte!  
Ja, gib mir Ruh, ich hab' Erquickung Not!  
Ich weine viel in meinen Einsamkeiten.  
Der Herbst in meinem Herzen währt zu lange.  
Sonne der Liebe, willst du nie mehr scheinen.  
Um meine bitteren Tränen mild aufzutrocknen?

## III. Von der Jugend

Mitten in dem kleinen Teiche  
Steht ein Pavillon aus grünem  
Und aus weissem Porzellan.  
Wie der Rücken eines Tigers  
Wölbt die Brücke sich aus Jade  
Zu dem Pavillon hinüber.  
In dem Häuschen sitzen Freunde,  
Schön gekleidet, trinken, plaudern,  
Manche schreiben Verse nieder.  
Ihre seidnen ärmel gleiten  
Rückwärts, ihre seidnen Mützen  
Hocken lustig tief im Nacken.  
Auf des kleinen Teiches stiller  
Wasserfläche zeigt sich alles  
Wunderlich im Spiegelbilde.  
Alles auf dem Kopfe stehend  
In dem Pavillon aus grünem  
Und aus weissem Porzellan;  
Wie ein Halbmond steht die Brücke,  
Umgekehrt der Bogen. Freunde,  
Schön gekleidet, trinken, plaudern.

## IV. Von der Schönheit

Junge Mädchen pflücken Blumen,  
Pflücken Lotosblumen an dem Uferrande.  
Zwischen Büschen und Blättern sitzen sie,  
Sammeln Blüten in den Schoss und rufen  
Sich einander Neckereien zu.

Gold'ne Sonne webt um die Gestalten,  
Spiegelt sie im blanken Wasser wider.  
Sonne spiegelt ihre schlanken Glieder,  
Ihre süssen Augen wider,  
Und der Zephir hebt mit  
Schmeichelkosen das Gewebe  
Ihrer ärmel auf, führt den Zauber  
Ihrer Wohlgerüche durch die Luft.  
O sieh, was tummeln sich für schöne Knaben  
Dort an dem Uferrand auf mut'gen Rossen,  
Weithin glänzend wie die Sonnenstrahlen;  
Schon zwischen dem Geäst der grünen Weiden  
Trabt das jungfrische Volk einher!  
Das Ross des einen wiehert fröhlich auf,  
Und scheut, und saust dahin,  
Über Blumen, Gräser, wanken hin die Hufe,  
Sie zerstampfen jäh im Sturm die  
hingesunk'nen Blüten,  
Hei! Wie flattern im Taumel seine Mähnen,  
Dampfen heiss die Nüstern!  
Gold'ne Sonne webt um die Gestalten,  
Spiegelt sie im blanken Wasser wider.  
Und die schönste von den Jungfrau'n sendet  
Lange Blicke ihm der Sehnsucht nach.  
Ihre stolze Haltung ist nur Verstellung.  
In dem Funkeln ihrer grossen Augen,  
In dem Dunkel ihres heissen Blicks  
Schwingt klagend noch die Erregung  
ihres Herzens nach.

#### V. Der Trunkene im Frühling

Wenn nur ein Traum das Leben ist,  
Warum denn Müh' und Plag'!?  
Ich trinke, bis ich nicht mehr kann,  
Den ganzen, lieben Tag!  
Und wenn ich nicht mehr trinken kann,  
Weil Kehl' und Seele voll,  
So tauml' ich bis zu meiner Tür  
Und schlafe wundervoll!  
Was hör' ich beim Erwachen? Horch!  
Ein Vogel singt im Baum.  
Ich frag' ihn, ob schon Frühling sei.  
Mir ist als wie im Traum.  
Der Vogel zwitschert: Ja!  
Der Lenz ist da, sei kommen über Nacht!  
Aus tiefstem Schauen lauscht' ich auf,  
Der Vogel singt und lacht!  
Ich fülle mir den Becher neu  
Und leer' ihn bis zum Grund  
Und singe, bis der Mond erglänzt  
Am schwarzen Firmament!  
Und wenn ich nicht mehr singen kann,  
So schlaf' ich wieder ein.  
Was geht mich denn der Frühling an!?

Lasst mich betrunken sein!

## VI. Der Abschied

Die Sonne scheidet hinter dem Gebirge.  
In alle Täler steigt der Abend nieder  
Mit seinen Schatten, die voll Kühlung sind.  
O sieh! Wie eine Silberbarke schwebt.  
Der Mond am blauen Himmelssee herauf.  
Ich spüre eines feinen Windes Weh'n  
Hinter den dunklen Fichten!  
Der Bach singt voller Wohllaut durch  
das Dunkel.  
Die Blumen blassen im Dämmerchein.  
Die Erde atmet voll von Ruh' und Schlaf.  
Alle Sehnsucht will nun träumen,  
Die müden Menschen geh'n heimwärts,  
Um im Schlaf vergess'nes Glück  
Und Jugend neu zu lernen!  
Die Vögel hocken still in ihren Zweigen.  
Die Welt schläft ein!  
Es wehet kühl im Schatten meiner Fichten.  
Ich stehe hier und harre meines Freundes;  
Ich harre sein zum letzten Lebewohl.  
Ich sehne mich, O Freund, an deiner Seite  
Die Schönheit dieses Abends zu genießen.  
Wo bleibst du? Du lässt mich lang allein!  
Ich wandle auf und nieder mit meiner Laute  
Auf Wegen, die von weichem Grase schwellen.  
O Schönheit! O ewigen Liebens-,  
Lebens-trunk'ne Welt!

### *(Orchestral Interlude)*

Er stieg vom Pferd und reichte ihm den  
Trunk  
Des Abschieds dar. Er fragte ihn, wohin  
Er führe und auch warum es müsste sein.  
Er sprach, seine Stimme war umflort:  
Du, mein Freund,  
Mir war auf dieser Welt das Glück nicht hold!  
Wohin ich geh'? Ich geh', ich wand're in die Berge.  
Ich suche Ruhe für mein einsam Herz!  
Ich wandle nach der Heimat,  
meiner Stätte.  
Ich werde niemals in die Ferne schweifen.  
Still ist mein Herz und harret seiner Stunde!  
Die liebe Erde allüberall blüht auf im  
Lenz und grünt  
Aufs neu! Allüberall und ewig blauen  
Licht die Fernen,  
Ewig...ewig...!

## I. The Drinking Song of the Earth's Despair

Now glimmers the wine in golden goblets,  
but let's not drink, not yet—first I have a song!  
The song of Sorrow will ring its laughter

through the soul.  
When Sorrow comes near,  
the soul's garden shrivels,  
joy and song wither and die.  
Dark is life, is death!  
Master of the house! Your cellar  
brims with golden wine.  
But here, this lute is mine!  
To pluck the lute, to empty the glasses,  
these things go well together.  
A full wine-glass at the right time  
is worth more than all the empires of this earth!  
Dark is life, is death!  
The starry sky is eternal, the firm earth  
long remains and even blooms again in springtime.  
But thou, humankind! What art thou?  
Not a hundred years hast thou to taste  
the stinking fruit of this earth!  
See there—there! In the moon-whitened graveyard  
gibbers a spectral thing...  
It is an ape! Hear him as he howls,  
shrieks, sours the sweetness of our lives!  
Now bring the wine! Now is the time, comrades!  
Drain the golden vessels to the dregs!  
Dark is life, is death!

## II. The Lonely One in Autumn

Autumn mist wells blue upon the sea,  
frost-covered stands the grass,  
as if an artisan had sprinkled jade-dust  
over all the leaves, all the fine-spun blossoms.  
The flowers' sweet fragrance is gone;  
a cold wind bends their stems earthward.  
Soon the withered golden lotus petals  
will scatter on the water.  
My heart is weary. My little lamp  
sputters low, I think of sleep...  
I come to you, dear resting place!  
Yes, give me peace, give me new life!  
I weep in my loneliness;  
autumn stays too long in my heart.  
Loving sun, wilt thou never again shine on me  
to gently dry my bitter tears?

## III. Of Youth

In the center of the small pool  
stands a pavilion of green  
and white porcelain.  
Like the back of a tiger  
the bridge, of jade, arches  
across to the pavilion.  
In the little house friends sit,  
finely clothed, drinking, chatting;  
some write verses down.  
Their silk sleeves slide backward,

their silken caps  
hang carelessly back on their necks.  
On the small pool's still surface  
everything shows clearly,  
magically, like a mirror image.  
They all stand on their heads  
in the pavilion of green  
and white porcelain.  
Like a half-moon stands the bridge,  
its arch turned upside down. Friends,  
finely clothed, drink and chatter.

#### IV. Of Beauty

Young maidens pick flowers,  
pluck lotus flowers at the water's edge.  
Among shrubs and leaves they're sitting,  
gathering blossoms in their laps,  
calling teasingly to one another.  
Golden sunshine envelops their forms,  
mirrors them in the shining water.  
Sunshine mirrors their slender limbs,  
their sweet eyes,  
and the west wind, with flattering  
caresses, lifts the fabric of their sleeves,  
bears the magic of their sweet fragrance  
through the air.  
Now see those fair youths,  
there on the shore, on spirited horses,  
gleaming, from afar, like the sun's rays;  
now through the green willow branches  
those heady youths come trotting!  
One youth's horse whinnies joyously,  
shies, races forward,  
over flowers, grass, its hooves trample;  
they trample the fallen flowers  
suddenly—it's like a storm—  
Look! how it tosses its mane, in a frenzy,  
its nostrils steaming hot!  
Golden sunshine envelops their forms,  
mirrors them in the shining water;  
and the fairest of the maidens casts  
long, longing glances toward him.  
Her proud bearing is only a pretense:  
in the flash of her large eyes,  
in the darkness of her searing glance,  
the troubled agitation in her heart  
is still evident.

#### V. The Drunkard in Springtime

If life is no more than a dream  
why then the shouts and tears!?  
I'll drink until I cannot drink,  
for days, for weeks, for years!  
And when I can't drink any more,

when guts and soul are full,  
I'll stagger to my own front door  
and sleep—so wonderful!  
What do I hear when waking? Hear!  
A pretty bird who sings?  
I'll ask him if the spring's here yet;  
I must be dreaming things.  
The birdie twitters, Yes, oh yes!  
The spring came in last night.  
I listen hard, he twitters, sings,  
and laughs 'til morning light.  
I fill my glass to start again;  
I drain it: bottoms up!  
I drink until the moon shines bright:  
I'll snare it in my cup!  
And when I tire of singing songs  
I'll go right back to sleep.  
Let spring go hang; what do I care!  
I'd rather be a drunk!

## VI. The Parting

The sun departs beyond the mountains.  
Evening descends into the valleys  
with its shadows cooling all.  
Oh see! Like a silver ship  
the moon soars on the blue sea of heaven.  
I feel a gentle wind  
wending through the darkling pines!  
The brook sings gently  
in the darkness.  
The flowers fade in dusk-light.  
The earth sighs, fully at peace, at rest.  
All longings want to dream.  
Weary humankind is going home,  
to find better fortune in slumber,  
to grow young again.  
The birds lie quiet in the branches.  
The world is dead asleep.  
It is cool in the shadow of my pines.  
Here I stand, waiting for my friend,  
waiting on the last parting.  
My friend, I long to savor with you  
the beauty of evening in this place.  
Where do you linger? You have left me too long alone!  
I pace, I stroll and stroke my lute,  
on the path overgrown with grass.  
O beauty! O endless love,  
life-drunken world!

He dismounted, and offered the  
stirrup-cup, the cup of parting.  
He asked him where  
he would go, and why he must.  
He spoke, and his voice was covered:  
Thou, my friend,

in this world good fortune was not mine!  
Where do I go? I go, go to wander in the mountains.  
I seek peace for my lonely heart.  
I wander toward my homeland,  
my dwelling place.  
No more will I roam the far country.  
My heart is still, awaiting its own hour!  
The loving earth, everywhere,  
everywhere flowers in springtime,  
becomes green again. Everywhere and  
ever blue gleams the beyond,  
forever...ever...!

**THE FIRST AMERICAN PERFORMANCE** of Mahler's "Das Lied von der Erde" was given by Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra on December 15, 1916, with soloists Johannes Sembach and Tilly Koenen.

**THE FIRST BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PERFORMANCES** of Mahler's "Das Lied von der Erde" were given by Serge Koussevitzky on December 7 and 8, 1928, with soloists George Meader and Mme. Charles Cahier. (It was Mme. Cahier who had sung the world premiere under Bruno Walter in 1911, in Vienna.) Koussevitzky led the work again in December 1930 with Richard Crooks and Margaret Matzenauer; in November 1936 with Paul Althouse and Maria Ranzow; in February 1937 in New York with Althouse and Ranzow; and in August 1949 at Tanglewood with David Lloyd and Janice Moudry. Richard Burgin led BSO performances in December 1943 with Hans J. Heinz and Jennie Tourel; in April 1950 with David Garen and Tourel; and in April 1961 with David Lloyd and Eunice Alberts, subsequent BSO performances being given by William Steinberg with Jon Vickers and Maureen Forrester (January 1970); Joseph Silverstein with Nicholas di Virgilio and Lili Chookasian (the most recent Tanglewood performance, on July 28, 1973); Colin Davis with Richard Cassilly and Janet Baker (January 1975, in Boston, Washington, D.C., and New York); James Levine with Ben Heppner and Anne Sofie von Otter (November 1994); and, in October/November 1998, Seiji Ozawa with Ben Heppner, baritone Thomas Quasthoff, and soprano Jessye Norman (with Quasthoff singing three of the four Symphony Hall performances, and Norman singing one Symphony Hall performance and two performances at Carnegie Hall).

## GUSTAV MAHLER

### Das Lied von der Erde

Texts from Hans Bethge's "The Chinese Flute"

Translations by Jerome Rosen (Nos. 1, 2, 5, 6) and Marc Mandel (Nos. 3, 4)

### To Read and Hear More...

Currently, the best quickly available source of information about John Harbison is the website of his publisher, G. Schirmer ([www.schirmer.com](http://www.schirmer.com)), which contains a biography, works list, reviews, and several interesting essays about the composer and individual pieces, including his opera *The Great Gatsby*. David St. George wrote the essay on Harbison in the *New Grove II*; Richard Swift wrote the one in *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music* (from 1983). Also of interest are the BSO's Concert Companion pages for Harbison at [www.bso.org](http://www.bso.org), which provide a multimedia view of the composer's career and the Symphony No. 5.

The catalogue of Harbison's recorded works is extensive and includes the Boston Symphony Orchestra's recording of the composer's Symphony No. 1, a BSO centennial commission, from 1984 (New World Records, with Olly Wilson's *Sinfonia*), and the Boston Symphony Chamber Players'

recording with pianist Gil Kalish of the Piano Quintet and *Words from Paterson*, the latter with baritone Sanford Sylvan, on a disc with *Simple Daylight* performed by Kalish and soprano Dawn Upshaw (Nonesuch). A live recording by James Levine and the Munich Philharmonic of Harbison's Symphony No. 3 was released as volume 7 in the series "Documents of the Munich Years" (Oehms Classics, with Gershwin's *Cuban Overture* and Ives's Symphony No. 2). Of the other symphonies, there is as yet no recording of the Symphony No. 4 (2004; premiered by Gerard Schwartz and the Seattle Symphony Orchestra), and the San Francisco Symphony's recording with conductor Herbert Blomstedt of Symphony No. 2 has inexplicably dropped out of the catalog—a particular loss, because Harbison's Oboe Concerto and one of the few recordings of Roger Sessions's Symphony No. 2 were also on that disc (Decca). Another recording of Symphony No. 3, along with Harbison's Flute Concerto and *The Most Often Used Chords*, is by David Alan Miller and the Albany Symphony Orchestra (Albany Records).

Just last month conductor Gil Rose and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project's recording of the complete ballet *Ulysses*—the first complete recording of this major work—was the first release on that orchestra's new label, BMOP Sound. A new recording of the piano-and-voice version of the composer's big song cycle *Mottetti di Montale* with mezzo-soprano Janice Felty and pianist Judith Gordon was released earlier this year (Albany); Boston-based Collage New Music led by David Hoose previously released the chamber-ensemble version, with the voice part split between Janice Felty and mezzo-soprano Margaret Lattimore (Koch). Naxos has released three discs of chamber music of various sorts; the most recent is a disc featuring the Piano Trio No. 2, *Gatsby Etudes*, the Cello Suite, and other works performed by the Amelia Piano Trio and others. The Boston-based Cantata Singers, with whom Harbison has long been affiliated, recorded two of his 1990s choral works, *Four Psalms* and *Emerson*, conducted by David Hoose (New World Records). The Cantata Singers and Orchestra and David Hoose also recorded the Pulitzer Prize-winning cantata *The Flight into Egypt*, with soprano Roberta Anderson and baritone Sanford Sylvan; also on that disc are *The Natural World* and the Concerto for Double Brass Choir and Orchestra (New World Records). Other recommendable discs include the Violin Concerto performed by the composer's wife, Rose Mary Harbison, with Emmanuel Music conducted by Craig Smith (Koch); Jaime Laredo's performance of the Viola Concerto with Hugh Wolff and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (New World Records); and the chamber ensemble version of Harbison's *Mirabai Songs*, sung by Dawn Upshaw with the Orchestra of St. Luke's under David Zinman (Nonesuch, with Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* and works by Menotti and Stravinsky).

Robert Kirzinger

Paul Banks's Mahler article from *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1980) was reprinted in *The New Grove Turn of the Century Masters: Janáček, Mahler, Strauss, Sibelius* (Norton paperback). The Mahler article in the revised Grove (2001) is by Paul Franklin. Michael Kennedy's *Mahler* in the Master Musicians series (Oxford paperback) and Kurt Blaukopf's *Mahler* (Limelight paperback) also provide good starting points. Deryck Cooke's *Gustav Mahler: An Introduction to his Music* is a first-rate brief guide to the composer's music (Cambridge University paperback). New to the Mahler bibliography is *The Cambridge Companion to Mahler*, edited by Jeffrey Barham, published in December 2007 (Cambridge University paperback). *Gustav Mahler: Letters to his Wife*, edited by Antony Beaumont, Henry-Louis de La Grange, and Gunther Weiss (Cornell University Press; Beaumont previously compiled *Alma Mahler-Werfel: Diaries 1898-1902*, from the same publisher), and Stuart Feder's *Gustav Mahler: A Life in Crisis*, a psychoanalytic view of the composer's life (Yale University Press), are noteworthy recent additions to the Mahler bibliography. Published in 1999, *The Mahler Companion*, edited by Donald Mitchell and Andrew Nicholson, is an important volume of essays devoted to Mahler's life, works, and milieu, with individual chapters on all of his major pieces, including a chapter by Stephen E. Hefling on *Das Lied von der Erde* (Oxford). The biography *Mahler* by Jonathan Carr offers an accessible approach aimed at beginners and enthusiasts (Overlook Press). Henry-Louis de La Grange's biography of Mahler, originally in French, and of which a four-volume English version is planned, so far includes two English-language volumes—*Vienna: The Years of Challenge, 1897-1904* and *Vienna: Triumph and Disillusion, 1904-1907* (Oxford). The latest volume, *Gustav Mahler: A New Life Cut Short, 1907-1911*, which covers

Mahler's final years (including the period of *Das Lied von der Erde*), was due for publication in January 2008 but was put off to April (Oxford). The out-of-print, original first volume of La Grange's study, entitled simply *Mahler*, and due for revision, covered Mahler's life and work through January 1902 (Doubleday). The other big Mahler biography, Donald Mitchell's, so far extends to three volumes—*Volume I: The Early Years*; *Volume II: The Wunderhorn Years*; and *Volume III: Songs and Symphonies of Life and Death*—covering through the period of *Das Lied von der Erde* (University of California). Alma Mahler's autobiography *And the Bridge is Love* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) and her *Gustav Mahler: Memories and Letters* (University of Washington paperback) provide important if necessarily subjective source materials. Knud Martner's *Gustav Mahler: Selected Letters* offers a useful volume of correspondence, including all the letters published in Alma's earlier collection (Farrar, Straus and Giroux). Mahler enthusiast and conductor Gilbert Kaplan has seen to the publication of *The Mahler Album* with the aim of bringing together every known photograph of the composer (The Kaplan Foundation with Thames and Hudson). Though now more than twenty years old, Kurt Blaukopf's extensively illustrated *Mahler: A Documentary Study* remains well worth seeking in second-hand shops (Oxford University Press). *Mahler Discography*, edited by Péter Fülöp, will be valuable to anyone interested in Mahler recordings, though its 1995 publication date obviously precludes inclusion of discs issued since then (The Kaplan Foundation).

James Levine recorded *Das Lied von der Erde* in 1992 with Jessye Norman, Siegfried Jerusalem, and the Berlin Philharmonic (Deutsche Grammophon). Two historic recordings under Bruno Walter's direction remain important to any serious Mahler enthusiast: a 1952 studio recording with contralto Kathleen Ferrier (fatally stricken with cancer at the time), tenor Julius Patzak, and the Vienna Philharmonic (London/Decca "Legends") and a 1936 concert performance, also with the Vienna Philharmonic, with mezzo-soprano Kerstin Thorborg and tenor Charles Kullman (Dutton). Another live performance with Walter conducting, from 1953, features Elena Nikolaidi and Set Svanholm with the New York Philharmonic (Music & Arts or Archipel). Classic stereo accounts of *Das Lied von der Erde* include Otto Klemperer's with Christa Ludwig, Fritz Wunderlich, and the Philharmonia Orchestra, from 1964/66 (EMI "Great Recordings of the Century") and Fritz Reiner's with Maureen Forrester, Richard Lewis, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, from 1959 (RCA Victor "Living Stereo"). A powerful 1972 concert performance features mezzo-soprano Alfreda Hodgson and tenor John Mitchinson with Jascha Horenstein conducting the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra (BBC Legends). For those seeking a version using Mahler's option of baritone rather than mezzo, there are two with baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, the first from 1959 with tenor Murray Dickie and the Philharmonia Orchestra led by Paul Kletzki (EMI), the second from 1966 with tenor James King and the Vienna Philharmonic under Leonard Bernstein (London/Decca "Legends"). A very good 1995 recording features tenor Peter Seiffert and baritone Thomas Hampson with Simon Rattle conducting the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (EMI). Other recordings of interest include Bernard Haitink's with Janet Baker, James King, and the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, from 1975 (Philips) and Colin Davis's with Jessye Norman, Jon Vickers, and the London Symphony Orchestra, from 1981 (also Philips).

Marc Mandel

### Guest Artists

#### Kate Lindsey

Mezzo-soprano Kate Lindsey appears twice with James Levine and the Boston Symphony Orchestra this season—in John Harbison's BSO-commissioned Symphony No. 5 (Ms. Lindsey's BSO debut), and in the BSO's season-ending concert performances of Berlioz's *Les Troyens*. She returned to the Metropolitan Opera this season as Cherubino in *Le nozze de Figaro*, Stéphanie in *Roméo et Juliette*, and the Madrigal Singer in *Manon Lescaut*. A recent graduate of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, she made her debut there as Javotte in *Manon* and has since appeared as the Second Lady in the new English-language children's version of *The Magic Flute* (which was broadcast in HD in movie theaters around the world), Tebaldo in *Don Carlo*, and Siebel in *Faust*. Other recent engagements have included several debuts—with Boston Lyric Opera as Cherubino, with the Cleveland Orchestra in performances of Haydn's *Harmoniemesse* conducted by Franz Welser-Möst, and with the Met Chamber Ensemble in Zankel Hall. Ms. Lindsey has also

appeared as Stéphano, Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, and Mercedes in *Carmen* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis (where she was a Gerdine Young Artist), as Angelina in *La Cenerentola* at Wolf Trap Opera, and as Rosina at Washington East Opera. A native of Richmond, Virginia, Ms. Lindsey holds a bachelor of music degree with distinction from Indiana University. Her many awards include the 2007 Richard F. Gold Career Grant, the 2007 George London Award in memory of Lloyd Rigler, the 2007 Lincoln Center Martin E. Segal Award, and a 2006 Sullivan Foundation Grant. She was first-place winner of the 2005 Licia Albanese Puccini Foundation Competition, a regional finalist in the 2004 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, first-place winner in the Student Division of the 2004 Palm Beach Opera Competition, and a major winner in the 2004 Opera Index Competition.

### Nathan Gunn

Baritone Nathan Gunn makes his BSO subscription series debut this week; his only previous Boston Symphony appearance was as soloist in Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* at Tanglewood in 1999. Also this season, Mr. Gunn returns to the Metropolitan Opera as Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette*, to Lyric Opera of Chicago as Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, and to the London Symphony Orchestra for the title role in a concert version of *Billy Budd* conducted by Daniel Harding. At Carnegie Hall he makes his recital debut, and performs in concerts with the Atlanta Symphony and the Orchestra of St. Luke's. Highlights of last season included Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* (both in the original Julie Taymor production and in a new English-language children's version that was broadcast live in movie theaters worldwide), Figaro at San Francisco Opera, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and *Billy Budd* at Pittsburgh Opera. Mr. Gunn has appeared in internationally renowned opera houses in repertoire including the title roles in *Billy Budd* and *Hamlet*, Papageno, Guglielmo, Figaro, the Count, Zurga in *Les Pêcheurs de perles*, and Ottone in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. He created the role of Clyde Griffiths in the world premiere of Tobias Picker's *An American Tragedy* at the Metropolitan Opera. On the concert stage, Mr. Gunn has appeared with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Münchner Rundfunkorchester, and the Rotterdam Philharmonic, under such conductors as Sir Andrew Davis, Sir Colin Davis, Dohnányi, Eschenbach, Gilbert, Harding, Levine, Masur, Nagano, Pappano, Runnicles, Salonen, Spano, Tilson Thomas, and Wigglesworth. He has been presented in recital at Alice Tully Hall and by Cal Performances, the Schubert Club, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, the Vocal Arts Society in Washington, D.C., the University of Chicago, the Krannert Center, Wigmore Hall, and the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels. As a student, he performed with his teacher John Wustman in recitals celebrating the 200th anniversary of Franz Schubert's birth. Nathan Gunn is an exclusive recording artist for Sony/BMG Masterworks; his first solo album for the label, "Just Before Sunrise," was released in August 2007. Other recordings include the Grammy-nominated *Peter Grimes* with Sir Colin Davis and the London Symphony Orchestra, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Kullervo* with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and his debut album, a collection of American songs entitled "American Anthem." He was Buzz Aldrin in *Man on the Moon*, an opera written specifically for television and broadcast in December 2006 by the BBC in the United Kingdom; the program garnered the Golden Rose Award for Opera at the Montreux Festival in Lucerne. Nathan Gunn has received the first annual Beverly Sills Artist Award, and, more recently, the Pittsburgh Opera Renaissance Award. An alumnus of the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artist Program, he won the 1994 Metropolitan Opera National Council Competition. He is also an alumnus of the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, where he still makes his home and was recently awarded a university professorship.

### Anne Sofie von Otter

Mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter is sought after by many of the world's major orchestras, conductors, opera companies, and recording companies. Born in Sweden, she began her studies in Stockholm and continued with Vera Rózsa at London's Guildhall School. She was a principal member of Basel Opera before launching an international career that has now spanned more than two decades. She is particularly renowned for her interpretation of Oktavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*, a role she has recorded for EMI with Bernard Haitink and has performed at Stockholm, Munich, Chicago,

Vienna, Covent Garden, the Opéra-Bastille in Paris, and the Met, as well as in Japan with the late Carlos Kleiber (a performance available on DVD). Her repertoire also includes Gluck's Orfeo and Alceste, the title roles of Handel's *Ariodante* and *Xerxes*, Ruggerio in *Alcina*, Sesto in *Giulio Cesare*, Sesto in Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*, Clairon in Strauss's *Capriccio*, the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Nerone and Ottavia in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Concepción in Ravel's *L'heure espagnole*, and the title role of Carmen. At the Metropolitan Opera she has sung numerous performances of *Der Rosenkavalier*, *La clemenza di Tito*, and *Idomeneo* as well as making her stage debut as Mélisande in Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Highlights of last season included her acclaimed debut as Brangäne in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* in Los Angeles and New York (a semi-staging by Peter Sellars conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen), *Bluebeard's Castle* with the Boston Symphony and James Levine in Boston and New York, and Ravel's *Shéhérazade* in Paris and Vienna with Myung-Whun Chung. The current season brings her debut as Didon in the Kokkos staging of *Les Troyens* at Geneva Opera, a new *Orphée* in Stockholm with Mats Ek, Lully's *Thésée* with Emanuelle Haim at Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, and a May 2008 residency at Vienna's Musikverein, to include orchestral concerts with Philippe Jordan. Concert engagements take her throughout Europe and America. An acclaimed recitalist, she performs around the world with her accompanist Bengt Forsberg. Anne Sofie von Otter's recording relationship with Deutsche Grammophon began in 1985. Her discography encompasses award-winning Lieder and chamber music recordings, orchestral repertoire ranging from Bach to Berg, and an extensive opera catalogue including Debussy's *Mélisande*, Bartók's *Judith*, Monteverdi's *Ottavia*, Gluck's *Orfeo*, Mozart's *Sesto*, *Idamante*, and *Cherubino*, Strauss's *Composer*, *Charlotte* in *Werther*, *Baba the Turk* in *The Rake's Progress*, and Handel's *Ariodante*, *Hercules*, and *Sesto* in *Giulio Cesare*. Other Deutsche Grammophon releases include "For the Stars," an award-winning collaboration with Elvis Costello; the Baroque recital "Music for a While"; "I Let the Music Speak," celebrating the music of Benny Andersson and Bjorn Ulvaeus, and, most recently, "Theresienstadt," which was awarded France's Diapason d'or de l'Année 2007. Anne Sofie von Otter has appeared twice previously with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, both times with James Levine conducting—in Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* in November 1994, and as *Judith* in *Bluebeard's Castle* in November 2006. She returns here in two weeks, to sing the role of Dido in Part II of Berlioz's *Les Troyens*.

### Johan Botha

South African-born tenor Johan Botha is considered one of the leading tenors of his generation. Since making debuts in Kaiserslautern, Hagen, Dortmund, and at Oper Bonn, he has been heard on all of the major opera and concert stages throughout the world, including the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, the state operas of Berlin and Dresden, Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Grand Théâtre Genève, Hamburg State Opera, London's Royal Opera House, Los Angeles Opera, La Scala in Milan, the Opéra-Bastille and Châtelet in Paris, the Salzburg Festival, the Vienna Volksoper, and Opera Australia in Sydney. He appears regularly with the Metropolitan Opera and Vienna State Opera, where his repertoire includes *Daphne*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Don Carlo*, *Fidelio*, *Lohengrin*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *Tosca*, *Parsifal*, *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Otello*, and *Die Walküre*, among others. Besides his deep commitment to the opera stage, Mr. Botha regularly appears on the concert stage as well, including collaborations with the BBC Symphony, Bergen Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of London, the London Symphony Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic, RSO-Vienna, and the WDR Cologne, as well as in Barcelona, Dresden, Madrid, Oslo, and frequently in his chosen hometown of Vienna, to name a few. Johan Botha made his BSO debut in Mahler's Symphony No. 8 at Tanglewood in July 2005, subsequently returning for his BSO subscription series debut in Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* in February 2006, a repeat performance of *Gurrelieder* at Tanglewood in July 2006, and the role of Florestan in concert performances of Beethoven's *Fidelio* in March 2007, all under the direction of James Levine. In July 2007 he sang the title role in a Tanglewood concert performance of Verdi's *Don Carlo* with Maestro Levine and the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra.