

YALE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

MAHLER

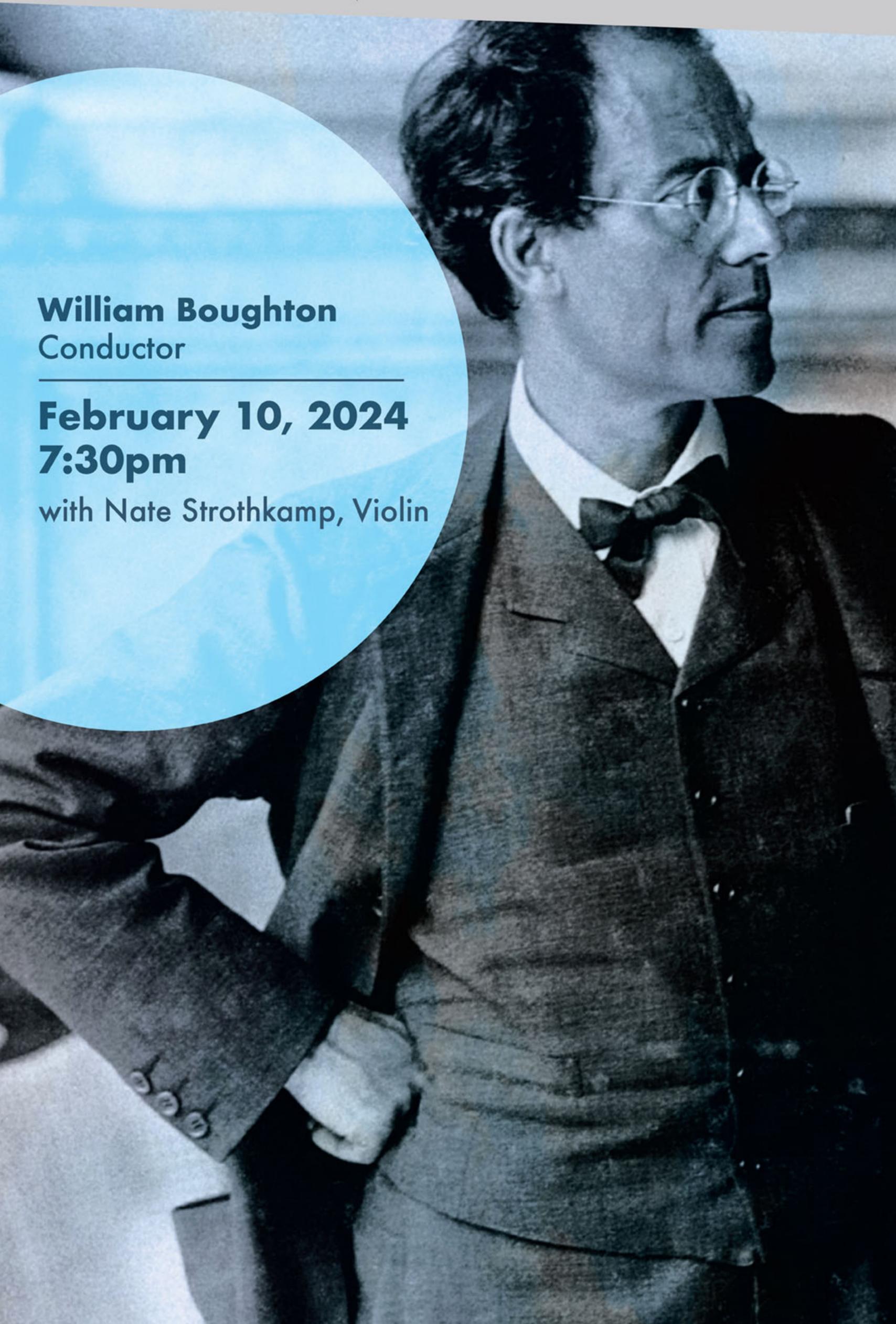
SYMPHONY

№5

William Boughton
Conductor

February 10, 2024
7:30pm

with Nate Strothkamp, Violin



Yale Symphony Orchestra

William Boughton, Director

Nate Strothkamp, Violin

Winner of the 2023 William Waite Concerto Competition

PROGRAM

Violin Concerto No. 2

Sergei Prokofiev

Nate Strothkamp '26, violin

1. Allegro moderato
2. Andante assai
3. Allegro, ben marcato

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 5

Gustav Mahler

Part I

1. Trauermarsch. In gemessenem Schritt. Streng. Wie ein Kondukt
2. Stürmisch bewegt, mit größter Vehemenz

Part II

3. Scherzo. Kräftig, nicht zu schnell

Part III

4. Adagietto. Sehr langsam
5. Rondo-Finale. Allegro – Allegro giocoso. Frisch

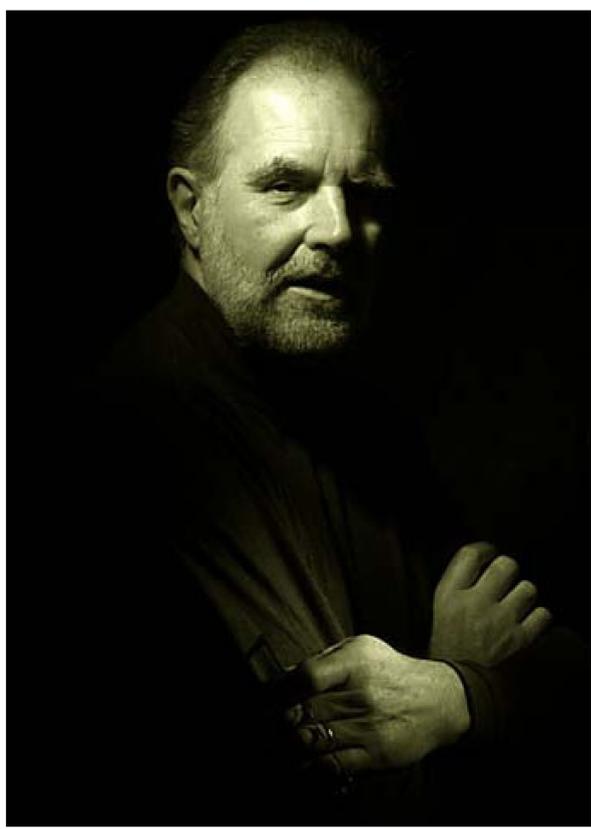
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William Boughton, *Conductor*

Born into a musical family - his grandfather (Rutland Boughton) was a composer, his father a professional viola player and his mother a singer. After studies, at New England Conservatory (Boston), Guildhall School of Music (London) and Prague Academy as a cellist, he entered the profession in

London playing with the Royal Philharmonic, BBC and London Sinfonietta Orchestras.

The experience of playing in orchestras led to a passion to pursue a career in conducting studying with George Hurst and then Sir Colin Davis. In 1980 he formed the English String Orchestra initially focusing on early 20th Century English repertoire but developing it into late



20th and 21st Century Contemporary music commissioning over 20 works from composers such as Peter Sculthorpe, John Joubert, Anthony Powers, Michael Berkeley, John Metcalf, Stephen Roberts and Adrian Williams. The depth of his partnership with the ESO was epitomised in 1985 when, as Artistic Director of the Malvern Festival, he collaborated with Sir Michael Tippett to present a musical celebration of the composer's eightieth birthday which was the subject of a BBC "Omnibus" documentary.

With the ESO he built a significant discography of internationally acclaimed recordings with Nimbus Records - predominantly of English music, a number of which reached the Top Ten in the US Billboard charts.

Between 1986-93 he was also Artistic & Music Director of the Jyväskylä Sinfonia in Finland and guest conducted with numerous orchestras including the London Symphony, Philharmonia, San Francisco, Royal Philharmonic, Finnish Radio, Mittel Deutsch Radio, working with artists such as Nigel Kennedy, Leonidas Kavakos, Emmanuel Ax, Radu Lupu and Viktoria Mullova.

In October 1993, William Boughton was award-

ed an Honorary Doctorate from Coventry University in recognition of his expertise in British music. In November 1995, he and the ESO presented a weekend of music celebrating the 60th birthday of English composer Nicholas Maw, marking another milestone in his championship of contemporary English music. In 1996 William Boughton commenced a second term as Artistic Director of the Malvern Festival.

The 2005/6 Season was his final year with the ESO in which they celebrated the Orchestra's 25th Anniversary performing a 'Complete Beethoven Symphony Cycle', and created a new series of pre-concert performances of British contemporary music, including works by Birtwistle, Knussen, Watkins, Woolrich, Holloway and Turnage.

In July 2007 he became the 10th Music Director of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra (NHSO), with whom he instituted a 'Composer in Residence' Scheme (Augusta Read Thomas, Christopher Theofanidis, Hannah Lash) and started a major Walton Project with concerts, lectures/talks and recordings on the Nimbus Label. With the NHSO he has received two ASCAP Awards (2011 & 2014) for Adventurous Programming and received critical acclaim for the Walton Project, with Gramophones Edward Greenfield nominating it for 'Record of the Year' (2010). In October 2014 two new recordings were released with the New Haven Symphony of William Walton and Augusta Read Thomas.

His commitment and dedication to the younger generation is epitomized through his teaching – creating a cello studio in one of the poorest areas of New Haven, building the NHSO's Education Dept, working with the State and Regional Youth Orchestras and teaching at the Yale School of Music. In May 2016 he visited Central China University for Conducting Master-classes and conducted the Hubei Symphony. He regularly records for both Nimbus and Lyrita Labels and guest conducts in the USA.

Nate Strothkamp, *Violin*

Nate Strothkamp is a twenty year-old violinist from Portland, Oregon. A current student of Wendy Sharp at Yale University, Nate has appeared as a soloist with the Oregon Symphony, Beaverton Symphony Orchestra, and Portland Youth Philharmonic and was selected as a 2022 All Classical Portland Young Artist Ambassador. Nate served as co-concertmaster of the Portland Youth Philharmonic from 2019-2022 and was invited to play in the Oregon Symphony and Amadeus Chamber Orchestra. He has attended the YellowBarn, Moritzburg, Chamber Music Northwest, Boston University Tanglewood Institute, Castleman, and Bowdoin summer festivals, as well as three iterations of the Online Solo String Intensive. Nate had the opportunity to perform in masterclasses for many renowned artists including Hilary Hahn, Simone Lamsma, Soovin Kim, Jan Sloman, and the Dover, Kronos, Brentano, and Miró quartets. He was selected as a participant in the 2022 New York String Orchestra Seminar with Jaime Laredo and was chosen as a co-winner of the 2023 Yale Symphony Orchestra William Waite Concerto Competition. Nate is currently a sophomore at Yale University pursuing music, education studies, and American studies while playing in a piano quintet and serving as sub-concertmaster of the Yale Symphony Orchestra.

Nate is performing on the Miriam Schneider and Michael Wieck violin, donated by Michael Schneider, an 18th century Milanese instrument labeled Carlo Antonio Testore on generous loan from the Yale School of Music.



Violin Concerto No. 2

Sergei Prokofiev

Sergei Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 63 was written at a pivotal time in the Russian composer's life. In 1935, Prokofiev had spent almost two decades traveling away from his home country. Despite ominous signs of Russia's future under Stalin, Prokofiev felt compelled to return to his home. The second violin concerto was his final Western commission, written for French violinist Robert Soërens, and it depicts unique stylistic characteristics that allude to this transitory period of Prokofiev's life. Prokofiev writes in his autobiography:

The variety of places in which that concerto was written is a reflection of the nomadic concert-tour existence I led at that time; the principal theme of the first movement was written in Paris, the first theme of the second movement in Voronezh, the orchestration I completed in Baku, while the first performance was given in Madrid in December 1935.

A haunting solo violin melody opens the first movement, *Allegro moderato*, beginning on the lowest note of the instrument and weaving through the key of G minor. Just eight measures into the movement, the orchestra enters in the key of B minor. These sly, quick key changes emerge all throughout the first movement, leaving the audience suspended and unsettled without a clear tonal center. The opening section is interrupted briefly by a romantic second theme, in which the solo violin and orchestra engage in an intimate dialogue. The theme is fleeting, however, and the solo violin soon continues with hurried acrobatic passages and anxious outbursts. The movement comes to a quiet but chilling close that violinist Stefan Jackiw describes as “a falling guillotine.”

The second movement, *Andante assai*, juxtaposes the first movement with its endlessly soaring melodic lines, swinging pizzicato accompaniment, two-versus-three syncopations, and dream-like textures. The solo vio-

lin embodies many roles throughout the movement, from intimate expression to proud heroism to colorful accompaniment. Prokofiev transforms the purpose of the solo violin over the course of the movement from melodic to accompanimental, perhaps alluding to his own personal transition from a touring composer back to his roots in Russia. The second movement remains hopeful until the end, when the melody descends down into the lowest register of the orchestra and foreshadows drama to come.

The third movement, *Allegro ben moderato*, is a fiery, jaunty, and passionate dance that pushes the solo violin to the limits of virtuosity. This character is highlighted with the inclusion of castanets, Prokofiev's reference to Spain where the concerto was premiered. The movement relentlessly propels forward for its full seven-minute duration, culminating in a riveting coda: a dialogue between violin and bass drum in 5/4 time. Though still a dance, this new time signature adds both fear and excitement to the music, and the different sections of the orchestra gradually join in to collectively bring the movement to a rowdy finish. The sharp and dry final notes harken back to the guillotine in the first movement.

Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 2 is unique, terrifying, and beautiful. Its astounding array of characters and colors is a testament to the tensions Prokofiev faced while sacrificing his nomadic touring life, longing for his homeland, and fearing Stalin's reign. Prokofiev never left Russia after he returned, and though he continued to compose many great works, it was impossible to escape Stalin's oppressive cultural policies. This concerto was Prokofiev's final artifact before his voyage back home, and its experimental style urges both musicians and audience members to imagine a strange world, narrate a fantastical story, and wrestle with the tensions between love, hate, fear, and hope.

– Nate Strothkamp '26

Symphony No. 5 Gustav Mahler

In February of 1901, Gustav Mahler suffered a major hemorrhage that placed him within an hour of losing his life. Rattled by this near death experience, the composer relocated to a lakeside villa at Maiernigg (now

known as Maria Wörth) in June of 1901, where he spent this period of convalescence in what often marks his middle period or post-*Wunderhorn* era compositions, including his fifth, sixth, and seventh symphonies. Friends of Mahler remarked in hindsight how delighted the composer was that he owned the property, and often spoke of how far he had come from his humble beginnings.

This story brings us to tonight, a February 123 years later, across the world, where we present Mahler's Fifth Symphony in its vast entirety. The musculature of this symphonically dense work reflects a marked difference from the arguably vocal focus of Mahler's first four symphonies, which is also seen again in his later works such as the inimitable *Das Lied von der Erde* ('*Song of the Earth*', 1908-1909). The work is scored for a large symphony, as most of Mahler's works underscored the larger than life nature of symphonic music; notably, this symphony features a large brass and wind section - flutes doubling as piccolos, oboe doubling as English horn, bassoon doubling as contra - a six person regime of horns, and a large percussion section. With all of this laid over the foundation of a full string section, it is possible to see the sheer scope of this symphonic work just from its composition and what is required of it.

Although special things can certainly be small in scale as it goes with chamber music, there is something to be said about the importance of a work so monumental it requires the deliberate, intimate collaboration of dozens of people to make it come to life. As Christian Schubart's *Ideen zu einer Aesthetik der Tonkunst* (1806) mentions the characteristics of keys, the key of c sharp minor - which is the key of the first movement - represents lamentation, religious intimacy, and the entanglement of friendship and love. On the other hand, the finale of this symphony is in D major, which famously emulates triumph.

Since Mahler opposed the labeling of a particular key to this symphony due to the difficulty of such a task, it must be recognized that this work requires a much broader musical understanding past its key. Typical performances last around 70 minutes, and the work is constructed in a more conventional way than most Mahler symphonies, although it is worth mentioning that it is written in five movements, ending on a *rondo* in classical tradition. The fifth symphony is a marking of Mahler's arrival into an era of densely orchestrated

symphonic music, with less attachment to vocal music as seen in his first four symphonies. Mahler also takes inspiration from Bach in his usage of counterpoint, particularly in the second, third, and fifth movements of this symphony. The symphony is also grouped into three larger parts, rather than just the movements:

PART ONE

This part of the symphony consists of the first and second movements; the first movement, marked *trauermarsch* (funeral march), is also given the marking *In gemessenem Schritt. Streng. Wie ein Kondukt* - meaning 'At a measured pace. Strict. Like a funeral procession'. This tradition of a funeral march as an opening movement is a familiar maneuver for Mahler, as seen in his second symphony, *Resurrection*. The movement, composed in c sharp minor, opens with a solitary, punctuated trumpet solo, perhaps one of the most famous in musical history. The rhythmic call of the trumpet emulates both the march of the Austro-Hungarian army but also Beethoven's 5th symphony; following the trumpet solo, the strings introduce a melancholic primary theme - the funeral march. The funerary qualities of this melody are immense in their sadness yet not overwhelming, as the primary theme is interrupted by a less somber, more serene secondary motif.

The second movement, marked only as *Stürmisch bewegt, mit größter Vehemenz* (Moving stormily, with the greatest vehemence), in a minor, indicates a much different mood than the first movement. However, the second movement can be thought of as an inversion of the first movement as a whole, as it is a quicker movement interrupted by slower motifs. This play on structure is also accompanied by both movements sharing thematic material, making the reason for their grouping together more prominent. This second movement also returns to the secondary theme of the first movement, bringing Part 1 to a solemn close following a moment of near victory.

PART TWO

The sole movement that makes up the second part of this symphony is the snappy *scherzo*, marked *Kräftig, nicht zu schnell*, translated as 'strong, but not too fast'. A sudden change from the *sturm und drang* of the first part of the symphony, the *scherzo* is introduced with a blaring unison of four horns that eventually leaves the

first horn as soloist, with a challenging *obbligato* serving as interjections throughout the movement. The waltz-like rhythms and sunny disposition of this movement are juxtaposed with the tragedy of the first part of the symphony, the strings creating an adventurous canvas that weaves dance with the joyous character of this section. However, this sudden change of tone is rather self-aware, as this is representative of the so-called ‘schizophrenic’ character of the symphony. The inventiveness of this movement can best be heard in its rich polyphony, the exuberance of this *scherzo* demonstrative of Mahler’s compositional abilities.

PART THREE

Perhaps the most famous movement of the entire symphony, the fourth movement, *Adagietto*, is marked only with *sehr langsam* (very slow). With the orchestra reduced to only strings and harp, the contour of this movement resembles one of Mahler’s earlier songs, “*Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen*” (“I am Lost to the World”). The final line of the song can be translated to “I live in solitude in my heaven, In my love, in my song.”, which can tell us much about what Mahler wanted audiences and performers alike to draw out of this movement— calm. Alma, Mahler’s wife, is also known to have been an inspiration for the *Adagietto*, having written in a letter that her husband left the following poem:

Wie ich Dich liebe, Du meine Sonne,
ich kann mit Worten Dir's nicht sagen.
Nur meine Sehnsucht kann ich Dir klagen
und meine Liebe, meine Wonne!

This, translated into English, roughly gives us:

In which way I love you, my sunbeam,
I cannot tell you with words.
Only my longing, my love and my bliss
can I, with anguish, declare.

The difficulty in this movement lies in expressing the depth of emotion that Mahler intended to convey. How does one, let alone a group of a hundred people, turn one page of music into something larger than all of us? There is not much left to say or do about this movement, except to listen and let it stick to you like honey.

The fifth movement, a jaunty *rondo* in the key of D

major (similarly to the scherzo), is marked with *Allegro – Allegro giocoso. Frisch*, the last of the aforementioned words translating to ‘fresh’. The *finale* to this enormous work is not just refreshing, but simply illuminating; it is vivacious in its brass chorales, returning from the second movement, and stunning in its virtuosity seen in the strings. Melodies return from the *Adagietto*, however this time in faster, more playful forms, and this movement is truly a finale in every sense of the word; tears of grief and laughter become indistinguishable. There is no drawn out ending– the music seems eager to end, glad to complete itself. The symphony ends, quite literally, with a bang, and everything is all quick movements of bows, perpetual motion in scales, until it’s over and nothing is left behind but the remnants of the orchestra’s energy.

This symphony is about gratitude, death, love, and how they are all parts of the same whole. It is about the things we carry with us, and the things that have weight; through this, we can be reminded that to be human is to pursue what we believe makes life worth living.

We constantly search for significance in things - historical, personal, or otherwise - in an effort to justify how much they mean to us. But the musical *je ne sais quoi* embedded in the breadth of Mahler’s oeuvre requires no justification; it exists in the space between who we are and who we want ourselves to become, and the lengths to which we feel, as an action, not just a word. Living life as an extension of this symphony– hardship and glory, tragedy and comedy, crying and laughing.

– Jackie Liu ’25

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Yale Symphony Orchestra



About the Orchestra

The Yale Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1965 by a group of students who saw the growing potential for a large orchestral ensemble to thrive on campus. The YSO provides a means for students to perform orchestral music at the conservatory level while taking advantage of all that Yale, a liberal-arts institution, has to offer.

The YSO boasts an impressive number of alumni who have gone on to successful musical careers with: New York Philharmonic (Sharon Yamada, 1st violin), the Boston Symphony Orchestra (Haldan Martinson, principal 2nd violin, and Owen Young, cello), the Los Angeles Philharmonic (David Howard, clarinet), the San Francisco Symphony (the late William Bennett, oboe), Philadelphia Orchestra (Jonathan Beiler, violin), Toronto Symphony (Harry Sargous, oboe, ret.) and the Israel Philharmonic (Miriam Hartman, viola); as well as music director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Marin Alsop; National Public Radio commentator Miles Hoffman; composers Michael Gore, Robert Beaser, Conrad Cummings, Stephen Paul Hartke, Robert Kyr, and more.

Throughout its history the YSO has been committed to commissioning and performing new music. Notably, the YSO presented the European premiere of Leonard Bernstein's *Mass* in 1973, the world premiere of the definitive restoration of Charles Ives' *Three Places in New England*, the U.S. premiere of Debussy's *Khamma*, and the East Coast premiere of Benjamin Britten's *The Building of the House*.

The YSO programs orchestral works written by new and emerging composers, as well as lesser-known works by established and obscure composers. The full list of YSO premieres can be seen at <https://yso.yalecollege.yale.edu/give-yso/premieres>.

The YSO has performed with internationally recog-

nized soloists; including Yo-Yo Ma, Frederica von Stade, Emmanuel Ax, David Shifrin, Thomas Murray, and Idil Biret. Each year the YSO is proud to perform major solo concerti played by the student winners of the William Waite Concerto Competition.

The YSO has performed at New York City's Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center, and St. Patrick's Cathedral. In the past ten years, the YSO has toured domestically and internationally, including a 2010 tour of Turkey with acclaimed pianist Idil Biret. Ms. Biret rejoined the orchestra for a recording of Paul Hindemith's piano concerti, which were released in 2013 on the Naxos label.

Past tours have brought the orchestra to Portugal, Korea, Central Europe, Italy, Brazil, and Russia. The YSO completed its first tour of Mexico in March of 2023. The full list of YSO tours can be seen at <https://yso.yalecollege.yale.edu/history/touring>.

The YSO is famous for its legendary Halloween Show, a student-directed and -produced silent movie, performed around midnight in full costume. Long a Yale tradition, the Halloween Show sells out Woolsey Hall days in advance, and the production details and storyline remain closely guarded secrets until the night of performance. Recent cameo film appearances include James Franco, Woody Allen, Alanis Morissette, Rosa DeLauro, Jodie Foster and Jimmy Kimmel.

The YSO music directors include Richmond Browne, John Mauceri, C. William Harwood, Robert Kapilow, Leif Bjaland, Alasdair Neale, David Stern, James Ross, James Sinclair, Shinik Hahm, George Rothman, and Toshiyuki Shimada. This year is William Boughton's fifth year as Director.

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