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**ORAMO  
CONDUCTS MAHLER'S  
FOURTH SYMPHONY**

Wednesday 16 April 2025

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Associate Orchestra

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**BBC**  
**Symphony  
Orchestra  
& Chorus**

SAKARI ORAMO  
CHIEF CONDUCTOR

## Feel the Music

The BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus at the Barbican

WEDNESDAY 12 MARCH, 7.30pm

### **Stasevska conducts Ravel**

**BÉLA BARTÓK** Cantata profana

**MAURICE RAVEL** Piano Concerto for the Left Hand

**LEOŠ JANÁČEK** Sinfonietta

**Dalia Stasevska** *conductor*

**Robin Tritschler** *tenor*

**Miklós Sebestyén** *bass-baritone*

**Jean-Efflam Bavouzet** *piano*

BBC Symphony Chorus

SUNDAY 30 MARCH

### **Total Immersion: Pierre Boulez**

A centenary tribute to one of the 20th century's most iconoclastic composers and thinkers, and former Chief Conductor of the BBC SO.

FRIDAY 4 APRIL, 7.30pm

### **Wigglesworth conducts Debussy and Berg**

**ALBAN BERG**

Three Pieces from 'Lyric Suite'  
Der Wein

**CLAUDE DEBUSSY**

Le livre de Baudelaire  
Nocturnes

**Ryan Wigglesworth** *conductor*

**Sophie Bevan** *soprano*

BBC Symphony Chorus

FRIDAY 11 APRIL, 7.30pm

### **Oramo conducts Vaughan Williams**

**RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**

Serenade to Music

**DOREEN CARWITHEN**

Concerto for Piano

**MALCOLM ARNOLD**

Symphony No. 5

**Sakari Oramo** *conductor*

**Alexandra Dariescu** *piano*

BBC Singers

WEDNESDAY 16 APRIL, 7.30pm

### **Oramo conducts Mahler's Fourth Symphony**

**DOROTHY HOWELL** Lamia

**KURT WEILL** Der neue Orpheus

**GUSTAV MAHLER** Symphony

No. 4 in G major

**Sakari Oramo** *conductor/violin*

**Anu Komsí** *soprano*

FRIDAY 25 APRIL, 7.30pm

### **Hough plays Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto**

**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN**

Egmont - overture

Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor

**GUSTAV MAHLER** Symphony

No. 1 in D major

**Sakari Oramo** *conductor*

**Stephen Hough** *piano*

FRIDAY 16 MAY, 7.30pm

### **Slobodeniouk conducts Prokofiev's 'Romeo and Juliet'**

**LILI BOULANGER** Psalm 130,  
'Du fond de l'abîme'

**SIR JAMES MacMILLAN** Three  
Interludes from 'The Sacrifice'

**SERGEY PROKOFIEV** Romeo  
and Juliet - excerpts

**Dima Slobodeniouk** *conductor*

**Marta Fontanals-Simmons**

*mezzo-soprano*

BBC Symphony Chorus

FRIDAY 23 MAY, 7.30pm

### **Elder conducts Mahler**

**FRANZ SCHREKER**

Kammersymphonie

**GUSTAV MAHLER** Das Lied  
von der Erde

**Sir Mark Elder** *conductor*

**Alice Coote** *mezzo-soprano*

**David Butt Philip** *tenor*

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RADIO **B** SOUNDS



**WEDNESDAY 16 APRIL 2025**

7.30pm, BARBICAN HALL



**DOROTHY HOWELL** Lamia 12'

**KURT WEILL** Der neue Orpheus, Op. 15 20'

INTERVAL: 20 MINUTES

**GUSTAV MAHLER** Symphony No. 4 in G major 54'

**Sakari Oramo** conductor/violin

**Anu Komsa** soprano

**RADIO 3 SOUNDS**

This concert is being broadcast live by BBC Radio 3 in *Radio 3 in Concert*. It will be available for 30 days after broadcast via BBC Sounds, where you can also find podcasts and music mixes.

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Tonight the BBC SO's Chief Conductor, Sakari Oramo, returns to conduct three works from the first three decades of the 20th century that reflect a burgeoning of musical diversity – a snapshot of the varied musical styles of the time, ahead of the take-down and rebuild effected by the modernists of the mid-century.

Dorothy Howell was dubbed 'the English Strauss' after Henry Wood (founder-conductor of the Promenade Concerts) conducted the premiere of her symphonic poem *Lamia* in 1919. At the age of just 21, Howell could already place her gifts for narrative flow and opulent scoring at the service of Keats's poem – set in a forest on the shores of Crete – in which the snake Lamia assumes a human form.

Oramo takes up the violin solo, joining soprano Anu Komsu in Kurt Weill's cantata *Der neue Orpheus* – which displays the composer's close connection with the stage in combining elements of opera and cabaret.

Mahler's Fourth Symphony straddles the divide between the 19th and 20th centuries, linking to the past but also pointing to the future, not least in the nightmarish ride of its first movement, complete with sleighbells. According to Oramo, the challenge in Mahler is to maintain an overall sense of continuity. 'I absolutely want all the contrasts to be as near the listener as possible,' he has said, 'but without stopping the overall flow of the music.'

**B B C**

### **SOUNDS**

You can hear recent performances by the BBC Symphony Orchestra on BBC Sounds.

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Watch the BBC SO's performances at the First and Last Nights of the 2024 Proms on BBC iPlayer until a year after first broadcast.

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## **DOROTHY HOWELL** **(1898–1982)**

### **Lamia (1918)**

It was ‘exceptional’ for a British composer’s work to become as successful as *Lamia*, the conductor Henry Wood observed. But when the composer in question was additionally a woman, he considered it nothing short of ‘a triumph’. He conducted the world premiere of Dorothy Howell’s symphonic poem *Lamia* at the 1919 Proms, and it proved so popular with the audience that it had to be repeated multiple times in the season, establishing itself as a Proms staple in succeeding years. Wood himself became one of Howell’s most staunch supporters – he was delighted when she dedicated the work to him, saying he considered it his ‘little baby’.

The breakout success of *Lamia* was made even more extraordinary because it was the first time that any of Howell’s orchestral music had been heard publicly. Just twenty-one years old, at the start of the 1919 Proms she was a relatively unknown composer. The piece turned Howell into a celebrity overnight. She was bombarded with interview requests as the press raced to find out everything they could about the woman they variously dubbed ‘the English Strauss’ and (with an air of infantilisation) a ‘Girl Musical Genius’.

*Lamia* is based on a poem by John Keats, about a snake transformed into a woman who is doomed to return to her original state as soon as her true identity is

revealed. *Lamia* falls in love with Lycius, and she convinces him to hide their love from the world. But when she finally consents to marry him, she is recognised at their wedding feast and vanishes into thin air. The events of the poem are clearly audible in Howell’s rendering. It opens with a seductive, undulating chromatic line woven between two flutes – *Lamia*’s snake persona. The love theme follows, first in the oboe, then violins, then cellos. The wedding dance is playful and joyous, decorated by the tambourine and harp, but *Lamia*’s snake theme soon returns. After a reprise of the two main themes the piece melts into silence, closing with quiet, funereal chords.

#### **Programme note © Leah Broad**

Leah Broad is a writer and broadcaster specialising in women’s cultural history. *Quartet: How Four Women Changed the Musical World*, her group biography of Ethel Smyth, Rebecca Clarke, Dorothy Howell and Doreen Carwithen, was published in 2023 (Faber & Faber).

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## **DOROTHY HOWELL**

When asked to give an interview about herself in 1923, Dorothy Howell advised the journalist in question to ‘talk for most of the column, and then bring me in casually at the end’, signing off with a brief ‘Excuse haste; I have to get on with my trumpets and trombones.’ This was completely characteristic. Modest to a fault, Howell lived for her music and her music alone. She was never one for self-promotion. Combined with the fact that

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she worked in a period with a widespread prejudice against women composers – and in which her romantic style was seen as old-fashioned – this has meant that Howell’s music received comparatively little attention from the 1940s onwards, and is only now experiencing something of a renaissance.

Born in Birmingham, Howell composed from a very young age. She studied privately with the composer Granville Bantock before entering the Royal Academy of Music. Her earliest compositions were written for her first instrument, the piano, but she shot to fame in 1919 with the symphonic poem *Lamia*. She followed this breakthrough piece with other major works, such as a ballet *Koong Shee* (1921, rev. 1933); a Piano Concerto (1923); and another symphonic poem, *The Rock* (1928). All were premiered at the Proms, the concerto with Howell herself as the soloist.

Alongside her orchestral music, Howell penned a substantial quantity of chamber music. She kept up a dual career as both pianist and composer, and she premiered many of her piano works herself. Among her most significant solo and chamber pieces are the Piano Sonata (c1916) and Violin Sonata (1947), but only a small proportion of her chamber music was ever published. What little made its way into print proved popular with performers, including her solo piano works *Humoresque* (1919), *Spindrift* (1920) and *Toccata* (1922).

Although Howell never had children of her own and remained unmarried, she adored children and taught first privately and then as a Professor at the Royal Academy of Music. She wrote extensively for children, and these playful pieces showcase her gentle sense of humour, with titles like *Puddle Duck (with apologies to Beatrix Potter)* (1911) and *Puppy Dogs’ Tales* (1925). Howell’s faith was another important strand in her life; she was a staunch Catholic, and wrote various sacred choral works including Masses, motets and anthems.

Howell lived quietly and died in relative obscurity in Malvern, where she is buried in the same graveyard as Edward Elgar, one of her lifelong inspirations.

Profile © Leah Broad

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## KURT WEILL (1900–50) Der neue Orpheus, Op. 15 (1925)

Anu Komsı soprano

Sakari Oramo violin/conductor

While working on *Der Protagonist* (1924–5) Weill met the Surrealist poet Yvan Goll and decided to collaborate with him on two projects: the cantata *Der neue Orpheus* and the opera *Royal Palace*. *Der neue Orpheus*, composed during the second half of 1925 and scored for soprano, solo violin and a chamber orchestra without violins, sets an extended and ironic poem about the mythical Orpheus who descends to the 'everyday street of the daily grind' in order to save his Eurydice. But Goll's Orpheus is not a romantic hero, but a well-behaved Mr Average, 'one metre seventy-eight tall, weighing sixty-eight kilos, brown eyes, narrow forehead, stiff hat, Catholic, sentimental, in favour of democracy'. His function is to roam through the city fulfilling the necessity of spreading music to tired and hungry hearts 'like a warm compress'. He becomes a shy piano teacher, joins the cabaret and appears as a clown in the circus, directs freedom songs for war veteran associations, plays the organ in church, frays people's emotions in conducting Mahler, performs in a picture house, makes gramophone records, piano rolls, and is even reproduced on the steam organ. When his radio concert is broadcast from the Eiffel Tower, Orpheus is proclaimed a genius. Yet he still harbours the desire to save Eurydice, the

prostitute waiting for him at the Silesian Railway Station. Unfortunately she turns away from him, incapable of accepting the power of his muse. Sitting alone in the station waiting room, Orpheus then shoots himself.

Weill's cantata, uniquely combining elements of opera, cabaret song and concerto, is constructed almost in the manner of a traditional operatic scena. After a lengthy and menacing orchestral introduction, couched in the intense and brittle style of *Der Protagonist*, the soprano delivers a dramatic recitative. More lyrical writing is announced at the words 'Orpheus ist zu dir gekommen' (Orpheus has come to you), where Weill begins a brief arioso section (*Andantino grazioso*) that forms the basis for a set of seven brief variations which underscore Orpheus's blossoming career as a contemporary musician. Before the variations, the violin, representing Orpheus's mythical lute, enters with a cadenza over low string tremolandos. The vivid images conjured in Goll's text allow Weill the opportunity to develop a strikingly contrasted sequence of ideas within a relatively short time span. Each variation parodies a different musical style, from Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, a Viennese waltz, oompah-band circus music, a march, Bachian organ music and a Mahlerian scherzo to the 'Pilgrims' Chorus' from Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. After the variations, the final section of the work, a cabaletta-style *Allegro vivace*, begins with the words

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‘Orpheus wird zum Genie’ (Orpheus becomes a genius). In the coda, there is a brief recollection of the opening idea of the work, where the harp assumes an even more prominent role in the texture than before. Just before Orpheus’s suicide, the violin movingly reiterates a short two-bar phrase, first heard in the cadenza.

Although *Der neue Orpheus* is another transitional work exploiting the virtuosity of vocal writing and angularity of language prevalent in *Der Protagonist*, there are other elements – specifically the clarity of Weill’s word-setting, the balanced structure and the momentary allusions to popular musical idioms – which point forward to the later compositions. For Weill, the struggle to reconcile these two sides of his creative personality became more urgent in succeeding years.

**Programme note © Erik Levi**

Erik Levi is a writer, broadcaster and Professor Emeritus in Music at Royal Holloway, University of London. He is author of the books *Music in the Third Reich* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1996) and *Mozart and the Nazis: How the Third Reich Abused a Cultural Icon* (Yale UP, 2010) and co-editor with David Fanning of *The Routledge Handbook to Music under German Occupation, 1938–1945* (2019).

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Damien Kennedy**

## KURT WEILL

Kurt Weill first rose to prominence as a powerful voice among the German avant-garde of the 1920s. Born on 2 March 1900, the son of a synagogue cantor in Dessau, he had composition lessons in his teens with Albert Bing before joining the Berlin Hochschule für Musik, where his teachers included Engelbert Humperdinck, composer of *Hansel and Gretel*. Later he studied with Ferruccio Busoni. Modernist, Romantic, free-thinking, jazz and cabaret strands in due course all fed into his unique musical language.

After the First World War, Weill earned a living as a jobbing musician, playing the piano in a Leipzig bierkeller and later teaching music theory (his students included Claudio Arrau, Maurice Abravanel and Nikos Skalkottas). Through his association with the leftist Novembergruppe artists he met the singer Lotte Lenya, whom he married in 1926, divorced in 1933, then remarried four years later.

Aged 27, Weill began to work with the dramatist Bertolt Brecht, collaborating on *Happy End* (1927–9), *The Threepenny Opera* (1928) and *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (1930), among other creations. The partnership powered both figures to new heights of achievement and fame, although Brecht’s trenchant political stance and acerbic character led to recurrent fallouts.



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After Hitler came to power in January 1933, and the subsequent arson attack on the Reichstag, Weill, who was Jewish, and Brecht, a Marxist, read the runes. Within a few weeks, Weill, with Lenya, fled Germany, going first to Paris – soon summoning Brecht to join him there to work on *The Seven Deadly Sins* – then in 1935 to New York, having been invited to the city to help produce the premiere of his dramatic oratorio *The Eternal Road*.

Weill and Lenya did not return to Europe. Instead, they embraced their new environment wholeheartedly. Weill involved himself in political action in favour of the USA joining the Second World War and embarked upon studies of American stage musicals and popular songs. In a 1943 radio interview he declared that he had ‘never felt as much at home in my native land as I have from the first moment in the United States’.

Weill duly reinvented himself as a composer of Broadway musicals, including *Lady in the Dark* (1940) and *One Touch of Venus* (1943), as well as a superb hybrid of opera and musical, *Street Scene* (1946), with playwright Elmer Rice and poet Langston Hughes. Weill died in New York of a heart attack shortly after his 50th birthday.

#### Profile © Jessica Duchen

Jessica Duchen’s music journalism appears in *The Sunday Times*, the *i* and *BBC Music Magazine*. She is the author of seven novels, three plays,

biographies of Fauré, Korngold and, most recently, Myra Hess and the librettos for Roxanna Panufnik’s operas *Silver Birch* and *Dalia*, commissioned by Garsington Opera.

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**INTERVAL: 20 MINUTES**

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**GUSTAV MAHLER (1860–1911)**  
**Symphony No. 4 in G major**  
**(1882, 1899–1900; rev. 1901–10)**

- 1 Bedächtig. Nicht eilen** [Deliberate. Don't hurry] – **Recht gemächlich** [Very leisurely]  
**2 In gemächlicher Bewegung. Ohne Hast** [At a leisurely pace. Without haste]  
**3 Ruhevoll** [Serene]  
**4 Sehr behaglich** [Very cosy]

**Anu Koms** soprano

In 1900 Mahler wrote to a friend about his newly completed Fourth Symphony. Initially he had envisaged the work as a kind of 'humoresque', but it seemed the music had other ideas:

To my astonishment it became plain to me that I had entered a totally different realm, just as in a dream one imagines oneself wandering through the flower-scented garden of Elysium and it suddenly changes to a nightmare of finding oneself in a Hades full of terrors ... This time it is a forest with all its mysteries and its horrors which forces my hand and weaves itself into my work. It becomes even clearer to me that one does not compose; one is composed.

Mysteries and horrors? Mahler's Fourth is often portrayed as his least complicated symphony: an idyllic picture of infant happiness, culminating in a child's vision of heaven. But Mahler knew only too well that children could both suffer intensely

and be alarmingly callous. There is cruelty in the text Mahler sets in his finale, 'Das himmlische Leben' ('The Heavenly Life'): 'we lead ... a guiltless, a patient, a lovely lamb to death!' the child tells us happily; 'Saint Luke is slaughtering the oxen.' Earlier we glimpse 'the butcher Herod', responsible for the Massacre of the Innocents in the biblical Christmas story. What kind of heaven has room for characters like these?

Ambiguous it may be, yet this concluding song-movement also offers one of the most original and satisfying solutions to the Romantic symphonists' perpetual 'finale problem'. It couldn't be less like the titanic, all-encompassing finales of Beethoven's Fifth and Ninth Symphonies, which so many (including Mahler) had tried to emulate. Interestingly, he wrote this movement some time before he began work on the preceding three. It was one of several settings of poems from the classic German folk collection *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* ('The Youth's Magic Horn') Mahler had composed in the 1890s. Yet in the Fourth Symphony the first three movements prepare the way for the closing vision of the song-finale on every possible level: its themes, orchestral colours, tonal scheme and, most of all, its masked emotional complexity.

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The very opening of the Fourth Symphony is a foretaste of the finale. Woodwind and sleighbells set off at a slow jog-trot, then

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a languid rising violin phrase turns out to be the beginning of a disarmingly simple tune: Mahler in Mozartian wig and frills. Contained yearning in the lovely second theme (cellos) soon subsides into the most childlike idea so far (solo oboe and bassoon). Later another tune is introduced by four flutes in unison – panpipes or, perhaps, whistling boys. After this the ‘mysteries and horrors’ gradually make their presence felt, until at the climax horns, trumpets, bells and glittering high woodwind sound a triumphant medley of themes from earlier on. A dissonance, underlined by gong and bass drum, introduces trumpets sounding out the fanfare rhythm Mahler later used to begin the sinister funeral-march first movement of his Fifth Symphony. Suddenly the music stops, and the Mozartian theme starts again in mid-phrase, as though nothing had happened. All the main themes now return, leading to a brief, ebullient coda.

The second movement, a scherzo with two trios, proceeds at a leisurely pace (really fast music is rare in this symphony). Mahler described the first theme as ‘Freund Hain spielt auf’: the ‘Friend Hain’ who ‘strikes up’ here is a Pied Piper-like figure from German folklore whose fiddle-playing beguiles its hearers into the land of ‘Beyond’ – death in disguise? Freund Hain’s fiddle is evoked by the orchestral leader playing a violin tuned a tone higher than normal, sounding both coarser and – literally – more highly strung. There are cosier, more comforting moments, though the final shrill *forte*

(flutes, oboes, clarinets, glockenspiel, triangle and harp) leaves a sulphurous aftertaste.

According to Mahler the slow movement, marked ‘Serene’, was inspired by ‘a vision of a tombstone on which was carved an image of the departed, with folded arms, in eternal sleep’ – an image half consoling, half achingly sad. A set of free variations on the first theme explores facets of this ambiguity, culminating in a full orchestral outburst of pure joy in E major (the key in which the finale is to end), with another climactic medley of themes. Then the movement slips back into peaceful sleep, to awaken – in the finale – in Paradise, or at least a child’s version of it.

Now the soprano enters for the first time. Mahler adds a note in the score: ‘To be sung in a happy childlike manner: absolutely without parody!’ At the mention of St Peter, the writing becomes hymnlike; then come the troubling images of slaughter. The singer seems unmoved by what she relates but plaintive, animal-like cries from oboe and low horn create a momentary frisson. The movement makes its final turn to E major on the words ‘There is no music on earth that can be compared with ours’. Then the child falls silent and the music gradually fades until nothing is left but the soft, low repeated tolling of the harp.

**Programme note © Stephen Johnson**

Stephen Johnson is the author of books on Bruckner, Wagner, Mahler and Shostakovich,

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and is a regular contributor to *BBC Music Magazine*. For 14 years he was a presenter of BBC Radio 3's *Discovering Music*. He now works both as a freelance writer and as a composer.

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## GUSTAV MAHLER

The eldest surviving of 14 children, Mahler grew up in the vibrant Bohemian city of Iglau (then within the Austrian Empire and now known as Jihlava), where his father owned a distillery and tavern. Born to Jewish parents who spoke German at home, Mahler was celebrated locally as a piano prodigy, gaining admission to the Vienna Conservatory at the age of 15 but ultimately studying composition. Thereafter he enrolled briefly at the University of Vienna to study philosophy and literature – enduring interests that profoundly affected his compositional development.

A young conductor lurching from one job to the next, Mahler was a force of nature in his capacity to learn operatic repertoire and impose high standards. Even with his enormous conducting skill, his strong personality remained a liability. Following appointments at the Royal Hungarian Opera in Budapest and the Hamburg Municipal Theatre, Mahler converted to Catholicism in 1897, qualifying him for the directorship at the Vienna Court Opera. In a city rife with anti-Semitism, his success at the Court Opera was eclipsed by personal difficulties with singers and the administration. He concurrently directed

the Vienna Philharmonic (1898–1901) but orchestra members chafed at his onerous rehearsal demands and revisions to great classics.

Continuing challenges led Mahler to negotiate a contract in 1907 with the Metropolitan Opera, New York. Sharing the podium with Arturo Toscanini the next season (1908–9) displeased him and he resigned, accepting an invitation to direct the New York Philharmonic. Its expanded concert season (1909–10) and touring proved exhausting, compounded by European travel in the summer. The next winter Mahler's defective heart valves became infected, and he returned to Vienna, where he died at the age of 51.

Mahler's music faced searing criticism because his preferred genre, the symphony, symbolised tradition and morality in Austro-German culture. Favouring a multiplicity of voices that evoked the diverse perspectives of urban and rural life, Mahler rejected the conventions of symphonic unity and of the dominance of melody over accompaniment. With textural expansion and brash colours, he tested the accepted limits of established taste. His first bold innovation was to meld together song (quiet intimacy) and symphony (public grandeur). He incorporated orchestral songs into the first four symphonies (premiered between 1889 and 1901); the Eighth Symphony (composed 1906–7) and *Das Lied von der Erde* ('The Song of the Earth', 1908–9) include vocal text throughout. With the genius and audacity

to reinvent and revitalise Austro-German tradition, Mahler left behind a veritable symphonic world (nine numbered symphonies, an incomplete 10th and an early cantata) that drew on orchestral and harmonic colours, spanning the full expressive range from late Romanticism to modernism.

**Profile © Karen Painter**

Karen Painter is a professor at the University of Minnesota. Her research focuses on Germany and Austria during the world wars and the Third Reich, and her books include *Symphonic Aspirations: German Music and Politics, 1900–1945* (Harvard UP, 2007) and *Mahler and His World* (Princeton UP, 2002).

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**FRIDAY 25 APRIL, 7.30pm**

**Hough plays  
Beethoven's Third  
Piano Concerto**

**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN**

Egmont – overture  
Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor

**GUSTAV MAHLER**

Symphony No. 1 in D major

**Sir Stephen Hough** piano  
**Sakari Oramo** conductor

As a pianist, Ludwig van Beethoven held his listeners spellbound. That's quite a common response to hearing Sir Stephen Hough play, too. Profound insight meets jaw-dropping artistry when Hough performs, and it's hard to imagine a more compelling interpreter of Beethoven's darkest piano concerto.

And that's just the first half. Then we're off to the sunlit meadows and storm-swept vistas of Gustav Mahler's epic First Symphony. Mahler wrote bigger symphonies; darker ones, too. But he never wrote anything fresher or more passionate. This is the sound of a young artist with big dreams and an even bigger imagination: a stirring climax to an evening brimming with poetry, drama and the sheer joy of creation.

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**SAKARI ORAMO**  
CONDUCTOR

Sakari Oramo studied conducting with Jorma Panula at the Sibelius Academy (1989–92). He was Music Director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (1998–2008), Chief Conductor of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra (2003–12), Principal Conductor of West Coast Kokkola Opera (2004–18) and Chief Conductor of the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra (RSPO, 2008–21). He has been Chief Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra since 2013 and next September he also becomes Artistic Partner of the Gürzenich Orchestra Cologne.

In recent seasons he has conducted the Berlin and Czech Philharmonic orchestras, the Leipzig Gewandhaus, New York Philharmonic and Boston Symphony orchestras and the Staatskapelle Dresden. Last summer he conducted four BBC Proms concerts, including the Last Night, with repertoire ranging from Mozart, via Holst and Elgar, to Saariaho and two world premieres.

Sakari Oramo's recordings include Nielsen's First and Third symphonies with the RSPO, which won *BBC Music Magazine's* Orchestral Award, Langgaard's Second and Sixth symphonies with the Vienna Philharmonic, which won a *Gramophone Award*, and Busoni's Piano Concerto with Kirill Gerstein and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, which won an International Classical Music Award.

**ANU KOMSI**  
SOPRANO

Anu Komsu was born in Kokkola, Finland, and completed her vocal studies at the Sibelius Academy, Helsinki. Her operatic repertoire of 70 roles ranges from the Queen of the Night (*The Magic Flute*) and Olympia (*The Tales of Hoffmann*) to Eva (Stockhausen's *Donnerstag aus Licht*) and the title-roles in *Salome*, *Lulu* and Eötvös's *Lady Sarahina*.

She has had many works written for her, including pieces by Sir George Benjamin, Unsuk Chin, Kaija Saariaho and Jukka Tiensuu. As Co-Founder and Artistic Director of West Coast Kokkola Opera (2004–18) she oversaw the Kokkola Opera Summer Festival, which produced 25 full-scale opera productions and more than 100 concerts and events.

Last summer she gave the world premiere of Lara Poe's *Laulut maaseudulta* ('Songs from the Countryside') at the BBC Proms conducted by Sakari Oramo. This season she appears with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic and Gürzenich Orchestra Cologne.

Her extensive discography includes works by Sibelius, Kurtág, Bernd Alois Zimmermann and Sebastian Fagerlund, as well as *Gramophone Award*-winning discs of works by Langgaard, Harvey and Saariaho. Her latest album, *Sumun Läpi* ('Through the Mist') features songs with piano by Saariaho.

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## BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

For over 90 years the BBC Symphony Orchestra has been a driving force in the British musical landscape, championing contemporary music and giving voice to rarely performed and neglected composers. It plays a key role in the BBC Proms, performing regularly throughout each season, including the First and Last Nights.

The BBC SO is Associate Orchestra at the Barbican, where it presents a distinctive season of concerts. Chief Conductor Sakari Oramo has a long-standing and widely acclaimed relationship with the orchestra. His concerts this season include four Mahler symphonies, Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 with Sir Stephen Hough, Doreen Carwithen's Concerto for Piano and Strings with Alexandra Dariescu, the UK premiere of Kaija Saariaho's trumpet concerto *HUSH* and Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* with the BBC Symphony Chorus, dedicated to the memory of the late Andrew Davis. The BBC Symphony Chorus also joins the BBC SO for Haydn's 'Nelson' Mass and Bartók's *Cantata profana*, conducted by Principal Guest Conductor Dalia Stasevska. Carolyn

Kuan conducts the UK premiere of Huang Ruo's opera *M. Butterfly* and Total Immersion days are dedicated to Pierre Boulez and to electronic music. *Wild Isles* features highlights on the big screen from the BBC nature documentary series.

The BBC SO makes appearances across the UK and internationally, and gives free concerts at its Maida Vale studios. You can hear the vast majority of the BBC SO's performances on BBC Radio 3 and BBC Sounds, with all 2024 BBC Proms currently available on BBC Sounds and Proms including the First and Last Night available to watch on BBC iPlayer.

The BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus – alongside the BBC Concert Orchestra, BBC Singers and BBC Proms – offer innovative education and community activities. Together they play a lead role in the BBC Ten Pieces and BBC Young Composer programmes, including work with schools, young people and families in East London ahead of the BBC SO's move to its new home in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford.

### Keep up to date with the BBC Symphony Orchestra

To find out more about upcoming events and broadcasts, and for the latest BBC SO news, visit [bbc.co.uk/symphoniyorchestra](https://bbc.co.uk/symphoniyorchestra).

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**Chief Conductor**

Sakari Oramo

**Principal Guest Conductor**

Dalia Stasevska

**Günter Wand  
Conducting Chair**

Semyon Bychkov

**Creative Artist  
in Association**

Jules Buckley

**First Violins**

Igor Yuzefovich *Leader*

Cellerina Park

Philip Brett

Jenny King

Colin Huber

Shirley Turner

James Wicks

Stuart McDonald

Gaia Ramsdell

Liu-Yi Retallick

Ruth Schulten

Joanne Chen

Ilhem Ben Khalfa

Anna Smith

Sophie Belinfante

William Hillman

**Second Violins**

Dawn Beazley

Rose Hinton

Vanessa Hughes

Danny Fajardo

Tammy Se

Caroline Cooper

Victoria Hodgson

Nihat Agdach

Ruth Funnell

Lyrít Milgram

Agnieszka Gesler

Ingrid Button

Shelley Van Leon

Sophie Hinson

**Violas**

Catherine Bullock

Joshua Hayward

Nikos Zarb

Natalie Taylor

Carolyn Scott

Mary Whittle

Peter Mallinson

Matthias Wiener

Clare Maynard

Raquel Lopez

James Flannery

Hannah Roberts

**Cellos**

Timothy Gill

Tamsy Kaner

Graham Bradshaw

Mark Sheridan

Michael Atkinson

Jane Lindsay

Anne Chauveau

Ghislaine McMullin

Deni Teo

Alba Merchant

**Double Basses**

Nicholas Bayley

Anita Langridge

Michael Clarke

Peter Smith

Marianne Schofield

Jose Areualos

Neil Watson

Nigel Smith

**Flutes**

Silvija Ščerbavičiūtė

Tomoko Mukai

Rebecca Larsen

**Piccolo**

Kathleen Stevenson

**Oboes**

Tom Blomfield

Imogen Smith

**Cor Anglais**

Emily Cockbill

**Clarinets**

Richard Hosford

Jonathan Parkin

**Bass Clarinet**

Thomas Lessels

**Bassoons**

Roberto Giaccaglia

Graham Hobbs

**Contrabassoon**

Steven Magee

**Horns**

Martin Owen

Michael Murray

James Pillai

Nicholas Hougham

Mark Wood

**Trumpets**

Philip Cobb

Martin Hurrell

Joseph Atkins

**Trombones**

Helen Vollam

Dan Jenkins

**Bass Trombone**

Robert O'Neill

**Tuba**

Sam Elliott

**Timpani**

Antoine Bedewi

**Percussion**

David Hockings

Alex Neal

Joseph Cooper

Joesph Richards

**Harp**

Elizabeth Bass

Anneke Hodnett

*The list of players was  
correct at the time of  
going to press*



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**Learning Producers**

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**Assistant Learning Producers**

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Catherine Humphrey

**Learning Trainees**

Shah Hussain

Nairobi Nomura

Beethoven's

# *Fifth Symphony*

with Haydn's *Trumpet Concerto*

AAM

**Maria Theresia Ahlefeldt**  
Telemachus on Calypso's Isle

**Haydn**  
Trumpet Concerto

**Beethoven**  
Symphony No. 5

**David Blackadder**  
trumpet

Academy of Ancient Music

**Laurence Cummings**  
director

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