



St. Louis Symphony
Orchestra

stéphane denève : music director

19:20
140th season

Stéphane Denève, conductor
Joëlle Harvey, soprano
Kelley O'Connor, mezzo-soprano
St. Louis Symphony Chorus
Amy Kaiser, Director

Friday, September 27, 2019 at 8:00PM
Saturday, September 28, 2019 at 8:00PM

MAHLER
(1860–1911)

Symphony No. 2, “Resurrection” (1894)

Allegro maestoso

Andante moderato

In ruhig fließender Bewegung—
Urlicht—

Im Tempo des Scherzo

Joëlle Harvey, soprano

Kelley O'Connor, mezzo-soprano

St. Louis Symphony Chorus

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The 2019/2020 Classical Series is presented by **The Steward Family Foundation** and **World Wide Technology**.

Joëlle Harvey is the **Essman Family Foundation Guest Artist**.

Kelley O'Connor is the **Ann and Lee Liberman Guest Artist**.

The concert of Friday, September 27 is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Mr. and Mrs. Barry H. Beracha**.

The concert of Saturday, September 28 is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Ms. Lesley A. Waldheim**.

The St. Louis Symphony Chorus is underwritten in part by the **Richard E. Ashburner, Jr. Endowed Fund**.

The St. Louis Symphony Chorus is underwritten in part by the **Edward Chase Garvey Memorial Foundation**.

Pre-Concert Conversations are sponsored by **Washington University Physicians**.

PROGRAM NOTES

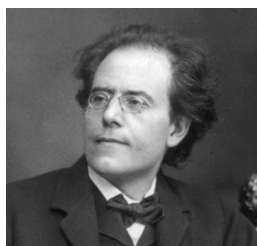
BY TIM MUNRO

Denève on Mahler's Second Symphony

I feel that Mahler's music is universal. Every Mahler symphony speaks about death and life, the struggle for one or the other. He was obsessed with this theme in every piece, but this struggle is especially clear in the Second Symphony.

Maybe the *Resurrection* is the most global of Mahler's symphonies. It is beyond religion. He had lost his mother, his father, his sister. At the end of the Second Symphony, the god that offers the possibility to arise, to be immortal, is a god that does not judge.

It is about love. The way we will save ourselves is love.



GUSTAV MAHLER

Born July 7, 1860, Kaliště, Czechia

Died May 18, 1911, Vienna, Austria

Symphony No. 2

Like all of us, Mahler struggled. Struggled with writer's block. Struggled to find his personal voice. Struggled with faith and doubt. Struggled with life and death. Mahler's Second Symphony puts these intimate, private struggles on the largest possible canvas.

Block

The 28-year-old Mahler's career was in overdrive. On his way to becoming Europe's most famous conductor, he had recently completed an ambitious First Symphony and barely drew breath before beginning work on another.

The Second Symphony's first movement was complete in weeks, a jagged torso, epic in scope, tragic in tone. Mahler began the second movement with a few lilting sounds, but the sketches end abruptly. He fell into a symphonic silence that would last five years.

Many have wondered about this silence. Did family matters intervene? Did his conducting career overwhelm all else? Did poor health interfere? Or was Mahler simply waiting for the right inspiration, the right catalyst, to put this journey on the right track?

Personal voice

From the outside, the folk-texts published as *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* ("The Youth's Magic Horn") might seem unremarkable. Two men, Achim von Arnim and

Clemens Brentano, driven by nationalist urges, collected (and often rewrote) the songs and stories of rural Germanic towns.

These texts heralded a sea-change in Mahler's music. *Wunderhorn* poems tell of war, nature, love, or persecution in language that is sentimental, rough, even surprising. Mahler breathed their scent deeply, writing many songs on *Wunderhorn* texts.

Pre-*Wunderhorn*, Mahler's music was earnest, proper. Post-*Wunderhorn*, his language flowered, embracing sounds from the city and forest, celebrating the collision of the plain-speaking and the complex. This new musical voice must have shocked contemporary listeners.

Unblock

Des Knaben Wunderhorn also gave Mahler an escape from silence.

In 1893 he set the *Wunderhorn* poem "St. Anthony of Padua's Sermon to the Fish" to music. In the song, St. Anthony finds his church empty and instead delivers his sermon to a school of fish. The images spoke to Mahler: he had fought the foolishness of people like St. Anthony; he had performed for audiences who, like the fish, didn't understand him.

Mahler's song provided a spark for the Second Symphony. Its music, wheels spinning pointlessly with "empty" repetitions, provided the germ for the symphony's third movement. Within a year, the symphony would be complete.

An almost-opera

When he wrote the Second Symphony, Mahler was completing a long operatic apprenticeship. He had spent eight years learning his craft as conductor, orchestrator, arranger, and producer.

This symphony reflects a life lived in the opera house. The shuddering opening, like a curtain being wrenched aloft. The demand for a five-minute silence, rarely enforced, after the long first movement. The terrifying gun-shot timpani strokes that open the third movement, breaking the second movement's calm. The heartrending intimacy of the fourth movement.

Capping it all, a theatrical, tour de force finale complete with vocal soloists, choir, and offstage players, contemplating nothing less than the end of the world.

A hymn

Mahler struggled to find the right conclusion to this mammoth symphony. Sitting in the memorial service for the conductor Hans von Bülow, a mentor and friend, a revelation came.

"The mood in which I sat and thought about the departed," wrote Mahler, "was in the spirit of [the Second Symphony]." The choir, invisible in the organ-loft, were singing a hymn. His ears pricked up. "It struck me like lightning and everything became plain and clear in my mind!"

The hymn sung by the church choir was the "Resurrection" chorale by German poet Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock. To complete his symphony, Mahler borrowed the first eight lines of Klopstock's text, creating his own surging, soaring hymn melody.

“The increasing tension, working up to the final climax,” wrote Mahler after he finished the symphony, “is so tremendous that I don’t know how I ever came to write it.”

Faith and doubt

Born into a Jewish family, the young Mahler held radical, anti-religious views. Later, bowing to the anti-Semitism of Vienna, he was baptized as a Catholic. Mahler’s beliefs have remained, to some extent, unknowable.

Faith and doubt take center stage in his Second Symphony. In the first movement, a hoarse musical voice cries out, “What is life’s purpose?” In the third, life is a churning mass of noise. In the fifth, the dead rise, wailing with pain.

Mahler is quoted as saying that the fourth movement, *Urlicht* (“primal light” or “ancient light”), is about the struggle for faith. That it evokes “the wrestling of Jacob and the Angel...and Jacob’s cry to the angel, I will not let thee go, except that thou bless me.”

Does the Second Symphony chart a path from doubt to faith? Is the “resurrection” of the finale a literal or metaphorical one? Is the journey of the Second Symphony ambiguous, a winding road that allows each listener to find their own meaning?

The final word

“Beg to report safe delivery of a strong, healthy last movement to my Second,” wrote Mahler to a friend. “Father and child doing as well as can be expected.”

First Performance December 13, 1895, Berlin, Germany, Gustav Mahler conducting the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra

First SLSO Performance February 18, 1955, Vladimir Golschmann conducting

Most Recent SLSO Performance April 10, 2011, David Robertson conducting

Scoring solo soprano, solo alto, chorus, 4 flutes (all doubling piccolo), 4 oboes (2 doubling English horn), 5 clarinets (1 doubling bass clarinet and 2 doubling E-flat clarinet), 4 bassoons (1 doubling contrabassoon), 10 horns, 8 trumpets, 4 trombones, tuba, 3 timpani, percussion (2 bass drums, 3 bells, 2 cymbals, glockenspiel, rute, snare drum, 2 tam tams, 2 triangles), 2 harps, organ, and strings

Performance Time approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes

Synopsis and text

Text in quotation marks is compiled from Mahler's own words of explanation for the symphony. Sung text and translations are printed in two columns.

First Movement. *Allegro maestoso: Mit durchaus ernstem und feierlichem Ausdruck* ("With gravity and solemnness")

"We stand beside the coffin of a beloved person. His life, his battles, his sufferings and his purpose appear as memories. Our hearts are gripped by a voice of awe-inspiring solemnity, which we seldom or never hear above the deafening traffic of mundane affairs. What next? it says. What is life—and what is death? Have we any continuing existence?"

Second Movement. *Andante moderato: Sehr gemächlich. Nie eilen* ("Leisurely. Never rush")

"The *Andante* [is] a memory! [It] tells of love. A ray of sunlight, pure and cloudless. You must surely have had the experience of burying someone dear to you, and then... some long-forgotten hour of shared happiness suddenly came into your mind, sending a sunbeam into your soul."

Third Movement. *In ruhig fließender Bewegung* ("With calm, flowing movement")

"This surge of life, ceaselessly in motion, never resting, never comprehensible, suddenly seems eerie, like the billowing of dancing figures in a brightly lit ballroom that you gaze into from outside in the dark. Life becomes meaningless, an eerie phantom state out of which you may cry out with disgust. The *Scherzo* ends with the appalling shriek of this tortured soul."

Fourth Movement. *Urlicht. Sehr feierlich, aber schlicht* ("Primeval Light." "Solemn, but simple")

"Urlicht ("Primal Light") represents the soul's striving and questioning attitude towards God and its own immortality. The moving voice of innocent belief sounds in our ears."

Fifth Movement.

"A death-shriek. And now the resolution of the terrible problem of life—redemption. The Day of Judgement. The earth trembles. The Last Trumpet sounds; the graves spring open, and all creation comes writhing out of the bowels of the earth.

"After everyone has shouted and screamed, [a solo flute gives the] long drawn-out call of the Bird of Death above the last grave. Finally that, too, fades away.

"[But there is] no last judgement, no souls saved and none damned; no just man, no sinner, no judge! Softly and simply there begins: 'Auferstehn'...'."

Gustav Mahler Symphony No. 2, “Resurrection”

Urlicht

*O Röschen rot!
Der Mensch liegt in grösster Not!
Der Mensch liegt in grösster Pein!
Je lieber möcht' ich im Himmel sein!*

*Da kam ich auf einen breiten Weg;
Da kam ein Engelein und wollt' mich abweisen.
Ach nein! Ich liess mich nicht abweisen!
Ich bin von Gott und will wieder zu Gott!
Der liebe Gott wird mir ein Lichtchen geben,
Wird leuchten mir bis in das ewig selig Leben!*

—from Des Knaben Wunderhorn

Die Auferstehung

*Aufersteh'n, ja aufersteh'n wirst du,
Mein Staub, nach kurzer Ruh!
Unsterblich Leben! Unsterblich Leben Wird,
der dich rief, dir gegeben.*

*Wieder aufzublüh'n, wirst du gesät!
Der Herr der Ernte geht
Und sammelt Garben
Uns ein, die starben.*

—Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock

*O glaube, mein Herz, o glaube:
Es geht dir nichts verloren!
Dein ist, ja Dein, was du gesehnt,
Dein, was du geliebt,
Was du gestritten!*

*O glaube:
Du wardt nicht umsonst geboren!
Hast nicht umsonst gelebt, gelitten!*

*Was entstanden ist, das muss vergehen!
Was vergangen, auferstehen!
Hör' auf zu beben!
Bereite dich zu leben!*

Primal Light

*O little red rose!
Humankind lies in greatest need!
Humankind lies in greatest pain!
Much rather would I be in Heaven!*

*Then I came onto a broad path;
And an angel came and wanted to turn me away
But no, I would not be turned away!
I am from God and would return to God!
The dear God will give me a little light,
Will light me to eternal, blissful life.*

Resurrection

*Rise again, yes, you will rise again,
My dust, after brief rest!
Immortal life! Immortal life
Will He, who called you, grant you.*

*To bloom again, you were sown!
The Lord of the Harvest goes
And gathers like sheaves,
Us, who died.*

*O believe, my heart, believe:
Nothing will be lost to you!
Yours, yes, yours is what you longed for,
Yours what you loved,
What you fought for!*

*O believe:
You were not born in vain!
You have not lived in vain, nor suffered!*

*All that has come into being must perish!
All that has perished must rise again!
Cease from trembling!
Prepare to live!*

O Schmerz! Du Alldurchdringer!
Dir bin ich entrungen!
O Tod! Du Allbezwinger!
Nun bist du bezwungen!

Mit Flügeln, die ich mir errungen,
In heissem Liebesstreben
Werd' ich entschweben
Zum Licht, zu dem kein Aug' gedrungen!
Sterben werd' ich, um zu leben!

Aufersteh'n, ja aufersteh'n wirst du,
Mein Herz, in einem Nu!
Was du geschlagen,
Zu Gott wird es dich tragen!

— Gustav Mahler

O Pain, piercer of all things!
From you I have been wrested!
O Death, conqueror of all things!
Now you are conquered!

With wings I won for myself,
In love's ardent struggle,
I shall soar upwards
To that light which no eye has penetrated!
I shall die so as to live!

Rise again, yes, you will rise again,
My heart, in the twinkling of an eye!
What you have conquered,
Will bear you to God!



JAY FRAM

STEPHANE DENÈVE

Music Director

Stéphane Denève is 13th Music Director for the 140-year-old St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, beginning his tenure in the 2019/2020 season. He also serves as Music Director of the Brussels Philharmonic, Principal Guest Conductor of The Philadelphia Orchestra, and Director of the Centre for Future Orchestral Repertoire (CffOR).

Recognized internationally for the exceptional quality of his performances and programming, Denève regularly appears at major concert venues with the world's greatest orchestras and soloists. He has a special affinity for the music of his native France and is a passionate advocate for music of the 21st century. A gifted communicator and educator, he is committed to inspiring the next generation of musicians and listeners, and has worked regularly with young people in the programs such as those of the Tanglewood Music Center, New World Symphony, the Colburn School, and the Music Academy of the West.

He is a frequent guest with leading orchestras such as the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Orchestra Sinfonica dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, The Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Toronto Symphony, Orchestre National de France, Vienna Symphony, DSO Berlin and NHK Symphony. Last season, he led a major U.S. tour with the Brussels Philharmonic.

In the field of opera, Denève has led productions at the Royal Opera House, Glyndebourne Festival, La Scala, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Saito Kinen Festival, Gran Teatro de Liceu, Netherlands Opera, La Monnaie, Deutsche Oper Am Rhein, and at the Opéra National de Paris.

As a recording artist, he has won critical acclaim for his recordings of the works of Poulenc, Debussy, Ravel, Roussel, Franck, and Honegger. He is a triple winner of the Diapason d'Or of the Year, has been shortlisted for Gramophone's Artist of the Year Award, and has won the prize for symphonic music at the International Classical Music Awards. His most recent releases include *Lost Horizon*, a two-disc set of music by Guillaume Connesson with the Brussels Philharmonic, saxophonist Timothy McAllister, and violinist Renaud Capuçon on Deutsche Grammophon; Honegger's *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher* with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra on its label; and *Cinema* with violinist Renaud Capuçon and the Brussels Philharmonic on Erato/Warner Classics featuring some of the most memorable melodies from the silver screen.

For further information, please visit slo.org/deneve.



AMY KAISER

AT&T Foundation Chair

Director of the St. Louis Symphony Chorus

Director of the St. Louis Symphony Chorus since 1995, Amy Kaiser is one of the country's leading choral directors. She has conducted the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra in Handel's *Messiah*, Schubert's Mass in E flat, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, and sacred works by Haydn and Mozart, as well as Young People's Concerts. Guest conductor for the Berkshire Choral Festival in Massachusetts, Santa Fe and at Canterbury Cathedral and Music Director of the Desoff Choirs in New York for 12 seasons, she led many performances of major works at Lincoln Center.

Other conducting engagements include Chicago's Grant Park Music Festival, Peter Schickele's PDQ Bach with the New Jersey Symphony, and more than 50 performances with the Metropolitan Opera Guild. Principal Conductor of the New York Chamber Symphony's School Concert Series for seven seasons, Kaiser also led Jewish Opera at the Y, and many programs for the 92nd Street Y's acclaimed *Schubertiade*. She has prepared choruses for the New York Philharmonic, Ravinia Festival, Mostly Mozart Festival, and Opera Orchestra of New York.

Kaiser is a regular pre-concert speaker for the SLSO and presents popular classes for the Symphony Lecture Series and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. A former faculty member at Manhattan School of Music and The Mannes College of Music, she was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford University and holds a degree in musicology from Columbia University. A graduate of Smith College, she was awarded the Smith College Medal for outstanding professional achievement.



JOËLLE HARVEY

Essman Family Foundation Guest Artist

A native of Bolivar, New York, soprano Joëlle Harvey has established herself over the past decade as a noted interpreter of a broad range of repertoire, specializing in Handel, Mozart, and new music.

The 2019/2020 season features important debuts for Harvey, as she performs Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* with both the Metropolitan Opera and Santa Fe Opera. She returns to the Cleveland Orchestra for Mahler's Fourth Symphony as well as Mozart's Mass in C minor, a work she also performs with the Handel & Haydn Society. Mahler's Second Symphony features prominently in her season's work, serving as a return to both the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic, with performances in New York and on tour conducted by Jaap van Zweden, and with the London Philharmonia with Jakub Hrůša conducting. She reprises the role of Serpenta in *La finta giardiniera* on tour in Shanghai with Teatro alla Scala, and returns to the San Francisco Symphony for Brahms's *Ein Deutsches Requiem* led by Michael Tilson Thomas, as well as the Santa Barbara Symphony for Beethoven's Mass in C. Her season also includes appearances with the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society for their Emerging Voices series, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center for a concert in Alice Tully Hall featuring songs of Schubert, Chausson, and Harbison, and the Cincinnati Symphony for Handel's *Dilirio Amoroso*.

Harvey is the recipient of a 2011 First Prize Award from the Gerda Lissner Foundation, a 2009 Sara Tucker Study Grant from the Richard Tucker Foundation, and a 2010 Encouragement Award (in honor of Norma Newton) from the George London Foundation. She received Second Prize in Houston Grand Opera's 2008 Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers, and is a recipient of the Shoshana Foundation's 2007 Richard F. Gold Career Grant.



KELLEY O'CONNOR

Ann and Lee Liberman Guest Artist

Kelley O'Connor has emerged as one of the most compelling performers of her generation. This season she joins Alan Gilbert for his inaugural concerts as Chief Conductor of the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester and she performs Lieberson's *Neruda Songs* with Stéphane Denève and the Philadelphia Orchestra, Adams' *El Niño* with David Robertson leading the Houston Symphony, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with Krzysztof Urbański and the Indianapolis Symphony, and Mahler's Eighth Symphony with Robert Spano and the Atlanta Symphony, and with the San Francisco Symphony for Michael Tilson Thomas' final concerts as Music Director.

Highlights of the recent past include performances with Iván Fischer and the Budapest Festival Orchestra, Daniel Harding and the London Symphony Orchestra, Andrés Orozco-Estrada and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Philharmonia Orchestra, and Franz Welser-Möst and the Cleveland Orchestra.

Sought after by many of the most heralded composers of the modern day, Kelley O'Connor recently gave the world premieres of Joby Talbot's *A Sheen of Dew on Flowers* with the Britten Sinfonia at London's Victoria & Albert Museum and Bryce Dessner's *Voy a Dormir* with Robert Spano leading the Orchestra of St. Luke's at Carnegie Hall. John Adams wrote the title role of *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* for her and O'Connor continues to be the eminent living interpreter of Lieberson's *Neruda Songs*.

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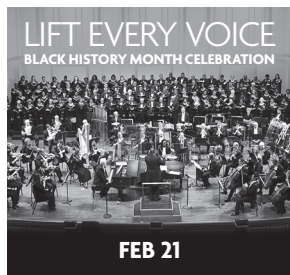
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Tales from Backstage, at the Hall, and in the Community
with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

SLSOStories.org shares the many different stories about the SLSO from backstage, in Powell Hall, and throughout the St. Louis region. This new site features stories, photos, program notes, and videos about the various aspects of the SLSO—including concerts, community programs, education initiatives, special events, and more.





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For additional information contact the SVA Office at **314-286-4153** or **slo.org/volunteer**.