

MAHLER THREE

A Summer's Midday Dream

Sponsored by Synovus Bank and
Periodontal Associates of North Florida

Darko Butorac, Conductor
Sahoko Sato Timpone, alto

Gustav Mahler
(1860-1911)

Symphony No. 3 in D minor
Kräftig

INTERMISSION

Tempo di Menuetto Sehr mässig
Comodo (Scherzando) Ohne Hast
Sehr langsam – Misterioso
Lustig im Tempo und keck im Ausdruck
Langsam – Ruhevoll – Empfundnen

Chorus prepared by Anna Marie Friars

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Program Notes

DID YOU KNOW

... what Darko says about Mahler's Third? "Listening to such a piece is an EXPERIENCE, like seeing Everest for the first time. It is an epic journey in sound—very dramatic, very intimate—and hopefully with a goosebump-inducing climax in the last movement."

Bohemian-born **Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)** was considered a child prodigy and began studying piano, composition, and conducting at the Vienna Conservatory at age fifteen. He became well known as a conductor, earning his first conducting appointment in Austria five years later. He subsequently was Artistic Director of the Vienna Court Opera (1897-1907) and also conducted the Vienna Philharmonic. His active conducting schedule allowed little time for writing but Mahler did compose numerous songs, including song cycles for voice and orchestra, and ten symphonies. The November 1889 premiere of his first symphony was disappointing, but his Second, "Resurrection," was well-received at its December 1895 premiere with the composer conducting. The previous two summers Mahler had also been working on his Third, which, like the Second, is scored for large orchestra, a vocal soloist, and chorus. Individual movements premiered in 1896 and '97, but the complete six-movement cycle was not performed until June 1902. Over a span of about 100 minutes, it encompasses Life and Death and every bit of space in between, just as its composer said to his colleague Jean Sibelius in 1907: "The symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything." During Mahler's lifetime, his reputation was based on his life as a conductor. His compositions were "re-discovered" after World War II. The composer provided insight into his music and his character in a letter written to his wife prior to their marriage: "The important thing is never to let oneself be guided by the opinion of one's contemporaries and, in both one's

life and one's work, to continue steadfastly on one's way without letting oneself be either defeated by failure or diverted by applause." Despite dealing with heart disease and the death of his four-year old daughter in 1907, Mahler continued conducting on several continents and in 1909 began a two-year tenure as conductor of the New York Philharmonic. A heart infection caused Mahler's death at age fifty.

So how does one write about a work as monumental as Mahler's **Third Symphony**? Not only is it a long composition (the first movement stretches 30-35 minutes, depending on the conductor's choice of tempo), it also utilizes a large cast of performers: four flutes, two piccolos, four oboes, English horn, five clarinets plus bass clarinet, four bassoons plus contrabassoon, eight horns, four trumpets, four trombones, tuba, strings, two harps, two timpanists each playing four timpani, bass drum, snare drums, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, gong, bells and Glockenspiel, two choirs and an alto soloist. Alternating between major and minor modes, Mahler creates strong juxtapositions of emotions. Celebration, majesty, contemplation, terror, charm, solemnity, idyll, grandeur, loftiness, despair, majesty, triumph—all this transpires in just the first movement, **Kräftig—Entschieden** (strong, decisive). After an opening fanfare and a majestic passage for eight (!) horns, there is an unexpected brass chorale, but the contemplative mood quickly dissipates with the beating of the bass drum. Terror! Muted trumpets and fierce tremolos in the cellos eventually cede to a charming episode that features solo violin and oboe, with steady ticking in the background. A solemn trombone solo speaks to us without words. Thus the first movement marches on until trumpets announce a triumphant theme—a John Williams moment. And we are only halfway

through the movement! It is a wild journey, with themes that eventually recapitulate in this loosely organized sonata form; however, Mahler clearly was not focused on form, but on the experience, the emotions, the textures, the roller coaster ride, and a conclusion that involved everyone playing "mit höchster Kraft" (with all their strength).

Mahler indicates a long pause after the first movement.

An elegant oboe melody with pizzicato string accompaniment starts the second movement. **Menuetto** appears to follow a traditional minuet-trio-minuet form. But wait, where did that lush romantic string melody come from? Okay, back to the prim and proper minuet. Abruptly the tempo changes again and scurrying strings combine with an assortment of winds in a dizzying conflict of meters. The playful mood is once again reined in and classical elegance returns for the third section of our simple ternary form; but just as Beethoven did before him, Mahler extends the movement with another trio section. This movement, marked *mässig* (moderately), alternates the conventional triple meter of the dance with an occasional escape to an energetic duple meter. "Okay, I may be dancing the minuet, but inside I am doing something else entirely!"

Mahler gives the third movement an unusual tempo indication: **Comodo—scherzando--ohne hast** meaning "comfortably, playfully, without haste." Winds play a carefree melody with pizzicato string accompaniment. Contrasting episodes feature individual instruments such as violin, oboe, and clarinet as well as a horn choir. One unexpected element is the off-stage trumpet.

Mahler was deeply influenced by the writings of Nietzsche and throughout his life used Nietzsche's texts for his solo songs, orchestral song cycles, and here, in a symphony. In the fourth movement, **Sehr Langsam--Misterioso** (very slow, mysterious), low strings oscillate between two pitches to create an ominous

atmosphere. The text is from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Twice the alto sings "O Mensch" (Oh Man) simply, on a single pitch, with slightly changing harmonies in the orchestra. It is chilling. Later the soloist repeats the word "Tief" (deep) with equally dramatic effect. Horns and later a solo violin provide an obbligato. An unusual sliding figure played three times in succession by oboe, later imitated by English horn, recurs numerous times and contributes to the eerie, otherworldly nature. The harmonic framework moves so slowly it is almost stagnant. This, combined with a primarily pianissimo dynamic level and strategic silences, suggests the vastness of the cosmic realm and of Mahler's vision.

*O man! Give heed!
What does the deep midnight say? I slept!
From deepest dream have I wakened!
The world is deep!
And deeper than the day had thought!
Deep, deep is its suffering!
Joy deeper still than deepest woe!
Woe says: Be gone!
But all joy seeks eternity!
Seeks deep, deep eternity!*

Das Knaben Wunderhorn (*The Youth's Magic Horn*) is a collection of German folk poems that always fascinated Mahler, and during the years that he was composing this symphony, he also used several of the poems for individual songs. In the fifth movement, **Lustig im Tempo und keck im Ausdruck** (cheerful in tempo and perky in expression), he sets the text of *Armer Kindler Bettlerlied* (*Poor Children's Begging Song*). The movement begins and ends with joyous, ringing orchestral bells matched by a children's choir. Mahler's music, featuring two choirs as well as the alto soloist, beautifully depicts the text.

*Ding, dong, ding, dong...
Three angels sang so sweet a song;
Resounding joyfully through Heaven,
They shouted with delight
That St. Peter was free of sin,
And when Lord Jesus sat at the table,
For the Last Supper with His twelve disciples,
Lord Jesus spoke: What doest thou here?
As I behold thee, thou weepst before me?*

*And shall I not weep, thou merciful God?
You must not then weep!
I have broken the Ten Commandments.
I go my way with bitter tears.
Ah, come and have mercy on me!
If thou has broken the Ten Commandments,
Then fall on thy knees and pray to God!
Only love God at all times!
So shalt thou aspire to heavenly joy.
The Kingdom of Heaven was readied for Peter
And all, through Jesus, for blessedness,
Ding, dong, ding, dong...*

The final movement, **Langsam—Ruhevoll—Empfunden** (slow, peaceful, with feeling) provides a complementary weighty bookend to the first movement. Traditionally a symphony ends with a rousing Allegro or even Animato, not a slow movement. At the end of his mammoth Third Symphony, Mahler gives the strings a simple, stepwise, but soul-felt tune that embraces sadness and nobility at the same time. Oboe and horn provide poignant counter-melody. Long-breathed phrases with infrequent cadences create a sense of timelessness. It is probably an exaggeration to say the final cadence is five minutes long, but it is a protracted ending. The final choreography of the two tympanists is glorious to watch. We are left with unadulterated Joy.

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Dr. Akers has a Master of Music degree in Piano Performance from Indiana University and a Ph.D. in Historical Musicology from Florida State University.



Anna Marie Friars is a local music educator, conductor, and soprano

serving in our Leon County School District as Lawton Chiles High School Choir Director. While she enjoys all aspects of the music making process, Ms. Friars particularly loves the choral art form and preparing choral masterworks is among her favorite ways to collaborate as a musician and conductor. Her long time love of choral music eventually brought her to her studies at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NJ where she was a member of the famed Westminster Choir, Kantorei, Jubilee Singers, Symphonic Choir, and Handbell Choir. At Westminster Choir College, Ms. Friars had the privilege of singing for and learning from many of the best conductors of our time and performed with the Korean Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra, the Dresden Staatskapelle, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic, and the New York Philharmonic.

Ms. Friars earned her Bachelor's degree in Sacred Music and Music Education and then came to the Florida State University where she earned her Master's degree in Music Education with a Choral Conducting emphasis. As a graduate student, she was responsible for a music group at our local homeless shelter, for 2 years, during which time she raised funds to bring the group to see their first opera. Since then, Ms. Friars has been busy teaching, learning, and performing as much music as possible near and far.

Recently, Ms. Friars has contracted and directed the Bach Parley Chamber Singers, prepared choral masterworks for the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra, performed with the Tallahassee Music Guild, Tallahassee Ballet, and the Thomasville Ballet. She serves as a staff singer at St. Peter's Anglican Cathedral, as the Children's Choir Director at Christ Presbyterian Church, and formerly as the Director of Music at Good Shepherd Catholic Church, and Intern coordinator at First Baptist Church of Tallahassee. She has enjoyed singing with the Tallahassee Community Chorus, serving on the Board of Directors in the past, and she continues to have a

Guest Artists

thriving career as a gigging Soprano.

Primarily, however, Ms. Friars prefers the classroom setting where she can share her passions with with future of our profession and it's audience members. Ms. Friars students have performed at Carnegie Hall and many have gone on to become music educator and performers themselves. She believes music is a gift to be shared by everyone and that it starts with the children of our community. When Ms. Friars is not making music, she can often be found traveling, SCUBA diving, gardening, or entertaining her many pets. She is thankful for our thriving local arts community and the support of her husband, family, friends, and students.



The "impressive" (*New York Times*) and "rich, glowing" (*New York Arts*) mezzo-soprano **Sahoko Sato Timpone** made her Carnegie Hall debut in Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields conducted by Sir Neville Marriner, narrated by Christopher Plummer, and has since appeared in opera and concerts throughout North America, Asia, and Europe.

Ms. Timpone's recent engagements include Verdi's Requiem with Masterwork Chorus at Carnegie Hall, Music Worcester, Cambridge Symphony, and Battenkill Chorale, Mary in *Der Fliegende Holländer* with Opera Maine, Mahler's Rückert Lieder and Second Symphony with Florida

State University Symphony, Mozart's Requiem with the Tallahassee Community Chorus, Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* and Marthe in *Faust* with St. Petersburg Opera. In addition, her first solo CD, Songs of Japonisme – Early 20th Century Art Song from Japan and the West with pianist Kenneth Merrill, was recently released from London-based Sheva Collection and Naxos USA.

Notable highlights of previous seasons include appearances under the baton of Seiji Ozawa in *Elektra* with Tokyo Spring Festival (former Tokyo Opera Nomori), Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Saito Kinen Festival, Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, and Rosina (cover) in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Seiji Ozawa Opera Academy. She has also performed Suzuki with Syracuse Opera, Nevada Opera, New Rochelle Opera and Opera Camera-ta of Washington, Cherubino with Syracuse Opera and West Virginia Symphony, Mercédès in *Carmen* with Opera Maine (former PORTopera), Miss Todd in *The old maid and the thief* with Berkshire Opera, Dora-bella in *Così fan tutte* with Baltimore Opera, and Pitti-Sing in *Mikado*, Maddalena in *Rigoletto* and Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* with Chautauqua Opera, Lucretia in *The Rape of Lucretia* at Le Poisson Rouge in New York City, and the New York premiere of Carlisle Floyd's last opera, *Prince of Players* with the Little Opera Theatre of New York. In 2016 and 2017, she made her Off-Broadway debut to critical acclaim as Ms. Sun-Yi Nam in *Figaro90210!* (Marcellina in *Le nozze di Figaro*).

On the concert stage, her past performances include Verdi's Requiem with the New York Choral Society, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at Carnegie Hall and United Nations with New York Symphonic Ensemble and Canadian Symphony Orchestra of NYC, Bruckner's *Te Deum*, Beethoven's Choral Fantasy, and Alexander Nevsky with Queensboro Symphony, Handel's *Messiah* with Singapore Symphony, and solo engagements with Seattle Symphony, Oregon Symphony, Chautauqua Symphony, and Sapporo Symphony.

She is also an advocate for new music and art song. She frequently performs in recitals nationally and internationally with appearances at the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie, Steinway Hall, NATS Art Song Composition Award Recital, Art Song Preservation Society of New York, Munson Williams Proctor Art Institute in Utica, NY, American Musicological Society, Lunigiana International Music Festival in Tuscany, Italy, Alion Baltic International Music Festival in Tallinn, Estonia, Tokyo International Vocal Academy, Ecuador's Fundación Cultural Armonia, Bangkok, Thailand, sponsored by the Nomura Cultural Foundation, and in Granada, Spain, as a winner of the First Miguel Zanetti International Spanish Song Competition. She is also featured in David Soldier's new opera *Eighth Hour of Amduat* (Mulatta Records) as Mistress of the Boat and in a jazz arrangement of *Time to Say good-bye* in jazz trumpeter James Zollar's CD, Zollar Systems (JZAZ Records).

A native of Tokyo who grew up in Germany and the United States, Ms. Timpone currently serves on the voice faculty at Florida State University. She is a graduate of the Manhattan School of Music (MM), New England Conservatory (BM), and Rutgers University (DMA), where she received the Irene Alm Memorial Prize for excellence in performance and scholarly research. Additionally, she is a licensed kimono dresser and has studied Japanese tea ceremony (Urasenke School) and Japanese kabuki-style dance (Sōke Fujima School).