

The AMHERST COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC presents the

# AMHERST SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Mark Lane Swanson, Music Director & Conductor  
Annierose Klingbeil, Assistant Director

## SEASON FINALE:

# THANK YOU, BIDDY!

The Amherst Symphony Orchestra dedicates tonight's performance to our beloved retiring President Carolyn ("Biddy") Martin for her inspiring and selfless leadership of Amherst College as well as for her unwavering support over the years of the ASO, the Music Department, and all arts organizations on campus. Words cannot convey our admiration, gratitude and love — so we'll do our best tonight to express our feelings through music!

SATURDAY EVENING, May 7, 2022 at 8pm  
Buckley Recital Hall, Amherst College

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### PROGRAM

Concerto in D minor for Violin & Orchestra, op. 47 (1905)

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

*I. Allegro moderato*  
*II. Adagio di molto*  
*III. Allegro, ma non tanto*

MARIE LEOU '22, soloist

\*\*\* INTERMISSION \*\*\*

Symphony #1 in D major, ("Titan") (1888)

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

*I. Langsam, schleppend* (Slowly, dragging). *Immer sehr gemächlich* (Restrained throughout).

*II. Kraftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell* (Moving strongly, but not too quickly).  
*Recht gemächlich* (Restrained). *Trio*.

*III. Feierlich und gemessen, ohne zu schleppen* (Slowly and measured, without dragging.)  
*Sehr einfach und schlicht wie eine Volksweise* (Simply, like a folk tune).  
*Wieder etwas bewegter, wie im Anfang* (Once more somewhat agitated, as at the start).

*IV. Stürmisch bewegt* (Fast and stormy).

FIRST VIOLINS

TARA ALAHAKOON  
CASSANDRA JIN  
JASON KANG  
EMILY KIM  
JAKE KIM  
SUNNIE NOH  
GRACE LEE  
DAVID XU\*+  
ZHIHAN XU

SECOND VIOLINS

FRANCISCA ABDO ARIAS  
NII-AYI ARYEETAY  
NORA DOCKTER  
DANIEL MARTIN\*+  
CHLOE METZ  
ALEXANDRA OLSON  
BIANCA SASS

VIOLAS

DEVIN COWAN  
GRACE GEEGANAGE  
ANNIEROSE KLINGBEIL  
HARRY PANNER  
RACHEL O'CONNOR  
YOSEN WANG\*+

CELLOS

JACK DUNHAM  
MEGAN GOH  
TAZ KIM\*+  
AIDAN KLINGSBERG  
JIWON LEE  
CLAIRE MACERO  
OREN TIRSCHWELL  
THOMAS YE

STRING BASSES

ZAC BRENNAN  
JACK CORCORAN\*+  
ADAM KORETSKY

FLUTES

ANNIE CHEN  
REID DODSON\*  
CECE HONG+  
IRIS XIE

OBOES

DIANA DANIELS  
(also English horn)  
VIVIANA LABARCA\*  
THOMAS MEYER+

CLARINETS

NATHANIEL ALBERT  
HANNAH GOLDBERG  
JINAE HONG  
KENNY KIM  
JUAN TOVAR VARGAS\*+

BASSOONS

DAVIS RENELLA+  
NATHANIEL ROTH\*

HORNS

CECE AMORY+  
JASON DEGRAAFF\*  
PAUL HADLEY  
SARAH PERRIN

EUPHONIUM

ERIC INGRAM

TRUMPETS

CAMERON CHANDLER  
SHUZO KATAYAMA+  
ALEX MOORE  
GABRIEL PROIA\*

TROMBONES

CONNOR BARNES\*+  
OFER COHEN  
SAMUEL WRIGHT

TUBA

KONNER HAFNER

TIMPANI

CLARA HOEY  
MIN WINTON

PERCUSSION

ROWAN BELT  
CHARLOTTE WANG  
MIN WINTON  
SAM YOUNG

KEYBOARD

ROWAN BELT

\* principal on Sibelius

+principal on Mahler

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

MARIE LEOU '22 began her violin studies in Seattle, Washington, under the tutelage of Simon James, Jan Coleman and Hiro David, and is currently a student of Sarah Briggs. Throughout her musical career, Marie has soloed with orchestras across the Pacific Northwest, including the Seattle Symphony, worked with world-renowned conductors and concert violinists, and won various regional and international competitions. She feels incredibly blessed to be a part of the wonderful musical community at Amherst and in the Amherst Symphony Orchestra (ASO). Marie thanks her family for their unconditional love and support and for nurturing her love of music; Mark Swanson for his thoughtful coaching and collaboration and for making her time at Amherst so musically rewarding; her fellow musicians in ASO; and Professor David Schneider, Professor Joel Pitchon, and David Kidwell for so generously sharing their time, musical wisdom, and invaluable expertise. Lastly, Marie would like to express her heartfelt gratitude to Sarah Briggs, who has taught her so much about musicianship, artistry, and the joy of music- without Sarah's mentorship, Marie would not be the musician she is today. Marie recently completed her senior honors thesis in anthropology and plans to work at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center before medical school.

## PROGRAM NOTES

**MAHLER: SYMPHONY #1 in D major ("Titan").** Once, contemplating the failures of sympathy and understanding with which his First Symphony met at most of its early performances, Mahler lamented that while Beethoven had been able to start as a sort of modified Haydn and Mozart, and Wagner as Weber and Meyerbeer, he had the misfortune to be Gustav Mahler from the outset. He composed this symphony, surely the most original First after the Berlioz *Fantastique*, in high hopes of being understood, even imagining that it might earn him enough money so that he could abandon his rapidly expanding career as a conductor—a luxury that life would never allow him. But he enjoyed public success with the work only in Prague in 1898 and in Amsterdam five years later. The Viennese audience in 1900, musically reactionary and anti-Semitic to boot, was singularly vile in its behavior, and even Mahler's future wife, Alma Schindler, whose devotion to The Cause would later sometimes dominate a concern for truth, fled that concert in anger and disgust. One critic suggested that the work might have been meant as a parody of a symphony. No wonder that Mahler, completing his Fourth Symphony that year, felt driven to mark its finale "Durchaus ohne Parodie!" (With no trace of parody). The work even puzzled its own composer. No other piece of Mahler's has so complicated a history and about no other did he change his mind so often and over so long a period. He changed the total concept by canceling a whole movement, he made striking alterations in compositional and orchestral detail, and for some time he was unsure whether he was offering a symphonic poem, a program symphony, or just a symphony.

When Mahler conducted the first performance with the Budapest Philharmonic in November 1889, he billed it as a "symphonic poem" whose two parts consisted of the first three and the last two movements. (At that time, the first movement was followed by a piece called *Blumine*, which Mahler later dropped.) A newspaper article the day before the premiere outlined a program whose source can only have been Mahler himself and which identifies the first three movements with spring, happy daydreams, and a wedding procession, the fourth as a funeral march representing the burial of the poet's illusions, and the fifth as a hard-won progress to spiritual victory. When Mahler revised the score in January 1893, he called it a symphony in five movements and two parts, also giving it the name *Titan* after a novel by Jean Paul (Johann Paul Friedrich Richter, 1763--1825), a key figure in German literary Romanticism and one of Mahler's favorite writers. But by October he announced the work as *TITAN, a Tone Poem in the Form of a Symphony*. Before the Vienna performance in 1900, Mahler again leaked a program to a friendly critic, and it is a curious one. First comes rejection of *Titan*, as well as "all other titles and inscriptions, which, like all 'programs,' are always misinterpreted. [The composer] dislikes and discards them as 'anti-artistic' and 'anti-musical.'" There follows a scenario that reads much like an elaborated version of the original one for Budapest. During the nineties, when Richard Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, *Don Quixote*, and *Ein Heldenleben* had come out, program music had become a hot political issue in the world of music. Mahler saw himself as living in a very different world from Strauss, and he wanted to establish a distance between himself and his colleague. At the same time, the extra-musical ideas would not disappear, and he seemed now to be wanting to have it both ways. There was no pleasing the critics on this issue.

Mahler writes "*Wie en Naturlaut*" (Like the sound of nature) on that first page, and in a letter to the conductor Franz Schalk we read, "The introduction to the first movement *sounds of nature, not music!*" Fragments detach themselves from the mist, become graspable, coalesce. Among these fragments are a pair of notes descending by a fourth, distant fanfares, a little cry of oboes, a cuckoo call (by the only cuckoo in the world who toots a fourth rather than a third), a gentle horn melody. Gradually the tempo quickens to arrive at the melody of the second of Mahler's *Wayfarer* Songs (one of the most characteristic, original, and forward-looking features of this movement is how much time Mahler spends not *in* tempo but en route from one speed to another). Mahler's wayfarer crosses the fields in the morning, rejoicing in the beauty of the world and hoping that this marks the beginning of his own happy times, only to see that no, spring can never, never bloom for him. But for Mahler the song is useful not only as an evocation but as a musical source, and he draws astounding riches from it by a process, as Erwin Stein put it, of constantly shuffling and reshuffling its figures like a deck of cards. The movement rises to one tremendous climax, and the last page is wild. Most important, however, and constant is another of the features to which Mahler drew Schalk's attention: "In the first movement the *greatest* delicacy throughout (except in the big climax)."

The second movement scherzo is the symphony's briefest and simplest movement, and also the only one that the first audiences could be counted on to like. Its opening idea comes from a fragment for piano duet that may go back as far as 1876, and the movement makes several allusions to the song "*Hans und Grethe*," whose earliest version was written in 1880. The trio, set in an F major that sounds very mellow in the A major context of the scherzo itself, contrasts the simplicity of the rustic, super-Austrian material with the artfulness of its arrangement. The funeral music of the third movement that follows was what most upset audiences. The use of vernacular material presented in slightly perverted form (the round we have all sung to the words "*Frère Jacques*," but set by Mahler in a lugubrious minor); the parodic, vulgar music with its lachrymose oboes and trumpets; the boom-chick of bass drum with cymbal attached; the hiccupping violins; the appearance in the middle of all this of part of the last *Wayfarer* song, exquisitely scored for muted strings with a harp and a few soft woodwinds—people simply did not know what to make of this mixture, how to respond, whether to laugh or cry or both. They sensed that something irreverent was being done, something new and somehow ominous, that these collisions of the spooky, the gross, and the vulnerable were uncomfortably like life itself, and they were offended.

Mahler likened the opening of the finale to a bolt of lightning that rips from a black cloud. Using and transforming material from the first movement, he takes us, in the terms of his various programs, on the path from annihilation to victory, while in musical terms he engages us in a struggle to regain D major, the main key of the symphony, but unheard since the first movement ended. When at last he re-enters that key, he does so by way of a stunning and violent *coup de théâtre*, only to withdraw from the sounds of victory and to show us the hollowness of that triumph. He then goes all the way back to the music with which the symphony began and gathers strength for a second assault that does indeed open the doors to a heroic ending and to its celebration in a hymn in which the horns, now on their feet, are instructed to drown out the rest of the orchestra, "even the trumpets."  
—Michael Steinberg for the San Francisco Symphony.

In no violin concerto other than the **SIBELIUS VIOLIN CONCERTO** is the soloist's first note—delicately dissonant and off the beat—more beautiful. It made Sibelius happy, too. In September 1902 he wrote to his wife Aino—and this was the first mention of the concerto—that he had just had "a marvelous opening idea" for such a work. But after that inspired start the history of the piece was troubled. Sibelius was drinking heavily and seemed virtually to be living at Kamp's and König's restaurants in Helsingfors. He was limitlessly inventive when it came to finding ways of running from work in progress. He behaved outrageously to Willy Burmester, the German virtuoso who had been concertmaster in Helsingfors for a while in the 1890s, who admired Sibelius and was ambitious on his behalf, who stirred him up to write a violin concerto and of course hoped to give the first performance. Sibelius sent the score to Burmester ("Wonderful! Masterly! Only once before have I spoken in such terms to a composer, and that was when Tchaikovsky showed me his concerto") and let word get about that the work would be dedicated to him, but at the same time pushed for a premiere at a time when Burmester was not free or, at best, would have had too little time to learn a piece that in its original form was still more demanding technically than it is now.

Sibelius wrote this concerto for a kind of ghostly self. He was a failed violinist. He had begun lessons late, at fourteen, but then "the violin took me by storm, and for the next ten years it was my dearest wish, my overriding ambition, to become a great virtuoso." In fact, aside from the double handicap of his late start and the provincial level of even the best teaching available in Finland, he had neither the physical coordination nor the temperament for such a career. In 1890-91, when he was in Vienna studying composition, he played in the conservatory orchestra (its intonation gave him headaches), and on January 9, 1891, he auditioned for the Philharmonic. "When he got back to his room," we read in one of the great Sibelius biographies, "Sibelius broke down and wept. Afterwards he sat at the piano and began to practice scales." With that he gave up, though a diary entry in 1915 records a dream of being twelve and a virtuoso. His Violin Concerto is imbued both with his feeling for the instrument and the pain of his farewell to his "dearest wish" and "overriding ambition."

Sibelius gives unprecedented importance to his first-movement cadenza (when the violinist plays a virtuosic section alone, without accompaniment). What leads up to that big cadenza is a sequence of ideas that begins with the sensitive, dreamy melody that introduces the voice of the soloist. This leads to what we might call a mini-cadenza, starting with a flurry of notes marked *veloce* (rapid). From this there emerges a declamatory statement upon which Sibelius's mark is ineluctable—an impassioned, super-violinistic recitation. Then the orchestra joins in music that slowly subsides from furious march music to wistful pastoral to darkness. It is out of this darkness that the cadenza erupts, an occasion for sovereign virtuosity, brilliantly, fancifully, and economically composed. Sibelius set store by having composed a soloistic concerto rather than a symphonic one. It seems an odd point for him to be so stubborn about it for so long. He opposes rather than meshes solo and orchestra. The first movement, with its daring sequence of disparate ideas, its quest for the unity behind them, its bold substitute for convention, its wedding of violinistic brilliance to compositional purposes, is one that bears the unmistakable stamp of the symphonist—perhaps the greatest symphonist after Brahms.

The Adagio is one of the most moving pages Sibelius ever achieved. Clarinets and oboes in pairs suggest a rather tentative idea; this is a gentle beginning, leading to the entry of the solo violin with a melody of vast breadth. It speaks in tones we know well and that touch us deeply. Sibelius never found, perhaps never sought, such a melody again: This, too, is farewell. Very lovely, later in the movement, is the sonorous fantasy that accompanies the melody (now in clarinet and bassoon) with scales, all *pianissimo* (very quietly), moving up in the violin, and with a delicate rain of slowly descending notes in flutes and soft strings.

"Evidently a polonaise for polar bears," said British writer and musicologist Donald Francis Tovey of the finale—a remark it seems no writer can resist quoting. The charmingly aggressive main theme was an old one, going back to a string quartet from 1890. The enlivening accompaniment in the timpani against the figure in the strings is one of the fruits of revision. As the movement goes on, the rhythm becomes more and more giddily inventive, especially in the matter of the recklessly across-the-eat bravura embellishment the soloist fires across the themes. It builds to a drama to end in utmost and syncopated brilliance. Michael Steinberg for the San Francisco Symphony