2010 SEASON
THE MAHLER ODYSSEY 2010–2011

MAHLER 1:
THE ODYSSEY BEGINS

ENERGYAUSTRALIA MASTER SERIES
Wednesday 10 February | 8pm
Friday 12 February | 8pm
Saturday 13 February | 8pm

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY
Thursday 11 February | 1.30pm

Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor
Markus Eiche baritone

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864–1949)
Don Juan – Symphonic poem, Op.20

GUSTAV MAHLER (1860–1911)
Blumine
Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen (Songs of a Wayfarer)
Markus Eiche baritone

INTERVAL

Symphony No.1 in D
Langsam, schleppend – Im Anfang sehr gemächlich
(Slow, dragging – Very comfortably)
Kräftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell
(Forcefully, yet not too fast)
Feierlich und gemessen, ohne zu schleppen
(Solemn and measured, without dragging)
Stürmisch bewegt (Stormily)

Friday night’s performance will be broadcast live across Australia on ABC Classic FM.

Pre-concert talk by David Garrett in the Northern Foyer, 45 minutes before each concert.
Visit sydneysymphony.com/talk-bios for speaker biographies.

Approximate durations:
17 minutes, 8 minutes, 16 minutes, 20-minute interval, 53 minutes
The concert will conclude at approximately 10.10pm (3.40pm on Thursday).
We’re delighted to welcome you back to the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall for a new season of exciting performances and great music. This is the first program in the EnergyAustralia Master Series for 2010 – it’s also the beginning of the Mahler Odyssey, under the leadership of Vladimir Ashkenazy.

This concert will chart Mahler’s first, ambitious steps with music that already shows the signs of a master symphonist. We also welcome baritone Markus Eiche, whose performance of Songs of a Wayfarer will reveal the more intimate side of this great composer. And as the season unfolds we’ll have a chance to hear where Mahler’s musical vision led him – Sydneysiders have never had a better chance to embark on such an amazing musical journey.

With one of the most recognised names in the energy industry, and with more than 1.4 million customers in NSW, the ACT, Victoria and Queensland, we are proud to be associated with the Sydney Symphony, and we’re very excited to be linked to the orchestra’s flagship Master Series.

We trust that you will enjoy this performance and look forward to seeing you at future concerts in the EnergyAustralia Master Series throughout the year.

George Maltabarow
Managing Director
Caricature of Mahler conducting the Viennese premiere of his First Symphony, 1900.
Mahler 1: The Odyssey Begins

An odyssey is a journey, but not just any journey. It’s long and adventurous, with setbacks and detours; there’s a suggestion of development over time – an odyssey can be life-changing.

Our two-year Mahler journey begins at the beginning, with music by a composer still in his 20s. (Richard Strauss is also represented by work from his 20s, and Don Juan and Mahler’s First Symphony were premiered just weeks apart in 1889.) We’ll play three of Mahler’s works, all intricately bound up in each other: Songs of a Wayfarer, the First Symphony and Blumine, which once formed a part of the symphony. A program like this offers a chance to witness a great creative mind in action, to hear how context and intent can transform a musical idea. It also shows how, even at the beginning of his composing career, Mahler’s instincts were leading him along two intertwining paths, symphonies and orchestral songs.

At the Viennese premiere of the First Symphony an artist was inspired to make a caricature. You can see it opposite: Mahler is the conductor, baton in one hand, lightning bolts in the other, ready for the beginning of the finale. The caricature is populated by the characters and sounds from the symphony – the cuckoo from the opening, ‘Brother Martin’ (asleep, of course) from the funeral-march movement, and some of the key musical motifs. But it’s not entirely complimentary – there’s destruction and confusion in this image. Mahler’s First Symphony shocked and overwhelmed its early listeners and left them puzzled.

That’s no longer the case, the First is one of Mahler’s most popular symphonies and certainly the most frequently performed. And if a composer can begin like this, how will he go on? This is the question underlying our two-year Mahler Odyssey – join us on the journey.
ABOUT THE MUSIC

Richard Strauss

Don Juan – Symphonic Poem, Op.20

A thrilling opening – an uprush of thrusting figures, then a string theme launched over pulsing chords for winds and brass. This music’s blood is up.

Even a listener unaware of the title and subject might suspect that it was about masculine ardour, even sexual conquest. And knowing that the subject is Don Juan, the legendary libertine lover, seems to give the key to the music. When Strauss composed it, at the age of 24, he was in the midst of an intense emotional attachment to a married woman, and had just met Pauline de Ahna, whom he was to marry. No wonder this subject appealed to him.

But the way Strauss ends his tone-poem should give us pause. This Don Juan neither satisfies his desires, nor is he dragged down to hell by a stone guest in divine retribution for his sins. The music swells towards climax, but is cut off by a sudden pause, without reaching fulfilment. The music fades away in a minor key, very quietly, but is crossed by one, jarring trumpet note.

Strauss prefaced the score of Don Juan with 32 lines of poetry, drawn from the unfinished verse drama of the same name by Nikolaus Lenau, who died in 1851. ‘My Don Juan,’ wrote Lenau, ‘is no hot-blooded man eternally pursuing women. It is the longing in him to find a woman who is to him incarnate womanhood, and to enjoy.’ In Lenau’s play, the Don is challenged to a duel, but, on the verge of subduing yet another adversary, loses interest, throws away his sword, and allows his opponent to run him through. Don Juan’s disgust at his failure to achieve his idealised quest is typical of the Romantic idealism of Lenau’s poetry. This author was one of the prophets of Weltschmerz, world-weariness, even disgust.

Strauss’ Don Juan is young man’s music, and although the quiet ending is daring, spurning cheap musical success, what precedes it is far from world-weariness. Lenau’s poem was the direct inspiration for his music, along with a play by Paul Heyse, Don Juan’s End, and both were in Strauss’ mind as he jotted down his first ideas for the symphonic poem, on a visit to Italy in May 1888. Some of the incidents in the music seem to come from Lenau. As the music unfolds, hints may be found of weariness, dejection and satiation, though these are overwhelmed by the forward thrust which keeps animating the music.

Strauss asked that the lines from Lenau be printed in the program book to indicate the music’s poetic inspiration, but...
well-meaning friends were quick to provide ‘analyses’ showing how the music illustrated a ‘program’. Strauss was surely teasing when he claimed it should be obvious from the famous oboe melody that the woman in Don Juan’s sights has red hair!

Don Juan is one of the most successful and best-loved of all symphonic poems, because Strauss has succeeded in making a self-sufficient and satisfying artistic form from the poetic subject. ‘The poetic program,’ he wrote, ‘is not merely a musical description of certain events in real life,’ wrote Strauss. ‘But if music is not to seep away in pure wilfulness, it needs certain boundaries to define the form, and a program serves as a canal bank.’

The form of Don Juan is shaped by Liszt’s idea of the symphonic poem. Strauss’ music can be heard as an expanded first-movement sonata form, with major independent episodes in the development – the first, with its love song for the oboe, plays the part of a slow movement, and after the irruption of the rousing horn theme comes the so-called carnival episode, which is like a scherzo (note-worthy among other things for a glockenspiel solo). The return of the opening music marks the beginning of a condensed recapitulation where, in truly Lisztian fashion, the themes are further combined and transformed. The exhausted, resigned ending is a coda.
For the first audiences of *Don Juan*, the idea that the music represented episodes in the reprobate lover’s career probably helped, when so much was new about the music. The orchestral players, at the premiere in Weimar on 11 November 1889, were mainly concerned with the unprecedented difficulties of execution. Strauss, who conducted, felt sorry for the poor horns and trumpets: ‘...they blew till they were blue in the face. In the performance...the orchestra wheezed and panted, but did their part capitally. They seemed to be enjoying the whole affair, in spite of their understandable amazement at such novelties.’ The novelty has worn off, but the excitement hasn’t. *Don Juan* was Strauss’ first great international success, and has remained one of his most played orchestral works.

DAVID GARRETT
SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA ©1998

*Don Juan* calls for three flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes, cor anglais, two clarinets, two bassoons and contrabassoon; four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion; harp and strings.

The Sydney Symphony first performed Strauss’s *Don Juan* in 1938 with Malcolm Sargent, and most recently in 2000, conducted by Edo de Waart.
Gustav Mahler

**Blumine**

*(originally *Andante* from Symphony No.1)*

The first performance of Mahler’s First Symphony, conducted by the composer in Budapest in 1889, was a mixed success. The reviews ranged from damning to perplexed and Mahler had partly himself to blame. Calling the work, as he did, a ‘Symphonic Poem in Two Parts’ immediately signalled that this was not ‘absolute music’ but had some literary pretensions, and peppering the symphony with quotations from his *Songs of a Wayfarer*, bird calls and rustic dances attracted accusations of ‘colour without design’.

After the premiere, friends persuaded Mahler to give the symphony a program ‘to make it easier to understand’; in its second and third performances he gave the movements explicit titles, and nicknamed the symphony *Titan* in reference to a novel by Jean-Paul Richter. The five-movement work thus became a narrative: ‘Endless Spring’, ‘Blumine’ (with a sense of ‘flowers’) and ‘In full sail’, and, in the second part (*Commedia humana*), ‘Funeral March’ and ‘Dall’inferno’. It thus conforms to a prevailing notion of the work as the story of a Romantic hero, whom we can identify with Mahler himself.

*Blumine*, the original second movement, was discarded by Mahler after its third performance. The symphony as a whole contains much ‘recycled’ material, and *Blumine* appears to have been lifted from some incidental music, now lost, that Mahler had written in 1884 for a dramatisation of Scheffel’s poem *The Trumpeter of Säkkingen*. The trumpet melody probably represented the hero, Werner, serenading his beloved Margareta from across the Rhine. One Budapest critic instinctively noted that in the alternation of trumpet and oboe ‘it is not hard to recognise the lovers exchanging their tender feelings in the silence of night’.

Conductor Bruno Walter recounts how he saved the score of *Blumine* when Mahler was burning a lot of old manuscripts, but it remained unperformed for 70 years until Benjamin Britten conducted it in 1967 with the New Philharmonia Orchestra. Why Mahler chose to discard it is a mystery. It may be that in the context of the work’s overall mood – which is frequently ironic and angst-ridden – *Blumine* is simply too beautiful.

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**MAHLER**

*Born Kalischt, 1860*

*Died Vienna, 1911*

Mahler is now regarded as one of the greatest symphonists of the turn of the 20th century. But during his life his major career was as a conductor – he was effectively a ‘summer composer’. Mahler believed that a symphony must ‘embrace the world’. His are large-scale, requiring huge orchestras and often lasting more than an hour. They cover a tremendous emotional range, and they have sometimes been described as ‘Janus-like’ in the way they blend romantic and modern values, self-obsession and universal expression, idealism and irony.

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**BLUMINE**

‘Blumine’ is a tricky title to translate. Its German etymology is shared with the English word ‘bloom’ and the possibilities include ‘Flora’ and ‘Bouquet’. The idea is one of flowering or blossoming, but no single word quite captures the exquisite, natural beauty of this music.

*Blumine* remained unknown for a long time. As a movement in earlier versions of Mahler’s First Symphony it was given three performances and then discarded, unpublished. It wasn’t until the 1960s that it was heard again. The main theme, which appears at the beginning, is played by a solo trumpet, reflecting its origins as music to accompany a dramatisation of *The Trumpeter of Säkkingen*. The Sydney Symphony gave the first Australian performance of *Blumine* in 1990 under Stuart Challender in concerts that also included Mahler’s First Symphony. This is our first performance of the movement since then.
Mahler

Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen
(Songs of a Wayfarer)

Markus Eiche baritone

Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht
(On my sweetheart’s wedding day)

Ging heut’ morgen übers Feld
(I went out this morning into the fields)

Ich hab’ ein glühend Messer
(I have a red-hot knife)

Die zwei blauen Augen
(The two blue eyes)

The head of the Kassel opera house in the early 1880s was Wilhelm Treiber, a former army officer who ran the company on military lines. Gustav Mahler (the chorus director at the time) appears twice in the Director’s Register of Fines. The first offence was the ‘…annoying habit of walking very noisily on the heels of his boots during rehearsals and performances’. The second involved causing female members of the company to break out in ‘peals of laughter’.

It is tempting to suppose that one of those giggling singers was Johanna Richter, a blue-eyed soprano with whom Mahler was completely besotted. It is unclear how their relationship soured. Some of his letters imply he had tried to break things off; but when the young composer turned to his music, the tone is of a jilted lover. He wrote to a friend of a set of songs, dedicated to her:

She has not seen them. What could they tell her beyond what she already knows? …The songs are a sequence, in which a wayfaring journeyman, who has had a great sorrow, goes out into the world and wanders aimlessly…

The term ‘journeyman’ (Gesell in German) is rarely heard these days. Technically, it is someone who has completed an apprenticeship but is not self-employed. Mahler’s title – literally ‘Songs of a Travelling Journeyman’ – therefore already implies a certain pathos: someone looking for work, for a home. Gesell can also mean ‘companion’, lending an ironic touch to this solitary subject.

Mahler was reiterating a recurring theme of 19th-century German Lieder: the world-weary traveller. Many of the great song cycles (Schubert’s Winterreise, for example) have a similar protagonist, disappointed in love. He chose to write his own poetry for three of the four movements, rather than (as others had done before him) choosing from the poetry on this topic by Goethe, Heine or Schiller.

Mahler was less confident of his ‘inadequate words’ than of his music, and worried they might be perceived as naïve or
even trite. What he in fact produced was a four-movement song cycle, equivalent in scale and form to a miniature symphony, and echoes of certain phrases in Songs of a Wayfarer can be found in Mahler’s First Symphony. The earliest autograph, for voice and piano, is from 1884 but written above the score are the words ‘for a deep voice with orchestral accompaniment’, which suggests he always had certain instruments in mind.

The opening motif of ‘On my Sweetheart’s Wedding Day’ possibly reflects the composer’s Moravian heritage in its folk-like character. (A similar phrase is heard in the third movement of the First Symphony.) The singer, although melancholy, still notices the beauty of the birds and flowers, but can only think of them in terms of what is lost.

Similarly, in the second song the wayfarer responds to the sounds of the finch and the bluebells merely by way of comparison with his own situation. The central musical idea of this song, outlined in the opening phrase ‘Ging heut’ Morgen über’s Feld’ (I went out this morning into the fields), later provided a musical starting point for the First Symphony. The sorrowful, resigned coda elegantly bridges the gap between the joyous opening of the second song and the almost shocking violence of the third.

‘I have a Red-Hot Knife’ moves the protagonist beyond gentle sorrow and into extremes of torment, marked most obviously by the repeated plaint ‘O weh!’. Trembling strings and winds keep the emotional level high even when the dynamic is low.

One of the most famous elements of Mahler’s First Symphony is the funeral march, a minor-key version of ‘Frère Jacques’; it contrasts with a G major section. ‘The Two Blue Eyes’ presages this contrasting section, in a portion of the song which begins ‘Auf der Strasse’ (By the road). Overwhelming sadness eventually gets the better of this gentle tune, twisting it back into a minor key, leaving the audience to wonder if the journeyman has indeed found restful sleep – or death.

ABRIDGED FROM A NOTE BY KATHERINE KEMP

Songs of a Wayfarer calls for an orchestra of three flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes (one doubling cor anglais), three clarinets (one doubling bass clarinet) and two bassoons; four horns, two trumpets and three trombones; timpani and percussion; harp and strings.

The Sydney Symphony first performed Songs of a Wayfarer in 1958 with mezzo-soprano Elena Nikolaidi and Nicolai Malko conducting, and most recently in 2002 with mezzo-soprano Liane Keegan and Mark Elder. In the 1990s the orchestra performed the cycle with Håkan Hagegård and Olaf Baer, and also in Schoenberg’s chamber music arrangement with Michael Leighton Jones.
1.
Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht,  
Fröhliche Hochzeit macht,  
Hab’ ich meinen traurigen Tag!  
Geh’ ich in mein Kämmerlein,  
Dunkles Kämmerlein,  
Weine, wein’ um meinen Schatz,  
Um meinen lieben Schatz!  
Blümlein blau! Blümlein blau!  
Verdorre nicht! Verdorre nicht!  
Vöglein süß, Vöglein süß,  
Du singst auf grüner Heide!  
Ach, wie ist die Welt so schön!  
Ziküth! Ziküth!  
Singet nicht! Blühet nicht!  
Lenz ist ja vorbei!  
Alles Singen ist nun aus.  
Des Abends, wenn ich schlafen geh’  
Denk’ ich an mein Leide.  
An mein Leide!

On my sweetheart’s wedding day,  
joyful wedding day,  
it will be a sad day for me!  
I will go to my little room,  
my dark little room  
and weep for my sweetheart,  
my dear sweetheart!  
Little blue flower! Little blue flower!  
Do not fade! Do not fade!  
Sweet little bird, sweet little bird,  
you sing on the green heath.  
Ah! How beautiful the world is!  
La-la! La-la!  
Do not sing! Do not bloom!  
Spring is over and gone!  
All singing is now over.  
At evening, when I go to sleep,  
I think of my sorrow!  
Of my sorrow!

2.
Ging heut morgen übers Feld,  
Tau noch auf den Gräsern hing;  
Sprach zu mir der lust’ge Fink:  
‘Ei du! Gelt? Guten Morgen! Ei gelt?  
Du! Wird’s nicht eine schöne Welt?  
Zink! Zink! Schön und flink!  
Wie mir doch die Welt gefällt!’  
Auch die Glockenblüm’ am Feld  
Hat mir lustig, guter Ding’,  
Mit den Glöckchen, klinge, kling, klinge,  
kling,  
Ihren Morgengruß geschellt:  
‘Wörd’s nicht eine schöne Welt?  
Kling, kling! Schönes Ding!  
Wie mir doch die Welt gefällt!’  
Heia!’  
Und da fing im Sonnenschein  
Gleich die Welt zu funkeln an;  
Alles Ton und Farbe gewann  
Im Sonnenschein!  
Blum’ und Vogel, groß und klein!  
‘Guten Tag, ist’s nicht eine schöne Welt?  
Ei du, gelt! Schöne Welt!’  
Nun fängt auch mein Glück wohl an?  
Nein, nein, das ich mein’,  
Mir nimmer blühen kann!

I went out this morning into the fields,  
the dew was still hanging on the grass,  
the happy finch said to me:  
‘Hey, you! Good morning! Yes, you!  
Right! Isn’t it a beautiful world?  
Chirrup! Chirrup! Lovely and lively!  
How I love the world!’  
Even the bluebells in the field  
merrily and with good spirits  
ring out to me with their little bells, ting, ting,  
ting,  
their morning greeting:  
‘Isn’t it a beautiful world?  
Ting, ting! What a lovely thing!  
How I love the world!  
Hey-ho!’  
And then in the sunshine,  
the world began to sparkle;  
everything took on sound and colour  
in the sunshine!  
Flowers and birds, great and small!  
‘Good morning! Isn’t this a beautiful world?  
Hey! You! It’s a lovely world!’  
Now will my happiness also begin?  
No, no, that happiness  
can never bloom for me!’
Ich hab' ein glühend Messer,
Ein Messer in meiner Brust,
O weh! O weh! Das schneid't so tief
In jede Freud' und jede Lust,
So tief, so tief!

Ach, was ist das für ein böser Gast!
Nimmer hält er Ruh',
Nimmer hält er Rast,
Nicht bei Tag, nicht bei Nacht
Wenn ich schlief!
O weh! O weh!

Wenn ich in dem Himmel seh',
Seh' ich zwei blaue Augen steh'n.
O weh! O weh!
Wenn ich im gelben Felde geh',
Seh' ich von Fern das blonde Haar
Im Winde weh'n.
O weh! O weh!
Wenn ich aus dem Traum auffähr'
Und höre klingen ihr silbern Lachen,
O weh! O weh!
Ich wollt', ich läg auf der schwarzen Bahr',
Könnt' nimmer, nimmer die Augen aufmachen!

Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz,
Die haben mich in die weite Welt geschickt.
Da mußt ich Abschied nehmen
Vom allerliebsten Platz!
O Augen blau,
Warum habt ihr mich angeblickt?
Nun hab' ich ewig Leid und Grämen!
Ich bin ausgegangen in stiller Nacht
In stiller Nacht wohl über die dunkle Heide.
Hat mir Niemand Ade gesagt,
Ade, Ade!
Mein Gesell' war Lieb' und Leide!
Auf der Straße steht ein Lindenbaum,
Da hab' ich zum ersten Mal im Schlaf geruht!
Unter dem Lindenbaum,
Der hat seine Blüten über mich geschneit,
Da wußt' ich nicht, wie das Leben tut,
War alles, alles wieder gut!
Alles! Alles!
Lieb' und Leid!
Und Welt und Traum!

I have a red-hot knife,
A knife in my chest,
Ah, pain! Ah, pain! It cuts so deep
through every joy and pleasure.
So deep, so deep.

Alas, what an evil guest!
It is never still,
it never rests,
not by day, not by night
when I sleep.
Oh, woe! Oh, woe!
When I look up at the sky,
I see there two blue eyes.
Oh woe! Oh, woe!
When I go through the golden fields
I see from far away blond hair
rippling in the wind.
Oh, woe! Oh, woe!
When I wake up from a dream
and hear the ringing of her silver laughter,
Oh, woe! Oh, woe!
I wish I were lying on a blackened bier,
and could never ever open my eyes again!

The two blue eyes of my sweetheart
have sent me out into the world.
I must take my leave
of the place I love more than anywhere!
O blue eyes,
Why did you ever look at me?
Now I have only eternal grief and pain!
I went out in the still night,
in the still night across the dark heath.
No one said farewell to me,
farewell, farewell!
Love and Sorrow were my companions!
By the road stands a linden tree,
and there for the first time I slept peacefully.
Under the linden tree,
whose blossoms snowed gently down on me,
I no longer knew what life was like,
everything, everything was good again!
Everything! Everything!
Love and pain
and world and dream!
Today, you’ll be taken away to Vienna by Gustav Mahler. Have you packed your bags?

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WWW.VIENNA.INFO

VIENNA
NOW OR NEVER
Mahler
Symphony No.1 in D

Langsam, schleppend – Im Anfang sehr gemächlich
(Slow, dragging – Very comfortably)
Kräftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell
(Forcefully, yet not too fast)
Feierlich und gemessen, ohne zu schleppen
(Solemn and measured, without dragging)
Stürmisch bewegt (Stormily)

In the days when Mahler’s work was at its lowest ebb of fashionability, it was frequently derided for its eclecticism – his magpie references to musical gestures not only from the classical repertoire, but from such disreputable sources as military marches and folk music. Today Mahler’s inclusion of a wide range of musical styles and stock elements from nature, folklore and the classical repertoire is regarded as an essential part of what makes him Mahler. His eclecticism resonates strongly with our own musical lives, which invariably include at least a smattering of classical, popular and commercial elements from a vast range of times, places and peoples.

Mahler does not restrict his musical models to humans, or even to animals: a typical Mahlerian direction to his performers is Wie ein Naturlaut (like a sound from nature), which appears in the direction for the shimmering opening of the first movement. Soon Mahler brings in the call of a cuckoo, seamlessly integrated with the descending two-note pattern of a fourth, which from beginning to end provides the first movement with much of its melodic material. Mahler’s audience would readily have recognised the opening of Beethoven’s fourth symphony (which similarly features a bare opening in octaves, and a figure dominated by falling fourths) in the very beginning of Mahler’s first. Here the gesture is enlarged to typically Mahlerian dimensions: the B flat of Beethoven’s beginning appears in a mere five octaves, whereas Mahler’s A ranges over seven – an attempt to embrace the world (as Mahler famously told Finnish composer Jean Sibelius a symphony should) rather than merely the orchestra. In another departure from Beethoven’s example, those falling fourths here resonate throughout the work: the interval begins three of the four movements, and will finally conclude the symphony in unequivocal triumph.

The jaunty second movement of the symphony draws on an early (and uncomplicatedly joyful) song of Mahler’s

Keynotes
FIRST SYMPHONY
Mahler’s First Symphony began life as a two-part symphony in five movements, and acquired layers of literary narrative along the way, but in its final form it takes on a classical shape with four movements and no ‘story’ or nickname to get between us and Mahler’s ambitious musical vision.

The beginning of the first movement is crucial – don’t be caught napping as the first notes of the symphony float into the hall. From these emerge the sound of a flute: two notes outlining the single most important motif of the whole work, a descending ‘cuckoo’-like idea. Hold that motif in your ears: this simple idea will be echoed and shared through the orchestra until the music bursts into the joyful, pastoral theme that comes from the second of the Wayfarer songs.

The journey of this symphony moves through rustic exuberance in the second movement and the macabre funeral-march parody of ‘Frère Jacques’ in the third movement – a rare solo moment for the double bass. The funeral march is repeatedly broken up by street musicians (klezmer style) and eventually the whole thing is interrupted by a heartrending cry. This is the transition to the 20-minute finale, morphing from that stormy, apocalyptic opening into a radiant conclusion.

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own entitled ‘Hans und Grethe’. Mahler’s slow movement makes a more startling borrowing: the nursery tune known in German-speaking countries as Bruder Martin (we cosmopolitan English speakers call it Frère Jacques). Mahler makes it unmistakably his own, defamiliarising it in three crucial ways: we hear it in the minor mode, in a slow tempo, and in the strained uppermost register of a solo double bass. The aim (according to a program Mahler prepared to assist his listeners in early performances of the work – although he later disdained such annotations as nothing more than ‘a crutch for a cripple’) was to depict a satirical funeral march: the animals of the forest carrying a hunter to his grave in solemn procession as shown in a children’s book woodcut, The Huntsman’s Funeral Procession. The first of the third movement’s contrasting sections continues the mocking theme, with much use of village-band trumpets and clarinets, accompanied by bass drum and cymbals; indeed the village band dominates the final return of the funeral march, at one point even wrenching it into dance tempo.

Mahler’s most significant reference in this work, however, is to his own Songs of a Wayfarer, which dates from 1885 (the symphony was completed in 1888, and revised several times before its publication in 1899). It is a partly autobiographical work, inspired by his unhappy love affair with the singer Johanna Richter. The texts deal with unhappy love in the way familiar from Schubert’s great song-cycles; the protagonist sets off wandering to escape his grief, eventually finding peace in death and reunion with nature. The second song of the cycle, ‘Ging heut’ morgen übers Feld’ (I went out this morning into the fields) lends its theme to the main body of the first movement. The third movement’s second contrasting section refers to the closing section of the final song, in
which Mahler’s wayfarer comes to his final rest under a linden tree. Mahler has here given us a particularly ambiguous juxtaposition: a partly autobiographical funeral of his own, or at least of his ardent youthful self, set within one of the most sarcastic funeral marches in music.

Besides thematic material, the song-cycle also provides the symphony with the tonal centres which underpin its form: the joyful D major of the first movement is also the key of ‘I went out this morning into the fields’, and the despairing F minor of the last movement’s frenzied opening is the key of the song-cycle’s ending. Here, however, Mahler rewrites the story, wrenching the tonality into D major with an exultant fanfare in one of his most brilliant dramatic strokes. As the relationship of the symphony to the songs demonstrates, Mahler’s practice of making reference to other works and genres is far more than a matter of appropriating the occasional tune; it is his means of bringing into play a vast range of human experience. His musical ‘found objects’ shed light on the nature of the symphony far more eloquently and more ambiguously than a written program could ever do; indeed often we are not sure whether it is the outside world illuminating Mahler’s symphony or the other way around.

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Mahler’s First Symphony calls for four flutes (three doubling piccolo), four oboes (one doubling cor anglais), four clarinets (with bass clarinet and E flat clarinet doublings) and three bassoons (one doubling contrabassoon); seven horns, four trumpets, three trombones and tuba; two timpani and percussion (bass drum, cymbals, triangle, tam-tam); harp and strings.

The Sydney Symphony gave the first performance by an ABC orchestra of Mahler’s First Symphony in 1948, conducted by Eugene Goossens. The most recent performance was in 2008 under Gianluigi Gelmetti.

Mahler 1 – The Genesis

Mahler began work on the First Symphony in 1884, around the same time as Songs of a Wayfarer, completing most of the work over six weeks in 1888. For the premiere in Budapest in 1889 it was called a ‘Symphonic Poem in Two Parts’. The second of the five movements was called Blumine; the fourth movement was a funeral march. But there was no official program, just an outline leaked to the newspaper the day before: spring, happy daydreams, and a wedding procession; a funeral march representing the burial of the poet’s illusions, and the achievement of spiritual victory. It could only have come from Mahler.

Mahler revised the symphony for Hamburg in 1893. He was persuaded to add a highly literary narrative and to include new, official movement titles. He gave the symphony a new name: ‘Titan – a tone poem in the form of a symphony’. Richard Strauss programmed it in Weimar in 1894 and the Berlin premiere followed in 1896. After this the Blumine movement was withdrawn and Mahler firmly rejected the program as well as the ‘Titan’ nickname. For English-speaking audiences this has been a good thing: ‘Titan’ is more likely to inspire thoughts of Greek mythology than of the 19th-century German novel intended.

The symphony in its final four-movement version was published in 1899 but Mahler continued to tinker with it and a revised version was published in 1906.

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ABSOLUTE MUSIC – ‘absolute’ music is the opposite of program music, i.e. it is music with no descriptive title or narrative or apparent extra-musical inspiration. Most symphonies would be considered ‘absolute’, with striking exceptions in works such as Beethoven’s Pastoral Symphony and Berlioz’s Symphonie fantastique, both of which are programmatic.

CODA – literally ‘tail’, a small section at the end of a movement or work that ‘rounds off’ the music.

INTERVAL – the distance in pitch between two notes. If the first note is higher in pitch then the interval is ‘falling’. Intervals are named according to the number of steps of the musical scale that they cover: a fourth is an interval of four steps. See octave.

KEY – in Western music there are two main categories of scale or key: major and minor. Aurally, a major scale will sound ‘brighter’ or more cheerful (‘Happy Birthday’), while a minor scale will sound sombre or mournful (funeral marches). The tonic or home note of a scale gives it its name (e.g. C minor, a minor scale beginning on the note C, or E flat major, a major scale beginning on E flat).

LIED – German for ‘song’; Lieder is the plural.

OCTAVE – the interval between two notes that are eight scale steps apart. The first two notes of ‘Somewhere over the rainbow’ are an octave apart. ‘Octave’ is also used when referring to the range and different registers of an instrument, ensemble or voice: Julie Andrews is famous for being able to sing a range of four octaves (most singers might manage two and a half).

PROGRAM MUSIC – music inspired by and claiming to express a non-musical idea, usually with a descriptive title and sometimes with a literary narrative, or program as well. Program music flourished in the 19th century, with works such as Berlioz’s Symphonie fantastique and the rise of the symphonic poem. In many instances there is evidence of conflict in the composer’s mind: an obvious or stated program being assigned to the music with a simultaneous (or later) denial that there is any programmatic intent behind it.

SYMPHONIC POEM – (also ‘tone poem’) a genre of orchestral music that is symphonic in scope but adopts a freer structure in service of an extra-musical program that provides the narrative or scene. Liszt was the first to use the term and Richard Strauss also championed the symphonic poem in preference to writing regular symphonies.

SCHERZO – literally, a joke; generally referring to a movement in a fast, light triple time, with whimsical, startling or playful elements.

TONAL CENTRE – another way of referring to key.

In classical music, movement titles are usually taken from standard musical terminology (drawn from Italian) indicating tempo and mood. For example, the tempo marking for Mahler’s Blumine movement is:

Andante – an easy walking pace

But Mahler also made a point of providing often quite elaborate instructions for expression and interpretation in his native tongue, German. We’ve translated these where they occur in this program, since they’re not standard musical terms.

This glossary is intended only as a quick and easy guide, not as a set of comprehensive and absolute definitions. Most of these terms have many subtle shades of meaning which cannot be included for reasons of space.
MORE MUSIC

Selected Discography

DON JUAN
One of the best ways to get to know Strauss’s tone poems is via an impressive boxed set that brings together performances by the Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and some of the world’s great conductors. Lorin Maazel conducts the VPO in Don Juan.
DECCA 470 954
Ashkenazy’s recording of Don Juan and Aus Italien with the Cleveland Orchestra is out of print but can be purchased as an ArkivCD from arkivmusic.com
DECCA 425 941

SONGS OF A WAYFARER
Thomas Quasthoff sings Songs of a Wayfarer with the Vienna Philharmonic and Pierre Boulez conducting, on a recording with mezzo-soprano performances of the Rückert Lieder (Violetta Urmana) and the Kindertotenlieder (Anne Sofi e von Otter).
DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 389 402
For the version with piano accompaniment, try Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau with Daniel Barenboim on a disc that includes Das Knaben Wunderhorn and the Rückert Lieder.
EMI CLASSICS 76780

BLUMINE & THE FIRST SYMPHONY
The three Mahler works in this program are collected in a 2-CD set that features Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra in performances of Blumine and Mahler’s First Symphony, together with Frederica von Stade singing Songs of a Wayfarer accompanied by the London Philharmonic Orchestra and conductor Andrew Davis.
RCA VICTOR RED SEAL 76233
There are several other recordings that pair Blumine and Mahler 1, including David Zinman and the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra.
RCA VICTOR RED SEAL 87156
Roger Norrington’s recording with the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra from 2004 also pairs the symphony with the rejected Blumine movement.
HÄNSSLER CLASSIC 93137

MARKUS EICHE
Markus Eiche sings Haydn with conductor Helmut Rilling on a disc that pairs the Nelson and Creation masses.
HÄNSSLER CLASSIC 98279
For the Naxos series of complete Schubert songs, Eiche has recorded a volume of songs with pianist Jens Fuhr.
NAXOS 8554799
And his most recent release is a recording of Otto Nicolai’s opera based on The Merry Wives of Windsor. Ulf Schirmer conducts the Bavarian Radio Chorus and Munich Radio Orchestra.
CPO 777317-2

Broadcast Diary

FEBRUARY
12 Feb, 1.05pm
SHOSTAKOVICH 10 (2009)
Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor
Janine Jansen violin
Dvořák, Shostakovich
12 Feb, 8pm
MAHLER 1
Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor
Markus Eiche baritone
See this program for details
16 Feb 8pm
JONATHAN BISS IN RECITAL (2009)
Haydn, Janáček, Beethoven, Schumann
18 Feb, 8pm
MAHLER 8
Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor
with a cast of ‘thousands’

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Have Your Say
Tell us what you thought of the concert at sydneysymphony.com/yoursay or email: yoursay@sydneysymphony.com
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor
PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC ADVISOR

In the years since Vladimir Ashkenazy first came to prominence on the world stage in the 1955 Chopin Competition in Warsaw he has built an extraordinary career, not only as one of the most renowned and revered pianists of our times, but as an inspiring artist whose creative life encompasses a vast range of activities.

Conducting has formed the largest part of his music-making for the past 20 years. He has been Chief Conductor of the Czech Philharmonic (1998–2003), and Music Director of the NHK Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo (2004–2007). Since 2009 he has held the position of Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of the Sydney Symphony.

Alongside these roles, Vladimir Ashkenazy is also Conductor Laureate of the Philharmonia Orchestra, with whom he has developed landmark projects such as Prokofiev and Shostakovich Under Stalin (a project which he toured and later developed into a TV documentary) and Rachmaninoff Revisited at the Lincoln Center, New York.

He also holds the positions of Music Director of the European Union Youth Orchestra and Conductor Laureate of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra. He maintains strong links with a number of other major orchestras, including the Cleveland Orchestra (where he was formerly Principal Guest Conductor), San Francisco Symphony, and Deutsches Symphonie Orchester Berlin (Chief Conductor and Music Director, 1988–96), as well as making guest appearances with orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic.

Vladimir Ashkenazy continues to devote himself to the piano, building his comprehensive recording catalogue with releases such as the 1999 Grammy award-winning Shostakovich Preludes and Fugues, Rautavaara’s Piano Concerto No.3 (which he commissioned), Rachmaninoff transcriptions, Bach’s Wohltemperierte Klavier and Beethoven’s Diabelli Variations. Last year he released a disc of French piano duo works with Vovka Ashkenazy.

A regular visitor to Sydney over many years, he has conducted subscription concerts and composer festivals for the Sydney Symphony, with his five-program Rachmaninoff festival forming a highlight of the 75th Anniversary Season in 2007. Vladimir Ashkenazy’s artistic role with the Sydney Symphony includes collaborations on composer festivals, recording projects and international touring.
Markus Eiche studied in Stuttgart and Karlsruhe, and in 1997 he was a prize winner in the Francesco Viñas International Singing Competition, Barcelona. From 2001 to 2007 he was a member of the National Theatre Mannheim, where he sang Marcello (La bohème), Wolfram (Tannhäuser), Papageno (Die Zauberflöte), Guglielmo (Cosi fan tutte) and Heerrufer (Lohengrin), as well as the title roles in Don Giovanni and Wozzeck. Since the 2007–08 season he has been a member of the Vienna State Opera, where his roles have included Count Almaviva (Le nozze di Figaro), Marcello, Jeletzki (Pique Dame), Belcore (L’elisir d’amore), Albert (Werther), Lescaut (Manon), and Fritz and Frank (Die tote Stadt).

He has also sung with Prague Opera, Lucerne Opera and Stuttgart Opera, as well as Teatro alla Scala, the Munich Biennale, Netherlands Opera, Komische Oper Berlin and Semperoper Dresden. He appears regularly for the Gran Teatre del Liceu Barcelona, and for many years he appeared at the Salzburg Festival. In 2007 he made his Bayreuth Festival debut singing Kothner in Die Meistersinger, reprising the role in 2008.

He enjoys a close working relationship with conductor Helmuth Rilling. He has also collaborated with conductors such as Marin Alsop, Harry Bicket, Christoph von Dohnányi, Alan Gilbert, Riccardo Muti, Kent Nagano, Seiji Ozawa, Kirill Petrenko, Christophe Rousset and Sebastian Weigle.

As a concert artist he has sung Brahms’ A German Requiem, Mahler’s Wunderhorn Lieder, a concert version of Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor, Handel’s Saul and Britten’s War Requiem. His repertoire also includes the Bach Passions and Christmas Oratorio, Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, Mahler’s Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen, and Mendelssohn’s Elijah and Paulus, as well as works by Aribert Reimann, Luigi Dallapiccola, Judith Weir and Wolfgang Rihm.

Besides his frequent appearances for the Vienna State Opera, Markus Eiche’s recent engagements have included the Szymanowski Requiem (Bavarian Radio Orchestra, Munich); Carmina Burana (Munich Bach Choir); Haydn’s oratorio The Seasons (Talens Lyriques); and A German Requiem in Valencia; as well as concerts in the Vienna Musikverein.
Performing in this concert…

FIRST VIOLINS

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Concertmaster

Sun Yi
Associate Concertmaster

Fiona Ziegler
Assistant Concertmaster

Julie Batty

Marianne Broadfoot

Brielle Clapson

Sophie Cole

Amber Gunther

Jennifer Hoy

Jennifer Johnson

Georges Lentz

Nicola Lewis

Alexandra Mitchell

Léone Ziegler

Emily Qin*

SECOND VIOLINS

Marina Marsden

Kirsty Hilton

Emma West

Shuti Huang

Susan Dobbie

Principal Emeritus

Maria Durek

Stan W Kornel

Benjamin Li

Nicole Masters

Philippa Paige

Biyana Rozenblit

Maja Verunica

Alexandra D’Elia#

Belinda Jezek*

VIOLAS

Roger Benedict

Aurelie Entringer*

Anne Louise Comerford

Yvette Goodchild

Assistant Principal

Robyn Brookfield

Sandro Costantino

Jane Hazelwood

Graham Hennings

Stuart Johnson

Mary McVarish

Felicity Tsai

Justine Marsden

Leonid Volovelsky

CELLOS

Catherine Hewgill

Emma Jane Murphy*

Fenella Gill

Timothy Nankervis

Elizabeth Neville

Adrian Wallis

David Wickham

William Hewer†

Patrick Murphy#

Rachael Tobin#

DOUBLE BASSES

Kees Boersma

Alex Henery

Neil Brawley

Principal Emeritus

David Campbell

Steven Larson

Richard Lynn

David Murray

Benjamin Ward

HARP

Louise Johnson

FLUTES

Janet Webb

Emma Sholl

Kate Lawson#

Rosamund Plummer

Principal Piccolo

OBOES

Diana Doherty

Shefali Pryn

David Papp

Alexander Oguey

Principal Cor Anglais

CLARINETS

Lawrence Dobell

Francesco Celata

Christopher Tingay

Craig Wernicke

BASSOONS

Matthew Wilkie

Fiona McNamara

Noriko Shimada

Principal Contrabassoon

HORNS

Ben Jacks

Robert Johnson

Geoffrey O’Reilly

Principal 3rd

Lee Bracegirdle

Marnie Sebire

Michael Dixon*

Katy Hermann*

Frankie Lo Surdo*

TRUMPETS

Daniel Mendelow

Paul Goodchild

Anthony Heinrichs

Adam Malone*

TROMBONES

Ronald Prussing

Scott Kinmont

Nick Byrne

Christopher Harris

Principal Bass Trombone

TUBA

Steve Rossé

TIMPANI

Richard Miller

Mark Robinson

Assistant Principal

Timpani/Tutti Percussion

PERCUSSION

Rebecca Lagos

Colin Piper

Brian Nixon*

Bold = Principal

Italic = Associate Principal

# = Contract Musician

* = Guest Musician

† = Sydney Symphony Fellow

In response to audience requests, we’ve redesigned the orchestra list in our program books to make it clear which musicians are appearing on stage for the particular performance. Please note that the lists for the string sections are not in seating order. To see photographs of the full roster of permanent musicians and find out more about the orchestra, visit our website: www.sydneysymphony.com/SSO_musicians

(The orchestra list is correct when we go to print – late changes of personnel do occur from time to time.)
THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY
Vladimir Ashkenazy PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC ADVISOR
PATRON Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, Governor of New South Wales

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the Sydney Symphony has evolved into one of the world’s finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world’s great cities.

Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, where it gives more than 100 performances each year, the Sydney Symphony also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales. International tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence, and in 2009 it made its first tour to mainland Asia.

The Sydney Symphony’s first Chief Conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdenek Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and, most recently, Gianluigi Gelmetti. The orchestra’s history also boasts collaborations with legendary figures such as George Szell, Sir Thomas Beecham, Otto Klemperer and Igor Stravinsky.

The Sydney Symphony’s award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, developing audiences and engaging the participation of young people. The Sydney Symphony promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program. Recent premieres have included major works by Ross Edwards, Liza Lim, Lee Bracegirdle and Georges Lentz, and the orchestra’s recording of works by Brett Dean was released on both the BIS and Sydney Symphony Live labels.

Other releases on the Sydney Symphony Live label, established in 2006, include performances with Alexander Lazarev, Gianluigi Gelmetti, Sir Charles Mackerras and Vladimir Ashkenazy. The Sydney Symphony has also released recordings with Ashkenazy of Rachmaninoff and Elgar orchestral works on the Exton label, and numerous recordings on the ABC Classics label.

This is the second year of Ashkenazy’s tenure as Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor.
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