

# MahlerFest XXVIII



Symphony No. 9 in D Major  
"Maestro Olson's Farewell Concert"  
Colorado MahlerFest Orchestra

*Mackay Auditorium, CU Boulder  
May 16 & 17, 2015*

# Schedule of Events

## Thursday, May 14 – 2:00 pm - Film - Boedecker Theatre at the Dairy Center, Boulder

- “Mahler auf der Couch,” Austria/Germany, 2010, 97 minutes
- Discussion to follow film

## Friday, May 15 – 2:00 pm - Film - Boedecker Theatre at the Dairy Center, Boulder

- The world premiere of a new film by Jason Starr: “For the Love of Mahler: The Inspired Life of Henry-Louis de La Grange”
- Discussion with the film maker and film participants Stephen Hefling and Morten Solvik

## Saturday, May 16 – Symposium

### Morning Session – 8:30 am - C-199 - Imig Building, University of Colorado

- Dr. Morten Solvik, IES Abroad, Vienna  
“The Death of Transfiguration: Memory and Demise in Gustav Mahler’s Ninth Symphony”
- Dr. Stephen Hefling, Case Western Reserve University  
“‘Enjoy Life!’ – The Anxiously Anticipated Ninth”
- Dr. Marilyn L. McCoy, Columbia University  
“Stepping, Sliding, and Soaring: Navigating the Ups and Downs of the First Movement of Mahler’s Ninth Symphony”
- Dr. Robert Olson, Artistic Director and Conductor, Colorado MahlerFest  
“A Conductor’s Perspective of the Ninth Symphony”

### Lunch – Atrium Lobby, ATLAS building, University of Colorado

Tickets available at the symposium

### Afternoon Session – 1:30 pm - Film -

### Rm 102 - ATLAS building, University of Colorado

- A new film by Jason Starr:  
“Everywhere and Forever – Mahler’s Song of the Earth”
- Discussion with the film maker and film participants  
Stephen Hefling, Catherine Keller, and Morten Solvik

## Saturday, May 16 – 7:30 pm - Orchestral Concert - Macky Auditorium, University of Colorado

## Sunday, May 17 – 3:30 pm - Orchestral Concert - Macky Auditorium, University of Colorado

Mahler Symphony No. 9 in D

Maestro Robert Olson conducting the Colorado MahlerFest Orchestra

Pre-concert Lecture by Dr. Marilyn L. McCoy at 6:30 pm on Saturday and 2:30 pm on Sunday

## From the Artistic Director

Mahler's vision of the world, so clearly mirrored in his works, reflected the problems of life, of love and disappointment, of achievement and failure, of happiness and fame, all from the viewpoint of death, common to all of us. Audiences of his time were utterly perplexed by both the emotional honesty and emotional complexity of this approach. However, today's generation of listeners finds itself increasingly in accord with a composer who does not spare them the trouble of stretching their emotional range. Not only has his music "begun to find a home", Mahler has become one of the most performed composers in the repertoire, and this almost unbelievable explosion of popularity in the last four decades has, at its core, a fundamental reason. With Mahler's music was a manifestation of the self, and listeners find a sympathetic connection with one who so honestly and simply explored the age-old questions of death and life, of loss and life, and the meaning of our existence, and who so nakedly exposed his soul in his musical creations.

A music critic recently wrote, in reviewing the Third Symphony, "Mahler may be our most ethereal composer, but there is no music more human than Mahler's."

As the eloquent writer Neville Cardus stated, "I do not feel when I listen to Beethoven, Bach, Bruckner, or Sibelius that I am coming into a sort of psychic contact with the men behind the music. I recognize their tone, their style and technical setup, the idiom, and so on; but I do not get sense of a personal presence. With Mahler, his music seems as though it is being projected or ejected from his very being, from his innermost nature, even as we are listening to it in a performance. It comes to us at times as a kind of ectoplasm to tone."

Moreover, just considered simply as music, Mahler spun gorgeous melodies; stunning climaxes; employed brilliant orchestration; was tender and poetic; and wrote for the voice in

Dear friends,

The MahlerFest family consists of many old friends-loyal supporters, musicians, and fellow music lovers-who return year after year for our performances under the baton of our outstanding Maestro, Robert Olson. His unfailingly pure and penetrating interpretations of Mahler's great music, his thorough preparation of the orchestra, and the emotional power of the performances are truly the hallmarks of MahlerFest, and the source of the strength and devotion of our little family.

We all have many fond memories from 28 years of MahlerFests under the guidance of Maestro Olson; we can look back on over 3000 musician performance experiences and many thousands of audience members' experiences, and know that we have all played a significant role in expanding the Mahler tradition, and keeping this great music before the music-loving public.

ways unmatched by any other composer. The listener can just let the music transport her/himself to pure enjoyment.

And thus was born the MahlerFest 28 years ago. Twenty-eight years of Mahler! From very humble beginnings in 1987 to receiving the Mahler Gold Medal in 2005 to performing Das Lied with Thomas Hampson, there is much to be thankful for, and many people to whom I could not possibly express sufficient gratitude. Our accomplishments are many, our goals humble but noble. We want to continue experiencing a composer whose music touches us in ways that few other do, and wish to share this experience with others, which is why so many wonderful musicians volunteer their precious time year in and year out, and why we have created our own small "Mahler community" from across the land, to gather in Boulder every May to celebrate that which binds us all. The MahlerFest has become an event propelled and driven by the artistic spirit which dwells in all its creative participants to be part of this unique experience. Every May, the Colorado MahlerFest allows its participants and audiences to explore one of history's greatest musical prophets!

While the MahlerFest has been one of the most satisfying endeavors of my musical career, all good things must come to an end, and I will be retiring at the conclusion of the last 4 notes played by the violas in Mahler's own farewell symphony. It has been a "ride" of unbelievable highs, of incredible satisfaction, of endearing friendships. It has taught me a sense of humility, for the journeys traveled by Mahler can help clarify our place and significance in the world, not to mention the admiration I have for the thousands of people who have been a part of this over the years. I will dearly miss the MahlerFest and hope that it will be able to continue to inspire us under new leadership. I thank each and every one of you for being a part of this amazing journey of discovery.

Robert Olson

Now Maestro Olson has decided that it is time for him to retire his MahlerFest baton, and we are all wondering how the MahlerFest tradition can go on without him, and how it might change under new direction. The MahlerFest Board of Directors is making every effort to secure the services of a new music director who will bring many of Maestro Olson's great qualities, along with his or her own strengths. We have Mr. Olson's full support during this challenging, but also exciting transition. With your continued support, MahlerFest will move forward into a new era, and CU's beautiful Macky Auditorium will continue to resound with the great Mahler performances that you love. With warmest regards,



Barry Knapp, President

# MahlerFest XXVIII

Saturday, May 16, 2015 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 17, 2015 3:30 p.m.

Andante Pre-concert lecture by Dr. Marilyn McCoy one hour before each performance

**The Colorado MahlerFest Orchestra**

**Robert Olson, conductor**

*Symphony No. 9 in D*

1. *Andante comodo*

2. *Im Tempo eines gemächlichen Ländlers. Etwas täppisch und sehr derb*

3. *Rondo-Burleske: Allegro assai. Sehr trotzig*

4. *Adagio. Sehr langsam und noch zurückhaltend*

**The Complete Mahler**  
**1988 - 2015**

A Limited Edition collection of MahlerFest recordings  
selected by Maestro Robert Olson with program notes  
available for \$35 in the Macky Auditorium lobby  
and at [www.mahlerfest.org](http://www.mahlerfest.org)

# The Complete Mahler

Maestro Olson

MahlerFest is pleased to make available a compilation of the “best of the MahlerFest” from over 28 years of performances. In one, small thumb drive, you can hear practically every note Mahler ever wrote, played with the “magic and devotion” that has come to be synonymous with the MahlerFest orchestra. While over the years, we have performed many pieces by any number of composers—those influenced by Mahler, or who lived during Mahler’s time—we have chosen to include only Mahler’s original compositions. Thus, we are not including our performance of Mahler’s “arrangement” of the Bach Suite, but *are* including his brief entr’acte to the von Weber opera *Der Drei Pintos*. And while the Hamburg version of Symphony No. 1 is very close to his final product, we included it for those of you who want to “hunt down” the minor differences.

Naturally, expressions of gratitude must go to all the wonderful artists and musicians who are responsible for this impressive collection, but the MahlerFest is much more than 100 to 500 musicians on stage, devoting a minimum of eight days of their busy lives to the preparation of Mahler’s “next” symphony. Recognition must also go to the singers, dancers, scholars, authors, program designers, recording engineers, photographer, donors, and the Board of Directors, to name a few. In order to recognize all of them, you have copies of every program from the twenty-eight years of MahlerFest included on this thumb drive. It includes some terrific program notes, background stories, and the personnel list from every orchestra since its inception. Please note also the list of contributors who have been instrumental in our success, in particular Dan Dietrich and the Dietrich Foundation of Philadelphia.

I hope you enjoy this collection as much as I did putting it together. When one considers the fact that the MahlerFest orchestra consists of 100% volunteers and “non-professionals,” it is an incredible testament to MahlerFest’s history and passion.

*Major funding for MahlerFest  
Provided by  
The Dietrich Foundation*

# Colorado MahlerFest

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Keith Bobo

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Judy Cole

MahlerFest acknowledges with sincere thanks the cooperation of the College of Music, University of Colorado, Robert Shay, Dean.

# Colorado MahlerFest XXVIII Orchestra

## Violin I

**Annamarie Karacson** - 27  
**Concertmaster, Boulder**  
 Yenlik Weiss\*\* - 2, Superior  
 Lindsie Cate - 1, Minneapolis, MN  
**Martha Dicks** - 28, Longmont  
 Ryan Foley - 1, Boulder  
 Stephanie Garvey - 1, Lakewood  
**Susan Hall** - 28, Boulder  
 Mary Matthews - 7, Boulder  
 Ramiro Miranda - 2,  
 Kansas City, MO  
 Johannes Rudolph - 4, Boulder  
 Paul Trapkus - 2, Longmont  
 Tracy Viator - 1, Boulder  
 Chelsea Winborne - 2, Arvada

## Violin II

Michael Brook\* - 1, Superior  
 Rebecca Ruttenberg\*\* - 22, Boulder  
 Gwyneth Ayers - 10, Longmont  
 David Cher - 2, Englewood  
**Emily Fenwick** - 28, Loveland  
 Jeralyn Friedli - 19, Boulder  
 Laura Johnson - 3, Littleton  
 Dario Landazuris - 11,  
 Austin, TX  
 Marilyn Maxvold - 20, Loveland  
 Rob Rubin - 10, Ridgewood, NJ  
 Susan Schade - 25, Boulder  
 Michelle Segal - 7, Boulder  
 Jane Uitti - 19, Louisville  
 Linda Wolpert - 22, Boulder

## Viola

Lauren Spaulding\* - 2, Boulder  
 Kyla Witt\*\* - 3, Bowling Green, OH  
 Alyssa Bell - 2, Kansas City, MO

Berngen Christensen - 1, Boulder  
 Judy Cole - 18, Broomfield  
 Andrea Dobbs - 2, Boulder  
 Jean Inaba - 2, Denver  
 Joanna Johnson - 3, Littleton  
 Hannah Kuchar - 13, Lafayette  
 Aleksa Dlaboha Kuzma - 1, Boulder  
 Busya Lugovier - 4, La Crosse, WI  
 Marilyn de Queiroz - 4, Denver  
 Eileen Saiki - 21, Louisville

## Cello

Andrew Brown\* - 1, Boulder  
 Joey Howe\*\* - 2, Boulder  
 Rowanna Bobo - 17, Louisville  
 Mathieu D'Ordine - 5, Boulder  
 Meryl Geib - 1, Edmond, OK  
 Timothy Johnson - 2, Littleton  
 Rebecca Jonas - 4, Boulder  
 Ezgi Karakus - 1, Kansas City, MO  
 Carmen Olguin - 6, Boulder  
 Monica Smiley - 1, Boulder

## Bass

Jared Conner\* - 11, Aurora  
**Jennifer Motycka\*\*** - 28,  
**Longmont**  
 Brett Armstrong - 1, Denver  
 Dale Day - 20+, Boulder  
 Michael Geib - 1, Edmund, OK  
 Megan Gore - 1, Boulder  
 Ross Gullo - 3, CO  
 Erik Habbinga - 16, Fort Collins  
 Karina Ogilvie - 8, Gilbert, AZ

## Harp

Hillary Schefter\* - 6, Denver  
 Jenilee Elsbernd - 1, Loveland

## Flute/Piccolo

Kay Lloyd\* - 21, Longmont  
 Jonathan Borja - 6,  
 Kansas City, MO  
 Peggy Bruns - 16, Longmont  
 Alexandria Aguirre - 3, Ada, OK  
 Sophie Tegart - 1, Beaverton, OR

## Oboe/English horn

Kimberly Brody\* - 8, Boulder  
 Gregory Stead - 1,  
 Kansas City, MO  
 Michael Sax - 1, Arvada  
 Marilyn Johnson - 2, Loveland

## Clarinet/Eb/Bass clarinet

Jason Richard Olney\* - 6, Louisville  
 Michael Moy - 3, Ft. Collins  
 Tom Hess - 1, Grand Junction  
 Nathaniel Berman - 2 (+bs cl), Ada,  
 OK  
 Jacob Eichhorn - 2 (+Eb), Boulder

## Bassoon/Contrabassoon

Tori Olson\* - 5, Ardmore, PA  
 Susan Hess - 1, Grand Junction  
 Cynthia Harris - 1, Boulder  
 Ben Cefkin - 4, Denver

## Horn

Kelly Drifmeyer\* - 16, Potsdam, NY  
 Alyssa Cherson\*\* - 3,  
 New Hyde Park, NY  
 Brian T. Kilp - 4, Terre Haute, IN  
 Scott Höhn - 2, Houston, TX  
 David Wallace - 8, Broomfield

## Trumpet

Geoffrey Wood\* - 4,  
 Athens, GA  
 Patrick Hunninghake - 1,  
 Chicago, IL  
 Sarah Stoneback - 2, Broomfield

## Trombone

Nathan Gonzales\* - 7, Broomfield  
 William Combs - 1, Denver  
 Daniel J. Morris - 6, Ft Collins

## Tuba

**Thomas Stein\* - 28,**  
**Kansas City, MO**

## Timpani

Alan Yost\* - 27,  
 North Andover, MA

## Percussion

Stan Pappas\* - 6, Thornton  
 Amy Heartling - 4,  
 Kansas City, MO  
 Lindsey Höhn - 2, Houston, TX  
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 Raleigh, NC

\* denotes principal

\*\* denotes associate principal

Numbers after names indicate number of MahlerFests played.

Bold names indicate musicians who have played every MahlerFest since its inception.

## Orchestra Affiliations (recent past and present) of the Members of the MahlerFest Orchestra

Alton (IL) Symphony \* American Chamber Players \* Anchorage Symphony \* Ann Arbor Symphony \* Arapaho Philharmonic \* Aspen Chamber Ensemble \* Austin Civic Orchestra \* Bay Area Women's Orchestra \* Boulder Bach Festival \* Boulder Philharmonic Orchestra \* Centennial Symphony Orchestra \* Central City Opera Orchestra \* Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra \* Chicago Symphony Orchestra \* Cincinnati Symphony and Pops \* Civic Orchestra of Chicago \* Civic Orchestra of KC \* Colorado Ballet Orchestra \* Colorado Music Festival \* Colorado Springs Symphony \* Colorado Symphony Orchestra \* Columbine Chamber Orchestra \* Columbus Symphony \* Concord (MA) Orchestra \* Conservatory of Music, University of Missouri Kansas City \* Corpus Christi Symphony \* Des Moines Symphony \* Estes Park Chamber Orchestra \* Evansville Philharmonic \* Evergreen Chamber Orchestra \* Fairbanks Symphony \* Ft. Collins Symphony Orchestra \* Ft. Worth Symphony \* Four Seasons Chamber Orchestra \* Fresno Philharmonic \* Greeley Philharmonic \* Greensboro Symphony Orchestra \* Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra \* Jefferson Symphony Orchestra \* Jerusalem Symphony \* Kansas City Civic Orchestra \* Kansas City Symphony \* Las Cruces Symphony \* Liberty Symphony (MO) \* Longmont Symphony Orchestra \* Mansfield (OH) Symphony \* Merced Symphony Orchestra \* Meridian (MS) Symphony Orchestra \* Midland-Odessa Symphony Orchestra \* Mississippi Symphony \* Mostly Strauss Orchestra \* National Repertory Orchestra \* New England Philharmonic (Boston) \* New Jersey Symphony \* New Orleans Philharmonic \* New World Symphony \* New Zealand Symphony \* North Carolina Symphony \* Northeast Symphony Orchestra (Oklahoma) \* Northwest Indiana Symphony \* Northwest Mahler Festival \* Northland Symphony (Missouri) \* Norwegian Chamber Orchestra \* Oberlin Conservatory Orchestra \* Orchestra Iowa \* Orchestra Wellington (NZ) \* Owensboro Symphony \* Pasadena Symphony \* Peoria Symphony \* Reno Philharmonic \* Ridgewood Symphony (NJ) \* Rocky Mountain Symphony \* Salt Lake Symphony \* Santa Fe Opera Orchestra \* St. Joseph (MO) Symphony \* St. Petersburg State Chamber Orchestra (Russia) \* Sinfonia of Colorado \* Sioux City Symphony \* Spokane Symphony \* Spoleto Festival Orchestra \* Strauss Symphony of America \* Timberline Orchestra \* Tucson Opera Orchestra \* Tucson Symphony \* University of Colorado Orchestra \* University of Northern Colorado Orchestra \* Utah Festival Opera \* Westminster Symphony \* Windsor (Ontario) Symphony

## Robert Olson, MahlerFest Artistic Director

“He may be more steeped in Mahler’s music than any other American.” - *New York Times*

“This Eighth is in the same class as the best on records.” - *American Record Guide*

“Legendary” - *FANFARE Magazine*

“Maybe the finest performance of this symphony (#8) ever put to disc.” - *Chicago Daily Herald*

“Robert Olson strikes me as being one of those rare beings among conductors, a man who puts the music first. And so were some of the other greats: Szell, Mengelberg, Beecham.” - *Tony Duggan, Staffordshire, UK*

“A world class performance.” - *On the Air magazine*

“... The greatest musical event in Boulder to date!” “Astonishing ability” - *Boulder Daily Camera*

Such is a sampling of reviews garnered by Maestro Robert Olson, Artistic Director and Conductor of the Colorado MahlerFest since its inception 28 years ago. He brings an amazingly active and varied career to the podium encompassing the entire spectrum of the concert stage, including symphony, opera, and ballet.

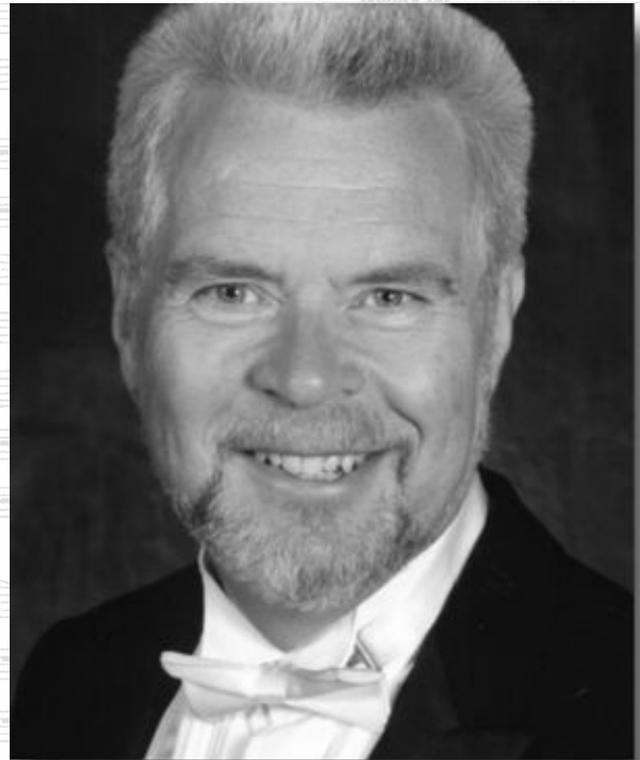
Currently a resident of Kansas City, Dr. Olson holds posts with two other orchestras. He is Director of Orchestras/Opera at the Conservatory of Music at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, where his two orchestras and, in particular, the opera productions consistently receive critical acclaim. With a repertoire of over 60 operas, recent productions include *Turandot*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Manon*, *Ariadne out Naxos*, and many others. He is also Music Director and Conductor of the Longmont Symphony Orchestra in Colorado, an orchestra that has consistently received rave reviews from Colorado critics. During his 31-year tenure, the orchestra has flourished, presenting an eleven-concert season to enthusiastic audiences, and Colorado residents hear the orchestra regularly on KVOD.

Prior to his move to Kansas City he was on the faculty of the University of Colorado College of Music for sixteen years, where he was music director of the opera program and Associate Conductor of Orchestras. Local audiences also know him as conductor for years of the immensely popular Colorado Gilbert and Sullivan Festival.

Prior to this year he was conductor for the Kansas City Ballet for fourteen years, having conducted over 600 performances with the St. Louis and Kansas City Symphonies. Other conducting posts include the Omaha Symphony, Boulder Baroque Chamber Orchestra, Boulder Civic Opera, Arapahoe Chamber Orchestra, Arvada Chamber Orchestra, Colorado Lyric Theater, and the Rocky Ridge Music Festival.

He made his European debut in 1990 in Belgium, which resulted in engagements in Venezuela; return invitations to Belgium; Bergamo and Milan, Italy; the Czech Republic; the Ljubljana Music Festival; Oporto, Portugal; and the National Symphony of China in Beijing. In February, 2001 he conducted five major Stravinsky works in a Stravinsky Festival sponsored by the Kansas City Symphony as well as five performances for the Miami City Ballet. In April, 2004, he took first place conducting the Korean National Symphony in a ten-contestant orchestra competition in a concert that was televised live over much of Asia.

In addition to the success of his recording of Mahler’s Eighth Symphony, Olson and a small international team of Mahler scholars spent over a year editing and preparing the Wheeler realization of Mahler’s Tenth Symphony. He then recorded the world premiere of the Wheeler version, both with the MahlerFest Orchestra in 1997 and



“But the palm goes to Olson who chooses ideal tempi ... and has a real sense of the long line. How I look forward to hearing him in other Mahler.”

- Jonathan Carr, author of biography *Mahler espresso*.

for Naxos records with the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra in 2002, to reviews such as “second only to Rattle and Berlin.”

He is married to Victoria Hagood-Olson and has two daughters, Tori and Chelsea, the former the principal bassoonist for the MahlerFest orchestra.

The Colorado MahlerFest, initiated by Olson on a dream and \$400 twenty-nine years ago, has become not only “one of Boulder’s most valuable cultural assets,” but a world-class festival, confirmed by the awarding of the Mahler Gold Medal by the International Gustav Mahler Society in Vienna in September, 2005, an honor shared that year with the New York Philharmonic.

# For Whom the Bell Tolls – Mahler's Symphony No. 9

Ron Nadel

*"The solitude, in which my attention is turned more inward, makes me feel all the more distinctly that everything is not right with me physically... I have been feeling worse than I did in town, where all the distractions helped to take my mind off things."*

- Gustav Mahler writing to Bruno Walter, 1908

*"I am thirstier for life than ever, and I find the 'habits of existence' sweeter than ever."*

- Gustav Mahler writing to Bruno Walter, 1909

We love stories, and central to the power of Mahler's symphonies is the sense that they contain narratives of some kind; in particular something deeply revealing about Mahler himself. To a large degree he is responsible for this impression. Mahler provided programs and titles for his early symphonies and movements, which he later withdrew. What could make a stronger suggestion that something very personal was revealed; so personal that it had to be hidden? Almost all his subsequent symphonies, with their patterns of powerful emotional progression, contributed to this autobiographical impression, or are interpretable in this light, with lots of tantalizing circumstantial evidence documented and recounted for each one. In this way, his ninth symphony, the last one he completed, is said to reveal the superstitious Mahler's belief he would die after completing it, leading the ailing composer to write it as his personal heartbreaking farewell, even including his faltering heartbeat in the first movement.

Unquestionably, the ninth symphony makes a deep bittersweet, melancholic impression on the listener, enhanced by its wistful melodies, slow finale, and dying last notes. Mahler was diagnosed with an untreatable heart condition in 1907, a year before he began to sketch the ninth. Those who knew him at the time emphasize a direct link between his state of mind and the music's "meaning." Mahler himself provided notes within the score, as well as musical references, which touch on the themes of mortality and farewell. And it was to be his last completed symphony after all. He died in 1911 without completing his tenth symphony. It is all the more poignant to experience the ninth as Mahler's despairing farewell. But is it?

We don't have direct corroboration of what Mahler himself intended or thought about vis-à-vis his ninth symphony. He abjured writing about the meaning of his music around the time of his fourth symphony. But we do know what those close to him thought, and there has been so much scholarly examination of the ninth symphony, it is now a subject in its own right.

In her memoirs, written nearly 30 years after Mahler died, his wife Alma says he superstitiously feared composing a ninth symphony, feeling it predicted his own end, because "*neither Beethoven nor Bruckner* [Mahler's beloved mentor] *had reached a tenth.*" The conductor Willem Mengelberg, a personal friend of

Mahler's, commented, "*The Ninth is farewell from all whom he loved and from the world.*" The young composer and Mahler disciple, Alban Berg, wrote "*The whole [first] movement is permeated with the premonition of death.*" Mahler's conducting protégé, Bruno Walter wrote "*The last movement, [of Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde] Der Abschied (farewell), might have been used as a heading for the Ninth.*"

The British musicologist and Mahler scholar, Deryck Cooke, in the '60s, described the ninth as Mahler's "*dark night of the soul*", but concludes that the symphony does not describe a subjective experience. Contemporary Mahler scholar Stephen Hefling has written "*...if not morbidly obsessed by death in 1909, Mahler was nevertheless aware of its relentless approach.*" Renowned Mahler biographer Henry-Louis de La Grange rejects the "*established wisdom... which views the symphony as a message from beyond the grave.*" Likewise, Canadian musicologist Vera Micznik challenges the "farewell meaning" attributed to the ninth, suggesting it is more a story which "*...results from a set of conditions surrounding the musical work.*"

All this interest and analysis clearly derives impetus from the beauty and emotional power of the music.

Mahler did leave unmistakable allusions to farewell and mortality in the score to his ninth symphony. In an early draft he wrote "Leb' wol" (farewell) above the opening notes of the first movement. This is a clear reference to Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 26, subtitled Les Adieux (farewells), wherein Beethoven wrote "Le-be-wohl" over the opening three notes. Mahler later removed this note, perhaps concerned it would appear to be an imitation of Beethoven. But midway into the first movement, Mahler has the music emulate a funeral cortege. The slow finale of the ninth begins with a near exact quote from the opening of the slow movement of Bruckner's incomplete ninth symphony. And with the long last note of the symphony, Mahler wrote "ersterbend" (dying). Mahler's use of a slow finale may also have been a reference to Haydn's Symphony No. 45, subtitled "Farewell," which contains a slow finale, contrary to the conventions of the time. Is there any doubt that the ninth is Mahler's personal, poignant farewell?

It is a mistake to view Mahler's ninth symphony apart from his entire output, however. Likewise, we should consider Mahler within the artistic and intellectual milieu of his times, and the clues he left from writings he did provide about his earliest symphonies.

From the time he was a young artist, Mahler would meet his friends at the cafes in Vienna, where they would engage in long, heated, intellectual conversations on the arts and life. These were post-romantic, early existentialist times. Philosophers began to consider human existence and the apparently meaningless and absurd world confronting it. Artists would elaborate on these themes and represent them in their works. Mahler was well-read and no exception.

Mahler's first symphony was initially created as a symphonic poem inspired by a novel whose protagonist is victorious because his integrated philosophies triumph over monolithic ideologies. But Mahler abandoned that programmatic connection to the novel. His music went in a different direction. He made significant changes, completing the work as a symphony. The music depicts aspects of human life: the pleasures of simple life juxtaposed by struggle with fate, the compensations derived through nature, and ultimate victory over adversity. The symphony also sardonically suggests the absurdity of life, and contains the first of his many symphonic funeral marches. In that symphony, the 24-year-old Mahler established a symphonic pattern: a sequence of movements expressing emotional responses to aspects of human fate.

Mahler's second, fifth, sixth, and seventh symphonies elaborate on this pattern. Each one begins with anguished funeral marches, except the sixth, which begins with a harrowing march. Each takes refuge in nostalgic references to simple country life and the pleasures of nature, encounters sardonic and bitter hints at the absurdity of life; and all but the sixth eventually triumph over the struggles with fate through love or faith. Even Mahler's fourth symphony, often described as his conflict-free paean to the innocent world of childhood, has its moments of darkness or menace in each movement, hinting at the calamities of adult existence to come.

The emotional journeys of these symphonies move us personally, making it tempting to look backward on Mahler's turbulent existence and assume his life is reflected in the music. But as the musicologist and philosopher Theodore Adorno wrote, Mahler "*was not content with first persons.*"

Mahler's own program notes provide support for Adorno's assertion. In his detailed description of the angry opening funeral march of his second symphony, for example, Mahler wrote, "*We are standing beside the coffin of a beloved man... there are great questions: Why did you live? Why did you suffer? Is it all nothing but a huge, terrible joke? Or has this life of ours a meaning? We must answer these questions if we want to go on living...*"

Mahler continues to include humanity broadly in his thoughts. He describes the nostalgic second and cynical third movements from that symphony as, "*...an interlude...the image of a long-forgotten hour of happiness... you could almost forget that which has happened. But when you awake from this wistful dream, and have to return to the confusion of life...the bustle of existence becomes horrible to you. Life strikes you as meaningless...*"

The fourth movement of the second symphony is, "*The stirring voice of simple faith*" which "*soothes our ears.*" And with its massive, triumphant finale, Mahler declares "*...an overwhelming love illuminates our being. We know, and are.*"

Those program notes, in conjunction with Mahler's recurring use of a similar emotional arc, suggest his symphonies contained related statements on universal human experience. In

addition, the circumstances of his life don't admit of a continuous personal narrative of struggle and tragedy; most of his darker works were composed at relatively optimistic times in his life. This applies to the ninth, as well.

Mahler composed the bulk of his ninth in 1909. That year he accepted the position of Music Director of the New York Philharmonic after completing a very successful season with the New York Metropolitan Opera the year before. During this time Mahler was also busy planning the premiere of his eighth symphony in Europe and the coming season with the Philharmonic, where he would conduct 46 concerts. Little wonder that he reported being "*thirstier for life than ever*" to his friend Bruno Walter. This can be understood as the expression of renewed vitality and/or recognition that time may be running out. But Mahler's health was not in decline until later in 1910.

The image of Mahler as despairing of his own imminent death, composing the ninth symphony as his bittersweet farewell, is inconsistent with the robust behavior he displayed the year he composed it, and with his planned future projects. Even if Mahler was superstitious, the intellectual post-romantic artist, continually musing on humanity's fate, would conceive the suitability of a ninth symphony as symbolic of "the inevitable." If his first seven symphonies are portrayals of humanity's struggles against fate, the ninth may be seen as representing the end of the struggle. As it was for Beethoven and Bruckner, the ninth stands for the "last symphony" faced by everyone.

Mahler's ninth therefore fits into the series of his universal statements, with the difference that, like his sixth, there will be no triumph over fate. Unlike the sixth, however, there is no tragedy. It is a fully realized contemplation of confronting "the inevitable" that presents a series of emotional responses, alternating between acceptance and resistance, bitterness and yearning. As Deryck Cooke described it, the ninth symphony is "*a three-sided conflict between agonized despair, a deep love of life, and a resigned sense of valediction.*" Its power and poignancy is that it tolls for each of us.

The first movement opens haltingly with two notes played by the celli followed by a note played by a horn. This is followed by two rising and two falling notes tolling on the harp. The falling notes are the ones above which Mahler wrote "Leb' wol" in his first draft, and which refer to the three-note opening of Beethoven's Les Adieux sonata. These opening measures evoke the passage of time. It has been suggested that the uneven rhythm is Mahler's unsteady heartbeat, but he was diagnosed with a heart valve condition, not arrhythmia. From these musical fragments, a sighing melody emerges, based on the two falling notes. This melody is contrasted by an anxious and combative section. The two are like an emotional tug of war between acceptance and resistance. It is the first of many moments comprising what contemporary British musicologist Julian Johnson characterizes as an obsession with letting go and an avoidance of letting go. An uneasy truce brings a lovely,

lilting melody in the violins, which will recur several times throughout the movement. That melody is a wistful version of Johann Strauss' waltz "Freut Euch des Lebens" (Enjoy Life). The tug of war continues through the movement, interspersed with Mahler's musical admonition to enjoy life while one can. At one point the timpani beat out a fearsome march. Here Mahler marks the score "Wie ein schwerer Kondukt" (like a heavy funeral cortege). Later, weary echoes of the angry funeral march from Mahler's fifth symphony can be discerned. Finally, a solo violin wistfully reminds us to "enjoy life" and the movement concludes as haltingly as it began.

The second movement is one of Mahler's many Ländler, or country dances. Mahler would often incorporate such movements in his symphonies to evoke a sense of nostalgia and the simple pleasures of life, and life as a dance with death. But this dance is awkward, frivolous, and manic; the shifting moods accompanying one's reflections on the fleeting, improbable, and precarious nature of the dance of life.

The third movement is titled Rondo-Burleske. It is Mahler's most raucous and chaotic music. Beginning with the opening trumpet fanfare, it fairly hurtles the listener into a storm of bitterness. This movement seems to answer the question from Mahler's second symphony, "Is it all nothing but a huge, terrible joke?", evoking shrill laughter and vulgar grimaces. The brazen

mockery is interrupted by a dignified melody on the trumpet, which is taken up by the strings. This melody turns on itself and its noble character is like a pious rebuke to cynicism. This turning melody will become the basis of the finale. But religious pacification is shouted down and swept aside as Mahler gives callous cynicism the last word.

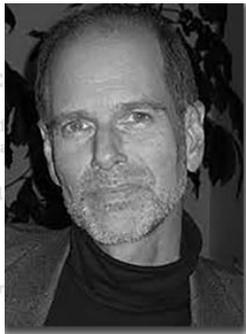
Mahler's slow finale opens with a direct reference to the opening of the slow movement of Bruckner's ninth symphony. The anguish, denial, and bitterness of the preceding movements have burned out and give way to transcendence and acceptance. The turning melody of the third movement becomes hymn-like, conveying an affirming love of life that is at once passionate and resigned. Emotion ebbs and flows through the movement, building in intensity until it reaches a heartbreaking climax. There follows a kind of triumphant leave-taking and finally a sense of peace is achieved. The music is suggestive of taking a last look back at life and a reluctance to let go. The movement seems to come to an end, but can't quite; embodying Julian Johnson's obsession/avoidance duality. Ultimately, Mahler doesn't want us to know exactly when the symphony ends; when life ends. The final note slowly dies away, imperceptibly.

- Program Notes by Ron Nadel  
Classical Music Announcer and Programmer



Maestro Robert Olson and baritone Thomas Hampson rehearsing *Das Lied von der Erde* in 2007

## Principal Participants



**Jason Starr** has produced and directed over one hundred films and television programs for broadcast on PBS, CBC, A&E, BRAVO and networks throughout Europe including Mezzo TV and 3sat. These productions range from classical music and modern dance performances to documentary profiles of artists and cultural issues. Passionate about sharing his love of music, Jason has created films intended to broaden interest in classical music performances. His

documentaries employ an interdisciplinary approach highlighting the historical, biographical and cultural context of an artwork. He hopes his films encourage the viewer's appreciation of art as a portal to a mysteriously entwined universe.

Jason's production, *What the Universe Tells Me: Unraveling the Mysteries of Mahler's Third Symphony*, won the 2004 Maui Film Festival "Visionary Filmmaker Award" and along with his *Of Love, Death and Beyond* and *Everywhere and Forever*, was an official selection of the Montreal International Festival of Films on Art.

Jason holds a BM in composition from Hartt School of Music and a MM from Manhattan School of Music. He resides in New York City where he formed the not-for-profit Cultural Media Collaborative to create performing arts films and interactive media.

Jason has been a frequent participant at the Colorado MahlerFest. The festival has been privileged to present all of Jason's Mahler related films: "*What the Universe Tells Me: Unraveling the Mysteries of Mahler's Third Symphony*", "*Of Love, Death and Beyond - Exploring Mahler's 'Resurrection' Symphony*", and this year "*Everywhere and Forever - Mahler's Song of the Earth*" and "*For the Love of Mahler - The Inspired Life of Henry-Louis de La Grange*".

A native of Norway, **Morten Solvik** grew up and received his education in the US, where he studied at Cornell University and at the University of Pennsylvania with a doctoral dissertation on the cultural setting of Gustav Mahler's Third Symphony. For over 20 years he has resided in Vienna, Austria, where he continues to pursue the tantalizing connections between music and culture in his research. His writings on Mahler have appeared in numerous standard volumes (Oxford, Cambridge, and Ashgate); he has also been a scholarly consultant on Mahler-related television productions for Jason Starr, Thomas Hampson, and Michael Tilson Thomas. His most recent work includes contributing to and co-editing two books: *After Mahler's Death* (Palacky Univ, 2013) and *Franz Schubert and His World* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2014). He is the Center Director of IES Abroad Vienna where he also teaches music history.



**Marilyn L. McCoy** is Adjunct Assistant Professor of Music Humanities at Columbia University in New York, where she has taught since 2009. She completed her doctorate at the University of Chicago with a dissertation entitled "Gustav Mahler's Path to the New Music: Musical Time and Modernism." Her research explores the ways in which Mahler evokes a sense of timelessness in his music,

a compositional strategy that plays an important part in his Ninth Symphony. Her article "It is my very self": The Multiple Messages of Gustav Mahler's 'Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen,'" was published in *Music Observed: Studies in Memory of William C. Holmes*, ed. Colleen Reardon and Susan Parisi (Harmonie Park Press, 2004). She was recently appointed to the Advisory Board of *The Reilly Catalogue of Mahler's Musical Manuscripts*, an online database being compiled under the direction of Professor Stephen E. Hefling of Case Western Reserve University.

Professor McCoy is much in demand as a pre-concert lecturer. She is especially proud of her long association with the Colorado MahlerFest, where she has served as "Official Pre-Concert Lecturer" since 2003 and as a Symposium participant since 2002. In February 2012 she gave several lectures at Disney Hall as part of the Los Angeles Philharmonic's "Mahler Project," led by Maestro Gustavo Dudamel. She has spoken at Carnegie Hall and the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center in New York, and at the Bard Festivals "Berg and His World" (2010) and "Mahler and His World" (2002). Other speaking engagements include lectures for the Boston Symphony Orchestra (2007 and 2008), the Berkshire Choral Festival (2004), and the Ravinia Festival of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (2001).



Though primarily a Mahler Scholar, Professor McCoy was Assistant Archivist at the Arnold Schoenberg Institute in Los Angeles for the last three years of its existence (1995-1998) until the archive moved to its present location in Vienna, Austria. In addition to "A Schoenberg Chronology," which appeared in *Schoenberg and His World*, ed. Walter Frisch (Princeton University Press, 1999), she and Elizabeth Keathley of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro are currently compiling a translation of the correspondence between Alma Mahler and Arnold Schoenberg, part of the *Schoenberg in Words* project, ed. Severine Neff and Sabine Feisst (forthcoming, Oxford University Press).



**Catherine Keller** is Professor of Constructive Theology in the Theological School and Graduate Division of Religion of Drew University. Books she has authored include *From a Broken Web: Separation, Sexism and Self*, *Apocalypse Now & Then*; *God & Power*; *Face of the Deep: a Theology of Becoming*; *On the Mystery: Discerning God in Process*, and most recently, *Cloud of the Impossible: Negative Theology and Planetary Entanglement*. She has co-edited several volumes of the Drew Transdisciplinary Theological Colloquium, including *Postcolonial Theologies*, *Ecospirit*, *Apophatic Bodies*, *Polydoxy: Theology of Multiplicity and Relation* and the forthcoming *Common Good/s: Ecology, Economy and Political Theology*. She persists in interlacing process, Continental and ecosocial, indelibly feminist, thinking with theological questions.



**Stephen E. Hefling** is among America's leading Mahler specialists. He received the A. B. in music from Harvard and the Ph. D. from Yale, with a dissertation examining Mahler's "Totenfeier" movement from the dual perspectives of programmatic influence and compositional process as documented in Mahler's surviving sketches and drafts. Currently Professor of Music at Case Western Reserve University, he has also taught at Stanford and Yale Universities as

well as Oberlin College Conservatory. Prof. Hefling has written numerous articles and book chapters for *19th Century Music*, *Journal of Musicology*, *Journal of Music Theory*, *Performance Practice Review*, the revised *New Grove Dictionary*, *German Lieder in the Nineteenth Century* (Routledge, 2009), *The Cambridge Companion to Mahler* (Cambridge, 2007), *Mahler and His World* (Princeton, 2002), *The Mahler Companion* (Oxford, 1999), *The Nineteenth-Century Symphony* (New York, 1997), etc. He rediscovered Mahler's manuscript version of *Das Lied von der Erde* for voices and piano, and edited that work for the *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Vienna, 1989). His monograph on *Das Lied* appeared in the *Cambridge Music Handbooks* series in 2000, and he has written program notes for Mahler recordings by leading conductors including Pierre Boulez and Lorin

Maazel. Currently he serves as program annotator and pre-concert lecturer for the complete Mahler cycle being presented by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra under their new music director, Manfred Honeck. Hefling has both edited and contributed to the volumes *Mahler Studies* (Cambridge, 1997) and *Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music* (New York, 1998). He currently serves on the editorial board of the *Neue Kritische Gesamtausgabe* of Mahler's works, and is completing *The Reilly Source Catalogue of Mahler's Musical Manuscripts*. He is also writing a two-volume study entitled *The Symphonic Worlds of Gustav Mahler* for Yale University Press.

For his work on Mahler, Prof. Hefling has been awarded grants from The Baker-Nord Center for the Humanities, The Kaplan Foundation, The Martha Baird Rockefeller Foundation, and the American Philosophical Society, as well as a Morse Junior Faculty Fellowship at Yale University; he has been a speaker at international conferences on the composer in Vienna, Paris, Hamburg, Rotterdam, New York, Montpellier, London, Guildford, and Boulder. Also a specialist in baroque performance practice, Prof. Hefling has performed widely with early music ensembles in the northeastern US, and has served as director of the Yale Collegium Musicum and the Cleveland Baroque Soloists; his book *Rhythmic Alteration in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Music* (New York, 1994) is generally considered the standard reference on that topic.



Colorado MahlerFest performance of Mahler Symphony No. 8 in 2009

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Wednesday, July 29, 2015 6:00 pm  
Symphony No. 5 in c#  
(With Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto in e, Op. 64)

**Aspen Music Festival**  
<http://www.aspenmusicfestival.com/>  
Wednesday, August 19, 2015 6pm  
Symphony No. 5 in c#  
(With Mozart: Violin Concerto No. 4 in D, K. 218)

**Colorado Symphony**  
<http://www.coloradosymphony.org/>  
Friday, February 19, 2016 7:30 pm  
Saturday, February 20, 2016 7:30 pm  
Symphony No. 2 in c

**Colorado Springs Philharmonic**  
<http://www.cspphilharmonic.org>  
Saturday, February 20, 2016 7:30 pm  
Sunday, February 21, 2016 2:30 pm  
Symphony No. 5 in c#  
(With Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 22 in Eb, K. 482)

*Andante comodo.* *offen (Echo)* *pp* *p*

2. Horn in F.  
4.

1. Harfe.

1. Violine.  
2. Violine.

Viola.

Violoncell.

Kontrabaß.

*pp* *pp* *1. Hälfte.* *pp*



The Colorado MahlerFest orchestra performing Mahler Symphony No. 5 in 2011



Jennifer Bird and Julie Simson after the performance of Mahler Symphony No. 2 in 2012



Abigale Nims performing Mahler's *Rückert Lieder* in 2014

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# MahlerFest Record of Works Performed

Engh.	Aria from <i>Die Tote Stadt</i> (Korngold) 1999	<i>Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen</i> , voice & piano, 1988, 1993, 1995, 2005, 2008, 2013
1.2.3 Klar in C	<i>Aus Goethe's Faust</i> Op. 75, No. 3 (Beethoven) 2009	<i>Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen</i> , with orchestra, 2006
1. Flg	<i>Bei Mondaufgang</i> (Wolfes) 1998	<i>Lied Lynceus des Türmers</i> Op. 79, No. 28 (Schumann) 2009
2.	<i>Blumine</i> (Mahler) 2006	Mephistopheles' Song in Auerbach's Tavern (Mussorgsky) 2009
3.	<i>Brettli-lieder</i> (Schoenberg) 1995	Marches & Ländler by Schubert 2000
Hr in F	<i>Das Klagende Lied</i> (two-part version) 1991	<i>Non piu andrai</i> (Mozart) 2000
4.	<i>Das Klagende Lied</i> (original three-part version) 2008	Piano Quartet in A minor (Mahler) 1988, 1997, 2004
1. Harfe	<i>Das Lied von der Erde</i> 1998, 2007	Prelude to <i>Die Meistersinger</i> (Wagner) 2004
	<i>Das Lied von der Erde, Der Abschied</i> (voice & piano version) 1998	<i>Rückert Lieder</i> (Mahler) 2006, 2014
	<i>Das Lied von der Erde</i> (I, III, V) (voice & piano version) 2005	<i>Sieben frühe Lieder</i> (Berg) 1990
	<i>Das Lied von der Erde, VI</i> , (choreographed) 1994	Suite from BWV 1067 and BWV 1068 (Bach/Mahler) 1989
	<i>Das Lied von der Erde, Der Abschied</i> , 2013	Song (Arnold Bax) 2000
	<i>Des Knaben Wunderhorn</i> (with orchestra) 2001	Song (Claude Debussy) 2000
1. VI	Entr'acte from <i>Die drei Pintos</i> (Weber/Mahler), 2011	Songs (Kurt Weill) 2000
	<i>Es war ein König in Thule</i> (Franz Liszt) 2009	Song (Roger Quilter) 2000
2. VI	Fanfare: "Our Time Has Come" (John David Lamb) 2006	Song (Sergei Rachmaninoff) 2000
	<i>Faust et Hélène</i> (Lili Boulanger) 2009	Songs and Movie Songs (Korngold) 1999
Vla. (get)	<i>Faust songs</i> (Schubert) 2009	Songs (Joseph Marx) 1998, 1999
	Five Poems, Opus 10 (Griffes) 1998	Songs from <i>Des Knaben Wunderhorn</i> , voice & piano 1989, 1994, 1997, 1999, 2003, 2005
	Four Early Lieder (Mahler) 1996	Songs from <i>Land of Smiles</i> (Franz Lehar) 1998
Vlc. (get)	<i>Fuge</i> (John David Lamb) 2001	Songs to Poems by Rückert 1989, 1997
	<i>Galgenlieder</i> (Graener) 1995	Songs, Opus 3 (Grosz) 1998
	<i>Greeting from Arias and Barcaroles</i> (L. Bernstein) 1997	Songs, Opus 8 (Wellesz) 1998
Kb.	<i>Hochsommer</i> (Felix Weingartner) 1997	<i>Song to the Moon</i> from <i>Rusalka</i> (Dvorak) 2000
	<i>Hütet euch!</i> (Zemlinsky) 1997	Symphony #1 1988, 2006
	<i>Kindertotenlieder</i> , voice & piano, 1990, 1996, 2006	Symphony #1 (Hamburg Version 1893) 1998
	<i>Kindertotenlieder</i> , voice & orchestra, 2002	Symphony #2 1989, 1999, 2012
1.	<i>Klavierstück</i> , Opus 19, No. 6 (Schoenberg) 1997	Symphony #3 1990, 2000, 2010
Klar in C	<i>Lebe hoch, Gustav!</i> (John David Lamb) 2010	Symphony #4 1991, 2001, 2013
2.3.	<i>Lieder</i> (Berg) 1996	Symphony #4, IV (Mahler performing on piano) 1994
	<i>Lieder</i> (Brahms) 2000, 2001	Symphony #4, IV (Schoenberg Society arrangement) 1991
B-Klar in B	<i>Lied</i> (Humperdinck) 2001	Symphony #5 1992, 2002, 2011
	<i>Lied</i> (Josephine Lang) 2001	Symphony #6 1993, 2003, 2014
1.2. Flg	<i>Lieder</i> (Alma Mahler) 1991, 1992, 2003	Symphony #6 (I) two piano version (Zemlinsky) 1993
	<i>Lied</i> (Mendelssohn) 2001	Symphony #7 1994, 2004
K-Fag	<i>Lieder</i> (Louise Reichart) 2001	Symphony #8 1995, 2009
	<i>Lied</i> (Max Reger) 2001	Symphony #9 1996, 2005, 2015
2.	<i>Lieder</i> (Schoenberg) 2001	Symphony #10, J. H. Wheeler version 1997
Hr in F	<i>Lieder</i> (Schubert) 2000, 2001, 2004	Symphony #10, <i>Adagio</i> only, 2007
4.	<i>Lied</i> (Schumann) 2001	<i>Totenfeier</i> (2007)
	<i>Lied</i> (Friedrich Silcher) 2001	Tragic Overture, Op. 81 (Brahms) 2005
	<i>Lieder</i> (Richard Strauss) 1993, 1995, 1998, 2000, 2001	<i>Vier Lieder</i> , Op. 2 (Schoenberg) 1996
1. Harfe	<i>Lieder</i> (Wolf) 1995, 2000	<i>Vier Stücke für Klarinette und Klavier</i> (Berg) 1990
	<i>Lieder from Opus 2</i> (Zemlinsky) 1995, 2003	<i>Der Zwerg</i> final scene (Alexander von Zemlinsky) 2002
	<i>Lieder und Gesänge</i>	
1. VI	<i>aus der Jugendzeit</i> (Mahler) 1988, 1993, 1997, 1999, 2008	

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