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**Colorado MahlerFest Announces
MahlerFest XXXIV – “The Return”
August 24 to 28, 2021**

Pictures available at: <https://bit.ly/MF34Press>

Boulder, CO – The Colorado MahlerFest announces MahlerFest XXXIV, “The Return,” August 24 to 28, 2021. The Colorado MahlerFest Orchestra will return to the stage for the first time in 27 months having previously canceled the in-person MahlerFest XXXIII in May 2020. MahlerFest XXXIV was delayed from May until August to allow for an in-person festival with larger events.

Executive Director Ethan Hecht said, “We couldn’t be more thrilled with how this is working out but are crossing our fingers that things continue in the right direction. Back in January, when we made this decision, it was a wild guess that moving to August would allow us to do more in-person events with larger audiences. We never imagined the pace at which the vaccine rollout would occur but we’re very excited to get a full orchestra of about 80 musicians back onstage at Macky Auditorium.”

The 34th annual MahlerFest, which celebrates the legacy of composer Gustav Mahler, will culminate in a performance of Mahler’s Fifth Symphony conducted by Artistic Director Kenneth Woods. The work, composed in 1901-02, is one of Mahler’s most famous and features the “Adagietto” movement that was a love letter to Alma Schindler, whom he had only recently met but would marry in 1902. The concert will also include the world premiere of a new symphony written during the pandemic by leading British symphonist, Philip Sawyers. Sawyers is the visiting composer of this year’s festival after having been scheduled for the canceled 2020 festival.

The festival features a wide array of activities designed to put Mahler’s work in perspective. Chamber music concerts on Tuesday and Thursday will highlight music composed by Mahler’s contemporaries and musical heirs. The free Thursday performance, on National Women’s Equality Day, includes Grażyna Bacewicz’s Trio for Oboe, Violin, and Cello from 1935. Another highlight is the regional premiere of



two new films by Mahlerite Jason Starr. Starr will be present at the showings and a discussion session afterward. The films, on Mahler's First Symphony and *Songs of a Wayfarer*, have not been screened outside of New York.

Due to a successful fundraising campaign in May, the Colorado MahlerFest Chamber Orchestra will present a free program at the Boulder Bandshell on Friday, August 27. Part of the City of Boulder's "Arts in the Park" program, "Roaring 20s – Decade of Decadence and Debauchery" will explore Mahler's influence on the music of the 1920s. The program will feature exciting music from composers who may be less well-known to audience members – Ernst Krenek, Erwin Schulhoff, and Darius Milhaud – and will also include some music composed by Mahler but arranged by the Festival's Artistic Director, Kenneth Woods. Rounding out this free concert, Woods has included three rags by African American composers Scott Joplin, Jim Europe, and Eubie Blake.

Kenneth Woods, Colorado MahlerFest Artistic Director says, "It was a conscious decision to expand the footprint of the festival. Not only have we been adding concerts over the last several seasons, we have diversified the range of music that we offer. It can be challenging to program music alongside a work like Mahler's fifth, but I feel confident that, in premiering Philip Sawyers' Fifth Symphony, we are both making a statement about the scope of our ambition as a festival, and offering a program that will excite our audience.

"Philip is a composer whose music is deeply rooted in the symphonic tradition, yet unmistakably of our time. For those of us who weren't lucky enough to be around when the Mahler symphonies were being premiered, I think it's important to know that first performances can still have that sense of historic excitement and occasion.

"The Friday concert offers a unique opportunity for some whimsy while exploring how some of Mahler's descendants opened their ears to the innovations of African American composers like Joplin and Blake, and in doing so, reinvented classical music. I'm thrilled with how it has come together and I'm so excited to invite the community to come celebrate with us. I had an embarrassment of riches when programming the chamber music concerts. Our family of Festival Artists continues to grow, and it's going to be a joyful moment when these wonderful musicians return to Boulder after the difficulties of the last year and a half."

Rounding out the season is the festival's acclaimed symposium. A free event on Saturday, August 28, the symposium helped put MahlerFest on the international map in the early years. The event normally takes place at a recital hall on the CU-Boulder campus but due to the August timing, the festival is trying something different. Reflecting on the conversations about Mahler that would have taken place in European salons, the symposium will be held at License No. 1, the swanky bar downstairs in the Hotel Boulderado. "It's the perfect setting for these kinds of in depth talks about Mahler, his music, and related culture. We jumped at the opportunity to work with the Hotel Boulderado and to try something a little different for us during this year in which every one has learned to be flexible," said Woods.



The festival also invites community members to attend rehearsals, have dinner with other Mahlerites, and hang out with the orchestra at social events after some performances and concerts. Tickets for the events that require them will be available on July 7, Mahler's 161st birthday. Full event listings for the entire festival is available at <https://mahlerfest.org/mf34/>.

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[Colorado MahlerFest](#)'s mission is to celebrate the legacy of composer Gustav Mahler through an annual festival featuring all of Mahler's musical output as well as contextual cultural and educational events. The organization was founded in 1988 by Artistic Director Emeritus Robert Olson who, after studying in Vienna on a Fulbright scholarship, recognized the similarities the beautiful Colorado landscape and Mahler's summertime composing locations. Notable achievements include a 2000 Colorado State Senate proclamation that the festival enriches the lives of the Colorado public and receiving the International Gustav Mahler Society of Vienna's rare Gold Medal (the only American orchestra to receive this award other than Mahler's own New York Philharmonic). Olson retired in 2015 and was succeeded by Kenneth Woods, an internationally active, American-born conductor, currently also the Artistic Director of the English Symphony Orchestra. During Woods's tenure MahlerFest has shifted from almost entirely volunteer-based to a training orchestra model with Festival Artists inspiring students of all ages.

Funding for the Colorado MahlerFest comes from the Daniel W. Dietrich II Foundation, the Scientific & Cultural Facilities District, the City of Boulder's Arts in the Park program, the Boulder Library Foundation, and the Boulder Arts Commission.

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For further information about Kenneth Woods, please visit <https://mahlerfest.org/about-kenneth-woods-page/>

For further information about the Colorado MahlerFest, please visit <https://mahlerfest.org/>