FORCE OF DESTINY

Monday, Nov. 14, 2022 @ 7 p.m.

Dr. Jacob Sustaita, conductor
Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra

PROGRAM

VERDI — ***La Forza del Destino***
Overture

MASCAGNI — ***Cavalleria rusticana***
Intermezzo

- INTERMISSION -

MAHLER — **Symphony No. 1 in D Major "Titan"**

I. Langsam, schleppend
II. Kräftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell
III. Feierlich und gemessen, ohne zu schleppen
IV. Stürmisch bewegt

The evening's performance is generously sponsored by **Janet L. Curci, Carol and Eugene Choi, Gary Good and Jackie Charnley.**

Performance at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

Scan here for full program notes.

Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra

Dr. Jacob Sustaita • Music Director

Mary E. Moore Family Assistant Conductor Chair

Mel Domingo • Youth Orchestra Manager

2022-23 Concert Season. Sections listed alphabetically under principal.

FLUTE

Heather Kim*
Amanda Lee*
Junhee (Ita) Lee
Joseph Yoo

PICCOLO

Tammy Pao*

OBOE

Victoria Lee*
Kayla De Guzman
David Wong

CLARINET

Soojong (Peter) Ha*
Isaac Yoon*
Aaron Chang
Samuel Choi

BASS CLARINET

Matthew Anderson*

BASSOON

Ariana Kim*

FRENCH HORN

Zhengkang (Allan) Lyu*
Brook Hill
Hongyi (Joey) Li
Wonu Park

TRUMPET

Randall (Benny) Carruth*
George Ramos
Ian Shin
Evan Trostler
Joshua Tian

TROMBONE

Lucas O'Brien*
Leo Sui*
Madison Berchtold

BASS TROMBONE

Harrison Chiang*

TUBA

Daniel Li*

PERCUSSION

Joshua Qin*
Dorina Lin

PIANO

Kyle Yeung*

HARP

Calene Lee*

VIOLIN I

Jayden Yeung*
Jeremy Chae
Eva Chen
James Eastmond
Bentie Feng
Gabriel Haraldson-Decker
Jessica Hong
Annie Huang
Aidan Jang
David Jou
Andrew Kao
Rubi Lee
Lyndsey Lipscomb
Rebecca Liu
Xiaolu (Lulu) Liu
Vivian Lu
Aadya Sharma
Jaemin Song
Lucy Woo
Katelyn Xu

VIOLIN II

Brian Chang*
Amelia Kang
Susan Kim
Eileen Lee
Grace Li
Jacob Liu
Lawrence Mi
Elena Miyamoto
Lucas Nguyen
Justin K. Park
Hannah Schweiger
Marcus Shih
Irene Sok
Elio Tran
Jocelyn Tsai
Kaley Wong

VIOLA

Kara Wong*
Zara Amendt
Jayden Chao
Caroline Cho
Daniel De La Cruz
Justin Hong
Jarrett Huang
Ting-Wei (Christine) Lee
Soohyun (Sean) Lee
Candice Lu
Alexandra Montgomery
Talia Nguyen
Peter Tan
Seawoo (Andy) Yoo

CELLO

Madeleine Kim*
Nathan Dishon
Daniel Goo
Declan Hu
Kyle Hwang
Irene Kim
Mattea Kim
Amy Lantz
Verena Lo
Daniel Park
Oooju Robinson
Josephine Velez
Emerson (Yul) Yang

DOUBLE BASS

Zheng (Paul) Gong*
Soleil De Jesus
Nicholas Doan
David Gima
Liam Ramos
Jacob Wheat

SCHOOLS REPRESENTED

Arnold O. Beckman High School
Brea Olinda High School
Buena Vista Virtual Academy/ Fullerton College
Canyon High School
Cathedral City High School
Corona del Mar High School
Crean Lutheran High School
Cypress High School
Diamond Bar High School
El Dorado High School
Eleanor Roosevelt High school
Irvine High School
Lakeside Middle School
Legacy Magnet Academy
Mater Dei
Mission Viejo High School
Monta Vista Academy
Murrieta Valley High School
Northwood High School
Orange County School of the Arts
Pacific Academy
Pacifica Christian High School
Portola High School
Rancho Cucamonga High School
Rancho Santa Margarita Intermediate School
Sage Hill School
Santa Margarita Catholic High School
Santiago High School
Tesoro High School
Trabuco Hills High School
Troy High School
University High School
Valencia High School
Woodbridge High School

**principal*

ABOUT THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

Dr. Jacob Sustaita serves as the Assistant Conductor for Pacific Symphony and Music Director, Carl St. Clair, a position he has held since the fall of 2020. Dr. Sustaita also serves as Music Director and Conductor for Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra (PSYO), the premier training orchestra of Orange County, and recognized as one of the most outstanding youth orchestras in the country.

Dr. Sustaita is also the newly appointed Orchestra Director for the Orange County School of the Arts Symphony Orchestra. In Fall 2021 and 2022, Sustaita served as Acting Director of Orchestras at the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). From 2015-20, he led the Sam Houston State University Symphony, Chamber, Ballet, and Opera Orchestras as Director of Orchestral Studies. In 2016, Sustaita and the Symphony Orchestra performed the American premiere of Anton Bruckner's Symphony No. 1 (original Linz version) with high praise from the American and European Bruckner Societies.

Dr. Sustaita is a frequent guest conductor and clinician across the country. In 2015, Sustaita was selected by Carnegie Hall's Weill Institute to serve as Assistant Conductor for Charles Dutoit and the National Youth Orchestra of America (NYO). Sustaita regularly conducted and coached the orchestra during its New York residency and on their seven-city tour of China and Hong Kong.

A native of Texas, Sustaita completed his Doctorate and Bachelor of Music degrees at the University of Houston, where he served as Assistant Conductor for the Moores Opera Center for three seasons. He also earned a Master of Music degree from both Penn State University and Rice University.

His honors include: Schissler Conducting Fellowship, Rice University Prize and Provost Fellowship and American Prize semi-finalist and finalist. His teachers and mentors include Carl St.Clair, Charles Dutoit, Franz Krager, Brett Mitchell, Gerardo Edelstein, and Paavo Järvi.

ABOUT PACIFIC SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Founded in 1993, Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra (PSYO) has emerged as the premier training orchestra of Orange County. Under the artistic direction and guidance of Pacific Symphony's renowned music director, Carl St.Clair, PSYO is quickly being recognized as one of the most outstanding youth orchestras in the country.

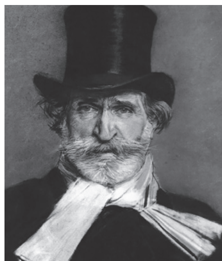
Representing over 34 schools in the SoCal region, PYSO offers performance opportunities to instrumentalists in grades 9-12 and is one of four Youth Ensemble programs offered by Pacific Symphony. PSYO provides members with an advanced and innovative artistic experience and strives to encourage musical and personal growth through the art of performance. Each season students enjoy an interaction with Maestro Carl St.Clair, as well as regular interactions with guest artists and professional musicians of Pacific Symphony. Students also engage in an annual weekend retreat and are offered free and discounted tickets to Pacific Symphony performances throughout the season. PSYO also enjoys international touring, including to Bulgaria in 2011 and China in 2016, with a July 2023 tour of the Czech Republic and Austria upcoming.

Each season PSYO presents a three-concert series, generously sponsored by individual donors. Members also participate in a side-by-side performance with Pacific Symphony, where students perform in concert with their professional counterparts as part of Pacific Symphony's Family Musical Mornings, presented by Farmers & Merchants Bank. All performances take place at the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts in Costa Mesa. The final performance of each season features the winner(s) of the annual concerto auditions, for which auditions are exclusive to current PSYO members.

Weekly rehearsals are held at the University of California, Irvine between September and May each season and members are selected through annual auditions each Spring.

PROGRAM NOTES

Giuseppe Verdi
La Forza del Destino



A towering giant in the history of Italian opera, **Giuseppe Verdi** (1813-1901) grew up in a small village in northern Italy, less than a hundred miles from the birthplace of Donizetti. Born into a middle-class family of innkeepers, he studied privately with local priests. He took up piano and organ at age seven, and soon began playing organ at the local church. He attended high school (something rather unusual for all but the upper class in early nineteenth-century Italy) in the nearby town of Busseto, continued his piano studies, and began composing. Verdi also was fascinated by literature beginning in his youth, something that would contribute to his future status as a great composer of opera.

Although Verdi received a scholarship from the town of Busseto to study in Milan, he was rejected from the Milan Conservatory. Instead, he studied counterpoint and composition privately with Vincenzo Lavigna. After completing his studies with Lavigna, he returned to Busseto. Appointed the town musical director in 1836, he also conducted and composed for the Philharmonic Society as well as giving private lessons. He also composed his first opera in 1836; its revision in 1839 as *Oberto* premièred at La Scala, the most prestigious opera theatre in Italy. *Oberto* was so successful that Verdi was offered a three-year contract at the theatre, which was soon renewed.

Verdi later referred to his time in Milan as his "galley years." Filled with incredibly intense work, these years saw him involved in constant negotiation, travel, and rehearsal. Prodded by theatre managers, Verdi composed at an average rate of one complete opera every nine months. By the 1850s, he had become the most famous and frequently performed composer of Italian opera in Europe. Able to command a high price from theatres and also earning extra income through sheet music rentals and sales, he became quite wealthy through his music, investing much of this wealth in real estate holdings.

After marrying for the second time in 1859 and moving to Genoa in 1866, Verdi divided his time between Paris, Naples, Venice, and his estate in his native Busseto, although he consistently avoided Milan until 1868. By the 1870s, a crisis in Italian opera took hold, with many younger composers producing music along French and German lines. Resisting this trend yet suffering through a change in artistic tastes, Verdi had trouble composing during this period. After taking ten years off from opera (he composed his famous Requiem during this period, inspired by the death of Rossini), he returned to the stage to compose *Otello and Falstaff*. During the last decade of his life, he led a quiet retirement tending to his estate and engaging in philanthropy.

As with practically every other composer of opera during the nineteenth century, Verdi faced considerable difficulty with government censorship. During the early part of his career, censors were relatively lax, especially in northern Italy where he spent much of his time. After revolutions swept through Europe in 1848, however, censorship became far stricter. As almost the only place where large social gatherings were permitted, the theatre became heavily regulated, even though its pricing made it available only for the wealthy elite.

Verdi's operas do contain some political overtones, with thinly veiled social criticisms and allegories for Italian unification. However, the association between Verdi with Italian nationalism came relatively late in his career. By the time he came to be connected with Risorgimento politics of Italian unification in the 1860s, his reputation was beginning to falter, and his newest operas were having some difficulty in being produced. Although his earlier works had not been recognized as overtly political at the time when they were composed, they were taken as symbols of Italian nationalism several decades later. Verdi himself was politically inclined and quite patriotic throughout his career. He even served as a member of the Italian parliament from 1861 to 1865, although he attended sessions only irregularly.

Although often seen today in Romantic terms as a consummate artist, in reality Verdi's career combined art with business. Distrustful of professional agents, he always negotiated with theatre companies himself; theatres would typically buy rights to the first performance, supply deadlines, and task Verdi with directing the first three performances (although conducting as we would recognize it today was at the time done by either the concertmaster or the keyboardist). Moreover, theatres usually told Verdi which singers to use for his operas. While he worked with theatres throughout his career, eventually his publisher Ricordi would also commission new works.

In contrast to works by composers like Wagner, who singlehandedly directed all aspects of his operas, Verdi operas were true collaborations from the very start. Verdi sometimes chose his subjects, while at other times they were chosen by the librettist. After selecting

a subject, for which he often had specific singers in mind, Verdi would divide the plot into recits, arias, duets, and other set numbers. He usually composed the score after the libretto had been completed, although he sometimes altered texts (for some librettists more than others) and occasionally composed sections of music before their texts had been finalized. Working closely with his librettist, he carefully created short form drafts and "skeleton" orchestral versions, waiting until after he heard his singers before finalizing the orchestration.

Verdi's decision to tailor his music to his singers was partially due to business contingencies. Like those of any composer at the time, his works' successes were often tied to how well the singers performed them. Moreover, singers had a great deal of say in choosing their theatre's repertoire. Clearly, he had a great impetus for keeping them pleased. However, he continued his habit of tailoring his music to particular singers throughout his career, long after his financial independence and artistic reputation made it unnecessary. Verdi operas also demanded an entirely new style of singing, one capable of heroic forcefulness over the light flexibility of Rossini, and only the right singers could successfully carry his works.

In his operas, Verdi used specific set forms derived from operatic convention. Verdi arias (called "cavatinas" if a character's first appearance) are typically in four movements: orchestral introduction – slow ("adagio") – connecting passage ("tempo di mezzo") – faster ("cabaletta"). Grand duets are set to the same pattern, but with expanded introductions ("tempo d'attaco"). Internal finales often use the same pattern as grand duets, but with a larger tempo d'attaco. In between these large movements, short arias ("romanzi") are interspersed. By convention, each principal singer was required to have a multi-movement entrance aria and to appear in at least two grand duets, while particularly notable soloists would be given extra romanzi. Many of these formulations were dictated to Verdi by singers or theatre managers.

While Verdi maintained these traditional forms, he managed to experiment with form as well, expanding or contracting their individual component movements. In particular, one of Verdi's innovations was to pair internal movements in a four-part aria with important action on stage, such as the introduction of a new character or the revelation of new information. Verdi's accomplishments in this area speak to a composer brilliantly asserting his own voice and personality into externally imposed constraints (Tchaikovsky also was fond of composing in this way).

Verdi's operas experienced a significant shift after 1850, integrating new developments modeled on French grand opera. These middle-period operas are much expanded from his earlier works, with more characters, more numerous locations, larger orchestras, louder voices, and a mixture of different types of operas within the same work. Verdi also began to experiment with form to a greater degree than in earlier operas. The reasons for this were diverse. In line with his political desires to bring Italy into the modern world, his newly expanded operatic forms made powerful statements about the grandeur of Italy. At the same time, revival productions and new copyright protections allowed composers additional streams of income, freeing them to spend more time on each work. In fact, the repertory opera—a standard work that withstands the test of time and continues to be performed continuously—was arguably Verdi's invention. For Verdi operas as in many cases, the form and scope of his compositions resulted from a combination of artistic growth, working conditions, and a changing social climate.

Verdi's reputation grew steadily during his career. By the 1850s he was the most famous and frequently performed Italian opera composer in Europe, although he still saw some resistance in England and Germany until much later in the nineteenth century. During his lifetime, nearly all of his premières took place in Italy. By the end of his career, he had come to be seen as an Italian national shrine, yet ironically during that period his more recent operas saw far fewer performances than his earlier ones. After his death in 1901, his music saw a revival in the 1920s and had become a central part of worldwide operatic repertory by the 1950s.

In 1858, declaring his operatic career over, Verdi settled into a pastoral life, tending to his farming estate in northern Italy. Verdi's retirement proved short lasting, however. In 1860, two years into his "retirement," he received a commission from Enrico Tamberlik, a famous Italian tenor, to compose another opera. The result was ***La forza del destino***, completed in 1862. With a libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, it is based on the 1852 play *Don Alvaro, o La Fuerza* del sino by Angel Saavedra. The opera also incorporates a scene adapted from *Wallenstein*, a trio of plays by Friedrich Schiller published in 1799 and based on historical events during the Thirty Years' War. The opera's première, which took place on November 10, 1862 in St. Petersburg, Russia, was somewhat less than a success. Unsatisfied, Verdi revised it over the next several years, producing a second version in 1869. This second version premièred at La Scala on February 27, 1869.

A prime example of what has been termed a "mosaic drama," the story of La forza unfolds nonlinearly and features sporadic events over a seven-year period in far-flung geographic locations. The opera centers on Leonora and Alvaro. In the first act, Leonora is about to leave her homeland to elope with Alvaro; her father challenges Alvaro to a duel. He refuses to fight, but when he throws his gun down it accidentally discharges and kills his would-be adversary. In the second act, Leonora has forgiven Alvaro, but the two lovers have

been separated while eloping; Alvaro has returned to his native South America. Returning to Europe but believing that Leonora is dead, he joins the army and is wounded in battle. By chance, he encounters Carlo, Leonora's brother. They fight, and Carlo tells Alvaro that Leonora is still alive. In the original 1862 version of the opera, Carlo and Alvaro fight a duel; Alvaro stabs Carlo just as Leonora enters the scene. Mortally wounded, Carlo stabs his own sister to spite Alvaro. Leonora dies in Alvaro's arms; distraught with grief, he flings himself from a precipice. In the revised version, Leonora dies, but Alvaro finds peace and absolution, and the opera ends in an aura of religious devotion.

The overture to the opera was taken from the 1869 version. Greatly expanded from the original, it gives many of the opera's main musical themes. Unlike many earlier operatic overtures, it is not composed in a particular musical form. The overture is unified by musical motifs that connect the opera's principal melodies. Of particular note is the repetition of three notes that begin the overture, termed the "fate" motif. It uses a huge variety of musical styles, in some places echoing Beethoven symphonies while in others reflecting almost Wagnerian use of chromaticism. Interestingly, sections of the overture use the same dominant-seventh chords that he would later warn Italian composers against. A rousing opening to the opera, it is a bold statement on the current state of Italian music in the wake of recent political developments.

Pietro Mascagni
Cavalleria rusticana

Pietro Mascagni (1863-1945) is widely known today as the composer of one of the most famous Italian operas of the late nineteenth century. Although discouraged by his father, he studied music from an early age, composing several works as a teenager. His youthful compositions impressed Count Florestano de Larderel, who funded him to attend the Milan Conservatory in 1883. As a student there, he shared a room with Puccini before dropping out of school two years later. After leaving the conservatory, he had several operas put on and toured Italy as a conductor. After marrying and having a child, he settled in Cerignola, a small city in southern Italy, where he taught the local philharmonic society. Later in his career, he became the director of the music school in Pesaro, Rossini's home city. Although he continued to write operas, none saw the success of *Cavalleria rusticana*. Mascagni went on to write music for a film in 1915, only a few years after Saint-Saëns became the first major composer to do so. Opposed to the modernism of the early twentieth century, he remained in relative obscurity for the rest of his career, although he was heralded as a symbol of Italian national greatness by the Mussolini regime.

In 1889, Edoardo Sonzogno (1836-1920), a prominent music publisher in Milan, decided to organize a competition for struggling opera composers. The competition was only open to composers who had never had an opera performed. Out of seventy-three entrees, three winners were to be selected to receive performances in Rome. Composed between 1889 and 1890, Mascagni's opera ***Cavalleria rusticana*** ("Rustic Chivalry") was one of the three winners, and singlehandedly established his reputation as a successful opera composer. Mascagni sent parts of the score to his friend Puccini; although Puccini forwarded it to his publisher Giulio Ricordi, Ricordi decided not to accept it. Instead, it went to Sonzogno and became an enormous success. The opera premièred at Teatro Costanzi in Rome on May 17, 1890.

An opera in a single act, *Cavalleria rusticana* returns to the Italian tradition of a numbers opera. In traditional Italian operas, the musical flow is broken into a set of discrete musical "numbers" with clear endings (including arias, recitatives, and instrumental numbers); audiences would applaud at the ends of these sections. This convention had already been abandoned in Germany by the mid-nineteenth century, and notably in Italy by Verdi in his last two operas; Mascagni's return to it must have struck audiences as a bold, somewhat controversial musical statement.

The opera was based on the short story *Cavalleria* by Giovanni Verga (1840-1922), a noted realist author famous for his depictions of life in Sicily. After writing it in 1880, Verga transformed his story into a stage play in 1884, which was widely acclaimed and helped to start the *verismo* (realist) literary movement in Italy. Varga's drama was suggested to Mascagni by his friend Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti, professor of Italian literature. Dealing with themes of love, deception, jealousy, and honor, the opera's action takes place in Sicily, and its plot remains quite close to the Verga original. While it clearly takes inspiration from Bizet's Carmen, the most popular opera in Europe at the time, Mascagni denied that he used anyone else's work as a model and instead stressed his fidelity to Verga. While it remains one of the most popular operas in the repertoire to this day, Mascagni was never able to repeat its success.

When the opera opens, Turiddu proclaims his love for Lola. At an Easter church service, he encounters Santuzza, an ex-lover. After having seduced her, he had turned her down for Lola, who is married to Alfio. When Turiddu and Santuzza see each other, she curses him; she soon tells Alfio that Lola had been unfaithful to him. Enraged, Alfio challenges Turiddu to a duel. After repenting and asking his mother to take care of

Santuzza, Turiddu is killed in the duel, and the opera comes to a tragic close.

Mascagni's musical style remains somewhat controversial. The opera's melodic invention is balanced with straightforward harmonies and simple formal structures. Though these may be thought of as shortcomings of the composer, he brilliantly used his own weaknesses as a way of expressing the opera's plot. In the Verga he found an operatic subject that would highlight his unique mode of musical expression, one that would complement both his strengths and shortcomings. Incredibly lush and beautiful, the **Intermezzo**'s smooth melodic writing and insouciant harmonies express a dreamy simplicity tinged with sadness.

In the opera, the Intermezzo marks the end of the villagers' Easter service, which had been going on in the background throughout the first part of the drama. The religious serenity symbolizes Santuzza's innocence, and strongly contrasts with the emotional tension between the characters. It transpires immediately after Santuzza tells Alfio that his wife had been unfaithful to him, thus occurring at a point of maximal emotional tension. Moreover, it is in the key of F major, which Mascagni uses throughout the opera to link key moments together with the tragedy that ultimately transpires (the ending, in a minor key, is also in F).

Cavalleria rusticana marks the ultimate in nineteenth-century operatic simplicity and grace. After this work, Italian opera took a new turn, one in which Puccini reigned supreme yet Mascagni was unable to follow.

Gustav Mahler

Symphony No. 1 in D Major "Titan"

One of the most significant Austro-German composers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) was perhaps the single most important link between late Romanticism and twentieth-century modernism. Today known as a composer, he was primarily regarded as a conductor in his own day. Considered the world's greatest living conductor, he was nonetheless highly controversial. He had extremely high, uncompromising musical standards and reformed many of the institutions he served. In particular, he drastically increased rehearsal time, demanding nothing less than absolute perfection from his musicians.

Predictably, his unrelenting artistic standards were not always enthusiastically received by orchestra members with whom he repeatedly clashed. In fact, some of his musicians threatened him with physical violence, and he was once even challenged to a duel (thankfully, he refused). Mahler's career was certainly not helped by his difficult personality. In spite of the pushback, Mahler's ideas would prove highly decisive and helped inform how we think about and perform music to this day.

The son of Jewish parents, Mahler grew up in the town of Iglau in western Bohemia, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He studied piano and composition and participated in the town's musical life featuring Czech folk musicians, an amateur orchestra, a small professional theatre and opera, and open-air military band concerts in the main square. As a part of Austria, Bohemia hosted a German-speaking middle and upper class into which Mahler's parents had assimilated. After a brief academic stint in Prague, Mahler attended the Vienna Conservatory where he studied piano and composition (including some classes with Anton Bruckner) and fell under the spell of Wagner—to his teachers' consternation. He also attended academic courses at the University of Vienna, developing particular interests in the Academic Wagner Society, leftist philosophical circles, and pan-Germanism. As a student, he began conducting student rehearsals and gave piano lessons. A young artist and intellectual in a city renowned for its café culture, Mahler frequently discussed philosophy with friends.

In 1885, Mahler was hired by Arthur Nikisch (future conductor of the New York Philharmonic) for a six-year contract at the Leipzig Opera to begin the following year; due to disputes with Nikisch he would only stay for two years. Mahler composed his **First Symphony** in 1888 while working as second conductor at the Leipzig City Theatre, although much of it was assembled from music written earlier. Although he tried to have it performed in Leipzig, he was unsuccessful. In addition to the composer's artistic, philosophical, and social aims for the piece, the work's intense expressivity is partly due to his romantic association with Marion von Weber, the English-born wife of the grandson of the early nineteenth-century German composer Carl Maria von Weber.

A difficult personality to work with, Mahler resigned from his position in Leipzig two years into his six-year position; he returned to Prague but was soon fired there. Luckily for him, he was noticed by David Popper, a cellist who was in charge of the Royal Hungarian Opera in Budapest (Mahler nearly missed his meeting with Popper because he was intensely absorbed in composing).

Mahler's arrival in Budapest in 1888 thrust him in the midst of a raging political dispute. As with Ljubljana and Prague, he came to Budapest as a representative of German culture. Although he had come from a Jewish family in a small town in Bohemia, his family had been highly assimilated into Austrian society. Throughout the

Austrian Empire, German had been both the language of administration and a unifying cultural force in an empire that encompassed many minority groups. Mahler thus grew up speaking German rather than Czech or Yiddish, reading German literature, attending a German high school, and studying and producing what was perceived as German music.

During the 1860s, Hungary had been granted particularly strong autonomy within Austria, becoming an equal component within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. By the time of Mahler's arrival there in the late 1880s, two factions vied for control of Budapest high society. A more liberal, pro-German group wanted to accept German culture, although on Hungary's terms. This faction sought to perform German works, particularly Wagner, although it aimed to utilize Hungarian singers and to perform the works in Hungarian translation. On the other side, a right-wing conservative faction embraced Hungarian culture over German and sought to perform works primarily by Hungarian composers. Mahler, for his part, attempted to learn Hungarian and establish friendships with prominent members of Hungarian society, but he still was seen by many as overwhelmingly German and foreign. Much of the criticism he faced was due to this tension between rival political factions within Hungarian society, although he also suffered from anti-Semitism.

It was in this fraught political situation in which the 1888 premiere of Mahler's first symphony took place. The piece's first part was warmly received, with high praise from critics and ovations from audiences. The darker, more experimental second part, however, was roundly rejected by audiences and critics alike. Mahler put the work away for three years, focusing instead on conducting.

During the 1880s, the Royal Hungarian Opera theatre had been run by Sandor Erkel, part of the anti-German faction. At the same time, both the general manager for all Budapest theatres and the Intendant of the Royal Opera were pro-German Wagner supporters. In 1890, Hungarian politics shifted to the right, with the pro-Hungarian faction gaining power in government as well as within the theatre. Amidst this uncomfortable, stifling political environment, Mahler broke contract. He was soon hired to conduct in Hamburg.

A free city for hundreds of years, not subject to the same restrictions as other regions of the Holy Roman Empire, Hamburg had a history and traditions of an open, entrepreneurial climate. Moreover, a part of the recently unified Germany rather than an ethnically disjointed Austria, its political environment was far less fraught. The Hamburg opera was run as a commercial business with a manager committed to maximizing revenues and audience sizes, not managing an official public culture.

Mahler thrived in the new environment, where he conducted freely, enjoyed long walks along the harbor, and finally returned to his symphony. He drastically revised its orchestration, finishing his second version in 1893. The work was performed in Hamburg in 1893 and in Weimar (through the help of Richard Strauss) the following year. Both cities were far more receptive to experimentalism than Budapest, although the work still proved controversial and divisive. Mahler continued revising and reorchestrating the piece, finally publishing it in 1899.

In a famous conversation, Finnish counterpart Jean Sibelius remarked that a symphony must have "profound logic and inner connection." Disagreeing with him, Mahler countered, "No, a symphony must be like the world. It must contain everything." Mahler symphonies are indeed world-encompassing.

For Mahler, unlike many other German symphony composers, the "world" of the symphony included social criticism. Since his youth, Mahler had been fascinated by the prospect of using music as a metaphor for social justice, with different "voices" coming to denote different social classes and ethnic identities. Mahler's incorporation of popular music into the symphony represents the culmination of this impulse. Another inspiration for the extreme levels of contrast in Mahler's music was a childhood incident. Witnessing a distressing argument between his parents, the young Mahler ran away from home. Distraught, he encountered a local street band. He never forgot the juxtaposition of his own unhappiness with a wider world that seemed unknowing and uncaring.

Mahler's music also reflects attitudes about symphonic music as a vehicle for the expression of profound philosophical ideas. In German artistic philosophy, absolute, "pure" music (i.e., music without words) was held in higher esteem than vocal music or "program" music. Program music—music written to express a specific extra-musical literary, philosophical, or artistic idea—was limited in possibilities and could only be about one specific thing (and was frequently expressed as "tone poems"). In contrast, absolute music—as embodied by the symphony—was held to offer limitless and infinite expression. Combining both theoretical impulses, Mahler's music reflects the paradoxes of cosmic and personal, high and low, symphony and song, huge societal forces, and intensely private meditation.

Like nearly all his works, Mahler's first symphony represents his efforts to reconcile poetry and music. Large parts of it were assembled out of music previously used in his song cycle *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Songs of a Wayfarer). A set of four songs for piano and voice written in 1884, that work's poetic text deals with a young man's idyllic youth, a disastrous love affair, and emotional resolution. Unlike today's version,

the symphony originally had five movements; an additional movement (called "Blumine") was placed after the first. Mahler based "Blumine" on incidental music he had composed in 1884 for a poem by Joseph Victor von Scheffel but excised it from the symphony after the first three performances.

Mahler originally called the piece *Titan, a Tone Poem in Symphonic Form* rather than a symphony. The piece straddles the boundary between absolute music and program music. For its first performance, in Budapest, Mahler left it as abstract (albeit with hidden literary references). He did supply a program for the Hamburg and Weimar performances, but later recanted it. To this day, it remains controversial among musicologists whether these explanations should be taken as authoritative.

In the written program, Mahler described the piece's first movement as "'Spring and no end' (Introduction and Allegro Comodo). The Introduction depicts the awakening of Nature from the long sleep of winter." The movement uses a unison A in the strings to represent natural sounds including bird calls, while off-stage trumpets represent physical distance, separation, and alienation between man and the nature from which he springs. Depicting the symphonic main character's youth, the movement reworks the song "Ging heut' Morgen übers Feld" ("I went this morning on the field") from *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*. Coming after "Blumine," the current second movement is described as "'With full sails (Scherzo)." A Ländler, a simple Austrian country dance in 3/4 meter, the movement represents the symphony's main character growing up, filled with youthful energy. Some of the movement's music dates back to "Der Trompeter von Säkkingen" which Mahler wrote in 1880, a full eight years prior to the symphony.

Mahler gave an extended description of the third movement:

> Stranded! (A funeral march in 'the manner of Callot.') The following might explain this movement: the external inspiration for the piece came to the author from a parodistic picture well known to all children in Austria: 'The Huntsman's Funeral', from an old children's book: the animals of the forest accompany the dead huntsman's bier to the grave; hares escort the little troop, in front of them marches a group of Bohemian musicians, accompanied by playing cats, toads, crows etc. Stags, deer, foxes, and other four-legged and feathered animals follow the procession in comic attitudes. In this passage the piece is intended to have now an ironically merry, now a mysteriously brooding mood.

Filled with bitter irony, the movement's round on *Frère Jacques* in a minor key reflects disillusioned memories of childhood. A contrasting section presents an ironically detached street music scene. The bitterness of a seemingly uncaring world breaking in on the protagonist's existential crisis almost certainly reflects Mahler's memory of his own childhood incident. Mahler also provided an alternative explanation for the movement in a private letter:

> On the surface one might imagine this scenario: A funeral procession passes by our hero, and the misery, the whole distress of the world, with its cutting contrasts and horrible irony, grasps him. The funeral march "Brother Martin" [Frère Jaques] one has to imagine as being played in a dull manner by a band of very bad musicians, as they usually follow such funeral processions. The roughness, gaiety, and banality of this world then appears in the sounds of some interfering Bohemian musicians, heard at the time as the terribly painful lamentation of the hero. It has a shocking effect in its sharp irony and inconsiderate polyphony, especially when we see the procession returning from the funeral (after the beautiful middle section), and the funeral band starts to play the usual happy tune (which pierces here to the bone).

The finale, which Mahler describes as "'D'all Inferno,' like the suddenly erupting cry of a heart wounded to its depths," follows immediately after the previous movement. In his own words, Mahler describes it as "A battle in which victory is always farthest away at the exact moment when the warrior believes himself to be closest to it. This is the character of every spiritual battle since it is not so easy to become or to be a hero." In another letter, Mahler offers the following description: "Our hero is completely abandoned, engaged in a most dreadful battle with all the sorrow of this world. Time and again he—and the victorious motif with him—is dealt a blow by fate whenever he rises above it and seems to get hold of it, and only in death, when he has become victorious over himself, does he gain victory. Then the wonderful allusion to his youth rings out once again with the theme of the first movement."

Regardless of whether one takes Mahler's program on face value, the work is a profound expression of the human spirit. Like the world, it truly contains everything.

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