



# London Philharmonic Orchestra

## MAHLER SYMPHONY NO. 4

VLADIMIR JUROWSKI *conductor*  
SOFIA FOMINA *soprano*  
LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA



## GUSTAV MAHLER

### SYMPHONY NO. 4 IN G

- 1 *Bedächtig. Nicht eilen* [Deliberate. Don't hurry]  
– *Recht gemächlich* [Very leisurely]
- 2 *In gemächlicher Bewegung, ohne Hast*  
[At a leisurely pace, without haste]
- 3 *Ruhevoll* [Restful]
- 4 *Sehr behaglich* [Very cosy]

When Mahler began work on his Fourth Symphony in 1899 he was thinking in terms of a 'humoresque' – a light, cheerful work, in strong contrast to the hugely ambitious Second and Third Symphonies. But it seems the muse had other ideas. 'To my astonishment', he wrote to a friend, 'it became plain to me that I had entered a totally different realm ... This time it is a forest with all its mysteries and its horrors which forces my hand and weaves itself into my work.' This may surprise some listeners. At first sight the Fourth appears Mahler's happiest and least complicated symphony: an idyllic picture of infant happiness, culminating in a child's vision of Heaven.

But Mahler knew only too well that childhood has its darker side. There is cruelty in the text Mahler sets in his finale, *Das himmlische Leben* ('The Heavenly Life'): 'We lead a patient, guiltless, darling lambkin to death', the child tells us contentedly; 'Saint Luke is slaying the oxen'. Earlier we glimpse 'the butcher Herod', responsible for the Massacre

of the Innocents in the Biblical Christmas story. What are characters like these doing in Heaven?

In fact Mahler wrote his fascinatingly ambiguous song-finale some time before he began work on the preceding three movements – so although it comes last, it is really the starting point for the whole symphony. It was one of several settings of poems from the classic German folk collection *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* ('The Boy's Magic Horn') Mahler had composed in the 1890s. Yet in the Fourth Symphony the three purely orchestral movements prepare the way for the closing vision of the song-finale on every possible level: its themes, orchestral colours, tonal scheme, and most of all its masked emotional complexity.

The very opening of the Fourth Symphony is a foretaste of the finale. Woodwind and sleigh-bells set off at a slow jog-trot, then a languid rising violin phrase turns out to be the beginning of a disarmingly simple tune: Mahler in Mozartian peruke and frills. A warmly yearning second theme (cellos) soon subsides into the most childlike idea so far (solo oboe and bassoon). Soon another tune is introduced by four flutes in unison – panpipes, or perhaps whistling boys. After this the 'mysteries and horrors' rise to the surface, until horns, trumpets, bells and glittering high woodwind burst into a joyous medley of themes from earlier on. A dissonance, underlined by gong and bass

drum, then trumpets sound out the fanfare rhythm Mahler later used to begin the sinister Funeral March in his Fifth Symphony. Suddenly the music stops, and the Mozartian theme starts again in mid-phrase, as though nothing had happened. All the main themes now return, leading to a brief, boisterous coda.

The second movement, a Scherzo with two contrasting trio sections, proceeds at a leisurely pace (really fast music is rare in this symphony). Mahler described the first theme as a portrait of 'Freund Hain' ('Friend Hain') – a pied-piper-like figure from German folklore whose fiddle playing beguiles its hearers into the land of 'Beyond' – death in disguise? The beguiling but sinister fiddler is evoked by the orchestral leader playing a violin tuned a tone higher than normal, sounding both coarser and – literally – more highly-strung. There are cosier moments, though the final shrill high forte leaves a faintly sulphurous aftertaste.

According to Mahler the gorgeous string theme that opens the slow movement was inspired by 'a vision of a tombstone on which was carved an image of the departed, with folded arms, in eternal sleep' – an image half consoling, half achingly sad. A set of free variations develops this ambiguity, culminating in a full orchestral outburst of pure joy in E major – the key in which the

finale is to end. Then the slow movement slips back into peaceful sleep. Now the soprano soloist enters for the first time to open the finale. Mahler adds a note in the score: 'To be sung in a happy childlike manner: absolutely without parody!' At the mention of St Peter, the writing becomes hymn-like, then come the troubling images of slaughter. The singer seems unmoved by what she relates, but plaintive, animal-like cries from oboe and low horn create a momentary frisson. The movement makes its final turn to E major to the words, 'No music on earth can be compared to ours'. Then the child sings no more, and the music gradually fades until nothing is left but the deep bell-like tones of the harp.

*Programme note © Stephen Johnson*

# GUSTAV MAHLER

## SYMPHONY NO. 4 IN G

### *DAS HIMMLISCHE LEBEN* ('THE HEAVENLY LIFE')

Text is taken from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*

Wir genießen die himmlischen Freuden,  
D'rum tun wir das Irdische meiden.  
Kein weltlich' Getümmel  
Hört man nicht im Himmel!  
Lebt Alles in sanfterster Ruh'!

Wir führen ein englisches Leben!  
Sind dennoch ganz lustig daneben!  
Wir tanzen und springen,  
Wir hüpfen und singen!  
Sankt Peter in Himmel sieht zu!

Johannes das Lämmlein auslasset,  
Der Metzger Herodes drauf passet!  
Wir führen ein geduldig's,  
Unschuldig's, geduldig's,  
Ein liebliches Lämmlein zu Tod!

Sankt Lucas den Ochsen tät schlachten  
Ohn' enig's Bedenken und Achten,  
Der Wein kost' kein Heller  
Im himmlischen Keller,  
Die Englein, die backen das Brot.

We enjoy the heavenly pleasures,  
So we do avoid the earthly ones.  
No worldly commotion  
Is heard in heaven!  
All live in gentlest peace!

We lead an angelic life!  
Yet we're quite merry besides!  
We dance and jump,  
We hop and sing!  
St Peter in heaven looks on.

St John lets out the lambkin,  
The butcher Herod awaits it!  
We lead a patient,  
Innocent, patient,  
Dear little lamb to death!

St Luke slaughters the oxen  
Without any scruple or care,  
The wine costs not a penny  
In the heavenly cellar,  
The angels bake the bread.

Gut' Kräuter von allerhand Arten,  
Die wachsen im himmlischen Garten!  
Gut' Spargel, Fisolen  
Und was wir nur wollen!  
Ganze Schüsseln voll sind uns bereit!

Gut' Apfel, gut' Birn' und gut' Trauben,  
Die Gärtner, die Alles erlauben!  
Willst Rehbock, willst Hasen?  
Auf offener Straßen  
Sie laufen herbei!

Sollt ein Festtag etwa kommen,  
Alle Fische gleich mit Freuden angeschwommen!  
Dort läuft schon Sankt Peter  
Mit Netz und mit Köder  
Zum himmlischen Weiher hinein.  
Sankt Martha die Köchin muß sein!

Kein' Musik ist ja nicht auf Erden  
Die unsrer verglichen kann werden.  
Elftausend Jungfrauen  
Zu tanzen sich trauen!  
Sankt Ursula selbst dazu lacht!

Good plants of every kind  
Grow in the heavenly garden!  
Good asparagus, beans  
And whatever we want!  
Whole platefuls are prepared for us!

Good apples, good pears and good grapes,  
The gardeners allow us them all!  
Do you want roebuck, want hares?  
On the open streets  
They are running about!

Should a feast-day be approaching,  
All fish alike come joyfully swimming!  
There already St Peter is running  
With net and bait  
To the heavenly pond.  
St Martha has to be cook!

There is no music on earth  
That can be compared to ours.  
Eleven thousand maidens  
Make bold to dance!  
Even St Ursula laughs!

Cäcilia mit ihren Verwandten  
Sind treffliche Hofmusikanten!  
Die englischen Stimmen  
Ermuntern die Sinnen!  
Daß alles für Freuden erwacht.

Cecilia and her relations  
Are excellent court musicians!  
The angelic voices  
Arouse the senses!  
So all things awake for joy.

*English translation © Eric Mason*

# SOFIA FOMINA

soprano

© Aleksandra Raluca Drafoli  
& Olga Martinez



Praised for her “formidably striking” and “stunning silvery” soprano sound, Sofia Fomina first burst onto the international operatic scene in 2012 when she made a sensational debut at the Royal Opera House in 2012

as Isabelle in Meyerbeer’s *Robert le Diable*. A previous member of the Saarländisches Staatstheater and Frankfurt Opera she has since appeared at Paris Opera, Bayerische Staatsoper, Hungarian National Opera, Royal Opera House, Théâtre du Capitole de Toulouse, Theater an der Wien and Concertgebouw Amsterdam.

A frequent collaborator with Vladimir Jurowski and the London Philharmonic Orchestra she has performed with them in *Fidelio*, *Das Rheingold*, and Mahler’s Fourth and Eighth Symphonies in London and on tour in Europe and the US. Other concert appearances include Mahler’s Second Symphony with Teatro Real, New Year’s Gala concerts with Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia and Czech Philharmonic, Mahler’s Eighth Symphony with Fabio Luisi and the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, *Falstaff* with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Edward Gardner, Marzelline in a concert version of *Fidelio* at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam and in London with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and a tour of Mahler’s

Fourth Symphony with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and Vladimir Jurowski.

Highlights on the opera platform include Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*) at Glyndebourne and the BBC Proms, title role Manon at Opéra de Paris, Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Olympia (*Les contes d’Hoffmann*) and Jemmy (*Guillaume Tell*) and Gilda (*Rigoletto*) at the Royal Opera House, Gilda at Bayerische Staatsoper, Berthe (*Le Prophete*) at Théâtre du Capitole de Toulouse, Adele (*Die Fledermaus*) at Bayerische Staatsoper, Oscar in a new production of *Un ballo in maschera* at Bayerische Staatsoper, Zerbinetta (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) at Staatsoper Hamburg, Musetta (*La bohème*) at Festspielhaus Baden-Baden with Teodor Currentzis, Rosina (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*) at Seattle Opera, Fiakermili (*Arabella*) at Bayerische Staatsoper, and Aquillo in a concert performance of (*Adriano in Siria*) at Theater an der Wien.

# VLADIMIR JUROWSKI

*conductor*

© Drew Kelley



One of today's most sought-after conductors, acclaimed worldwide for his incisive musicianship and adventurous artistic commitment, Vladimir Jurowski was born in Moscow in 1972. In 1990 he relocated with his family to Germany.

In 2017 Vladimir Jurowski took up the position of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin and also celebrated ten years as Principal Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. 2021 will see him take up the position of Music Director of the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich. In addition he holds the titles of Principal Artist of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Artistic Director of the Russian State Academic Symphony Orchestra, and Artistic Director of the George Enescu International Festival, Bucharest. He has previously held the positions of First Kapellmeister of the Komische Oper Berlin, Principal Guest Conductor of the Teatro Comunale di Bologna, Principal Guest Conductor of the Russian National Orchestra and Music Director of Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

Vladimir Jurowski appears regularly at festivals including the BBC Proms, the Glyndebourne Festival Opera, the George Enescu Festival of Bucharest, Musikfest Berlin, and the

Dresden, Schleswig Holstein and the Rostropovich Festivals. In 2017 he made an acclaimed Salzburg Festival debut.

He collaborates with many of the world's leading orchestras including the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Staatskapelle Dresden, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, the Cleveland and Philadelphia Orchestras, New York Philharmonic, Chicago and Boston Symphonies, the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestras.

A committed operatic conductor, Jurowski has conducted at the Metropolitan Opera New York, the Opera National de Paris, Teatro alla Scala Milan, the Bolshoi Theatre, the State Academic Symphony of Russia, the Semperoper Dresden, the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, the Komische Oper Berlin and the Bayerische Staatsoper.

Jurowski's discography includes CD and DVDs with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, the Russian National Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.



# LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The London Philharmonic Orchestra is one of the world's finest orchestras, balancing a long and distinguished history with its present-day position as one of the most dynamic and forward-looking ensembles in the UK. This reputation has been secured by the Orchestra's performances in the concert hall and opera house, its many award-winning recordings, trail-blazing international tours and wide-ranging educational work.

Founded by Sir Thomas Beecham in 1932, the Orchestra has since been headed by many of the world's greatest conductors, including Sir Adrian Boult, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt and Kurt Masur. Vladimir Jurowski was appointed the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor in March 2003, and became Principal Conductor in September 2007.

The Orchestra is based at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall in London, where it has been Resident Orchestra since 1992, giving around 30 concerts a season. Each summer it takes up its annual residency at Glyndebourne Festival Opera where it has been Resident Symphony Orchestra for over 50 years. The Orchestra performs at venues around the UK and has made numerous international tours, performing to sell-out audiences in America, Europe, Asia and Australasia.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra made its first recordings on 10 October 1932, just three days after its first public performance. It has recorded and broadcast regularly ever since, and in 2005 established its own record label. These recordings are taken mainly from live concerts given by conductors including LPO Principal Conductors from Beecham and Boult, through Haitink, Solti and Tennstedt, to Masur and Jurowski. **[lpo.org.uk](http://lpo.org.uk)**



**GUSTAV MAHLER (1860–1911)**

**58:55 Symphony No. 4 in G**

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|----|-------|---|
| 01 | 17:51 | Bedächtig. Nicht eilen [Deliberate. Don't hurry]<br>– Recht gemächlich [Very leisurely] |
| 02 | 10:08 | In gemächlicher Bewegung, ohne Hast [At a leisurely pace, without haste]                |
| 03 | 21:20 | Ruhevoll [Restful]  |
| 04 | 09:36 | Sehr behaglich [Very cosy]  |

**VLADIMIR JUROWSKI** *conductor*

**SOFIA FOMINA** *soprano*

**LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA**

**Pieter Schoeman** *leader*

*Recorded live at Southbank Centre's* **ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL**, London