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We believe that architecture which works for our clients, the wider community, and the environment, is a careful synthesis of these elements, which vary with each individual project.

Therefore we do not have a "house style"; we believe that our work must be designed in a process of close and ongoing consultation with our clients; be appropriate to, and enhance site and location; and express the highest levels of aesthetics, functionality and value for money.

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Mahler Players

6th, 8th, 9th December 2017
Ullapool, Lossiemouth, Inverness

Claude Debussy: *La mer*

I. *De l'aube à midi sur la mer*
"From dawn to noon on the sea"

II. *Jeux de vagues*
"Play of the waves"

III. *Dialogue du vent et de la mer*
"Dialogue of the wind and the sea"

Interval

Richard Wagner *Parsifal: An Orchestral Fantasy*

The Mahler Players
Tomas Leakey *conductor*

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862 - 1918) *La mer* (arr. Farrington)

Debussy composed *La mer* from 1903 – 1905, completing the score at the Grand Hotel, Eastbourne, on the English coast. The work is subtitled *Trois esquisses symphoniques* ("Three symphonic sketches") and each movement has a descriptive title. Despite the specific images evoked by these titles, the music does not follow a story. Instead, it suggests certain colours and sounds that are constantly changing, through novel harmonic and orchestral effects. The often transparent approach to the orchestration, lightness of touch and soloistic nature of the scoring lends itself well to a reduced ensemble. By including many of the original instruments in a suitably sized orchestra, the work can be effectively conveyed with little loss of colour and variety, with hidden details made more apparent.

Programme note by Iain Farrington

RICHARD WAGNER (1813 – 1883) *Parsifal: An Orchestral Fantasy* (arr. Farrington)

Richard Wagner composed the music to his opera *Parsifal* between 1877 and 1880, with much preliminary work on the text in the years before. It was Wagner's final opera and was composed specifically for his new theatre at Bayreuth. This new orchestral fantasy is a condensed version of the whole opera, featuring many of the orchestral highlights, following the story in chronological order and arranged for a medium-sized chamber orchestra. It is made up entirely of Wagner's music, including many of the major events in the opera, all connected as one continuous tone poem. Some sections of vocal writing are taken by the instruments, to create a purely orchestral work. The dramatic and musical content is as follows:

The opening Prelude is heard complete. A short section of Gurnemanz's music follows, and he states that only an innocent fool can cure Amfortas from his wound. Parsifal enters, bold and heroic, but is mocked by Kundry, a wild and mysterious woman. After she falls asleep, the Knight's Procession follows, a long orchestral sequence depicting them travelling to the Hall of the Grail. The Knights receive Holy Communion and see the Grail uncovered. Gurnemanz asks Parsifal if he understands what he has seen. Parsifal is unmoved and Gurnemanz rejects him. The scene changes to Klingsor's Magic Castle where Kundry is now a beautiful woman. Parsifal

arrives at the the Castle and is immediately surrounded by Flower Maidens trying to seduce him. Their music is alluring and erotic. Kundry calls to Parsifal, reminding of his mother, and causing him to feel guilt for her death. She kisses him, but he is repulsed and immediately recalls Amfortas's wound. Kundry curses him and Klingsor appears, hurling the Holy Spear towards Parsifal. The Spear hangs over Parsifal's head who takes it, causing the Castle and everything around to collapse and disappear. Some years later, Parsifal returns to the Knights' domain with the Holy Spear. Gurnemanz is overjoyed and Kundry washes Parsifal's feet. The Good Friday Music follows where Parsifal is made King of the Knights by Gurnemanz. He baptises Kundry before praising nature and its beauty. It is midday and once again the Knights process to the Grail Hall, carrying the coffin of their former King, Titurel. The Knights urge Amfortas to reveal the Grail again, but he would rather be granted death. Parsifal presents the Spear and cures Amfortas. The Grail is presented once again and all kneel in rapture before it.

Programme note by Iain Farrington

TOMAS LEAKEY – conductor



Founder and conductor of the Mahler Players, Tomas Leakey began his musical life as a trombonist in the Highland Regional Youth Orchestra. At Cambridge he studied Natural Sciences but was also active on the music scene as a pianist and trombonist. In his final year he took up conducting and was the director of Christ's College Orchestra.

Tomas studied conducting with the late George Hurst at the Sherborne Summer School of Music and with Denise Ham in London. In June 2017 he took part in the conducting masterclass

at the St Magnus Festival in Orkney, where he was taught by Alexander Vedemikov and had the chance to work with the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, BBC Singers, The Assembly Project and St Magnus Festival Chorus. Tomas has also studied at the Järvi Winter Academy in Estonia, with Toby Purser, Adrian Brown, Susan Dingle and at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama with David Jones.

At the 2016 Aberystwyth Musicfest Tomas was the joint winner of the Orion Conductors' Prize, which came with the position of assistant conductor to Toby Purser and the Orion Orchestra in the 2016-17 season. At this festival he also conducted the UK premiere of *Tiffany Windows* by the American composer Arlene Sierra with a chamber orchestra featuring the Solem Quartet and Magnard Ensemble as the principal players.

EMMA DONALD – leader



From the Highlands of Scotland, Emma has been playing the violin since the age of 8. Growing up, she enjoyed learning both classical and traditional Scottish music, and has strived to keep both passions running simultaneously. She has a first-class honours degree in music from the University of Edinburgh, where she was leader of the three main student orchestras. This has given her the opportunity to work with inspiring conductors including Will Conway, Chris George and Russell Cowieson. Since graduating, she performs regularly with orchestras such as

Mahler Players and Amicus Orchestra, her piano trio, the Hans Gal Trio, and her neo-trad fiddle and clarsach duo, Turadh. She has also worked with Scottish Ballet, and with up and coming opera group, Magnetic Opera, where she was the soloist for their production of Menotti's *The Medium* in London.

Emma is a full-time musician based in the Highlands of Scotland. She has built up a portfolio career that includes community music work, individual and ensemble teaching, and solo and group performance.

THE MAHLER PLAYERS

The Mahler Players were founded in 2013 as a high-level chamber orchestra for musicians, mainly based in the Highlands, to make music together. As part of the now completed *Mahler in Miniature* project they performed chamber versions of Mahler's First, Fourth, Fifth, Ninth and Tenth Symphonies, *Das Lied von der Erde*, and most of the other Mahler song cycles. They have commissioned and given the premieres of four new works, including *Birth-Rebirth* by Stuart MacRae in 2016. Their performance of Mahler's Ninth Symphony in September 2016 was given a four-star review and described as "outstanding" by Michael Tumelty in *The Herald Scotland*.

FIRST VIOLINS

Emma Donald (leader)
Simon Evans

CLARINET

D James Ross

SECOND VIOLINS

David Murray
Francis Moore-Colyer

BASSOON

Bruce Gordon

VIOLAS

Jonathan Rutter
Rachel Farmer

HORNS

Rob Farmer
Wendy Ritchie

CELLOS

Katy Bell
Sandy Scott-Brown

TRUMPET

Alasdair Grant

DOUBLE BASS

Tam Hardy

TROMBONE

Mark Bell

FLUTE/PICCOLO

Catherine O'Rourke

TIMPANI/PERCUSSION

Alison Russell
Wendy Ritchie

OBOE

Leslie Callander

HARP

Erica Sindair

The Mahler Players have exciting plans for 2018 – 2020, including further collaborations with arranger Iain Farrington on performances of full acts from Wagner operas (with singers) and a new commission based on late sketches by Wagner, as well as more concerts of symphonic repertoire. The project is in the early to middle stages of planning. We will need all the help we can get to make this happen. If you would like to support the Mahler Players in this venture, then please get in touch with us! Help could be in the form of an individual donation tonight or via the form included with the programme, a sponsorship deal with a business or in-kind support as simple as inviting your friends and spreading the word about our concerts when you hear about them. We look forward to hearing from you!

contact@mahlerplayers.co.uk

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The Mahler Players is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) Charity No. SC044711