



Northern Lights – Mahler Players

Welcome to today's concert!

PROGRAMME

Jean Sibelius: Symphony No. 5

- 1) *Tempo molto moderato – Allegro moderato*
- 2) *Andante mosso, quasi allegretto*
- 3) *Allegro molto*

Interval

Jean Sibelius: Symphony No. 2

- 1) *Allegretto*
- 2) *Tempo Andante, ma rubato*
- 3) *Vivacissimo*
- 4) *Finale: Allegro moderato*

The Mahler Players
Tomas Leahey *conductor*

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865 - 1957) Symphony No. 5 (arr. Farrington)

The first version of Sibelius's Fifth Symphony was premiered by the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra on 8th December 1915, the day of the composer's 50th birthday, with Sibelius himself conducting. He had been a huge figure in Finnish music for over 20 years and the government honoured the occasion by declaring a national holiday. Over the next four years Sibelius made substantial revisions to the score, with the final version as we know it today being first performed in 1919. Sibelius wrote in his diary that the process of composing this symphony was: "As if God the Father had thrown down the shards of a mosaic from the floor of heaven and asked me to find out what it had looked like." The music is some of the most sensuous and passionate that Sibelius ever composed, but it is also powerfully unique and ground-breaking in structure. The first movement is a seamless combination of what was originally two separate movements: a broad opening *Moderato* and a scherzo-like second section, with the tempo proceeding inexorably from the measured opening to the final exhilarating *Presto*. The second movement is a beautiful set of variations on a rhythm and the last movement, with its great "swan" theme, a thrilling and memorable conclusion.

Symphony No. 2 (arr. Farrington)

The Second Symphony was first performed in 1902. The sketches for the work were made during some months that Sibelius spent in Italy in the winter of 1900/01 and it was completed in Finland. It is one of Sibelius's most-loved symphonies, at the heart of which is the *Andante* second movement, which Sibelius's friend and colleague the conductor Robert Kajanus described as "the most broken-hearted protest against all the injustice that threatens at the present time to deprive the sun of its light and the flowers of their scent." This reflected the difficult political situation in Finland at the time, with increasing control exercised by the Russians - Finland was an autonomous "Grand-Duchy" of the Russian Empire from 1809 until 1917. It is a work of powerful contrasts: the sunny and gentle

opening of the first movement belies the later drama, the second movement contains everything from Gregorian chant-like melodies to militaristic interjections and grand chorales. The third movement is a thrilling Scherzo, with a gentle Trio, and everything is summed up in the triumphant apotheosis of the finale.

A note on the chamber arrangements by Iain Farrington

These arrangements aim to create a full orchestral picture using only the instruments in Sibelius's score. Hearing the clarity of individual lines can reveal hidden aspects of the score, adding an intimacy in the performing and listening experience, as well as enabling this work to be performed in smaller venues.

TOMAS LEAKEY – conductor

Tomas is the founder and music director of the Mahler Players. Originally from Inverness, his first experiences of orchestral music were playing trombone in the Highland Regional Youth Orchestra. He began conducting whilst at University in Cambridge, where he was also active as a trombonist and pianist. Tomas studied conducting initially with the late George Hurst at the Sherborne Summer School of Music and with Denise Ham in London. He has taken part in many masterclasses, with highlights including the Orkney Conductors' Course with Alexander Vedernikov/Norwegian Radio Symphony Orchestra and International Masterclasses Berlin with Johannes Wildner/Berlin Sinfonietta. He also spent a year studying conducting at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Currently based in London, Tomas also teaches piano and works as a Grades and Diploma examiner for the ABRSM, with whom he travels widely, though he likes nothing more than returning to the Highlands to conduct the Mahler 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. Emma is a founding member of Fyrish String Quartet, the Hans Gal Trio, and the neo-trad fiddle and clarsach duo, Turadh. She has 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 Edinburgh. 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 by conductor Tomas Leakey. As part of the now completed *Mahler in Miniature* project they performed chamber versions of Mahler's First,

Fourth, Fifth, Ninth and *Adagio* from the 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 leading Scottish composer Stuart MacRae in 2016. Their performance of Mahler's Ninth Symphony was given a four-star review and described as "outstanding" by Michael Tumelty in The Herald Scotland. More recently they have worked closely with composers Matthew King and Peter Longworth on the music of Richard Wagner, including performances of a brand new chamber orchestra version of Act 1 from *Die Walküre*.

FIRST VIOLIN Emma Donald (leader),
Simon Evans, Rebecca Minio-Paluello,
Rachel Farmer

FLUTE Catherine O'Rourke

OBOE Leslie Callander

SECOND VIOLIN Jenny Wychrij, Francis
Moore-Colyer, Hazel Younger, David
Murray

CLARINET Mhairi Callander

BASSOON Bruce Gordon

VIOLA Teresa Macedo Ferreira, Jan
Anderson

HORN Rob Farmer

TRUMPET Alasdair Grant

CELLO Katy Bell, Irini Dimitriadou,
Sandy Scott-Brown

TROMBONE Mark Bell

DOUBLE BASS Tam Hardy

TIMPANI Alison Russell

If you would like to support the Mahler Players then please get in touch with us! Help could be in the form of an individual donation, sponsorship deal with a business or in-kind support as simple as inviting your friends and spreading the word about our concerts. We look forward to hearing from you!

contact@mahlerplayers.co.uk

www.facebook.com/mahlerplayers

www.twitter.com/mahlerplayers

Acknowledgements

HRI-Munro Architects
Highlife Highland

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

HRI | Munro architecture



We are Chartered Architects and Design Consultants based in Inverness, Highland.

The long established Practices of HRI Architects and Thomas Munro & Co merged in 2016 to create **HRI | Munro Architecture** - one of the largest and most experienced firms of Architects in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

With experience ranging from residential work – ‘one-off’ houses and social housing developments – to cutting edge work in tidal and offshore wind power control buildings, hotel retail and commercial design, Conservation and Historic Building work, **HRI | Munro** offer quality, care and close attention to cost and detail.



www.hri-architects.com

RIBA

