



Mahler's Third Symphony

Saturday 31st May and Sunday 1st June 2025.

Inverness Cathedral and Strathpeffer Pavilion

Welcome to today's concert.

Mahler Symphony No. 3

I. Kräftig. Entschieden

II. Tempo di Menuetto. Sehr mäßig

III. Comodo. Scherzando. Ohne Hast

IV. Sehr langsam. Misterioso. Durchaus *ppp* "O Mensch! Gib Acht!"

V. Lustig im Tempo und keck im Ausdruck "Es sungen drei Engel"

VI. Langsam. Ruhevoll. Empfunden

The Mahler Players, conducted by Tomas Leakey

Barbara Scott – mezzo-soprano

Running time c.100 minutes. *Please note, there will be no interval in this concert.*

Arranging Mahler's Symphony No. 3 for Chamber Orchestra

— *Why, How and am I completely insane?*

This arrangement of Mahler's Third Symphony was, like my previous arrangements of his Sixth and Seventh, essentially done for purely selfish reasons. I'd never played it and I wanted to experience these pieces from the inside of an orchestra at least once before I shuffle off my mortal coil. So, it's a good thing that Tomas and the Mahler Players were (still) heading in my direction.

Having previously played Symphonies No. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, the unfinished 10th, *Das Lied von der Erde*, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, *Rückert-Lieder* and *Kindertotenlieder*, we were fast running out of orchestral compositions by our eponymous composer. (Mahler earned his living primarily as an Opera Conductor so composed only in his holidays.) I originally overlooked arranging the Third because it is a monumental work, not only in its orchestration and length, but in its philosophical scope. Essentially, it is now the longest symphony in the standard orchestral repertoire, running to around 100 minutes, depending on the amount of coffee the conductor has had.*

The number of performers for a full performance are massive: an alto soloist, women's chorus, children's chorus, offstage drums and posthorn, quadruple winds, trumpets & trombones, a tuba, eight (yes, eight!) horns, a gaggle of strings (ninety or so), as well as a

few harps and a lot of things you hit (percussion). This can total up to 200 musicians! And that's why, along with the Second and Eighth, I (and most other arrangers) have avoided trying to miniaturise this magnum opus.

This version is not a reduction in the sense of limitation — rather, it is an act of 'interpretational transparency' by the removal of extra instrumental layers. All the harmonies remain musically complete, just the way Mahler originally composed. With fewer instruments, however, Mahler's intricate inner voices, harmonic detail, and structural brilliance come into sharper focus. The only compromise that has to be made is in a few of the very loud passages where the original would feature an overwhelming wash of sound. But, as we have about 70 fewer string players, 8 fewer wind players, 5 fewer brass players, 5 fewer horns, 1 less harp, 5 fewer percussionists and 100 fewer singers than we should, it just makes everyone work a fraction harder. And they just love it!

Philosophically the work explores the grandeur of nature, the voice of humanity, and the quiet stillness of love and transcendence. Yet beneath its massive surface lies an emotional clarity and intimacy that chamber forces like ours can uniquely reveal.

Arranging Mahler's Symphony No. 3 for chamber orchestra was a natural extension of the mission and spirit of The Mahler Players. Working in the Scottish Highlands access to full-scale orchestral resources is limited, although fortunately within these limited resources we still have leading exponents of the orchestral art. We are committed to bringing world-class symphonic music to local audiences, music that has never been performed in the Highlands — not by compromising its depth or simplifying its musical language, but by reimagining its scale. This arrangement reflects our prime belief that geography should never be a barrier to experiencing the most profound works of art. It is both a tribute to Mahler's genius and a statement of our commitment to making that genius resonate here, in the unique cultural landscape of the Scottish Highlands, that we proudly present to you the Highland premiere of Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 3 in D minor. As Sergeant Pepper said... "We hope you will enjoy the show!"

Robert Farmer: Arranger INVERNESS May 2025

*Although the longest piece of music full-stop is the John Cage piece 'Organ2 ASLSP' (As Slow as Possible) which is being performed on a specially built organ in St Burchardi's Church in Halberstadt, Germany. This piece is scheduled to continue for an impressive 639 years, with the next chord change expected on August 5, 2026. The interval should occur around about the year 2335. Drinks available at the bar. As of today (May 31) it's been playing for 23 years, 8 months and 4 days!

IV. *O Mensch! Gib Acht!*

Text from *Also sprach Zarathustra* by Friedrich Nietzsche

O Mensch! Gib Acht!
Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?
"Ich schlief, ich schlief —,
aus tiefem Traum bin ich erwacht: —
Die Welt ist tief,
und tiefer als der Tag gedacht.
Tief ist ihr Weh —,
Lust — tiefer noch als Herzeleid.
Weh spricht: Vergeh!
Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit —,
— will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit!"

O Man! Take heed!
What says the deep midnight?
"I slept, I slept —,
from a deep dream have I awoken: —
the world is deep,
and deeper than the day has thought.
Deep is its pain —,
joy — deeper still than heartache.
Pain says: Pass away!
But all joy seeks eternity —,
— seeks deep, deep eternity!"

V. *Es sungen drei Engel*

Text from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* ed. Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano

Es sungen drei Engel einen süßen
Gesang,
mit Freuden es selig in dem Himmel
klang.
Sie jauchzten fröhlich auch dabei:
daß Petrus sei von Sünden frei!

Three angels sang a sweet song,

with blessed joy it rang in heaven.

They shouted too for joy
that Peter was free from sin!

Und als der Herr Jesus zu Tische saß,
mit seinen zwölf Jüngern das Abendmahl
aß,
da sprach der Herr Jesus: "Was stehst du
denn hier?
Wenn ich dich anseh', so weinst du mir!"

And as Lord Jesus sat at the table
with his twelve disciples and ate the
evening meal,
Lord Jesus said: "Why do you stand here?
When I look at you, you are weeping!"

"Und sollt' ich nicht weinen, du gütiger
Gott?
Ich hab' übertreten die zehn Gebot!
Ich gehe und weine ja bitterlich!
Ach komm und erbarme dich über mich!"

"And should I not weep, kind God?
I have violated the ten commandments!
I wander and weep bitterly!
O come and take pity on me!"

"Hast du denn übertreten die zehen
Gebot,
so fall auf die Knie und bete zu Gott!
Liebe nur Gott in alle Zeit!

"If you have violated the ten
commandments,
then fall on your knees and pray to God!
Love only God for all time!

So wirst du erlangen die himmlische
Freud'."

So will you gain heavenly joy."

Die himmlische Freud' ist eine selige
Stadt,
die himmlische Freud', die kein Ende
mehr hat!

The heavenly joy is a blessed city,

the heavenly joy that has no end!

Die himmlische Freude war Petro bereit't,
durch Jesum und allen zur Seligkeit.

The heavenly joy was granted to Peter
through Jesus, and to all mankind for
eternal bliss.

The Mahler Players were founded by Tomas Leakey in 2013 as a seven-piece ensemble which has gradually expanded in scope to the current orchestra of around 40 players.

We have performed chamber orchestra versions of most of Mahler's music. More recently we have also had a focus on Wagner and Beethoven. We have worked with some of the greatest singers of our era, including numerous collaborations with Sir John Tomlinson, and were joined in 2023 and 2024 by Anthony Negus as guest conductor. In 2021 we released our acclaimed debut album, featuring the world premiere recording of Matthew King's *Richard Wagner in Venice: A Symphony*.

Rob Farmer (arranger)

Rob was born a long time ago, in a country far, far away. He earns most of his pennies as an Instrumental Instructor with High Life Highland, teaching the next generation of brass players which end of the instrument to blow into. (It's the small end... I think.) He plays trumpet in the odd rock band, helps out with the Highland Brass on cornet, turns up in the odd musical (on horn in the pit), plays Principal Horn for the Mahler Players, and conducts the Inverness Schools Wind Band. On the days that it rains he dabbles in a few other activities, including keeping his own noise making skills up to scratch, arranging ridiculous sized symphonies for wee orchestra (unfortunately no Shostakovich until 2046 owing to him not being dead enough), reading an insane amount of Roman history and appreciating good beer. On the few days of sun that the Highlands gets he may be glimpsed out on his motorcycle desperately dodging potholes, tending his vegetable patch in a gentlemanly manner, on his way to the airport to try to see a bit more of the world, or appreciating good beer. He lives on the bonny shores of Loch Ness with his violinist wife Rachel.

Barbara Scott (mezzo-soprano)

Barbara Scott lives in Muir of Ord, and studies with Judith Howarth in Aberdeen. She has performed a variety of principal opera roles. Highlights include the title role in Bizet's *Carmen*; Olga in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*; Dritte Dame in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*; Verdi roles include Fenena (*Nabucco*), Maddalena (*Rigoletto*) and Ulrika

(Un ballo in maschera). Her professional concert engagements as alto soloist have included Rossini's Petite Messe Solonelle for Edinburgh Bach Choir; Beethoven's 9th Symphony for the St Andrew Orchestra; the Bach St John Passion for Stonehaven Chorus; Mozart Requiem for Arbroath Choral Society; and Handel's Messiah at Inverness Cathedral. She performed the UK premiere of the cantata Rain in Summer by John Glenesk Mortimer with The St Andrew Orchestra, Edinburgh. Barbara also performs regular recitals with her trio Sopranaria, featuring art song and operatic duets. She has performed Wagner's song cycle, the Wesendonck Lieder, in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Barbara is delighted to be back with The Mahler Players, having performed as Kundry in their 2024 performance of Wagner's Parsifal Act 3. Upcoming engagements include Rossini Petite Messe Solonelle at Pluscarden Abbey; Aboyne & Deeside Festival with Sopranaria; and a recital at Inverness Cathedral.

Tomas Leahey (conductor)

Founder and Music Director of the Mahler Players, Tomas also works with the Aberdeen City Orchestra and is the conductor of the Highland Regional Youth Orchestra. He has a particular interest in the music of Wagner and his performances have included complete acts from *Die Walküre*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Siegfried* and *Parsifal* as well as excerpts from *Lohengrin*, *Tannhäuser*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and *Götterdämmerung*.

Tomas began his musical life as a trombonist. He studied with and was encouraged in his conducting by the formidable late George Hurst and undertook additional study with Denise Ham at the London Conducting Academy.

Emma Donald (leader)

Originally from the Highlands, Emma Donald 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, and she works full time as a freelance musician based in Glasgow.

Emma is very passionate about chamber music, she is a founding member of the Harris String Quartet and the Cairdeas Trio. She is also an accomplished composer; her works have been performed by several string quartets in the UK. Emma is one half of a contemporary folk duo with harpist Isbel Pendlebury. Their original music was featured as part of "The Farewell Glacier", a programme broadcast on BBC Radio 3 in January 2024.

Next month Emma will be performing with the Harris String Quartet during their June 2025 tour to the Highlands, featuring music by Haydn, Mendelssohn, Rebecca Clarke and Pavel Haas. You can find out more information about their concerts on Instagram: [@harris.quartet](https://www.instagram.com/harris.quartet).

FIRST VIOLIN

Emma Donald (leader), Emily Birse,
Simon Evans, Ruth Kalitski, Mark
Osborne

SECOND VIOLIN

Andrew Birse, Heather Lanz, Ellis Ash,
Hazel Younger, David Murray,
Maureen Turnbull

VIOLA

Rachel Farmer, Vanessa Turner,
Bernhard Nicolás Ersfeld Mandujano

CELLO

Kate Ellingson, Ed Pendrous, Jo
Gascoigne

DOUBLE BASS

Tam Darlughdach, Chris Sergeant

FLUTE Ruth Binks, Babs Crocker

PICCOLO Michael Crocker

OBOE Leslie Callander

OBOE/COR ANGLAIS Krys

Hawryszczuk

CLARINET/Eb CLARINET Mhairi

Callander

CLARINET/BASS CLARINET Mike

Weare

BASSOON Kate Smith

BASSOON/CONTRABASSOON

Bruce Gordon

FRENCH HORN Rob Farmer, Wendy
Ritchie, Willie Aristide-Deighan

TRUMPET/FLUGELHORN Alasdair
Grant

TRUMPET Harry Marshall

TROMBONE Mark Bell

TUBA Gavin Woods

TIMPANI/PERCUSSION Ally Russell

PERCUSSION Louise Andrews

HARP/PERCUSSION Erica Sinclair

CHORUS

Kathryn Arnould, Mary Deverell, Moira
Docherty, Gina Francis, Anne Gillies,
Marnie Greenrod, Kirsten Makins, Cath
Niven, Barbara Scott, Alice Shering,
Jane Thomson

HRI | Munro architecture

CHARTERED
ARCHITECTS
& DESIGN
CONSULTANTS

+44 (0)1463 240066
@hri_munro_architects
info@hri-architects.com
hri-architects.com



With warm thanks to

Inverness Common Good Fund, The Members of the Mahler Circle, HRI-Munro Architecture, Culture & Business Scotland, The Gustav Mahler Society UK

The Mahler Circle - members

Sandra and John Black

David and Fiona Johnson

Ash Johnston

Thomas Baxter and Benjamin Mawston
(Rossmor Guesthouse)

Professor Sue Lightman

Alan Maitland

Leo and Cathy McClymont

Dr Helen Robinson

Benefits of the Mahler Circle include complimentary tickets with reserved seating, acknowledgement in our programmes and occasional invitations to post-concert receptions. If you would be interested in finding out more about the Mahler Circle please get in touch: contact@mahlerplayers.co.uk.



We are pleased to announce our concerts in the first half of the 2025/26 season.

Saturday 20th September, 8pm at Inverness Cathedral

Sunday 21st September, 3pm at Strathpeffer Pavilion

Boulez *Initiale*

Wagner *Albumblatt für Betty Schott* (orch. Matthew King)

Wagner *Parsifal* Act 2 (chamber orchestra version by Matthew King)

Cast to include Sir John Tomlinson and Magdalena Anna Hofmann

Sunday 7th December, 4pm at Inverness Cathedral

Bruckner Symphony No. 3

Tickets are available now via www.mahlerplayers.co.uk

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