

Sunday, August 7 • 3:00 pm
Whittington-Pfohl Auditorium

Season Finale

Brevard Music Center Orchestra
David Efron, conductor

Gustav Mahler

Symphony No. 6 in A minor
Allegro energico, ma non troppo
Scherzo: Wuchtig
Andante
Finale: Allegro moderato

David Effron, conductor

David Effron is the Brevard Music Center's third artistic director and principal conductor. He is an alumnus of BMC and spent his first summer here, studying piano, when he was fourteen years old.



Effron earned a Bachelor of Music degree in piano from the University of Michigan. After receiving his master's degree in piano with Sidney Foster at Indiana University, Effron received a Fulbright Scholarship and a Rockefeller Grant and worked as an assistant to Wolfgang Sawallisch at the Cologne Opera. Upon returning to the United States, he joined the New York City Opera, serving on the conducting staff for eighteen years.

For seven seasons Effron was head of the opera department and conducted many symphony concerts as a faculty member of The Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. Then he spent twenty-one years as head of the orchestra program at the Eastman School of Music. He joined the faculty of the Indiana University School of Music in 1998.

Notes on the Program

Gustav Mahler never knew the sustained level of success and public acclaim which other composers of the time, including his friend and rival Richard Strauss, had begun to enjoy. He was of necessity, then, a part-time composer, who balanced his writing with a full-time career as one of Europe's leading conductors. After a swift rise through ever more prominent opera houses (Leipzig, Hamburg, Budapest), he was appointed Director of the Vienna Court Opera (now the Vienna State Opera) in 1897. His ten-year reign at one of the world's great houses is still referred to as its "Golden Age," and he was known for his uncompromising standards, his iron will, and his impatience with the mediocrity he claimed beset him everywhere. He assembled an unparalleled roster of singers and greatly refined the playing of the Opera's pit orchestra, the renowned Vienna Philharmonic. He also oversaw technological innovations in stagecraft, and his productions with the designer Alfred Roller were immediately recognized for their innovative uses of space and light. After being forced to resign the Vienna post because of anti-Semitic intrigue, he conducted at the Metropolitan Opera and served as Music Director of the New York Philharmonic for a brief time before his death on May 18, 1911.

Mahler's genre of choice was the symphony, but the symphony, as a preferred genre of composers, was in eclipse in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Its "Golden Age" was long past, having ended about 1825 with the last symphonies of Beethoven and Schubert. The early Romantics had had a difficult time reconciling the new philosophical ideas of post-French Revolution Europe with Beethoven's architectural achievements, and the efforts of the later Romantics—Bruckner, Brahms, and Dvorak—were all tributes, conscious or un-, to an earlier time. Wagner and his adherents dismissed the genre as archaic, and Richard Strauss realized early on that his path lay in a different direction. It was left to Gustav Mahler and Jean Sibelius to re-invigorate the form and demonstrate its relevance to audiences of the new century. It is enlightening to compare their respective innovations; to Sibelius, symphonic writing was a process of distillation aiming for greater concentration and density. His symphonies, with one exception, grew increasingly shorter over his career, as if every extraneous note had been pared away. Mahler, in contrast, thought that the

symphony should be all-inclusive, all-encompassing—it should “embrace the world,” as he once said, coincidentally, to Sibelius. The Mahler symphonies represent for us today both the swan song of Romanticism and the birth pangs of modernity. They are a remarkable blend of the cosmic and the universal with the personal and the particular.

The Sixth, at one time known as the “Tragic,” stands alone in Mahler’s output. Of his eleven symphonic works (including *Das Lied von der Erde*, which Mahler considered a symphony), all except the Sixth end in major keys. The traditional Romantic strategy of “triumph-over-adversity” employed by Mahler so effectively in his Fifth is conspicuously absent here—the symphony ends in unrelieved bleakness. Perhaps this sheds light on why the Sixth made its way slowly into the repertoire since its completion in 1904. It wasn’t played at all in the US until 1946, while the Fifth was played here as early as 1905. It seems that only a handful of contemporary musicians recognized its stature, such as Alban Berg, who, in a letter to Webern, called it “the ONLY Sixth, except the Pastoral”—Beethoven’s Sixth—a well-meant, if meaningless, tribute. In certain ways it is the most “Classical” of all Mahler’s works: it is cast in four movements, of which three are in the same key of A minor, and they have a unity of tone and mood unusual for a Mahler symphony. Clearly Mahler held the reins tightly (is there Sibelius influence here?) in a way not often seen with him, which helps to account for both the symphony’s consistency of tone and the impression it creates of great conciseness—there is not one extra note, despite its eighty-minute length. How to account for this unity of feeling? The elements Mahler used to assemble his Sixth are not different from what we find in his other works: we hear marches, chorales, melodies in either an unabashedly “popular” style, or of almost heartbreaking loneliness and yearning, and moments of heaven-storming intensity, all clothed in his inimitable orchestral splendor. The difference seems to be in the music’s refusal to allow the rare moments of victory to last for long: the first movement’s optimistic ending is immediately offset by the grim tramping rhythm of the scherzo, and the slow movement’s gentle, consoling melancholy is just as abruptly cut off by the uneasy and spectral beginning of the Finale. The long Finale presents episode upon episode of music building up to crashing climaxes of such terrifying intensity that Mahler was compelled to call for a new, giant-sized, drum-like instrument, because the traditional battery of percussion instruments couldn’t give him enough sound. (In today’s performance, a large wooden box will be struck with a mallet to provide extra weight at these moments.) The vehemence of some of the music seems almost to exceed the expressive capacity of the orchestra. As the end approaches there is no hint of either the victory of the Fifth Symphony’s closing or the peaceful resignation of the *Kindertotenlieder*; a nihilistic despair and hopelessness settle over the coda that even one, last, savage gesture cannot dispel. The piece ends with a unison A low in the strings, pizzicato - the very sound of emptiness.

A work of art, Emile Zola said, is a “corner of the creation seen through a temperament.” While to our knowledge Mahler never explicitly embraced that individualist creed, musicians and audiences of our time have somehow accepted the musical temperament of Gustav Mahler as the paradigm of the post-modern mind-set. Why are we so attracted to this music? It offers no certainty or guarantee. It abounds in ambiguity. It is often difficult, even unpleasant, to listen to (no “ear candy” from this composer—he was not about to make things easier for us than they were for him). It is the first chapter in modern music’s creation saga, written with a prophetic prescience that *fin-de-siecle* European culture could not continue. He was right, of course; Europe self-destructed in 1914, and even if Mahler had lived to see that “corner of the creation” he would have had no reason to alter even the smallest detail of his horrific vision, the Sixth Symphony.

—James Howsmon

Brevard Music Center Orchestra

David Efron, conductor

Violin I

David Brickman, concertmaster*
Thomas Joiner*
Marjorie Bagley*
Sarah Schreffler
William Terwilliger*
Austin Wulliman
Katie McLin*
Christian Jackson
Annegret Klaua*
Ellen Cockerham
Arturo Rodriguez
Barbara Careaga
Fiona Hughes
Sara Guerriero
Lauren Rausch
Alexander Martin
Helen Morin
Serban Petrescu

Violin II

Julian Ross, principal*
Sarah Johnson*
Margaret Baldrige*
Jessica Robinson
Kristine McCreery*
Essena Setaro
Andrew Tholl
Leif Petersen
Emanuala Lacraru
Brandon Ironside
Aaron Neumann
Lemuel de la Cruz
Gerome Stewart
Allison Willet
James Farley

Viola

Scott Rawls, principal*
Simina Renea
Anna Joiner*
Tanritai Wyllie
Louise Zeitlin*
John Concklin

Jonathan Morgan
Susannah Plaster
Lindsey Parsons
Rebecca Jones
Audrey Selph
Allison Richards
Andrew Braddock
Diana Maley
Alan Elkins
Jim Lichtenberger
Eric Koontz*
Matt Hofstadt

Cello

Carlton McCreery, principal*
Ruth Boden
Pablo Mahave-Veglia*
Ariana Arcu
Aron Zerkowicz*
Jeremy Crosmer
Elaine Anderson*
Leslie Lyons
Ian Jones
Sara Wolfe
Katie Andrzejewski
Andy Johnson
Marty Sproul
Derek Stein
Sarah Schmitz
Leah Branstetter
Franklin Keel

Double Bass

Craig Brown, principal*
Travis Miller
Kevin Casseday*
Gerald Torres
Nery Rodriguez
Salima Barday
Paul Quast
Patrick Byrd
Jennfier Coalson
Ian Berg
Di Wang

Joshua Lebar
Jonathan Perry

Flute

Elizabeth Buck, principal*
Mihoko Watanabe*
Julia Barnett
Elany Mejia

Piccolo

Caitlyn Perry

Oboe

Eric Ohlsson, principal*
Paige Morgan*
Tessa Gross
Sian Ricketts
Rebecca Marquardt

English Horn

Paige Morgan, principal*

Clarinet

Steven Cohen, principal*
Eric Ginsberg*
Antonio Tanase
Daniel Frazelle

Bass Clarinet

Kristin King

Bassoon

William Ludwig, principal*
Gili Sharett*
Alex Applegate
Kendrick Boyd

Contrabassoon

Andrew West

Horn

John Q. Ericson, principal*
Gustavo Camacho
Todd Williams*
Elizabeth Fleming

Andrea Geniuk
Rose French
Laura Carter
Kathryn Taylor
Marc Zyla

Trumpet

William Campbell, principal*
Mark Schubert*
Jordan Olive
Matthew Vangjel
Peter Kuan
David Harbuziuk
Matthew Shefcik

Trombone

William Zehfuss, principal*
Andrew Peoples

Bass Trombone

Dan Satterwhite, principal*
Devin Roark

Tuba

Charles Schuchat, principal*

Keyboard

Andrew Campbell, principal*

Harp

Katie Buckley, principal*
Ashley Jackson

Timpani

Timothy K. Adams, Jr, principal*
Nick Galante

Percussion

Conrad Alexander, principal*
Thida Vongkoth
Tom Schmidt
Lee Hinkle
Christopher Roode