

A low-angle photograph of several pink cosmos flowers with yellow centers, set against a clear blue sky. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some fully open and others as buds. The stems are thin and green, with some small leaves visible. The overall composition is bright and cheerful.

London **Philharmonic** Orchestra

**MAHLER**  
**SYMPHONY NO. 1**  
including 'Blumine'

VLADIMIR JUROWSKI *conductor*  
LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA



# MAHLER

## SYMPHONY NO. 1 IN D MAJOR

- 1 *Langsam. Schleppend – Immer sehr gemächlich*  
[Slow, held back – Always very leisurely]
- 2 *'Blumine' [Flowers]: Andante allegretto*
- 3 *Kräftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell – Trio: Recht gemächlich*  
[Moving strongly, but not too fast – Trio: leisurely]
- 4 *Feierlich und gemessen, ohne zu schleppen – Sehr einfach und schlicht wie eine Volksweise*  
[Solemn and measured, without dragging – Very simple, like a folk melody]
- 5 *Stürmisch bewegt – Sehr gesangvoll*  
[Tempestuously – Very melodious]

Mahler once told a friend that his First Symphony was 'the most spontaneous and daringly composed of my works', a surprising remark when one considers that it probably took him over four years to write (from 1884 to 1888), and that, even then, it went through several revisions before reaching its final form. At its premiere in November 1889 in Budapest (where Mahler was at that time conductor of the Royal Opera), it had five movements and went under the title of 'Symphonic Poem in two parts'; for subsequent performances in Hamburg and Weimar it acquired a title – 'Titan', after the novel by the German Romantic writer Jean Paul – and also a written programme; and it was not until its fourth

performance, in Berlin in 1896, that it emerged as more or less the four-movement 'symphony' we know today, without title or programme. Clearly his initial feeling that 'it would be child's play for performers and listeners' was somewhat misplaced, and indeed audience reaction to the Symphony in its early years of existence was hostile. That may explain Mahler's indecision over how to present it, but, for all that, this debut by one of the greatest of all symphonists has a bursting energy and freshness to it that can make the blood run faster in the veins. This performance presents it in its original form, reinstating the movement dropped by Mahler after 1894 and nearly destroyed by him, but recovered from a private collection in 1967.

Mahler's suppressed programme for the 'Symphonic poem' labelled its two parts as 'From the Days of Youth' (movements 1, 2 and 3) and the Dante-esque 'Commedia humana' (movements 4 and 5). Certainly there is a nostalgic feel to the first movement; even though Mahler was only in his mid-20s when he began it, it is filled with sounds remembered from his Moravian childhood, particularly in the spaciousness of the opening pages, which present a wide-open sonic landscape peppered by cuckoo cries and bugle calls from distant barracks. 'The awakening of nature and early dawn' was how Mahler described it in his programme, something he may well have missed in his busy conducting

career. Eventually the music coalesces into melody and moves into the main part of the movement, where again there is a sense of looking back as Mahler borrows a theme from 'Ging heut' Morgen übers Feld', one of his *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Songs of a Wayfarer) composed around the same time as the Symphony was begun. The initially radiant but ultimately darkening song had recalled a youthful love gone wrong, and was inspired by just such an episode in Mahler's own life. The symphonic movement, however, ends in optimistic vein.

The original second movement is the one that Mahler later dropped. Entitled 'Blumine' (Flowers), it is probably an adaptation of music he had written in 1884 to illustrate an episode in a *tableaux vivant* production entitled *Der Trompeter von Säkkingen*, in which a lover wafts his serenade across a moonlit Rhine; certainly it has appropriate stillness and luminosity. Mahler's stated reason for omitting it was that it was 'insufficiently symphonic', and he may have agreed with his friend Natalie Bauer-Lechner that it was 'sentimentally indulgent', but the presence of such an interlude can be said to have a later and greater parallel in the famous *Adagietto* of the Fifth Symphony.

Conductor Vladimir Jurowski explains that the inclusion of 'Blumine' in this performance was determined by his intention

to work his way chronologically through the symphonies, tracing Mahler's own evolution as a composer. 'At the time, I felt quite strongly about the multi-layered philosophical concept of all the early symphonies (i.e. 1, 2 and 3), where the first movement is always followed by an intermezzo-type slow movement, then a much rougher Scherzo. I think the inclusion of the 'Blumine' movement makes the links between the three early symphonies much more apparent.'

The third movement is rustic and strongly rhythmic, Mahler's affectionate evocation of the rural dances of his childhood and their favourite form, the waltz-like *Ländler*. Again there is melodic material derived from a song – 'Hans und Grethe' from his *Lieder und Gesänge* of the early 1880s – though this time less overtly presented and without apparent specific significance. A central Trio brings a more graceful mood, before the bucolic lurchings of the first section return.

The 'Human Comedy' part of the Symphony opens with a funeral march, though one weirdly based on the nursery tune of 'Frère Jacques' (or 'Bruder Martin', as Mahler would have known it), initially intoned by a glassily muted solo double bass and then taken up and adorned by the other instruments over stately treading timpani and basses. Mahler's programme explains that it was inspired by a well-known engraving from an Austrian children's book, showing a huntsman's funeral in

which the coffin is attended by an assortment of woodland animals and village musicians. 'The movement is intended to express alternately the moods of jesting irony and eerie brooding', Mahler declared; the former can certainly be heard in the twice-appearing episode of Klezmer-like band music, but there is also a central episode, based on another *Gesellen* song, 'Die zwei blauen Augen' which offers perhaps the most dreamily reposeful moments in the whole Symphony.

The mood is shattered by the intrusion of the last movement – 'Dall' Inferno al Paradiso, as the sudden cry of a wounded heart' according to the discarded programme. The movement brings together material from its predecessors, but there is more than a formal struggle going on here. The frenzied anguish of the opening gives way to a long and consoling string theme, but bursts out again, only to be challenged by a new version of the first theme, proposed quietly at first by the trumpets but then quickly growing in confidence. A return of the nature music of the Symphony's opening questions the seeming inevitability of the direction things are taking, but eventually the main theme creeps back in on violins to begin its inexorable build towards a final peroration, which, when it comes, is as life-affirmingly emphatic as in any Mahler symphony.

*Programme note © Lindsay Kemp*

## VLADIMIR JUROWSKI *conductor*



Vladimir Jurowski was born in Moscow, but in 1990 moved with his family to Germany, where he completed his musical studies at the High Schools of Music in Dresden and in Berlin. In 1995 he made his international debut at the Wexford Festival, where he conducted Rimsky-Korsakov's *May Night*. The same year saw his brilliant début at the

Royal Opera House Covent Garden in *Nabucco*. In 1996 he joined the ensemble of Komische Oper Berlin, becoming First Kapellmeister in 1997 and continuing to work at the Komische Oper on a permanent basis until 2001.

Since 1997 Vladimir Jurowski has been a guest at some of the world's leading musical institutions including the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Teatro La Fenice di Venezia, Opéra Bastille de Paris, Théâtre de la Monnaie Bruxelles, Maggio Musicale Festival Florence, Rossini Opera Festival Pesaro, Edinburgh International Festival, Dresden Semperoper and the Teatro Comunale di Bologna (where he served as Principal Guest Conductor between 2000 and 2003). In 1999 he made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera New York with *Rigoletto*.

In January 2001 Vladimir Jurowski took up the position of Music Director of Glyndebourne Festival Opera. He also holds the titles of Principal Artist with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Artistic Director of the State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Russia, and from 2005 to 2009 served as Principal Guest Conductor of the Russian National Orchestra. In September 2007 he became the London Philharmonic Orchestra's 12th Principal Conductor.

Vladimir Jurowski is a regular guest with many of the world's other leading orchestras including the Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Staatskapelle Dresden, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, and the Chicago Symphony, Boston Symphony, Cleveland and Philadelphia orchestras.

# LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The London Philharmonic Orchestra is known as one of the world's great orchestras with a reputation secured by its performances in the concert hall and opera house, its many award-winning recordings, its trail-blazing international tours and its pioneering education work. Distinguished conductors who have held positions with the Orchestra since its foundation in 1932 by Sir Thomas Beecham include Sir Adrian Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt, Franz Welser-Möst and Kurt Masur. Vladimir Jurowski was appointed the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor in March 2003 and became Principal Conductor in September 2007.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra has been Resident Symphony Orchestra at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall since 1992 and there it presents its main series of concerts

between September and May each year. In summer, the Orchestra moves to Sussex where it has been Resident at Glyndebourne Festival Opera for over 40 years. The Orchestra also performs at venues around the UK and has made numerous tours to America, Europe and Japan, and visited India, Hong Kong, China, South Korea, Australia, Oman, South Africa and Abu Dhabi.

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)

### **60:51**     **Symphony No. 1 in D major**

- |    |       |  |
|----|-------|--|
| 01 | 15:56 | Langsam. Schleppend – Immer sehr gemächlich<br>[Slow, held back – Always very leisurely]   |
| 02 | 6:48  | ‘Blumine’ [Flowers]: Andante allegretto  |
| 03 | 8:16  | Kräftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell – Trio: Recht gemächlich<br>[Moving strongly, but not too fast – Trio: leisurely]  |
| 04 | 10:17 | Feierlich und gemessen, ohne zu schleppen – Sehr einfach und schlicht wie eine Volksweise<br>[Solemn and measured, without dragging – Very simple, like a folk melody] |
| 05 | 19:34 | Stürmisch bewegt – Sehr gesangvoll [Tempestuously – Very melodious]  |

**VLADIMIR JUROWSKI** *conductor*

**LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA**

**Pieter Schoeman** *leader*

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