

## Celebrity Series is now VIVO PERFORMING ARTS

TUE FEB 10 7:30PM SYMPHONY HALL

### **Budapest Festival Orchestra**

**Iván Fischer** music director

**Gerhild Romberger** mezzo-soprano

**Boston Lyric Opera Chorus, Brett Hodgdon** head of music, chorus director

**Boys of the St. Paul's Choir School, Brandon Straub** music director

**Gustav Mahler**                      Symphony No. 3 in D minor

#### **First Part**

Kräftig, Entschieden

#### **Second Part**

Tempo di Minuetto

Comodo, Scherzando. Ohne Hast

Sehr Langsam. Misterioso. Durchaus Leise

Lustig im Tempo und keck im Ausdruck

Langsam, Ruhevoll. Empfundener

*There will be no intermission in this evening's program, which will run approximately one hour and 45 minutes.*

*This performance is being recorded for future broadcast on CRB Classical 99.5 FM*

Presented in collaboration with Boston Lyric Opera

2025/26 Season Sponsors

**Crescendo Donor Advised Fund**

and

**The Thonis Family**

Vivo Performing Arts is supported by the  
Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

## TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

### FOURTH MOVEMENT

Text from Friedrich Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra*: the "Midnight Song"

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 all' 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!"

### FIFTH MOVEMENT

Text from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* ("The Boy's Magic Horn")

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

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!"

"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!"

"Hast du denn übertreten die zehen Gebot,  
so fall auf die Knie und bete zu Gott!  
Liebe nur Gott in alle Zeit!  
So wirst du erlangen die himmlische Freud'."

Die himmlische Freud' ist eine selige Stadt,  
die himmlische Freud', die kein Ende mehr hat!  
Die himmlische Freude war Petro bereit't,  
durch Jesum und allen zur Seligkeit.

Three angels sang a sweet song,  
with blessed joy it rang in heaven.  
They shouted too for joy  
that Peter was free from sin!

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!"

"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!"

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

The heavenly joy is a blessed city,  
the heavenly joy that has no end!  
The heavenly joy was granted to Peter  
through Jesus, and to all mankind for eternal bliss.

## THOUGHTS ON MAHLER 3

An essay by Anne Bogart, Boston Lyric Opera Artistic Associate

I believe in the great benefits of study. It is one of the reasons that I am a theatre and opera director: every project asks me to step across a threshold and discover a new world from the inside, not as a tourist but as a citizen. Study—of scores, of texts, of people’s biographies—stretches the mind sideways and forwards at once, enlarging the space in which my own thoughts can move. Reading, listening, asking questions: these are the ways I loosen the grip of my own habits and let other realities in.

When Boston Lyric Opera invited me to write about Mahler’s Third Symphony, I realized I would have to begin almost from scratch. I have long loved Mahler—the breadth of his emotion, the way he allows grief and ecstasy to coexist within a single phrase—but this enormous, elusive symphony was never one that I felt I understood; it loomed like a mountain I had admired from a distance but felt too immense to scale. I knew enough to be intimidated. Compared to Mahler’s other works that had carved themselves into me—like the desperate clarity of the *Adagietto* from the Fifth, or the aching intimacy of the *Kindertotenlieder*—the Third felt unruly, almost defiant in its length and scope, a work whose grandeur I could sense but whose voice I could not yet hear. And yet, that very resistance sparked my curiosity and became my way in: why did this particular piece hold me at arm’s length, and what might it reveal if I stayed with that question long enough?

At first, I began to research. I read that Mahler conceived the symphony as a kind of cosmic ladder, rising from inanimate nature toward divine love. Each movement seemed to embody a different voice in the world’s unfolding—stones, flowers, animals, humans, angels, God. That idea alone was staggering, and I began to hear the piece less as music and more as evolution made audible. When I finally settled in to listen, the first movement shocked me. It was not polite, not orderly. It barged forward as if the Earth itself were waking too fast. The sound was a parade of chaos and swagger, of primordial energy trying to organize itself. I felt as though Mahler were teaching me how the world begins: noisily, without permission. Over time, the mess began to cohere. The animals appeared, sly and rhythmic; voices emerged, tentative and human. The shimmering song of the fourth movement, “O Mensch! Gib Acht” (“O man! Take heed!”) broke through like a lone beam of light, asking not for awe, but for attention. Then came the riot of children’s voices in the fifth movement, followed by that final, patient *Adagio* that stretches time until I almost forgot where I was. That last movement is where I finally fell in love. Its melody unfolds like breath returning after exhaustion. It builds and falls again and again, hesitant, as though testing whether love can really endure all that came before. By the end, when everything gathers into that radiant final chord, I found myself suspended, listening not just to Mahler but to my own inner stillness.

Learning to appreciate the Third meant surrendering to its scale. It demanded not comprehension but patience, not tidy analysis but faith. Eventually, I stopped trying to master it and began simply to live inside it, to let its contradictions breathe, to welcome its noise and confusion. Now, when I think of Mahler 3, I no longer see a forbidding monument but a mirror for the world's untidy pulse: the battle, the tenderness, the searching, and finally, the fragile grace that follows. When I step into a work I do not yet fully inhabit, I can sense the edges of my personhood tightening in response. It is not that I cling to the familiar—I have built a life on seeking out the unknown—but there is always a subtle pull back toward what I already do and know well, where my instincts are quickest and my judgement feels assured. The discipline of full immersion insists on something else; it asks me to sit still inside my discomfort and remain curious. Over time, this practice has made me less interested in defending what I already think and more interested in discovering what I have not yet imagined. Study becomes a quiet but radical act of decentering myself, recognizing that my perspective is only one angle among many. In this sense, study is not an escape from the world, but a way of entering it more fully. Each time I commit to learning something that initially resists me—a difficult symphony, an unfamiliar philosophy, a culture or history not my own—I become a little less confined by my first impressions. I feel more porous, more in conversation with the time and place I inhabit. Through this ongoing act of inquiry, my life becomes less about circling the small island of what I already know and more about sailing—sometimes clumsily—into the wider complicated sea of everything and everyone else. The world is a library, and Mahler's Third became, for me, one of its more demanding but deeply rewarding volumes. Mahler 3 taught me this in an especially vivid way. The symphony's vastness confronts me with a scale far beyond my daily concerns. Listening closely forced me to widen my frame. I could feel the piece slowly re-arranging my inner landscape, making room for perspectives I did not know how to hold before. For me, learning to appreciate this symphony meant giving myself over to its sheer size, its rough edges, and its fearless attempt to contain so much human experience at once. It came to feel as though I were walking beside a vast, unsettled mind, watching it search—painfully and beautifully—toward love. The final chord hangs in the air a moment longer than seems possible. In that suspension, and in countless other small details, I found my own path through Mahler's great, restless world. In this way, Mahler's music seems to be a promise rather than a polite concert experience, an outsized encounter with the whole unruly spectrum of feeling alive.

*Anne Bogart is a frequent, valued, and long-standing collaborative partner of Boston Lyric Opera, both as a stage director and as BLO's Artistic Associate. She is a renowned theatre and opera director, celebrated author, founder of SITI Company, and professor at Columbia University. She will direct BLO's upcoming production of Mahler's Song of the Earth (Das Lied von der Erde).*

## A NOTE ON THE PROGRAM

“One is only an instrument played by the universe. A symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything,” said Mahler, and this closeness to nature seems most manifest in his Symphony No. 3.

The last time that the longest symphony in the history of music was performed by Mahler specialist Iván Fischer and the Budapest Festival Orchestra was ten years ago. On that occasion, the solo of the six-movement philosophical composition was sung by mezzo-soprano Gerhild Romberger, who has a history with this orchestra of embodying the heroine of the piece’s “human” movement. The angels will be sung today by the chorus of Boston Lyric Opera and the boys of the St. Paul’s Choir School in Cambridge.

During the six years he spent in Hamburg, Mahler composed two important symphonies. Unlike the Second Symphony entitled “Resurrection,” the Third has no title in its score, even though the composer added notes to the whole composition and each movement. Eventually, however, he decided not to influence the fantasy of audiences so strongly. Still, we can learn from the titles, and they reveal a lot about the literary and philosophical influences and messages that he was interested in at the time.

The piece was entitled “A Summer’s Midday Dream”; however, Mahler immediately dispelled the idea of comparing it to a *Midsummer Night’s Dream*: “Not after Shakespeare. Critics and Shakespeare scholars please note.” The words summer, midday, and dream can be linked to Nietzsche’s philosophical novel, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, and indeed, in the fourth movement of the symphony, an excerpt of its text is set to music. The subtitle, “My Joyous Science,” further confirms this connection, as it is a clear reference to Nietzsche’s work.

The six movements of “A Summer’s Midday Dream” are divided into two major parts. The first one is the extensive opening movement with a slow introduction (Pan’s Awakening). As in his first two symphonies, Mahler has incorporated into the composition an earlier song, this time the “Changing of the Guard in Summer.” (“The Heavenly Life,” originally intended for the finale eventually became the closing movement of Symphony No. 4.) The only movement in the symphony telling a mythological story was entitled “Summer Marches in (Procession of Bacchus)” conjuring up Pan awakening from his sleep, the herald and the battle of the seasons. After this, the composer prescribed a longer pause before the other movements, which are rather different in character.

The minuet beginning the second part ("What the Flowers in the Meadow Tell Me") almost takes us back to the world of Haydn's symphonies. It is followed by a scherzo ("What the Animals in the Forest Tell Me"), which "seems as if all of nature was making faces and sticking out its tongue." Ascending on the Schopenhauerian steps of ideas, the hero of the fourth movement is "Man." At this point, Mahler relies on human voice for a song based on Nietzsche's words of profundity, anguish, bliss, and eternity. For the angels' song in the fifth movement, he turned to a poem from the folk poetry cycle "The Youth's Magic Horn" (*Des Knaben Wunderhorn*), which he had often used before. In this movement transcending human reality, the music brightens into a major key for the first time. The symphony concludes with a grand slow movement telling us of the love of God, because "in an adagio everything dissolves in stillness; whereas, in the fast movements everything flows, moves and changes."

- Note provided by the  
*Budapest Festival Orchestra*

#### **FROM THE ARCHIVES...**

#### **Vivo Performing Arts & Budapest Festival Orchestra**

The Budapest Festival Orchestra and conductor Iván Fischer made their Vivo Performing Arts (then Celebrity Series) debuts together in February 2017. Mezzo-soprano Gerhild Romberger makes her debut today, as does the Boston Lyric Opera Chorus and Boys of the St. Paul's Choir School.

# BUDAPEST FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

IVÁN FISCHER music director

## First violin

Daniel Bard  
Violetta Eckhardt  
Ágnes Biró  
Balázs Bujtor  
Csaba Czenke  
Mária Gál-Tamási  
Emese Gulyás  
Erika Illési  
István Kádár  
Péter Kostyál  
Eszter Lesták Bedő  
Gyöngyvér Oláh  
Tímea Iván  
Gábor Sipos  
Alexei Stichkin  
Lucrezia Costanzo

## Second violin

János Pilz  
Antónia Bodó  
Györgyi Czirók  
Pál Jász  
Zsófia Lezsák  
Noémi Molnár  
Anikó Mózes  
Levente Szabó  
Zsolt Szefcsik  
Zsuzsanna Szlávik  
Solvejg Wilding  
Éva Kóbor  
Birgit Born  
Marta Dettlaff

## Viola

Shira Majoni  
Csaba Gálfi  
Cecília Bodolai  
Zoltán Fekete  
Barna Juhász  
Nikoletta Reinhardt  
Nao Yamamoto  
Krisztina Haják  
Harriet Quick  
Barbora Butvidaite  
Salomé Osca  
László Bolyki

## Cello

Péter Szabó  
Lajos Dvorák  
Éva Eckhardt  
György Kertész  
Gabriella Liptai  
Kousay Mahdi  
Orsolya Mód  
Rita Sovány  
Alejandro Viana  
Pietro Silvestri

## Double bass

Zsolt Fejérvári  
Attila Martos  
Károly Kaszás  
László Lévai  
Csaba Sipos  
Jenő Puporka  
Vilmos Mohácsi  
Uxia Martinez Botana

## Flute

Gabriella Pivon  
Kata Scheuring  
Anett Jóföldi  
Eszter Boglárka Réti

## Oboe

Balder Dendievel  
Eva Neuszerova  
Salomé Harth  
Marie-Noëlle Perreau

## Clarinet

Ákos Ács  
Rudolf Szitka  
Roland Csalló  
Daniel Roscia  
Zsuzsanna Majzik

## Bassoon

Bence Bogányi  
Dániel Tallián  
Ziv Wainer Bobrowicz  
Bálint Vértesi

## Horn

Zoltán Szőke  
Bostjan Lipovsek  
András Szabó  
Dávid Bereczky  
Zsombor Nagy  
Máté Harangozó  
Péter Erdei  
Lilla Fröschl  
János Keveházi

## Trumpet

Gergely Csikota  
Tamás Póti  
Zsolt Czeglédi  
Zoltán Tóth  
Bence Horváth

## Trombone

Balázs Szakszon  
Attila Sztán  
Gergely Janák  
Dávid Sztranyák

## Tuba

Bálint Keresztesi

## Timpani

Torsten Schönfeld  
Roland Dénes

## Percussion

László Herboly  
István Kurcsák  
Boris Boudinov  
Boglárka Fábry  
Gábor Pusztai  
Kornél Hencz

## Harp

Ágnes Polónyi  
Rosanna Rolton

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BUDAPEST FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

Iván Fischer fulfilled a dream when he founded the Budapest Festival Orchestra in 1983 in partnership with Zoltán Kocsis, the Hungarian pianist and conductor.

Thanks to its innovative approach to music and the uncompromising dedication of its musicians, the BFO has become the youngest ensemble to join the world's top ten symphony orchestras. In addition to Budapest, the orchestra regularly performs in some of the most important concert venues of the international music scene and is also present on international streaming platforms. Since its inception, the BFO has been recognized by *Gramophone*, the prestigious British musical periodical, three times: in 1998 and 2007, the magazine's professional panel of judges awarded the BFO the prize for the best recording, while in 2022, thanks to audience votes, it was named Orchestra of the Year. The BFO's most considerable successes are connected to Mahler: their recording of Symphony No. 1 was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2013.

As well as recording successes and acclaimed tours, the BFO has also made a name for itself internationally with its series of innovative concerts. The Autism-friendly Cocoa Concerts, the Surprise Concerts (appreciated also at the Proms in London), informal Midnight Music performances geared towards young adults, open-air concerts in Budapest, and the free Community Weeks are all unique in their own ways. Another special feature of the orchestra is that its members regularly form a choir at their concerts.

Each year, the BFO, in collaboration with the Iván Fischer Opera Company, Müpa Budapest, and the Vicenza Opera Festival, also stages an opera production. The performances have been invited to the Mostly Mozart Festival in New York, Spoleto Festival dei Due Mondi, the Edinburgh International Festival and the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg; in 2013, the *Marriage of Figaro* led *New York* magazine's list of the best classical music events of the year. The Vicenza Opera Festival, founded by Iván Fischer, debuted in the fall of 2018 at the Teatro Olimpico.

In 2024, the European Orchestra Academy (EOA) was created through collaboration of Iván Fischer, the Budapest Festival Orchestra and the European Youth Orchestra (EUYO).

### Staff

**Orsolya Erdődy** managing director

**Ivett Wolf** senior tour manager

**Ágnes Czirják** tour coordinator

**Róbert Zentai** head of stage management

**Sándor Kathi** stage coordinator

**Márton Zeibig** PA to Iván Fischer

## **Iván Fischer** music director

Conductor, composer, opera director, thinker and educator, anchored in the tradition of the great musical polymaths, Iván Fischer is considered one of the most visionary musicians of our time.

His focus is always the music, and to this end he has developed several new concert formats and reformed the structure and working method of the symphony orchestra. In the mid-1980s he founded the Budapest Festival Orchestra, where he has since introduced and established numerous innovations. He envisions a pool of musicians serving the community in various combinations and musical styles.

His work as music director of the Budapest Festival Orchestra has developed into one of the greatest musical success stories of the last 40 years. With international tours and a series of recordings for Philips Classics and Channel Classics, he has earned a reputation as one of the world's most celebrated orchestral conductors, for whom tradition and innovation go hand in hand.

He has founded a number of festivals, including the Budapest Mahlerfest, the Bridging Europe festival and the Vicenza Opera Festival. In 2024 he launched the European Orchestra Academy focusing on chamber music, orchestra playing and community responsibility. The World Economic Forum presented him with the Crystal Award for his achievements in fostering international cultural relations.

He was principal conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, the Opéra National de Lyon and the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, the latter appointing him Conductor Laureate. The Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra named him Honorary Guest Conductor following many decades of working together. He is a frequent guest conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic. Since 2024 Iván Fischer has been the music director of the European Union Youth Orchestra.

Iván Fischer studied the piano, violin, and cello in Budapest, before joining the legendary conducting class of Hans Swarowsky in Vienna. Having spent two years as assistant to Nikolaus Harnoncourt, he then launched his international career as winner of the Rupert Foundation conducting competition in London.

After various guest appearances at international opera houses, he founded the Iván Fischer Opera Company. His staging always sets as its goal an organic unity between music and theatre. IFOC productions, which often spatially connect the instrumentalists and singers, have been received with great acclaim in recent years in Hamburg, New York, Edinburgh, Abu Dhabi, Berlin, Geneva, and Budapest.

Iván Fischer has been active as a composer since 2004, writing mostly vocal music with instrumental ensembles. His opera *The Red Heifer* made headlines across the world; the children's opera *The Gruffalo* enjoyed numerous revivals in Berlin; his most frequently performed work, *Eine Deutsch-Jiddische Kantate* has been performed and recorded in several countries.

Iván Fischer is founder of the Hungarian Mahler Society and patron of the British Kodály Academy. The president of the Republic of Hungary awarded him the Gold Medal, and the French government honored him as Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres.

In 2006 he received the Hungarian Kossuth Prize; in 2011 the Royal Philharmonic Society Music Award and the Dutch Ovatie Prize; and in 2013 he was named an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Music in London.

Iván Fischer is honorary citizen of Budapest and Vicenza.

### **Gerhild Romberger** mezzo-soprano

Gerhild Romberger was born in the Emsland district of Germany, northwest near the border with the Netherlands. After studying at the Academy of Music in Detmold, she worked with Mitsuko Shirai and Hartmut Höll.

As a dedicated concert-singer, her extensive repertoire encompasses all the major contralto and mezzo-soprano parts in the oratorio and concert repertoire from the Baroque to the Classical and Romantic periods to music of the 20th century.

Career highlights in recent years include concerts with Manfred Honeck, the Berlin Philharmonic under Gustavo Dudamel, the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Herbert Blomstedt, and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra under Riccardo Chailly. Additional highlights include performances with the Vienna and Bamberg symphony orchestras under Daniel Harding and at La Scala under Franz Welser-Möst.

The current season includes a concert tour of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Vienna Philharmonic and Andris Nelsons. as well as Mahler's Third Symphony with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam. In addition, she can be heard in Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* with the Budapest Festival Orchestra and in Schumann's *Paradies und Peri* at Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie.

## **BOSTON LYRIC OPERA CHORUS**

**Brett Hodgdon** head of music, chorus director

Now in its 49th season, Boston Lyric Opera (BLO) is dedicated to creating compelling operatic experiences that welcome new audiences, break new ground, and enrich community life. Since its founding in 1976, BLO has produced world and U.S. premieres, Pulitzer Prize-winning operas, and notable co-productions that celebrate opera's rich history while promoting adventurousness. Each year, BLO employs over 800 artists and creative professionals in over 150 public performances, including mainstage programming and free community and education offerings, welcoming over 20,000 audience members. These programs are enhanced by partnerships with local cultural organizations including Boston Public Library, Boston Public Schools, and many more. The company is proud to play a significant and meaningful role in Boston's vibrant arts community.

### Sopranos:

Mara Bonde

Alisa Cassola

Carley DeFranco

Alexandra Henderson

Josie Larsen

Marie McCarville

Kay Patterson

Laura Santamaria

Emily Siar

Abigail Whitney Smith

Jessica Jacobs Tybursky

Simeng Wu

### Altos:

Chihiro Asano

Margretta Beaty

Darby Clinard

Juliette Kaoudji

Jaime Korkos

Mary Kray

Sara Mitnik

Roselin Osser

Arielle Rogers-Wilkey

Meghan Ryan

Elena Snow

Sarah Rose Taylor

## **BOYS OF ST. PAUL'S CHOIR SCHOOL**

**Brandon Straub** director

The Boys of St. Paul's Choir bring centuries of tradition to life each week at historic Saint Paul's Parish in Harvard Square. Educated in the great European Cathedral school tradition at Saint Paul's Choir School, these remarkable choristers fill the church with hymns, plainchant, and the very finest choral music drawn from the Church's extensive and rich repertoire—all within the breathtaking acoustics of Saint Paul's.

While the boys' hard work shines through in daily liturgies, their gifts and dedication extend far beyond. Alongside a rigorous academic program, the choristers are featured in concerts, domestic and international tours, and on professional recordings. Their annual Christmas in Harvard Square concerts are a beloved holiday offering in Boston.

Since its founding in 1963 by Dr. Theodore Marier, the Choir School—the only all-boys Catholic choir school in the United States—has earned a reputation for excellence, performing alongside the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston Lyric Opera, and Tanglewood Festival Chorus. Recent highlights include Mahler's awe-inspiring Symphony No. 8 (October 2024) and Korngold's *Die Tote Stadt* (January 2025) at Symphony Hall. Soloists from the choir were recently featured in Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* with the BSO (January 2026), Britten's *The Burning Fiery Furnace* with Enigma Opera (February 2024), Puccini's *Tosca* at Tanglewood (July 2025), and alongside Sarah Brightman at the Wang Theater (November 2023).

The 2025/26 season brings more unforgettable experiences, including three separate productions of Mahler's Symphony No. 3 with the Budapest Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Philharmonic, and the Vista Philharmonic, as well as collaborations with the Harvard Glee Club and Harvard University Choir. As the Choir looks to the future, it remains dedicated to cultivating the next generation of musicians, leaders, and ambassadors of this timeless tradition.