Gustav Mahler
Symphony No. 3

GUSTAV MAHLER was born in Kalischt (Kali´stˇe) near the Moravian border of Bohemia on July 7, 1860, and died in Vienna on May 18, 1911. He did the main work on his Third Symphony in the summers of 1895, when he composed the second through sixth movements, and 1896, when he added the first. Two songs, “Ablösung im Sommer” (“Relief in Summer”) and “Das himmlische Leben” (“Life in Heaven”), provide source material for some of the symphony, and they go back to about 1890 and February 1892, respectively. Mahler made final revisions in May 1899. The symphony was introduced piecemeal. Arthur Nikisch conducted the second movement, then presented as “Blumenstück” (“Flower Piece”), with the Berlin Philharmonic on November 9, 1896. Felix Weingartner gave the second, third, and sixth movements with the Royal Orchestra, Berlin, on March 9, 1897. With L. Geller-Wolter singing the alto solos, Mahler himself conducted the first complete performance on June 9, 1902, at the Festival of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein in Krefeld; the score was published that year by Josef Weinberger in Vienna.

THE SCORE OF MAHLER’S SYMPHONY NO. 3 calls for four flutes (two doubling piccolo), four oboes (one doubling English horn), three clarinets (one doubling bass clarinet) and two E-flat clarinets, four bassoons (one doubling contrabassoon), eight horns, four trumpets, posthorn, four trombones, bass tuba and contrabass tuba, timpani, glockenspiel, snare drum, triangle, tambourine, bass drum with cymbal attached, suspended cymbals, tam-tam, birch brush, two harps, and strings, plus solo contralto, women’s chorus, and boys’ chorus.

When Mahler visited Sibelius in 1907—Mahler was then near to completing his Eighth Symphony—the two composers argued about “the essence of symphony,” Mahler rejecting his colleague’s creed of severity, style, and logic by countering with “No, a symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything.” Twelve years earlier, while actually at work on the Third, he had remarked that to “call it a symphony is really incorrect, as it does not follow the usual form. The term ‘symphony’—to me this means creating a world with all the technical means available.”

The completion of the Second Symphony the previous summer had given him confidence: he was sure of being “in perfect control” of his technique. Now, in the summer of 1895, escaped for some months from his duties as principal conductor at the Hamburg Opera, installed in his new one-room cabin in Steinbach on the Attersee some twenty miles east of Salzburg, with his sister Justine and his friend Natalie Bauer-Lechner to look after him (this most cruelest of hosts), Mahler set out to make a pantheistic world to which he gave the overall title The Happy Life—A Midsummer Night’s Dream (adding “not after Shakespeare, critics and Shakespeare mavens please note”). Before he wrote any music, he worked out a scenario in five sections, entitled What the forest tells me, What the trees tell me, What twilight tells me (“strings only” he noted), What the cuckoo tells me (scherzo), and What the child tells me. He changed all that five times during the summer as the music began to take shape in his mind and, with a rapidity that astonished him, on paper as well. The Happy Life disappeared, to be replaced for a while by the Nietzschean Gay Science (first My Gay Science). The trees, the twilight, and the cuckoo were all taken out, their places taken by flowers, animals, and morning bells. He added What the night tells me and saw that he wanted to begin with the triumphant entry of summer, which would include an element of something Dionysiac and even frightening. In less than three weeks he composed what are now the second, third, fourth, and fifth movements. He went on to the Adagio and, by the time his composing vacation came to an end on August 20, he had made an outline of the first movement and composed two independent songs, Lied des Verfolgten in Turm (Song of the Prisoner in the Tower) and Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen (Where the beautiful trumpets sound). It was the richest summer of his life.

In June 1896 he was back at Steinbach. He had made some progress scoring the new symphony and he had complicated his life by an intense and stormy affair with a young, superlatively gifted dramatic soprano newly come to the Hamburg Opera, Anna von Mildenburg. He also discovered when he got to Steinbach that he had forgotten to bring the sketches of the first movement, and it was while waiting for them that he composed his little bouquet for critics, Lob des hohen Verstandes (In Praise of Lofty Intellect). In due course the sketches arrived, and Mahler, as he worked on them, gradually realized that the Awakening of Pan and the Triumphal March of Summer wanted to be one movement instead of two. He also saw, rather to his alarm, that the first movement was growing hugely, that it would be more than half an hour long, and that it was also getting louder and louder. He deleted his finale, What the child tells me, which was the Life in Heaven song of 1892, putting it to work a few years later to serve as finale to the Fourth Symphony. That necessitated rewriting the last pages of the Adagio, which was now the last movement, but essentially the
work was under control by the beginning of August. The Gay Science was still part of the title at the beginning of the summer, coupled with what had become A Midsummer Noon’s Dream, but in the eighth and last of Mahler’s scenarios, dated August 6, 1896, the superscription is simply A Midsummer Noon’s Dream with the following titles given to the individual movements:

First Part:  
Pan awakes. Summer comes marching in  
(Bacchic procession)

Second Part:  
What the flowers in the meadow tell me  
What the animals in the forest tell me  
What humanity tells me  
What the angels tell me  
What love tells me

At the premiere, the program page showed no titles at all, only tempo and generic indications. “Beginning with Beethoven,” wrote Mahler to the critic Max Kalbeck that year, “there is no modern music without its underlying program.—But no music is worth anything if you first have to tell the listener what experience lies behind it, respectively what he is supposed to experience in it.—And so yet again: pereat every program!—You just have to bring along ears and a heart and—not least—willingly surrender to the rhapsodist. Some residue of mystery always remains, even for the creator.” When, however, we look at the titles in the Third Symphony, we are, even though they were finally rejected, looking at an attempt, or a series of attempts, to put into a few words the material, the world of ideas, emotions, and associations that lay behind the choices Mahler made as he composed. We, too, can draw intimations from them, and then remove them as scaffolding we no longer need. And with that, let us turn to a brief look at the musical object Mahler left us.

The first movement accounts for roughly one third of the symphony’s length. Starting with magnificent gaiety, it falls at once into a mood of tragedy—seesawing chords of low horns and bassoons, the drumbeats of a funeral procession, cries and outrage. Mysterious twitterings follow, the suggestion of a distant quick march, and a grandly rhetorical recitative for the trombone. Against all that, Mahler poses a series of quick marches (the realizations of what he had adumbrated earlier for just a few seconds), the sorts of tunes you can’t believe you haven’t known all your life and the sort that used to cause critics to complain of Mahler’s “banality,” elaborated and scored with an astounding combination of delicacy and exuberance. Their swagger is rewarded by a collision with catastrophe, and the whole movement—for all its outsize dimensions as classical a sonata form as Mahler ever made—is the conflict of the dark and the bright elements, culminating in the victory of the latter.

Two other points might be made. One concerns Mahler’s fascination, not ignored in our century, with things happening “out of time.” The piccolo rushing the imitations of the violins’ little fanfares is not berserk: she is merely following Mahler’s direction to play “without regard for the beat.” That is playful, but the same device is turned to dramatic effect when, at the end of a steadily accelerating development, the snare drums cut across the oom-pah of the cellos and basses with a slower march tempo of their own, thus preparing the way for the eight horns in unison to blast the recapitulation into being. The other thing is to point out that several of the themes heard near the beginning will be transformed into the materials of the last three movements—fascinating especially when you recall that the first movement was written after the others.

In the division of the work Mahler finally adopted, the first movement is the entire first section. What follows is, except for the finale, a series of shorter character pieces, beginning with the Blumenstück (“Flower-piece”), the first music he composed for this symphony. It is a delicately sentimental minuet with access, in its contrasting section, to slightly sinister sources of energy. Curiously, it anticipates music not heard in the symphony at all, that is to say, the scurrying runs from the Life in Heaven song that was dropped from this design and finally made its way into the Fourth Symphony.

In the third movement, Mahler draws on his song Ablösung im Sommer (Relief in Summer), whose text tells of waiting for Lady Nightingale to start singing as soon as the cuckoo is through. The marvel here is the landscape with posthorn, not only the lovely melody itself, but the way it is introduced: the magic transformation of the very “present” trumpet into distant posthorn, the gradual change of the posthorn’s melody from fanfare to song, the interlude for flutes, and, as Arnold Schoenberg points out, the accompaniment “at first with the divided high violins, then, even more beautiful if possible, with the horns.” After the brief return of this idyll and before the snappy coda, Mahler makes spine-chilling reference to the “Great Summons” music in the Second Symphony’s finale.

Low strings rock to and fro, the harps accenting a few of their notes, the seesawing horn chords from the
first pages return, and a human voice intones the Midnight Song from Friedrich Nietzsche’s Thus spoke Zarathustra (see page 49). Each of its eleven lines is to be imagined as coming between the strokes of midnight. Pianississimo throughout, warns Mahler.

From here, the music moves forward without a break, and as abruptly and drastically as it changed from the scherzo to Nietzsche’s midnight, so does it change from that darkness to the bells and angels of the fifth movement. The text comes from Des Knaben Wunderhorn (The Boy’s Magic Horn), though the interjections of “Du sollst ja nicht weinen” (“But you mustn’t weep”) are Mahler’s own. A three-part chorus of women’s voices carries most of the text, though the contralto returns to take the part of the sinner. The children’s chorus, confined at first to bell noises, joins later in the exhortation “Liebe nur Gott” (“Only love God”) and for the final stanza. This movement, too, foreshadows the Life in Heaven that will not, in fact, occur until the Fourth Symphony: the solemnly archaic chords first heard at “Ich hab übertreten die Zehen Gebot” (“I have trespassed against the Ten Commandments”) will be associated in the later work with details of the domestic arrangement in that mystical, sweetly scurrile picture of heaven. Violins drop out of the orchestra for this softly sonorous movement.

The delicate balance between the regions of F (the quick marches of the first movement, and the third and fifth movements) and D (the dirges in the first movement, the Nietzsche song, and, by extension, the minuet, which is in A major) is now and finally resolved in favor of D. Mahler perceived that the decision to end the symphony with an Adagio was one of the most special he made. “In Adagio movements,” he explained to Natalie Bauer-Lechner, “everything is resolved in quiet. The Ixion wheel of outward appearances is at last brought to a standstill. In fast movements—minuets, Allegros, even Andantes nowadays—everything is motion, change, flux. Therefore I have ended my Second and Third symphonies, contrary to custom...with Adagios—the higher form as distinguished from the lower.”

A noble thought, but, not uniquely in Mahler, there is some gap between theory and reality. The Adagio makes its way at the last to a sure and grand conquest, but during its course—and this is a movement, like the first, on a very large scale—Ixion’s flaming wheel can hardly be conceived of as standing still. In his opening melody, Mahler invites association with the slow movement of Beethoven’s last quartet, Opus 135. Soon, though, the music is caught in “motion, change, flux,” and before the final triumph, it encounters again the catastrophe that interrupted the first movement. The Adagio’s original title, What love tells me, refers to Christian love—“agape”—and Mahler’s drafts carry the superscription: “Behold my wounds! Let not one soul be lost.” The performance directions, too, seem to speak to the issue of spirituality, for Mahler enjoins that the immense final bars with their thundering kettledrums be played “not with brute strength, [but] with rich, noble tone,” and that the last measure “not be cut off sharply,” so that there is some softness to the edge between sound and silence at the end of this most riskily and gloriously comprehensive of Mahler’s “worlds.”

Michael Steinberg

MICHAEL STEINBERG was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1976 to 1979, and after that of the San Francisco Symphony and New York Philharmonic. Oxford University Press has published three compilations of his program notes, devoted to symphonies, concertos, and the great works for chorus and orchestra.

THE FIRST UNITED STATES PERFORMANCE of Mahler’s Symphony No. 3 was given by Ernst Kunwald at the Cincinnati May Festival on May 9, 1914.

THE FIRST BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PERFORMANCES of music from Mahler’s Symphony No. 3 were of just the first movement, which Richard Burgin conducted in Cambridge and then at Symphony Hall in March 1943. It was also Burgin who introduced the complete work here, nearly twenty years later, in January 1962, with mezzo-soprano Florence Kopleff and the Chorus pro Musica, Alfred Nash Patterson, conductor.

GUSTAV MAHLER

Symphony No. 3

O Mensch! Gib Acht!
Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?
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 tief, tiefe Ewigkeit!

Friedrich Nietzsche

Es sungen drei Engel einen süßen Gesang,
Mit Freuden es selig im Himmel klang,
Sie jauchzten fröhlich auch dabei,
Dass Petrus sei von Sünden frei.
Denn als der Heer Jesus zu Tische saß,
Mit seinen zwölf Jüngern das Abendmal aß,
So sprach der Herr Jesus: “Was stehst du denn hier?
Wenn ich dich anseh’, so weinest du mir.”
“Und soll’ ich nicht weinen, du gütiger Gott!
(Du sollst ja nicht weinen!)
Ich hab’ übertreten die Zehen Gebot;
Ich gehe und weine ja bitterlich,
(Du sollst ja nicht weinen!)
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 End mehr hat;
Die himmlische Freud’, war Petro bereit
Durch Jesum und allen zur Seligkeit.

From “Des Knaben Wunderhorn”
Oh man, give heed!
What does deep midnight say?
I slept!
From a deep dream have I waked!
The world is deep,
And deeper than the day had thought!
Deep in its pain!
Joy deeper still than heartbreak!
Pain speaks: Vanish!
But all joy seeks eternity,
Seeks deep, deep eternity.

Friedrich Nietzsche

Three angels were singing a sweet song:
With joy it resounded blissfully in heaven.
At the same time they happily shouted with joy
That Peter was absolved from sin.
For as Lord Jesus sat at table,
Eating supper with his twelve apostles,
So spoke Lord Jesus: “Why are you standing here?
When I look at you, you weep.”
“And how should I not weep, you kind God!
(No, you mustn’t weep.)
"I have trespassed against the Ten Commandments. I go and weep, and bitterly."

("No, you mustn't weep.")

"Ah, come and have mercy on me!"

"If you have trespassed against theTen Commandments,
Then fall on your knees and pray to God,
Love only God for ever,
And you will attain heavenly joy."

Heavenly joy is a blessed city,
Heavenly joy, that has no end.
Heavenly joy was prepared for Peter
By Jesus and for the salvation of all.

Trans. Michael Steinberg

To Read and Hear More...

Deryck Cooke’s Gustav Mahler: An Introduction to his Music is a first-rate brief guide to the composer’s works (Cambridge University paperback). Other good starting points include Jonathan Carr’s Mahler (Overlook Press), Peter Franklin’s The life of Mahler in the series “Musical lives” (Cambridge paperback), and Michael Kennedy’s Mahler in the “Master Musicians” series (Oxford paperback). There are two big, multi-volume biographies of the composer, one by Henry-Louis de La Grange (Oxford), the other by Donald Mitchell (University of California). A good single-volume biography—though still by no means small—is Gustav Mahler by Jens Malte Fischer, translated by Stewart Spencer (Yale University paperback). Useful essay collections devoted to Mahler’s life, works, and milieu include The Mahler Companion, edited by Donald Mitchell and Andrew Nicholson (Oxford), Mahler and his World, edited by Karen Painter (Princeton University paperback), and The Cambridge Companion to Mahler, edited by Jeffrey Barham (Cambridge paperback). A Guide to the Symphony, edited by Robert Layton, includes a chapter on Mahler by Stephen Johnson (Oxford paperback). The late Mahler enthusiast and conductor Gilbert Kaplan saw to the publication of The Mahler Album with the aim of bringing together every known photograph of the composer (The Kaplan Foundation with Thames and Hudson). Also published by The Kaplan Foundation are Mahler’s Concerts by Knud Martner, which offers a detailed history of Mahler on the podium, including music performed, soloists, concert halls, etc., for each of more than 300 concerts (co-published with Overlook Press), and Mahler Discography, edited by Péter Fülöp, which remains valuable to anyone interested in Mahler recordings, despite its 1995 publication date. Michael Steinberg’s program notes on Mahler’s symphonies 1 through 10 are in his compilation volume The Symphony—A Listener’s Guide (Oxford paperback). Alma Mahler’s autobiography And the Bridge is Love (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) and her Gustav Mahler: Memories and Letters (University of Washington paperback) provide important if necessarily subjective source materials. Knud Martner’s Gustav Mahler: Selected Letters offers a useful volume of correspondence, including all of the letters published in Alma’s earlier collection (Farrar, Straus and Giroux). Though now more than forty years old, Kurt Blaukopf’s extensively illustrated Mahler: A Documentary Study remains well worth seeking from second-hand sources (Oxford University Press).

The Boston Symphony Orchestra has made two recordings of Mahler’s Third Symphony: first under Erich Leinsdorf in 1966, with Shirley Verrett, the New England Conservatory Chorus, and the Boston Boy Choir (RCA), and later under Seiji Ozawa in 1993, with Jessye Norman, the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, and the American Boychoir (Philips). Other recordings (listed alphabetically by conductor) include Claudio Abbado’s with the Vienna Philharmonic and Jessye Norman (Deutsche Grammophon) or with the Berlin Philharmonic and Anna Larsson (Deutsche Grammophon), Leonard Bernstein’s with the New York Philharmonic and Christa Ludwig (Deutsche Grammophon), Pierre Boulez’s with the Vienna Philharmonic and Anne Sofie von Otter (Deutsche Grammophon), Bernard Haitink’s live with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and Gerhild Romberger (BR Klassik), James Levine’s with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Marilyn Horne (RCA), Michael Tilson Thomas’s with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and Chorus and Michelle DeYoung (San Francisco Symphony), and Benjamin Zander’s with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Lilli Paasikivi (Telarc).

Marc Mandel
Andris Nelsons

In October 2017, BSO Music Director Andris Nelsons was named *Musical America*’s 2018 Artist of the Year. In 2017-18, his fourth season as the BSO’s Ray and Maria Stata Music Director, Andris Nelsons leads the Boston Symphony Orchestra in twelve wide-ranging subscription programs at Symphony Hall, repeating three of them at New York’s Carnegie Hall in March. Also this season, in November, he and the orchestra toured Japan together for the first time, playing concerts in Nagoya, Osaka, Kawasaki, and Tokyo. In addition, in February 2018 Maestro Nelsons becomes Gewandhauskapellmeister of the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, in which capacity he will bring both orchestras together for a unique multi-dimensional alliance; under his direction, the BSO celebrates its first “Leipzig Week in Boston” that same month. In the summer of 2015, following his first season as music director, his contract with the Boston Symphony Orchestra was extended through the 2021-22 season. Following the 2015 Tanglewood season, he and the BSO undertook a twelve-concert, eight-city tour to major European capitals as well as the Lucerne, Salzburg, and Grafenegg festivals. A second European tour, to eight cities in Germany, Austria, and Luxembourg, took place in May 2016.

The fifteenth music director in the history of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Andris Nelsons made his BSO debut at Carnegie Hall in March 2011, his Tanglewood debut in July 2012, and his BSO subscription series debut in January 2013. His first CD with the BSO—live recordings of Wagner’s *Tannhäuser* Overture and Sibelius’s Symphony No. 2—was released in November 2014 on BSO Classics. April 2017 brought the release on BSO Classics of the four Brahms symphonies with Maestro Nelsons conducting, recorded live at Symphony Hall in November 2016. In an ongoing, multi-year collaboration with Deutsche Grammophon initiated in 2014-15, he and the BSO are making live recordings of Shostakovich’s complete symphonies, the opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and other works by the composer. The first release in this series (the Symphony No. 10 and the Passacaglia from *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*) won the 2016 Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Performance and *Gramophone* Magazine’s Orchestral Award. The second release (symphonies 5, 8, and 9, plus excerpts from Shostakovich’s 1932 incidental music to *Hamlet*) won the 2017 Grammy for Best Orchestral Performance. Also for Deutsche Grammophon, Andris Nelsons is recording the Bruckner symphonies with the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig and the Beethoven symphonies with the Vienna Philharmonic.

In 2017-18, Andris Nelsons is artist-in-residence at the Konzerthaus Dortmund and continues his regular collaboration with the Vienna Philharmonic, leading that orchestra on tour to China. He also maintains regular collaborations with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and the Philharmonia Orchestra. Maestro Nelsons has also been a regular guest at the Bayreuth Festival and at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, where he conducts a new David Alden production of *Lohengrin* this season.

Born in Riga in 1978 into a family of musicians, Andris Nelsons began his career as a trumpeter in the Latvian National Opera Orchestra before studying conducting. He was music director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra from 2008 to 2015, principal conductor of the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie in Herford, Germany, from 2006 to 2009, and music director of Latvian National Opera from 2003 to 2007. Mr. Nelsons is the subject of a 2013 DVD from Orfeo, a documentary film entitled “Andris Nelsons: Genius on Fire.”

Guest Artists
Susan Graham

Susan Graham’s operatic roles span from Monteverdi’s Poppea to Sister Helen Prejean in Jake Heggie’s *Dead Man Walking*, which was written especially for her. She won a Grammy Award for her collection of Ives songs, and composers from Purcell to Sondheim are represented on her most recent album, “Virgins, Vixens and Viragos.” One of the foremost exponents of French vocal music, the Texas native was awarded the title Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur by the French government. In the 2017-18 season Ms. Graham reprises the title role in Susan Stroman’s production of Lehár’s *The Merry Widow* at the Metropolitan Opera, joins Nathan Gunn for Bernstein’s *Trouble in Tahiti* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and returns to Opera Theatre of Saint Louis for Blitzstein’s *Regina*. This season with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, she sang Berlioz’s *La Damnation de Faust* in October with Charles Dutoit conducting and returns this week for Mahler’s Third Symphony under Andris Nelsons, which will also be repeated at Tanglewood this coming summer. Also this season she sings Ravel’s *Shéhérazade* with the San Francisco Symphony, headlines a gala concert celebrating Tulsa Opera’s 70th anniversary, gives solo recitals at Emory University and Washington University, and sings a night of cabaret at New York’s Park Avenue Armory. Last season
she joined Renée Fleming for the San Francisco Symphony’s opening gala; joined a host of singers in a concert marking the Metropolitan Opera’s five decades at Lincoln Center; starred in Washington National Opera’s revival of Dead Man Walking, making her role debut as the convict’s mother; returned to Santa Fe Opera as Prince Orlofsky in Die Fledermaus; sang Dido in Les Troyens at Lyric Opera of Chicago; performed selections from Mahler’s Des Knaben Wunderhorn at Carnegie Hall and Canteloube’s Chants d’Auvergne with the Philadelphia Orchestra; gave U.S. recitals of her “Frauenliebe und -leben: Variations” program (inspired by Schumann’s song cycle), and expanded her discography with the DVD release of the Metropolitan Opera’s recent production of Berg’s Lulu, which captured her role debut as Countess Geschwitz. Ms. Graham created leading roles in the Metropolitan Opera’s world premieres of Harbison’s The Great Gatsby and Picker’s An American Tragedy, and made her Dallas Opera debut as Tina in Argento’s The Aspern Papers. As Houston Grand Opera’s Lynn Wyatt Great Artist, she starred there as Prince Orlofsky before singing Sycorax in the Met’s Baroque pastiche The Enchanted Island and making her acclaimed musical theater debut in Rodgers and Hammerstein’s The King and I in Paris. Her affinity for French repertoire, including Berlioz’s La Mort de Cléopâtre and Les Nuits d’été, Ravel’s Shéhérazade, and Chausson’s Poème de l’amour et de la mer, also serves as the foundation for her extensive concert and recital career. In addition to many recordings of complete operas, she has released several solo albums. Since her November 1994 BSO debut under Seiji Ozawa in several Berlioz works that were immediately repeated on tour in Hong Kong and Tokyo, Susan Graham has appeared numerous times with the orchestra in Boston and at Tanglewood, including Ravel’s Shéhérazade in January 2014 under Bernard Haitink followed by a repeat performance at Carnegie Hall in New York; and as Octavian opposite Renée Fleming’s Marschallin in Symphony Hall performances of Strauss’s Der Rosenkavalier led by Andris Nelsons in September/October 2016.

Tanglewood Festival Chorus
James Burton, BSO Choral Director and Conductor of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus
John Oliver, Founder and Conductor Laureate

This season at Symphony Hall, the Tanglewood Festival Chorus joins the Boston Symphony Orchestra for performances of Mahler’s Symphony No. 3 and Schumann’s Nachtlied und Neujahrslied under BSO Music Director Andris Nelsons; Grieg’s incidental music to Peer Gynt under BSO Associate Conductor Ken-David Masur; Berlioz’s The Damnation of Faust under Charles Dutoit; Ravel’s complete Daphnis et Chloé; and Leonard Bernstein’s Symphony No. 3, Kaddish, under Giancarlo Guerrero. Members of the chorus also participated in this season’s all-Bernstein program on Opening Night. Originally formed under the joint sponsorship of Boston University and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the all-volunteer Tanglewood Festival Chorus was established in 1970 by its founding conductor John Oliver, who stepped down from his leadership position with the TFC at the end of the 2014 Tanglewood season. Awarded the Tanglewood Medal by the BSO to honor his forty-five years of service to the ensemble, Mr. Oliver now holds the lifetime title of Founder and Conductor Laureate and occupies the Donald and Laurie Peck Master Teacher Chair at the Tanglewood Music Center. In February 2017, following appearances as guest chorus conductor at both Symphony Hall and Tanglewood, and having prepared the chorus for that month’s BSO performances of Bach’s B minor Mass led by Andris Nelsons, the British-born James Burton was named the new Conductor of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, also being appointed to the newly created position of BSO Choral Director.

Though first established for performances at the BSO’s summer home, the Tanglewood Festival Chorus was soon playing a major role in the BSO’s subscription season as well as BSO concerts at Carnegie Hall. Now numbering more than 300 members, the ensemble performs year-round with the Boston Symphony and Boston Pops. It has performed with Seiji Ozawa and the BSO in Hong Kong and Japan, and with the BSO in Europe under James Levine and Bernard Haitink, also giving a cappella concerts of its own on the two latter occasions. The TFC made its debut in April 1970, in a BSO performance of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with Leonard Bernstein conducting. Its first recording with the orchestra, Berlioz’s La Damnation of Faust with Seiji Ozawa, received a Grammy nomination for Best Choral Performance of 1975. The TFC has since made dozens of recordings with the BSO and Boston Pops, with James Levine, Seiji Ozawa, Bernard Haitink, Sir Colin Davis, Leonard Bernstein, Keith Lockhart, and John Williams. In August 2011, with John Oliver conducting and soloist Stephanie Blythe, the TFC gave the world premiere of Alan Smith’s An Unknown Sphere for mezzo-soprano and chorus, commissioned by the BSO for the ensemble’s 40th anniversary. Its most recent recordings on BSO Classics, all drawn from live performances, include a disc of a cappella music led by John Oliver and released to mark the TFC’s 40th
anniversary; and, with James Levine conducting, Ravel’s complete Daphnis and Chloé (a 2009 Grammy-winner for Best Orchestral Performance), Brahms’s German Requiem, and William Bolcom’s Eighth Symphony for chorus and orchestra (a BSO 125th Anniversary Commission). Besides their work with the BSO, TFC members have performed Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with Zubin Mehta and the Israel Philharmonic; participated in a Saito Kinen Festival production of Britten’s Peter Grimes under Seiji Ozawa in Japan, and sang Verdi’s Requiem with Charles Dutoit to help close a month-long International Choral Festival given in and around Toronto. The ensemble had the honor of singing at Sen. Edward Kennedy’s funeral; has performed with the Boston Pops for the Boston Red Sox and Boston Celtics; and can be heard on the soundtracks of Clint Eastwood’s Mystic River, John Sayles’s Silver City, and Steven Spielberg’s Saving Private Ryan. TFC members regularly commute from the greater Boston area, western Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine, and TFC alumni frequently return each summer from as far away as Florida and California to sing with the choir at Tanglewood. Throughout its history, the TFC has established itself as a favorite of conductors, soloists, critics, and audiences alike.

Children’s Choir
James Burton, Conductor
The Children’s Choir that joins the women of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus in these performances of Mahler’s Symphony No. 3 has been formed especially for these concerts. Following auditions of nearly 200 children in the fall, sixty-five singers were selected by BSO Choral Director James Burton to take part in this project. The singers are in grades 5-9 and come from all over the Boston area. Many of them have sung before in school and church choirs, and some of them are enjoying their first choral experience by singing with the BSO in these concerts. The choir met for the first time in early January and has been working toward these performances in a series of rehearsals and workshops with James Burton.

James Burton
James Burton was appointed Conductor of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, and to the new position of BSO Choral Director, in February 2017. Born in London, Mr. Burton began his training at the Choir of Westminster Abbey, where he became head chorister. He was a choral scholar at St. John’s College, Cambridge, and holds a master’s degree in orchestral conducting from the Peabody Conservatory, where he studied with Frederik Prausnitz and Gustav Meier. He has conducted concerts with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the Hallé, the Orchestra of Scottish Opera, Royal Northern Sinfonia, BBC Concert Orchestra, and Manchester Camerata; in early 2016 he made his debut with the Orquestra Sinfônica Nacional with concerts in the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City. Opera credits include Don Giovanni and La bohème at English National Opera, Così fan tutte at English Touring Opera, The Magic Flute at Garsington, and Gianni Schicchi and Suor Angelica at the Prague Summer Nights Festival. He has served on the music staff of the Metropolitan Opera, Opéra de Paris, English National Opera, Opera Rara, and Garsington Opera, where he was honored with the Leonard Ingrams Award in 2008. He has also conducted in London’s West End and led a UK tour of Bernstein’s Wonderful Town in 2012. His extensive choral conducting has included guest invitations with professional choirs including the Gabrieli Consort, the Choir of the Enlightenment, Wroclaw Philharmonic, and the BBC Singers, with whom he performed at the Dubai Opera house in its inaugural season earlier this year. From 2002 to 2009 he served as choral director at the Hallé Orchestra, where he was music director of the Hallé Choir and founding conductor of the Hallé Youth Choir, winning the Gramophone Choral Award in 2009. He returned to Manchester in 2014, preparing the choirs for a Grammy-nominated recording under Sir Mark Elder of Vaughan Williams’s A Sea Symphony. From 2002 to 2017 he was music director of the chamber choir Schola Cantorum of Oxford, touring all over the world and recording with Hyperion Records. He collaborates regularly with leading young musicians and in 2017 appeared as guest director of the National Youth Choir of Japan and the Princeton University Glee Club, as well as the Genesis Sixteen. He teaches conducting, and has given master classes at the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal Welsh College of Music. In 2011 he founded a conducting scholarship with Schola Cantorum of Oxford. His compositions and arrangements have been performed internationally, and his orchestral arrangements for Arlo Guthrie have been performed by the Boston Pops, by many other leading U.S. orchestras, and at the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall. His commissions have included the music for the 2010 World Equestrian Games opening ceremony, a setting for chorus and orchestra of Thomas Hardy’s The Convergence of the Twain commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Titanic disaster, and a recent
Christmas carol premiered by the Choir of St. John’s College, Cambridge, live on BBC Radio 3. His choral works are published by Edition Peters. As BSO Choral Director and Conductor of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, James Burton occupies the Alan J. and Suzanne W. Dworsky Chair, endowed in perpetuity.