

MAHLER

SYMPHONY NO.

5

Sir Donald Runnicles
Grand Teton Music Festival Orchestra



**GRAND
TETON
MUSIC
FESTIVAL**



MAHLER 5

S Y M P H O N Y N O .

Program Notes by Scott Foglesong

Gustav Mahler (1860—1911)

Symphony No. 5 in C-sharp Minor (1901—1902)

Scored for 4 flutes (2 doubling piccolo), 3 oboes, English horn, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 6 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings.

Gustav Mahler entered a period of intense personal transformation starting in 1901. The initial catalyst was likely his near death from a severe intestinal hemorrhage on February 24 of that year. Countering the lonely anguish of facing his potential demise was the warmth and promise of his engagement to the beautiful and gifted Alma Schindler; they would be married on March 9, 1902, with two daughters soon to follow. Given Mahler's propensity for reflecting his inner life in his compositions, it's reasonable to connect the personal upheavals of this period with the vast emotional scope of his *Symphony No. 5 in C-sharp Minor*, completed in 1902, but not performed until two years later.

In the Fifth Symphony, Mahler dispensed with his practice of incorporating his *lieder* into his symphonies. All but the First Symphony include vocal passages, while the First features an instrumental take on "Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz" from *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*. Now in the Fifth Symphony he would avoid sung text, focus on exclusively instrumental writing, and trust his listeners to draw their own inferences without verbal clues.

Which isn't to say that the Fifth is without programmatic aspects. For Mahler, like most late Romantics, extra-musical associations were bedrock elements of everyday musicianship, indispensable and pervasive. Intimations of death thread through this symphony, much as they do in much of Mahler's work. For Mahler, mortality was an *idée fixe*, excessive even in the context of the literary 'death cult' so pervasive in turn-of-the-century Vienna. It likely stemmed from his own experiences: half of his siblings died before the age of 3, three more died young, and his own daughter Maria died at the age of 5. Thus, the many dirges in Mahler's symphonies, not to mention in song cycles such as *Kindertotenlieder*, *Das Knaben Wunderhorn*, his settings of Rückert poems, and even his first major work, *Das klagende Lied*, which concerns fratricide. But although Mahler exhibited a pervasive fear of death, he also found it subtly attractive. "I will die, in order to live" Mahler stated in a line he added to Klopstock's poem in the Second Symphony's finale. Of his 1901 hemorrhage, he wrote that "while I was hovering on the border between life and death, I wondered whether it would not be better to have done with it at once, since everyone must come to that in the end."



David Coucheron
Concertmaster

Nostalgia also informs the Fifth, particularly an ache for a past that may not have actually existed. This idealized place of happy peasants dancing *ländler*s on the sunlit village green may well have been drawn from Mahler's memories of his childhood, some blissful and others anguished. "Composing is like

playing with bricks, continually making new buildings from the same old stones,” he wrote in 1899 to confidant Natalie Bauer-Lechner. “But the stones have lain there since one’s youth, which is the only time for gathering and hoarding them.” Those memories are often cited as fueling at least some of the discontinuities that are so common in Mahler’s music. Biographer Henri-Louis de La Grange described Mahler’s works as being filled with intrusions, some of which might be quotations of music that Mahler heard in his youth. There is a substantial amount of autobiography in Mahler’s compositions, far more than is encountered in most composers. Mahler himself encouraged such thinking, as when he wrote to Bauer-Lechner in 1893 that “my two symphonies contain the inner aspect of my whole life ... to understand these works properly would be to see my life transparently revealed in them.”

Nevertheless, in the Fifth Mahler sought a relatively abstract approach to composition, in which the working out of ideas provides the underlying logic from which all else springs. Mahler was, after all, one of the great conductors of history, an expert on all matters orchestral. He was deeply familiar with the works of his symphonic predecessors such as Beethoven, whose Fifth Symphony must have been on Mahler’s mind at least to some extent in writing his own Fifth. (It can’t be a coincidence that the opening figure




Thomas Hooten
Trumpet, *principal*

of the Mahler Fifth closely resembles Beethoven's four-note 'fate' motif, nor that both symphonies follow a trajectory that begins in darkness and ends in light.)

The Mahler Fifth is a gigantic symphony, laid out in three fundamental parts that encompass five separate movements. **Part 1** consists of both first and second movements, starting with a *Trauermarsch*, or funeral march. Mahler's performance indication is downright incisive, telegraphic directives closed by periods: "With measured pace. Strict. Like a cortège." That measured pace is not maintained throughout, however, but is broken by a powerful passage of shattering violence before resuming the steady tread of the opening. In keeping with the symphony's roots in abstract music, the movement is structured in a blend of rondo and classic sonata-allegro form.

Mahler described the second movement (*Violently agitated. With great vehemence*) as the true opening of the symphony, with the previous material serving as an extended introduction. Violence, strife, and storm prevail; the mood never quite settles, although the first movement's funeral march recurs several times. *Nota bene*: a broad chorale melody arises in the brass towards the end of the movement; it will feature strongly in the symphony's lustrous final moments.



Gail Williams
Horn, *principal*

Part 2 consists of a single movement, an extensive *Scherzo* of breathtaking optimism and joy. Mahler referred to it as “mankind in the full brightness of day, at the zenith of life.” Described as “perhaps the most Austrian of all Mahler’s movements,” it avoids any hint of parody, caricature, or exaggeration.

Part 3 opens with the *Adagietto*, easily the most familiar movement amongst Mahler’s symphonies. Scored for a stripped-down ensemble of strings and harp, it has stepped out of the symphony to serve in various guises, including as Leonard Bernstein’s memorial to President John F. Kennedy. Dutch conductor Willem Mengelberg was convinced that it was Mahler’s “declaration of love for Alma! Instead of a letter, he sent her this manuscript without further explanation. She understood and wrote back that he should come!!! Both have told me this!” (Vintage Mengelbergian bombast, especially all those exclamation points.)

The fifth movement follows the *Adagietto* without pause. Bearing the straightforward marking of *Allegro* it brims with cheerful optimism and high spirits. Even Mahler’s choice of key reflects that happy demeanor; D Major elicits an overall bright sound from orchestral instruments and is commonly encountered in upbeat, positive compositions. Consider the joyous second symphonies of both Brahms and Beethoven, Haydn’s radiant final “London” symphony, and Mozart’s propulsive “Paris” and “Haffner” symphonies—D Major all. The thematic materials are mostly sturdy, stepwise tunes that stride along in brisk cut time. Thus, the epic drama of the Mahler Fifth culminates in resplendent music that radiates a healthy robustness, assertive without being overbearing, a young man’s joy in his vigor and the limitless possibilities of his future.



“Over the many years where it has been my privilege to be Music Director, the Grand Teton Music Festival has quietly yet assuredly established itself as one of the great American orchestras, nestled in the rarified beauty of the Tetons Mountains. As we aspire to share the musical brilliance and versatility with the international world, may the release of the epic Fifth Symphony of Gustav Mahler burst upon the scene with the same joy and excitement that we experienced in performing this masterful work. We are indebted to Reference Recordings and savor the opportunity to release further performances with this remarkable and unique Festival Orchestra. It is indeed my privilege.”

— Sir Donald Runnicles

Sir Donald Runnicles

Music Director

Over the course of a career spanning 45 years, Sir Donald Runnicles has built his reputation on enduring relationships with several of the most significant opera companies and orchestras and is especially celebrated for his interpretations of Romantic and post-Romantic symphonic and opera repertoire which are core to his musical identity. He is the music director of the Grand Teton Music Festival (since 2005) and the Deutsche Oper Berlin (since 2009) and has held chief artistic leadership roles at the San Francisco Opera (1992—2008), BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra (2009—2016), and the Orchestra of St. Luke's (2001—2007). Runnicles was also Principal Guest Conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra for more than two decades (2001—2023), and he is the first ever Principal Guest Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (since 2019). In February 2024, Runnicles was appointed as Chief Conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic, beginning in the 2025/26 season.

Maestro Runnicles kicked off his 2024/25 season with a 70th birthday celebration concert at the Edinburgh International Festival conducting the BBC Scottish Symphony in a program of Mahler and Bruckner, after which he opened the Dresden Philharmonic's season in his first concerts as Chief Conductor Designate, returning two more times over the course of the season. At the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Runnicles concluded his Strauss cycle in collaboration with director Tobias Kratzer

with a new production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, alongside *Arabella* and *Intermezzo*, as well as revival performances of Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg*, Puccini's *La bohème*, Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, Verdi's *Don Carlo*, and a symphony concert with the Deutsche Oper Berlin (DOB) as part of Musikfest Berlin. In North America, he made guest appearances with the Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit, Houston and Pittsburgh symphony orchestras. He also returned twice to the Sydney Symphony.

Runnicles spends his summers at the Grand Teton Music Festival in Jackson, Wyoming. This eight-week festival of symphonic and chamber music, five of which are conducted by Runnicles as music director, takes place amid the breathtaking beauty of Grand Teton National Park.

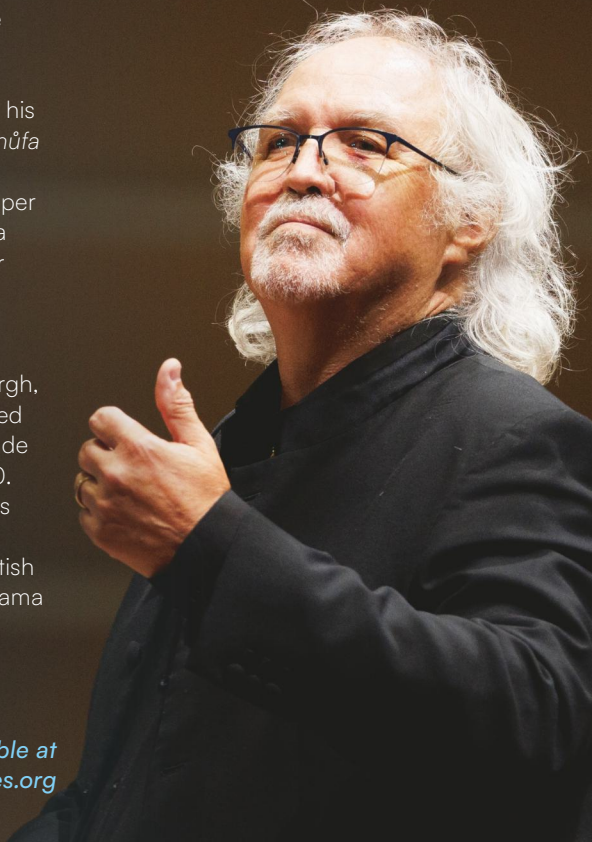
Runnicles tours regularly with the DOB to destinations such as the Edinburgh International Festival, the London Proms and Royal Opera House Muscat in Oman. He has joined the Philadelphia Orchestra on tours to China, summer residencies at Bravo! Vail Music Festival in Colorado, and in subscription concerts. A regular guest conductor with the Chicago Symphony, Runnicles' performance history with the orchestra dates back to 1997. Over a decade-long relationship with the Vienna State Opera, he has led new productions of *Parsifal*, Britten's *Billy Budd* and *Peter Grimes*, as well as core repertory pieces.

His extensive discography includes recordings of Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Britten's *Billy Budd*, Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, and Aribert Reimann's *L'invisible*. His recording of Wagner arias with

Jonas Kaufmann and the Orchestra of the Deutsche Oper Berlin won the 2013 Gramophone prize for Best Vocal Recording, and his recording of Janáček's *Jenůfa* with the Orchestra and Chorus of the Deutsche Oper Berlin was nominated for a 2016 GRAMMY® award for Best Opera Recording.

Sir Donald Runnicles was born and raised in Edinburgh, Scotland. He was appointed OBE in 2004 and was made a Knight Bachelor in 2020. He holds honorary degrees from the University of Edinburgh, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

More information available at
donaldrunnicles.org



GRAND TETON MUSIC FESTIVAL

Each summer, the Grand Teton Music Festival unites more than 250+ celebrated orchestral musicians led by Music Director Sir Donald Runnicles. These musicians represent over 84 orchestras and nearly 72 institutions of higher learning in North America and Europe. In addition to orchestral concerts, the summer season also features visiting guest artists and chamber music.

The Grand Teton Music Festival is one of America's leading summer classical music festivals. Recognized by *The New York Times* as one of the top 10 music festivals in the US and chosen by *BBC Music Magazine* as their 2020 "Festival Choice," it is the most prominent arts organization in the state of Wyoming and a national treasure.

GTMF's mission is to engage, entertain, educate, and inspire our resident and seasonal communities through exhilarating musical experiences. We feature orchestral, chamber, and solo performances of primarily classical music by world-class artists, and we foster a culture that draws outstanding musicians to Jackson Hole in support of this mission.

More information available at gtmf.org



GRAND
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FESTIVAL

WALK FEST

This recording is dedicated in loving memory to Richard Brown.

Music Director Sir Donald Runnicles

Grand Teton Music Festival Orchestra

VIOLIN I

David Coucheron*
Yi Zhao
Holly Mulcahy
Marta Krechkovsky
Jessica Mathaes
Dimitri Lazarescu
Patrick Neal
Louise Morrison
Karen Whitson Kinzie
Miika Gregg
Judith Cox
Jeffrey Dyrda
Jennifer Thompson
Jennifer Kozbial Posadas
Joan Christenson

VIOLIN II

Jennifer Ross*
Maria Semes
Annie Kuan-Yu Chen
Jennifer Gordon Levin
Olga Shpitko
Carolyn Semes
Barbara Scowcroft
Lois Finkel
Sarah Schwartz
Mary Corbett
Rebekah Johnson
Ling Ling Huang
Anne-Marie Terranova

VIOLA

Susan Gulkis Assadi*
Joan DerHovsepien
Chiara Kingsley Dieguez
Whittney Sjogren
Nathan Frantz
Abhijit Sengupta
Rachel Swerdlow
Yang-Yoon Kim
Allyson Goodman
Caroline Gilbert
Lucina Horner Cosby

CELLO

Daniel Laufer*
Grace An
Theodore Harvey
Gregory Clinton
Charae Krueger
Karen Freer
David Mollenauer
Deborah Nitka Hicks
Judith Galecki
Julia Sengupta

BASS

Robin Kesselman*
Jeffrey Kail
Corbin Johnston
Richard Barber
Joseph McFadden
Sidney King
Robert Barney
Fred Bretschger

FLUTE

Mercedes Smith*
Koren McCaffrey
Stephanie C. Mortimore
Carole Bean

OBOE

Zachary Boeding*
Jonathan Gentry
Tamara Benitez Winston

ENGLISH HORN

Tamara Benitez Winston*

CLARINET

Jose Gonzalez Granero*
Stephanie Key
Marc Gurnow

E-FLAT CLARINET

Victoria Luperi

BASS CLARINET

Marc Gurnow

BASSOON

Richard Ranti*
Rudi Heinrich
Juan de Gomar

CONTRABASSOON

Juan de Gomar

HORN

Gail Williams*
Shelby Nugent, *asst.*
Adam Unsworth
Michael Gast
Robert Lauver
Nancy Goodearl
Paul Straka

TRUMPET

Thomas Hooten*
L. Russell Campbell
Charles Daval
Jennifer Marotta

TROMBONE

Craig Mulcahy*
Jay Evans

BASS TROMBONE

Jared Rodin

TUBA

JáTiik Clark*

TIMPANI

Leonardo Soto*

PERCUSSION

Richard Brown*
Keith Carrick*
Eric Hopkins
John Kinzie
Brian Prechtl

HARP

Allegra Lilly*

LIBRARIAN

Robert Stiles*

* *principal chair*



Notes on the Production

by Vic Muenzer

When in my early teens, my father brought home a recording of Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 5. The two LP set was an artist's copy as he was a violinist in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. I had never heard any music by Mahler. But the moment I put that LP on the turntable, my life changed. And I know that many people have had that same experience.

So, it is with humility and deep respect that I bring this second GTMF recording to our Reference audience following our debut release of the Beethoven Piano Concertos with Garrick Ohlsson. Once again, we bring you the dream team of the beautiful acoustics of Walk Festival Hall, the unparalleled musicians of the Grand Teton Music Festival Orchestra, and the unrivaled present-day Mahlerian conductor, Sir Donald Runnicles.

For this recording we used a four-mic Decca Tree: two mics in the center and two outriggers. The main microphones were M-150 tube mics, Neumann's modern-day version of the legendary M-50. We did use spot mics, very judiciously. These were exclusively Schoeps MK4s with the exception of the spots on the violins which were Schoeps MK21s and spots on the trumpets and trombones where we utilized Sennheiser MKH40s and

8040s. We used a Telefunken TF 11 on the basses. Two Schoeps MK4s were carefully aimed toward the back of the hall for the surround mix. As we also created an Atmos mix for this recording, four Sennheiser MKH20s were hung as high as possible in the hall for the overhead channels. Grace preamps (m108s) were used throughout and the project was recorded directly into Apple MacBook Pros at 192 kHz at 24 bits.

I would like to thank the University of Colorado Boulder for giving us a week in their studio to create the final mixes, which were monitored using a Genelec SAM 5.1 surround system. We also want to thank Dann Thompson at Skywalker Sound in Marin County, California where we tested the final mixes and created the Atmos mix. Additional work on the Atmos mixes took place at Blue Marble Sound in Loveland, Colorado.

This project was mastered by Graemme Brown at Zen Mastering in British Columbia. I want to thank the Festival's Executive Director Emma Kail for her unwavering support of this recording and all of our work at the Grand Teton Music Festival. I remain grateful to Marcia Martin, Sean Royce Martin and 'Professor' Keith O. Johnson and the legendary crew at Reference Recordings for giving our recordings a home. Last, but hardly least, collaborating with Kevin Harbison is always a joy.

Any great recording is about the performance and the performers. I know that Mahler's Symphony No. 5 lives somewhere right at the core of Sir Donald Runnicles' being. It is my hope that this recording, with these musicians and this great conductor, changes your life, in much the same way I experienced many decades ago.

—Vic Muenzer, *Producer, Chicago, IL*



MAHLER 5

S Y M P H O N Y N O .

RECORDED: July 26—27, 2024

RECORDING LOCATION: The Grand Teton Music Festival
Walk Festival Hall
Teton Village, Wyoming, USA

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Emma Kail

PRODUCER: Vic Muenzer

SOUND ENGINEERS: Kevin Harbison
Vic Muenzer

MASTERING ENGINEER: Graemme Brown, Zen Mastering

ALBUM ART DIRECTOR: JoAnn Nunes

FRONT/BACK COVER PHOTOS: Courtesy of Visit Jackson Hole®

CONCERT PHOTOS: © 2024 Cody Downard

THOMAS HOOTEN PHOTO: © 2016 Rob Shanahan

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REFERENCE
RECORDINGS FR-763SACD

MAHLER 5

S Y M P H O N Y N O .

- PART 1** I. Trauermarsch. In gemessenem Schritt.
Streng. Wie ein Kondukt 13:38
- II. Stürmisch bewegt. Mit grösster Vehemenz 15:45
- PART 2** III. Scherzo. Kräftig, nicht zu schnell 17:51
- PART 3** IV. Adagietto. Sehr langsam 10:05
- V. Rondo-Finale. Allegro 15:35

TOTAL TIME: 72:57

Music Director Sir Donald Runnicles
Grand Teton Music Festival Orchestra