Welcome...

On behalf of the Department of Music, I am delighted to welcome you to our concert.

This performance represents only a small portion of the richness and diversity of activities that take place in the Department of Music every year. Composition, scholarship and performance are the central activities of our students and faculty and many of the performances we present represent more than one of those areas. Scholarly seminars often reconstruct and present performances of ancient, lost, or unfinished work. The Princeton Sound Kitchen presents music newly composed by our faculty and students performed by some of the world's most skilled and adventurous musicians.

Our two certificate programs – the Program in Jazz Studies and the Program in Musical Performance – also integrate the stage, the studio and the classroom. Participants in both of those programs take private lessons, master classes, and academic courses en route to solo and ensemble concerts.

Our new Edward T. Cone Performers-in-Residence, Só Percussion, are an exciting new addition to our musical community. An internationally acclaimed quartet of musicians, Só will give free public concerts with instruments that range from the familiar to the exotic.

We hope you will attend many more events presented by the Department of Music at Princeton University. The diverse and eclectic interests of our students and faculty mean that you can enjoy events not only in our high traffic areas, like Euro-American concert music, opera and jazz, but also a great variety of other music – vernacular, learned, sacred and profane – from around the world.

The public is also invited to the many pre-concert lectures, colloquia and conferences that feature local scholars as well as distinguished visitors. For a list of upcoming events please visit princeton.edu/music.

We look forward to seeing you at our next Music Department event!

Steven Mackey
Professor and Chair, Department of Music

Thursday, December 4, 7:30 pm
Friday, December 5, 7:30 pm
Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA
Michael Pratt, conductor

Four Sean-nós songs, arranged for voice and orchestra
Donnacha Dennehy, arr.  Taím Sínte
Dan Trueman, arr.  Loch Lein
Siúl a Rún
Táim Córtha ó Bleith im’ Aonar im’ Lui
(I’m Weary of Lying Alone)

Iarla Ó Lionáird, vocalist

* INTERMISSION *

GUSTAV MAHLER  Symphony No. 4
I. Bedächtig, nicht eilen
(Moderately, not rushed)
II. In gemächlicher Bewegung, ohne Hast
(Leisurely moving, without haste)
III. Ruhevoll, poco adagio
(Peacefully, somewhat slowly)
IV. Sehr behaglich
(Very comfortably)

Katherine Buzard ’14, soprano

The Princeton University Orchestra concert this evening honors the memory of William H. Scheide, a friend and supporter of the orchestra.
Assistant Conductor
JJ Warshaw

VIOLIN 1
Caitlin Wood, Co-concertmaster
Stephanie Liu, Co-concertmaster
Sophia Mockler
Dana Ramirez
Emma Powell
Dawn Wang
Samantha Cody
Mina Park
Kenny Wong
Caroline Chen
Demi Fang
Lydia Cornett
Aurélie Théramène
Richard Tuckwell
Jackie Levine

VIOLIN 2
Billy Fang*
Jay Park
Juliana Hsing
Alina Spiegel
Lisa Kojima
Caroline Suh
Kerith Wang
Daniel Wood
Tabitha Oh
Kristin Qian
Anne Jung
Caroline Kim
Andy Deng
Jeffrey Kuan
Cadee Qiu
Gabrielle Armstrong-Scott

VIOLA
Devin Naftzger*
Sam Mantzner
Hannah Kronenberg
Brandon Lam
Ben Parks
Derek Yeung
Ben Lee
Lawrence Liu
Meredith MacMahon
Isabelle Uhl
Nathan Wong
Clara Wilson-Hawken
Catherine Hochman
Matthew Du

*CELLO
Spencer Shen*
Agisae Kim*
Preston Lim
Eli Chang
Nathan Park
Vivian Ludford
Nicole Cho
Elliot Pearl-Sacks
Kiwon (Joshua) Baeg
Evan Wood
Surin Ahn
Jay Kim
Joshua Shin

BASS
Austin Gengos*
Christopher Perron*
Harrison Waldon
Sam Dale
Matt Troiani
Noah Fishman
Adnan Sachee
Jack Hill

FLUTE/PICCOLO
Jamie Chong
Alexia Kim*
Marcelo Rochabrun*
Bruno Schaffa

OBOE/ENGLISH HORN
Emily Chen
Tiffany Huang*
Alexa McCall*
Anne-Elise Siden

CLARINET AND BASS
Frederick Allen
Ryan Budnick
Paul Chang*
George Liu
Kevin Mizes*

BASSOON AND CONTRABASSOON
Dan Mossing
Greg Rewoldt
Louisa Sosar*
Luise Zhong*

HORN
Jesse Chou
Sophie Giguerre
Alison Halter
Bryan Jacobowitz*
Nivanthi Karunaratne*

TRUMPET
Emily Bobrick*
Junya Takahashi
Henry Whitaker*

TROMBONE AND BASS
Riley Fitzgerald*
Andrew VanZytfeld
Miles Yacht

TROMBONE
Anuraj Balaji
Collin Edwards
David Graff
Isaac Ilivicky
Buyan Pan

TIMPANI/PERCUSSION
Anuraj Balaji
Collin Edwards
David Graff
Isaac Ilivicky
Buyan Pan

HARP
Sarah Rapoport
Julia Schorn
Cara Souto

PIANO
Jason Nong

—PRINCETON UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA COMMITTEE—

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The Princeton University Orchestra began with a group of professional musicians from the New York Symphony and Philharmonic Societies who performed a series of concerts at Alexander Hall in 1896, the first on February 13. The proceeds were "devoted to the funds for the establishment of a School of Music for the study of Musical Composition, Theory, and History at Princeton University." In the ensuing century, the orchestra has come to be an almost exclusively student organization; some 90-100 undergraduate and graduate musicians representing a broad spectrum of academic departments come together for concerts in Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall.

Under the direction of Michael Pratt since 1977, the orchestra has in recent years taken an important place in the state's concert calendar. The Newark Star-Ledger had high praise for the orchestra's "passionate performance" of Mahler's "Resurrection" Symphony and called the performance of Mahler's Third Symphony one "that would make any orchestra proud." The Princeton University Orchestra performs ten to fifteen concerts a year on campus, in addition to international tours. These concerts include both new music and works from the standard repertory. Audience members and critics alike have commented that even the most familiar works take on a new freshness in the enthusiastic, spirited and precise performances given by the Princeton musicians.

The orchestra also serves an important role in Princeton's Department of Music by both reading and performing new works by graduate composition students. In addition, the orchestra has also been invited to give command performances for special University events, such as the installation of President Harold Shapiro, and the celebration of Princeton's 250th Anniversary. In April 2001, the Orchestra appeared in Lincoln Center for a special performance called "Beethoven and Homer, The Heroic Moment," a program which combined the Fifth Symphony of Beethoven and Professor Robert Eagles reading from his translation of The Iliad and The Odyssey. The Orchestra has represented Princeton on tours both of the United States and Europe. Recent tours have seen visits to London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Madrid, Barcelona, Prague, Bratislava, Budapest and Vienna. In January 2007 the Orchestra's performance in Bratislava was taped for later broadcast on Slovak television. Participation in the orchestra is voluntary and extracurricular; students commit many hours to rehearsal above and beyond the time required for academic course work. Graduates of the orchestra have gone on to be performers, music teachers, and arts administrators, but the list of professions also includes lawyers, physicians, business executives, government officials, economists, architects, research scientists, and journalists. The Princeton University Orchestra offers an important opportunity for student instrumentalists to pursue musical interests in a way that significantly enhances their overall growth in a strong academic environment.

For 37 seasons the Princeton University Orchestra has been led by conductor MICHAEL PRATT, a relationship that has resulted in the ensemble's reputation as one of the finest university orchestras in the United States. Over the years, the Orchestra and Pratt have performed a remarkable variety of the orchestral literature, from J. S. Bach's orchestral suites, to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, to Wagner's Tristan und Isolde. He has led the orchestra on nine European tours, leading performances in London, Prague, Vienna, Budapest and Madrid.

As Director of the Princeton University Opera Theater, Pratt has conducted operas from Mozart to Ravel, and in the past decade has focused on the early Baroque operas of Monteverdi and Cavalli. One of the chief architects of Princeton's Certificate Program in Musical Performance, Pratt has served as its director for over twenty years, and is co-director of the Composers Ensemble and Richardson Chamber Players. Pratt was educated at the Eastman School of Music and Tanglewood, and his teachers have included Gunther Schuller, Gustav Meier, Leonard Bernstein and Otto Werner Mueller. He also holds the posts of Music Director of the Delaware Valley Philharmonic and Principal Conductor of American Repertory Ballet. He has also conducted the orchestras of Boston, Atlanta, Buffalo, Detroit, Indianapolis, and Odessa, Ukraine.

IARLA Ó LIONÁIRD (pronounced car-lah o-linnard) was born in the West Cork Gaeltacht area of Cuil Aodha in 1964. The area was rich in singers and the 12 Ó Lionáird children were no exception. Their mother taught them many traditional songs, passed down from her own mother, and her sister, Elizabeth Cronin. Iarla began performing at the tender age of 5, his first radio broadcast was at age 7, and he recorded Aisling Gheal at age 12 for the Gael Linn label. He also performed with the Cor Chuil Aodha (choir of Chui! Aodha), founded by Sean O'Riada. Since then he has worked in radio, film and TV production, and is the lead singer for the Afrot Celtic Sound System. Not just a pretty voice, Iarla has a B.Ed from Carysfort College in Dublin and taught primary school for 7 years, while still maintaining a strong interest in matters musical and performing as time allowed. In 2003 he completed a MA in Ethnomusicology at the University of Limerick. Iarla lives in County Kilkenny with his wife, Eimear, and their three children: Liam, Eabha and Iséult.
DAN TRUeman is a composer, fiddler, and electronic musician. He began studying violin at the age of 4, and decades later, after a chance encounter, fell in love with the Norwegian Hardanger fiddle, an instrument and tradition that has deeply affected all of his work, whether as a fiddler, a composer, or musical explorer. He has worked with many groups and musicians, including Trollstilt and QQQ, the American Composers Orchestra, So Percussion, the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, the Brentano and Daedelus string quartets, the Crash Ensemble, many wonderful fiddlers, and has performed across America, Ireland, and Norway. His explorations have extended into new technologies; he co-founded the Princeton Laptop Orchestra, the first ensemble of its size and kind that has led to the formation of similarly inspired ensembles across the world, from Oslo to Dublin, to Stanford and Bangk. His compositional work reflects this complex and broad range of activities, exploring rhythmic connections between traditional dance music and machines, for instance, or engaging with the unusual phrasing, tuning and ornamentation of the traditional Norwegian music while trying to discover new music that is singularly inspired by, and only possible with, new digital instruments that he designs and constructs. His work has been recognized by fellowships and grants from the Guggenheim and MacArthur Foundations, among others. He is Professor of Music and Director of the Princeton Sound Kitchen at Princeton University, where he teaches counterpoint, electronic music, and composition.

DONNACHA DENNehY has received commissions from Dawn Upshaw, the Kronos Quartet, Alarm Will Sound, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Bang On A Can, Joanna MacGregor, Percussion Group of the Hague, and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players among others. His work has featured at the Nonesuch Explorations Festival, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, ISCM World Music Days, Carnegie Hall’s Contemporary Music Subscription Series, Chicago Symphony’s Music Now, WNYC’s New Sounds Live, Bang On A Can, Ultima Festival in Oslo, Musica Viva Lisbon, the Saarbrucken Festival, the Schleswig-Holstein Festival, and the Gaudefaus Festival in Amsterdam. In 2010 his large single-movement orchestral piece for the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, Crane, was ‘recommended’ by the International Rostrum of Composers. Returning to Ireland after studies in the USA, France and Holland, Dennehy founded Crash Ensemble in 1997. Alongside the singers Dawn Upshaw and Iarla O’Lionaird, Crash Ensemble features on the 2011 Nonesuch release of Dennehy’s music, entitled Gá agus Bás. NPR named it one of its “50 favorite albums” (in any genre) of 2011. In July 2012, Cantaloupe released an EP of his piano music, played by Lisa Moore. Previous releases include a number by NMC Records in London. Previously a lecturer at Trinity College Dublin, Dennehy was appointed a Global Scholar for at Princeton University in the fall of 2012. He was also appointed composer-in-residence for the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra in Texas (2013-14). He joined the faculty at Princeton University in 2014.

KATHERINE BUZARD is currently studying for her Masters in Music in Vocal Performance at the Royal College of Music in London. She graduated from Princeton University in 2014 where she concentrated in Music with a certificate in Vocal Performance. Upon graduation she received the Isodore & Helen Sacks Memorial Award for musical performance. Her operatic roles include Poppea in Monteverdi’s L’incoronazione di Poppea, Nancy in Britten’s Albert Herring, Lucy in Menotti’s The Telephone, and Tara in the world premiere of Anthony Davis’ one-act opera Lear on the Second Floor. She has also appeared as a soloist in numerous concerts, notably as a soloist in Bach’s Magnificat at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig with the Princeton Glee Club, and gave a pre-concert recital for Joyce DiDonato’s performance at Richardson Auditorium last March. She has taken part in master classes given by Joyce DiDonato, David Daniels, Sophie Daneman, and Anthony Roth Costanzo. She is an Oppeby Stokowski Scholar at the RCM, where she studies with Tim Evans-Jones.

ABOUT TODAY’S PROGRAM

SEAN-NOS SONGS

Like many terms used to describe folk or traditional music, sean-nós has had a variety of meanings and connotations over the centuries. Most recently, the writings of ethnomusicologist Sean Williams offer a working definition of the term as “unaccompanied vocal performance in the Irish language, often in relatively free rhythm, although rhythmically regular items also form part of the repertory.” Literally meaning “old way, manner, custom, or style,” it can describe both the style of such singing and the repertory of songs themselves. The term sean-nós can be traced as far back as the sixteenth century, but its use as a musical descriptor became more common in the later nineteenth and twentieth century in association with nationalist political and cultural movements in Ireland. Although the use of the term has been the subject of some debate, sean-nós has nevertheless become the preferred label for performers and composers of this distinct idiom of monophonic, unaccompanied traditional singing. Tonight’s performance thus can be heard as yet another chapter in the long history of an ever-emerging genre and style, a collaboration among
two composers and one of the leading exponents of sean-nós singing working today. As a work for symphonic orchestra, these sean-nós songs also find their place in a long-standing compositional tradition in which “classical” composers—Mahler, Stravinsky, and Copland to name only a few—sought inspiration for music’s future in the cultural resources of the present and past.

FOUR SEAN-NÓS SONGS
Arranged for orchestra by Donnacha Dennehy and Dan Trueman
Translations by Iarla O Lionáird

I. Táim sínte

Táim sínte ar do thuama,
Is do gheár ann de shior mé;
Dá mbeadh barr do dhá láimh agam
Ní sgarfáinn leat a choicé.

A uilín is a’annsacht,
Is am domhsa luí leat,
Tá bha fuar na cré orm,
Dath na gréine ‘sna gaoithe!

I am stretched upon your grave
This is where you will find me
If I could touch your fingertips
I’d never let you go.

My little apple tree, my darling
Its time for me to lie with you
I smell of the cold earth
The colour of the sun and the wind.

There is a mark in my heart
Still full with love for you.
Black as the sloe berry.
And if ill should befall me
And death come and take me
I will become a wind spirit
In the meadows before you

II. Loch Léin

Do shiúilós a láin gan spás i dtosach mo shaoil
On tSionainn go Ráth ‘s cois báinte Daingean an tSleibhe’
Ní fhéacsion aon aít ba bhreáthá, s ba dheise ná é
Ná’n baile beag bán ‘tá láimh le barra Loch Léin

I walked long when in my youth
From the Shannon River to the fort by the hills of Daingean by Sleigh Head
Nowhere did I see a place more fine or beautiful
Than that little white village by the banks of Loch Léin

Niorbh fhada liom lá a bheith speá ar Thuairín an Chéim
Ag amharc ar an aít ba bhreáthe is ba dheise faoin spéir
Mórthimpeall Thuairín Áth Charnáin is Mucros na gCróibh
Is ag Ros an Chaiseleán de gnáthach an ghasara threán

Too short would be the day spent outside the little pasture at Céim
Contemplating the most beautiful and perfect place under the sky
Around Ghuareen, Áth Charnáin and Mucross of the trees.
And at Castle Ross where the heroes used to frequent.

Nuair a thagann an tSamhain, is geall le Nollaig ’cu é
Biónn acu gan amhrais brannda mil agus céir
An maitr a bhiodh maradh i dteannta an bhroc a bhfodh méith
An bradhán ón Leamhan a fheabhas san don choire go léir

When November comes, to them it’s like Christmas
They feast on brandy, and waxen honey
Beef that’s fattened and badger that’s in season
The salmon in excellent condition for all those gathered.

Ó do shiúilós Bui Bhéara, cois Éirne, is as an thoir-thuaidh
Cois Maingé go bhreag agus tréimhse in Arm-i-dTuaim
Ní fhacás in aon bhail den mhéid sin, cé gur fáda mo chuaidh
Ba bhreáthá ná Loch Léin mar a mbionn an máigh-shluí

I walked Bui Bhéara, by the Erne’s banks and from that north east
Through Castlemaine, and a spell in arms in Tuam
Nowhere did I see though my journey was long
Any place as fair as Loch Lein where the mythic ones dwell.
III. Siúl a Rón

Oh I wish I were on yonder hill
and every tear would turn a mill
'S go d'tu tu mo mhúirnín slán

(And may you go safely, my darling)

Chorus:
Siúl, siúl siúl a rún
siúl go socair agus siúl go ciúin
siúl go dtí an dorais agus calaí liom
's go d'tu tu mo mhúirnín slán

A bhuaicheadh an oilbhirnín álann óg
Ba leathan do choiri, ba dheas do phóig
Mo lán gan mise leat féin go deo
Is go d'tu tu a mhúirnín slán

(And may you go safely my dear)

My darling sweet young lad
Wide was your heart, sweet was your kiss
How sad that I will never be with you
And may you go safely my love

Chorus
I'd sell my rock and sell my reel
To buy my love a sword
's go d'tu tu mo mhúirnín shin

'I'd sell my rock and sell my reel
To buy my love a sword
's go d'tu tu mo mhúirnín shin

Chorus
Ach, chuireadh ar Ríf Sheamais ruaig
Is d'imigh na geanna leis ar luas
Is d'imigh mo bhuaicheadh leo, monuar
Is go d'tu tu a mhúirnín slán

'(And may you go safely, my darling)

Chorus
I'm Weary of Lying Alone

One evening of late as I careless strolled
I espied a fair maid in deep mourn
I asked her the matter, she quickly made answer
'I am weary from lying alone, alone

As a mhúirnín donn dílis, suigh anso taobh liom
Agus áithris do mháthair, ar t'aois
A cúig a's a sí a' sárú dhá naoi
As tám cortha ó bhítheim' aonar.im' lú, im líu
Táim chomh cortha ó bhítheim' aonar.im' lú

My comely young damsel, come down here alongside me
And tell me of the years that have a-flow
For seven long gone and eleven years around
I am weary from lying alone, alone
I am weary from lying alone

's'da bhfaigh-innse o-gan-ach ci-gin do thofadh gan spre me
sgo mbeinn-se aige thei-nig mar mhnoai
ni chéil-fínse ar e'n-ne s'do neo-skainn don saol e
go a bhfuilim cortha o bhítheim aonar im' lú im' lú
táim cortha o bhítheim' aonar.im' lú

If I got a comely young man who would take me without fortune
And make me a wife of his very own
For the truth is, I'll say is, I'll die in despair
If I lie any longer alone, alone
If I lie any longer alone

's'ta roi-sín brea neata sa ghair-sín seo taobh linne
'se bhaineann mar stao-nadh me dhion
mar is rogha na dhaideadh sin go mbéadh sé ro tharaochta
leis a' naoi bhiodh na h'aonar na ló
leis a' naoi bhiodh na h'aonar na ló

There's a neat sweet li' flower in this garden alongside me
Take it away, sure it is all but your own
For the flower, it will fade and so also will the maid
For she's weary from lying alone, alone
For she's weary from lying alone

IV. Táim Cortha ó Bheith im' Aonar im' Lú (I'm Weary of Lying Alone)

(And may you go safely, my darling)

Chorus
I'm Weary of Lying Alone

One evening of late as I carelessly strolled
I espied a fair maid in deep mourn
I asked her the matter, she quickly made answer
'I am weary from lying alone, alone
I am weary from lying alone

I'm Weary of Lying Alone
MAHLER'S FOURTH SYMPHONY

First performed in 1901, Gustav Mahler's Fourth Symphony was viewed by many as a step backward for the composer. In comparison to the sprawling scale of his first three symphonies (not to mention the ones that would follow), the Fourth is indeed almost minuscule. The work is scored for a more conventional orchestral ensemble and also conforms to many classical conventions of the genre—a second movement scherzo gives way to a slow third movement written in variation form—not to mention its more manageable length. Some observers have gone so far as to understand the symphony as a "neoclassical" turn for the composer, that is, a conscious adaptation of the more modest and restrained techniques of a past musical era.

But the Fourth is by no means a work that could have been written by Beethoven or much less Mozart, despite its structural similarity to the works of Mahler's Viennese forebears. What is more, the Fourth's more modest format was not entirely by design, if the composer's statements about the work are to be believed. "I actually just wanted to write a symphonic humoresque," as Mahler explained, "and then it became the normal measure of a symphony." As a corollary observation, the composer quipped that when he had previously set out to write symphonies, they always turned out three times as long as they were supposed to. Further evidence of the neoclassical status of the Fourth is its lack of an explicit program or story line. In public, Mahler publicly maintained that this was a conscious decision intended to buck what had become a predictable trend. In private, however, he reluctantly provided clues as to the work's underlying story line, albeit in conditional terms.

The first three movements were understood to depict life in heaven: "One could in the first movement think of the human who is learning to know this life. The movement consists of a great cheerfulness, an unearthly pleasure that attracts as often as it disturbs, an astonishing light and an astonishing desire, in which, of course, humane and touching sounds are also present." The second movement takes a more sinister turn, and according to Mahler could have borne the title "death strokes the fiddle in a quite bizarre manner and his melody accompanies us up into heaven." (As noted by Maestro Pratt below, this effect is heightened by having this devilish solo violin play literally out of tune.) The atmosphere of the third movement, by contrast, is so pleasant that it could make even Saint Ursula (one of the church's early martyrs) smile and laugh. "The most earnest of the saints laughs, so cheerful is this sphere," as Mahler put it, explaining that "solemn, blessed peace, earnest and mild cheerfulness is the character of this movement, in which also deeply painful contrasts—as reminiscences of earthly life—as well as an intensification of the cheerful up to the brisk, are not missing."

If the action of the first three movements was unclear, the fourth movement provides a more definite answer, using a text from the folk collection Des Knaben Wunderhorn to articulate more explicitly the "heavenly" vision of the symphony. "When the human now asks astonished what all this means," as Mahler explained, "that child answers him with the fourth, last movement: This is the heavenly life." In strophic form, the final movement offers a contended if somewhat macabre view of life in heaven, a place where wine flows freely and animals are peaceably led to the slaughter to provide abundant food for the inhabitants. It was Mahler's preference for the solo soprano part to be performed by a singer with a high and pure register in order to convey the sweetness and youthfulness of its message.

In the end, however, it is the work's original status as a "symphonic humoresque" that the composer understood as most important for appreciating the Fourth, a "persecuted step-child that has so far known so little joy in the world," as he wrote a couple years after its premiere. "My own experience," he explained, "has been that humor of this type (as distinct from wit or good humor) is frequently not appreciated by the best of audiences." Fortunately, Mahler provides one clearly audible sonic emblem of symphony's humor: the sleigh bells that recur in the first and final movements. These bells are to be heard as not a Yuletide special effect, but rather as the tinkling of the Fool's cap, and ensure that everyone can take note of some of the humor, as thus the heavenly joy, of the Fourth.

CONTINUATION OF THE JOURNEY

It's hard to believe it was seven months ago that we finished with the soul-resounding, universe-enveloping D major chord of Mahler's Third Symphony. I think that for the rest of the lives of many of us, it will always seem like last week.

If you look on the Orchestra's website orchestra.princeton.edu under "Concerts > Past Seasons" you will discover, going back to 1989, PUO has kept coming back to Mahler, often in bunches. Obviously that's a reflection of the conductor's personal taste, of course, but it's more than just my love for this particular composer's work. First, I think it's generally agreed that Mahler's importance, as measured by the impact on ensuing generations, was as
monumental as anyone else’s—Beethoven, Wagner, Debussy, Stravinsky. This is music that students need to get to know if they are to develop a strong sense of the unfolding of musical history.

Second, and the reason they come in bunches, is that the musical style of playing—the articulation, the orchestration, the character that switches instantly from sublime to grotesque, and the very nature of the sound—all do not come easily. It is much easier for students to assimilate this on the second or even third Mahler project, for many of these issues are consistently there throughout his life’s work.

But as similar as the symphonies are to each other in essential ways, each one throws new issues at us, as Mahler took huge steps compositionally with each new work. Consider the steps from the Third to tonight’s Fourth. They are both still considered to be in the early period, the so-called “Wunderhorn” symphonies. Mahler was obsessed with the collection of German folk poetry Des Knaben Wunderhorn (The Boy’s Magic Horn), with its poems of flirtation, grotesque horror and ghosts. Some of the songs that he wrote on these texts find their way into the symphonies—the Fourth ends with one of these, with its depiction of Heaven (well, a meat-eater’s Heaven). Since they are based musically on quasi-folk song construction, they are a little simpler and more regular in phrase construction and counterpoint.

The Fourth is a bridge work. Shorter and more concentrated, it uses these same elements but now Mahler twists them in new ways, and overlaps them in some truly dizzying counterpoint, especially in the development section of the first movement and the entire demonic/angelic scherzo, with its Devil’s violin, tuned a step higher to sound more eerie. There is still some folk-ish character, but this was gone by the Fifth (it reappears astoundingly in the second movement of the Ninth).

Absorbing these differences represents the main challenges for young musicians. But—full disclosure—the real reason I keep putting Mahler before them is because, to me, no other composer penetrates to our deepest life-and-death concerns, our desire for, as Nietzsche’s text sung in the Third states, “joy... that seeks deep, deep eternity.” Other than late Beethoven, no other composer plumbed these depths. As Mahler once said “We must answer these questions if we are to go on living.”

—Michael Pratt

TEXT AND TRANSLATION FOR MAHLER, SYMPHONY NO. 4,
Fourth Movement

Wir genießen die himmlischen Freuden,
D’rum tun wir das Erdische meiden!
Kein weltlich’ Getümmel
Hört man nicht im Himmel!
Lebt alles in sanftester Ruh’!

Wir führen ein englisches Leben!
Sind dennoch ganz lustig daneben!
Wir tanzen und springen,
Wir hüpfen und singen!
Sankt Peter im Himmel sieht zu!

Johannes das Lämmlein auslasset!
Der Metzger Herodes d’rauf passet!
Wir führen ein geduldig’s,
Unschuldig’s, geduldig’s,
Ein liebliches Lämmlein zu Tod.
Sankt Lucas den Ochsen tat schlachten
Ohn’ einig’s Bedenken und Trachten.
Der Wein kost’ kein Heller
Im himmlischen Keller!

Die Englein, die backen das Brat!
Gut’ Krauter van allerhand Arten,
Die wachsen im himmlischen Garten,
Gut’ Spargel, Fisolen
Und was wir nur wollen.
Ganze Schüsseln voll sind uns bereit!
Gut’ Apfel, gut’ Birn’ und gut’ Trauben;
Die Gartner, die alles erlauben!

Wir geniesen die himmlischen Freuden,
Drum tun wir das Erdische meiden!
Kein weltlich’ Getümmel
Hört man nicht im Himmel!
Lebt alles in sanftester Ruh’!

Wir führen ein englisches Leben!
Sind dennoch ganz lustig daneben!
Wir tanzen und springen,
Wir hüpfen und singen!
Sankt Peter im Himmel sieht zu!

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Der Metzger Herodes d’rauf passet!
Wir führen ein geduldig’s,
Unschuldig’s, geduldig’s,
Ein liebliches Lämmlein zu Tod.
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Gut’ Spargel, Fisolen
Und was wir nur wollen.
Ganze Schüsseln voll sind uns bereit!
Gut’ Apfel, gut’ Birn’ und gut’ Trauben;
Die Gartner, die alles erlauben!

Willst Rehbock, willst Hasen?
Auf offener Straße sie laufen herbei!

We enjoy the heavenly pleasures,
So can dispense with earthly things!
No worldly turmoil
Is to be heard in heaven!
Everything lives in gentlest repose

We lead an angelic life!
We are, however, at times quite merry!
We dance and jump,
We skip and sing!
Saint Peter in heaven looks on!

Saint John drains the blood of the little lamb!
Herod, the butcher looks out for it!
We lead a patient,
Innocent, patient,
A lovable lamb to its death!
Saint Luke slaughters the ox
Without giving it thought or mind!
Wine costs not a penny
In heaven’s cellars!
The angels, they bake the bread!

Tasty herbs of every kind
Grow in heaven’s gardens,
Good asparagus, beans
And whatever we desire,
Whole dishfuls are ready for us.
Good apples, good pears and good grapes!
The gardeners, they let you have anything!
Do you want roebuck or hare?
In the middle of the street they come running to us!
Sollt’ ein Fasttag etwa kommen,
Alle Fische gleich mit Freuden angeschwommen,
Dort läuft schon Sankt Peter
Mit Netz und mit Köder
Zum himmlischen Weiher hinein!
Sankt Martha die Köchin muß sein!

Kein’ Musik ist ja nicht auf Erden,
Die unser verglichen kann werden.
Elefantset Jungfrauen
Zu tanzen sich trauen!
Sankt Ursula selbst dazu lacht.
Kein’ Musik ist ja nicht auf Erden,
Die unser verglichen kann werden.
Cecilia mit ihren Verwandten
Sind treffliche Hofmusikanten!
Die englischen Stimmen
Ermuntern die Sinnen,
Daß alles für Freuden erwacht.

Should, per chance, a day of fasting occur,
All the fish immediately swim up to us with joy,
There’s Saint Peter already running
With his net and bait
To the heavenly fishpond!
Saint Martha must be the cook!

No music on earth
Can compare with ours.
Eleven thousand maidens
Are bold enough to dance!
Even Saint Ursula herself laughs at the sight.
No music on earth
Can compare with ours.
Cecilia with her relatives
Are excellent musicians!
The angelic voices
Delight the senses!
So that everything for joy awakens.