

M Manhattan
School of Music

MSM CHAMBER SINFONIA

George Manahan (BM '73, MM '76), Conductor

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2018 | 7:30 PM
THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH



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MSM CHAMBER SINFONIA

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PROGRAM

DAVID NOON
(b. 1946)

Anniversary Fanfare, Op. 141 

PAUL HINDEMITH
(1924–1963)

*Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes
by Carl Maria von Weber*

Allegro

Turandot: Scherzo

Andantino

March

INTERMISSION

GUSTAV MAHLER
(1824–1896)

Symphony No. 5

PART I

1. *Trauermarsch*

2. *Stürmisch bewegt*

PART II

3. *Scherzo: Kräftig, nicht zu schnell*

PART III

4. *Adagietto*

5. *Rondo-Finale*

CENTENNIAL NOTE

David Noon was a member of the Manhattan School of Music faculty from 1981 to 2011, teaching music history and composition. He wrote over 90 works that received a first performance at MSM, including four fanfares: *Curtain Raiser*, Op. 116, commissioned by MSM for the opening concert of MSM's 75th anniversary season, premiered on October 8, 1993, by the MSM Symphony, Sixten Ehrling conducting; *Manhattan Fanfare*, Op. 129, premiered on October 7, 1995, by the MSM Philharmonia, conducted by Glen Cortese; *Anniversary Fanfare*, Op. 141, written to celebrate MSM's 80th anniversary, premiered on September 26, 1997, by the MSM Symphony, again conducted by Mr. Cortese; and a special composition for the opening of MSM's newly constructed Andersen Hall in 2001 written for three brass quintets, inspired by the great brass works of Gabrieli's Venice.

—*John Blanchard (MM '89), Institutional Historian and Director of Archives*

PROGRAM NOTES

Anniversary Fanfare, Op. 141

David Noon

David Noon's multifaceted early training in music—clarinet, bassoon, flute, piccolo, and piano lessons together with participation in choirs, bands, orchestras, and chamber ensembles—foreshadowed his equally prismatic later education and illustrious career. He received his Bachelor's degree from Pomona College, where he not only continued to sing and play bassoon and piano but began the systematic study of composition. Noon studied medieval music with the renowned Gustave Reese at New York University, where he earned his Master's degree in musicology; received another Master's degree and his doctorate in composition at Yale University; and furthered his composition skills as a Fulbright Fellow at the Music Conservatory in Warsaw. His composition teachers included Karl Kohn, Darius Milhaud, Charles Jones, Yehudi Wyner, Mario Davidovsky, and Włodzimierz Kotowski.

Noon then combined the career of a prolific composer with that of an inspiring pedagogue. His more than 265 works encompass orchestral, choral, and chamber works, including twelve string quartets, as well as an opera. He particularly relishes writing for percussion and has frequently added to his long-term project of writing pieces for every instrument and standard instrumental ensemble with percussion rather than piano. Noon taught for three years at Northwestern and for three decades at Manhattan School of Music, with overlapping appointments as Chair of the Music History and Composition departments and Dean of Academics. He was named Dean *emeritus* in 2011. He also held composer residencies at the Wurlitzer Foundation in Taos, New Mexico, and at the famed Cathedral of St. John the Divine. In 2007–08, he was a visiting professor of musicology and composition at the Central Conservatory in Beijing, China. Noon is also the author of two books of poetry, seven historical novels, two faux memoirs, and six Nadia Boulanger mysteries. He resides in New York City, Venice, and on the Greek island of Crete.

Noon's lively *Anniversary Fanfare*, commissioned for Manhattan School of Music's 80th anniversary, was completed in 1997 during one of several idyllic sojourns in Grass Valley, California. The piece opens with a scintillating chord whose harmonies become elaborated as the piece proceeds. Rhythmically charged passages, scalar runs, and an exploration of many keys bring on a striking section in 7/8 meter, punctuated by bars

of 3/4 and 4/4. A recall of the opening leads to a grand pause and emphatic conclusion. Throughout, a plethora of percussion colors contributes to the brilliant, celebratory atmosphere.

Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes by Carl Maria von Weber

Paul Hindemith

Shortly after landing in New York in 1940, Hindemith was engaged by choreographer Léonide Massine to write the music for a ballet inspired by Brueghel paintings. When Hindemith produced his draft of a scenario for this ballet, Massine proposed another to be based on works by Carl Maria von Weber. Despite Hindemith's growing misgivings about Massine, he proceeded to work on both pieces, mainly for the income. Working at his characteristic quick pace, the composer sketched the music for both ballets in two weeks, delivering them on March 31. Unfortunately, Hindemith's music did not suit Massine and their disagreement led to the termination of their association. Hindemith wrote to his wife Gertrude:

The Weber ballet has gone down the drain. I wrote two nice numbers for it, coloring the music slightly and making it a bit sharper. Ever since I gave Massine the music there have been a lot of phone calls between Buffalo and New York. It seems that the music is too complicated for them and that they simply wanted an exact orchestral arrangement of the original Weber. I am not just an orchestrator and furthermore I had already told them what I was going to do.

One really cannot work seriously with Massine. Last Monday night he even proposed that Salvador Dali do the scenic designs for the Brueghel ballet. I howled at him and said I was not going to have anything more to do with him. I will write the Brueghel ballet score this summer so he can have it in the fall and pay me for it. The sheepheads can do what they want with it, but without me.

The Brueghel score was left unfinished and Hindemith was never paid for any of his preliminary work on either ballet. He made good use, however, of his sketches for the Weber ballet—in 1943 they served as the basis for the *Symphonic Metamorphosis after Themes by Carl Maria von Weber*, composed during the period of his teaching at Yale University. The very characteristics that had brought about Massine's rejection of the earlier ballet sketches are those that in fact enhance the *Symphonic*

Metamorphosis. More than simple transcriptions, the four movements that comprise the work show Hindemith's ingenuity in absorbing and developing Weber's themes in his own style.

This work is especially playful and occasionally even raucous, reminiscent in some ways of Hindemith's own Neoclassic tendencies in the 1920s and those of his French counterparts, Les Six. The high-spirited opening movement actually follows the fourth of Weber's Eight Pieces for piano duet, Op. 60, fairly closely. The piece gives the effect of a wittily heavy-handed polka, with vivid orchestral colors resulting from pitting blocks of woodwinds against groups of brasses or strings.

Hindemith's originality and metamorphosis of Weber becomes more pronounced in the second movement, which includes an introductory fantasia, a set of variations, and a fugue in jazz style. The main theme had already been adapted by Weber in his *Turandot* Overture from Rousseau's *Dictionnaire de musique*, which in turn had been quoting a melody from the famous Sinologist Father Jean Baptiste Duhalde. The theme, then, is probably a slightly Westernized version of an ancient Chinese melody. Hindemith's introduction can best be heard with a long-term memory: the chimes intone the first four notes of the theme one at a time in augmentation, separated by flute and clarinet statements.

The third movement recalls the second of Weber's Six Pieces, also for piano duet, Op. 10, in lyric *siciliano* style. An elaborate obbligato line by the flute enhances the closing return of the main theme.

Hindemith again turned to the piano duets, Op. 60, for his finale, basing his triumphant march on Weber's *Marcia*, the seventh of the eight pieces. As in the Weber model, Hindemith's march includes a contrasting central trio section.

Symphonic Metamorphosis was first performed by the New York Philharmonic on January 20, 1944, conducted by Artur Rodzinsky, and received enthusiastic praise by critics and audience. At long last the work was used as a ballet, staged by the New York City Ballet in 1952 with choreography by George Balanchine.

Symphony No. 5

Gustav Mahler

Because of his duties as director of the Vienna Opera, Mahler did most of his composing in the summer months. He began his Fifth Symphony in 1901 at his summer place on the edge of Lake Wörth in Maiernigg, where he composed in a studio in the forest far removed from the main house. That summer he probably laid the overall plan for the Symphony and wrote the Scherzo and possibly the first two movements.

Whereas his first four symphonies had reflected his immersion in folk poetry (often pseudo-folk poetry) and song-writing, the Fifth takes a new direction, focusing more on music in the abstract—fueled in part by his studies of Bach counterpoint. Mahler could never completely divorce himself from his folk-inspired tendencies, however, and certain musical quotations, reminiscences, and extramusical ideas still crept into the Fifth.

In the summer of 1902 Mahler returned to his summer home with his beautiful and pregnant new wife, née Alma Schindler, who was also a musician and composer. Her own composing urges were soon stemmed by her famous husband; she sorrowfully made the decision to support and assist him rather than lose him. Her assistance in this case included copying the music and advising him to make certain cuts in the orchestration, particularly the percussion parts, so that more of his carefully created polyphony was audible.

On August 24, two days before leaving for Vienna, Mahler announced to his friends that the Symphony was completed, and the following day led Alma to the studio where he played it through for her on the piano. He continued to work on the score throughout the year, again thinking he was finished in the fall of 1903. Still dissatisfied, however, he made further revisions after a private run-through with the Vienna Philharmonic and again after the premiere which he conducted in Cologne on October 18, 1904. He continued to revise the Symphony even to the year he died.

Mahler typically wrestled extensively with overall structural matters such as number and order of movements. Though he had originally talked to his friend Natalie Bauer-Lechner about a four-movement symphony, the Fifth in its final form became five movements, grouped into three parts. Part I contains the first and second movements, which share motivic material; the monumental Scherzo stands alone as the middle section; and the fourth and fifth movements form the third section, again on account of their thematic connections. In regard to the tonality of the Symphony as a whole, Mahler preferred not to name one,

as it might be misunderstood (though we give a common listing here). The Symphony's carefully considered tonal scheme "narrates" an overall move from C-sharp minor to D major (C-sharp could be considered a leading tone to D).

The opening funeral march contains no romanticized notion of death as in the Fourth Symphony. It was perhaps influenced in some way by Mahler's own brush with death in February 1901 from an intestinal hemorrhage. The trumpet fanfare is one of the last few reminders of Mahler's childhood when calls from barracks and marching bands filled his ears. This fanfare returns at important junctures in the movement. The second theme, played by the violins, bears some relationship to two of Mahler's songs from the same period: the first of the *Kindertotenlieder* (Songs on the Death of Children) and "Der Tamboursg'ssell" of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, which deals with a drummer boy about to be executed. The movement contains two "trios," one a kind of hysterical outpouring and the second rising to a climax marked "*Klagend*" (lamenting) before the movement disintegrates, as if all its energy had been sapped.

The A minor second movement, which Mahler considered the Symphony's true first movement (with the *Trauermarsch* as an introduction of sorts), unfolds in sonata form. After a stormy beginning the "second" theme labeled "*Bedeutend langsamer*" (distinctly slower) quotes the second "trio" from the march almost literally. The development builds to fevered anguish, while the recapitulation summons a certain optimism toward the end with a brass "chorale," only to be submerged in hushed scattered fragments. Mahler requested that a long pause be observed before the start of the highly contrasting Scherzo.

Part II consists of Mahler's longest scherzo, one in which his typical sardonic features are held at bay, and which first establishes D major, the key in which the Symphony will end. In a highly sophisticated manner it incorporates elements of the *ländler* (Austrian folk dance in 3/4, precursor of the waltz) in its main theme and more leisurely waltz elements in the two trios. One of the most striking features, perhaps, is the "obligato" part for the first horn, beginning with the opening subject and continuing throughout in a soloistic manner.

The celebrated Adagietto in F major opens Part III, its lyric strains intoned by strings and harp. The expressive weight of this peaceful interlude has given rise to frequent independent performances. Yet in context it serves as an introduction to the Rondo-Finale due to its motivic connections—twice the Adagietto's main theme is heard in the Finale but at a faster tempo. The dreamy world of the Adagietto is that of one of

Mahler's Rückert songs, *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen* (I Am Lost to the World), to which it bears a certain thematic relationship.

The Rondo-Finale begins with a brief introduction given to the winds. The bassoon quotes one of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* songs, *Lob des hohen Verstandes* (In Praise of High Intellect) of 1896, in which a donkey judges the cuckoo a better singer than the nightingale. Mahler's use of it here may reflect the irony of using "learned" contrapuntal devices in an exuberant final movement, or perhaps may refer to the critics, who, like the donkey, were likely to misjudge his Symphony. The Rondo unfolds in a complex display of Mahler's contrapuntal techniques and the aforementioned transformations of the Adagietto material. The crown of this movement, and indeed the Symphony, is the return of the chorale that had tried to assert itself in the second movement.

Success eluded Mahler at the Cologne premiere of the Fifth Symphony. After the first rehearsal of the Scherzo on October 16, 1904, Mahler wrote to Alma:

The Scherzo is the very devil of a movement. I see it is in for a peck of troubles! Conductors for the next fifty years will take it too fast and make nonsense of it, and the public— Oh, heavens, what are they to make of this chaos, of which new worlds are forever being begotten, only to crumble in ruin the next moment? What are they to say to this primeval music, this foaming, roaring, raging sea of sound, to these dancing stars, to these breathtaking iridescent and flashing breakers? . . . Oh that I might give my Symphony its first performance fifty years after my death!

His words were right on the mark: it was approximately fifty years after the premiere of his Fifth, particularly with the Mahler centennial year of 1960, that his music began to receive its due on an international scale.

—Program notes ©Jane Vial Jaffe

ABOUT THE CONDUCTOR

George Manahan, Conductor

George Manahan is in his ninth season as Director of Orchestral Activities at Manhattan School of Music, as well as Music Director of the American Composers Orchestra and the Portland Opera. He served as Music Director of the New York City Opera for fourteen seasons and was hailed for his leadership of the orchestra. He was also Music Director of the Richmond Symphony (VA) for twelve seasons.

Recipient of Columbia University's Ditson Conductor's Award, Mr. Manahan was also honored by the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) for his "career-long advocacy for American composers and the music of our time." His Carnegie Hall performance of Samuel Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* was hailed by audiences and critics alike. "The fervent and sensitive performance that Mr. Manahan presided over made the best case for this opera that I have ever encountered," said the *New York Times*.

Mr. Manahan's guest appearances include the Orchestra of St. Luke's and the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, as well as the symphonies of Atlanta, San Francisco, Hollywood Bowl, and New Jersey, where he served as acting Music Director for four seasons. He has been a regular guest with the Curtis Institute and the Aspen Music Festival, and has also appeared with the opera companies of Seattle, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Chicago, Santa Fe, Paris, Sydney, Bologna, St. Louis, the Bergen Festival (Norway), and the Casals Festival (Puerto Rico).

His many appearances on television include productions of *La Bobème*, *Lizzie Borden*, and *Tosca* on PBS. Live from Lincoln Center's telecast of New York City Opera's production of *Madama Butterfly*, under his direction, won a 2007 Emmy Award.

George Manahan's wide-ranging recording activities include the premiere recording of Steve Reich's *Tebillim* for ECM; recordings of Edward Thomas's *Desire Under the Elms*, which was nominated for a Grammy; Joe Jackson's *Will Power*; and Tobias Picker's *Emmeline*. He has conducted numerous world premieres, including Charles Wuorinen's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, David Lang's *Modern Painters*, Hans Werner Henze's *The English Cat*, Tobias Picker's *Dolores Claiborne*, and Terence Blanchard's *Champion*.

He received his formal musical training at Manhattan School of Music, studying conducting with Anton Coppola and George Schick, and was appointed to the faculty of the school upon his graduation, at which time the Juilliard School awarded him a fellowship as Assistant Conductor with the American Opera Center. Mr. Manahan was chosen as the Exxon Arts Endowment Conductor of the New Jersey Symphony the same year he made his opera debut with the Santa Fe Opera, conducting the American premiere of Arnold Schoenberg's *Von Heute Auf Morgen*.

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George Manahan, Conductor

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Fujisawa-shi, Japan

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* Noon: *Anniversary Fanfare*, Op. 141

^ Hindemith: *Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes by Carl Maria von Weber*

+ Mahler: *Symphony No. 5 in C-sharp Minor*

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The School is dedicated to the personal, artistic, and intellectual development of aspiring musicians, from its Precollege students through those pursuing doctoral studies. Offering classical, jazz, and musical theatre training, MSM grants a range of undergraduate and graduate degrees. True to MSM's origins as a music school for children, the Precollege program continues to offer superior music instruction to 475 young musicians between the ages of 5 and 18. The School also serves some 2,000 New York City schoolchildren through its Arts-in-Education Program, and another 2,000 students through its critically acclaimed Distance Learning Program.

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