



Mahler Here & Now

FEBRUARY 3-4, 2024

Daniel R. Martin Masterworks Series | Mahler Here & Now

Saturday, February 3, 2024

Sunday, February 4, 2024

Paul Shaghoian Memorial Concert Hall

Rei Hotoda, conductor

Jasmine Habersham, soprano

Gabriela Lena Frank

Contested Eden

Canto para California
in extremis

Intermission

Mahler

Symphony No. 4 in G major

- I. Bedächtig. Nicht eilen
- II. In gemächlicher Bewegung. Ohne Hast
- III. Ruhvoll
- IV. Sehr behaglich

IN MEMORY OF

Lewis & Virginia Eaton

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Program Notes



Gabriela Lena Frank (B. 1972)

Contested Eden

American composer and pianist Gabriela Lena Frank was born in Berkeley, California, to parents of widely mixed background: Her mother is of Peruvian/Chinese ancestry and her father of

Lithuanian/Jewish descent. A graduate of Rice University in Houston and the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, Frank has traveled extensively in South America drawing on its folk culture as inspiration for her compositions. The recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2009, she is currently a free-lance composer living in California's Mendocino County, where she founded her own music school, The Creative Academy of Music.

Frank composed *Contested Eden* in 2019 for the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music. It is an elegy to the climate crisis, a reflection on years of fires that devastated the countryside around Frank's home, demonstrating the fragility of life in the climate crisis. Frank calls it a secular elegy, split into two movements: "The first movement is essentially a prayer, and it goes super intimate. It can be played with a string quartet, just four players."

The second movement, titled "in extremis, uses the full orchestra in a big orchestral swell which breaks, and as it breaks apart, one singing violin line is left up at the top, with commentary from the other instruments". Then, over the next few minutes, it takes its time to wind its way down this one melodic arch before it passes to the violas, to the cellos, to the basses.

According to Frank, the piece ends on a hopeful note, "in tribute to the Eden that's my beloved native state."



Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

Symphony No. 4 in G Major

Photo credit: Moritz Na?hr

Gustav Mahler, one of the last great figures of the late Romantic movement, was at the same time one of the harbingers of twentieth-century music. Growing up Jewish but a convert to Catholicism, he faced culturally-ingrained anti-Semitism, and his volatile, eccentric, hypochondriacal personality made him a social outcast. Most of Mahler's music expresses his battle against fate and the uncertainty of existence – which may explain how he could have written two of the *Kindertotenlieder* (Songs on the Death of Children) immediately following the birth of his second daughter. In spite of his difficult personality, his brilliant conducting outweighed his negative qualities and his star rose quickly in the opera world.

Born in a small town in what is now the Czech Republic, Mahler showed early musical gifts. He entered the Vienna Conservatory at age 15 and in the summer of 1880, at 20, he landed the first of a series of minor conducting jobs in a summer theater in Austria, an apprenticeship which was essential for advancement in the world of opera. From 1891 to 1897, he was conductor at the Hamburg Opera and from 1894, of the subscription concerts there as well. By 1897 he was named *Kapellmeister* and then Director of the most prestigious musical organization of the time, the Vienna *Hofoper*. He left the post in acrimony in 1907, the result of Vienna's virulent anti-Semitism and

Mahler's abrasive personality.

Such a meteoric rise and hectic schedule left little time for composing, usually only during the summer recess. Mahler, nevertheless, completed nine massive symphonies and numerous songs and song cycles. These works, especially the symphonies, were innovative and challenging; for nearly 50 years they were only occasionally performed. Only in the 1960s did they finally become standard fare in orchestra programs, championed by Leonard Bernstein. As late as 1972, however, Bernstein had to cajole and browbeat the Vienna Philharmonic to take Mahler's music seriously.

Mahler created in his Fourth Symphony a work light in spirit and relatively simple in style, a relief from his usual musical complexity and melancholy philosophical underpinnings. While the extreme mood swings of his other symphonies expose the audience to an emotional roller coaster, the Fourth is easily digested – even charming. It is short for a Mahler symphony (55-60 minutes) and utilizes a more modest orchestra without trombones and tubas, although with extra woodwinds.

The symphony is of mixed vintage. Mahler composed the first three movements during the summers of 1899-1900, but he had already composed the fourth movement as a song for soprano solo and piano in 1892, which he immediately orchestrated. He used a fragment of it in the Third Symphony and finally the entire song as the conclusion to the Fourth

The central idea of the Fourth Symphony expresses a child's view of heaven, with its promise of eternal peace and happiness set against the terror of death. The first movement, with its opening sleigh bell motive, creates a warm, cheerful atmosphere.

By contrast, the second movement sets the teeth on edge – as it was intended to do. It includes a solo violin tuned one step sharp to be played, as Mahler put it, "*Wie eine Fiedel*," like a fiddle. Mahler intended the theme as "...the gruesome dance of death, led by a figure of popular demonology, *Freund Hein spielt auf* (Goodman Death leads the music). It is the mistuned fiddle of the skeletal figure of death."

The following *Adagio*, a theme and set of free variations, is one of Mahler's most beautiful, serene creations. Only towards the end, does its ethereal mood take on a slightly darker resonance in the concluding mysterious sound of pianissimo violin harmonics and flute.

The final movement is marked *Sehr behaglich* (very cozy or comfortable), reflected in the musical themes as well as the text. In sharp contrast to the massive endings of most of Mahler's other symphonies, this symphony ends with a slow, peaceful fade. While seemingly incongruous with the rest of the Symphony, the soprano's song – which, like many of Mahler's songs, comes from the anthology of folk poetry *Des Knabens Wunderhorn* (The Youth's Magic Horn). It develops some of the programmatic elements in the rest of the work, including the opening sleigh bell motive and the dance of death in the Scherzo.

The Munich premiere took place in November 1901. Yet despite the relative accessibility of the music itself, it was a critical disaster. Both the critics and the public found the work confusing, neither a symphony nor program music – some even suggesting that it was a sick musical joke. Likewise, even admirers of the Symphony have seen it as a hybrid form combining program music using traditional symphonic sonata-allegro, scherzo and variation structures. One critic, in fact, stated the work should be played backwards, like the Hebrew Scriptures. Only the fact that the critic was himself Jewish saves this remark from being one of the innumerable anti-Semitic slights aimed at Mahler throughout his career in Germany and Vienna.

Das himmlische Leben

Wir genießen die himmlischen Freuden,
D'rum tun wir das irdische 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!
Sank Peter im Himmel sieht zu!
Johannes das Lämmlein auslasset,
Der Metzger Herodes drauf passet!
Wie führen ein geduldig's,
Unschuldig's, geduldig's,
Ein liebliches Lämmlein zu Tod!
Sankt Lukas den Ochsen tät schlachten
Ohn' einig's Bedenken und Achten;
Der Wein kost't kein Heller
Im himmlischen Keller;
Die Englein, die backen das Brot.

Gut' Kräuter von allerhand Arten,
Die wachsen im himmlischen Garten!
Gut' Spargel, Fisolen,
Und was wir nun wollen,
Ganze Schüsseln voll sind uns bereit!
Gut' Äpfel, gut' Birn' und gut Trauben!

The Heavenly Life

We relish the joys of heaven
Therefore everything earthly, we shun.
No worldly commotion
Is heard here in heaven!
All live in the sweetest repose!
We live an angelic life!
And are merry as well!
We dance and we jump
We hop and we sing!
In heaven, Saint Peter is watching!
Saint John spares the little lamb.
The butcher Herod is watching!
As we lead a patient
Innocent and patient
And meek little lamb to its death!
Saint Luke the oxen did slaughter
Without any scruple or heed;
The wine costs no farthing
In the heavenly cellar,
And the cherubs, they bake all the
bread.
Tasty greens of every kind
Grow in the heavenly garden!
Fine asparagus and beans
All we could wish for
Great bowlfuls for us are ready!
Good apples, good pears good grapes,

Die Gärtner, die alles erlauben!
Willst Rehbock, willst Hasen?
Auf offener Strassen
Sie laufen herbei!
Sollt' ein Festtag 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 unsrer verglichen kann werden.
Elftausend Jungfrauen
Zu tanzen sich trauen!
Sankt Ursula selbst dazu lacht!
Cäcilia mit ihren Verwandten
Sind treffliche Hofmusikanten!
Die englischen Stimmen
Ermuntern die Sinnen!
Das Alles für Freuden erwacht.

The gardeners will allow us all!
You want deer, you want hare?
In open roads
They run hither!
Whenever a feast day arrives
All fish swim up happily!

Saint Peter pursues them
With net and with bait,
Right into the heaven's fishpond.
Saint Martha must be the cook!
There is surely no music on earth
That compares with ours here.
Eleven thousand young maidens
Dance with such confidence!
Saint Ursula laughs at the sight!
Cecilia with all of her kinfolk
Are marvelous court musicians!
The angelic voices
Enliven all the senses
So that all will awaken with joy!

Program notes by:
Joseph & Elizabeth Kahn
Wordpros@mindspring.com
www.wordprosmusic.com

| Artist Biographies



Rei Hotoda

conductor

Now in her sixth season as Music Director of the Fresno Philharmonic, conductor Rei Hotoda has been hailed as an inexhaustible dynamo with a deep commitment to reimagining the 21st century concert experience. Her vision can be seen through her thought-provoking programming, passionate allyship to marginalized artists, advocacy for arts education, and an unwavering commitment to presenting the music of our times.

Her success as the Music Director of the Fresno Philharmonic since 2017 has resulted in the extension of her tenure through the 2025 season. She has worked tirelessly to build first-time and unique connections with the Fresno community with an eye toward reaching different audiences with a new music concert series, *Proxima*, and special concerts at South Stadium. She has reimagined the post-concert experience by creating the ever popular *Stay Tuned* series, and her programming continues to push through the preconceived notions of the classical concert-going experience, offering audiences works by often marginalized composers and today's leading voices in the field. Through her efforts, she has successfully broken down the barriers that often exist between artist and listener and reestablished the Fresno Philharmonic as a leader in the community it serves.

Rei has appeared as a guest conductor with many of today's leading ensembles, including the Symphony Orchestras of Baltimore, Chicago, St. Louis, Dallas, Detroit, Toronto, Winnipeg, Louisville, Hawaii and Utah as well as the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, among others. Her interpretations of such epic centerpieces of the classical canon such as Shostakovich's Symphony No. 8 and Britten's War Requiem, make her one of the most sought-after conductors of today. She is a tireless advocate for the music of our time, and most recently conducted the world premieres of Derek Bermel, John Wineglass, Kenneth Froelich, Cynthia Lee Wong, Kevin Day, Dinuk Wijeratne as well as works by seminal composers such as Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate, Jessie Montgomery and Hawaiian composer, Michael-Thomas Foumai to much acclaim. As a

champion of today's living composers and an artist that is dedicated to amplifying marginalized voices, Rei's innovative programming and interdisciplinary collaborations continue to position her as a leader in the industry.

Rei is also an active and critically acclaimed keyboardist and embraces her time conducting from the piano and harpsichord. One of her many recent highlights was leading the Fresno Philharmonic from the piano in Beethoven's monumental Triple Concerto as part of the orchestra's *Beethoven @250* celebration and from the harpsichord in Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 as part of their Digital Masterworks series. In the 2021-22 season, she conducted both the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and the Fresno Philharmonic from the keyboard in Mozart's Concerto for Two Pianos in E-flat major.

Rei is the proud recipient of several prestigious awards, including the 2006 Taki-Alsop Conducting Fellowship, created by Marin Alsop to mentor women conductors. Additionally, she has received a Peabody Career Development Grant, the Women's Philharmonic Scholarship, and an Illinois Arts Council International Arts Exchange Grant. Her teachers and mentors include Gustav Meier, Marin Alsop, Jaap van Zweden and Thierry Fischer.



Jasmine Habersham

soprano

American soprano Jasmine Habersham is a versatile and dynamic performing artist whose voice has been hailed as “exquisite” by *Broadway World* and possessing a “well-controlled, silvery tone had an alluring presence” by *Opera Today*.

She has performed as a featured soloist in numerous concert productions including Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*, Schubert's *Mass in G*, Bach's *B Minor Mass*, Handel's *Messiah*, and Duke Ellington's *Concert of Sacred Music*.

A finalist in the Lotte Lenya Competition, she is well-versed as a crossover artist in opera and musical theatre. She has performed the roles Edith in *The Pirates of Penzance* with The Atlanta Opera, Susannah in *The Musical: Tintypes* with Janiec Opera Company, and Pearl in *Morning Star* with Cincinnati Opera Fusion. She has won numerous awards including 2nd Place in the 2018 Southeast Regional Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, The Strauss Award in the National Orpheus Competition, the John Alexander Memorial Award from University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and the Young Artist Guild Award from Central City Opera.

Ms. Habersham has participated in several esteemed young artists programs including with The Glimmerglass Festival, Central City Opera, Kentucky Opera, and the Brevard Music Center. She received her Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance at Shorter College and her Master of Music and Artist Diploma from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.



Gabriela Lena Frank (B. 1972)

composer

Currently serving as Composer-in-Residence with the storied Philadelphia Orchestra and included in the Washington Post's list of the most significant women composers in history (August, 2017), identity has always been at the center of composer/pianist Gabriela Lena Frank's music. Born in Berkeley, California (September, 1972), to a mother of mixed Peruvian/Chinese ancestry and a father of Lithuanian/Jewish descent, Gabriela explores her multicultural heritage through her compositions. Inspired by the works of Bela Bartók and Alberto Ginastera, Gabriela has traveled extensively throughout South America in creative exploration. Her music often reflects not only her own personal experience as a multi-racial Latina, but also refract her studies of Latin American cultures, incorporating poetry, mythology, and native musical styles into a western classical framework that is uniquely her own.

Moreover, she writes, "There's usually a story line behind my music; a scenario or character." While the enjoyment of her works can be obtained solely from her music, the composer's program notes enhance the listener's experience, for they describe how a piano part mimics a marimba or pan-pipes, or how a movement is based on a particular type of folk song, where the singer is mockingly crying. Even a brief glance at her titles evokes specific imagery: **Leyendas (Legends): An Andean Walkabout; La Llorona (The Crying Woman): Tone Poem for Viola and Orchestra; and Concertino Cusqueño (Concertino in the Cusco style)**. Gabriela's compositions also reflect her virtuosity as a pianist — when not composing, she is a sought-after performer, specializing in contemporary repertoire.

In 2020, Gabriela was a recipient of the prestigious [25th anniversary Heinz Award](#) in the Arts and Humanity category with an unrestricted cash prize of \$250,000, a meaningful portion of which was donated by Gabriela to the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music. The award recognized Gabriela for breaking gender, disability, and cultural barriers in the classical music industry, and for her work as an activist on behalf of emerging composers of all demographics and aesthetics.

Winner of a Latin Grammy and nominated for Grammys as both composer and pianist, Gabriela also holds a Guggenheim Fellowship and a USA Artist Fellowship given each year to fifty of the country's finest artists. Her work has been described as "crafted with unself-conscious mastery" (Washington Post), "brilliantly effective" (New York Times), "a knockout" (Chicago Tribune), "glorious" (Los Angeles Times) and "a magical world premiere" (Wall Street Journal). Gabriela is regularly commissioned by luminaries such as cellist Yo Yo Ma, the King's Singers, the Cuarteto Latinoamericano with guitarist Manuel Barrueco, and conductors Marin Alsop and Yannick Nézet-Séguin. She has also received orchestral commissions and performances from leading American orchestras including the Chicago Symphony, the Boston Symphony, the Atlanta Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra and the San Francisco Symphony. Before her current residency with the Philadelphia Orchestra for

which she will compose the 45-minute **Picaflor (Hummingbird)**, in 2017 she completed her four-year tenure as composer-in-residence with the Detroit Symphony under maestro Leonard Slatkin, composing [Walkabout: Concerto for Orchestra](#), as well as a second residency with the Houston Symphony under Andrés Orozco-Estrada for whom she composed the [Conquest Requiem](#), a large-scale choral/orchestral work in Spanish, Latin, and Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs.

In 2017, Gabriela founded the award-winning Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music.

| Orchestra Roster

VIOLIN I

Stephanie Sant'Ambrogio, *Concertmaster*

Jay Zhong

Lianna Elmore

John Morrice

Amy Lindsey

Gabrielle Wunsch

Brynn Albanese

Rebecca Ward

Rudolfina Sjostrand

Erin Adams

Sarah Coyl

Claire Tatman

VIOLIN II

Caitlin McSherry, *Principal*

Cynthia Stuart

Darren Sagawa

Joseph Galamba

Gaylene Debra Joe

Barbara Schaefer

Benjamin Porter

Dagenais Smiley

Petr Masek

Calvin Gregory

VIOLA

Dustin Budish, *Acting Principal*

Lynn Grants

Heather Gardner

Matthew Smoke

Ivo Bokulic

Alex Navarro

Matt Oshida

CELLO

Isaac Pastor-Chermak, *Acting Principal*

Alicja Blanquart

Drew Ford

Alana Shannon

Dieter Wulfhorst

Boris Nixon

Emma Hill

Nicholas Anton

BASS

Andy Butler, *Principal*

Nicholas Vegas

Heidi Franklin

Keith Biondi

Benjamin Green

Sheldon Schlesinger

FLUTE

Catherine Baker, *Acting Principal*

Pamela Thoman Ellzey

Colleen Fernandez

Patricia Cloud

OBOE

Rong-Huey Liu, *Principal*

Kathy Oh

Marissa Honda

CLARINET

Peter Nevin, *Principal*

Jeannie Psomas

Lea Steffens

BASSOON

Jordan Farber, *Acting Principal*

Katherine Ruiz

Ashlea Sheridan

HORN

Meredith Brown, *Principal*

Lauren Varley

Alex Camphouse

Jennie Blomster

Sarah Ference

TRUMPET

John Freeman, *Principal*

Ron Franklin
Nathan Sobieralski

TROMBONE

Bruce Chrisp, *Principal*
Dillon MacIntyre

TIMPANI

Alex Orfaly, *Acting Principal*

PERCUSSION

Matthew Darling, *Acting Principal*
Tammy van der Paardt
Craig Cory
Joe Lizama

Harp

Laura Porter, *Principal*

Piano

Kathryn Eames, *Principal*