

MAHLER'S DAS LIED

WITH THE NASHVILLE SYMPHONY

CLASSICAL SERIES

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, MARCH 8 & 9, AT 8 PM

NASHVILLE SYMPHONY

GIANCARLO GUERRERO, *conductor*

TOBIAS PICKER, *narrator*

MICHELLE DEYOUNG, *mezzo soprano*

ANTHONY DEAN GRIFFEY, *tenor*

TOBIAS PICKER

The Encantadas

Dream

Desolation

Delusion

Diversity

Din

Dawn

Tobias Picker, narrator

– INTERMISSION –

GUSTAV MAHLER

Das Lied von der Erde (The Song of the Earth)

Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde (The Drinking Song of Earth's Misery)

Der Einsame im Herbst (The Lonely One in Autumn)

Von der Jugend (Of Youth)

Von der Schönheit (Of Beauty)

Der Trunkene im Frühling (The Drunk in Spring)

Der Abschied (The Parting)

Michelle DeYoung, mezzo soprano

Anthony Dean Griffey, tenor

*This concert will last 2 hours and 10 minutes,
including a 20-minute intermission.*



TOBIAS PICKER

The Encantadas

- Hailed by *The Wall Street Journal* as “our finest composer for the lyric stage,” Tobias Picker has garnered critical acclaim for his opera writing, but also boasts a rich catalog of concertos and symphonic works, including *Opera Without Words*, which the Nashville Symphony performed and recorded in 2017.
- Composed in 1983, *The Encantadas* was a commission intended, in part, to commemorate the 175th anniversary of the Albany Academy, an independent college preparatory school. Since Herman Melville had briefly attended the Albany Academy as a boy, the author’s work was proposed as a starting point for Picker’s composition.
- *The Encantadas* draws on Melville’s book of the same name, which collects 10 prose “sketches” depicting striking features of the Galápagos Islands. For this piece, Picker employed the now rarely used “melodrama” tradition, in which text is recited dramatically by a narrator (in this case, Picker himself) alongside the score.
- Picker became intrigued by Melville’s obsessive use of alliteration in *The Encantadas*, which is reflected in his titles for the six movements, all beginning with the letter D. The work flows like a dream, from the opening frame of the narrator looking back in memory to the conclusion at the break of day. The music itself begins on the note of D, played by low strings, harp and piano.
- Nashville Symphony music director Giancarlo Guerrero’s connection to *The Encantadas* dates back to 2003, when the Minnesota Orchestra — where he was serving as associate conductor at the time — programmed the piece.



GUSTAV MAHLER

Das Lied von der Erde (The Song of the Earth)

- Mahler composed this piece mostly in 1908, following a tumultuous year during which he was diagnosed with a fatal heart disease and mourning the loss of one of his two daughters to scarlet fever. The previous October, he was also forced to resign his post as director of Vienna’s main opera house, the Hofoper, due to anti-Semitism.
- As a result, *Das Lied von der Erde* has deep autobiographical connections to Mahler’s newfound sense of mortality. In a letter to his protégé Bruno Walter, the composer described having lost “any calm and peace of mind I ever achieved.”
- Today, Mahler is celebrated for redefining the scope of the symphony. As he famously told Jean Sibelius in 1907, “A symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything.” With *Das Lied von der Erde*, the Austrian composer broke even more new ground, creating a hybrid song-symphony in which each movement sets a text and — like Picker’s *The Encantadas* — straddles musical, dramatic and poetic realms.
- In a departure from the Western worldviews that defined his preceding symphonies, Mahler embraced Eastern influences in *Das Lied von der Erde*, consistent with an interest in Asian art that was fashionable at the time. For the text of the piece, he adapted seven poems from an anthology of Chinese poetry, *Die chinesische Flöte*, which collected work attributed to poets associated with the Tang Dynasty.

TOBIAS PICKER



Born on July 18, 1954, in New York City, where he currently resides part-time

Composed: 1983

First performance: October 14, 1983, with Julius Hegyi conducting the Albany Symphony Orchestra and Michael Arkin as the narrator

First Nashville Symphony performance:

These are the Nashville Symphony's first performances.

Estimated length: 30 minutes

The Encantadas

At 64, Tobias Picker remains one of the most fascinating and versatile composers at work today. Singled out by *The Wall Street Journal* as “our finest composer for the lyric stage,” he has written for the Metropolitan Opera (*An American Tragedy*) and other leading companies, and — evidence of the enduring quality of his work — his operas continue to be regularly revived internationally. The Oliver Sacks book *Awakenings*, which inspired Picker’s widely toured ballet score from 2010, is also the source for his latest opera, which will receive its world premiere next season at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

Picker has also composed a rich catalog of symphonic works and concertos. A recent example is the large-scale orchestral piece *Opera Without Words*, which the Nashville Symphony performed and recorded in 2017. *The Encantadas* might be described as another “orchestral opera” — with many words, but without singing. Giancarlo Guerrero and the Nashville Symphony are recording these performances, which they will combine with their recording of *Opera Without Words* for future worldwide release on Naxos.

Indeed, with its intersection of theatrical and symphonic dimensions, *The Encantadas* anticipates the two directions in which Picker’s artistic passions evolved over the course of his career. Dating from 1983, early in the composer’s career, the work was commissioned as part of a consortium project. Picker was one of five composers asked to compose pieces for a group of five orchestras in the Northeast. Peter Kermani, past president of the Albany Symphony, organized the consortium, and *The Encantadas* is dedicated to him.

Picker’s work was additionally intended to commemorate the 175th anniversary of the Albany Academy, an independent college preparatory

school. Since Herman Melville had briefly attended the Albany Academy as a boy, Kermani suggested selecting a text by the legendary writer. Picker initially considered a treatment of *Moby-Dick* but, on the advice of writer, friend and Melville expert Renaud Charles Bruce, he arrived at the idea of using selections from *The Encantadas*. Published in *Putnam’s Magazine* in 1854, three years after the epic novel, *The Encantadas* provided the composer with precisely what he was seeking: “something that had a narrative arc but that also existed in the border zone between poetry and prose,” as Picker recalls.

In the wake of the commercial failure of *Moby-Dick* and its even more-experimental follow-up (*Pierre*), *The Encantadas*, or *Enchanted Isles*, garnered Melville a much-needed positive reception that recalled the widespread success of his first books. Like *Moby-Dick* and the early works (*Typee* and *Omoo*), *The Encantadas* mines the author’s experiences encountering the Galápagos Islands while he was at sea on the whaling ship, the *Acushnet*. Melville’s trip occurred less than a decade after Charles Darwin’s history-making voyage to these volcanic islands west of Ecuador, but rather than evidence for the theory of natural selection, Melville stored away a host of powerful images from a landscape he perceived as “plutonian.”

Sometimes called a novella, Melville’s *The Encantadas* — actually one of the older place-names that circulated at the time for the Galápagos — unfolds as 10 heavily symbolic prose “sketches,” each revolving around the striking features of the land and seascape. Tennessee Williams homed in on the dramatic character of Melville’s writing by adapting the image of the Galápagos as a place where nature’s violence reigns in his one-act play, *Suddenly Last Summer*.

The Encantadas has become one of Picker's most widely performed scores, with versions available for the narrator in Spanish, German, Japanese and even Romanian, and the narrator's part has attracted an impressive roster of actors, from Sir John Gielgud to Claire Bloom.

Tobias Picker decided to draw on the older tradition of the “melodrama,” now a rarity. This refers to a particular genre of composition in which a text is recited dramatically alongside a score that functions like incidental music to a play. The popular connotation of “melodrama” as sensationalized plot at the expense of all else is, in fact, the opposite of what happens here: a plot is barely hinted at, while the entire emphasis is on the character of the islands, in words and music alike.

The composer worked with the “chunks of texts” that Bruce pinpointed to shape a coherent libretto. “Long before I had written my first opera, *Emmeline* [1994], I was involved in a process that was similar to working with a librettist,” he explains. Picker underscores his admiration of Melville’s vivid language: “By the time I was done composing it, I felt like I’ve lived there, but I’ve still never visited the Galápagos.” The overall shape that resulted is a six-movement work presented as the recollections of an old man thinking back on his youthful adventures observing these islands.

The Encantadas has since gone on to become one of Picker’s most widely performed scores, with versions available for the narrator in Spanish, German, Japanese and even Romanian. The narrator’s part, in particular, has attracted an impressive roster of actors, from Sir John Gielgud to Claire Bloom. In 1986 Pinchas Zukerman commissioned a chamber orchestra version to use for a dance company that choreographed the piece. When the Minnesota Orchestra programmed the work in 2003, recalls the composer, Giancarlo Guerrero was associate conductor there, and *The Encantadas* provided his entrée into Picker’s music.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Picker became intrigued by Melville’s obsessive use of alliteration in *The Encantadas*, reflected in his titles for the six movements: “Dream,” “Desolation,” “Delusion,” “Diversity,” “Din” and “Dawn.” Overall, the shape of the work flows in the manner of a dream, from the opening frame of the narrator looking back in memory to the

conclusion at the break of day. The music itself begins on octave D’s, pulsing on low strings, harp and piano. This ominous tread returns at the end of the first movement, followed by a dreamy violin solo.

Picker does not prescribe any rhythmic patterns to set the words, but the score indicates specifically where the moments of narration are to occur. Sometimes the musical elements are specifically linked up to certain words, while in other passages, the narrator speaks unaccompanied before the music enters in. The musical language is highly descriptive on its own terms, at times drawing out the implications of a particular image. Picker’s focus in both the selections chosen and the music is on the ambiguous, dualistic aspect of the natural phenomena Melville describes. The cruel, “evilly enchanted” aspect of these islands comes menacingly into the foreground, but so does their ethereal and spectacular beauty.

Each movement inhabits a sound world of its own, focusing on specific timbres. In the apocalyptic landscape of “Desolation,” a place where “change never comes,” for example, it is dry and hissing, while the harsh sonorities of “Delusion” vividly underscore Melville’s dark vision of a “fallen” world. “Diversity” fittingly encompasses a wide spectrum of moods, including the famous tortoises and varied bird pictures: downright comical in the waltz-parody given the penguin, and lonely and mysterious in a long piano solo that etches the pensive pelicans at the end of the movement. Birds also inhabit the fifth movement, which arrives at a violent climax, suggesting the “dissonant din” of the wild birds’ cries. Here, too, the narration is set completely apart from the music. *The Encantadas* concludes — as does the Mahler work that follows — with slow, meditative music. Picker’s muted strings and languid winds convey the fantasy dissolving, as “nature seemed...half suspended in jaded expectation of the sun.”

The Encantadas is scored for 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (2nd doubling English horn), 2 clarinets (2nd doubling bass clarinet), 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, 3 percussionists, harp, piano and strings.

TEXT OF 'THE ENCANTADAS'

I. Dream

Sometimes, even now,
when leaving the crowded city
to wander out July and August
Among the Adirondack Mountains...
In some deep-wooded gorge,
Surrounded by prostrate trunks of
blasted pines...

I recall, as in a dream, my other
and far-distant roving
In the baked heart of the Encantadas.
I behold again the vitreous inland rocks
Worn down, and grooved into deep ruts
by ages and ages of the slow dragging of
tortoises in quest pools of scanty water...
And I can hardly resist the feelings that in
my time I have indeed slept upon evilly
enchanted ground.

II. Desolation

Take five-and-twenty heaps of cinders
Dumped here and there in an outside city lot.
Image some of them
Magnified into mountains and the vacant
lot the sea...

And you will have a fit idea of
the Encantadas, or Enchanted Isles.
Rather a group of extinct volcanoes
than of isles...
Looking much as the world at large might, after
A final conflagration.

Their special curse...
Which exalts them in desolation above
Idumea and the Pole...
Is that to them change never comes.

Neither the change of seasons nor the
change of sorrows. Cut by the Equator,
They know not autumn, and they know
not spring.

Already reduced to the lees of fire,
Ruin, itself, can

Work little more upon them.
Showers refresh the deserts,
But in these isles rain never falls.

Like split Syrian gourds
Left withering in the sun,
They are cracked by an everlasting drought
Beneath a torrid sky.
"Have mercy upon me," the wailing spirit
Of the Encantadas seems to cry,
"For I am tormented in this flame."

Man and wolf alike disown them.
Little but reptile life is here found...

No voice, no low, no howl is heard.
The chief sound of life here is a hiss.

III. Delusion

In many places
The coast is rock-bound, or, more properly,
Clinker-bound; tumbled masses
Of blackish or greenish stuff
Like the dross of an iron-furnace
Forming dark clefts and caves,
Into which a ceaseless sea pours a fury of foam;

Overhanging them with a swirl of gray,
haggard mist, amidst which
Sail screaming flights of unearthly
birds heightening the
Dismal din.

However calm the sea without,
There is no rest for these swells and
those rocks; they lash
And are lashed, even
When the outer ocean
Is most at peace with itself.
On the oppressive, clouded days,
Such as are peculiar to this part of the
Water Equator,
The dark, vitrified masses, many of
which raise themselves among white
Whirlpools and breakers in detached
and perilous places off the shore,

Present a most Plutonian sight. I no world
but a fallen one
Could such lands exist.

Those parts of the strand free from the marks
of fire, stretch away in wide level beaches
of multitudinous dead shells, with here and
there decayed bits of sugar-cane, bamboos,
and cocoanuts washed upon this
Other and darker world from the charming
palm isles to the westward and southward;
All the way from Paradise to Tartarus;
While mixed with the
Relics of distant beauty you
Will sometimes see fragments of charred
wood and mouldering ribs
Of wrecks.
Neither will any one be surprised at
meeting these last, after observing the
Conflicting currents which eddy throughout
the wide channels of the entire group.

The capriciousness of the tides of air
sympathizes with those of the sea.
Nowhere is the wind so light, baffling,
unreliables, and so given to perplexing calms,
As at the Encantadas.

IV. Diversity

One noon my ship was cruising in close vicinity
to the isles. Partly by way of freak, and partly by
way of spying out so strange a country, a boat's
crew was sent ashore.

It was after sunset when the adventures
returned. Ropes were dropt over, and
presently three huge antediluvian-looking
tortoises were landed on deck. These were
none of your schoolboy mud-turtles... but
black as widower's weeds, heavy as chests of
plate, with vast shells medallioned and orbed
like shields, and dented and blistered like
shields that have breasted a battle. Shaggy,
too, here and there, with dark green moss,
and slimy with the spray of the sea.

The great feeling inspired by these creatures
was that of age: dateless, indefinite endurance.

They seemed newly crawled from beneath the
foundations of the world.

These mystic creatures, suddenly translated
by night from unutterable solitudes to our
peopled deck, affected me in a manner not
easy to unfold.

As I lay in my hammock that night, overhead
I heard the slow weary draggings of the three
ponderous strangers along the encumbered
deck. One ceased his movements altogether
just before the midwatch.

At sunrise I found him butted like a battering-
ram against the immovable foot of the foremast,
and still striving, tooth and nail, to force the
impossible passage.
In that strange infatuation of hopeless toil
which so often possesses them...
They seem the victims of a
downright enchanter.
I have known them in their journeyings
to ram themselves heroically against rocks,
And long abide there,
Nudging, wriggling, wedging, in order
to displace them,
And so hold on their inflexible path.
Their crowning curse is their drudging impulse
to straightforwardness in a belittered world.

To gaze abroad upon the Encantadas there
is the noble point of
Observation... Rock Rodondo.
Two hundred and
Fifty feet high, rising straight from the sea.
When first seen afar, it is invariably mistaken
for a sail.
When four leagues away of a golden hazy noon,
It seems some Spanish Admiral's ship,
Stacked up with glittering canvas...
But coming nigh the enchanted frigate is
transformed apace into a craggy keep...
sole survivor
Of some perished castle.

From a broken stair-like base, washed
as the steps of
A water-palace by the waves,

The tower rose in entablatures of strata to a
Shaven summit. These uniform layers
At their lines of junction project
Flatly into encircling shelves, from
Top to bottom, rising one above
another in graduated series.
All these rocky ledges are alive
With unnumbered sea-fowl.
Eaves upon eaves, nests
Upon nests.

Let us first glance low to the lowermost shelf
of all. What outlandish beings are these?
Erect as men... they stand all around the rock
like sculptured carytides, supporting the next
range of eaves above.

Their bills short...
Their feet seemingly legless...the members
at their sides neight fin, wing,
Nor arm. And truly neither fish, flesh nor
fowl is the penguin...
Without exception the
Most ambiguous creature yet discovered
by man. Though dabbling in all three
Elements...and indeed possessing some
rudimental claims to all...
The penguin is at home in none.
On land it stumps...
Afloat it sculls...
In the air it flops.
As if ashamed of her failure...
Nature keeps this ungainly child hidden away
At the ends of the earth.

But look, what are you woe-begone regiments
drawn up on the next shelf? Pelicans. A pensive
race, they stand for hours together
Without motion. Their dull ashy plumage
imparts an aspect as if they had been powdered
over with cinders. A Penitential bird,
Indeed, fitly haunting the shore of the clinkered
Encantadas...whereon tormented Job himself
might have well sat down and
Scraped himself with potsherds.

V. Din

Rodondo is the Aviary of Ocean.

Birds light here which never touched mast
or tree. Hermit-birds... which ever fly alone.
Cloud-birds... familiar with unpierced zones
of air. As eyes ascend from shelf to shelf, we
find the tenants of the tower serially disposed
in order of their magnitude: gannets, black
and speckled haglets, jay, sea-hens, sperm-
whale birds, gulls of all varieties. Thrones,
princedom, powers... dominating one above
another in senatorial array. All would have
been bewitchingly quiescent, were it not for the
demoniac din created by the birds. Not only
were the eaves rustling with them, but they flew
densley overhead, spreading themselves into a
winged and continually shifting canopy.

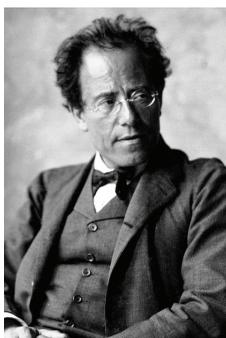
With ear-splitting cries the wild birds celebrate
their matins. Each moment... flights push
from the tower, and join the aerial choir
hovering overhead... while their places below
are supplied by darting myriads in dischord of
commotion.

As day advances the dissonant din augments.

VI. Dawn

I found myself just before dawn of day close
under the moon-shadow of Rodondo.
Its aspect was heightened, and yet softened,
by the strange double twilight of the hour.
The great full moon burnt in the low west
like a half-spent beacon, casting a soft mellow
tinge upon the sea... like that cast by a waning
fire of the embers upon a midnight hearth.

*Along the entire east the invisible sun sent
pallid intimations of his coming. The wind
was light... the waves languid... the stars
twinkled with a faint effulgence. The twilight
was just enough to catch Rodondo in its perfect
mood, without tearing away the dim investiture
of wonder. All nature seemed to supine with the
long night watch, and half suspended in jaded
expectation of the sun.



GUSTAV MAHLER

Born on July 7, 1860, in Kalischt, Bohemia; died on May 18, 1911, in Vienna.

Das Lied von der Erde (The Song of the Earth)

Composed: July–September 1908, with final touches in 1909

First performance: November 20, 1911, with Bruno Walter conducting at the Munich Tonhalle; the two soloists were American singers.

First Nashville Symphony performance:

The Nashville Symphony performed two songs from *Das Lied* on November 25, 1952 with Music Director Guy Taylor.

Estimated length: 63 minutes

Between 1897 and 1907, Gustav Mahler was consumed by his day job as director of Vienna’s main opera house, the Hofoper. This stressful work — which entailed a high public profile — required total commitment throughout the regular season, leaving him little time to compose, one reason why Mahler regularly reserved the summer months to write his symphonies. As chief conductor at the Hofoper, Mahler lived and breathed opera, so it’s not surprising that he continually redefined the scope of the symphony to trace epic narrative arcs that either imply a dramatic scenario or even, in several cases, include movements that set words to music.

Das Lied von der Erde (“The Song of the Earth”) breaks further new ground. The entire work is a hybrid song-symphony in which each movement sets a text. It is far more expansive than an orchestral song cycle (such as Hector Berlioz’s *Les Nuits d’été*, one model he may have initially had in mind). On the title page, Mahler called it “A Symphony for Tenor, Contralto (or Baritone), and Orchestra.” From another perspective, it represents the opera Mahler never wrote during his mature years. (The Eighth Symphony, which is also vocal throughout, does something similar by setting the final scene of Goethe’s *Faust*, but the choral first movement is closer to the oratorio tradition.) Like Picker’s *The Encantadas*, *Das Lied von der Erde* straddles

musical, dramatic and poetic realms. Indeed, the work can be — and has been — interpreted as a drama unfolding between two characters, each taking center stage as they alternate from one song to the next.

One of Mahler’s most famous definitions of what a symphony could encompass comes from the period when he was writing his epic Third Symphony, his only other symphony containing six movements, like *Das Lied*: “To me ‘symphony’ means constructing a world with all of the technical means available.” Accompanying each of those worlds is a worldview, and what Mahler explores in his preceding symphonies is an emphatically Western, individual-centered worldview, culminating in one of the archetypes of the Western spirit in the Eighth Symphony: the image of *Faust*, striving restlessly for knowledge, power and, at the end of Goethe’s monumental work, salvation.

Das Lied von der Erde marks a radical departure in philosophical perspective as well. Here, Mahler opens up to an Eastern perspective, above all in the final movement, a long farewell in which truth is found in the eternal cycles and patterns of nature.

Paving the way for the composer’s shift was a year of personal upheaval in 1907, the year before he composed the bulk of the work. *Das Lied* has deep autobiographical links with Mahler’s newfound awareness of his mortality. In the summer of 1907, he received devastating confirmation of his medical condition (a fatal heart disease). This occurred while Mahler was still grieving the loss of one of his two young daughters to scarlet fever. On top of these two tragic events, a vicious campaign from his opponents, fueled by anti-Semitism, led Mahler to resign from his post at the Hofoper. He conducted his final performance there in October 1907.

In combination, these personal shocks shook Mahler to his core. In a letter to his gifted protégé, Bruno Walter (who would conduct the posthumous world premieres of both *Das Lied von der Erde* and the Ninth Symphony), the composer described having lost “any calm and peace of mind I ever achieved.” He now felt himself confronted “face to face with nothingness,” needing, at the end of his life, to begin anew to learn the very basics of how to live.

One of Mahler's famous definitions of what a symphony could encompass comes from the period when he was writing his epic Third Symphony: "To me 'symphony' means constructing a world with all of the technical means available."

One of Mahler's friends suggested he set some excerpts from a recently published anthology of translated Chinese poems, *Die chinesische Flöte* ("The Chinese Flute"). The "translations" were by the German poet Hans Bethge (1876-1946), who did not know Chinese, but paraphrased earlier German and French versions of the poems that had appeared in various other sources. The anthology exemplifies something of the then-fashionable "Judendstil" aesthetic (the German-speaking world's manifestation of art nouveau) as well as a current trend of interest in Asian art.

From *Die chinesische Flöte* Mahler culled seven poems (linking two in the final movement and adding some lines of his own). The texts are thus adaptations, filtered through a European, fin-de-siècle lens, of work that has been attributed to Chinese poets associated with the golden age of the Tang Dynasty. (It should be noted that Chinese scholars have been debating the authenticity of these sources in recent years.) These include Li Bai/Li Bo (701-761) for movements 1, 3, 4, and 5; Qian Qi (710-782) for movement 2 and Meng Haoran (c. 689-740) and Wang Wei (699-759) for movement 6.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Das *Lied von der Erde* ranks among the composer's most exquisitely crafted scores, though Mahler never had a chance to hear it performed and thus, was unable to follow his usual practice of revising details on the basis of that live experience. If each writing of a symphony meant constructing an entire world, each movement here builds a mini-universe of its own, as Mahler selectively draws from his orchestral resources and develops a language suitable for each.

Overall, as Mahler biographer Jens Malte Fischer describes it, the score revolves around "a five-note scale associated with central and eastern Asia" instead of the Western major-minor binary, and a "prevailing diatonicism" (i.e., basic scales) moves to the foreground in place of

Mahler's familiar harmonic language of intense chromaticism.

"Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde" ("The Drinking Song of Earth's Sorrow"), with its strenuous tenor writing, is a tempestuous tour de force, returning to its refrain ("dark is life, and so is death") at a slightly higher pitch each time. The first long notes from the violins, just after the opening horn calls, spell a simple motif that unifies this complex symphony (A-G-E). "Der Einsame im Herbst" ("The Solitary One in Autumn") immediately switches to a much sparer sound world, with a prominent role for the oboe.

Fischer compares "Von der Jugend" ("Youth") — which finds Mahler at his most impressionist — "Von der Schönheit" ("Beauty") and "Der Trunkene im Frühling" ("The Drunkard in Spring") to lieder or art songs "in terms of their character and length," while the vast final movement, "Der Abschied" ("The Farewell"), lasting nearly as long as all five preceding movements, is clearly symphonic in its scope and style.

Giving a prominent role to the tam-tam, flute, oboe and harp in his orchestration, Mahler also introduces the celesta for the first time in his score near the end of "Der Abschied." Divided into three sections, the final movement includes a vast introduction for the orchestra alone before the singer returns for the final section, ending with a lullaby-like oscillation between two notes on "ewig" ("forever"). This culmination of *Das Lied von der Erde* does not contradict the intense longing for life's joys that Mahler represents elsewhere in the work, but opens up to a calm contemplation of the inevitable, in which the individual ceases and nature is eternally renewed.

In addition to the two vocal soloists, Das Lied von der Erde is scored for 4 flutes (incl. piccolo), 3 oboes (incl. English horn), 3 clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons (incl. contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, mandolin, celesta, 2 harps and strings.

— Thomas May is the Nashville Symphony's program annotator.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



TOBIAS PICKER

composer, narrator

“Tobias Picker’s music displays a distinctively soulful style that is one of the glories of the current musical scene.” — *BBC Music Magazine*.

The recipient of numerous awards and honors, including election to lifetime membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Tobias Picker has been commissioned to compose symphonic works (three symphonies, four piano concertos, concertos for violin, viola, cello, oboe, song cycles and tone poems) for the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, The Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony and major orchestras throughout the world.

Picker’s five operas have been produced throughout the United States and internationally. Santa Fe Opera gave the world premiere of his acclaimed first opera, *Emmeline*, broadcast nationally on PBS’ *Great Performances*. Additional premieres include *An American Tragedy* by The Metropolitan Opera, *Therese Raquin* with The Dallas Opera, and *Dolores Claiborne*, based on the novel by Stephen King, by the San Francisco Opera. The world premiere recording of his family opera *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, premiered by the L.A. Opera, will be released by Boston Modern Orchestra Project and Odyssey Opera this spring on the BMOP label. Last month, *Dolores Claiborne* was given its New England premiere by the Boston University Opera Institute and was recorded for release on Naxos Records.

An accomplished pianist, Picker has performed as soloist in performances of his piano concertos and chamber works with, among others, the American Symphony Orchestra, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Houston Symphony and the Georges Enescu Philharmonic. Picker narrates his 1983 melodrama *The Encantadas* for these performances with the Nashville Symphony, which are being recorded live for Naxos.

Picker’s music is published exclusively by Schott. He has been artistic director of the Tulsa Opera since 2016.



MICHELLE DEYOUNG

mezzo soprano

Michelle DeYoung has established herself as one of the most exciting artists of her generation. She continues to be in demand throughout the world, appearing regularly with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, BBC Vienna Philharmonic and many more. She has also performed at the prestigious festivals of Ravinia, Tanglewood, Saito Kinen, Edinburgh and Lucerne, and in Australia she has appeared multiple times with Sydney Symphony.

Equally at home on the opera stage, DeYoung has appeared with the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Teatro alla Scala, Bayreuth Festival, Berliner Staatsoper, Paris Opera, Theater Basel, English National Opera and the Tokyo Opera. Her many roles include title roles in *Samson et Dalilah* and *The Rape of Lucretia*; Fricka, Sieglinde and Waltraute in *The Ring Cycle*; Kundry in *Parsifal*; Venus in *Tannhäuser*; Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde*; Eboli in *Don Carlos*; Amneris in *Aida*; Santuzza in *Cavallaria Rusticana*; Ježibaba in *Rusalka*; Marguerite in *Le Damnation de Faust*; Dido in *Les Troyens*; Judith in *Bluebeard’s Castle* and Jocaste in *Oedipus Rex*. She also created the role of the Shaman in Tan Dun’s *The First Emperor* at the Metropolitan Opera.

A multi-GRAMMY® award winning recording artist, DeYoung’s impressive discography includes *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* with the Jaap van Zweden and the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (Naxos); *Kindertotenlieder*, Mahler’s Symphony No. 3 and *Das Klagende Lied* with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony (SFS Media); *Les Troyens* with Sir Colin Davis and the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO Live!) and Mahler Symphony No 3 with both the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Bernard Haitink (CSO Resound) and the Pittsburgh Symphony and Manfred Honeck (Challenge Records International).



**ANTHONY
DEAN GRIFFEY**
tenor

American tenor and
four-time GRAMMY®

Award-winning recording artist Anthony Dean Griffey has garnered critical and popular acclaim on opera, concert and recital stages around the world thanks to the combination of his beautiful and powerful lyric voice, gift of dramatic interpretation and superb musicianship.

Griffey has appeared in the world's most prestigious opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Los Angeles Opera, Paris Opera, Teatro Comunale di Firenze, Teatro dell'Opera in Rome, and the Saito Kinen Festival in Japan. He has earned international acclaim in particular for his portrayal of the title role in *Peter Grimes*, which he debuted at the Tanglewood Festival and has since performed all over the world, as well as for his performances of Lennie in Carlisle Floyd's *Of Mice and Men*, for which he won a Helpmann Award for Best Male

Performer in an Opera. During the 2018/2019 season Mr. Griffey returns to the Metropolitan Opera for the Met premiere of Nico Muhly's *Marnie*, conducted by Robert Spano.

A celebrated concert performer, Griffey appears regularly with many distinguished international orchestras and at prominent festivals around the globe. He made his Carnegie Hall recital debut in 2004, where André Previn composed and dedicated a song cycle for him and accompanied him on the piano, and in 2006, Griffey had the distinction of being invited by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg to perform a recital at the U.S. Supreme Court.

Griffey holds degrees from Wingate University, the Eastman School of Music, the Juilliard School and was a member of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artists Program. He was awarded the Doctorate of Humane Letters from Wingate University in May 2012 and was also inducted into the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame in 2011.

Since 2015 he has held the position of Professor of Voice at the Eastman School of Music – University of Rochester.