

10-27-2014

UNLV Symphony Orchestra

Taras Krysa

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Stephanie Weiss

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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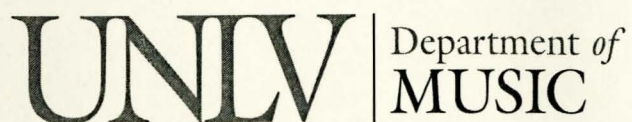
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College of Fine Arts

presents the

UNLV Symphony Orchestra

Taras Krysa, music director and conductor

Stephanie Weiss, mezzo-soprano

PROGRAM

Gustav Mahler
(1860–1911)

Symphony No. 4
Bedächtig, nicht eilen
In gemächlicher Bewegung, Ohne Hast
Ruhevoll, Poco adagio
Sehr behaglich

Monday, October 27, 2014

7:30 p.m.

Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall
Performing Arts Center
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Program Notes

Symphony No. 4

Composed 1899–1901

First Performance November 25, 1901; Munich

Instrumentation soprano solo, four flutes and two piccolos, two oboes and English horn, three clarinets and Eb clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, timpani, bass drum, triangle, sleigh bells, glockenspiel, cymbals, tam-tam, harp, and strings

While planning the Fourth Symphony, Mahler relied on a song he composed, "*Das himmlische Leben*," more so than he did when composing any other work that included this song. *The Heavenly Life*, as it translates to English, presents a setting that illustrates a child's vision of heaven. This song was used the governing idea for both the musical material and an overall image of the story behind the music. Mahler knew how the symphony would end before he wrote the first page which placed the song as a logical destination for the three movements to be written before. With the goal of working backwards, Mahler was able to conceive a symphony that explored the road from knowledge to virtuousness, intricacy to simplicity, and from earthly life to a heavenly one. This symphony, unlike the three previous, did not have an explanatory text. Mahler wanted the music to solely explain and express the inner drama written in his symphony.

The first movement begins with sleigh bells and winding woodwinds as the first theme is introduced. Like a typical first movement, Mahler used sonata form, but with at least seven themes within the exposition. Shifting through the keys of G Major and D Major, Mahler uses singing strings, rich sonorities, and flourishing wind parts to establish "childishly simple and quite unselfconscious" melodies. The development increases with complexity and harmonic range. Through this development, a main theme from the finale is introduced and gains prominence as the development progresses. The first movement comes a close with an energetic, yet brief coda.

The second movement is set in a scherzo form with a contrasting trio section. Although in the end Mahler did not entitle the movements, the second was originally inscribed "*Freund Hein spielt zum Tanz auf*" after a German folklore describing a pied piper who played his violin and lead his victims to the death. Suggesting that vision of death, the solo violin is tuned a tone higher creating an eerie sound with a melody that is grotesquely ornamented with unusual leaps and intervals. The trio sections are much brighter suggesting a German dance. It is in the trio in which allusions to the finale are heard.

The third movement is often referred to as one of Mahler's finest slower movements. The composer stated that this movement was inspired by "a vision of a tombstone on which was carved an image of the departed, with folded arms, in eternal sleep." A set of two variations based in the key of G Major dominates the majority of this movement. The first theme presents a soft and restful cello line as the basses pizzicato in their bell-like motifs while the second is more lamenting in its variations. Both theme complexes come to a climax, yet collapse after as the music settles down. The full orchestra bursts through with new material as the coda begins in E Major. After a foreshadowing outburst of the orchestra in the 'heavenly' key, G Major comes back in and the movement finishes with a series of ethereal chords that fade away gradually.

To express the journey, Mahler's first three movements gradually diminish in their complexity as they approach the serene end of the final movement. With a few introductory phrases between the winds and plucking harp and strings, the soprano is introduced for this first time in the symphony. A simple structure lays out each verse and an interlude that separates each verse sung by the soloist. The first verse is gentle and references St. Peter, while the second is a bit more troubled and includes settings from the Third and Fifth Symphony. The third verse settles as did the previous two with a choral-like texture, but is much longer and incorporates texts from the first two. After a final interlude of bells, E Major is reintroduced and the setting becomes more intimate with melodies in English Horn and harp. The last verse sung begins like the first and describes the awakening of joy as soft sounds accompany the soprano singer. Mahler beautifully juxtaposes the final word of the text with a dying away orchestral setting as the soprano sings the final word, "*erwach*," translating to awaken.

Biography

Taras Krysa

Taras Krysa serves as the director of orchestras at UNLV and music director of the Henderson Symphony Orchestra. Krysa was born in Kiev, Ukraine to a musical family and began his formal studies as a violinist at the Moscow Conservatory. After moving to United States, Krysa continued his studies at Indiana University and Northwestern University both in violin and conducting. His conducting teachers have included Victor Yampolsky, Jorma Panula and David Zinman. As a violinist, Krysa has won positions with the New World Symphony Orchestra and St. Louis Symphony Orchestras.

In recent seasons his conducting appearances have included National Ukrainian Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra van het Osten, New World Symphony, St. Petersburg Symphony, Moscow Soloists, Slovak Sinfonietta, Spoleto Festival Chamber Orchestra, Kiev Chamber Orchestra and the Lublin Philharmonic Orchestra. He has made three critically acclaimed recordings for the Brilliant Classics label. Krysa has also served as Principal Conductor of the Ukrainian State Symphony Orchestra, which he led on the several European tours with the appearance at the Concertgebouw Hall.

THE UNLV SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Symphony Orchestra at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas is a student orchestra comprised of music majors in the UNLV College of Fine Arts and non-music majors on both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

The mission of this performing ensemble is threefold:

- 1) to train music majors to become professional performers and teachers
- 2) to introduce non-music majors to higher quality musicianship
- 3) to enrich the cultural life of UNLV and the Las Vegas community

The UNLV orchestra presents a number of programs each season that include a variety of the orchestral standard repertoire, ranging from early Baroque through modern contemporary. The UNLV Symphony Orchestra performs at least one major work with a chorus every year as well as one complete opera. Student soloists are featured throughout the year on either the Student Soloists Concert or else as guest artists for winning the annual Solo Concerto Competition. The extensive list of guest conductors and soloists with UNLV Symphony Orchestra includes Itzhak Perlman, Sarah Chang, Rachel Lee, Edgar Meyer and Hillary Hahn.

UNLV Symphony Orchestra Personnel

Violin I

+Dmytro Nehrych
Sammi Ciarlo
Tammy Hung
Sarah Wright
Robert Hunt
Braydon Pikyavit

Violin II

+Megan Hermansen
Hunter Haynes
Ashley Riedy
Alexandria Pritchard
Robert Alex Hill

Viola

+David Chavez
Dalton Davis
Valerie Reives
Micaela Nielson
Andrew Vasquez
Mariah Revis
Miguel Guillen

Cello

+Katharine Smith
Lindsay Johnson
Pishoi Nassif
Micheal Rompel
Tabitha Mackin

Bass

+Trey Lawrence
Summer Kodama
Jimmy Cisneros
Issa Acosta
Bennett Mason

Flute

Lynn Tsai
Rodrigo Corral
Dafne Guevara, picc.
Daniel Nuñez, picc.

Oboe

Chris Fujiwara
Rachel LaRance
Sharon Nakama, E. Horn

Clarinet

Ivan Ivanov
Jonathon Cannon, Eb Cl.
Erin Vander Wyst, Bass Cl.

Bassoons

Kevin Eberle
Bronson Foster
Brock Norred, Contra

Horns

Linnie Hostetler
Michael Villarreal, asst.
Tom Frauenshuh
Sarah Walton
Alina Eckersley

Trumpet

Micah Holt
Julio Vargas
Rudolph Jovero

Percussion

+Manny Gamazo, Jr.
Eduard Yervinyan
Max Feld
Sam Friend