

**nyOS**

National  
Youth Orchestras  
of Scotland

nyos  
**symphony  
orchestra**

# Spring Concerts 2023

**Catherine  
Larsen-Maguire**  
Conductor

**Sean Shibe**  
Guitar

**14 April, 7.30pm**  
Usher Hall

**15 April, 7.30pm**  
Glasgow Royal Concert Hall





# nyos symphony orchestra

## Programme

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**Lotta Wennäkoski**

Susurrus

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Symphony No.7 in E minor

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# Welcome

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As soon as I was asked to conduct the NYOS Symphony Orchestra, I knew that it would be a very special project for me. Working with Scotland's most talented young classical musicians is a pleasure, a privilege and a huge responsibility.

I will never forget my own time as a member of various youth orchestras (although it's not exactly recent now), and how invaluable this experience was for me as a young musician just starting out into this wonderful, exciting and demanding profession. As a member of a youth orchestra, you share moments of extreme emotion with people you've never met before; this is why you become friends for life. You learn to be extremely disciplined, to concentrate for hours on end, to work as a small but essential part of the biggest, most supportive team you can imagine, and you get to perform some of the greatest works of art ever created. For me, being a part of this process again (in a slightly different role) is incredibly exciting.

To make it even more special, we have the fantastic and challenging combination of Mahler's monumental Seventh Symphony and Wennäkoski's fascinating guitar concerto, played by Sean Shibe; working with him will be inspiring for us all. It will be an unforgettable occasion, not only for the musicians, but for everyone involved. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those behind the scenes who have supported these young musicians in some way: parents, brothers, sisters, teachers, friends, our audience and of course all the staff at NYOS. Each one of you has done an amazing job, and now all you have to do is sit back, relax and enjoy the concert!

**Catherine Larsen-Maguire**  
Conductor



# Catherine Larsen-Maguire

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## Conductor

After ten years as principal bassoonist at the Komische Oper Berlin, Catherine Larsen-Maguire turned her focus to conducting in 2012, and has since then become a sought-after conductor with orchestras in Europe and South America. The 2021-22 season and beyond sees debuts with the London Philharmonic, Royal Northern Sinfonia, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia, Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Chambre de Genève, Orchestre de Chambre Fribourgeois and the Faroese Symphony Orchestra. She will also return to the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Deutsches Kammerorchester Berlin, Slovenian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Orquesta Sinfónica de Tenerife and OFUNAM in Mexico City, orchestras with which she has developed close relationships.

Catherine also has a special interest in contemporary music, and has directed the first performances of numerous works, including Alexander Goehr's most recent orchestral work, *The Master Said*, with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Other ensembles with which Catherine regularly collaborates include Ensemble Musikfabrik, Ensemble Ascolta, Klangforum Wien and United Berlin. In September 2021 she made her debut with Ensemble Modern at the Berlin Music Festival, and in April 2022 she conducted a joint project with the Scottish Ensemble, Ensemble Resonanz and the Trondheim Soloists in the Barrowland Ballroom Glasgow.

Placing great emphasis on working with younger musicians, Catherine is very much in demand as a conductor for youth orchestras and in music colleges around the world. As part of the Young Euro Classic Festival, she made her debut in Berlin's Konzerthaus, returning a year later to conduct a world premiere with the German Youth Ballet; this was followed by a tour of China with the same group. She led the conducting team at the annual Femusc Festival in Brazil for five years, and held a guest professorship in conducting at the University of the Arts, Berlin. She gives regular masterclasses in Germany and abroad and was a jury member for the Besançon Competition for Young Conductors in 2017, 2019 and 2021.

Born in Manchester and now based in Berlin, Catherine read music at Cambridge University and studied the bassoon at the Royal Academy of Music in London, with Klaus Thunemann in Hanover, and at the Karajan Academy in Berlin, playing regularly in the Berlin Philharmonic during this time. Important influences on the development of her conducting career were John Carewe, George Hurst and Vladimir Jurowski, whom she assisted on several occasions early in her career.





# Sean Shibe

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## Guitar

*One of my most vivid memories of NYOS was playing Anton Webern's Passacaglia for Orchestra as a cellist in the National Children's Orchestra of Scotland. This was an absolutely terrifying experience for a 13-year-old (only recently passed Grade 6 exam with merit - no hard feelings ABRSM), but dealing with a then-unfamiliar language prepared me in ways that I still notice today. I hope that our grappling with Susurrus will prove similarly instructive.*

*Susurrus is not your typical concerto. Wennäkoski eschews the type of virtuosity one might expect in a work of this sort in favour of delicately balanced textures – whisperings and rustles appear through extended effects: tapping and tambora; deliberate squeaking of the strings; even the scrape of a ruler. While this might suggest gimmick or novelty, the writing is in fact rigorously considered; these unusual effects are never deployed for their own sakes. Herein lies a different sort of virtuosity – this sound world is defined by subtle shifts of timbre using unfamiliar tools, necessitating hyper-focused minds and agile chamber musicianship.*

One of the most versatile guitarists performing today, Sean Shibe's innovative approach to his instrument has enhanced his reputation for having 'one of the most discriminating ears in the business' (*Gramophone*). He was the first guitarist ever to be selected for BBC Radio 3's New Generation Artists scheme, to be awarded a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship and, in 2018, to receive the Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Young Artists. Accolades for his recordings include two Gramophone Awards and an Opus Klassik. He is also the 2022 recipient of the Leonard Bernstein Award.

Following very successful performances at various summer festivals, this season Shibe gives his New York City solo recital debut at the 92nd Street Y which is followed by a tour in the US with Quatuor Van Kuijk. During this concert season he performs at Wigmore Hall four times and in solo recitals in Germany at the Konzerthaus Dortmund, Mozartfest Würzburg, and returns to the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival sharing the stage with tenor Karim Sulayman. He performs with Hallé Orchestra and National Youth Orchestra of Scotland and tours with Manchester Collective in the UK and Europe.

A great admirer of the masterful composers of the past, Shibe is equally committed to new music. Alongside his own transcriptions of Bach's lute suites and seventeenth-century Scottish lute manuscripts, he continues to explore, experiment and expand the repertoire for his instrument with recent works by Daniel Kidane, David Fennessy, Shiva Feshareki, David Lang, Julia Wolfe and Freya Waley-Cohen. New commissions include solo works by Thomas Ades, Helen Grime and a new collaboration with Cassandra Miller and Dunedin Consort.



Lotta Wennäkoski (b. 1970)

## Susurrus



**DURATION** 15 minutes

**YEAR OF COMPOSITION** 2017

### THE WORLD IN 2017...

Millions of people worldwide join the Women's March in protest at the inauguration of Donald Trump as President of the United States.

A Leonardo da Vinci painting, *Salvator Mundi*, sells for US\$450 million at Christie's in New York, a new record price for any work of art.

### FURTHER LISTENING

Lotta Wennäkoski – Flouce  
*Innovative and endlessly inventive orchestral fireworks. Commissioned to open the Last Night of the Proms in 2017.*

Rodrigo – Fantasía para un  
gentilhombre  
*A 20th-century guitar concerto that looks backwards to the guitar music and folk dances of 17th-century Spain.*

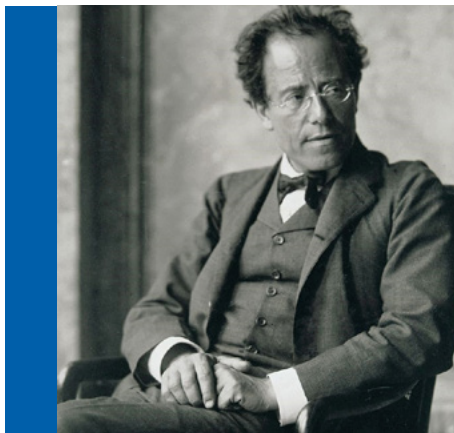
The Latin word *Susurrus* refers to rustling or rasping sound – indeed a suitable title for a guitar concerto, the sound world of which consists of whining, swooshing and rattling as well as more usual pitched material. My approach has been both humorous and sincerely lyrical. The former is present for example in the use of plastic rulers, that the musicians get to strum together with the soloist. On the other hand, I've also wanted to compose beautifully melancholic passages and moments on the border of silence. The concerto's moods are many.

*Susurrus* was commissioned by the Tapiola Sinfonietta and Kymi Sinfonietta together, and the premiere was in October 2017. I wish to thank the guitarist Petri Kumela for the open-minded co-operation during the compositional process.

© Lotta Wennäkoski

# Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

## Symphony No.7 in E minor



**DURATION** 80 minutes

**YEAR OF COMPOSITION** 1904-5

### THE WORLD IN 1905...

The distress signal CQD is established, only to be replaced two years later by SOS.

Albert Einstein submits for publication his paper 'On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies', establishing his theory of special relativity.

- i. Langsam – Allegro risoluto, ma non troppo
- ii. Nachtmusik I
- iii. Scherzo
- iv. Nachtmusik II
- v. Rondo Finale

Mahler was an Austro-Bohemian composer, who spent much of his childhood in what is now the Czech Republic but in Mahler's time was part of the Austrian Empire. He was world renowned as a conductor in his lifetime, but his own music was neglected in the decades after his death, not least because performances were banned through much of Europe during the Nazi era due to the composer's Jewish heritage. After the war his work was revived and he is now among the most frequently performed composers.

Mahler is particularly synonymous with the symphony, a compositional form that he radicalised perhaps more than anyone had done since Beethoven in the early 19th century. Most of his nine symphonies (or ten depending on how you look at it – see page 15) run for well over an hour, requiring large and eclectic orchestral forces and incorporating vocal soloists and gargantuan choirs. He once remarked 'A symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything.' If that analogy holds, then his Symphony No.7 might take the crown for the strangest and most foreboding 'world' that he created.

From the stately and menacing opening bars, which underpin a mysterious horn

melody, to the central 'night music' movements which frame a nightmarish scherzo, most of the music hovers uneasily between major and minor keys, creating a sense of tension and disorientation which heightens the impact of the emphatically bright C major final movement.

Unlike many of his other symphonies, Mahler did not give any programme, or story, to this work. The sometimes-used subtitle 'Song of the Night' is not Mahler's own. He once wrote to a critic referring to the symphony's 'three night pieces' (meaning the central three movements), and to the finale as 'bright day', suggesting a journey from darkness to light is not far off the mark.

The work was not initially well received, the first listeners finding a lack of coherence between the movements and some remarking that the unrelenting and riotously celebratory final movement sweeps away the tortured and questioning music that precedes it with too much ease.

As Mahler was busy with his job as director of the Vienna Court Opera, at this point in his life he was only able to compose during the summer months when he and his family would escape the city to the Austrian countryside. The two *Nachtmusik* movements were composed during the summer of 1904, but when he returned to complete the symphony in the summer of 1905 he was struck with a case of writer's block. After a few difficult weeks, he found himself in a boat and recounts 'at the first

stroke of the oars the theme (or rather the rhythm and character) of the introduction to the first movement came into my head'. Following that burst of inspiration his creative impulse returned, and he completed the remaining three movements of the symphony within a month.

One of the most striking features of the first movement is its unexpectedly delicate and mysterious centre. After Mahler has outlined the movement's two main themes, the orchestra suddenly shrinks and a distant trumpet fanfare sounds, underpinned by gentle chords in the strings. This otherworldly passage continues until the harps enter, accompanied by trilling flutes, which seem to reveal the night sky afire with stars.

The second movement opens with two horns calling to each other, the second muted to create the illusion of distance. This music is heavily rooted in Mahler's connection with nature, the horn calls echoing across a valley giving way to birdsong and cowbells painting a nocturnal landscape. At the rehearsals for the premiere, disturbed by a bird outside, Mahler had to ask for a window to be closed, remarking 'This one's not in my score.'

The scherzo (from the Italian word for 'joke') is typically a lighter or at least more fleeting movement in a symphony, but here we find a nightmarish concoction of waltzes and Austrian folk-style melodies, with interjections from the timpani and



the tubas and bassoons in the depths of the orchestra allowing no relief. At one point the cellos and double basses are instructed to pluck their strings with the volume *ffff* (just three *fs* already signify ‘very very loud’) with the additional instruction to ‘pluck so hard that the strings hit the wood’ just in case there was any doubt.

The fourth movement, the second *Nachtmusik*, is more intimate. The orchestra is considerably reduced, the trumpets, trombones and tubas are silent, and the woodwinds are halved, giving a chamber music feel. The unusual addition of the guitar and mandolin to this movement, underpinning the melodies, conjures the atmosphere of an evening serenade.

The serenity of the fourth movement’s final bars is soon interrupted by the rowdy timpani solo that heralds the dawning of the finale’s ‘bright day’. The movement is in rondo form, meaning that the main theme returns repeatedly in between variations and new orchestral passages. Although for the most part the mood is relentlessly celebratory, there are some moments of unease. The principal theme of the first movement makes an appearance, but it is soon transformed into a major key.

After racing towards what seems like an inevitable conclusion, replete with bells, emphatic brass chords and scurrying strings, in the penultimate bar the music suddenly fades away with G# notes in the

orchestra momentarily destabilising the key signature for just a few seconds, before the symphony ends with a sudden flourish on a very loud C major chord. A fittingly unorthodox ending to the strange world that Mahler has created.

By Jack Johnson (© NYOS, 2023)

## FURTHER LISTENING

Bacewicz – Symphony No. 3  
*A mid-20th-century symphonic masterpiece full of orchestral drama.*

\***The curse of the ninth** is a musical superstition that a ninth symphony is destined to be a composer’s last, and the composer is fated to die before completing their tenth. It is thought that this superstition originated with Mahler, driven by the fact that both Beethoven and Schubert had died while sketching their tenth symphonies.

After writing his Eighth Symphony, Mahler titled his next symphonic work *Das Lied von der Erde* and presented it as a song cycle. He then wrote his Ninth Symphony thinking he had beaten the curse, but died, like Beethoven and Schubert, leaving his Tenth Symphony incomplete.

## **First Violin**

Chun-Yi Kang (Leader), East Dunbartonshire

Ryan Chan, East Dunbartonshire

Sophie Chin, Edinburgh

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Lucy Hanson, Kirkcaldy

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## **Second Violin**

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Caitlin Williams, Aberdeen

Jessica Zhu, Glasgow

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## **Cello**

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Benjamin Clark, Fife



Jamie Dickinson, East Renfrewshire

Johnny Gray, East Ayrshire

Charlotte Hay, Aberdeenshire

Rebecca Lynn, Glasgow

Dòmhnall MacGriogair, Glasgow

Ayla Mascarenhas, Lanark

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Matilda Sills, Edinburgh

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## **Double Bass**

Euan Coyle, Glasgow

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Joseph McLaren, Glasgow

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## **Flute**

Serenna MacLellan, Edinburgh

Benjamin Maybury, Selkirk

Lalleh Memar, Glasgow

Lucy Rowan, Moffat

Clíodhna Scott, Tranent





### **Oboe**

Angelos Charalampous, Glasgow  
Sophia Laurie, Glasgow  
Annabelle Pizzey, Glasgow  
Laura Ritchie, Glasgow

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Anthony McKenna, Motherwell  
Amelia Neilson, Near Dumbarton  
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Cara Goutcher, Glasgow  
Katie Parker, Inverness

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Andrew Dixon, Glasgow  
Mark Hunter, Glasgow  
Callum Robb, Innerleithen

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### **Tuba**

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### **Timpani/Percussion**

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Conor Feeney, Wishaw  
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### **Harp**

Beatrice Cheng, Glasgow  
Clara Harrigan Lees, Edinburgh

### **Guitar**

Jacques Carroll-Leitao, Kilsyth  
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*Correct at the time of going to print.*

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**FRIDAY 14 JULY, 7.30PM**  
**NYOS Symphony Orchestra**  
*Music Hall, Aberdeen*

T: 01224 641122

W: [aberdeenperformingarts.com](http://aberdeenperformingarts.com)

**FRIDAY 28 JULY, 7PM**  
**NYOS Development Orchestra**  
*Greyfriars Kirk*

T: 0131 668 2019

W: [thequeenshall.net](http://thequeenshall.net)

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**NYOS Symphony Orchestra**  
*Perth Concert Hall*

T: 01738 621031

W: [perththeatreandconcerthall.com](http://perththeatreandconcerthall.com)

*Concert in memory of Richard Chester MBE*



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