Saturday 4 November 2023
West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge

Gustav Mahler Symphony No 5

Joseph Canteloube Chants d'Auvergne

Cambridge Philharmonic Orchestra Harry Sever *conductor*



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Cambridge Philharmonic presents

Joseph Canteloube Chants d'Auvergne

Rowan Pierce: soprano

Interval

Gustav Mahler Symphony No 5

Cambridge Philharmonic Orchestra

Harry Sever: conductor Paula Muldoon: leader

Programme notes

by Jeremy Harmer

Music and song – or no song!

Tonight's programme comprises two stand-alone works of extraordinary beauty, drama, playfulness and poignancy. But whereas the folk songs of the Auvergne region of France sing, in actual words, of life and love, of shepherds and shepherdesses and the nature all around them, Mahler's great symphony is, unlike its three previous siblings, free of song, offering us a purely instrumental journey through his multi-faceted psyche. Love, death, hope and humour occur in both works. Swooning, laughing, crying and reflecting deeply would all be entirely natural reactions to what you will hear. That's because all human life is here dressed in wonderful and breathtaking adornments.

Chants d'Auvergne

Joseph Canteloube (1879-1957)

La pastoura al camps Bailero Obal, din lou Limouzi Pastourelle

La delaissado

N'ai pas ieu de mio

Almost every composer who ever lived has mined the folk melodies of the tradition and the culture they come from. Tchaikovsky uses Ukrainian traditional tunes in symphonies and quartets. Bartok and Kodaly frequently excavate their country's country music for use and inspiration. So do Dvořák, Britten, Elgar (the tune he heard that day on the Malvern Hills, the viola tune he copied from his visits to the countryside around Alessio in Italy) and countless others.

In this country there exists fierce debate about the great folk collectors, Vaughan Williams, Cecil Sharp and Lucy Broadwood, for example, who helped to preserve our great folk songs – and to whom today's folk world owes a massive debt of gratitude – but then 'prettified' and appropriated them to the horror of people devoted to singing and playing in the traditional way. The *Chants d'Auvergne* fit right into this puzzling dichotomy, presenting us with real, delicious beauty whilst, of course, doing the same as their British equivalents. As we shall see, Canteloube had an eloquent answer to any doubts.

Joseph Canteloube was born in the Ardèche in France and his family had deep roots in the Auvergne. He was a gifted musician and from an early age he studied piano with a friend of Chopin. After completing his schooling he worked in a bank in Bordeaux but moved back to his family home in Maloret when his father died in 1886. He stayed there, marrying and raising a family, and studying music via correspondence with Vincent d'Indy, until in 1907 he was persuaded to study at the Schola Cantorum in Paris in 1907, remaining there until the outbreak of the First World War.

He wrote a violin and piano sonata, a work for voice and string quartet, a symphonic poem and works for voice and orchestra. There were operas too but they didn't meet with much success.

In the early 1940s, as war raged, Canteloube got involved with the Vichy government and wrote for the monarchist newspaper. Of more interest to us, perhaps, is that some years before, he and a group of people from Auvergne (Auvergnats) had created La Bourrée, a group dedicated to promoting the charms of their part of France. This is something which Canteloube had been doing for years, collecting, as he did so, many 'peasant songs' (sic), claiming that they rose to the "level of purest art in terms of feeling and expression if not in form." The result of course are the *Chants d'Auvergne*, beloved and admired by generations of musicians even while a great deal of his oeuvre, at least in this country, is often ignored.

Explaining his approach to folk songs Canteloube wrote: "Just because the peasant sings without accompaniment, that is not sufficient reason to imitate him ... there is an accompaniment which surrounds his song ... It is nature herself, the earth which makes this, and the peasant and his song cannot be separated from this ... only the immaterial art of music can evoke the necessary atmosphere, with its timbres, its rhythms and its impalpable, moving harmonies."

What else to listen to: Dans la montagne (for violin and piano), Colloque sentimentale (for voice and string quartet), Le mas (opera)

Text

La pastoura als camps

Quon lo pastouro s'en bo os cams, Gardo sèï mountounadoï, tidera la la la la loï! Gardo sèï mountounadoï!

Guèlo rèscoutr' un moussurèt, Lou moussou l'ogatsavo, Tidera la la...

'Ah! Daïssa mè bous ogasta! Sès ton poulido filho!' Tidera la la...

'Estaco boustré cabalèt, O lo cambo d'un' 'aôbré', Tidera la la...

È lo perdri, quan lo tènio, Guèlo s'èn ès onado, Tidera la la...

Baïlèro

Pastré, dè dèlaï l'aïo a gaïré dè boun ten, dio lou baïlèro lèrô, lèrô... È n'aï pas gaïré, è dio, tu baïlèro lèrô...

Pastré, lou prat faï flour, li cal gorda toun troupèl, dio lou baïlèro lèrô. L'èrb ès pu fin' ol prat d'oïçi, baïlèro lèrô...

Pastré, couçi foraï, èn obal io lou bèl rîou dio lou baïlèro lèrô... Espèromè, tè, baô çirca, baïlèro lèrô...

The Shepherdess in the Fields

When the shepherdess goes to the fields, To look after her little sheep, Tidera la la la la loï! To look after her little sheep!

She meets a fine gentleman, The gentleman looks at her, Tidera la la...

'Ah! Let me look at you!
You are such a pretty girl!'
Tidera la la...

'Tie up your horse, To a tree here', Tidera la la...

He lost her, when he held her, She gave him the slip, Tidera la la...

Baïlèro

Shepherd, across the water you don't seem to have much fun, sing baïlèro lèro...

Not really, no – and you, baïlèro lèro...

Shepherd, the pasture is in flower, there you ought to tend your flock, say the baïlèro lèro...

The grass is more fine in the pasture here, baïlèro lèro...

Shepherd, the stream is between us, I cannot cross, sing baïlèro lèro.
Wait for me, I'll come for you, baïlèro lèro...

Obal din lou Limouzi

Obal din lou Limouzi, pitchoun' obal din lou Limouzi, Sé l'io dè dzèntoï drolloï, o bé, o bé, Sé l'io dè dzèntoï drolloï, oïçi, o bé!

Golon, ton bèlo què siascou lèï drolloï dè toun pois, Lous nostrès fringaïrès èn Limouzi, Saboun miliour counta flourèt' o bé!

Obal, din lou Limouzi, pitchouno, sé soun golon, Oïçi en Aoubèrgno, dïn moun poïs, Lous omès bous aïmoun è soun fidèls!

Pastourelle

'È passo dè dessaï! È passo dellaï l'aïo! Bendras olprès de ièu, Què d'ofaïré parlorèn, È lou restan del jiour N'en parlorén d'amour!

'Né pouodi pas passa! Couçi bouos qué ièu passi? N'aï pas dé pount d'arcados È n'aï pas dé batèu Ni maï dé pastourel Qué mé siasco fidèl!'

'Aurias lèu un batèu Sè tu èros poulido! Aurias un pount d'arcados, Aurias un pastourel Qué té serio fidèl E máï djusqu'al toumbel!'

Down in Limousin

Down there in Limousin, little one, down there in Limousin There are many beautiful girls, oh yes, there are beautiful girls here too, oh yes!

Young lad, even if the girls are pretty in your country,
Our men down in Limousin know better how to talk of love, oh yes!

Down there in Limousin, little one, the lads are gallant; here in Auvergne, in my country, the men love you and stay faithful.

Pastourelle

'Come here to me! Cross over the river! Come over here to me that we may talk business, And the rest of the day we shall only speak of love!'

'I cannot cross!
How could I cross?
I have no arched bridge,
I have no boat,
nor do I have a shepherd boy
to be faithful to me!'

'You would have a boat
If you were pretty!
You would have an arched bridge,
you would have a shepherd boy
to be faithful to you
even to the grave.'

La delaïssádo

Uno pastourèlo èsper' olaï al capt del bouès, Lou galan doguélo, mè né bèn pas!

Ay! souï délaïssádo! Qué n'aï pas vist lou mio galant; Crésio qué m'aïmábo, è ton l'aïmé iéu!

Luziguèt l'estèlo, aquèlo qué marco lo nuèt, E lo pauro pastoureletto Démouret à ploura...

N'aï pas iéu dè mîo

N'aï pas iéu dè mîo, soui qu'un' pastourel; mè sé n'obio-z-uno li sério fidèl; s'obio 'no mio qué m'aïmèssé plo, dé poutous, dé flours iéu lo coubririo!

Mè sul pount d'Entraygo n'io dous áuzelous, né fa què canta pel lous amourous; s'ès plo bertat cantarèn plo lèu pel lo gento mio qu'es olprès dé iéu!

Pel lous camps d'Endoun' io dé gèntoï flours; soun blugoï, roujoï, è dé toutos coulours; li cal ana qué n'èn culiaráï, o lo méouno mio lès pourtoráï!

The deserted one

A shepherdess waits at the top of the woods for her lover, but he does not come!

'Ah! I have been deserted! I do not see my lover; I thought he loved me, and I love him!'

The star shines, signalling nightfall, and the poor little shepherdess stavs there in tears...

I have no girl

I have no girl of mine, I am only a shepherd; if I had one, I would be faithful to her; if I had one that loved me, I would cover her with kisses, with flowers!

On the bridge of Entraygue are two birds that only sing for lovers; if this is true, they will soon sing for the sweet girl that is with me!

In the fields of Endoune there are fair flowers; they are blue, red, and of all colours; I shall go to pick them and bring them to my girl!

English translation: Andrew Barnett, from CD booklet for BIS Records' recording of Chants d'Auvergne ©BIS Records

Interval

Symphony No 5

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

Part I

- 1. Trauermarsch (Funeral march). In gemessenem Schritt. Streng. Wie ein Kondukt (At a measured pace. Strict. Like a funeral procession.)
- 2. Stürmisch bewegt, mit größter Vehemenz (Moving stormily, with the greatest vehemence)

Part II

3. Scherzo. Kräftig, nicht zu schnell (Strong and not too fast)

Part III

- 4. Adagietto. Sehr langsam (Very slow)
- 5. Rondo-Finale. Allegro Allegro giocoso. Frisch (Fresh)

It must have been hard work being Mahler! He seems to have been constantly awash with a stew of conflicting emotions ranging from morbid imaginings and premonitions of death to great tenderness; from a healthy and irreverent appreciation of the ridiculous to a love of simplicity and of the purity of nature; from anger and rage to great and moving passion. His music encompasses a full palette of emotions, from the profound and hopeless leave-taking of his ninth symphony and *Der Abshied* (Farewell) in Das Lied von der Erde (Song of the Earth) to the sweet purity of a contralto yearning for relief from



the world's troubles, leading immediately to the colossal expression of joyful hope which ends his 'Resurrection' Symphony (No 2). There are his beautiful song settings and the glitter of sparkling brass mixed with the pathos of deep string playing and the cheeky subversion of it all with high jinks and almost Rabelaisian fun.

In 1907, so it is said, Sibelius and Mahler had a discussion about what a symphony should be. Mahler is supposed to have opined that "A symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything," and for Mahler it most assuredly does. Bird song and Alpine cowbells mix with sonorous chorales and boisterous country dances. One minute you are laughing, the next you are crying or dreading approaching death — or rejoicing in resurrection. And sometimes it all happens in the space of a few bars! That's Mahler for me. And like so many others, I find that there are no composers whose work I would rather hear more and more often. All human life!

Mahler clearly had an obsessive nature, constantly revising and re-revising his compositions, writing incredibly detailed instructions on how individual phrases should be played. Aside from his composing, however, he was clearly a great conductor. Tchaikovsky, for example, on hearing him take charge of the Hamburg premiere of his (Tchaikovsky's) opera Eugene Onegin was said to have remarked "outstanding, outstanding" about the Austrian's command of his orchestra and singers. Ralph Vaughan Williams "staggered home in a daze and could not sleep for two nights" so great was the effect of watching Mahler conduct in London. None of this should be surprising when we consider his fame, in particular as an interpreter of Wagner, Weber and Mozart, and all those other opera composers. It is somewhat surprising, however, since his relationship with orchestras was always a bit fraught. His obsessive perfectionism was legendary, as was his snappiness, and his insistence on extra rehearsals was never a hit with the bands! And then there was that other thing. Mahler was a Jew (though he later converted to Roman Catholicism). Anti-semitism was a recurrent stain in the Austro-Hungarian empire and Mahler was frequently disapproved of for that reason, most notably in the Vienna Hofoper, which he was forced to leave, largely because of it. But he had two fantastically successful conducting stints at the Metropolitan Opera in New York and held conducting posts all over Europe.

The eldest of twelve children (only six of whom survived infancy) Mahler spent his early years In Jihlava/Iglau (Moravia) a commercial town of some 20,000 people where he would regularly hear street songs, dance tunes, folk melodies and the trumpet calls and marches of the local military band. Anyone with only a cursory knowledge of his music would recognise all of these ingredients because they appear regularly in all his compositions.

Responses to Mahler's music were always mixed and after his death performances of his compositions were not that frequent, although people like Aaron Copland in the USA and Adrian Boult in the UK were early

enthusiasts. In the first half of the twentieth century George Bernard Shaw wrote that audiences would find Mahler's music "expensively second rate." But then in the 1950s things began to change. Whether this was because Leonard Bernstein (as he claimed) resurrected the Austrian all on his own or because, rather more prosaically, new LPs could fit a whole Mahler movement on one side – and anyway other people were Mahler enthusiasts too – we may never know. Mahler knew his music was somewhat controversial but he kind of knew too that his day would come. Writing to his wife Alma in 1902 Mahler claimed that "My day will come when his [Richard Strauss – his almost contemporary] is ended. If only I might see it with you at my side."

It was to Alma that Gustav wrote his most famous single composition, the *Adagietto*, which is the fourth movement of his Symphony No 5. It is notable that this 'love letter' to his new wife, however, is also used for mourning: Visconti used it for the tragic pathos of his Mahler-like figure in his film *Death in Venice* and Bernstein conducted it at the funeral of President Kennedy. Maybe this dual interpretation is because of the depth of emotion in this deceptively simple piece, a kind of Mahlerian speciality. All human life!

Gustav Mahler composed his fifth symphony during the summer months of 1901 and 1902 when he and his new wife were at his holiday cottage in Maiernigg. After the unconventional constructions of his third and fourth symphonies, Mahler returns to a more traditional symphonic form. But not quite! This is Mahler, after all. So instead of the usual four movements of a classical symphony, Mahler fits five movements into three broad sections: two movements in Part I; the Scherzo in Part II (the symphony's longest single movement); then the *Adagietto* and the extraordinarily joyful, playfully brilliant *Finale* in Part III.

His previous symphonies had drawn heavily on his effervescent settings of poems from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (The boy's magic horn). But for this symphony he put these aside, becoming influenced instead by the writings of Friedrich Rückert, whose verses he set to music – in one case against Alma's wishes. Her dreadful premonitions were borne out when one of their children died. He was also immersed in a study of the music of J.S. Bach and this, almost certainly, accounts for the greater polyphonic sophistication of this and his next two symphonies. Symphony No 5 was a departure for Mahler and moved him firmly towards a more modern twentieth century view of what music could be.

The premiere wasn't much of a success, possibly because the over-use of percussion drowned out a lot of its subtler glories. The composer immediately

set about revising the work to correct this imperfection. In fact he kept on revising his fifth symphony for the next twenty years.

The symphony opens with an almost Beethovenian trumpet call leading us, as so often in his work, into a profound funeral theme. Strings play a melancholy threnody and scream in violent protest. The funeral cortege moves inexorably on, quoting, in its quieter moments, a theme from one of his settings of a poem from Rückert's *Kindertotenlieder* (Songs on the death of children), the settings which Alma had feared. Violin scales return as the movement gradually falls to pieces with reminders of that opening fanfare, culminating in a final almost savage full stop.

The second movement continues with this thematic material which transforms into an almost jolly (but insistent) march with glorious brass chorales. But they don't last as the movement ends in a kind of disorganised fantasy.

Now the *Scherzo* comes into view with a quartet of horns playing in unison, from which one detaches itself to soar above the orchestra, after which we have a cheerful, typically Mahlerian gallop through different aspects of joyfulness, sometimes even parody, as we seem to zoom down mountainsides into the valleys and out again. The *Scherzo* would serve all on its own as an orchestral showpiece with its superb use of polyphony and unstoppable inventiveness.

And then here is the famous *Adagietto* (the name refers to the movement's relatively short length, not its speed) – a very slow (the score is peppered with Mahler's insistent instructions here) outpouring of love. It is uncertain and almost needy, just the strings and a solo harp emoting and pleading. Which is why, perhaps, it continues to move all who hear it.

Where do you go from there? Well, if you are Mahler you go straight into a triumphant, lively, brilliant – and sometimes very funny – affirmation of life. He even quotes the *Adagietto* theme a few times, now devoid of self-doubt and full of fun. And that's how this whole expansive view of the human condition ends – in fun and laughter and excitement and a brilliant display of polyphonic exuberance.

What else to listen to: His eight other symphonies; Das Lied Von der Erde (The song of the earth); Das Knaben Wunderhorn (The boy's magic horn); the Kindertotenliede (Songs on the death of children); his unfinished (reconstructed) tenth symphony.

Rowan Pierce (soprano)



Saltburn-by-the-Sea soprano Rowan Pierce was awarded the President's Award by HRH The Prince of Wales at the Royal College of Music in 2017. She won both the Song Prize and First Prize at the inaugural Grange Festival International Singing Competition in 2017, the first Schubert Society Singer Prize in 2014 and the Van Someren-Godfrey Prize at the RCM. She was a Britten Pears young artist, a Rising Star of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and a Harewood Artist at English National Opera.

Rowan has appeared in concert throughout Europe and North and South America. Recent highlights include performances with Les Arts

Florissants, the Rotterdam Philharmonic, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Freiburg Baroque, La Nuova Musica, Polyphony, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Early Opera Company and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. Visits to the US in 2019 included appearances with the OAE at the Lincoln Center in New York, with the Academy of Ancient Music in San Francisco and at the Disney Hall in Los Angeles. She also gave a recital at the Kennedy Center, Washington with Richard Egarr and William Carter in January 2020 and gave a tour in New York with Philharmonia Baroque in the summer of 2021.

Nominated for The Time Sky Arts Award for opera in 2020 her operatic roles include Galatea (*Acis & Galatea*), Iris (*Semele*), Dorinda (*Orlando*), Belinda (*Dido and Aeneas*), Elsie (*Yeoman of the Guard*). As a Harewood Artist she has performed Tiny (*Paul Bunyan*), Papagena (*The Magic Flute*) and Barbarina (*The Marriage of Figaro*). Future engagements include various roles in performances of both Purcell's *King Arthur* and *The Fairy Queen* with the Gabrieli Consort, *The Indian Queen* with Opéra de Luxembourg, Opéra de Caen and Antwerp Opera as well as a recital with Philharmonia Baroque in Ryedale Festival. In 2020 she should have made her Covent Garden debut performing Barbarina but this was cancelled due to Covid. Instead she made her debut there in 2023 singing Papagena in Mozart's *Magic Flute*. In 2022 her Glyndebourne Festival debut was Oberto (*Alcina*).

Harry Sever (conductor)



BBC Music Magazine 'Rising Star' conductor Harry Sever is fast developing a wide-ranging repertoire and a fluency in both operatic and orchestral style.

A finalist in both the LSO's Donatella Flick and the Athens International Conducting Competitions, he is currently the Ring Cycle Conducting Fellow at Longborough Festival Opera.

Recent engagements include *Carmen* (Opera North), *Siegfried* (Den Ny Opera and Longborough), *The Fairy*

Queen (Longborough) Fantasio (Garsington), La Traviata (Opera Holland Park), Cendrillon (Bampton Classical Opera), The Nutcracker (Peter Schaufuss Ballet), concerts with the orchestra of Welsh National Opera and recordings with the orchestra of Opera North.

As an assistant conductor and member of music staff, Harry has worked with Scottish Opera, English National Opera, the Royal Danish Opera, Den Jyske Opera (Danish National Opera), Garsington, Opera Holland Park, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra at the Grange Festival, and the Britten Sinfonia at Sadler's Wells.

His education work has included projects with The Royal Opera House Covent Garden, The Royal Opera Academy, Copenhagen, British Youth Opera, Birmingham Conservatoire and Trinity Laban Conservatoire.

A composer for stage and screen, Harry's shows Mr Men & Little Miss, James and the Giant Peach and Guess How Much I Love You have toured internationally. For the theatre, scores include The Kreutzer Sonata (Arcola Theatre), Sleeping Beauty and My Mother Said I Never Should (The Theatre Chipping Norton), King Lear, As You Like It, Love's Labours Lost (The Minack Theatre); for television, Stalker (CBS); for the radio, Rossum's Universal Robots (BBC Radio 4).

Harry studied at the Queen's College, Oxford and trained at the Royal Academy of Music and Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Paula Muldoon (leader)



Paula Muldoon is a violinist, software engineer, and composer based in Cambridge, UK. The leader of the Cambridge Philharmonic Orchestra since 2017 and a Lead Software Engineer at Zopa Bank, she thrives on the intersection of music and programming.

As leader of the Cambridge Philharmonic, Paula's interpretation of the solo part to Richard Strauss' *Ein Heldenleben* was lauded as having "impressive sensitivity". Paula enjoys guest leading other orchestras in East Anglia; highlights include

performing the solo violin part to *Scheherazade* with the Norfolk Symphony Orchestra.

Paula loves teaching both violin and programming. Her violin lessons focus on breath, effective practising, and historically informed bow usage. Much of her programming teaching comes via volunteering with her community MusiCoders, which she founded in 2020.

Paula is a former member of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, and subsequently spent several years living in London and performing with ensembles including the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra, and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, along with conductors such as Andris Nelsons, Sir Simon Rattle, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Marin Alsop, and Esa-Pekka Salonen. Highlights of her musical career include guest leading the Xi'an Symphony Orchestra in China, recordings at Abbey Road Studios, and performances at Carnegie Hall.

Paula has composed music for solo violin, string quartet and string trio. You can hear her play her own piece, *Get Outside*, on Spotify and iTunes. She is a graduate of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama (MMus 2012) and the University of Michigan (B.M. 2010).

While at the University of Michigan, she won the Undergraduate Award for Classics Translation and was a semi-finalist in the prestigious Hopwood writing competition. She is also one of WeAreTechWomen's 100 Women in Tech and was named to the Computer Weekly Women in Software Power List in 2019 and 2020.

www.paulamuldoon.com

Cambridge Philharmonic Orchestra

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Paula Muldoon (leader)
Kate Clow (co leader)
Hilary Crooks
Anne McAleer
Roz Chalmers
David Favara
Sabine Lindner
Sarah Ridley
Halyna Vakulenko
Sebastian Bechmann
Tabitha Smith

Violin 2

Chris Lin-Brande
Margaret Scourse
Leila Coupe
John Richards
Joyce Yu
Abigail Tan
Ariane Stoop
Marian Holness
Joanne Funk
Amy Kent

Viola

Ruth Donnelly
Mari O'Neill
Anne-Cecile Dingwall
Agata Richards
Peter Conlon
Jeremy Harmer
Edna Murphy
Emma McCaughan
David Yadin

Cello

Anna Edwards
Lucy O'Brien
Angela Bennett
Catherine Wilson
Daniel Coldridge
Clare Gilmour
Isabel Groves
Helen Hills
Helen Davies

Double Bass

Sarah Sharrock Sophie Rudge Susan Sparrow Alan Blackwell

Flute

Adrienne Jackson Sarah Blazeby Samantha Martin Alison Townend

Oboe

Rachael Dunlop Kate Pilling Charlotte Ewins

Clarinet

Graham Dolby David Hayton Berdel Efe Glüşen

Bassoon

Neil Greenham Jenny Warburton Sarah Kwan

Contrabassoon

Sarah Kwan

Horn

Caroline Prozesky Tony Hawkins Gareth Edwards Chris Wykes James Riehl Peter Roberts

Trumpet

Colin Bloch Neil Thornton Eliza Talman Isaac Holt

Trombone

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