

HARVARD- RADCLIFFE ORCHESTRA



SEASON 219
FEDERICO CORTESE, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Saturday, October 3rd, 2026

Beethoven & Mahler

Beethoven: String Quartet No. 11
in F minor, Op. 95 *Serioso*
(arr. Mahler for string orchestra)

Mahler: *Das Lied von der Erde*

Music Director: Federico Cortese

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SEASON 219, CONCERT 1
FEDERICO CORTESE, MUSIC DIRECTOR

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

String Quartet No. 11 in F minor, Op. 95 "Serioso"

(arranged for string orchestra by Gustav Mahler)

- I. *Allegro con brio*
- II. *Allegro ma non troppo*
- III. *Allegro assai vivace ma serioso - Più allegro - Trio*
- IV. *Larghetto espressivo - Allegretto agitato - Allegro*

- INTERMISSION -

GUSTAV MAHLER

Das Lied von der Erde

- I. *Allegro con brio*
- II. *Der Einsame im Herbst*
- III. *Von der Jugend*
- IV. *Von der Schönheit*
- V. *Der Trunkene im Frühling*
- VI. *Der Abschied*

Mezzo-Soprano: Ashley Dixon

Tenor: John Matthew Myers

HARVARD-RADCLIFFE ORCHESTRA
Conductor: Federico Cortese

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PROGRAM NOTES

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN: STRING QUARTET NO. 11 IN F MINOR, OP. 95 “SERIOSO”

Beethoven composed the String Quartet in F minor, Op. 95, in 1810, near the end of the period often referred to as his “middle” or “heroic” period. The years leading up to the quartet had been among the most productive of his career, including such works as his Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, the Violin Concerto, the Fourth and Fifth Piano Concertos, and the three “Razumovsky” Quartets. The String Quartet No. 11 is one of the shortest of all the Beethoven quartets, and is related to *Egmont*, another piece from Beethoven’s “middle” period which he was composing in the same year he was working on this quartet.

At the same time, Beethoven was entering an increasingly difficult period in his life, as his worsening deafness and unsettled personal circumstances began to weigh more heavily on him. The music he wrote during these years began to change as well. Whereas many of the works from the height of his middle period are large in scale, Op. 95 is unusually compressed. The movements are among the shortest he wrote for string quartet, and the music moves quickly from one idea to the next. Beethoven gave the work the title *Quartett Serioso*, the only one of his string quartets to carry a descriptive title of his own.

The first movement, *Allegro con brio*, immediately establishes the serious character of the work. All four instruments

begin together with a forceful unison statement in F minor, followed by a leaping response in the first violin. This opening material returns throughout the movement and gives the music much of its restless energy. A contrasting second theme, first introduced by the viola, provides a brief lyrical rest, but the tension is always looming in the background. Beethoven also compresses the traditional sonata form, omitting the usual exposition repeat and moving quickly through the development and recapitulation before the movement comes to a subdued close.

The second movement, marked *Allegretto ma non troppo*, begins more quietly. A descending line in the cello introduces the movement, after which the first violin presents a more lyrical melody. Beethoven then turns to imitative and fugal writing, gradually building a more intricate texture as the voices enter one after another. The movement shifts between moments of stillness and passages of greater harmonic tension, and its closing measures lead almost directly into the third movement.

The third movement serves as the quartet’s scherzo, although Beethoven specifically marks it *Allegro assai vivace ma serioso*. Its principal idea is built on a persistent dotted rhythm, which gives the music an unsettled quality. Two contrasting trio sections provide a change of character, with broader, chorale-like writing in the lower voices and more flowing motion above. Each time the scherzo returns, however, its rhythmic intensity quickly reasserts itself.

The finale begins with a short *Larghetto espressivo*, seven measures of dark, searching music that briefly suspend the motion of the quartet. The main *Allegretto agitato* follows, restless and lyrical at once. Near the end, however, the character of the work changes unexpectedly. The music turns from F minor to F major and accelerates into a brilliant coda. After the severity of the preceding movements, the sudden lightness of this conclusion is one of the most striking moments in the quartet.

Nearly ninety years later, Gustav Mahler arranged the *Serioso* for string orchestra. Mahler prepared the transcription during his years in Vienna and conducted its premiere with the Vienna Philharmonic on January 15, 1899. He was not the first composer or conductor to enlarge chamber works for orchestral performance, but his treatment of Beethoven's quartet was relatively restrained.

Mahler preserved Beethoven's original musical material and did not attempt to turn the quartet into a newly composed orchestral work. Instead, he distributed the four original parts across a full string ensemble and added double basses selectively to strengthen the lower register. The arrangement was controversial at its first performance. Some members of the Viennese audience objected to the idea of altering Beethoven's quartet for larger forces, and the performance was reportedly interrupted by protests and booing. Mahler subsequently abandoned plans to perform his arrangement of Beethoven's Op. 131 quartet, and the *Serioso* transcription itself largely disappeared from performance for decades.

Mahler's arrangement remains very close to Beethoven's original score, but the larger string forces give the music a

different weight and sonority. Passages that were originally written for four players become more powerful, while the quieter sections take on a warmer, fuller sound. Even with these changes in scale, the tense and concentrated character of the *Serioso* remains at the center of the work.

—Victor Hsu '30, Edward Lee '30

INSTRUMENTATION: Strings

GUSTAV MAHLER: DAS LIED VON DER ERDE

For the eminent Gustav Mahler (1860–1911), the lingering shadow of death woven into his life served as an enduring source of fascination. Born in Kalischt, Bohemia, the young Mahler displayed a great talent for music, eventually going on to graduate from Vienna Conservatory in 1878. After conducting at successively more prominent opera houses across the continent, his endeavors culminated in an appointment as the music director of the Vienna *Hofoper* in 1897, a position that required him to convert to Catholicism. Fulfillment in personal life followed professional fulfillment: In 1901, the composer met Alma Schindler, daughter of the painter Emil Jacob Schindler and widely considered one of the most beautiful women in Vienna, Austria, later wedding her in 1902.

In the summer of 1907, tragedy upon tragedy struck. Fueled by an antisemitic press campaign, the talented conductor/composer was forced to resign as Director of the *Hofoper* and move his career to New York. He was also diagnosed with a devastating heart condition, confining Mahler to limited physical

activity and leading to his death a mere four years later. Perhaps the most heartbreaking, however, was the death of his daughter Maria Anna, nicknamed Putzi. The latter incident broke Mahler, and he wrote to fellow conductor Bruno Walter that “[he had] been going through so many experiences for the last year and half...” and that late in his life, he had to learn “[to] walk and stand again as a beginner.” However, just a year after the three tragic hammer-blows to his life, he revealed to Walter the composition of a new work that was the “most personal thing [he had] written so far.”

As we would later learn, the work referenced was *Das Lied von der Erde* (“The Song of the Earth”). Written for two solo voices and symphonic orchestra, the composer refused to number the symphony, hoping, according to his wife Alma, to avoid the ill fate of the so-called “curse of the ninth” that had plagued earlier composers starting with Beethoven. Mahler biographer and music critic Richard Specht wrote of the profound final movement of the work: “I know only very few pieces in music that speak such a profoundly moving language...” Even the eminent conductor Leonard Bernstein described *Das Lied* as Mahler’s “greatest symphony.”

Mahler’s inspiration for writing *Das Lied* was Hans Bethge’s *Die chinesische Flöte* (*The Chinese Flute*), a collection of readapted Tang-dynasty Chinese poems. The identity of the original poems was long obfuscated, due to manifold reinterpretations and inaccuracies over the course of four translations and adaptations: first into French by two separate translators, and subsequently into German, then followed by Bethge’s “free adaptation” and Mahler’s own

edits. Despite much being quite literally “lost in translation,” Mahler nevertheless retains the spiritual essence of the Tang poets in this symphonic song cycle, weaving the East and the West in both music and poetry. Today, 5–7 poems by Li Bai, Qian Qi, Meng Haoran and Wang Wei are generally accepted as the source material.

The first movement of the symphony, “Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde,” opens *pesante*, with all four horns blasting a pentatonic theme meant to evoke the howling of an ape. Over the course of the movement, this “ape call” is passed around throughout the orchestra: strings, woodwinds, trombones, glockenspiel. In the pessimistic tenor’s drinking song, Mahler drives one point home, repeating it three times, each time in a key a semitone higher. This is something Li Bai, in his original poem “Song of Sorrow (悲歌行),” dared not mention; the source of all sorrows: Dark is life, dark is death.

When the movement reaches its most pensive moment, the tenor sings of the eternity of the earth and heavens in contrast with the transience of a man’s prosperity. This line in Li Bai’s poem quotes the texts of Laozi, the founder of Taoism himself. Mahler, deeply touched by Taoist thought, also adds a few words of his own, which reappear at the end of the symphony: not only is the earth eternal, but it will always blossom again in the spring. Here, the singer finally reveals the origin of the ever-recurring “ape calls”: a lone ape in the graveyard, howling vainly into the moonlight. The haunting image of the ape is too sobering for the poor tenor, who raises his glass of wine, ready to drink it in one gulp, reminding himself: Dark is life, dark is death.

The second movement, “Der Einsame im Herbst,” is much more introverted. This is also reflected in the smaller, chamber-like orchestration lacking heavy brass and percussion. The song begins with the gentlest murmur of muted *pianissimo* violins and the weary lament of the oboe. The first two notes of the oboe solo, a *legato* descending second, are a sighing motif passed around throughout the movement, much like the baroque *pianto* (Italian for “weeping”) motif, which is a minor second. In contrast with the desperation of the pessimistic tenor, the alto’s words are introspective and caring. Alternating between the forlorn mood of the opening and a warmer, richer texture, the music reaches its peak as the alto wishes for the sunshine of love to dry her tears. But in the meantime, she has no choice but to continue her lament in solitude.

Attribution of the text of the third movement “Von der Jugend,” to its corresponding Tang poem has proved most difficult. However, in recent decades, an interesting theory has gained traction: that a French translator read the Li Bai poem “Banquet at the Tao family pavilion” (Ref. 1,) mistakenly interpreted the surname Tao (陶) by its literal meaning, porcelain, and conjured the image of a porcelain pavilion, out of which she effectively created a whole new poem.

Regardless of the veracity of this theory, it is easy to imagine that Mahler took delight in setting to music this orientalist, yet superbly picturesque text. A blatantly pentatonic theme opens the movement, and thereafter, the rustic whistle of the two piccolos lends a distinct jollity to the song. The music then calms as it reaches the sole verse that can be directly attributed to

the Li Bai poem: the clear pond, whose still surface reflects everything in clear mirror-images. After a quick recapitulation of the opening theme, the piccolos fade into the heavens. The title of this movement, “Of Youth,” is an addition made by Mahler himself. It is also the only joyous song sung by the ever-depressed, pessimistic tenor. The implication is saddening: that the carefree pleasure of spending time with friends disappears with age, remaining only as a distant memory.

In the fourth movement, “Von der Schönheit,” the alto introduces a scene of flower-picking maidens against the backdrop of yet another pentatonic melody, played by woodwinds. Moving on, the music suddenly picks up pace, the whole orchestra (including a mandolin!) entering a frenzied stampede as the singer describes the handsome young boys riding their horses by the riverbank. The boys disappear just as abruptly as they appeared, and the maidens too fade away into the distance, as the movement closes with a shimmering *pianissississimo* chord of flutes doubled by cello harmonics.

The fifth movement, “Der Trunkene im Frühling,” features the tenor, once more in a bout of drunken dejection. Just like the drunkard, the music stumbles about, never settling in a single tempo for more than a dozen or so bars. As the tenor goes to bed, the solo violin plays a melody from *Nachtmusik II*, the fourth movement of Mahler’s Symphony No. 7, composed just a few years prior. The piccolo, representing a little bird, echoes this melody, and the half-awake tenor asks the bird whether spring has come. Evidently, the bird’s gleeful affirmation was lost on the drunkard, who chooses to stay in his cycle of despair.

The final movement, "Der Abschied," alone spans half of the entire symphony. Featuring many solo instruments and a wide range of orchestral textures, it combines texts from two separate Tang poems. The movement opens in a heavy mood, with the dark, low C of a contra-bassoon, and the subtly oriental strikes of the tam-tam. The solo oboe and high horns exchange piercing songs of lament, as the horns' line transforms into a succession of the two-note weeping (sighing) motifs from movement 2. The darkness lifts for just a moment when violins enter in C major, before quickly returning to the depression of C minor. The alto then enters in a recitative, against a solo flute and the soft pedal point of the cellos' open C string. As she describes the world around her, each bit seems to come alive, if only for an instant: another moment of C major respite as the moon drifts across the sky, clarinets and harp depicting the flowing brook, the solo cello's song as the sad men search for the happiness left behind in youth, fluttering woodwinds as the birds perch on their branches. After another recitative with the flute, the narrator begins playing the lute (represented by the mandolin and harp), while the pentatonic flute melody represents the anxious pacing of the narrator waiting for the friend. A sharp descent returns us to the opening melody, which gradually evolves into a towering orchestral interlude, the four horns weeping with all their might.

The transition to the second poem, Wang Wei's "Farewell" (Ref. 2.) is musically seamless. In another alto recitative, ominous strikes of the tam-tam replace the flute accompaniment. As the friend explains his unfulfillment in life, the music wavers once again between a for-

lorn C minor and a tender C major. But with the return of flowing brook theme in a sanguine F major, these woes dissipate, clarifying the friend's resolve to settle in retirement. Just then, the music pans out, blossoming into a *dolcissimo* C major, as Mahler harks back to what he said in the first movement: our dear earth will always blossom again in spring. The music dies away as the alto repeats "forever..." amidst sparkling harp and celesta, the flutes still pacing back and forth in their pentatonic motif until they too give out.

Mahler's changes to this last Wang Wei poem, such as the addition of third-person pronouns and replacement of the eternal white clouds with the one word "forever," serve to detach the scenery and generalize the philosophical aspect which ties the whole symphony together. Just as in the first movement, Mahler also adds the line that the earth will blossom in spring, which, interestingly, bears a resemblance to a line from another Wang Wei poem, "Farewell in the Mountains" (山中送别). Regardless of its intentionality, this highlights the crossroads of Mahler's philosophy and the Taoist ideas present in the Tang poems: the very crossroads where *Das Lied von der Erde* was born.

From Laozi to Li Bai to Bethge to Mahler, the earth sings one truth to every one of us humans: There is darkness everywhere, in life and in impending death. And yet, there is also eternal beauty everywhere on this dear earth.

—Ethan Chang '29, Aquila Wolff '27

INSTRUMENTATION: Piccolo, 3 flutes (3rd doubling 2nd piccolo), 3 oboes (3rd doubling English horn), 3 clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons (3rd doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, glockenspiel, tam-tam, tambourine, triangle), 2 harps, celesta, mandolin, strings, and solo voices (tenor and alto)



REFERENCES

1: Banquet at the Tao Family Pavilion (excerpt) - Li Bai

Amidst the winding alleys lies the house of a hermit, and with its high gates, one knows its owner is a great man.

There, the pond's surface is like a large, clear mirror, and the woods are full of flowers that make anyone smile.

The green water holds vestiges of the spring sun, while the cyan pavilion holds traces of the glow of sunset.

Once one hears the exquisite music of strings and winds there, not even Jingu* could compare.

*Jingu(金谷园): A beautiful garden and former villa in Luoyang.

2: Farewell - Wang Wei

Dismount your horse and drink this wine. Where are you going?

You say: I remained unfulfilled in this world, so I will retire to my home by the mountains to the south.

Then go, and I shall ask no more. White clouds go on forever.

1: 宴陶家亭子 (摘录) - 李白

曲巷幽人宅，高门大士家。

池开照胆镜，林吐破颜花。

绿水藏春日，青轩秘晚霞。

若闻弦管妙，金谷不能夸。

2: 送别 - 王维

下马饮君酒，问君何所之？

君言不得意，归卧南山陲。

但去莫复问，白云无尽时。

(Translations by Aquila Wolff '27 with the assistance of Xinran Tong '29 and Paloma So '27)

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

MAHLER: DAS LIED VON DER ERDE

1. Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde

Schon winkt der Wein im gold'nen Pokale,
doch trinkt noch nicht, erst sing' ich
euch ein Lied!

Das Lied vom Kummer soll auflachend
in die Seele euch klingen.

Wenn der Kummer naht,
liegen wüst die Gärten der Seele,
welkt hin und stirbt die Freude, der
Gesang.

Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod.

Herr dieses Hauses!

Dein Keller birgt die Fülle des goldenen
Weins!

Hier, diese Laute nenn' ich mein!

Die Laute schlagen und die Gläser
leeren,
das sind die Dinge, die zusammenpas-
sen.

Ein voller Becher Weins zur rechten Zeit
ist mehr wert als alle Reiche dieser
Erde!

Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod!

Das Firmament blaut ewig und die
Erde

wird lange fest steh'n
und aufblüh'n im Lenz.

Du aber, Mensch, wie lang lebst denn
du?

Nicht hundert Jahre darfst du dich
ergötzen,
an all dem morschen Tande dieser Erde!
Seht dort hinab! Im Mondschein auf den
Gräbern
hockt eine wildgespenstische Gestalt.

1. The Drinking Song of the Earth's Lament

The wine in the golden goblet
beckons,
but do not drink yet, for first I will sing
you a song!

The song of sorrow shall resound
in your soul, bursting with laughter.

When sorrow comes near,
the garden of the soul lies waste,
while joy and song wither
and die.

Dark is life, dark is death.

Master of this house!

Your cellar holds an abundance of gold-
en wine!

Here, I call this lute mine!

Playing the lute and emptying the glass-
es,
those are things that go together
well.

A full goblet of wine at the right time
is worth more than all kingdoms of this
earth!

Dark is life, dark is death!

The heavens are forever blue and the
earth

will remain unchanged for a long time,
and blossom in spring.

But you, human, how long will you
live?

Not even for a hundred years may you
gloat over
all the rotten trumpery of this Earth!
Look down there! In the moonlight on
top of the graves
crouches a wild, haunting figure.

Ein Aff' ist's! Hört ihr, wie sein Heulen
hinausgellt in den süßen Duft des Lebens!

Jetzt nehm den Wein! Jetzt ist es Zeit,
Genossen!

Leert eure gold'nen Becher zu Grund!
Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod!

2. Der Einsame im Herbst

Herbstnebel wallen bläulich überm
See,
vom Reif bezogen stehen alle Gräser.
Man meint, ein Künstler habe Staub von
Jade
über die feinen Blüten ausgestreut.

Der süße Duft der Blumen is
verflogen;
ein kalter Wind beugt ihre Stengel
nieder.
Bald werden die verwelkten, gold'nen
Blätter
der Lotosblüten auf dem Wasser
zieh'n.

Mein Herz ist müde. Meine kleine Lampe
erlosch mit Knistern, es gemahnt mich an
den Schlaf.

Ich komm' zu dir, traute Ruhestätte!
Ja, gib mir Ruh', ich hab' Erquickung not!

Ich weine viel in meinen Einsamkeiten.
Der Herbst in meinem Herzen währt zu
lange.
Sonne der Liebe, willst du nie mehr
scheinen,
um meine bitteren Tränen mild
aufzutrocknen?

3. Von der Jugend

Mitten in dem kleinen Teiche
steht ein Pavillon aus grünem
und aus weißem Porzellan.

It is an ape! Do you hear, how its howls
shrill out into the sweet fragrance of
life!

Now take the wine! Now is the time,
comrades!

Empty your golden goblets to the dregs!
Dark is life, dark is death!

2. The Lonely One in Autumn

The blue autumn mist flows over the
lake,
all the grass stand covered in frost.
One would think an artist had sprinkled
jade dust
over the fine blossoms.

The sweet scent of the flowers has
flown away;
a cold wind bends their stems
down.
Soon the wilted, golden
petals
of the lotus blossoms will drift atop the
water.

My heart is tired. My small lamp
has gone out with a crackle, and re-
minds me of sleep.

I am coming to you, cozy resting-place!
Yes, give me rest, for I need refreshment!

I weep much in my solitude.
The autumn in my heart goes on for too
long.
Sun of love, will you never shine
again
to gently dry
my bitter tears?

3. Of Youth

In the middle of the small pond
stands a pavilion of green
and white porcelain.

Wie der Rücken eines Tigers
wölbt die Brücke sich aus Jade
zu dem Pavillon hinüber.

In dem Häuschen sitzen Freunde,
schön gekleidet, trinken, plaudern,
manche schreiben Verse nieder.

Ihre seidnen Ärmel gleiten rückwärts,
ihre seidnen Mützen
hocken lustig tief im Nacken.

Auf des kleinen Teiches stiller Wasser-
fläche
zeigt sich alles wunderbarlich im
Spiegelbilde.

Alles auf dem Kopfe stehend
in dem Pavillon aus grünem
und aus weißem Porzellan;

wie ein Halbmond scheint die Brücke,
umgekehrt der Bogen. Freunde,
schön gekleidet, trinken, plaudern.

4. Von der Schönheit

Junge Mädchen pflücken Blumen,
pflücken Lotosblumen an dem Ufer-
rande.
Zwischen Büschen und Blättern sitzen
sie,
sammeln Blüten in den Schoß und rufen
sich einander Neckereien zu.

Gold'ne Sonne webt um die
Gestalten,
spiegelt sie im blanken Wasser wider.
Sonne spiegelt ihre schlanken Glieder,
ihre süßen Augen wider,
und der Zephir hebt mit Schme-
ichelkosen
das Gewebe ihrer Ärmel auf,
führt den Zauber ihrer Wohlgerüche
durch die Luft.

Like a tiger's back
the bridge of jade arches
across to the pavilion.

Friends sit in the little house,
nicely dressed, drinking, chatting,
many write down verses.

Their silken sleeves slip backwards,
their silken caps
perch gaily low on their necks.

On the small pond's still
surface
everything appears fantastically in mir-
ror-image.

Everything is upside down
in the pavilion of green
and white porcelain;

the bridge looks like a crescent,
its arch inverted. Friends,
nicely dressed, drinking, chatting.

4. Of Beauty

Young girls pluck flowers
they pluck lotus flowers at the water's
edge
Between bushes and leaves
they sit
collecting blossoms in their lap
and bantering with each other.

The golden sun weaves around their
figures,
reflecting them in the bright water.
The sun reflects their slender limbs,
their sweet eyes,
and the breeze, flattering and fondling,
lifts up
the fine fabric of their sleeves,
guiding their magical fragrance through
the air.

O sieh, was tummeln sich für schöne
Knaben
dort an dem Uferrand auf mut'gen
Rossen,
weithin glänzend wie die Sonnen-
strahlen;
schon zwischen dem Geäst der grünen
Weiden
trabt das jungfrische Volk einher.
Das Roß des einen wiehert fröhlich auf,
und scheut und saust dahin,
über Blumen, Gräser, wanken hin die
Hufe,
sie zerstampfen jäh im Sturm die hinge-
sunk'nen Blüten,
Hei! Wie flattern im Taumel seine Mäh-
nen, dampfen heiß die Nüstern!
Gold'ne Sonne webt um die
Gestalten,
spiegelt sie im blanken Wasser wider.

Und die schönste von den Jungfrau'n
sendet
lange Blicke ihm der Sehnsucht nach.
Ihre stolze Haltung ist nur Verstellung.
In dem Funkeln ihrer großen Augen,
in dem Dunkel ihres heißen Blicks
schwingt klagend noch die Erregung
ihres Herzens nach.

5. Der Trunkene im Frühling

Wenn nur ein Traum das Dasein ist,
warum denn Müh' und Plag'?
Ich trinke, bis ich nicht mehr kann,
den ganzen, lieben Tag!

Und wenn ich nicht mehr trinken kann,
weil Kehl' und Seele voll,
So tauml' ich bis zu meiner Tür
und schlafe wundervoll!

Was hör' ich beim Erwachen? Horch!
Ein Vogel singt im Baum.
Ich frag' ihn, ob schon Frühling sei,
mir ist als wie im Traum.

Oh see, what handsome boys are romp-
ing around
on their brave horses there at the wa-
ter's edge,
shining all over, like rays of
the sun;
between the branches of the green
willows
the fresh-spirited youth now trot along.
One of the steeds neighs gleefully,
and balks and dashes off,
over flowers and grass, staggering on its
hooves,
At once the hooves take the fallen blos-
soms by storm, trampling them,
Ah! How its mane tosses in frenzy,
its nostrils steaming hot!
The golden sun weaves around their
figures,
reflecting them in the bright water.

And the prettiest of the maidens
sends
long glances of yearning after him.
Her proud demeanor is but a pretense.
In the sparkle of her large eyes,
in the darkness of her heated glances
her agitated heart still pulsates in ago-
ny.

5. The Drunken One in Spring

If life is but a dream,
why toil and trouble?
I drink until I can drink no more,
the whole day long!

And when I can drink no more,
for my throat and soul are full,
Then I stagger my way to my door
and sleep wonderfully!

What do I hear when I awake? Listen!
A bird is singing in the tree.
I ask it if it is spring yet,
to me, it is just like a dream.

Der Vogel zwitschert: Ja!
Der Lenz ist da, sei kommen über Nacht!
Aus tiefstem Schauen lauscht' ich
auf,
der Vogel singt und lacht!

Ich fülle mir den Becher neu
und leer' ihn bis zum Grund
und singe, bis der Mond erglänzt
am schwarzen Firmament!

Und wenn ich nicht mehr singen kann,
so schlaf' ich wieder ein.
Was geht mich denn der
Frühling an!?
Laßt mich betrunken sein!

6. Der Abschied

Die Sonne scheidet hinter dem Gebirge.
In alle Täler steigt der Abend nieder
mit seinen Schatten, die voll Kühlung
sind.

O sieh! Wie eine Silberbarke schwebt
der Mond am blauen Himmelssee her-
auf.

Ich spüre eines feinen Windes Weh'n
hinter den dunklen Fichten!

Der Bach singt voller Wohllaut durch das
Dunkel.

Die Blumen blassen im
Dämmerchein.

Die Erde atmet voll von Ruh' und Schlaf.
Alle Sehnsucht will nun träumen.

Die müden Menschen geh'n heimwärts,
um im Schlaf vergess'nes Glück
und Jugend neu zu lernen!

Die Vögel hocken still in ihren Zweigen.
Die Welt schläft ein!

Es wehet kühl im Schatten meiner Ficht-
en.

Ich stehe hier und harre meines Freun-
des.

Ich harre sein zum letzten Lebewohl.

The bird chirps: Yes!
Spring is here, it has come overnight!
Out of the depths of my gaze I listen
closely,
the bird sings and laughs!

I fill myself another goblet
and empty it to the dregs
and sing, until the moon glistens
in the pitch-black heavens!

And when I can sing no more,
then I fall asleep again.
After all, what does spring have to do
with me?
Let me be drunk!

6. The Farewell

The sun departs behind the mountains.
Into every valley the night descends
with its shadows that are full
of cold.

Look! Like a silver boat
the moon floats upwards on the blue
lake of the sky.

I feel the waft of a soft wind
beyond the dark spruces!

The brook sings resonant euphony
through the dark.

The flowers turn pale in the glow of the
dusk,

The earth breathes full of rest and sleep.
All yearning now will dream.

The tired people walk homeward,
so that in sleep they might learn again
forgotten joy and youth!

The birds perch still in their branches.
The world is asleep!

A cool wind blows in the shadows of my
spruces.

I stand here and await my
friend.

I await him to bid a final farewell.

Ich sehne mich, o Freund, an deiner
Seite die Schönheit dieses Abends zu
genießen.
Wo bleibst du? Du läßt mich
lang allein!
Ich wandle auf und nieder mit meiner
Laute
auf Wegen, die vom weichen Grase
schwellen.
O Schönheit, o ewigen Liebens, Lebens
trunk'ne Welt!

Er stieg vom Pferd und reichte
ihm
den Trunk des Abschieds dar.
Er fragte ihn, wohin er führe
und auch warum es müßte sein.
Er sprach, seine Stimme war umflort:

Du, mein Freund,
mir war auf dieser Welt das Glück nicht
hold!
Wohin ich geh'?
Ich geh', ich wand're in die Berge.
Ich suche Ruhe für mein einsam Herz!
Ich wandle nach der Heimat, meiner
Stätte!
Ich werde niemals in die Ferne schweif-
en.
Still ist mein Herz und harret seiner
Stunde!

Die liebe Erde allüberall
blüht auf im Lenz und grünt
aufs neu!
Allüberall und ewig
blauen licht die Fernen,
ewig... ewig...

I long, my friend, to enjoy the beauty of
this night by your
side.
Where have you been? You have left me
alone for so long!
I wander back and forth with
my lute
along roads swelling with
soft grass.
O beauty, o world, eternally drunk on
love, and with life!

He dismounted his horse and handed
him
the drink of farewell.
He asked him where he is heading
and also why it had to be so.
He spoke, in a muffled voice:

You, my friend,
fortune was not kind to me in this
world!
Where am I going?
I walk, I wander in the mountains.
I seek rest for my lonely heart!
I walk to my homeland, my
place!
I will never again rove in distant
lands.
My heart is calm and awaits its
hour!

Every place on this dear earth
blossoms in spring and becomes green
once again!
Everywhere and forever
the distance gleams blue and bright,
forever... forever...

Translation by Aquila Wolff '27 with the
assistance of Moshi Tang '27, Noemi
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HROf

CONDUCTOR FEDERICO CORTESE

THE JAE WON LEE & SUN WHI LEE MUSIC DIRECTOR, IN PERPETUITY



This year marks Federico Cortese's eighteenth season as Music Director & Conductor of the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra. Mr. Cortese first moved to Boston as the Assistant Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and debuted in September 1998, stepping in at short notice to conduct Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 in place of an ailing Seiji Ozawa, which was widely praised. Serving in that position from 1998-2003, Mr. Cortese led the Boston Symphony several times in Symphony Hall and at Tanglewood. His conducting of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* was particularly heralded. Additionally, he has served as Music Director of the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras since

1999 and was previously Music Director of the New England String Ensemble and Associate Conductor of the Asian Youth Symphony Orchestra. Other appointments have included Music Coordinator (in lieu of Music Director) and Associate Conductor of the Spoleto Festival in Italy, Assistant Conductor to Daniele Gatti at the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, and Assistant Conductor to Robert Spano at the Brooklyn Philharmonic.

Mr. Cortese has conducted numerous prominent symphony orchestras, including Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, BBC Scottish Symphony, Sydney Symphony, and Oslo Philharmonic to name a few. Opera engagements have included Maggio Musicale in Florence, Spoleto Festival in Italy and the United States, Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Finnish National Opera, Opera Australia, and Washington National Opera, among many others. Mr. Cortese has been Music Coordinator and Associate Conductor of the Spoleto Festival in Italy. He also served as Assistant Conductor to Robert Spano and to Daniele Gatti.

Federico Cortese studied composition and conducting at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia in Rome and subsequently studied at the Hochschule fur Musik in Vienna. He has been a conducting fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center. In addition to music, Mr. Cortese studied literature, humanities and law, earning a law degree from La Sapienza University in Rome.

MEZZO- SOPRANO ASHLEY DIXON



This season, mezzo-soprano Ashley Dixon joins the roster of the Metropolitan Opera for covering duties in both *Medea* with Carlo Rizzi and *Maria Stuarda* with Enrique Mazzola. Ms. Dixon will also sing the Mozart Mass in C Major “Coronation Mass” and Hasse *Miserere* in C minor with the American Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Leon Botstein. Two engagements in Texas include taking on the role of Flora in *La Traviata* for Austin Opera and Opera San Antonio conducted by Timothy Myers and Francesco Milioto respectively with E. Loren Meeker directing. She will be the mezzo-soprano soloist for the Mozart Requiem with The Washington Chorus led by Eugene Rogers.

Her career has included engagements at the Houston Grand Opera, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Opera, Festival d’Aix-en-Provence, Palm Beach Opera, Chattanooga Symphony, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, Virginia Opera, Ravinia Festival, Detroit Opera, and Des Moines Metro Opera, collaborating with conductors James Conlon, Marin Alsop, Eun Sun Kim, James Lowe, Adam Turner, Leonardo García Alarcón, Ilya Ram, Kwamé Ryan, Carlo Montanaro, David Neely, Michelle Merrill, among others, in productions and stage appearances working with directors James Robinson, Tomer Zvulun, Fenlon Lamb, Mark Foehring, Karen Tiller, and more.

Her concert repertoire spans Beethoven Symphony No. 9, Elgar *Sea Pictures*, Ravel *Shéhérazade*, Berlioz *Les nuits d’été*, in prestigious venues like Carnegie Hall (New York) and Symphony Hall (Boston).

Ms. Dixon earned her Bachelor of Music at the Louisiana State University and Master of Music at the University of Michigan.



HRO

TENOR JOHN MATTHEW MYERS



Praised for his “strong, pleasant timbre with textual command and expressiveness” (*Opera Magazine*), John Matthew Myers has garnered acclaim for his “lovely, warm tenor of considerable promise” (*Opera News*). His critically acclaimed solo debut album titled *Desiderium* with pianist Myra Huang was released on AVIE Records in 2022.

This season, Myers joins the North Carolina Symphony for excerpts from Beethoven’s *Fidelio* and the 9th Symphony, the Minnesota Orchestra for Rachmaninoff’s *The Bells*, the Grant Park Music Festival for Beethoven’s 9th Symphony, the Euskadiko Orkestra for Berlioz’s Re-

quiem, the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra for *Das Lied von der Erde*, and the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra for Verdi’s *Requiem*. He also joins Gustavo Dudamel and the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra on tour in Asia as Florestan in *Fidelio*.

Myers made his surprise Los Angeles Philharmonic debut in 2017 as Mao in John Adams’s *Nixon in China* conducted by the composer. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Tenor 1 in the Pit Ensemble of Brett Dean’s *Hamlet* and covered Siegmund in Wagner’s *Die Walküre* with the Fort Worth Symphony. He made his New York Philharmonic debut in the world premiere of David Lang’s *prisoner of the state*, directed by Elkhannah Pulitzer.

Originally from Southern California, Myers received his graduate and undergraduate degrees from the Manhattan School of Music, was a Gerdine Young Artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, an Apprentice Artist with Santa Fe Opera, an alumnus of the Verbier Festival Academy, and a fellow with Music Academy of the West.



HISTORY OF THE HRO

The Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra (HRO) is the oldest continuously active symphony orchestra in the United States. Founded in 1808, the orchestra delivers professional-quality performances to the Harvard, Cambridge, and greater Boston communities four times each academic year, in addition to initiating a variety of outreach programs on equitable arts access and music education.

Originally founded as “the Pierian Sodality” by Joseph Eaton (class of 1810) and five classmates on the night of March 6, 1808, the Pierian Sodality was named after the Pierian Spring, a sacred spot where the ancient Greek drank from an alleged fountain of knowledge and worshiped the heroic musician Orpheus. Accordingly, Eaton’s group was known for its consumption of brandy and cigars, in addition to its music.

In the 1830s, the Faculty of Harvard College began public admonishment of the Pierian Sodality for entire nights spent away from Cambridge “serenading young ladies.” In 1832, such censure reduced the group’s membership to one musician. The tradition of the Sodality was gradually restored until 1840, when the group reported fame that “did wax exceedingly great, and did reach all the places round about Cambridge.” The Pierian Sodality predates the first professional orchestra in the United States (the New York Philharmonic Orchestra), which was established in 1842.

In 1860, shortly after Harvard College President James Walker (class of 1814, HDS 1817) added music to the college

curriculum, making Harvard the first institution to do so, the Pierian Sodality was permitted to “hire a hall and give a public concert, on condition that no tickets be sold.” They began to deliver regular concerts under student-conductors until 1926, when students in the orchestra hired the group’s first professional conductor. The orchestra also embarked on its first tour during this time, traveling throughout New York State in 1908. Subsequent features in the U.S. included a concert for First Ladies Florence Mabel Harding and Grace Anna Coolidge, a concert at Carnegie Hall, and a third place finish at the Fifth Annual International Festival of Student Orchestras in 1978. In 1962, the HRO took its first international tour to Mexico. Other international tours have been to the Soviet Union, Italy, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Israel, Jordan, Korea, the Philippines, and Argentina. Most recently, in 2026, the orchestra returned to Japan on tour.

By the recommendation of Leonard Bernstein, Dr. James Yannatos began his 45-year term as music director of the HRO in 1964. Under his baton, HRO developed into the highly reputable orchestra it is today. Following Yannatos’ retirement in 2009, Federico Cortese was appointed music director of HRO, and he remains today. With Cortese, the orchestra has expanded its repertoire and learned to see it from both a musical and an artistic perspective.

Follow the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra on Instagram @hrorchestra or visit our website at harvardradcliffeorchestra.org.

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HRO visited Cambridge Homes over the summer to play movie and classical music for residents!



HRO was hired to perform holiday music for shoppers at The COOP in Harvard Square!



HRO visited the Baldwin School to play an arrangement of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*!



On April 7, 2026, HRO visited the Peabody Terrace Children's Center to play for curious little listeners in the T2 class!

ABOUT SANDERS THEATRE

Sanders Theatre at Memorial Hall is managed by the Office for the Arts at Harvard.

All inquiries should be addressed to:

*Memorial Hall /
Lowell Hall Complex
45 Quincy Street, Room 027
Cambridge, MA 02138*

Phone: 617-496-4595

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<https://www.boxoffice.harvard.edu>

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Exit the theatre on either side and descend the stairs to the lower level.

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Latecomers are seated at management's discretion.

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Wheelchair accessible seating is available through the Harvard Box Office by telephone at 617-496-2222, TTY 617-495-1642, or in person. Sanders Theatre is equipped with Assistive Listening Devices, which are available at the Box Office, one-half hour before performance time. For information about parking for disabled patrons, call the University Disability Services at 617-495-1859, Monday through Friday 9 AM to 5 PM, or email at disabilityservices@harvard.edu. Please call at least two business days in advance.

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Advance Sales:

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Website: www.boxoffice.harvard.edu

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Open on performance days only, at 12 noon for matinees and 5 PM for evening performances. Open until one-half hour after curtain.

USHERING

Contact the Production Office at 617-495-5595 about ushering opportunities.

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