

Generation Orchestra: Symphonic Poets

—
Onsdag 11 februari 2026 kl. 18:00

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Kungasalen

Program

dirigenter:

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

Totenfeier (from 2nd Symphony, "resurrection".)

Guillaume Villiers

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Ma mère l'Oye, M.60, version of 1911

Pauline Normand

Hugo Alfvén (1872-1960)

En Skärgårdssägen, op. 20

Sebastian Heurlin Fernold

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Les Préludes, S.97

Ellinor Bäcklin Bergh

Handledare för dirigentstudenterna:
Henrik Schaefer

Totenfeier, from the 2nd Symphony “resurrection” (Mahler)

In 1888, shortly after his First Symphony, Gustav Mahler composed Totenfeier (Funeral Ceremony), later revised as the first movement of his Symphony No. 2. Inspired by Adam Mickiewicz’s poem, the work reflects on death and the possibility of continuation, as Mahler wrote: “At the grave of a beloved person... what does Death mean? – is there a continuation?”

When Mahler played the piece for Hans von Bülow, the conductor famously protested: “If what I have heard is music, I understand nothing about music. [...] Compared with this, Tristan is a Haydn symphony.” With its funeral-march character, monumental structure, and intense emotional drive, Totenfeier marks Mahler’s first full assertion as a symphonist, blending echoes of Bruckner with a distinctive voice shaped by sharp contrasts between major and minor.

Ma Mère l’Oye (Ravel)

This suite was originally a four-hands piano piece written in 1910 for the children of Ravel’s friends. The composer then orchestrated it in 1911 and later expanded it as a ballet the same year, with two more movements and interludes. The suite is divided in 5 short movements, inspired by french tales:

1. *Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant* (Pavane of Sleeping Beauty)
2. *Petit Poucet* (Little Tom Thumb / Hop-o'-My-Thumb)
3. *Laideronnette, impératrice des pagodes* (Little Ugly Girl, Empress of the Pagodas)
4. *Les entretiens de la belle et de la bête* (Conversation of Beauty and the Beast)
5. *Le jardin féerique* (The Fairy Garden)

En Skärgårdssägen (Alfvén)

In the magnificent symphonic poem En Skärgårdssägen, Hugo Alfvén recalls his impressions and experiences of the solitude and beauty of the outer isles, outside the capital. The piece is not a glimmering depiction of sunny beaches and calm waters, instead Alfvén has composed brooding, sometimes threatening, ever creative and unexpected music. The structure of the piece follows a fluid, but constantly interrupted pattern. The suddenness of thematic breaks, could perhaps represent the intentional telling of a tale of failure, implying a narrative situation of alarm and inadequacy.

Skärgårdssägen, in its complex and uncompromising relation with nature, provides a worthy and individual counterweight to the other great tone poems in the programme.

Les Préludes (Liszt)

Franz Liszt composed Les Préludes between 1845 and 1854 during his years in Weimar, where he had settled down after retiring from the concert stage as a piano virtuoso. The musical material was initially intended as an overture to the choral cycle “Les quatre éléments” (the four elements). He later abandoned the project, revised it as an independent piece, and chose the title inspired by an ode by the French poet Alphonse de Lamartine.

Although it does not follow an explicit program, he called it a “symphonic poem” to suggest a literary inspiration, making it the first orchestral work being performed as a symphonic poem and thus introducing a whole new genre.