

M Manhattan
School of Music

MSM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

George Manahan (BM '73, MM '76), Conductor

Sofia Gotch-Caruana (MM '23), soprano

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2022 | 7:30 PM
NEIDORFF-KARPATI HALL

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PROGRAM

CARLOS SIMON
(b. 1986)

AMEN!

Lively

Soulfully

Mysteriously

(played without pause)

Intermission

GUSTAV MAHLER
(1860–1911)

Symphony No. 4 in G Major

Bedächtigt, nicht eilen

In gemächlicher Bewegung, ohne Hast

Rubevoll, poco adagio

Sehr behaglich

Sofia Gotch-Caruana (MM '23), soprano

MSM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

George Manahan (BM '73, MM '76), Conductor

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*SIMON *AMEN!*

[^]MAHLER *Symphony No. 4 in G Major*

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PROGRAM NOTES

AMEN!

Carlos Simon

The imagination of Carlos Simon has fascinated audiences nationwide. He works in a wide variety of genres, drawing influence from his youthful experience as a piano player and gospel songwriter at his father's small church in Atlanta, as a jazz keyboardist and arranger, as a self-confessed "tech geek," and as someone trained in classical techniques and styles as well as film scoring. After earning his undergraduate degree at Morehouse College and a Master's degree at Georgia State University, he earned his doctorate at the University of Michigan as a student of Michael Daugherty and Evan Chambers. He also studied at the Hollywood Music Workshop in Baden, Austria, and at New York University's Film Scoring Summer Workshop.

Myriad organizations and artists have sought Simon's talents as a composer and as a performer. Among his most recent commissions, *Night Trip* on a libretto by Sandra Seaton was premiered by the Washington National Opera at the Kennedy Center on January 10, 2020, and his *Fate Now Conquers* is scheduled for a March 29 premiere with the Philadelphia Orchestra as part of their BeethovenNOW series, which showcases new works inspired by and performed alongside Beethoven's symphonies. Simon's *Let America Be America Again* on a poem by Langston Hughes is to be featured in a PBS documentary about the inauguration of the Gabriela Lena Frank Academy of Music.

Simon has composed works for the 150th anniversary of Morehouse College and the 200th anniversary of the University of Michigan, as well as pieces for the Reno Philharmonic, American Composers Orchestra, Albany Symphony, and Irving Klein String Competition, among many others. In 2018 he served as a Sundance/Time Warner Composer Fellow, just after his return from touring Japan as a featured composer and lecturer with the Asia/America New Music Institute (AANMI). As music director and keyboardist for Grammy winner Jennifer Holliday, Simon has performed with the Boston Pops and the Jackson and St. Louis Symphonies and has toured internationally with Grammy-nominated soul artist Angie Stone. He recently joined the faculty of Georgetown University, having also taught at Spelman and Morehouse Colleges.

Simon's *AMEN!* originated in 2017 as a piece commissioned by the University of Michigan Symphony Band. In 2019 Simon arranged the work for orchestra on a joint commission by the Reno Philharmonic (Laura Jackson, conductor), Gateways Music Festival (Michael Morgan, conductor), and the American Composers Orchestra.

The composer writes: "This piece pays homage to my family's four-generational affiliation with the Pentecostal church. My intent is to re-create the musical experience of an African American Pentecostal church service that I enjoyed being a part of while growing up in this denomination. Pentecostal denominations, such as Church of God in Christ, Pentecostal Assemblies of God, Apostolic, and Holiness Church, among many others, are known for their exuberant outward expressions of worship. The worship services in these churches will often have joyous dancing, spontaneous shouting, and soulful singing. The music in these worship services is a vital vehicle in fostering a genuine spiritual experience for the congregation.

"The three movements in *AMEN!* are performed without break to depict how the different parts of a worship service flows into the next. In the first movement, I've imagined the sound of an exuberant choir and congregation singing harmoniously together in a call-and-response fashion. The soulful second movement quotes a gospel song, 'I'll Take Jesus For Mine,' that I frequently heard in many services. The title *AMEN!* refers to the plagal cadence or 'Amen' cadence (IV-I), which is the focal point of the climax in the final movement. Along with heavily syncopated rhythms and interjecting contrapuntal lines, this cadence modulates up by half step until we reach a frenzied state, emulating a spiritually heightened state of worship."

Symphony No. 4 in G Major Gustav Mahler

In the summer of 1899 near Alt Aussee, away from the pressures of his duties as director of the Vienna Opera and Philharmonic, Mahler spent the precious time he had for composing hindered by cold, rain, and "bad health-resort music." Finally, however, in the last ten days of his "vacation," he was able to draft about half of the first three movements of his Fourth Symphony. The germinating point for this work—the fourth movement's setting of "Das himmlische Leben" (Heavenly life)—he had actually composed as a song with piano accompaniment in February 1892, then employed as the seventh movement ("What the child tells me") of his Third Symphony, and finally rejected from that work as too repetitious of its "angels" movement. Mahler was particularly proud of the "thematic connections that figure so prominently in the [Fourth Symphony's] design," which he conceived in relation to the already-composed finale. In performance we experience the process in reverse—as foreshadowing. The "sleigh bells" of the opening, the carefree flute tune taken over by the trumpet at the climax of the first movement, the folklike clarinet melody in the trio of the Scherzo, and the climax of the miraculous slow movement all anticipate the finale.

Mahler composed the remainder of the Fourth Symphony in essence the following summer, completing the “final copy” in April 1901. He conducted the premiere on November 25, 1901, in Munich with the Kaim Orchestra and soprano Margarete Michalek. Though he published the work in 1902, he continued to make revisions after each performance he conducted, the last with the New York Philharmonic in 1911.

With the sunny naiveté of his tunes, the relatively smaller orchestration, and the “shorter” duration by the composer’s standards (though still over fifty minutes), Mahler had thought the Fourth would win him some new supporters. The reception at the premiere, however, was decidedly hostile. His critics had come to expect something gargantuan and felt short-changed and infuriated by the work’s little bells, charming melodies, and even the retuned violin in the scherzo—all of which are now counted among its inspired touches. Felix Weingartner took the work on tour with the Kaim orchestra immediately after the premiere and reactions again were negative, yet the Fourth had its supporters—it was well received in Stuttgart for some reason, and we know that it totally won the heart of Alban Berg, who heard it in Vienna. In the long run Mahler was right: the Fourth holds its place in the repertoire as his most popular and approachable symphony.

The first movement opens with a picturesque imitation of sleigh bells that will become the refrain of the celestial “sleigh ride” of the finale. Mahler presents a remarkable profusion of melodies, beginning with the graceful, somewhat old-fashioned main theme in the violins, to which basses then horns add new gestures. A forthright transitional theme from the clarinets and a lovely “second theme” in the cellos add to the melodic riches. He also introduces a jovial folklike tune on the oboe and bassoon before launching a varied version of all his ideas thus far. Even as he concludes this late-nineteenth-century take on the traditional repeat of the exposition, he presents yet another new idea, one of repose, before beginning his development section.

Here the sunny nature of the movement clouds over and the developing climax turns sinister. A trumpet call emerges—a precursor to that in the Fifth Symphony—and the music actually collapses from its own restless wanderings. In one of the composer’s masterstrokes, after recalling the main theme “too soon,” he simply allows the sound to die out, and, after a moment of silence, casually resumes the carefree main theme in the violins—an ingenious disguised recapitulation. It is as if the music’s shadows are only make-believe and can be banished like fairy-tale demons.

Though Mahler did not provide a programmatic guide to the work, he did acknowledge to friends that he thought of the scherzo as a “dance of death”—so-listed in one of his concert programs in 1904—and he originally gave it

the heading: “*Freund Hein spielt auf*” (Friend Hal, a fairy-tale euphemism for Death, strikes up). The prominent violin solos, played on an instrument with the strings tuned one step higher, should sound, he remarked to friends, “like a fiddle” and “screeching and rough, as if Death would strike up.” For all that, the scherzo doesn’t sound gruesome, but its disquiet becomes noticeable next to the intervening trios in cheerful *ländler* (waltzlike dance) style.

The heart-melting Adagio was Mahler’s own favorite slow movement. The profound calm of the opening dispels trouble, and yet the second section introduces tension-filled contrast. The composer then varies each section in a kind of free double-variation form. He proudly wrote to his friend Natalie Bauer-Lechner that these were the first proper variations he had written, that is, he said, “varied through and through.” Following a second variation of the restful section, Mahler fashions a coda that comes to an amazing climax: the brasses powerfully foreshadow the “heavenly music” of the finale, part of which had already been anticipated in the first movement’s development.

Mahler was captivated, as were many nineteenth-century composers, by the popular collection of “folk” poetry *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (*The Youth’s Magic Horn*), collected, compiled, and in many cases written by Arnim and Brentano. He set many of these texts as songs with piano accompaniment and later rescored a number of them with orchestral accompaniment. In yet a further step, he worked some of these songs into his Second, Third, and Fourth Symphonies—hence their designation as *Wunderhorn* Symphonies. Sometimes he incorporated the songs purely instrumentally, but, as in the present finale, he sometimes felt the need to include the human voice.

With utmost clarity and deceptive simplicity Mahler looks through the eyes of a child at heavenly bliss in “*Das himmlische Leben*.” Naturally this bliss includes culinary delights—from the perspective of a needy Austrian Catholic child (Saint Martha, mentioned in the poem, is the patron saint of the needy). The text is a Bavarian folk song, “Heaven Is Hung with Violins,” which the composer admired for its “roguishness and deep mysticism.” Mahler lets the verse form of the poem dictate the structure of his music, though he introduces slight variants with each verse and separates them with an orchestral refrain that he had prefigured in the Symphony’s opening measures. He also uses the exquisite soaring line at “Saint Peter in Heaven looks on,” “The angels bake the bread,” and “Saint Martha will have to be cook” as a kind of vocal refrain. This he transforms at the end (“For all things awake to joy”) to bring closure to his magical vision of Paradise.

—Program notes ©Jane Vial Jaffe

TEXT AND TRANSLATION

Das himmlische Leben

Wir geniessen die himmlischen
Freuden,
D'rum tun wir das Irdische meiden.
Kein weltlich' Getümmel
Hört man nicht im Himmel!
Lebt Alles in sanftester Ruh'!

Wir führen ein englisches Leben!
Sind dennoch ganz lustig daneben!
Wir tanzen und springen,
Wir hüpfen und singen!
Sankt Peter im Himmel sieht zu!

Johannes das Lämmlein auslasset,
Der Metzger Herodes drauf passet!
Wie führen ein geduldig's,
Unschuldig's, geduldig's,
Ein liebliches Lämmlein zu Tod!

Sankt Lukas den Ochsen tät schlachten
Ohn' einig's Bedenken und Achten;
Der Wein kost't kein Heller
Im himmlischen Keller;
Die Englein, die backen das Brot.

Gut' Kräuter von allerhand Arten,
Die wachsen im himmlischen Garten!
Gut' Spargel, Fisolen,
Und was wir nur wollen,
Ganze Schüsseln voll sind uns bereit!

Gut' Äpfel, gut' Birn' und gut Trauben!
Die Gärtner, die alles erlauben!
Willst Rehbock, willst Hasen?
Auf offener Strassen
Sie laufen herbei!

Heavenly Life

We enjoy heavenly pleasures,
therefore we avoid everything earthly.
No worldly turmoil
does one hear in Heaven!
We all live in sweetest peace.

We lead an angelic life,
so we are perfectly happy.
We dance and leap,
we skip and sing!
Saint Peter in Heaven looks on.

Saint John has lost his little lamb,
the butcher Herod is lurking!
We lead a patient,
guiltless, patient,
darling little lamb to death.

Saint Luke slaughters the oxen,
without the least misgiving or care;
Wine costs not a penny
in the heavenly tavern;
the angels bake the bread.

Fine herbs of all kinds,
grow in Heaven's garden!
Fine asparagus, fine beans,
and all we could want,
whole bowls are prepared for us!

Fine apples, fine pears, and fine grapes!
The gardeners allow us everything!
You want venison, hare?
In the open streets
They run around!

Sollt' ein Festtag etwa kommen,
Alle Fische gleich mit Freuden
angeschwommen!
Dort läuft schon Sankt Peter
Mit Netz und mit Köder,
Zum himmlischen Weiher hinein.
Sankt Martha die Köchin muss sein!

Kein Musik ist is nicht auf Erden,
Die unsrer verglichen kann werden.
Elftausend Jungfrauen
Zu tanzen sich trauen!
Sankt Ursula selbst dazu lacht!
Cäcilia mit ihren Verwandten
Sind treffliche Hofmusikanten!
Die englischen Stimmen
Ermuntern die Sinnen!
Dass Alles für Freuden erwacht.

—*Des Knaben Wunderhorn*

When a holiday comes around,
all the fishes come joyfully swimming!
Off runs Saint Peter
with net and with bait,
toward the heavenly pond.
Saint Martha will have to be cook!

There's no music at all on the Earth
that can ever compare with ours.
Eleven thousand virgins
trust themselves to dance.
Saint Ursula herself laughs about it!
Saint Cecilia with her companions
are splendid court musicians.
The angelic voices
delight the senses!
For all things awake to joy.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

George Manahan (BM '73, MM '76), Conductor

George Manahan is in his 12th season as Director of Orchestral Activities at Manhattan School of Music, as well as Music Director Emeritus of the American Composers Orchestra. He served as Music Director of the New York City Opera for 14 seasons and was hailed for his leadership of the orchestra. He was also Music Director of the Richmond Symphony (VA) for 12 seasons. Recipient of Columbia University's Ditson Conductor's Award, Mr. Manahan was also honored by the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) for his "career-long advocacy for American composers and the music of our time." His Carnegie Hall performance of Samuel Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* was hailed by audiences and critics alike. "The fervent and sensitive performance that Mr. Manahan presided over made the best case for this opera that I have ever encountered," said the *New York Times*.

Mr. Manahan's guest appearances include the Orchestra of St. Luke's, Atlanta, San Francisco, Hollywood Bowl, and New Jersey, where he served as acting Music Director for four seasons. He has been a regular guest with the Curtis Institute and the Aspen Music Festival and has appeared with the opera companies of Seattle, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Chicago, Santa Fe, Paris, Sydney, Bologna, St. Louis, the Bergen Festival (Norway), and the Casals Festival (Puerto Rico). His many appearances on television include productions of *La bohème*, *Lizzie Borden*, and *Tosca* on PBS. The Live from Lincoln Center telecast of New York City Opera's production of *Madama Butterfly*, under his direction, won a 2007 Emmy Award.

George Manahan's wide-ranging recording activities include the premiere recording of Steve Reich's *Tebillim* for ECM; recordings of Edward Thomas's *Desire Under the Elms*, which was nominated for a Grammy; Joe Jackson's *Will Power*; and Tobias Picker's *Emmeline*. He has conducted numerous world premieres, including Charles Wuorinen's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, David Lang's *Modern Painters*, Hans Werner Henze's *The English Cat*, Tobias Picker's *Dolores Claiborne*, and Terence Blanchard's *Champion*.

He received his formal musical training at Manhattan School of Music, studying conducting with Anton Coppola and George Schick, and was appointed to the faculty of the school upon his graduation, at which time the Juilliard School awarded him a fellowship as Assistant Conductor with the American Opera Center. Mr. Manahan was chosen as the Exxon Arts Endowment Conductor of the New Jersey Symphony the same year he made his opera debut with the Santa Fe Opera, conducting the American premiere of Arnold Schoenberg's *Von Heute auf Morgen*.

Sofia Gotch-Caruana (MM '23), soprano

Originally from the Bay Area in Oakland, California, soprano Sofia Gotch-Caruana received her Bachelor of Arts degree in music and in English from University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington. Sofia is a second-year Master's degree candidate at Manhattan School of Music under the tutelage of Ruth Golden. Previous performance credits include Noémie in Manhattan School of Music's outreach production of Massenet's *Cendrillon* (Spring 2022); Giulietta in scenes from *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* and L'Armonia in Raphael Fusco's *La Canora Contesa* with Classic Lyric Arts, Italy (Summer 2022); and chorus member in Manhattan School of Music's production of *Orpheus in the Underworld* (Fall 2021).

Upcoming performances include the Graduate Opera Theatre's Opera Scenes production tomorrow evening, Thursday, October 20, and Kenneth Merrill's Collaborative Seminar performance on December 13.

Sofia would like to thank her teacher, Ruth Golden, and her coach, Nobuko Amemiya, for their passionate teaching and mentorship. She would also like to thank her friends and family—namely her sister, Claire Gotch-Caruana, for her endless love and support.

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Manhattan School of Music's Centennial Project was an ambitious program of improvements to the School's architecturally distinguished campus coinciding with MSM's 100th anniversary. The centerpiece of the Project was the renovation of Neidorff-Karpati Hall, MSM's principal performance space, which has been transformed into a state-of-the-art venue to showcase our talented students. Built in 1931 and designed by Shreve, Lamb & Harmon, the architects of the Empire State Building, the hall has been called "one of the Art Deco treats in the city" by the *New York Times*. The Project also included a dramatic and welcoming new campus entrance on Claremont Avenue, new practice rooms, and an expansion of the main entryway and lobby.

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Founded as a community music school by Janet Daniels Schenck in 1918, today MSM is recognized for its more than 1,000 superbly talented undergraduate and graduate students who come from more than 50 countries and nearly all 50 states; its innovative curricula and world-renowned artist-teacher faculty that includes musicians from the New York Philharmonic, the Met Orchestra, and the top ranks of the jazz and Broadway communities; and a distinguished community of accomplished, award-winning alumni working at the highest levels of the musical, educational, cultural, and professional worlds.

The School is dedicated to the personal, artistic, and intellectual development of aspiring musicians, from its Precollege students through those pursuing doctoral studies. Offering classical, jazz, and musical theatre training, MSM grants a range of undergraduate and graduate degrees. True to MSM's origins as a music school for children, the Precollege Division is a highly competitive and professionally oriented Saturday music program, dedicated to the musical and personal growth of talented young musicians ages 5 to 18. The School also serves some 2,000 New York City schoolchildren through its Arts-in-Education Program, and another 2,000 students through its critically acclaimed Distance Learning Program.

Your gift helps a young artist reach for the stars!

To enable Manhattan School of Music to continue educating and inspiring generations of talented students and audiences alike, please consider making a charitable contribution today.

Contact the Advancement Office at 917-493-4434 or visit msmnyc.edu/support

Land Acknowledgment

We want to acknowledge that we gather as Manhattan School of Music on the traditional land of the Lenape and Wappinger past and present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations. This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the land we inhabit as well.



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