

SATURDAY 16 SEPTEMBER

GUSTAV  
MAHLER

SYMPHONY NO. 1  
"TITAN"

PHILHARMONIA  
ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTED  
BY  
ELENA  
SCHWARZ

**SATURDAY 16 SEPTEMBER at 7.30PM**

**Symphony No. 1**

**“Titan”**

**by Gustav Mahler**

**Elena Schwarz — Conductor**

**Philharmonia Orchestra**

Performed in the presence of Mahler’s granddaughter,  
Marina Mahler, President of the Mahler Foundation.

Hope is something you have to earn.

Hope is taking action. It is stepping outside  
of your comfort zone.

—Greta Thunberg

A burning, painful feeling crystallises: What  
a world this is that emits such sounds and  
forms as a reflection of itself! And in each  
new work of mine this cry rises up again  
and again.

—Gustav Mahler

The psychologically demanding First Symphony by Gustav Mahler offers us an emotionally powerful meditation on human life and its meaning. Known as 'The Singer of Nature', Mahler's work profoundly respects the natural world. He lived in a time very different to ours, but the challenges his society faced are all too familiar.

A definitive composer of crisis - but also of hope - our 2023 season ends with this monumental work, written 1884-8 (rev. 1893-6) in Leipzig for a vast orchestra of 98 players when he was just 28. He called it 'the sudden outburst of despair from a deeply wounded heart', music struggling to overcome darkness — dissonant screams amongst a flash of lightning from a dark cloud. Inclined as he was to extremes, to excesses, and even to the grotesque, today we may hear in his rich sonic world the thunder of fractured ice caps, the flare of wildfires, gasps for clean air in polluted cities; the disappearance of habitats, species and families.

His was a violently agitated world of music, passionate humanity, poetic imagination, philosophical thought and religious feelings with which he wrestled. Mahler wrote of the First Symphony, 'My whole life is contained in it: I have set down in it my experience and suffering.' His work continues to feel relevant in our present moment of crisis, his radical thinking, pursuit of truths and singing of nature providing inspiration for generations to come. We must use our creativity: to protest, take action, and see beyond catastrophe. Everyone is needed, vital, and capable in the fight for change. But hope must be earned.

Known early in his life for environmental activism and his writings on nature, Mahler's work is frequently associated with the need to recognise our interdependence with the natural world, and exemplary with regards to the symbiotic relationship between music and politicism. As Marina Mahler, the composer's granddaughter and President of the Mahler Foundation, says, 'The children who are marching everywhere for climate change, they are the young heroes of today. Mahler would have adored them.'

The 2023 programme at Bold Tendencies, Crisis, has focused on our current moment as a tipping point. The programme has explored how modern conceptions of crisis are crucial to understanding the emergencies we live in today - and how they structure the ways we experience and respond to moments of historical change.

We developed the dual presentation of the words and ideas of Greta Thunberg and Gustav Mahler - a procession of hand-painted banners ranging from tragic laments, to warnings and incendiary calls-to-arms - with the sonic hum of the world of Mahler's Symphony, to provide a moment of catharsis and hope in the final notes of the Crisis season.

We hope this conclusion emboldens us all to engage with our capacity to determine the path of our collective future. The visionary activism and voice of protest of Greta Thunberg resonates with Bold Tendencies. Her insatiable spirit for change is shared in Mahler's radical compositions, brought together here and spanning more than a century; they speak to a world on fire - but also to catharsis, action and hope.

**Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)** is one of the most significant composers of the 20th century. He wrote nine completed symphonies with a Tenth left unfinished. This symphonic odyssey spanned half his entire life. During his distinguished career, Mahler held positions as Director of the Vienna Court Opera, New York's Metropolitan Opera and the New York Philharmonic. Designed for large-scale orchestral forces, his orchestral work prefigures that of Schoenberg and Stravinsky, embracing the rise of modernism's formalism and conceptual rigour. Though he only found popular success in the last years of his life, today his symphonies are cornerstones of the orchestral repertoire and seen by many as the high point of orchestral writing.

Award-winning Swiss-Australian conductor **Elena Schwarz (b.1985)** is recognized for her interpretations that bring a freshness to performances of core repertoire alongside an extensive knowledge and experienced approach to contemporary music, bringing to her work a human quality that inspires confidence and draws the best from musicians. Schwarz is developing regular partnerships with a range of orchestras including the BBC Philharmonic, WDR Sinfonieorchester, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Klangforum Wien, San Diego Symphony, Royal Philharmonique de Liège, Tasmanian Symphony and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras. From 2018-19 Schwarz was the Dudamel Fellow with the LA Philharmonic.

The **Philharmonia Orchestra** is a world-class orchestra for the 21st century. The Philharmonia is a team of 80 musicians of 16 different nationalities led by Principal Conductor Santtu-Matias Rouvali. With award-winning concert series, a vital community programme across the UK, and pioneering work in virtual reality, the Philharmonia brings orchestral music to a worldwide audience with a rare spirit, energy and optimism.

# BOLD TENDENCIES

## **Players of the Philharmonia Orchestra**

### **FIRST VIOLIN**

Rebecca Chan  
Eugene Lee  
Tristan Gurney  
Victoria Irish  
Eunsley Park  
Naori Takahashi  
Yuriko Matsuda  
Coco Inman  
Cassandra Hamilton  
Julia Liang  
Boglárka György  
Jane Kim  
Jessica Coleman  
Hannah Tracz

### **SECOND VIOLIN**

Emily Davis  
Nuno Carapina  
Susan Hedger  
Gideon Robinson  
Julian Milone  
Jose Nuno Cabrita Matias  
Anthony Wing Pong Poon  
Malcolm Allison  
Lucy Waterhouse  
Alison Strange  
Clare Hoffman  
Anna Bringham

### **VIOLA**

Richard Waters  
Sylvain Séailles  
Cheremie Hamilton-Miller  
Sara Sheppard  
Linda Kidwell

Cameron Campbell  
Lucia Ortiz Sauco  
Joe Ichinose  
Raquel Lopez Bolivar  
Nancy E. Johnson

### **CELLO**

Jesper Svedberg  
Richard Birchall  
Anna Beryl  
Alexander Rolton  
Leo Popplewell  
Alba Merchant  
Joy Lisney  
Abi Hyde-Smith

### **DOUBLE BASS**

Tim Gibbs  
Owen Nicolaou  
Michael Fuller  
Samuel Rice  
Catharina Feyen  
Lewis Reid

### **FLUTE**

Frederico Paixão  
Anna Kondrashina  
Robert Looman  
Daniel Shao

### **PICCOLO**

Robert Looman  
Daniel Shao  
Anna Kondrashina

# BOLD TENDENCIES

## **OBOE**

James Hulme  
Imogen Davies  
Ruth Contractor  
Jennifer Brittlebank

## **COR ANGLAIS**

Jennifer Brittlebank

## **CLARINET**

Mark van de Wiel  
Maura Marinucci  
Laurent Ben Slimane

## **E-FLAT CLARINET**

James Gilbert

## **BASS CLARINET**

Laurent Ben Slimane

## **BASSOON**

Tammy Thorn  
Shelly Organ  
Luke Whitehead

## **CONTRABASSOON**

Luke Whitehead

## **HORN**

Timothy Jones  
Kira Doherty  
Eleanor Blakeney  
Carsten Williams  
Phillippa Koushk-Jalali  
Joel Ashford  
Jo Withers  
Louise Sullivan

## **TRUMPET**

Jason Evans  
Robin Totterdell  
Aaron Akugbo  
Katie Bannister  
Kaitlin Wild

## **OFF STAGE TRUMPET**

Toby Street  
Catherine Knight  
Louis Barclay

## **TROMBONE**

Byron Fulcher  
Philip White  
Dan Jenkins

## **BASS TROMBONE**

James Buckle

## **TUBA**

Peter Smith

## **TIMPANI**

Antoine Siguré  
Elliott Gaston-Ross

## **PERCUSSION**

Paul Stoneman  
Kiyomi Kikuchi  
Jacob Brown

## **HARP**

Lucy Wakeford



As soon as I am in the midst of nature and by myself,  
everything that is base and trivial vanishes without trace.  
On such days nothing scares me; and this helps me again  
and again.

— Gustav Mahler





We have not come here to beg world leaders to care. You have ignored us in the past and you will ignore us again. You've run out of excuses and we're running out of time. We've come here to let you know that change is coming whether you like it or not. The real power belongs to the people.

— Greta Thunberg

***Reach out to those who are like minded;  
bond with, bind with them, and work with them.***

Interview with Marina Mahler by Katrina Nzegwu

Hailing from a long line of legendary artists, there is no doubt Marina Mahler is a phenomenon in her own right. Born in London, Marina spent much of her childhood in California. Though she conceives of home as in her mind, she has spent her grown up life between London - where her daughter was born and raised - France, and her mother's former home in Spoleto, Italy.

Mahler has dedicated her life to activism, and has enacted profound philanthropic work in the name and spirit of her grandfather, the composer Gustav Mahler. Aware of the responsibility of the great emotion the iconic virtuoso inspired, and with which she was approached as his descendent, she established The Mahler Foundation. Embracing and inspiring concepts and projects that encourage artistic innovation and creativity, and awareness and activism for climate change, the foundation avails itself of all media possibilities, to take Mahler beyond the concert hall, and into public venues and habitats. A long-time and ardent champion of children and young artists across the mediums, she has also sparked life into entities such as The Mahler Competition for Conducting in 2004 (with Ernest Fleischmann and the Bamberger Symphoniker); the Anna Mahler Association, to give residency opportunities to burgeoning visual artists and curators in Spoleto, Italy; and Mahler & LeWitt Studios, which broadened the scope of the art residencies through the incorporation of the neighbouring studio of Sol LeWitt.

In a wide ranging conversation that spanned four days, three countries and two time zones, I had the pleasure of touching upon the various facets that comprise the life and work of the marvellous Marina Mahler.

KATRINA NZEGWU: The arts are in your blood: you're the granddaughter of the legendary composer Gustav Mahler, daughter of sculptor Anna Mahler and conductor Anatole Fistoulari. Do you have your own creative practice?

**MARINA MAHLER: I'd rather not call it a practice but a habit; or rather an old necessity, and it's all to do with words. I've been writing fragments ever since I can remember, ongoing, so there's a huge accumulation of black ink on white paper; and now, on the screen. My mother always said that words were my music.**

KATRINA: You're no stranger to the concert hall, or institutional gallery. Bold Tendencies is a world away from the white cube or an orchestral setting. What excites you about the potentialities of music and the visual arts within such a unique space?

**MARINA: Our mission is to take Mahler beyond the concert hall, expand his reach, promote his legacy, and encourage love of the environment as a seed**

of artistic exploration. We want to reach out to all continents, all cultures; not stick to the typical venues but find new ways of expression. I think we owe it to young people, in the middle of ruining the planet for their future - to address ourselves to them, in the ways they most are likely to feel it emotionally, and to respond.

We need a huge impact these days to touch the imagination! All the arts are related. Film and photography - being the arts of our times - music, theatre and multimedia can have a double or triple effect! We mustn't be afraid to take risks. To go beyond traditional borders, success and discovery are often the fruit of risk.

KATRINA: I think that's pretty amazing. I think a lot of the older generation are reluctant to admit that they've messed up, let alone speak "our language."

MARINA: I've seen it for over 50 years now. I think it's a total and desperate lack of imagination, and as far as I can see, our task - in trying to help counter climate change - is to awaken the imagination. And that's what the arts can do, if we link together, and we think together. It's our task to awaken people's imaginations so that they are more aware; so that they become upset along with us, and they can regroup and bond together to react to this.

I think of Mahler's music and spirit as a bridge to the future; a lightning rod towards positive action. Because we need to change ways of thinking, we need to change ways of living, and music can reach people - so that something changes inside, they wake up to something. When you look for like-minded people, you find them. If we think and work together we can change the dialogue, and we can change the direction of things.

KATRINA: You've referred several times in interviews to the concept of the "Mahler Effect," and you've spoken briefly about this already - the power to effect change, or make people upset alongside us. But can you speak a bit more to this? How would you define the effect exactly?

MARINA: I think the Mahler Effect could be finding comfort, hope and a will to act thanks to an encounter with creative imagination. I think creative imagination is very powerful and all people have it. Little children have that imagination in abundance; it should be fed, awakened and encouraged.

There's a wonderful saying: Rainer Maria Rilke - the poet - said, "Never think that fate is anything other than the condensation of childhood." It's true that people's childhoods form them, positively or negatively. All we become is fruit, of not only what we lived, but how we lived it - how we reacted to it. And that's our freedom. We have the choice to react, to be as we want to be.

KATRINA: That's so much of our ethos here at Bold Tendencies - art for all, and the dismantling of perceived and real barriers, whether they be geographic,

economic, or sociocultural - to music and art. And the extrapolation of that is that everyone should have the right to joy, which art is, or brings.

**MARINA:** Yes, it's the most important thing, to go beyond the normal venues. I don't go anymore to single concerts unless they have a concept or are leading somewhere. That's why I'm coming to London specifically to attend your performance of Mahler's First Symphony. I believe in your way of thinking. It's exactly in tune with mine and the Mahler Foundation..

KATRINA: We really appreciate that!

**MARINA:** Our vision is: we generate multidisciplinary initiatives to propose a deeper understanding of nature, community, and humanity's common purpose. I think this Mahler Effect is a very important point. We have to reach out to children. And also the children in adults, who have grown up but are still wounded. The child stays in every single human being.

KATRINA: I've been reading a lot about the concept of the inner child recently, so I relate to that very much. But - I wanted to ask you a bit more about the Songs of the Earth project. How did it come about, and what do you think is the importance of the project in raising awareness?

**MARINA:** I spoke to our board, and I said this has been with me for a very long time - to inspire young people to create artworks that celebrate the earth and raise awareness of our reliance on its precious resources, designed as a template for implementation for countries around the world. The key elements are young people, new creations, multiple art forms, emphasis on song, local and regional organisations, outreach to underserved communities, topics on protecting our planet and a connection to Gustav Mahler - his thought, not necessarily his music.

There's a story that moves me most about my grandfather. When he was a little boy his father walked him into the woods. His father forgot that he had an appointment, so he had to run back to town. He said to Gustav: "Sit under that tree; don't move, and I'll be right back." But he wasn't right back, he completely forgot; and then suddenly, you know, time jumps, he thinks, "Oh my god, Gustav is still in the woods!" So he rushed back; he found this little boy just where he'd left him. Very calm, very silent, in a kind of trance - he hadn't moved at all. He was listening. He was a very little boy - I feel this was key to his awakening to nature, and it's my favourite image of him.

KATRINA: To bring the conversation back to our concert - Symphony No. 1, 'Titan' - what do you personally think makes this piece so powerful? And a subsection - maybe this is an impossible question, but if you had to pick a favourite of your grandfather's repertoire, what would it be?

**MARINA:** Well the First Symphony was the first symphony. According to several people it was the most amazing and mature first symphony written

by any composer. It was just astounding - so complete - and of course it started a whole new world of symphony, and was the beginning of his journey of discovery as a composer.

As far as my favourite - I tend to like best the one I've just heard, because they're so overwhelming and so moving. I love the 10th. I've always loved the 6th. I love them all, really. Oh, my god, the 4th, the 8th, the 2nd. I love them all, and I think it's always so interesting with different conductors. It makes a huge difference when you listen. I like to hear the same symphony but conducted by two different people, and I also like to hear one symphony conducted by the same conductor in succession, on two different evenings.

KATRINA: I think that's the magic of live performance as opposed to visual art forms. They feed off the energy of the crowd; the energy of the performer, the conductor, the composer. That's one of the reasons I absolutely adore live music.

**MARINA: Yes, it's amazing; it's a unique experience each time. It's just so exciting! I'm so looking forward to coming to Bold Tendencies, to discovering the car park, because I know it as an exhibition space, but I've never been to a concert there. And I've heard a lot about it, so I'm very excited to be able to be there. And to be there for the rehearsal - I hear there'll be a lot of children there, which is very interesting! Where are they coming from, tell me a bit about that.**

KATRINA: It'll be schools; we work within our one mile radius for our Creative Learning programme, so all local schools in Southwark, our borough. It's quite magical - people will come for a Public Rehearsal; or we have Backstage Pass sessions which are a bit more discursive, where the children can ask questions or interact with the musicians...but the fact that they're so local, you get people coming back with their siblings, their parents, and they want to show them the space. It has this legacy beyond a scholastic activity, and the space becomes part of one's social fabric.

You are quoted as saying, "The children who are marching everywhere for climate change, they are the young heroes of today. Mahler would have adored them." One such activist is Greta Thunberg, who at just 20 is already a household name for challenging world leaders to take immediate action for climate change. The Philharmonia will be playing surrounded by decorative banners bearing Greta's and Mahler's words of activism and inspiration...our founder Hannah Barry has dubbed the event not a concert but a conscience! What are your thoughts on the use of a recital as a protest?

**MARINA: I find it wonderful, and right. All art is conscience, and a challenge to one's own very existence.**

**It's the children that I count on, to wake up their parents and grandparents about climate change. We need to reach out; the children already know all about it, but we need to give them the tools, and we need to give them**

**backing and enthusiasm, our help and support. And the beauty of music and the arts - we need to give them all the beauty they will need; to give them strength and energy.**

KATRINA: What do you think makes music such a powerful tool of communication and communion? Why can it be deployed in ways other art forms can't, to tackle truth and global issues?

**MARINA: Music is everywhere. In nature - the wind, the waves, the movements of trees. Music goes directly to the soul, and touches the heart; it can awaken the sleeping mind. It penetrates so deeply. It doesn't need explanation, preamble or presentation. You don't need to study it to be touched by it. Music is not a historical thing; all music is now. Mozart, when you listen in the concert hall - it's not then when he wrote it, it's now that it's hitting you; it's now that it's making you tear up, or weep, or feel joyous. That's the wonderful thing about all the arts - they are now, and they will go into the future.**

**At the same time, I think it's the only real history of man - the arts, poetry, music. Everything that man, and woman, has been able to do and create - that is the story of man, and woman; the past and future of the human race.**

KATRINA: There's something about the timelessness of music. One of my interests is hauntology, the trace and memory. I've been reading about the effect of music on memory, of children being played music in the womb, but also when people get older, people with Alzheimer's - music is the thing that grounds them. The sense memory of it, music is what they recall the most.

**MARINA: Yes! And they may not even understand anything, they may have lost the present. I saw recently - there was a ballet dancer, I think in her 90s, and they played something from Tchaikovsky, I don't know, Swan Lake? But her arms started moving - I mean she was out of this world, but that brought her back! It goes very deep, and that's such a wonderful thing. I believe in what's being written now, and what will be written in the future, and we need to give help, in this sense, to young composers. We need to commission work.**

KATRINA: To wrap up - firstly this has been such a blessing, and an amazing conversation, so thank you. But you've dedicated your life to activism, and you've done so much. Do you have any advice for the younger generation of new changemakers, artists, and musicians? How do you stay strong in the face of adversity, and continue the good fight, across the years?

**MARINA: I can't call it advice, that would be pompous, and arrogant. All I can say is don't ever lose hope; don't lose your energy. We absorb, from childhood on, the most amazing amount of beauty, but also pain. Our task, and our real freedom, is to take that mixture and decide not to give into the pain.**

**Don't get old. Getting old for me is losing hope and energy; we should do all we can in our power not to do that. And how can we do that? Oh my god, I mean, just go outside and look around! Every city has its trees, its parks, its sky, the birds, the clouds. Look at the people around you, whom you love; look at everything. There is so much beauty to give one energy.**

**Don't give in to any ugliness that might surround you. Make a ring of light around yourself, act from within, and go beyond that. But it's up to us to give young people hope. Not just out of duty, but also because it's natural. One wants to protect the next generation, the planet; you want to protect what's wondrous and awe inspiring and magical. Also - reach out to those who are like minded; bond with, bind with them, and work with them. Whatever age they are.**

## ***Happy in the Crisis!***

Interview with Elena Schwarz by Katrina Nzegwu

Rapidly ascending as one of music's most exciting young conductors, Elena Schwarz is possessed of a much deserved reputation for her musical vision and versatility. Beginning her conducting life as a student of the Geneva Conservatoire and Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana, she went on to study under the tutelage of maestros Peter Eötvös, Matthias Pintscher, Bernard Haitink and Neeme Järvi.

The 2014 First Prize winner of the Princess Astrid competition in Trondheim served as assistant to Mikko Franck at the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Marko Letonja at the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, and Asher Fisch at the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, the latter to which she was subsequently appointed Associate Conductor.

With a repertoire spanning world premiere performances, work with specialist contemporary ensembles, the guest conducting of world-renowned classical outfits, and a spate of operatic productions, Schwarz begins her 23/24 classical season with a host of career highlights under her belt, and a fantastic year ahead of her. Taking a break from rehearsing in Amsterdam, Elena sat down with me on a balmy Tuesday afternoon, to discuss Mahler, nature, and the importance of community, as well as her soundtrack of the summer!

TUESDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 4.45 / 5.45, LONDON / AMSTERDAM

KATRINA NZEGWU: Thank you so much for taking the time to sit down with me today! You've had a really busy season, including debuts with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Bremen Philharmoniker and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, as well as returning to the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, to name just a few. What was your favourite concert of the previous season, and what are you most looking forward to over the coming year?

**ELENA SCHWARZ:** Now I'm just stepping out of rehearsals here - I'm speaking to you from Amsterdam so maybe I'll start with that! My mind is very much now in this beautiful project; it's an opera by Kaija Saariaho, called *Innocence*. The London audience will know it actually; it was at the Royal Opera House this spring. It's a powerful drama about a tragic event, a school shooting, and how that impacts a whole community. It's a stunning piece and production, so I speak from where I stand, I guess! I've really been looking forward to this project, and of course, it's lovely in the midst of this fantastic music from today, to have the opportunity to come to London for some Mahler! To have this possibility to bring these two musics into dialogue - that's been something I've really been looking forward to.

I've had many fantastic experiences last year; perhaps it's freshest in mind, but I concluded the season with the Salzburg Festival, with two beautiful programmes with Klangforum Wien. [They're] a contemporary music ensemble that I've really enjoyed working with, and they were in a church. One of them was actually a late night concert; that was my very last concert of the season. I have this image in my mind that is stuck in my mind; this real concentration at 10 pm in this very special venue, with music by Salvatore Sciarrino which is also very much about silence. That was really a beautiful way to conclude the season. I cannot really pick, but that's what comes to mind!

**KATRINA:** You've already had such an illustrious and exciting career. Part of our programme at Bold Tendencies is our Creative Learning Programme, and we work with schools and community groups during "Backstage Pass" sessions to try and break down the barriers, or expose to them how it might be possible for them to have a career as an artist, a musician, a composer, or conductor. Do you remember what conducting your very major first concert was like? What was the programme, and where was it?

**ELENA:** First of all - I wanted to say I'm really inspired by you! I've been following [Bold Tendencies'] work, and I'm really inspired by the work you do in the community. This is something that is for me very important, also, as an artist; I always appreciate it when I come to a new place to know that this is so connected to the community. It makes it very special; even when we come for a concert that is not coupled with this kind of educational project, but we feel that connection. I think it's very important, and it's even more important today to broaden our audience and connect. This is really fantastic - that's the first thing.

**KATRINA:** Thank you!

**ELENA:** My first concert that I have a strong memory of...I studied in Geneva at the Conservatoire, and I remember very much this experience of conducting colleagues, which I think many conductors have when they begin. I don't know if my colleagues would agree, but I would say it's the



toughest orchestra ever to conduct! As conductors, we don't have the possibility to practise, really, our "instrument" with an orchestra. We prepare of course, and we work on our movement, but we don't have that practical experience, so when it comes to the orchestra, we are figuring things out as we go, in a sense. When [our colleagues] are watching us, it's a very pressuring situation. For sure, I remember that clearly. And then I had the opportunity to do some competitions - one in Norway, one in Finland - that were sort of starting my career, so I remember those very clearly. The competition situation, that is, of course, an indelible memory, because of the pressured environment. So these days it feels much more relaxed going to work! [Laughs]

KATRINA: Bold Tendencies is a world away architecturally from the concert halls you frequent internationally. What excites you about making your Bold Tendencies debut, and what do you find intriguing about performing in such an atypical space?

ELENA: What really inspires me in what you are doing is the connection with the community, and the fact that it is a space you have repurposed. I have had some experience in the past working in art spaces; there's a kind of energy in places where many things are happening, not only - I find it very inspiring. The energy in the air - it's different to, as you say, the concert hall, but it brings something to us as performers.

This piece, by Gustav Mahler...Mahler was a composer who brought a lot of things that weren't traditionally in the concert hall, to the concert hall. Folk music, sounds of nature, to name just a couple...he was always playing with this [idea of] what is expected in the concert hall, and what is unexpected. I was thinking today about this, as I walked home to talk to you; it's actually really interesting to bring this music by Mahler, which was a real fusion for his time, into a space where not only classical music is happening. I think this can bring us a nice inspiration for this symphony.

KATRINA: Your regular repertoire spans the gamut of classical to contemporary music. Who are some of the contemporary musicians and composers you currently love? And, it's September now - as we transition into autumn, is there a particular album, or song, that you would say was the soundtrack to your summer?

ELENA: I'm really inspired by the collaborative work we can do with contemporary music, because we have the possibility of being in the same space with creators. I think that this has always been something that informs my relationship with music of the past, because it allows us to see this flexibility, this dialogue. Putting pieces from the past in dialogue with pieces of the present, creates something interesting for me in programming; to play a newer masterpiece people haven't heard can bring new thoughts, in the interpretation of both [the old and new].

I had the chance to take a break over the summer, and listen to some fantastic music - I've been listening to a lot of things that aren't classical. One musician I'm really inspired by is the drummer and composer Tyshawn Sorey, so I've been listening to some of his recordings. I've worked with him in the capacity of composer; he's a fantastic composer - but he's also a fantastic jazz drummer. He has an album, it's called *Invisible Ritual*, that he made together with Jennifer Curtis.

KATRINA: You've touched on it, but you're increasingly renowned for your advocacy of new music, and have conducted world premiere performances, as well as regularly working with specialist contemporary ensembles. I guess, to expand - why do you think it's so important to champion emerging composers and introduce fresh perspectives into the classical canon?

ELENA: I mean, you've said - you talk about fresh perspectives. I think we have - as classical musicians who are trained in conservatoires to conserve the tradition, and I think this is one beautiful aspect of our profession, this feeling of transmission and continuity - but also we have a responsibility to keep what we make relevant. To listen to the voices that are very much expanding, and more and more connected to other arts, and new music. I think this is something that for me is very interesting. I think there's a lot of great people working today who are writing new pieces. On one hand, I think it's our responsibility to give them the platform, but also our pleasure, our fortune, that we're living in a time when there are fantastic new pieces being written. This is for me, not a difficult question - I'm always glad to discover new things. And then it's a question of finding the right programmes, and not just slotting things in place. Trying to find real junctures, or really interesting connections between pieces of the past, and those being written today.

KATRINA: Yes! Well, to go back to the past for a moment - on the occasion of your Bold Tendencies debut, you will be conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra, performing Gustav Mahler's monumental Symphony No. 1, 'Titan'. Have you conducted the work before? What do you think makes the work so powerful, in that it has remained resonant across the centuries?

ELENA: I'm really looking forward to it! It's the first time I've conducted this work, but of course, as a Mahler lover I've heard it many times in the concert hall; I've studied it for years...but it's a really fantastic opportunity for me. I think in general, Mahler's music is very emotionally powerful. It has the capacity to move us, incredibly, through a whole palate of emotions - I think this is why people have connected to his music, and very much continue to do so. He also has this very interesting eclecticism in his writing, and this incredible curiosity, or capacity, to combine different things in his music. I think, actually, this really resonates with us today, and how we experience music. We have a great fortune now, that we can go to hear a great traditional music concert, and the day after we can listen to jazz; we can put on our earphones and listen to a recording, and in the evening we can come to Bold Tendencies and hear Mahler 1! Mahler was in this universe of

complete openness to his surroundings, and this is reflected very much in this 1st symphony. Especially in the third movement, which is a bit of a wild ride! It starts with a traditional, almost child[like] song, transposed in minor, then it goes into one song from his cycle about love - you know, he'd just had a big love disappointment; then it's this wild, almost cinematic quality, also...he was completely avant-garde in this sense, but today we find it totally resonant.

KATRINA: You've touched on the sounds of nature! Mahler was renowned for his reverence of nature Mahler was renowned for his reverence of nature, evident throughout his oeuvre in general and particularly in the 'Titan' symphony...with reference to the first movement, which is full of the instruments evoking the sounds and calls of nature. What is your own relationship to the environment? Do you have a particular spot in nature that makes you feel at peace?

ELENA: I think my relationship to nature is fundamental to recharging from the hectic city life. I'm living in Paris, also, which as London can be a very intense environment, in many ways [laughs]. To go into nature to recharge, to relax, to slow down... there's many studies today that prove this scientifically, but I think we know it intuitively. One of the reasons in general Mahler's music touches me; Strauss also - he had such a relationship with the mountains, and these high landscapes, and we know he escaped there in the summers when he was writing - he would go and find this quietness. My grandmother is originally from the Alps in Switzerland, in Austria, and so these landscapes really - not in this symphony, but we know the cowbells et cetera - they touch a note for me. Early experiences in my childhood of nature are really connected to the mountains.

KATRINA: I always feel incredibly lucky...I mean I grew up in London, but South West London, which is a lot more green than North. It's not quite the Swiss Alps, but we do have some good parks! [Laughs]

ELENA: [Laughs] London parks are so fantastic! You have the feeling you can forget the city for some time.

KATRINA: Alongside advocating for the beauty, and upholding the importance of nature, Mahler is credited with bridging the gap between the 19th century Austro-German tradition, and 20th century modernism. Between the two musical periods, would you say that you have a preference for the compositions of the former or the latter? And if so, why?

ELENA: [Laughs] No, I really cannot choose! I think the dialogue between the two is really a happy place for me. This is also maybe why I feel so close to this musical language - as you say, we have this feeling we are on the verge of...actually already with the First Symphony, when we hear the first notes - we can hear there is a new space. We can hear this very clearly, that this is the opening of modernity, in a certain way. But what I also love with Mahler is his love of traditional music, his deep roots, and we have this also, of

course, in the Viennese school, but he really upheld that. So, I really can't choose! [Laughs] Unfortunately, or fortunately it's my predicament - to be happiest in both.

KATRINA: 2023 is Bold Tendencies' year of Crisis...well, it's the world's year of crisis, but it's the title of Bold Tendencies' theme this year. Mahler's work, the evocative nature of it - it's so exemplary of art's power to be a lifeline through periods of catastrophe, so it feels like the perfect way to close the season. But what does the word Crisis mean to you, and what do you think is the most pressing issue of our time? On a separate vein - in the same way that Mahler's work shows the beauty to be found even in the darkness, how do you balance that? How do you find solace in this time?

ELENA: Indeed, when I heard this theme, and I knew that I was invited for Mahler 1, I was happy for that, in a certain way. Happy in the crisis! [Laughs] I don't know if that's the right word, but - I found it very meaningful. I think all of this is a thread in Mahler; the question of nature, but also his life was a life in which he had to overcome a lot of discrimination, because of his identity. Somehow his output, his symphonies - they show this question of struggle, may it be personal, or societal. Certainly, the personal struggle is in this music, in the First symphony, but thread throughout his work. Maybe it's because of this symphony that I'm answering like this, but I would say [the 1st] threads together two themes: the environment, and the preservation of nature, but also we cannot do that without combating all forms of discrimination. This is very connected, and this is a very beautiful work to embody those two.

KATRINA: I've been periodically dipping into *The Climate Book*, by Greta Thunberg, and that's one of the things that's come out of my deep diving into the ecological crisis - the notion that everything is connected. You can't tackle climate change without tackling the refugee crisis, and migration; or without tackling capitalism, which has an impact on supply chains, emissions, and agricultural exploitation...so to be in a space where we're discussing interconnection feels really special.

ELENA: For me too, this is very important. It's important to be able to acknowledge this as a theme, and I'm happy to know that you've also been having these interesting conversations.

**Katrina Nzegwu** is Visitor Engagement Manager & Artist Research at Bold Tendencies. Katrina has worked for Bold Tendencies since 2019, first on the Education, Community and Play team, and in her current role as Artist Research since 2022. Katrina graduated from Goldsmiths College with a Bachelors in Fine Art and History of Art, and the Royal Academy of Art with Masters in Print.

## **About Bold Tendencies**

Bold Tendencies is a not-for-profit arts organisation started in 2007 in Peckham, London. Bold Tendencies supports artists to develop their ideas and to realise site-specific projects and present live performances from its rooftop home, Peckham's Multi-Storey Car Park. Bold Tendencies celebrates the free enjoyment of public space in the city, welcoming participation in its rich, experimental programme and preserving open access to this special, spectacular place.

## **Huge thanks to our 2023 Supporters**

Southwark Council, Art Fund, Selfridges, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Phillips, The Mila Charitable Organisation, Genesis Kickstart Fund, Outset Partners, Steinway & Sons, Southby Productions, Vanguardia, Big Issue Access Invest, CMS-CMNO, Hallett Independent Art Insurance, Think Smart Accounts, and all those individuals who have generously donated.

Thanks also to Frank's Cafe and Lost and Grounded for providing tonight's drinks for the orchestra.

**2023 Visual Arts Commissions**

Emory Douglas, *Some American History*

Jenny Holzer, *Bold Sign*

Kahlil Robert Irving, *Memorial to Labor* [*Through my wonder*] My memory to your labor **LOST**

Sandra Poulson, *How much for the coal?*

Abbas Zahedi, *Best Before End*

**Permanent Works On-Site**

Adel Abdessemed, *Bristow*, 2016

Sophie Collins & Sam Riviere, *FLOURISHED*, 2016

The Derek Jarman Garden, 2013

Rene Matić, *no more quick, quick, slow*, 2021

Richard Wentworth, *Agora*, 2015

Simon Whybray, *hi boo i love you*, 2016

**Architecture**

Frank's Cafe and Straw Auditorium by Practice Architecture, 2009 & 2010

Peckham Observatory and Concert Wall by Cooke Fawcett, 2017-2018

Remastering by Feilden Fowles, 2020-2025

## **Bold Tendencies Team**

Hannah Barry - Artistic Director & Chief Executive

Diana Córdoba Barrios - Managing Director

Tom Kelly - Site & Production Manager

Charlie Mills - Visual Arts Curator & Producer

Misty Ingham - Creative Learning Producer

Toby Taylor - Visitor Engagement Manager & Live Events

Katrina Nzegwu - Visitor Engagement Manager & Artist Research

Esme Wedderburn - Creative Learning Facilitator

Akhera Williams - Creative Learning Facilitator

Molly Burrows - Visitor Engagement Assistant

Margot Dower - Visitor Engagement Assistant

Maya King-Dabbs - Visitor Engagement Assistant

Luca Pokorny - Visitor Engagement Assistant

Mitzi Clarke - Back of House Assistant

Priscilla Holder - Back of House

Riccardo Pillon - Special Projects

Simon Whybray - Graphic Design

Oscar Maguire - Visualisation

## **Mahler Project Production Team**

Molly Burrows - Hand-painted Banners

Mike Steer & Matt Knapp - Sound Engineers

Tom Brown - Production

Ross Chalmers - Production

## **Bold Tendencies Board**

Ronojoy Dam

Linda Hewson

Helen Newman

Zia Zareem-Slade

We thank you all for joining us tonight,  
and for being with us across the season.  
Again, soon!

Bold Tendencies is a not-for-profit.  
Our Live Events, Visual Arts and Creative  
Learning Programmes are only possible with  
support. If you'd like to contribute to the  
future of Bold Tendencies then please  
consider donating via our website or on-site.





This programme is printed on 100% recycled paper.  
Please keep it as a souvenir or recycle yourself!