

THE HARVARD-RADCLIFFE ORCHESTRA PRESENTS

MAHLER  
TOTENFEIER

SIBELIUS  
SYMPHONY NO. 2

FEDERICO CORTESE, MUSIC DIRECTOR

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27  
SANDERS THEATRE  
8.00 PM



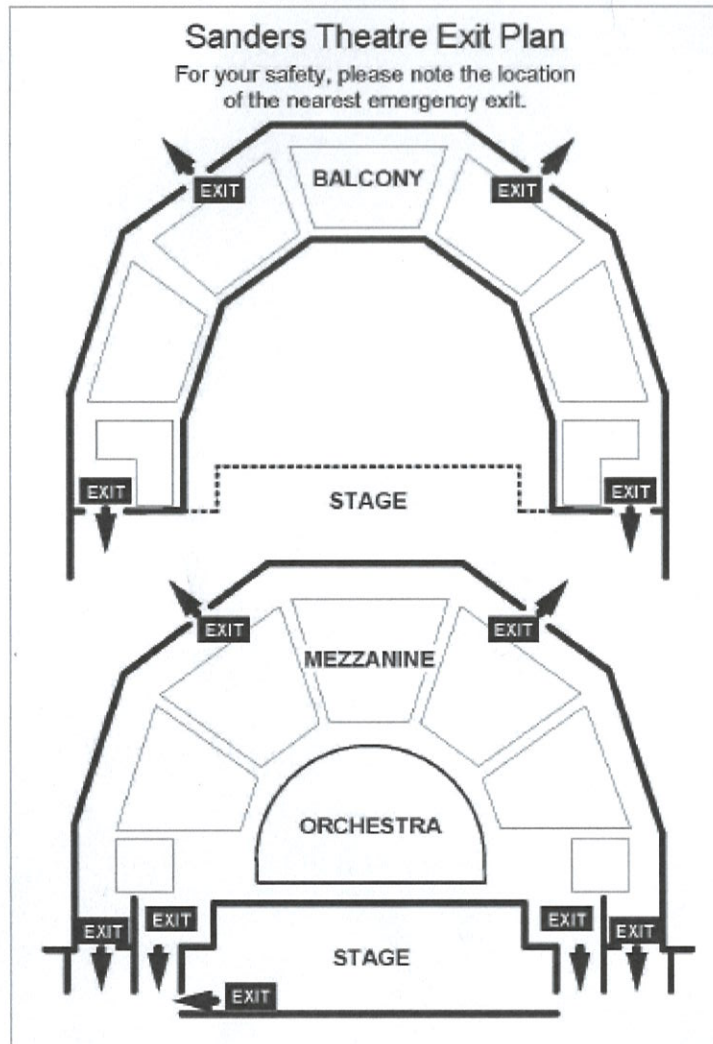
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# HISTORY OF THE HRO



**The Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra is Online!**  
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The Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra (HRO) is the oldest symphony orchestra in the United States. It traces its history back to the night of March 6, 1808, when Joseph Eaton (class of 1810) and five other Harvard men formed the Pierian Sodality, taking its name from the Pierian Springs, where Greek immortals drank and found musical inspiration. (In contrast, the oldest professional orchestra – the New York Philharmonic – was founded only in 1842.)

In its early years, the Sodality was a student club not only for playing music, but also for consuming brandy and cigars, as well as the “serenading of young ladies.” In the 1830s, the Faculty of Harvard College publicly admonished the Sodality for a whole night serenading away from Cambridge. Administration censure was so great that in 1832 the Pierian Sodality was reduced to one man. Gradually, however, other members were elected, and the Sodality played on. According to a June 29, 1840 entry in the Sodality’s record book, the group’s late-night music-making antics earned them fame that “did wax exceedingly great, and did reach all the places round about Cambridge.”

Two decades later, the performing career of the Pierians began. In 1860, shortly after Harvard President James Walker made Harvard the first institution to add music as a regular subject of study in the curriculum, the Pierian Sodality was given permission to “hire a hall and give a public concert, on condition that no tickets be sold.” They began to give regular concerts, and even rehearsed to prepare for them.

Therefore, by the turn of the century, the Pierian Sodality could justly refer to itself as the Harvard University Orchestra. It had developed into a serious musical organization and become the largest college orchestra in America. The late thirties saw joint concerts with

the Radcliffe Orchestra and in 1942, the Pierians suggested that the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra be formed. Since the Sodality’s membership was depleted during the years of World War II, and since the Radcliffe Orchestra lacked certain instruments, both groups benefitted from the merger. Thus the men and women of Harvard and Radcliffe united in their music-making efforts, and the HRO as it is today was born.

The orchestra was conducted by students until 1926, when the first professional conductor was hired by orchestra members. Most conductors remained for only a few years (with the exception of Malcolm Holmes, conductor from 1933-50), until on a recommendation from Leonard Bernstein, Dr. James Yannatos became conductor in 1964 and served as the music director for 45 years. Under his baton, HRO developed into a high-quality orchestra, and toured all over the country and the world. Following Dr. Yannatos’ retirement, Federico Cortese was appointed music director of HRO in 2009. He has continued its tradition of musical excellence, of performing with other Harvard musical organizations, such as the Holden Choirs, and of performance tours.

It is now over one century ago that HRO deemed itself ready for its first out-of-state tour. Beginning with a successful tour through New York State in 1908, HRO’s travels have featured such highlights such as performing at Washington DC’s National Theatre for First Ladies Mrs. Warren Harding and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge, gracing the stage of Carnegie Hall and, in 1978, placing third in the Fifth Annual International Festival of Student Orchestras. Since the 1980s, HRO has taken tours to the Soviet Union, Asia and Europe, Italy, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Israel, Jordan and most recently in 2015, the Philippines and South Korea.

# HARVARD-RADCLIFFE ORCHESTRA

208th Season, 2015-2016

## VIOLIN I

Emma Frucht '17  
*Concertmaster*  
Jeremiah Blacklow '19  
Peter Chang '18  
Joanna Chung '18  
Anna Clink '17  
Jason Herrmann '18  
Natalie Hodges '19  
Tommy Peeples '17  
Luther Warren †  
Helen Wu '19  
NaYoung Yang '18

## VIOLIN II

Enchi Chang '17  
*Principal*  
Clare Criscione '19  
Christine Hong '19  
Tomo Kazahaya '17  
Jennifer Kim '17  
Flora Li '19  
Inga Liu †  
Hueyjong Shih '18  
Anes Sung '16

## VIOLA

Faith Pak '19  
*Principal*  
William Chang '19  
June Criscione '17  
Susanna Johnson †  
Nicholas Ngo '19  
Maria Park '19  
Henry Shreffler '18  
Peter Youn '18

## CELLO

Daniel Giebisch '19  
*Principal*  
John Austin '17  
Eleanor Bragg '19  
Ju Hyun Lee '19  
Elias Miller '16  
Bihn Park '19  
Grant Riew '19  
Ila Shon '19

## BASS

Frederick Metzger '18  
*Principal*  
Elizabeth Foulser †  
Evie Huang †  
Andrew Wilson †

## FLUTE

Jennifer Chiang '17  
Kristen Fang '19  
Dominique Kim '17  
Handong Park '18

## OBOE

Harrison Besser '17  
Rachel Clemens '19  
*English horn*  
Mara Roth '19  
*English horn*

## CLARINET

Erica Chang '19  
Max Hopkins '18  
HyukJoo Hwang '19  
Keum Yong Lee '17

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William Brechtelsbauer '19  
George Goodwin '17  
Sóley Hyman '19  
Patrick Sanguineti '17  
William Tobias '16

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James Conatser '17  
Brendan Pease '17  
Brian Rolincik '18  
Mauricio Ruiz '19

## TUBA

Nat Goldberg '16

## PERCUSSION

Grant Hoechst '18  
Matthias Pergams '19  
Nick Pham '19

## HARP

Brenda Chiang '19  
Sarah Yeoh-Wang '17

† guest performer

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# HARVARD-RADCLIFFE ORCHESTRA

208th Season, 2015-2016



FEDERICO CORTESE, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Saturday, February 27, 2016, 8:00 P.M.

Sanders Theatre, Harvard University

## Program

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

*Totenfeier (1888)*

Jean Sibelius (1865 - 1957)

*Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 43 (1902)*

- I. Allegretto
- II. Tempo andante, ma rubato
- III. Vivacissimo
- IV. Finale: Allegro moderato

*Funded in part by a Kahn Grant from the Office of the Arts at Harvard*



To most, Gustav Mahler's *Totenfeier* is probably best known as the opening movement to his Second Symphony, but such a consideration does not do the piece justice. Originally composed in 1888 as a standalone tone poem, *Totenfeier* ("Funeral Rites") is one of the greatest testaments to Mahler's musical genius, even as an up-and-coming, if not still immature composer. For one familiar with his Second Symphony, one will surely notice a few differences between the *Totenfeier* and its symphonic alter ego. In the seven years between its release and that of the symphony, Mahler decided to return to the poem and edit it for its use as the grand, harrowing opening many would recognize today. While the original is not always as fleshed out as its symphonic successor, it is still very much a groundbreaking piece, especially within the context of its publication.

Mahler, as he does in much of his work, plays a lot with the relationship between life and death. Such interplay is particularly noticeable in his juxtaposition of the unrelenting, oppressive march style established by the cellos at the very outset and the delicate, lyrical song of the woodwinds not long after. Looking to Mahler's own program notes, written for a Dresden performance of his Second Symphony, one can further understand this relationship:

"We are standing beside the coffin of a man beloved. For the last time his life, his battles, his sufferings and his purpose pass before the mind's eye. And now, at this

deeply stirring moment, when we are released from the paltry distractions of everyday life, our hearts are gripped by a voice of awe-inspiring solemnity, which we seldom or never hear above the deafening traffic of mundane affairs.

What next? it says. What is life -- and what is death?

Have we any continuing existence?

Is it all an empty dream, or has this life of ours, and our death, a meaning?

If we are to go on living, we must answer this question."

One might conceive of this man to be the so-called "titan" of his First Symphony (originally published in 1888, though later revised), who seemed to reach victory in the closing fanfare of that symphony. Regardless of his identity (perhaps Mahler himself), the weightiness of the *Totenfeier* vis-à-vis the human condition is not that difficult to perceive. In a time of fairly widespread optimism and forward thinking all across Europe, this apparent pain and preoccupation with the grave made Mahler both widely known and disliked by some.

While ultimately unsatisfying to its creator in its original form, *Totenfeier* nevertheless proves to be an important step in both the compositional and philosophical journeys of Gustav Mahler. When listening to this grand piece, while a resurrection might one day bring ultimate victory, one cannot help but ponder the struggles of this life and, at times, its seeming futility.

-Patrick Sanguineti '17



Finnish composer Jean Sibelius (1865 – 1957) composed his Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43, in 1901 and 1902, not long after the wildly successful premiere of his *Finlandia*. "A confession of the soul," as Sibelius himself later described in 1943, the Second Symphony was immediately popular upon its premiere and has proven to be the most well-loved of his symphonies, cementing Sibelius's stature as a major force in music and as Finland's national icon.

The seven symphonies by Jean Sibelius form one of the cornerstones of the symphonic repertoire and represent a unique, unparalleled musical and personal journey. They span the majority of his career, starting with the First Symphony that helped him rise to fame and ending with the Sixth and the Seventh, both among his final compositions before his retirement in 1926. Sibelius's symphonic cycle, unlike those by most other composers, represents a steady progression in compositional innovation; each symphony has a life and character of its own, and each successively points toward the ultimate goal of total structural integration finally realized in the Seventh, a one-movement symphony that represents the pinnacle of Sibelius's compositional output.

At the time of the Second Symphony's conception, Sibelius was rising to international fame and to recognition as a national hero thanks to his patriotically-inspired music, most notably the tone-poem *Finlandia*. The same time was marked in Finland by the ever-growing suppression of Finnish language and cul-

ture by the Russians, thus brewing increasing discontent and a desire for independence among the people of Finland. Many Finns saw a connection between the optimism and passion in the symphony and Sibelius's nationalistic aspirations, and while Sibelius himself never verified this hypothesis, he may indeed have written the symphony for Finland's independence.

The Second Symphony represents the archetypal late Romantic symphony, with grand, flowing melodies and rich, sonorous orchestration. Nevertheless, Sibelius's compositional hallmarks, especially the prominent role given to the winds and the interconnectedness of the musical ideas, assert a defining role in the composition, and the inspiration of Finland's natural landscapes is everywhere to be heard.

The first movement is characterized by its youthful, pastoral atmosphere, with dancing melodies in the winds flowingly cradled by a rising three-note motif in the strings. The music exudes the warmth of home, full of vitality and life.

By contrast, the second movement is dark and tragic, punctuated in several occasions by loud brass outbursts followed by gripping silence. Its extended scope makes it the longest movement in the symphony.

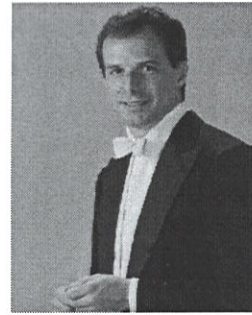
The third movement, by turns spirited and songlike, is an energetic scherzo. It has its own independent themes, but the unifying three-note motif inconspicuously sneaks in at one point and then later asserts its



presence, finally leading the music without pause into the final movement.

The music reaches its emotional climax in the rousing finale, the centerpiece of the entire work. The movement is built upon the same three-note motif that opens the symphony, only now, the motif has become a grandiose, liberating melody. A relentless ostinato underpins the merciless advancement of the repressive, tyrannical second theme. But righteousness and freedom prevail, and the rising three-note motif, having spent the entire symphony aspiring for a fourth, crowning note, finally reaches this destination in the coda, a stirring conclusion that promises victory in Finland's struggle for independence.

-Michael Cheng '19



From the moment of his debut in September 1998, stepping in at short notice to conduct Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 in place

of an ailing Seiji Ozawa, Federico Cortese's work as Assistant Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra was widely praised. Serving in that position from 1998-2003, Mr. Cortese led the BSO several times in Symphony Hall and at Tanglewood. His conducting of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* at Symphony Hall was particularly heralded. Additionally, he has served as Music Director of the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras since 1999 and is currently Music Director of the New England String Ensemble and Associate Conductor of the Asian Youth 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 operatic and symphonic engagements throughout the United States, Australia, and Europe. Recent engagements in the US include, among many others, conducting the Dallas and Atlanta Symphony Orchestras, San Antonio and New World Symphonies, and

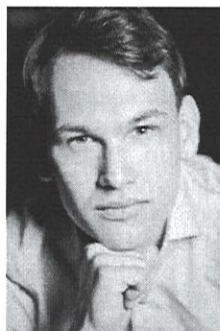
the Louisville Orchestra; as well as many operatic productions including Mozart's *Don Giovanni* with the Boston Lyric Opera, Puccini's *La bohème* with Opera Theater of Saint Louis and at the Yale Opera program, and André Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* with the Washington National Opera. In Europe, his opera experience includes conducting productions of Verdi's *Il trovatore* in Parma, Italy as part of the Verdi Centennial Festival; Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at the Spoleto Festival in Italy; Niccolò Piccinni's *La bella verità* at the Teatro Comunale, Firenze, with the Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino; and a new production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with the Finnish National Opera in Helsinki. Recent successes include guest conducting Britain's Opera North, BBC-Scottish Symphony, Slovenian Philharmonic, Oslo and Zagreb Philharmonics, and Göttingen Symphony Orchestra, to name just a few.

In Australia, he has conducted the Sydney and Tasmanian Symphonies; Australian Youth, West Australia Symphony, and Queensland Orchestras; and a production of *Madama Butterfly* for Opera Australia in Melbourne.

Mr. Cortese studied composition and conducting at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia in Rome and at the Hochschule für Musik in Vienna. In addition, he has been a conducting fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center. In 2009, he was appointed Senior Lecturer in the Harvard music department. In addition to music, Mr. Cortese studied literature, humanities, and law, earning a law degree from La Sapienza University in Rome.

# KAI JOHANNES POLZHOFFER

*Assistant Conductor*



The German-Austrian composer and conductor Kai Johannes Polzhofer, born in Munich (Germany), graduated with a Bachelor's of Arts with high distinction from University Leipzig and a diploma

with high distinction from the Hochschule für Musik und Theater "Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy" Leipzig.

As a composer, Polzhofer has won several prizes and fellowships, including the Austromechana Composition Prize, the Academy Schloss Solitude, Francis Boott Prize, the Blodgett Prize, and a national scholarship (Deutschlandstipendium), among other prestigious awards. In 2010, Polzhofer co-founded *forma Leipzig*, a group focusing on the crossroad linking contemporary music and literature, for which he remains artistic advisor.

Broadcasted in Austria and Germany (Österreich 1, MDR), his music has been performed both in Europe and North America by ensembles like Ensemble Mosaik, Ensemble *forma Leipzig*, Ensemble Surplus, Ensemble Dal Niente, Jack Quartet, Parker Quartet, and Ensemble Recherche. He has worked with various artists including guitarist Nico Couck, conductor Ulrich Windfuhr, and pianist Michael Wendeborg. In 2013, Polzhofer was commissioned by the City of Leipzig to compose a work for the official European Anniversary of the 1813 Battle of the Nations Leipzig. He is author of several articles about musicological and compositional

topics, and publishes regularly in journals like *Musik und Ästhetik* and *New Music and Aesthetics in the 21st Century*.

Trained in trumpet and violin, Polzhofer studied piano and composition at Hochschule für Musik und Theater München. He also attended the University Munich (LMU) as a guest student in the Department of Philosophy between 2004 and 2008. After graduating from classical grammar school under Benedictines, he continued his studies in philosophy, music theory and composition at the Universities and Conservatories of Graz (Austria) and Leipzig (Germany).

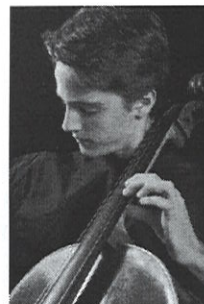
At Harvard University, he is pursuing a Doctorate in Composition under the guidance of Chaya Czernowin, Hans Tutschku and Steven Kazuo Takasugi. Kai Johannes Polzhofer studies also conducting with Federico Cortese and serves as Music Director of the Dudley Orchestra (Symphony Orchestra of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Harvard), as well as Assistant Conductor of the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra in 2015/16.

His compositions are published by Edition Gravis.



# SASHA SCOLNIK-BROWER

*Assistant Conductor*



Sasha Scolnik-Brower, a junior in Winthrop House, is the Music Director for the Bach Society Orchestra's 2015-2016 season, as well as assistant conductor for the Harvard Radcliffe Orchestra. Scolnik-Brower was the Bach Society's

music director last year and has also conducted Harvard's Mozart Society Orchestra and the Phillips Academy Orchestras, having studied with Federico Cortese and Jim Orent. As a cellist, he is currently enrolled in the dual degree program of Harvard University and the New England Conservatory in the studio of Paul Katz. Previous teachers include Natasha Brofsky and Andrew Mark.

He was a first-place winner of the Boston Symphony (2011), Boston Youth Symphony (2011), and the New England Conservatory Preparatory (2012) competitions, as well as a finalist in the Stulberg International String Competition. Scolnik-Brower has performed as a soloist with orchestras including the Boston Symphony, Boston Youth Symphony, NEC Youth Philharmonic Orchestra, Wellesley Symphony, Reading Symphony, Nashua Chamber Orchestra, Longy School of Music Chamber Orchestra, and the Merrimack Valley Philharmonic.

Scolnik-Brower has played in the masterclasses of Joel Krosnick, Lynn Harrell, Alisa Weilerstein, Yo-Yo Ma, and Menahem Pressler, among others. During the summer, he has attended programs including Kneisel

Hall, Aspen Music Festival, Yellow Barn, and the Perlman Music Program Chamber Music Workshop.

# SANDERS THEATRE INFORMATION

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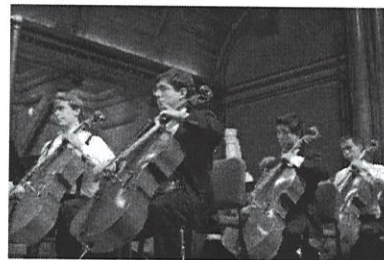
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