

Programme Notes

Summer Night Concert

Fri 2 September 2022 • 20.15

A portrait of Lahav Shani, a man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a black turtleneck sweater. He is leaning against the trunk of a large tree with rough, textured bark. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting a forest or park setting. The lighting is natural, highlighting his features.

Lahav Shani chief conductor

Born: Tel Aviv, Israel

Current position: chief conductor
Rotterdam Philharmonic
Orchestra; music director Israel
Philharmonic Orchestra

Before: principal guest conductor
Vienna Symphony Orchestra from
2017 to 2020

Education: piano at the
Buchmann-Mehta School of
Music Tel Aviv; conducting and
piano at the Academy of Music
Hanns Eisler Berlin; mentor:
Daniel Barenboim

Breakthrough: 2013, after winning
the Gustav Mahler International
Conducting Competition in
Bamberg

Subsequently: Staatskapelle
Berlin, Berlin State Opera, Vienna
Philharmonic Orchestra, Bavarian
Radio Symphony Orchestra,
Staatskapelle Dresden, Zurich
Tonhalle Orchestra, Berlin
Radio Symphony Orchestra,
Philharmonia Orchestra,
Philadelphia Orchestra,
Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra,
Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra,
Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra

Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic:
2016

Foto: Marco Borggreve

PROGRAMME

conductor **Lahav Shani**

György Ligeti 1923–2006

Atmosphères [1961]

Willem Pijper 1894–1947

Symphony no. 2 [1921]

- Allegro maestoso
- Lento - Grazioso - Finale: Più mosso, maestoso

Interval

Gustav Mahler 1860–1911

Symphony no. 1 in D major [1884-88, revised 1906]

- Langsam, schleppend (Wie ein Naturlaut) – Im Anfang sehr gemächlich
- Kräftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell
- Feierlich und gemessen, ohne zu schleppen
- Stürmisch bewegt

Concert ends at around 22.15

Most recent performances by our orchestra:

Ligeti Atmosphères: Aug 2015,

conductor Martyn Brabbins

Pijper Symphony no. 2: Feb 2022,

conductor Lahav Shani

Mahler Symphony no. 1: Nov 2021,

conductor Lahav Shani

One hour before the start of the concert, Arthur van Dijk will give an introduction (in Dutch) to the programme, admission €5. Tickets are available at the hall, payment by debit card. The introduction is free for Vrienden.

Cover: Photo Iakov Kalinin



A trail of renewal

Three musical pioneers lead us on a trail back in time. Ligeti freed himself from the dogmas of the avant-garde, just as a generation previously Pijper had moved on from his Mahleresque style – and in his First Symphony Mahler himself had opened a door to new symphonic sounds.

György Ligeti was a master in finding his own way. Quite literally so, because in 1944 he escaped from forced labour and again in 1956 he fled communist Hungary. Unnoticed, he simply walked across the border with Austria and with the help of compatriot Matyas Seiber, who had emigrated much earlier, he ended up in Germany. He had anticipated that composers working in the free West could write what they wished, but instead was amazed to discover the dogmas of the avant-garde. Here, serialism – the composition of a serial pattern, a development of Schönberg's twelve-tone music – was dominating the musical breeding grounds. Ligeti decided to throw out all the traditions of the last five hundred years: to dispense with melody, rhythm and harmony. Even the trusted structures of variation and repetition needed replacing.

A murmuration of starlings

Atmosphères is a collage of kaleidoscopic sound fields, a fascinating spectacle like a murmuration of starlings on a summer evening. The opening chord is an accumulation of 59 different tones across a range of over five octaves. Each voice is separately instructed to play louder or softer, so that other sounds and tones keep coming to the fore. A sound cloud that is constantly changing in colour. Through micropolyphony – literally a miniature multiplicity of voices - Ligeti had created a different way to achieve differing sound textures. Using traditional techniques of composition, inspired by the 15th century work of Johannes Ockeghem, he carved in sound a sculpture comprising as many as 56 individual voices in the string section. Ligeti dedicated his



Ligeti flees Hungary. Watercolour by Juan Álvaro Pernia.

trailblazing work to Seiber, who had died the year before. *Atmosphères* was premiered at the Donaueschingen Festival for new music to great acclaim; the public demanded it to be encoered.

Unshackled from Mahler

Forty years previously, Willem Pijper also had faced the challenge of marking his own trail. So far, he had been leaning heavily on Debussy and Mahler. In March 1920 he described his *First Symphony* to Diepenbrock as 'my too Mahleresque symphony'. Breaking free of the master remained a big challenge, because it was in that year that Amsterdam presented a lavish festival dedicated to the revered composer Mahler. Pijper had himself noted that since 1915 there had been no concert season without at least of Mahler's symphonies on the programme of the Concertgebouw. Perhaps that explained why he chose isolation in the Swiss village of Minusio By Lake Maggiore, to be able to work quietly on his *Second Symphony*. Judging by the response from conductor Mengelberg and colleague Cornelis Dopper, Pijper had succeeded in marking a new trail. 'Non capisco', Mengelberg is reported to have said: he simply did not understand the music. Dopper also regretted the decision of Pijper to go for the modern. The day following a performance of the symphony under the baton of none other than Mengelberg, a newspaper critic wrote that the Concertgebouw audience had never so openly shown its displeasure for any work as for Pijper's *Second Symphony*. Right from the start, Pijper caught everyone unawares with a complex accumulation of tones. Where Ligeti would later make

such a 'sound cloud' the central element of his composition, Pijper however remained faithful to the melody as the most important element of his music. And in the end, hidden away in his Swiss summer retreat, he still couldn't completely let go of Mahler. He wrote to Mengelberg about the number of instruments his symphony was scored for, including the tenor horn, which he described as the

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'prophet' of Mahler's *Seventh Symphony*. He had the tenor horn and fourth trumpet play together offstage: 'just audible above the quiet sounds of the orchestra'. An idea for which he was certainly indebted to Mahler's *First Symphony*.

Misunderstood

A modern listener may struggle to imagine that not even Mahler's first symphony found favour with the public at its premiere in 1888. At the end of the performance his friends scarcely dared to talk to him

about the music, and gave him the wide birth they would have given someone stricken with a highly contagious disease. Shocked, Mahler withdrew the symphony, and only years later would he try again with a reworked version. To give the public some pointers, he presented a description of the music in words. But this just added to the confusion. This performance again stunned press and public alike. The orchestra was much bigger than they were used to for performances of Beethoven and Brahms. From the very first bars the public heard new orchestral colours considered sensational for that time. When asked why he needed such a big orchestra, Mahler replied: 'The more that music develops, the more complicated the instrument needed to express the ideas of the composer'. Where the public anticipated a slow second movement, what they got instead was a rustic waltz. In the place of a scherzo came a funeral march, led off by the tympani and a double bass solo in a trickily high register. Mahler would later scrap all these descriptions, with the plea: 'Get rid of all programme music! The public should just open their ears and hearts, and be prepared to surrender to the rhapsodist. There must always be a bit of mystery, even for the artist!'. In 1918, the young critic and composer Willem Pijper wrote a newspaper review full of praise for Mahler's *First Symphony*, calling it a masterpiece. Eight years later, he had come to think that Mahler's time was over. How would Pijper have felt, knowing that 75 years after his death his *Second Symphony* would be played alongside Mahler's *First*?

Carine Alders

Agenda

Fri 16 September 2022 • 20.30

conductor **Lahav Shani**

clarinet **Julien Hervé**

Copland Rodeo

Copland Clarinet Concerto

Bernstein West Side Story:

Symphonic Dances

Sat 17 September 2022 • 20.30

conductor **Tarmo Peltokoski**

piano **Lahav Shani**

Gershwin Rhapsody in Blue

Strauss Don Juan

Sibelius Symphony no. 7

Thu 29 September 2022 • 20.15

Fri 30 September 2022 • 20.15

conductor **Lahav Shani**

violin **Hillary Hahn**

Widmann Con brio

Dvořák Violin Concerto

Brahms Symphony no. 1

Fri 30 September 2022 • 17.00

piano **Lahav Shani**

violin **Igor Gruppman** and **Hed Yaron**

Meyerson

cello **Emanuele Silvestri**

horn **David Fernández Alonso**

Dvořák Piano Trio 'Dumky'

Brahms Horn Trio

Sat 8 October 2022 • 20.30

conductor **Bertie Baigent**

Wagner Meistersinger Overture

Rachmaninoff Vocalise

Dvořák Largo from Symphony no. 9

Bizet Carmen: Suite no. 1

Ravel Boléro

Fri 14 October 2022 • 20.15

conductor **André de Ridder**

piano **Daniil Trifonov**

Barber Adagio for Strings

Bates Piano Concerto

Roukens Symphony nr. 1

'Kaleidoscopic'

Orchestra

Chief Conductor

Lahav Shani

Honorary Conductor

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Principal Assistant Conductor

Bertie Baigent

First Violin

Igor Gruppman, concertmeester
Marieke Blankestijn, concertmeester
Quirine Scheffers
Hed Yaron Meyerson
Saskia Otto
Arno Bons
Mireille van der Wart
Cor van der Linden
Rachel Browne
Maria Dingjan
Marie-José Schrijner
Noëmi Bodden
Petra Visser
Sophia Torrenga
Hadewijch Hofland
Annerien Stuker
Alexandra van Beveren
Koen Stapert

Second Violin

Charlotte Potgieter
Cecilia Ziano
Frank de Groot
Laurens van Vliet
Tomoko Hara
Elina Staphorsius
Jun Yi Dou
Bob Bruyn
Letizia Sciarone
Eefje Habraken
Maija Reinikainen
Sumire Hara
Wim Ruitenbeek
Babette van den Berg
Melanie Broers

Viola

Anne Huser
Roman Spitzer
Maartje van Rheeden
Galahad Samson
Kerstin Bonk
Lex Prummel
Janine Baller
Francis Saunders
Veronika Lénártová
Rosalinde Kluck
León van den Berg
Olfje van der Klein

Cello

Emanuele Silvestri
Joanna Pachucka
Daniel Petrovitsch
Mario Rio
Gé van Leeuwen
Eelco Beinema
Carla Schrijner
Pepijn Meeuws
Yi-Ting Fang

Double Bass

Matthew Midgley
Ying Lai Green
Jonathan Focquaert
Robert Franenberg
Harke Wiersma
Arjen Leendertz
Ricardo Neto

Flute

Juliette Hurel
Joséphine Olech
Désirée Woudenberg

Flute/Piccolo

Beatriz Da Baião

Oboe

Remco de Vries
Karel Schoofs
Hans Cartigny
Anja van der Maten

Oboe/Cor Anglais

Ron Tijhuis

Clarinet

Julien Hervé
Bruno Bonansea
Jan Jansen

Clarinet/ Bass Clarinet

Romke-Jan Wijmenga

Bassoon

Pieter Nuytten
Lola Descours
Marianne Prommel

Bassoon/ Contrabassoon

Hans Wisse

Horn

David Fernández
Alonso
Wendy Leliveld
Richard Speetjens
Laurens Otto
Pierre Buizer

Trumpet

Giuliano
Sommerhalder
Alex Elia
Simon Wierenga
Jos Verspagen

Trombone

Pierre Volders
Alexander Verbeek
Remko de Jager

Bass Trombone

Rommert Groenhof

Tuba

Hendrik-Jan Renes

Timpani/ Percussion

Randy Max
Danny van de Wal
Ronald Ent
Martijn Boom
Adriaan Feyaerts

Harp

Charlotte Sprenkels