

Symphony of a Thousand: Mahler's Eighth

Friday, January 16, 2026 · 20:00 · Philharmonie Berlin

Kirill Petrenko, conductor · Jacquelyn Wagner, soprano · Golda Schultz, soprano · Jasmin Delfs, soprano · Beth Taylor, contralto · Fleur Barron, mezzo-soprano · Benjamin Bruns, tenor · Gihoon Kim, baritone · Le Bu, bass · Rundfunkchor Berlin, chorus · Bachchor Salzburg, chorus · Staats- und Domchor Berlin, chorus

approximately 85 minutes

Gustav Mahler

1860–1911

85 minutes

Symphony No. 8 in E-flat major "Symphony of a Thousand"

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

In Part I: - The overwhelming organ chord that launches the work, immediately followed by the blazing choral entrance on “Veni, creator spiritus!” - The three-note “Veni” motif (the notes spelling out the rhythm of the words), which permeates the entire symphony - The double fugue that develops with stunning complexity, yet never loses its spiritual ecstasy - The climactic return to E-flat major at “Accende lumen sensibus” (Kindle our senses with light)

In Part II: - The mysterious orchestral prelude depicting the mountain landscape, with its ethereal string harmonics and distant brass - The contrasting characters of the anchorites: the brooding Pater Ecstaticus, the meditative Pater Profundus, the serene Pater Seraphicus - The angelic choirs of blessed boys and younger angels bearing Faust’s immortal essence - The three penitent women: the Magna Peccatrix (Mary Magdalene), the Mulier Samaritana (the Samaritan woman), and Maria Aegyptiaca (Mary of Egypt) - Doctor Marianus’s ecstatic hymn to the Mater Gloriosa - The transcendent moment when the Mater Gloriosa finally sings: a brief passage, achingly short, yet the goal of the entire work - The Chorus Mysticus’s closing affirmation: “Alles Vergängliche ist nur ein Gleichnis” (All that is transient is but a symbol), where material from Part I returns, transfigured into a vision of eternity



CONCERT PROGRAMS

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