

BERLINER PHILHARMONIKER

A Universe in Sound: Mahler's Third Symphony

Thursday, May 21, 2026 · 20:00 · Philharmonie Berlin

Yannick Nézet-Séguin, conductor · Joyce DiDonato, mezzo-soprano · Rundfunkchor Berlin, chorus · Staats- und Domchor Berlin, chorus

approximately 100 minutes

Gustav Mahler

1860–1911

Symphony No. 3 in D minor

100 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

The Third Symphony is the longest in the standard orchestral repertoire, typically lasting around 100 minutes, and one of Mahler's most personal statements. He composed it during the summers of 1895 and 1896 at his lakeside hut on the Attersee in Upper Austria, in a burst of staggering ambition. It was meant as a creation story, setting the whole world to music. Its working title was *Pan*, after the Greek god of nature; Mahler also gave its movements descriptive headings, which changed from draft to draft, linking them to a vast cosmic hierarchy. One version reads:

YANNICK NÉZET-SÉGUIN, CONDUCTOR

Canadian conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin, born in Montreal in 1975, is one of the most influential musicians in the world today, holding three of the most prestigious positions in classical music simultaneously: Music Director of the Metropolitan Opera in New York, Artistic and Music Director of the Philadelphia Orchestra, and Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of his hometown Orchestre Métropolitain of Montreal, where in 2019 he signed a contract for life.

Trained at the Quebec Conservatory in piano, conducting, composition, and chamber music, with further studies in choral conducting at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, Nézet-Séguin counts the legendary Italian maestro Carlo Maria Giulini among his most formative mentors. He took up the Philadelphia Orchestra in 2012 and the Metropolitan Opera in 2018, and both contracts now run to 2030. Beyond his core posts, he is a regular guest with the Berliner Philharmoniker, the Vienna Philharmonic, and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. A small curiosity: he began as a pianist, studying the instrument from the age of five, and his spouse, Pierre Tourville, plays viola in the Orchestre Métropolitain.

JOYCE DIDONATO, MEZZO-SOPRANO

American mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato, born in Prairie Village, Kansas, in 1969, is among the most beloved singers of her generation. The sixth of seven children in an Irish-American

family, she trained at Wichita State University and the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia before launching a career that has taken her to virtually every major opera house in the world: La Scala, Covent Garden, the Vienna State Opera, the Bayerische Staatsoper, and the Metropolitan Opera, where she made her debut as Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro* in the 2005–06 season.

A three-time Grammy Award winner (2012, 2016, 2020) for Best Classical Vocal Solo, DiDonato has built her core operatic repertoire on Handel, Mozart and Rossini; Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* has been one of her signature roles. She is also known for ambitious themed concert projects. Her album *In War & Peace* (2016) explored the human cost of conflict through Baroque opera arias; her 2022 project *EDEN* examined humanity's relationship with the natural world.

Tonight's artists

Rundfunkchor Berlin *chorus*

The women of the Rundfunkchor Berlin sing the women's chorus in the fifth movement.

Staats- und Domchor Berlin *chorus*

The boys of the Staats- und Domchor Berlin sing the children's chorus in the fifth movement.

CONCERT PROGRAMS

<https://concertprograms.eu/concerts/bp-2026-05-21-nezet-seguin>

Version 3, 30 September 2026