



# Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia — Roma

Saturday 25 May 2018 7.30pm, Hall

**Mahler** Symphony No 6 in A minor

*There will be no interval*

**Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale  
di Santa Cecilia — Roma**  
**Sir Antonio Pappano** conductor

**Part of Barbican Presents 2018—19**

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# Welcome

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A warm welcome to this evening's concert given by one of the world's leading orchestras, the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. Remarkably, it was the first orchestra to be founded in Italy specifically to perform symphonic repertoire and it has boasted an impressive roster of music directors and guest conductors since its debut performance in 1908.

Sir Antonio Pappano has been the orchestra's Music Director for the past 14 years and has cemented its reputation in a wide range of repertoire, touring both at home in Italy and internationally.

Tonight they present a single work – Mahler's mighty Sixth Symphony. It is in four movements and is one of the composer's

most traditionally Classical structures, but is also one of his most intensely intimate compositions. On completion of the score in 1904, Mahler played it to his wife Alma at the piano; she was later to write: 'Of all his works this was the most personal ... We were both in tears .... so deeply did we feel this music and the sinister premonitions it disclosed'. The hammer blows that end the symphony became almost as famous as the work itself, thanks to Alma's explanation that these represented 'three blows of fate'.

Writing to Anton Webern in 1908, Alban Berg commented about the work that 'there is only one Sixth, despite the "Pastoral"'.

I hope you enjoy tonight's performance.

Huw Humphreys, Head of Music, Barbican

# Gustav Mahler (1860–1911)

## Symphony No 6 in A minor

(1903–4, rev 1906)

**1 Allegro energico, ma non troppo. Heftig, aber markig** [Fierce, but pithy]

**2 Scherzo: Wuchtig** [Forceful] – **Altväterisch** [In an old-fashioned style]

**3 Andante moderato**

**4 Finale: Sostenuto – Allegro energico**

Of all Mahler's nine completed symphonies, the Sixth has a reputation as the darkest. When Mahler began work on it in 1903, he considered calling it 'The Tragic'. But he had already begun to lose faith in titles and literary programmes; in any case, the music hardly needs any explanation. Mahler's Sixth is clearly a powerful, tragic drama. Such disagreement as there is tends to be more about the shading of the interpretation. For one of Mahler's greatest disciples, the conductor Bruno Walter, the Sixth was 'bleakly pessimistic ... the work ends in hopelessness and the dark night of the soul'. But not everyone has found it devoid of hope: Mahler's biographer Michael Kennedy regarded the Sixth Symphony as 'a tragic work, but it is tragedy on a high plane, classical in conception and execution'.

An aura of superstition clings to the symphony, especially to the cataclysmic Finale. Mahler's widow Alma reported him as saying that this movement depicts 'the hero, on whom fall three blows of fate, the last of which fells him like a tree'. Alma wove a seductively chilling legend out of this. She related that in 1907, the year after the symphony's premiere, 'three blows of fate' fell on Mahler himself: his forced resignation as conductor of the Vienna Opera; the death of his daughter Maria from scarlet fever; and the diagnosis of a potentially fatal lesion of the heart. Did Mahler sense his own fate, deep in his prophetic soul, and spell it out in his Sixth Symphony? Actually Alma may have had good reason for wanting to steer interpretations this way: the real 'blow of

fate' that struck Mahler at the age of 50 was almost certainly his discovery of her affair with the architect Walter Gropius. Still, Alma's account retains its grim fascination for many. On another level, too, there does seem to be something uncomfortably prophetic about the symphony: those violent march rhythms, those vivid depictions of vanquished hopes and crushed innocence – it's difficult to believe Mahler didn't have some kind of intuition about where the 20th century was heading.

But Michael Kennedy's description of the Sixth Symphony as 'classical in conception' isn't easily dismissed. A possible clue might be found in Mahler's admiration for the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. The tragedies of the Ancient Greeks fascinated Nietzsche. He felt that these dark but sublime works were some of the sanest – or, as he put it, 'healthiest' – achievements of mankind. In tragic art, the Greeks had been able to look 'with bold eyes into the dreadful destructive turmoil of so-called world history as well as into the cruelty of nature'. By experiencing violence and suffering through the medium of tragedy, the spectator could acquire the courage to face the horror of existence and thus, as Nietzsche put it, 'say Yes to life'. It's easy to see how Nietzsche's idea of the tragic would have appealed to a man like Mahler, who throughout his life was obsessed with death, suffering and the apparently arbitrary cruelty of life, and who strove constantly to make sense of all three. In which case, his 'Tragic' Symphony can perhaps be seen as an attempt to do just that in music.

This might also help explain why, for many listeners, the Sixth Symphony is ultimately exhilarating rather than depressing. However real we may believe its pathos and pain to be, there are times when Mahler seems to be exulting in his mastery, his ability to express what Nietzsche called 'the artistic conquest of the terrible'. Mahler's orchestral wizardry is at its most awe-inspiring here. His handling of the huge forces is incomparable: the score of the Sixth includes instruments never before used in a symphony (celesta, cowbells, whip and a large hammer to represent the 'blows of fate'), as well as one of the largest woodwind and brass sections in the standard repertory. A contemporary cartoonist depicted Mahler in a warehouse full of exotic instruments clutching his forehead and exclaiming, 'My God, I forgot the motor-horn!'

For all its vastness of conception, the Sixth Symphony has a remarkable formal clarity – at least until the huge Finale. Broadly speaking, the first movement follows the outlines of Classical sonata form. Two strongly contrasted themes – a biting, driven march tune and an impassioned major-key melody (identified with Alma Mahler) are opposed, developed at length, then brought back in something like their original form before pressing forwards to a triumphant major-key conclusion. But Mahler loves paradox: at the heart of the movement comes a passage of magical stillness, all shimmering strings with the distant chimes of celesta and cowbells; for Mahler these were 'the last terrestrial sounds penetrating into the remote solitude of mountain peaks'.

Originally Mahler intended the Scherzo to follow the first movement, although he later

changed his mind, placing the slow movement second and the Scherzo third. However, for tonight's performance, Sir Antonio Pappano reverts to Mahler's original ordering of the movements. The Scherzo, then, returns to the pounding march rhythms of the first movement but now the violence has a grotesque edge. Even the childlike Trio theme (introduced on the oboe) has a strange, limping four-plus-three rhythm. This time the ending is bleak, with fragments of motifs on double basses, contrabassoon and timpani; the first movement's premature triumph has been well and truly negated.

The *Andante moderato* offers a fragile haven of peace – a longer exploration of the Alpine solitude glimpsed momentarily during the first movement – but with an undercurrent of bitterness and foreboding.

After this, the Finale is like a vast summing-up of all that has been heard before, now fused into a single compelling musical narrative. Its progress is by turns fearful, desolate and heroically striving. The mood swings constantly between extremes: wild ecstasy turns in a moment to spiralling catastrophe. The first two of Mahler's 'three blows of fate' are underlined by the hammer but, after the symphony's publication, Mahler removed the third hammer blow (which is how we hear it tonight) – whether for superstitious or more practical reasons is hard to deduce. In any case, the real killer stroke is left to the end. After a grim threnody for bass brass, a full orchestral chord of A minor falls like the blade of a guillotine, leaving the march rhythms dwindling into nothingness.

Programme note © Stephen Johnson

# About the performers

Musacchio &amp; Ianniello



Sir Antonio Pappano

## Sir Antonio Pappano conductor

Sir Antonio Pappano has been the Music Director of Rome's Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia since 1 October 2005. He has also been Music Director of the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, since September 2002. He has held other prestigious positions, including, in 1990, being named Music Director of Oslo's Norwegian Opera, the theatre where he made his international debut. From 1991 to 2002 he carried out the same role at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels.

He was born in London in 1959 to Italian parents and studied piano, composition and conducting in the USA. Among the most notable events in his career are his debuts at the Vienna Staatsoper in 1993, the Metropolitan Opera, New York, in 1997 and at the Bayreuth Festival in 1999.

He has conducted many of the world's major orchestras, including the Berlin, New York and Vienna Philharmonic orchestras, the Chicago and London Symphony orchestras, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Staatskapelle Dresden. In 2005, he was named

Conductor of the Year by the Royal Philharmonic Society; that same year he also received the Abbiati Prize for his conducting of the Requiems of Brahms, Britten and Verdi together with the Chorus and Orchestra of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. In 2013 he was named Conductor of the Year at the International Opera Awards.

He records extensively for Warner Classics and has made several recordings with the Santa Cecilia Orchestra and Chorus. Among his latest recordings are Verdi's *Aida*, Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No 1 and Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No 2 with Beatrice Rana at the piano. In February 2016 he won a Grammy Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Recording together with mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato for their album *Joyce & Tony*. Other recent highlights include *Nessun Dorma: The Puccini Album* with tenor Jonas Kaufmann (Sony), Schumann's Symphonies Nos 2&4 (ICA Classics), Anna Netrebko's *Verismo* (DG), Saint-Saëns's Symphony No 3 and *The Carnival of the Animals* with Martha Argerich, as well as Bernstein's *Jeremiah*, *The Age of Anxiety* and *Kaddish* symphonies (Warner), which won a 2019 ICMA Symphonic Music Award.

In 2010 he presented a widely acclaimed series *Opera Italia* for BBC television.

In 2007, Sir Antonio Pappano was named a Life Member of Santa Cecilia. In 2012 he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II for his services to music and the same year was appointed Cavaliere di Gran Croce dell'Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana. In 2015 he received the Royal Philharmonic Society's Gold Medal – the society's highest honour – becoming the 100th RPS Gold Medallist since the award was founded in 1870. He joins a rarefied group of musicians that includes Brahms, Elgar, Strauss, Stravinsky and Britten.

## **Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia—Roma**

The Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, based in Rome, was the first orchestra in Italy to devote itself exclusively to the symphonic repertoire, giving premieres of major contemporary masterpieces, such as Respighi's *Fountains of Rome* and *Pines of Rome*, Henze's *Opfergang*, Arvo Pärt's *Cecilia*, *vergine romana*, Richard Dubugnon's *Caprice romain* and Salvatore Sciarrino's *Euridice secondo Rilke*.

The orchestra was founded in 1908 and has been conducted by some of the major musical figures of the 20th century, notably Mahler, Debussy, Saint-Saëns, Strauss, Stravinsky, Sibelius, Hindemith, Toscanini, Furtwängler, de Sabata, Karajan and Abbado, as well as leading musicians of today, including Riccardo Muti, Valery Gergiev, Christian Thielemann, Gustavo Dudamel and Yuri Temirkanov. Its music directors form a similarly august list: Bernardino Molinari, Franco Ferrara, Fernando Previtali, Igor Markevitch, Thomas Schippers, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Daniele Gatti, and Myung-Whun Chung, while Leonard Bernstein was its Honorary President from 1983 to 1990.

Sir Antonio Pappano has been the orchestra's Music Director since 2005, during which

time its reputation has grown further, both at home and internationally. Together they have appeared at major festivals, including those of Lucerne and Salzburg, the BBC Proms and White Nights in St Petersburg; they have also performed at leading venues worldwide, such as the Berlin Philharmonie, Musikverein and Konzerthaus in Vienna, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Royal Albert Hall, Salle Pleyel and Philharmonie in Paris, La Scala, Milan, Tokyo's Suntory Hall, Carnegie Hall in New York and the Dresden Semperoper.

During its history, the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia has enjoyed long-term collaborations with some of the most renowned record labels, creating many classic recordings; it now has an exclusive contract with Warner Classics. Under Pappano its releases include Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Rossini's *William Tell*, Britten's *War Requiem*, Mahler's *Symphony No 6*, Verdi's *Aida* (with Anja Harteros and Jonas Kaufmann), *Nessun Dorma: The Puccini Album* with tenor Jonas Kaufmann (which was named one of *The New York Times*' Best Classical Music Recordings of 2015), Saint-Saëns's *Symphony No 3* and *The Carnival of the Animals* with Martha Argerich, as well as Bernstein's *Jeremiah*, *The Age of Anxiety* and *Kaddish* symphonies.

# Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia – Roma

## **Violin 1**

Carlo Maria  
Parazzoli *leader*  
Ruggiero Sfregola  
Marlene Prodigio  
Elena La Montagna  
Margherita Ceccarelli  
Roberto Saluzzi  
Fiorenza Ginanneschi  
Roberto Granci  
Paolo Piomboni  
Barbara Castelli  
Silvana Dolce  
Jalle Feest  
Daria Leuzinger  
William Esteban  
Chiquito Henao  
Soyeon Kim  
Ylenia Montaruli  
Simona Cappabianca  
Marco Norzi  
Antonella D'Andrea  
Margherita Busetto  
Cristiano Giuseppetti

## **Violin 2**

David Romano\*  
Ingrid Belli  
Rosario Genovese  
Leonardo Micucci  
Lavinia Morelli  
Pierluigi Capicchioni  
Riccardo Piccirilli  
Daniele Ciccolini  
Andrea Vicari  
Maria Tomasella  
Papais  
Cristina Puca  
Giovanni Bruno  
Galvani  
Manuela Costi  
Brunella Zanti  
Svetlana Norkina  
Annamaria Salvatori  
Clarice Curradi  
Federica Fersini

## **Viola**

Raffaele Mallozzi\*  
Stefano Trevisan  
Sara Simoncini  
Carla Santini  
Fabio Catania  
Ilona Balint  
Andrea Alpestre  
Lorenzo Falconi  
David Bursack  
Luca Manfredi  
Federico Marchetti

## **Cello**

Luigi Piovano\*  
Carlo Onori  
Diego Romano  
Francesco Storino  
Bernardino Penazzi  
Francesco Di Donna  
Matteo Michele  
Bettinelli  
Sara Gentile  
Giacomo Menna  
Roberto Mansueto  
Giuseppe Scaglione

## **Double Bass**

Libero Lanzilotta\*  
Anita Mazzantini  
Paolo Marzo  
Andrea Pighi  
Enrico Rosini  
Paolo Cocchi  
Nicola Cascelli  
Simona Iemmolo  
Marko Lenza  
Cecilia Perfetti

## **Flute**

Adriana Ferreira\*  
Nicola Protani  
Elisa Boschi  
Elena Sedini

## **Piccolo**

Davide Ferrario

## **Oboe**

Francesco Di Rosa\*  
Annarita Argentieri  
Gabriele Cutrona

## **Cor anglais**

Maria Irsara  
Luigi Sala

## **Clarinet**

Siefano Novelli\*  
Simone Sirugo  
Lorenzo Russo  
Pierluigi Capezzuto

## **E flat Clarinet**

Michele Naglieri

## **Bass Clarinet**

Dario Goracci

## **Bassoon**

Andrea Zucco\*  
Fabio Angeletti  
Luca Franceschelli  
Mario Mattia Perticaro

## **Contrabassoon**

Alessandro Ghibaudo

## **Horn**

Alessio Allegrini\*  
Jonathan  
Quaintrell-Evans  
Mirko Landoni  
Alessio Bernardi  
Luca Agus  
Fabio Frapparelli  
Damiano Fiore  
Finlay Bain  
Giuseppe Accardi

## **Trumpet**

Andrea Lucchi\*  
Alfonso González  
Barquín\*  
Ermanno Ottaviani  
Antonio Ruggeri  
Giovanni Nicosia

## **Trombone**

Andrea Conti\*  
Esteban Méndez  
Maurizio Persia  
Cosimo Iacoviello

## **Tuba**

Gianluca Grosso

## **Timpani**

Antonio Catone\*  
Davide Tonetti

## **Percussion**

Edoardo Albino  
Giachino  
Andrea Santarsiere  
Davide Tonetti  
Francesco Fiorante  
Salvatore Alibrando  
Mirko Pedrotti  
Chris Terian

## **Harp**

Cinzia Maurizio\*  
Flora Uboldi

## **Celesta**

Roberto Arosio\*

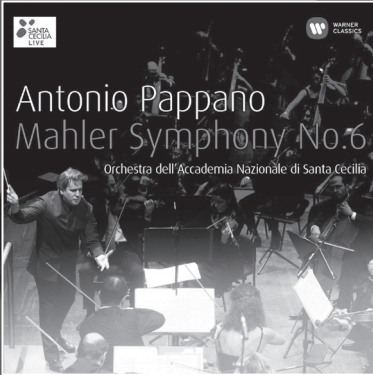
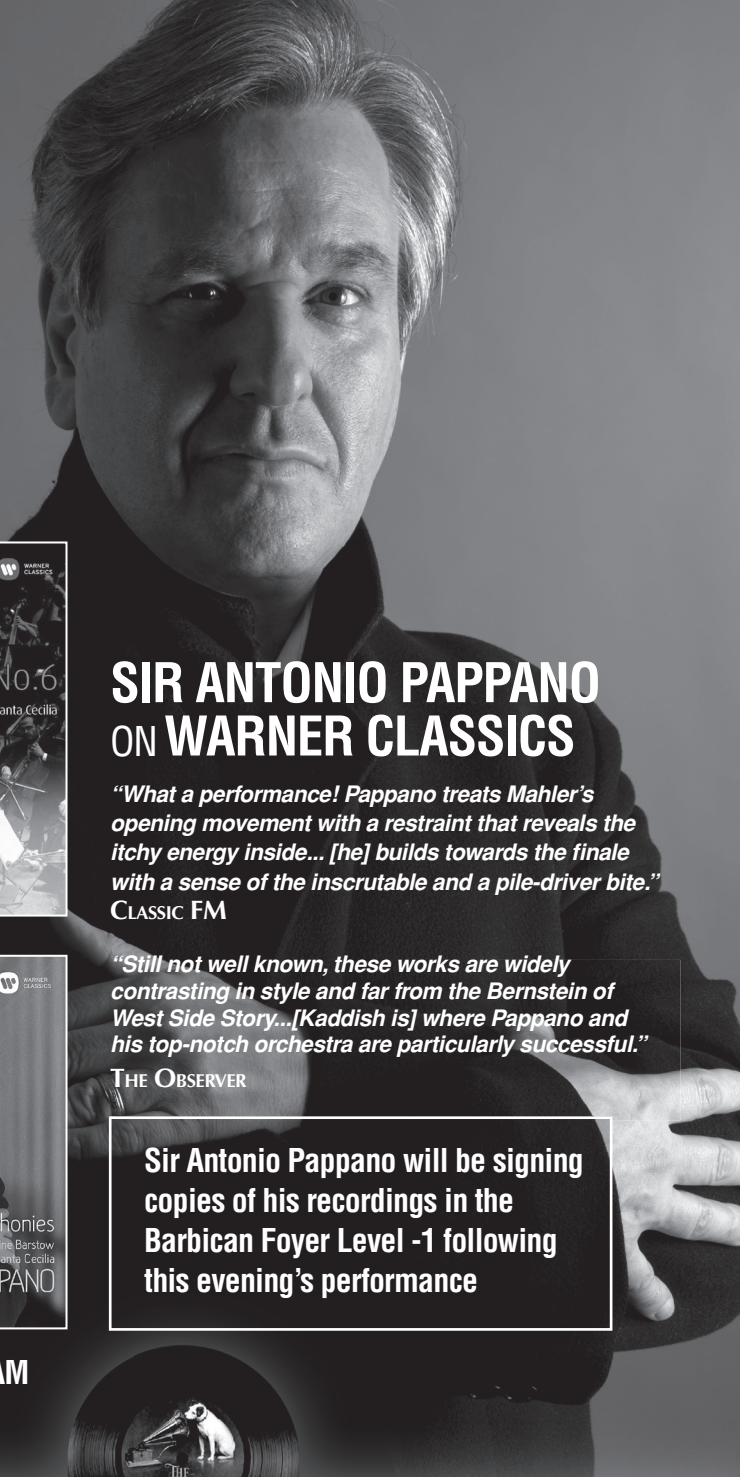
\* *principal*

*Tour managed by  
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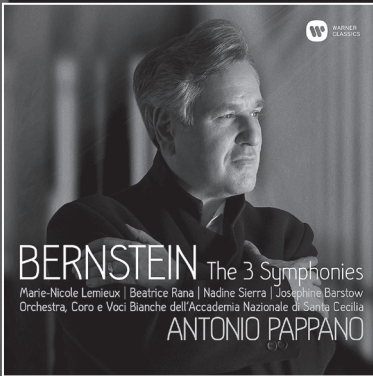


WARNER CLASSICS



# SIR ANTONIO PAPPANO ON WARNER CLASSICS

*“What a performance! Pappano treats Mahler’s opening movement with a restraint that reveals the itchy energy inside... [he] builds towards the finale with a sense of the inscrutable and a pile-driver bite.”*  
CLASSIC FM



*“Still not well known, these works are widely contrasting in style and far from the Bernstein of West Side Story...[Kaddish is] where Pappano and his top-notch orchestra are particularly successful.”*

THE OBSERVER

**Sir Antonio Pappano will be signing copies of his recordings in the Barbican Foyer Level -1 following this evening’s performance**

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