

Total performance time: approximately 85', including a short pause.
There is no interval

Symphonic Cinema: Mahler

[New European Ensemble](#)
[Symphonic Cinema](#)
[Lucas van Woerkum](#) film director

Richard Wagner (1813–1883)
Siegfried Idyll (1869) 18'

PAUSE

The Echo of Being (2020) *approx 50'*

Film written and directed by **Lucas van Woerkum** (b. 1982)
Music by **Gustav Mahler** (1860–1911)
based on selections of his work arranged by Thomas Beijer

Cast:

Amira Casar Alma Mahler
Dominique van Ginkel Maria Mahler
Greg Wise Gustav Mahler

We are grateful for the support of the
Embassy of the Netherlands
toward this performance

Richard Wagner: Siegfried Idyll

Perhaps no composer left a greater imprint on the compositional style of Gustav Mahler than Richard Wagner. It was primarily through his work as a conductor of operatic works that Mahler made a name for himself in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; he conducted a great number of Wagner's operas and was intimately familiar with both the harmonic innovations and epic nature of these works.

Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll* was first performed on Christmas morning 1870 by an ensemble of players from Zurich's Tonhalle Orchestra. Famously, the musicians were assembled on the stairs at Wagner's home and played the work to the composer's wife Cosima, who was awakened by the piece's opening melody. The *Idyll* was written as a private gift for Cosima who had given birth to the couple's son Siegfried the previous year. The private nature of the work's first performance accounts for the small ensemble forces – just 13 players were employed by the composer. At the same time the work introduced a number of themes that Wagner went on to use in his opera *Siegfried*, the third work in his *Ring* cycle.

Wagner's intimate instrumentation fits well with the ensemble arrangements by Thomas Beijer of excerpts from Mahler's symphonies for *The Echo of Being*. Both *The Echo of Being* and *Siegfried Idyll* are works connected with intimate, familial relationships.

The Echo of Being, with music by Gustav Mahler

The Echo of Being is a poetic meeting of Mahler's symphonies, with extracts performed live by the New European Ensemble, and a film inspired by details from the lives of Gustav and Alma Mahler and their young daughter Maria. The lead roles are played by actors Amira Casar (*Call me by your name*) and Greg Wise (*The Crown*). As the ensemble performs sections from Mahler's 2nd, 4th, 8th, 9th and 10th symphonies, music and film interweave to create a poetic narrative. From within the orchestra, filmmaker Lucas van Woerkum synchronizes the film scenes live to the music, creating the perfect symbiosis between music and image.

The main theme of the film is the process of dying. Seen through the individual perspectives of the three family members, we experience their pain and grief, but, more importantly, their love for nature, life and what comes after. The journey to the hereafter, seen through the eyes of the dying daughter, is visualized by fractal animations that are created based on the structure and dynamics of the music.

Symphonic Cinema

Symphonic Cinema brings to life the stories told by classical music masterpieces, through real-time synchronizations of films with live orchestra performances. Created with the music at its heart, Symphonic Cinema performances allow the musicians and conductor to express their own artistry; the films are controlled live in response to tempo and dynamic.

Audiences are invited to challenge their associations and relationship with the music, as the films amplify the narrative power of the music, visualizing a world behind the notes.

New European Ensemble

The New European Ensemble was founded in 2009 in the Netherlands by dedicated and passionate musicians from across Europe. It has built a reputation as one of the Netherlands' leading ensembles and is particularly noted for its imaginative programming. In 2019, it was awarded the prestigious Kersjesprijs. The ensemble's mission is to present contemporary music and 20th-century classics in exciting ways, and it often combines music performance with film, literature, theatre, dance and visual art. Some of today's most prominent composers, such as Kaija Saariaho, Magnus Lindberg, Mark-Anthony Turnage, Bright Sheng and Anna Thorvaldsdóttir, have enjoyed working with the group.

The ensemble has performed in nearly all the major concert halls and theatres in the Netherlands, including the Concertgebouw, Royal Theatre Carré and Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ in Amsterdam, De Doelen in Rotterdam, and Tivoli Vredenburg and the Royal Theatre in The Hague. It performs regularly at festivals such as Gaudeamus Muziekweek, Festival Vlaanderen, November Music, Shanghai New Music Week, Beijing Contemporary Music Festival and Svensk Musikvår. International tours have taken the group to the UK, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, Finland, Italy, Lebanon, China and Hong Kong.

The ensemble's musicians work regularly with young composers and performers at the Hague's Royal Conservatoire and at music schools worldwide.