

## Amazon, Stewart Crowe (11 April 2019)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ Arguably the most telling realisation and performance of this work from a most unexpected source

Chamber reductions of Mahler Symphonies are not new-Arnold Schoenberg's "Society for Musical Performance" in Vienna commissioned a reduction of the 4th Symphony by Erwin Stein (best heard on a recording led by Christian Tetzlaff) and Schoenberg's own incomplete *Das Lied von Der Erde* (best heard in my view on a recording led by Welser-Most) were early examples, and in recent years reductions of the Sixth and Seventh have had varying degrees of success.

This performance throws in an additional element of complexity in that it is a reduction of a completion or realisation of Mahler's uncompleted 10th Symphony.

In an extended and most interesting essay in the accompanying booklet to this recording, . Ms Michelle Castelletti outlines her strategy of taking the familiar Cooke/Goldschmidt/Matthews performing version but adding in elements of the Barshai (itself based on the Cooke version), taking into account newly published further sketch material to which she was given access by the Vienna State Library-and then reducing it a chamber sized orchestra in the manner of Schoenberg, taking care to use a period (turn of the 20th century) harmonium as well as extended percussion and piano.

The scoring is for 15 strings but solo instruments for each section thereafter-some 25 players in all. In her comprehensive list of those to have been brave enough to tackle the completion she even mentions Solti's intention to amend the Cooke version for his own performance of which Fate sadly robbed us, though she neglects to include the electrifying Gamzou version and does not recount that Karajan actually discussed taking it on with Chailly, but was ultimately dissuaded from the project.

Ms Castelletti is something of a polymath-despite her relative youth, this artist from Malta has established a reputation as a singer, conductor, musicologist, composer and is active in many other fields of the arts. If I'm honest, all this combined to make me somewhat sceptical about the likely results of her confection.

My scepticism was SO unjustified-this is as stunning a realisation of the work as can be imagined, backed by a performance of such intensity that I am almost tempted to elevate to the rank of "default choice."

The Lapland Chamber Orchestra might seem an unlikely band to deliver such a committed and technically dazzling performance, but they do just that. The scoring and intensity of the playing combine to make the listener forget that this is a chamber version, were it not for the transparency of detail uncovered as in no other performance. The quotations from the 5th, 6th and 7th Symphonies reveal themselves as in no other recording, and the atmosphere is both giddier and more frightening than in any other performance.

The merits of John Storgards as a conductor are well known to us in the UK, but here his musical direction rises to new levels. I hope that we will hear more Mahler from him. Tempi are generally swift but not rushed, with the most expressive shaping.

I have to single out the finale. It is literally terrifying in its intensity. The opening drum shot is just that-it catches the listener unaware with the whip crack intensity of a rifle shot followed by a daringly long silence, and when the orchestra enters the scoring for harmonium ,piano strings and brass is the darkest I can recall-fear, bitterness and despair combine in those chords to a level that is almost unbearable, and Storgards whips up the intensity into a desperate frenzy of ecstasy and trepidation combined, with climatic points being underlined by tam-tam crashes that scythe through the orchestral textures leaving one breathless. The Second Viennese School permeates this version as in no other.

“That chord” does not have the sheer weight of the full orchestral version-but instead it literally grates on the nerves, setting the teeth on edge with saw-like intensity. (I’m running into the age old problem of trying to convey sound and emotional impact in words-sorry!).

The final moments are not resigned and resolved-they are a cry of endless despair in this version.

If you love this work as I do-in all its versions (not too impressed with the Mazzetti) – then I urge you to hear this magnificent and revelatory reworking. It probably comes nearer to the spirit and intention of what Mahler sought to convey better than any other-seriously. The recording is superb, conducting and playing beyond praise-as is the work of Ms Castelletti!

## Gramophone (Peter Quantrill, April 2019):

Erwin Stein's arrangement of the Fourth set the precedent for attempts to compress and deconstruct Mahler that have more recently included two chamber versions of the Ninth and Matthew Herbert's 'Mahler X'. From the discomfiting way that the strings of the Lapland Chamber Orchestra slide down icy portamentos into yawning glissandos during the opening minutes of the Adagio, you might anticipate that here is another experiment designed at once to domesticate and disorient. But Michelle Castelletti's arrangement doesn't turn out like that.

Having taken Deryck Cooke's completion as the basis for her edition, Castelletti slims down the orchestra, not the argument, insinuating that in his later works Mahler was already engaged on a project of deconstructing himself. Meanwhile John Storgårds always cultivates legato, connects notes and episodes, privileges coherence over discontinuity and reminds us that the composer's sketches preserved at least a single thread of melody running through almost the entire symphony. Outstanding throughout, hornist Ilkka Puputti lends a glowing aurora borealis to the Adagio's piercing cry of anguish. Taken very slowly indeed, the coda itself inches its way towards provisional closure as if (rather plausibly) Mahler was beginning his last and in many ways most radical symphony by rewriting the finale of the previous one.

The stylistic ground of the first Scherzo is more uncertain, pitched (again not inauthentically) somewhere between Johann Strauss, Schoenberg and Shostakovich, and decked out with gaudy triangle and cymbal trappings in the manner of Rudolf Barshai's Soviet-tinted orchestration. But it works. There is the lazy drawl of an authentic Mahler scherzo about Storgårds' refined direction, the queasy movement between waltz and march, between nostalgia and parody. The orchestra play as if they had just broken off rehearsals of the Fifth.

Castelletti's version passes one important Mahlerian test insofar as it sheds a wan light of revelation on previous symphonies. The 'Purgatorio' sounds more than ever like a caustic rewrite of 'Von der Jugend' from *Das Lied* (hardly an original observation: Cooke himself made this comparison back in 1961). Borrowed from the Eighth as well as the arrangements made for the Society for Private Musical Performances by Schoenberg and his colleagues such as Stein, piano and harmonium fill out the more problematically fragmented textures of the second Scherzo, while Storgårds recaptures the whirling nihilism of *Das Lied*'s opening song with much teasing rubato.

Cooke himself saw the Tenth as finally affirmative but Castelletti's telling use of tam-tam in the coda recalls the closing section of the *Pathétique* Symphony – another Mahlerian touchstone – and offers only the most fragile consolation. However you hear the Tenth, you'll hear it differently after experiencing this one.

## Fanfare Magazine

I was all prepared to dislike this disc even before I'd heard it. I scarcely believed the 10th could survive transmutation to a chamber orchestra, but how wrong I was! If you follow this performance with the score in Cooke's orchestration, it quickly becomes apparent that the 10th may well be the most chamber-music oriented of the 10 symphonies. Many of the lines in Cooke's version call for four of the same instrument. One usually suffices quite nicely, thank you. The orchestra for this version numbers just 24 players, but all the music is there, it is cleverly orchestrated, very well played, and conducted with love and sympathy.

Michelle Castelletti, a Maltese conductor, singer, and composer (b. 1974), credits her numerous predecessors of completed versions of this symphony for her own work, including Wheeler, Mazzetti, Barshai, Carpenter, Zemlinsky (movements 1 and 3, in collaboration with Berg, Krenek, and Franz Schalk) and especially Cooke. Castelletti provides an extensive explanation of her efforts in a program note. "What I have attempted is to give a faithful and stylistic re-creation of Mahler's Symphony No. 10 – a correct representation of a large-scale work, retaining its profoundness, impact and magnificence, while creating clarity of lines and revealing the intimacy of the work." For once, the results justify the rhetoric.

It is amazing what Castelletti has accomplished with so few instruments: five woodwinds (flute doubling piccolo); just two brass (a horn and a trumpet), 14 strings, keyboard (piano doubling harmonium), and percussion. Actually, it is the percussion that gives this orchestration its most interesting and decisive character. Castelletti uses it extensively, and the listener familiar with any of the full-orchestra versions is going to be surprised often. The two keyboards and harp are also used to great effect.

The symphony opens with just two lonely violas, creating a heightened sense of bleakness and forlornness. The entire passage is devoid of the plentiful performance indications subsequently found in the score, and Storgårds emphasizes this contrast mightily. Compared to other performances, accents are sharper, contrasts of loud and soft greater, dynamic bulges more pronounced, and portamentos more exaggerated, sometimes fiercely so. The full orchestral outburst near the end is as shattering as in any other performance, regardless of how many instruments are used, and the trumpet's piercing cry is all the more effective as it does not have to carry over a 100-piece orchestra.

The second movement is crisply articulated, its trenchant counterpoint vividly exposed in reduced orchestration. About mid-way through, though, momentum stalls, as Storgårds seems content to merely beat time. But this is the only part of the performance to suffer thusly. The "Purgatorio" movement loses nothing in reduced orchestration; in fact, its bitter bite is even more pronounced this way.

Of the five movements, the second scherzo is the only one truly in need of a larger orchestra. Some of the inner voices and contrapuntal lines had to be shed, and the big climaxes lack the punch of full-orchestra versions. On the other hand, Castelletti uses the tam-tam to good effect at key moments, an instrument Mahler/Cooke did not.

The finale brings the greatest surprises, both in number and emotional impact. As there is no tuba in Castelletti's orchestration, one would logically guess that she would use a double bass for the slow upward crawl following the initial "whack." Guess again. I won't give away the surprise except to say that what she has done here, and even more so in subsequent similar passages, is absolutely

terrifying. Just get the disc and prepare to be scared silly. The long flute solo that follows is ravishing in its haunting sweetness; it takes a strong constitution not to shed tears while listening to this performance.

The Lapland Chamber Orchestra is based in the city of Rovaniemi, Finland, which makes it the most northerly professional orchestra in the world (just four miles south of the Arctic Circle). And professional it is indeed—every player sounds like he or she could hold a first-chair position in any orchestra further south. Storgårds, its Artistic Director since 1996, leads his little band with the utter conviction and emotional intensity one expects from a good Mahler interpretation.

Whether you prefer the richness of sound and texture of any of the full-orchestra versions, or Castelletti's pared down but trenchant chamber setting, is a matter of taste and preference. But you choose, you can be assured that Storgård's brings a level of emotional intensity to his interpretation matched only by Rudolf Barshai in his recording with the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie on Brilliant Classics. Obviously the Storgårds/Castelletti effort is not for those coming to the symphony for the first time, but if you love this symphony, you owe it to yourself to hear what Castelletti has done with it. You won't be disappointed.

### The Arts Desk

Other Mahler symphonies have been downsized on CD: there are superb transcriptions of Nos 7 and 9 from Peter Stangel's Taschenphilharmonie and the Camerata RCO respectively. Michelle Casteletti's version draws most heavily on Deryck Cooke's idiomatic performing version (rightly so; the various other completions don't sound like Mahler), played here by just 24 musicians: single winds and a tiny string section, backed up with harp, percussion, piano and harmonium. BIS's fruity sound underplays the smallness, and there are moments when you're convinced that it's a full complement of players instead of John Storgårds' fearless Lapland Chamber Orchestra. The added clarity makes for ear-tickling results; the first movement's quirky second subject is pointed to perfection and the famous screaming discord has plenty of impact. The string slides disconcert but make emotional sense, Mahler's chromatic writing disarmingly vocal and painfully human.

Casteletti's first Scherzo is an upbeat romp, and she fills out the second one's barer textures with some effective keyboard vamping. Storgårds understands the idiom so well, the queasy waltz almost toppling into the abyss. This symphony only works if the finale hangs together. Here it does, led by Heli Haapula's radiant flute solo. Mahler's neuroses unfold on a smaller, less cluttered canvas; we're being whispered to rather than screamed at. The strings' ecstatic upward slide in the final bars is capped by percussion here. At which point you'll either punch the air or turn off in disgust. I loved it, and defy anyone to remain dry-eyed as the final chord dies away. Sensational playing and impressive direction; this is a very special disc.

## Klassik Heute (Christoph Schlüren, 22 June 2019)

Nicht in allem, aber doch in vielem Schlechten liegt auch etwas Gutes. Entsprechend der heute allgemein verbreiteten, zur jahrzehntelangen Redundanz verkommenen Mode, dass sich die großen Orchester auf CD mit einem Mahler-Zyklus zu präsentieren gewohnt sind, den meist niemand braucht, weil der Dirigent außer Mainstream nichts zu bieten hat, der Effekt aber mit dieser Musik (und mit derjenigen von Schostakowitsch) am Größten ist, ohne dass man etwas zu sagen hätte – entsprechend diesem dämlichen Umstand präsentiert uns John Storgårds, den wir auf Tonträgern in den letzten Jahren mit recht vorzüglichen Sinfoniezyklen von Sibelius, Nielsen und Antheil als ersten Gastdirigenten des BBC Philharmonic aus Manchester für Chandos bewundern durften: eine Überraschung... er hat nämlich die Ersteinspielung einer weiteren Vollendung der Zehnten Sinfonie von Gustav Mahler mit seinem in Rovaniemi ansässigen Lapland Chamber Orchestra unternommen! Wie das? Seine Kollegin Michelle Castelletti hat in jahrelanger Arbeit eine Fassung für Kammerorchester erstellt, die abgesehen von dem von Mahler in Partitur vollendeten Kopfsatz von den vorhandenen Fassungen Deryck Cookes, Rudolf Barschais, Clinton Carpenter, Remo Mazzettis und Joseph Wheelers ausgeht und sozusagen eine ergänzt-erweiterte ‚Best of‘-Version des Stands der postumen ‚Rekonstruktion‘ bietet (die Karten sind hier ungleich besser für ein Gelingen gemischt als etwa beim Finale von Bruckners Neunter, da die Mahler'sche Skizze durchgehend bis zum Schluss vorhanden ist). Es handelt sich Michelle Castellettis bei der Universal Edition erscheinender Fassung um eine ganz kleine Besetzung in der Tradition der Arrangements des Wiener Kreises um Schönberg für den Verein für Privataufführungen: Flöte (auch Piccolo), Oboe, Klarinette in B, Fagott, Horn, Trompete, 1 Paukist, der auch die verschiedenen Schlaginstrumente (Xylophon, Glockenspiel und eine Vielfalt mit unbestimmter Tonhöhe) bedient, Harfe, 1 Pianist, der auch Harmonium und etwas Schlagwerk spielt, 2 Geigen, Bratsche, Cello und Kontrabass. Das ist natürlich viel zu wenig für eine Mahler-Sinfonie, aber so etwas sind wir heute längst gewohnt, und so kann man es jetzt auch in einem etwas größeren Wohnzimmer spielen und vor allem kostengünstig überall da, wo ein großes Orchester nicht verfügbar ist.

Ich halte mich nicht mit einer Mängelliste auf, die versucht aufzuzählen, wo überall die Nachteile der Kammerbesetzung problematisch sind. Was sofort auffällt, ist die stupende technisch-tonliche Makellosigkeit aller Beteiligten. Natürlich ist manchmal auch der Preis für eine so gestochen scharfe Intonation bei einem so unausgeglichen zusammengestellten Instrumentarium, dass die Spontaneität des Ausdrucks dem Streben nach letzter Perfektion geopfert wird. Auch die Pianissimo-Kultur ist unglaublich hoch, und da besteht natürlich hier und da auch einmal die Gefahr, dass das extrem Leise ein bisschen zum Selbstzweck wird: Das wirkt dann schon geradezu ‚nordisch‘, rückt manchen (durch die Orchestration in dieser Richtung begünstigten) asketisch-linearen Moment in die Nähe von Sibelius' Vierter. Und da kann es doch auch passieren – wie gleich zu Beginn – dass das Andante durchs Lauschen in die Stille langsamer wird als ein Adagio, was sich in der erforderlichen Relation nicht mehr ausgleichen lässt. Rhythmisch ist selbstverständlich unter Storgårds äußerster Exaktheit geboten, allerdings meine ich, dass die Tempovorschriften oft andeutenderer Natur sind und nicht überall so kontrastbetont wie hier verstanden, und vor allem auch in sich flexibler, aus einem gewissen permanent vorhandenen Grundrubato heraus, das mehr subtil als offenkundig geschehen sollte.

Von diesen Einwänden abgesehen, die nur einem sehr subtilen Hören zugänglich sind, ist diese Ersteinspielung vortrefflich gelungen, wie auch Michelle Castelletti viel gelernt hat aus den publizierten Versuchen ihrer Vorgänger bezüglich der großen Orchestration. Und natürlich ist dieser radikal entschlackte Mahler auch sehr interessant, ohne dass man im Ernst behaupten könnte, das klangliche Ergebnis sei Mahler verwandt. Das Niveau des Lappländischen

Kammerorchester ist unter der langjährigen Leitung von Storgårds zu einem Weltklasseklangkörper aufgestiegen, was diese Aufnahme unbezweifelbar belegt. Und die BIS-Klangtechnik (Matthias Spitzbart und Robert Suff) tut das ihre, um ein fulminantes Ergebnis zu garantieren. Mahlerianer kommen um die Anschaffung keinesfalls herum, und wer wissen will, wie die Verwandlung der großen Orchesters in ein Kammerensemble im Idealfalle wirken kann, sollte hier unbedingt zuhören.



## Amazon (Peter Bond, 4 May 2019)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ A magnificent Mahler 10 which makes a profound emotional impact

The arguments that fly around about the validity of realising Mahler's intended 10th symphony are ill founded. He left the structure complete, the orchestration of the first and third movements pretty much fully realised and the principal melodic lines and most harmonies (or chief intentions) for all else. Every bar of his sketches has meaningful information.

It requires someone to 'get into' Mahler's mind - beyond the musicological - to the entirely 'musical'. Beyond understanding Mahler's musical language they'd need to consider his state of mind and interpret his intentions coloured by anxieties caused by illness and Alma's narcissistic behaviour.

The various performing editions tell us new secrets about Mahler and allow us to hear his tenth symphony with just that bit greater interpretative freedom than conductors might bring.

So what of this new version by Michelle Castelletti, which creates an orchestration that would have been used by the members of the 2nd Viennese School and their brethren? It is a triumph!

It is as if we are taken at once from Mahler's 9th to Schoenberg's Chamber Symphonies. This is 'forward looking' Mahler in the sound-world of those who most admired him and fully understood him and the context and period of his work.

Dr Castelletti has had to invent material, of course, and we must consider its success in comparison with the pioneering work of Joe Wheeler and Deryck Cooke et al. I'd argue that this realisation gets closer to Mahler's increasing sense of anguish and ever developing musical language than anyone. That this is a chamber orchestra is surprising, because the range of colours is vast, the musical impact profound and the sheer weight combined with translucency of sonority is enthralling. But then again, let's hark back to the ghostly scherzo of No 7, much of the second movement of No 8 and Das Lied von der Erde as well as much of No 9 - that is all chamber music! Has the second scherzo of No 10 ever had such disturbing and portentous undertones as here? Has the final movement ever combined such terrifying impact with serene beauty to leave us so wrung out?

The playing of Lapland Chamber Orchestra under the inspired direction of John Storgårds is simply glorious. Their playing moves from breathtaking and wistful tenderness to passages where Heaven seems briefly to stand still. Yet they evoke the darkest chasms too!

This is a most magnificent Mahler recording which makes a profound emotional impact. How lucky are we to be able to hear his final symphony realised with such musical authority and integrity. In addition, the recording is beyond reproach - achieving a perfect balance of clarity, impact and atmosphere.

## HR Audio

Left unfinished at the death of the composer, Gustav Mahler's Tenth Symphony has exerted an enormous fascination on musicologists as well as musicians. Whether fully orchestrated in specific passages, or a sole melody in others, there is one continuous line throughout the surviving manuscript pages and over the years a number of different completions or performing versions have seen the light of day. One of the latest is this 'recreation' of the work for chamber orchestra by composer and conductor Michelle Castelletti.

In her liner notes to the recording, Castelletti describes the symphony as 'possibly one of Mahler's most passionate emotional outbursts and autobiographical creations'. The decision to make an orchestration for chamber forces was inspired by the example of the Viennese Society for Private Musical Performance, established by Arnold Schoenberg in 1918 with the goal of performing newly composed music. Among the works performed by the Society were chamber orchestra versions of Mahler's Symphony No. 4 and *Das Lied von der Erde* – the latter made by Schoenberg himself – and in her version of Symphony No. 10, Castelletti uses a similar instrumentation. This new completion appears on disc for the first time, in a performance by the acclaimed Lapland Chamber Orchestra under John Storgards, the ensemble's artistic director since 1996.

### **JETZT JOURNALE (30 August 2019)**

Vollendeter Mahler aus Lappland mit Peter Kislinger. Das Lapland Chamber Orchestra unter der Leitung von John Storgårds mit der von Gustav Mahler unvollendet hinterlassenen, von Michelle Castelletti neu "rekonstruierten" und für Kammerorchester arrangierten,

Gustav Mahlers zehnte Symphonie, an der er 1910/11 bis zu seinem Tode - am 18. Mai 1911 - arbeitete, hat zahlreiche Versuche der Vervollständigung und Instrumentierung erlebt. Manche Passagen lagen von Mahler vollständig orchestriert vor, in anderen skizzierte er bloß die Melodiestimme. Diese von der Komponistin und Dirigentin Michelle Castelletti vorgelegte "Rekonstruktion für Kammerorchester", die nun zum ersten Mal auf Tonträger vorliegt, ließ sich von Arnold Schönbergs 1918 gegründetem "Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen" inspirieren. Unter den dort aufgeführten Werken fand sich die für Kammerorchester arrangierte 4. Symphonie Mahlers und das von Schönberg für Kammerorchester arrangierte "Das Lied von der Erde", an dessen Instrumentation sich Castelletti orientierte.

Auch die Erfahrungen der Rekonstruktionsversuche von Deryck Cooke, Rudolf Barschai, Clinton Carpenter, Remo Mazzetti und Joseph Wheeler sind in Castellettis Arbeit eingeflossen. Es ist ein faszinierendes, vielleicht paradox anmutendes Klangerlebnis geworden, das - weil Castelletti auf den großen Orchesterapparat verzichtet - Mahlers Torso vielleicht eher gerecht wird als Fassungen für großes Orchester, die einen vollendeten Mahler nur vorzutäuschen vermögen.

Und die Leistung des in Rovaniemi - wenige Kilometer südlich des Polarkreises - beheimateten finnischen Orchesters? Ich schließe ich mich gerne dem Resümee von "Klassik heute" an: "Das Niveau des Lappländischen Kammerorchesters ist unter der langjährigen Leitung von Storgårds zu einem Weltklasseklangkörper aufgestiegen, was diese Aufnahme unbezweifelbar belegt."

## Amazon, Deniz Urval (25 April 2019)

Rapprocher la « Dixième symphonie » de Gustav Mahler et ce fragment de gravure signé Koloman Moser avec figure féminine au sablier renversé est une si bonne idée que ce disque Bis, servi par une prise de son parfaite, m'a tout de suite intrigué.

John Storgards est un excellent chef, plus discret que d'autres. Et l'idée d'une version de concert de la dixième dans l'esprit des arrangements de la « Société pour des exécutions musicales privées » fondée en 1918 par Arnold Schönberg ne peut que retenir l'attention. Nous n'entendrons jamais la dixième telle que Mahler aurait pu la compléter, puisqu'il n'y a par endroit sur la page d'esquisse qu'une ligne mélodique et rien d'autre. La « réduction », si elle est intelligente, au lieu de masquer que la musique que nous écoutons n'existe qu'à moitié, et même bien moins, garde quelque chose du « comme si » de la reconstruction. La dixième ne peut être qu'une sorte d'hallucination auditive, une rive dont on peut s'approcher mais qu'on ne peut pas atteindre.

La version due à Michelle Castelletti (née en 1974), qui s'est inspirée du travail de Deryck Cooke et de celui de Rudolf Barchaj, prévoit un pupitre unique de bois, cor, trompette, percussion, harpe, piano (harmonium), et dix cordes (4/4/2/2).

Enregistrée par l'orchestre de chambre de Laponie à Rovaniemi, Finlande, en octobre 2017, cette exécution si fine projette sur une musique présente-absente une lumière blanche assez extraordinaire. Le premier mouvement comporte plus de contrastes qu'on ne pouvait l'espérer avec des forces aussi réduites, et les cordes y ont recours à des portamentos expressifs. Avec ses épisodes animés qui regardent vers l'avenir, c'est une alternative possible à l'ambiance « Vienne au crépuscule » si bien recrée par Michael Gielen (édition Cooke) dans sa version éditée chez Hänssler. Le premier scherzo trouve le ton juste entre fête et parodie. Le Purgatorio central est déchirant dans son ironie légère : depuis Deryck Cooke j'ai lu qu'on le rapproche du Lied du Chant de la Terre von der Jugend, mais il est tout autant pour moi comme un pressentiment du Cercle de Craie de Zemlinsky, un compositeur que ces interprètes connaissent bien. Le second Scherzo reste le mouvement le plus difficile à cerner. Dans le Finale, Storgards laisse entrevoir comme rarement un Eden des plus mystérieux. J'ai écouté successivement pour ce mouvement la récente version due à Yoel Gamzou, dans sa propre reconstruction de l'oeuvre (Wergo), qui a été beaucoup louée, et le présent disque : Gamzou est plus post-romantique, plus ample, plus subjectif, il y a plus de tension avec Storgards, avec lui c'est plus une stèle au bout de la route et moins une élégie.

La Laponie serait-elle cette terre des confins où on parvient au terme du dernier volet de cette trilogie de l'adieu que forment le Chant de la terre, les 9ème et 10ème symphonies ?

## WHOLENOTE

When Gustav Mahler died in 1911 at the age of 50 he left behind sketches for his tenth and final symphony. Of the five movements, we have Mahler's full scores of the first and third movements with the remainder in an abbreviated short score format. These preliminary sketches, skeletal though they may be, define the entire melodic structure of the work. In this sense Mahler's final testament is less unfinished than unrealized. It was not until the mid-1920s that efforts were made to bring the symphony to light with the publication of Ernst Krenek's edition of the first and third movements and the release of a facsimile edition of the sketches. Numerous subsequent efforts have been made to refine the other three movements; the most successful of these has proved to be the "performing version" by Deryck Cooke first heard in 1960.

Over 30 recordings of the complete work in various versions have been issued since. This new chamber orchestra arrangement, by the Maltese conductor and musicologist Michelle Castelletti, is an exceptional accomplishment, quite brilliantly executed by the phenomenal John Storgårds and his Lapland Chamber Orchestra. I was initially quite skeptical that an orchestra of a mere 24 players (single woodwinds, a lone trumpet and horn, 14 strings, piano, harmonium, harp and percussion) would prove adequate to convey the impact of the 100 musicians Mahler normally employed. I was mistaken; even in these reduced circumstances the pathos of Mahler's message still shines through in Storgårds sublime interpretation. This ranks as one of the most exciting and accomplished performances I have heard in my lifetime of terminal Mahleria.

**Jean-Yves Duperron - April 2019**

“[...] the essence of Mahler's intent is intact in this highly expressive account. Passages where Mahler seems to have caught a glimpse of the cosmos, like the ending of the first movement for example, are sublime. The "devil may care" spirit of the first Scherzo, the odd and impish pastoral feel of the Purgatorio movement, the turn of the century decadent waltz that is the Allegro pesante. It's all there and projected extremely well by the members of the Lapland Chamber Orchestra and conductor John Storgards. In this "chamber" attire, all the crucial thematic details come through clear and sharp. And I was worried that the grim and fatalistic elements opening the final movement would go missing, but was I ever wrong. It's as foreboding as it gets and the supremely beautiful flute melody that rises out of it is stunning. And to me, this final movement is pure, unadulterated Mahler at its best. And this performance exemplifies this very well. The final 5 minutes or so could melt the heart of a yeti.

This is the world premiere recording of this chamber version by Michelle Castelletti, presented in trademark BIS superb audio engineering.”