

The 1030th Suntory Subscription Concert
Wed. May 13, 2026, 19:00 at Suntory Hall

The 1031st Orchard Hall Subscription Concert
Sun. May 17, 2026, 15:00 at Bunkamura Orchard Hall

Andrea Battistoni, conductor

Yui Takahashi, soprano*

Kaoru Kondo, concertmaster

Schumann (orchestration by Andrea Battistoni): Kinderszenen (Scenes from Childhood), Op. 15

〈World Premiere〉 (ca. 20 min)

1. Von fremden Ländern und Menschen (Of Foreign Lands and Peoples)
2. Kuriose Geschichte (A Curious Story) 3. Hasche-Mann (Blind Man's Buff)
4. Bittendes Kind (Pleading Child) 5. Glückes genug (Perfect Happiness)
6. Wichtige Begebenheit (An Important Event) 7. Träumerei (Dreaming)
8. Am Kamin (By the Fireside) 9. Ritter vom Steckenpferd (Knight of the Hobby-Horse)
10. Fast zu ernst (Almost Too Serious) 11. Fürchtenmachen (Frightening)
12. Kind im Einschlummern (Child Falling Asleep)
13. Der Dichter spricht (The Poet Speaks)

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— intermission (ca. 15 min) —

Mahler: Symphony No. 4 in G major* (ca. 55 min)

- I. Bedächtig. Nicht eilen (Deliberate. Not hurried)
- II. In gemächlicher Bewegung. Ohne Hast (In leisurely motion. Without haste)
- III. Ruhevoll, poco adagio (Serene)
- IV. Sehr behaglich (Very leisurely)

Presented by Tokyo Philharmonic
 Subsidized by the Agency for Cultural Affairs Government of Japan |
 Japan Arts Council
 In Association with **Bunkamura** (May 17)



- ♪ All seats are reserved. Late admittance will be refused during the live performance. If you enter or reenter just before the concert or between movements, we may escort you to a seat different from the one to which you were originally assigned.
- ♪ Exiting during the performance will be tolerated. If you do not feel well, please exit or enter as you need. However, please mind the other listeners so that they will be minimally disturbed.
- ♪ Please refrain from using your cellphone or other electronic devices during performance.
- ♪ Please cherish the "afterglow" at the end of each piece for a moment before your applause.

Artists Profile



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Andrea Battistoni, conductor

Chief Conductor of the Tokyo Philharmonic

Born in Verona in 1987, Andrea Battistoni is a rising star with an international reputation as one of the most important conductors of his generation.

He served as the first Principal Guest Conductor of the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa from 2013 to 2019, and has been Chief Conductor of the Tokyo Philharmonic since 2016. He was appointed Music Director of the Teatro Regio di Torino in January 2025, Composer-in-Residence at the Opéra Royal de Wallonie in Liège in 2025, and Music Director

of Opera Australia in Sydney in January 2026.

In Tokyo, he has proven to be a sensation, captivating audiences with his charisma and sensitive musicality. He has conducted the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra in operas such as *Nabucco*, *Rigoletto*, *Madama Butterfly* (Nikikai), and *Aida* (a co-produced grand opera), as well as in numerous symphonic works, including the *Roman Trilogy*, *Pictures at an Exhibition*, *The Rite of Spring*, *Carmina Burana*, and Mahler's Symphonies Nos. 1, 2, 5, 7, and 8. The concert-style operas he has led - *Turandot* (2015), *Iris* (2016), and *Mefistofele* (2018) have secured his reputation as a leading light with critics and audiences alike. He has been regularly releasing CDs with the Tokyo Phil through Nippon Columbia.

Other noteworthy engagements include: Teatro alla Scala, La Fenice in Venice, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, the Royal Opera House-Covent Garden, Semperoper of Dresden, Arena di Verona, Mariinsky Theater, and world-renowned orchestras such as the Filarmonica della Scala, Accademia di Santa Cecilia, and Israel Philharmonic.

His book, *Non è musica per vecchi* was published by Rizzoli 2012, and by Ongaku-No-Tomo-Sha in Japan in 2017.

In 2021, Andrea Battistoni, performing with Tokyo Phil, won the OPUS KLASSIK Prize 2021 in the 20th/21st Century symphonic category, one of the most prestigious classical awards in Europe, for their international disc, "Dvorak: Symphony No. 9, 'From the New World' & Works of Akira Ifukube."

Website <http://www.andreabattistoni.it/>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/maestrobbattistoni>



Yui Takahashi,
soprano

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Graduated from Tokyo University of the Arts Graduate School. Received the 27th Goto Memorial Culture Award for New Opera Artists. Trained in Vienna.

Appearances include Cleopatra in Nikikai's *Giulio Cesare*, the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte*, Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Pepi in *Wiener Blut*, Eurydice in *Orphée aux Enfers*, Adele in *Die Fledermaus*, the title role in Nissay Theatre's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Musetta in *La Bohème* conducted by Tetsuro Ban, Valencienne in *Die lustige Witwe* produced by Yutaka Sado, and Zerlina in ORCHARD PRODUCE 2025's *Don Giovanni*.

In concerts, she has performed works such as Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven's 9th Symphony, Mahler's Symphony No. 4, and Orff's *Carmina Burana*, and in the Tokyo Opera City Recital Series "B→C: From Bach to Contemporary". She has also appeared in many media programs, including NHK's "New Year's Opera Concert," "Classic TV," TV Asahi's "Untitled Concert," and NHK-FM's "Recital Passio," and is active in a wide range of media. A member of Nikikai.

Program Notes

Text by Robert Markow

Schumann (orchestration by Andrea Battistoni): Kinderszenen (Scenes from Childhood), Op. 15

The thirteen short, intimate piano pieces that constitute Schumann's *Kinderszenen* were written in 1838 and published the following year. They quickly established themselves as some of the composer's most popular music, and No. 7, "Träumerei," has become one of the icons of western culture. While this is not music expressly *for* children, it is *about* children. (Music *for* children to play came later, the *Album for the Young*, Op. 68, in 1848.)

Schumann was particularly drawn to the whole world of childhood in all its freshness, innocence and simplicity. In a letter to his fiancée Clara Wieck, he claimed that these pieces were inspired by her remark that he "sometimes seemed to be like a child." Each vignette captures to perfection some aspect of recollected childhood: rapt absorption in thought, a soaring imagination, a moment of fear, desire to be someone or someplace else, unadulterated joy, or a confusing dream. Eventually the child drifts off into slumberland, and the final word goes to a "poet," whom we may well imagine to be the composer himself. Schumann wrote to a friend that "in my compositions I myself have become brighter, softer and more melodious. You will already have noticed this in my *Kinderszenen*." The whole marvelously evocative, poetic world of this music is embodied in the words of the poet Chamisso: "the dream of one's own days which are now far distant."

Although Schumann claimed that he affixed the titles afterwards, it is difficult not to imagine the reverse. How can one *not* be dreaming of faraway landscapes and strange peoples in No. 1? How can No. 4 depict anything but a "Pleading Child" who constantly nags for the same thing over and over? And what is No. 9 if not someone trotting along on a horse?

We hear *Kinderszenen* at this concert in conductor Andrea Battistoni's orchestration, which is receiving its world premiere. Here are Mr. Battistoni's thoughts on the subject:

"Schumann's music has always held a special place in my repertory. As a young cellist, I tackled many of his works for the instrument. His Fourth Symphony was the work with which I made my professional debut as a

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conductor. I consider Schumann one of the greatest composers of all time; his artistic legacy continues to strike me as an exceptionally original voice within the Romantic landscape. Above all, he is a composer with whom I firmly share the belief that music is an alternative form of narration – or storytelling. Schumann’s music always seems to be telling a story.”

“A brilliant miniaturist, Schumann always gives his best in intimate forms of musical expression. The famous *Kinderszenen* (Scenes from Childhood) are the best examples of this special affinity for brief pianistic gems. For Schumann, the child is perhaps the prototype of the Romantic artist. Fascinated by Schumann’s rich piano writing, I sought to orchestrate this celebrated suite as a tribute to the great composer’s spirit without betraying his unique sound world. The instrumentation is therefore designed for a medium-sized orchestra that Schumann himself might have used. No trombones, no harp, no glittering percussion: only an intimate orchestra capable of maintaining that quasi-chamber dimension inherent in so much of this extraordinary composer’s music.”

ROBERT SCHUMANN: Born in Zwickau, June 8, 1810; died in Edenich, July 29, 1856

Work composed: 1838 [original piano version]

World premiere: May 13, 2026 at Suntory Hall in Tokyo, by the Tokyo Philharmonic conducted by Andrea Battistoni

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, strings

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Mahler: Symphony No. 4 in G major

Each of Mahler’s ten enormous symphonic edifices inhabits a world of its own and can boast any number of unique features. The Fourth is a special symphony in the Mahler canon for its general air of childlike charm and gentle radiance, the absence of spiritual turmoil, its transparent textures, modest orchestral forces (trombones and tuba are absent; horns are just four in number, percussion is used discreetly), relative brevity (under an hour) and use of a song as the concluding movement.

The Symphony's first three movements were written in the summers of 1899 and 1900. A song Mahler had written in 1892 for soprano and piano was orchestrated and became the symphony's finale, the subject of which (a child's view of heaven) is the goal to which the previous movements all aspire. Mahler himself led the Kaim Orchestra of Munich in the first performance of the Fourth Symphony on November 25, 1901.

Only a split second is needed to identify the composition that opens with flutes playing even, repeated notes a fifth apart accompanied by jangling sleigh bells; nothing else sounds remotely like it. The good-natured, *gemütlich* first theme slides in with sunny radiance in the fourth bar, bringing to mind the composer's comparison of the symphony's basic mood to "a sky of unbroken blue ... only occasionally does it grow dark with ghostly menace." The basic tonality of the symphony is G major, a key often associated with genial moods and folksong. This movement proves to be one of Mahler's most fertile in terms of thematic content. The first theme alone contains three separate elements (the smiling violin tune, a rising bass line, a few chuckles from the horn). A brief, jaunty, martial tune in the clarinets leads immediately into the yearning melody sung by cellos. A new mood is established by the woodwinds playing a perky, amusing, almost dance-like idea. Mahler then proceeds to incorporate this multitude of melodic strands into what musicologist Michael Steinberg calls a "game of interruptions, resumptions, extensions, reconsiderations, and unexpected combinations."

The second movement (Scherzo) portrays a dance of death of Freund Hein, a popular character in German fairytales. His instrument is a country fiddle tuned a tone higher than normal in order to produce an unearthly, harsh sound. The music is sinister, to be sure, but at the same time it also retains a sense of humor. Mahler described the effect as "a grisly, sudden feeling that comes over us, just as one is often panic-stricken in broad daylight in a sunlit forest." Two bucolic trios interrupt the dance, tempering its evil connotations and looking forward to the joys of a life in heaven.

The otherworldly serenity and ineffable beauty of the third movement bring us to the threshold of the heavenly life that awaits us in the finale. Mahler told his disciple, the conductor Bruno Walter, that his vision in this movement was that of a church sepulcher "showing a recumbent stone image of the deceased with his arms crossed in eternal sleep." Mahler used the double

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variation form (developing two different melodic ideas in alternation), much as Beethoven had done in the *Adagio* of his Ninth Symphony. In a sudden outburst near the end of the movement, the full orchestra proclaims in brilliant colors a grandiose vision of heaven. The proclamation by the horns anticipates the melody the soprano will sing in the following movement.

The fourth movement is relatively short, but it perfectly and exquisitely fulfills its mission of depicting a child's view of heaven as a place of serene delight, simple joys and quiet mystery. The child's voice speaks to us in the words of a poem from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (The Youth's Magic Horn), a famous nineteenth-century collection of German folk poetry. Interspersed between the verses are brief reminders of earthly life (the symphony's opening flutes and bells motif is now transformed into a harshly aggressive figure), but each time the text returns us to comforting celestial visions. The final moments bring us to the realization that this music does not really end, but rather fades into the quietude of heavenly peace.

GUSTAV MAHLER: Born in Kalischt, Bohemia, July 7, 1860; died in Vienna, May 18, 1911

Work composed: 1899-1900 (revised 1901-10)

World premiere: November 25, 1901 at Kaim-Saal in Munich, conducted by the composer

Instrumentation: 4 flutes (3rd and 4th doubling on piccolo), 3 oboes (3rd doubling on English horn), 3 clarinets (2nd doubling on clarinet in E \flat , 3rd doubling on bass clarinet), 3 bassoons (3rd doubling on contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, timpani, percussion (bass drum, triangle, cymbals, tam-tam, glockenspiel, sleigh bells), harp, strings, solo soprano

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Formerly a horn player in the Montreal Symphony, **Robert Markow** now writes program notes for numerous orchestras and other musical organizations in North America and Asia. He taught at Montreal's McGill University for many years, has led music tours to several countries, and writes for numerous leading classical music journals.